

Cold War

How do you win a war of ideals at home and abroad?

In World War II, the United States and Great Britain teamed up with the Soviet Union to defeat Adolf Hitler's Germany. In the years that followed, however, the partnership broke down into a struggle between the west, led by the United States, and the communist bloc backed by the Soviets. Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared that Russia had erected an "iron curtain" in Eastern Europe to force communism upon the countries it had occupied at the end of the war.

Post-WWII Relationship Crumbles Between U.S. and Soviet Union

The U.S. began rebuilding western Europe with economic aid through the Marshall Plan while eastern Europe struggled. Control of Berlin, the capital city of a defeated Germany, was shared by Russian, British and U.S. forces at the end of the war. When Russia shut off land routes to the city from the west, President Harry Truman ordered a massive air lift of supplies to send the message that the west would not abandon its European allies. In 1949, the U.S. and the nations of western Europe created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The member nations declared that an attack on any one would be considered an attack on all. Russia responded with a similar military alliance in eastern Europe.

In the 1948 election, Iowa's Henry A. Wallace ran for president on a platform that sought to reduce tensions and find ways to cooperate with the Soviet Union. He was soundly defeated and tagged as sympathetic to communism. This effectively ended his national political career of nearly two decades from his appointment as Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture in 1933, his election as vice president in 1940 and next in line to the presidency through World War II, and a term as Secretary of Commerce under President Truman. Cold War tensions became even stronger when the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949. Until then, the United States had been the only atomic power, and the only nation that had ever used the atomic bomb in the attack on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which rapidly led to a Japanese surrender. In another shock to Americans, communist China military forces won a bloody civil war while forces loyal to the west fled to the island of Taiwan.

Cold War Tensions Reign Supreme Over U.S. Politics

For the next 40 years, the Cold War was the focus of American foreign policy. There was always the danger that a conflict anywhere could touch off a conflict that might escalate into the use of nuclear weapons. A very real threat came in October 1962, when the U.S. discovered that the Soviets were sending missiles to Cuba capable of attacking American cities. The U.S. demanded that Soviet ships turn back. For 13 days, the world anxiously awaited the outcome. Finally, Russian ships turned around and the immediate crisis was over.

Some politicians, most often Republicans, favored a more aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union and a build-up of American military forces. George Kennan, an American diplomat, developed the "containment" theory that advocated for policies that prevented Soviets from expanding but did not initiate military moves to roll back communist control. He predicted that Soviet communism would eventually collapse from internal factors.

For one moment in the Cold War, the eyes of the world focused on Iowa when Iowa corn seed salesman Roswell Garst hosted the premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, on a visit his farm near Coon Rapids. Amid very tight security, the head of the communist world leaned on the fences of a hog lot and discussed farming practices with Garst, who had been a business partner with Henry Wallace. Garst proposed boosting agricultural trade with Russia which was at the time struggling with farm output.

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan boosted military spending which put a huge strain on the Soviet economy to keep up. It could not, and in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed into several pieces and lost control of eastern European. The Cold War as it had existed from the end of World War II was over.

Supporting Questions

Is conflict unavoidable in a battle over ideals or is compromise possible?

- [“The Only Good Communist is a Dead Communist” Sign at Protest in Des Moines, Iowa, September 23, 1959](#)
- [“International Space Law and Outer Space” Speech by Sen. Thomas E. Martin, August 16, 1960](#)

What role, if any, should the military play in a war of ideals?

- [People Picketing the Use of Tax Dollars for the Development of Nuclear Weapons, March 15, 1950](#)
- [Soldiers Seek Shelter from Mortar Shells in Korea, April 11, 1951](#)
- [“Old Soldiers Never Die” Address by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, April 19, 1951](#)
- [“Defense - Space - Atomic” Speech by Iowa Senator Thomas E. Martin, 1959](#)

How can leaders effectively convince nations and people its ideals are in their best interests?

- [Korean War Atrocities Report by U.S. Senate, January 1954](#)
- [Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev Visits Farms, Research Center in Iowa, 1959](#)
- [Interview of Korean War Veteran Raymond L. Ayon, October 27, 2004](#)

*Printable Image and Document Guide

Additional Resources

[50th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan](#) - This online exhibit through the Library of Congress has a variety of cartoons, letters, images and more showing the impact of the Marshall Plan in Europe.

