

The Cold War

Traveling Exhibition Educator's Guide

Developed by

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

The grades 6–12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12

The standards below begin at grade 6. The CCR anchor standards and high school standards in literacy work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources . . .
 - a. attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
 - b. connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary . . .
 - a. Of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
 - b. Of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
 - c. That makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
3. Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).
4. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
5. Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
6. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

7. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.
8. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
9. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
10. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
11. Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

Guide Elements

Key Takeaways

This section summarizes the main points of the panel.

Guiding Questions

These questions have been designed to challenge exhibition viewers to think critically about the information presented in each panel. For classrooms, these questions make great discussion or short essay prompts. Each question ties into information directly on the panels, helping viewers connect to the primary sources.

Potential Activity

These activities are geared towards classroom settings. They range from in-classroom activities to research prompts for take-home projects.

For Further Exploration

History is always more complex and has more nuance than can fit on panels! This section will provide links to reputable resources about events, people, and topics associated with but not included on the panels. Often, they will provide context for the social or political environment in which events shown on the panels take place, giving students a more complete picture of the world at the time.

Student Glossary

The glossary lists terms students may not know before studying the exhibition. If students are prompted to view the exhibition gallery-style, encourage them to take the glossary with them! It will help them understand the basic concepts on the panels and allow them to focus on critical analysis of the primary sources instead.

PANEL BY PANEL RESOURCES

Key Takeaways

- The Cold War was a series of political, economic, and cultural events that shaped the second half of the 20th century.
- While it never evolved into a direct conflict between the United States and the USSR, it was fought indirectly all over the world.
- The Cold War was significantly shaped by the leaders of the United States and the USSR.
- Domestic and foreign policies of both nations were affected by the Cold War.

Panel Two: The Cold War Begins

The beginning of the Cold War can be traced back to World War II. Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin (the leaders of the victorious Allied countries) gathered in Potsdam, Germany, to make final decisions about the post-war world. Here they decided who controlled what section of the defeated territory. Western nations, like France, Great Britain, and the United States, controlled the west and the Soviet Union controlled the east. The western nations were quickly rebuilt and political autonomy was restored through democratic elections. Eastern nations were turned into buffer security states for the Soviet Union, which used military presence to establish sympathetic communist governments.

Europe was divided by an “Iron Curtain.” The two sides rapidly grew to distrust each other. The United States, and other capitalist nations, had long been wary of communism but they were also concerned about the totalitarianism demonstrated by the Soviet Union. To “contain” the spread of communism, President Truman supported a foreign policy that would offer aid to any nation resisting authoritarianism, a policy known as the Truman Doctrine. Similarly, the Marshall Plan, a massive economic aid project, was rapidly rebuilding Europe. Concurrently, Joseph Stalin was centralizing more power and using gulags, or work camps, to stifle political dissent at home.

The early Cold War saw initial challenges in China, Korea, and Berlin. World War II briefly allied the nationalist and communist forces in China against Japan. However, the two sides returned to fighting after the war ended. The nationalist forces, led by Chiang Kai-shek and supported by the United States, lost to Mao Zedong’s communist forces and withdrew to Taiwan in 1949. This was viewed as a foreign policy failure in the United States and established China as the most populous communist government on the planet, something that it still is today. Furthermore, as Japan surrendered and withdrew from Korea, communist forces in the North, supported by the Soviet Union, launched an invasion of the democratic South. The United Nations authorized a police action that was led by the United States and allied nations. They were able to push the North Korean forces back across the 38th parallel, a boundary line that had been established after World War II, and is still in use today.

The blockade of Berlin in 1948–1949, however, represented the most complicated problem of the early Cold War. Deep in East Germany, and behind the Iron Curtain, West Berlin was surrounded by unfriendly forces. The Soviet Union, in an attempt to seize West Berlin, shut down all railways and roads into the city. West Berlin needed supplies of food and fuel especially, as winter approached. To get past the blockade, American forces would have needed to use force, which could have led to a shooting war. Using aircraft, however, shifted the pressure. To stop the aid coming in, the Soviet Union would have had to shoot down the planes, leading to war. The persistence of the “Berlin Airlift,” while testing each side’s objectives, let the two powers step back from the brink of an all-out war.

Guiding Questions

Students should be encouraged to engage with the primary sources on the exhibition panels and cite evidence from them in their responses.

1. How did national policies encourage a distrustful nature between the United States and the Soviet Union? Find an example on the panel that demonstrates this.
2. According to the panel, which nations are more aligned with the United States? Which nations are more aligned with the Soviet Union?

Potential Activity

Berlin Airlift: Students should research the logistical challenges, as well as the political ones, associated with supporting West Berlin.

For Further Exploration

- **Marshall Plan:** <https://afsa.org/helping-europe-help-itself-marshall-plan>
- **NATO:** https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm#founding
- **Berlin Airlift:** <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/berlin-airlift>
- **Origins of the Cold War lesson plan:**
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/lesson-plan/origins-us-cold-war-fears-1946-1961>

Interesting Tidbit

You can find the United Nations in New York City today.
However, its first meeting was in San Francisco.

Panel Three: The Cold War Heats Up

In the fifties, a new generation of leaders came to power. In the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president and Nikita Khrushchev became the Soviet premier. While there was still tension between the two nations, there was a new chance at improving relations now that Joseph Stalin had died. The two leaders had met before to discuss disarmament and peaceful resolutions to political problems,

but espionage events like the U-2 Crisis and extensive Soviet electronic bugging of embassies dashed those hopes. The next decade turned into a race between two superpowers.

