**Cold War Reading**

*Why the US and the USSR enter the Cold War?*

**Directions:** Read the information below and annotate along the right hand side. Think about what we went over in the Power Point and what is expanded on. There will be a quiz tomorrow on this information.

**Vocab:**

**Capitalism-** an economy based on private ownership of wealth, by investments that are decided privately (not publicly), and by prices/ production/distribution of goods determined by competition.

**Communism-** in the USSR, communism meant government ownership of land and property, a single party government, and the absence of individual rights. There was also a call for worldwide revolution.

**Containment-** a term first used by American diplomat George Kennan during the late 1940s. As the USSR exerted influence in Eastern Europe, the American government adopted a foreign policy that sought to resist, or “contain,” Soviet influence in the rest of the world.

**Coup-** (Koo) a sudden, violent, and/or illegal seizure of power from a government.

In a sense, World War II represented a break in the hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had become a **communist** nation during World War I. Even then, the United States was concerned that the Soviet Union would pose a challenge to America’s government and values. As a **capitalist** nation, the United States feared the revolutionary rhetoric of **communism**, which vowed to create a world order led by workers and which denounced organized religion. As a result, Americans did not establish diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union until 1933. American and Soviet relations soured when Joseph Stalin agreed to a nonaggression pact with Adolf Hitler, but Hitler nullified the treaty by invading the USSR in 1941. During World War II, the United States sided with Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union (the Grand Alliance) to fight the Axis Powers. However, the United States and the Soviet Union disagreed about what postwar Europe should look like, and their mutual suspicion gradually led to a Cold War that lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

After World War II, American leaders hoped that an American monopoly on the atomic bomb would convince the Soviet Union to agree to American plans for Europe (the monopoly was short lived, as the Soviets developed a bomb by 1949). American leaders wanted to ensure the continued health of its economy, so it wanted to see governments with similar economic and political systems established in Europe. Although this foreign policy coincided with American economic needs, Americans saw these goals not as self-interest but as a crusade to bring freedom, democracy, and capitalism to the world. They therefore tried to “**contain**,” or limit, the spread of communism all over the world.

The United States attempted to contain **communism** by implementing two major policies, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The Truman Doctrine focused on helping nations in Europe that were trying to resist takeover by non-democratic countries. This policy was originally enacted in 1947 to help Turkey and Greece combat Soviet influence, and continued to guide American foreign policy throughout most of the Cold War. The Marshall Plan was an even more encompassing policy to reduce the spread of **communism** and to promote democracy and **capitalism** abroad. The Marshall Plan provided any type of aid to all European nations that needed it. Its’ goals were to fight against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos that spread across Europe. Over time, both policies helped diminish Soviet influence around the world.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union feared another invasion and wanted to protect its western borders by establishing **pro-communist** governments in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union suffered incredible losses—including 20 million deaths and heavy damage to industry and agriculture—during World War II. Joseph Stalin wanted to protect the USSR from further attack by establishing “satellite nations” that were sympathetic to **communism** along its western borders. Stalin claimed that he was protecting Soviet interests in Europe, just as the United States was protecting its interests. Suspicious of the United States, Stalin did not participate in agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which helped established **capitalist** economies in Western Europe.

During the Cold War, the United States divided the world into the “free” and “unfree” world. The “free world” included nations that were willing to cooperate with the United States and Western Europe. This did not necessarily mean that its allies were all democracies; indeed, it may be noted that countries such as South Africa and the Philippines were considered “free” nations although they did not have democratic governments. At the same time, the Soviet Union—and most notoriously Joseph Stalin—pursued oppressive policies in its own nation and across Eastern Europe.

As the Cold War continued through the decades, the United States began to get increasingly involved in other nations, most famously: Cuba, Korea, and Vietnam. As the Cold War began other major nations began to move towards **communism**, including China. This major shift caused the United States to feel more obligated to get involved in Korea, fearing it too would fall to **communism**. At the end of WWII Korea was freed from Japan, but split at the 48th parallel, with the USSR and **communism** in the north and the US and democracy in the south. With the newly communist China as a neighbor and increasingly strong North Korean military pushing into the South, the US and the newly formed United Nations stepped in to support the South Koreans. While the war ended in a stalemate, it illustrated just how far the US was willing to go to stop the spread of **communism**.

During Kennedy’s presidency, the United States built up against the rising tide of **communism** in Cuba led by the revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro. In his first year in office, Kennedy had to deal with both the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis. During the Bay of Pigs, the United States was involved in a failed **coup** in Cuba, and during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the US built up a naval blockade around Cuba to keep Soviet nuclear weapons from reaching the shores of Cuba. This event was considered one of the tensest times in United States history due to the realization that the threat of nuclear warfare was so close. This event also exhibited the dangerous and growing arms race that the United States and the Soviet Union were a part of.

With both its failures and successes, the United States continued its involvement in other nations in an attempt to **contain** **communism**. The most infamous being US involvement in Vietnam. The struggle in Vietnam lasted from 1955 to 1975 and resulted in not only excessive loss of life, but a growing mistrust in the United States towards the government. Not only did these events lead to increased mistrust of the government’s ability to take on **communism**, but they also increased panic on the home front about nuclear war and the presence of **communists** within the United States.