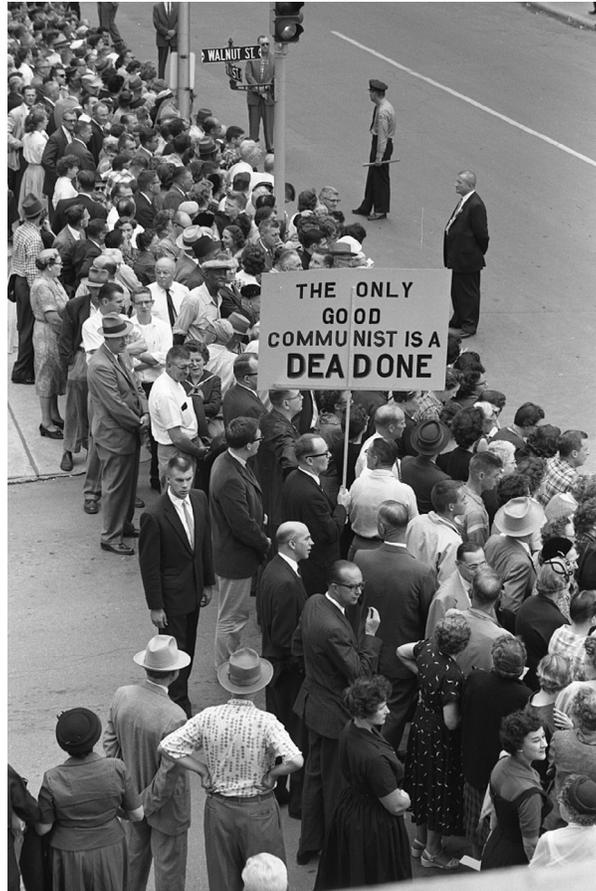
[Overview of Khrushchev Visit](#) - The link takes you to a four-page secondary source outlining Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the United States.

[Herblock Gallery](#) - A link to a digital version of the Library of Congress' Herbert L. Block political cartoon exhibit. The exhibit includes selections from 1961-1966, as well as 1951, cartoons focused solely on communism.

[Khrushchev's Itinerary for his US Visit](#) - A recap of Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the United States in 1959.

[Revelations from the Russian Archives](#) - A variety of sources that have been translated from Russian to English. Sources include Nikita Khrushchev's letter to John F. Kennedy and a document outlining the United States' imperialist policies.

“The Only Good Communist is a Dead One” Sign at Protest in Des Moines, Iowa, September 23, 1959



Courtesy of Library of Congress, O'Halloran, Thomas J., 23 September 1959

Description

This black and white photo shows a crowd gathered on a street in Des Moines, Iowa, to see Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev was in town to meet with the owner and see the operation of Garst Farms. One man on the street holds a sign that reads, "The Only Good Communist is a Dead One."

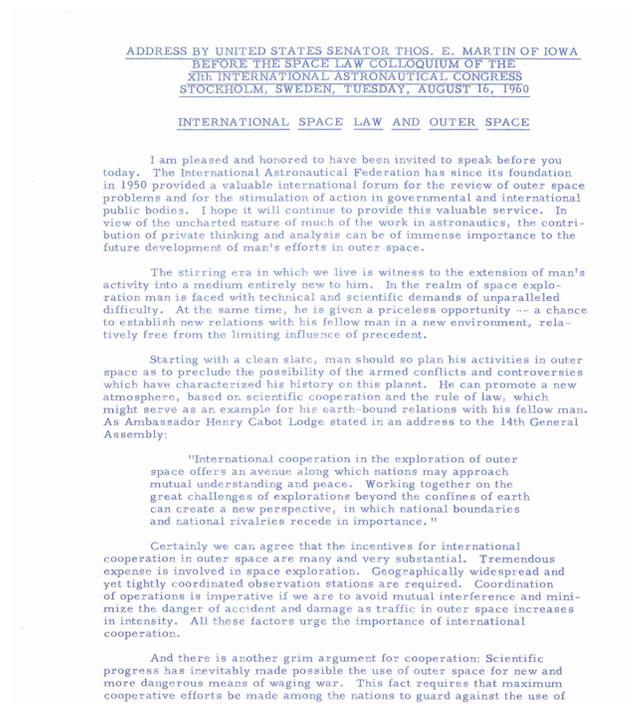
Text-Dependent Questions

- How does the man's sign compare to the behavior of the crowd? Support your claim with evidence from the picture.
- What does the behavior and body language of the crowd say about their feelings toward Khrushchev?
- How could a photograph like this be misleading?

Citation Information

O'Halloran, Thomas J., "Crowd gathered on street to see Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in Des Moines, Iowa; man holds sign reading 'The only good communist is a dead one,'" 23 September 1959. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

“International Space Law and Outer Space” Speech by Sen. Thomas E. Martin, August 16, 1960



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Martin, Thomas E., 16 August 1960

Description

In his speech before the Space Law Colloquium of the 11th International Astronautical Congress, Iowa Senator Thomas E. Martin stresses the importance of cooperation in outer space while also reporting on the broad areas of space exploration that could potentially be regulated in order to achieve that cooperation. Martin delivered this speech in Stockholm, Sweden, on August 16, 1960.

[Full Transcript of “International Space Law and Outer Space” Speech by Sen. Thomas E. Martin](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts of “International Space Law and Outer Space” Speech by Sen. Thomas E. Martin](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Use details from the speech to explain why Senator Thomas E. Martin believes outer space presents a unique opportunity to achieve cooperation.
- Taking both this 1960 speech and his 1959 **“Defense - Space - Atomic”** speech into consideration, how does Sen. Martin’s attitude about the relationship between the United States and Soviet Union in outer space differ from his attitude about their relationship on Earth? Use evidence from the two speeches to support your decision.
- Although Sen. Martin’s speech clearly refers to the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States it was delivered to an international audience. Why do you think he selected this platform for this speech? What would be the impact of this speech if it was directly addressed to the Soviet Union?

People Picketing the Use of Tax Dollars for the Development of Nuclear Weapons, March 15, 1950



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Palumbo, Fred, World-Telegram, 15 March 1950

Description

The black and white image is of individuals protesting the use of tax money to develop nuclear weapons in the United States. Two individuals are marching holding signs, one states, "Let's do it Gandhi's way not Truman's," the other reads, "Your taxes pay for the H-Bomb."

Text-Dependent Questions

- Select one passage from Senator Thomas E. Martin's speech, "[Defense - Space - Atomic](#)," that these picketers could be protesting. Use evidence from the letter and the image.
- How would the picketers characterize the moral standing of the United States? How would Sen. Martin characterize the validity of the picketers arguments?

Citation Information

Palumbo, Fred, "Persons picketing against the use of tax dollars for the development of nuclear weapons," *World-Telegram*, 15 March 1950. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Soldiers Seek Shelter from Mortar Shells in Korea, April 11, 1951



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Signal Corps, U.S. Army, 11 April 1951

Description

This photograph is of three soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division in the U.S. Army. The three men are crouching behind rocks to shield themselves from exploding mortar shells near the Hantan River in central Korea on April 1, 1951.

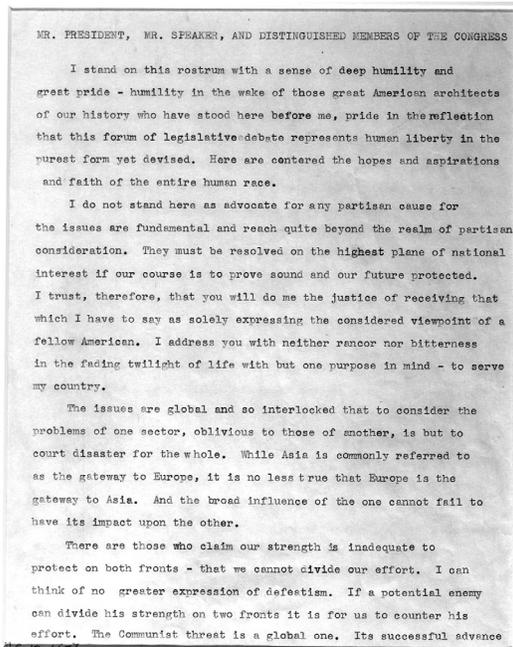
Text-Dependent Questions

- Looking at the image, what impact would the conflict in Korea have on the land? Use specific evidence from the image. How would the conflict affect South Korean citizens' opinion of the benefit of their alliance with the United States?
- Place yourself in the position of one of the soldiers and describe how you would feel. When fighting in a foreign land on behalf of another country as shown above, what type of motivation would you need to continue to fight?

Citation Information

"Korean Conflict. Men of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division, covering up behind rocks to shield themselves from exploding mortar shells, near the Hantan River in central Korea," Signal Corps, U.S. Army, 11 April 1951. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

“Old Soldiers Never Die” Address by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, April 19, 1951



Courtesy of Library of Congress, MacArthur, Douglas, 19 April 1951

Description

In recognition of his status as one of the nation's greatest living military leaders, the U.S. Congress asked General Douglas MacArthur to address a joint session on April 19, 1951. His speech is best known for its final lines in which he quoted an old army ballad: "Old soldiers never die--they just fade away." And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away--an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-bye."

[Full Transcript of “Old Soldiers Never Die” Address by Gen. Douglas MacArthur](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt from “Old Soldiers Never Die” Address by Gen. Douglas MacArthur](#)

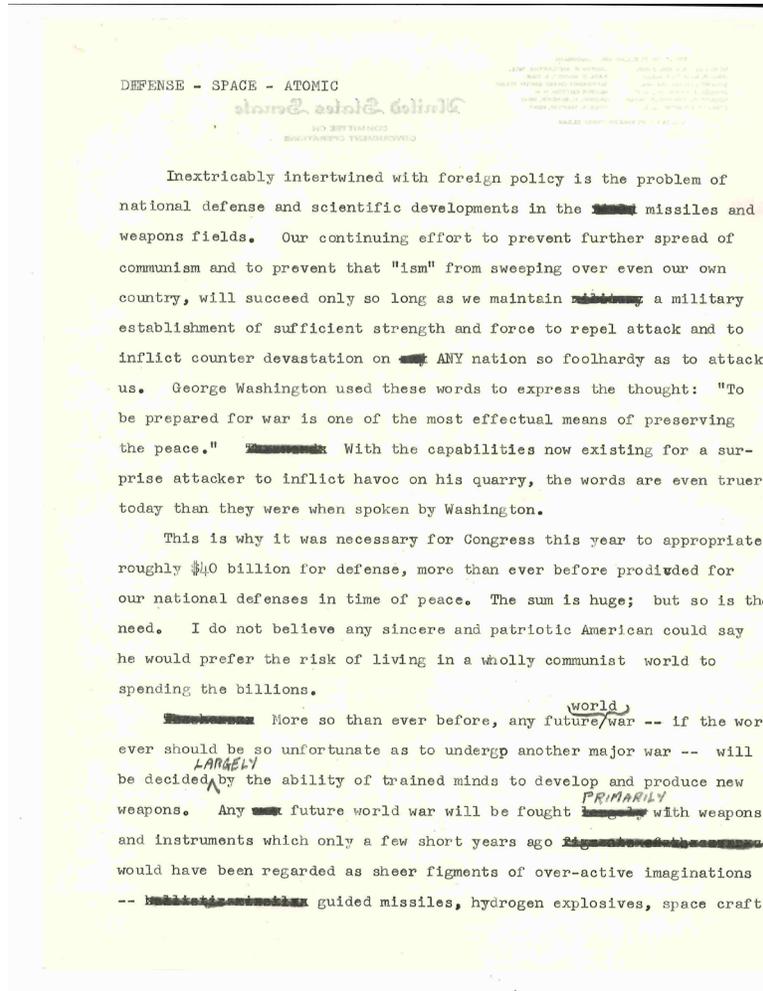
Text-Dependent Questions

- According to General Douglas MacArthur, what were the struggles the United States forces faced in Korea? Do you feel these outweighed any advantages gained through the conflict?
- Who did General MacArthur see as the enemy? Use evidence from the documents.
- According to General MacArthur, is conflict inevitable between the United States and Soviet Union? Why or why not?
- Do you believe General MacArthur was the type of person needed to win a war of ideals? Use evidence from the speech.

Citation Information

MacArthur, Douglas, “Old Soldiers Never Die,” 19 April 1951. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

“Defense - Space - Atomic” Speech Delivered by Iowa Senator Thomas E. Martin, 1959



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Martin, Thomas E., 1959

Description

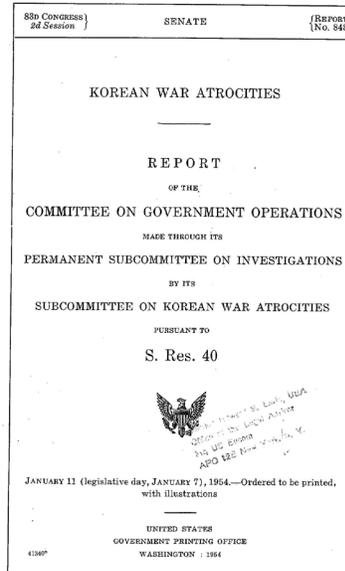
This speech, “Defense - Space - Atomic,” was given by Iowa Senator Thomas E. Martin in 1959. Martin emphasized the importance of deterrence and military superiority in the ongoing struggle against communism.

[Transcript of “Defense - Space - Atomic” Speech by Senator Thomas E. Martin](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What type of actions does Senator Thomas E. Martin put forth as needed to win the war on communism?
- Make a case for conflict being either avoidable or unavoidable using excerpts from Sen. Martin’s speech as evidence.

Korean War Atrocities Report by U.S. Senate, January 1954



Courtesy of Library of Congress, U.S. Congress, January 1954

Description

U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy appointed a special subcommittee on October 6, 1953, to investigate the war crimes committed by communist forces in Korea with the purpose of bringing them to the world's attention. The "Korean War Atrocities" report, which was released in January 1954, details these findings.

[Full Transcript of the Korean War Atrocities Report](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Korean War Atrocities Report](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Based on the information contained within the report, how would you characterize communism? List at least three specific words or passages that were carefully included by the U.S. Senate subcommittee to achieve this characterization.
- What if any bias do you see in the document? Could this report be considered propaganda? Provide specific evidence from the text to support your claim.
- Contrast the treatment of Americans held as prisoners of war by the communists to that of communist prisoners of war held by Raymond Ayon. Include specific evidence from each source.
- Could this report be used to help America win its war of ideals? Why or why not? Provide textual evidence to support your claim.

Citation Information

"Korean War Atrocities Report of the Committee on Government Operations made through its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations by its Subcommittee on Korean War Atrocities," U.S. Congress, January 1954.

[Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev Visits Farms, Research Center in Iowa, 1959



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Wilson, Woodrow, 26 July 1918

Description

This film shows the news footage of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to Iowa in 1959. The video focuses on Khrushchev at the Swine Research Center of Iowa State University. It shows him seeing how hogs were raised from birth to market. He also visited the farm of Roswell Garst in Coon Rapids, Iowa.

[Transcript of Interviews from Nikita Khrushchev Video](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Based upon what you heard in the interviews, how would you characterize the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union? How is this similar or different from the other documents in the text set?
- Considering the suggestion of "(t)he best place to hold a summit meeting would be an Illinois cornfield." In what ways could a meeting of this nature impact the interaction between nations?

Citation Information

"Khrushchev's Visit to Iowa," WOI-TV, Iowa State University Library, 1959.

Interview of Korean War Veteran Raymond L. Ayon, October 27, 2004



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Schneider, Dorothy, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, 27 October 2004

Description

This interview with Raymond L. Ayon, a Korean War veteran, follows his journey as a young man who was initially told by his superiors that Korea was a brief police action, but he watched the conflict escalate while on the ground. At 16, Ayon was fascinated with his older brothers' letters home from World War II, Ayon dropped out of high school in 1945. He signed up for the Merchant Marines, but after a year they learned he was too young. Ayon went back to school, graduated and enlisted in the Air Force in 1948. In his interview, he speaks about how his first assignment was with a fighter bomber squadron in Japan, but the Air Force decided to make a medical corpsman out of him. Shortly after the United States went to war in Korea in 1950, Ayon was in the thick of things, loading casualties onto transport planes bound for Japan. He spent time with a MASH unit, claiming it was hardly like what was depicted in the famed TV show - his own unit was staffed by an international crew. Ayon said he was sensitive to those who would diminish his service just because he wasn't an infantry soldier, though he spent four seasons in Korea. He also speaks about using napalm instead of firewood to fuel a tent stove during the winter, how he was almost killed by a casket in the back of a truck he was driving and what it was like to care for enemy prisoners of war.

**The full video was edited down from the original clip. The edited version focuses primarily between the 24th and 34th minute of the interview.*

[Transcript of Edited Raymond Ayon Interview](#)

Click [HERE](#) for access to the full 55-minute interview with Raymond Ayon

Text-Dependent Questions

- Explain how prepared soldiers were for the conditions in Korea according to Ayon. Use specific evidence from the interview.
- Consider the description of how Ayon and his fellow soldiers treated enemy soldiers that had been captured. What are the benefits to treating enemy prisoners of war this way? How could such treatment help the United States win its war of ideals?
- How did Ayon describe General Douglas MacArthur? Does it appear Ayon respects General MacArthur? Why or why not? How important is it for soldiers to respect those in command?

Citation Information

Schneider, Dorothy, "Interviewee Raymond L. Ayon," Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, 27 October 2004. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)