The first major crisis began when an American pilot flew a U-2 spy plane deep into Soviet airspace. Francis Gary Powers was shot down and held prisoner for nearly two years. Ironically, President Eisenhower was reluctant to use the spy program, but was persuaded to use it to gather intelligence. The fallout from the incident forced the United States to admit to spying, and more importantly, led to the cancellation of a summit that could have thawed relations even more.

Beyond the race to gather intelligence (something both sides were doing), the US and USSR challenged each other for supremacy on the ground, in the air, and in space. In 1957, the Soviet Union gained an early lead with the launch of Sputnik 1. Little more than a basketball-sized orb, it nonetheless presented a new fear. After all, if the Soviet Union could put an orb into orbit over American territory, why not a nuclear weapon? As a response, the United States established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA, with the intent to put an American in space. In 1961, the Soviet Union launched Yuri Gagarin into orbit. Shortly after, the United States responded with Project Mercury. Ultimately, the “Space Race” was won when American Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon eight years later.

Back on Earth though, the Cold War was still raging, particularly in Berlin. After the Second World War, emigration had always been an issue for the Soviet Union. However, through a technical loophole, people were still able to leave for the West, through Berlin. The Soviet and East German governments, working together, constructed a physical barrier to prevent this. It started as barbed wire and machine gun towers, but eventually expanded to a full wall that became one of the most prominent symbols of the Cold War. It stood for over thirty years.

Guiding Questions

1. The early Cold War was dominated by various “races.” Find examples on the panel that demonstrate this.
2. According to the panel, what were the mistakes that each side made regarding the other?

Potential Activity

The Space Race: Students should research sources regarding the beginning of the Space Age, from both a Soviet and American youth perspective. There is potential tie-in to modern technological development.

For Further Exploration

- **Military Industrial Complex:**
<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address>
- **Space Race:** <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/what-was-space-race>

Interesting Tidbit

Yuri Gagarin may have been the first person in space, but Laika, a stray dog from Moscow, was the first animal to orbit the Earth.

Panel Four: The Global Cold War

In the 1960s and '70s, the Cold War truly went global. While the most critical moments occurred at the beginning of the decade with the Cuban Missile Crisis, proxy wars were fought in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia, Chile, and Angola, encompassing nearly every continent on Earth. Even Antarctica was tangentially involved when it became the focus of an international treaty designating the continent as a scientific zone. The first major crisis, however, occurred in the warm climate of the Caribbean.

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in October 1962. Shortly after the fallout of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the communist Cuban government looked to the Soviet Union for support and protection from any further aggression. Looking to gain an advantage of their own, the Soviet Union began placing nuclear weapons in Cuba, significantly decreasing the amount of warning time for the United States and destabilizing the status quo of the Cold War. The United States could not afford to let the missiles stay in Cuba nor could the Soviet Union afford to fail in Cuba. Both sides were locked in to their policies, creating a dangerous situation. Over the next thirteen days, the United States established a naval "quarantine" and used back-channel negotiations with the Soviet Union to allow both nations to step back from the brink of war.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was short and terrifying. Proxy wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan, on the other hand, were long, costly, and demoralizing. US involvement in Vietnam significantly increased in 1964. In an attempt to contain the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia, the US poured more and more resources into Vietnam. Over the next ten years, the war increasingly became divisive, shattering American prestige at home and abroad.

Similarly, the Soviet Union had foreign problems as well. In 1968, the Soviet Union cracked down on reformist movements in Czechoslovakia. Utilizing Warsaw Pact members against one of their own, the Soviet Union was able to forcefully reinstall a government that was more in line with Soviet policy. This action emboldened the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan a decade later. This attempt to curtail Afghan socio-economic development came at an enormous cost to both nations and hastened the end of the Cold War. The catastrophic damage, though, made Afghanistan fertile ground for the next major threat: terrorism.

The Cold War was fought nearly everywhere. However, there were notable examples of nations bypassing the conflict. The Non-Aligned Movement represented much of the Global South. As World War II ended, many of the nations in this movement discovered new-found independence and resisted attempts to get pulled into the orbits of either the United States or the Soviet Union. Additionally, China moved

further from the Soviet Union and established normal ties with the United States. Even with this, however, Cold War intrigue managed to encapsulate the world.

Guiding Questions

1. How did an event like the Cuban Missile Crisis encourage both superpowers to de-escalate? Find an example on the panel that demonstrates this.
2. According to the panel, where were the “hot spots” of the Cold War?

Potential Activity

Gulf of Tonkin: Students should research primary sources regarding the firing upon a US naval vessel. They should discuss the reasons why the United States chose to escalate. There is a potential tie-in to the Ukrainian Crisis here as well.

For Further Exploration

- **Proxy Wars:** <https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/eight-hot-wars-during-cold-war>
- **Soviet Afghanistan:**
<https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/08/the-soviet-war-in-afghanistan-1979-1989/100786/>
- **Pop Culture in the Cold War lesson plan:**
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/lesson-plan/cold-war-culture-war-visualizing-values-and-role-pop-culture>

Interesting Tidbit

During this time period, both the United States and the Soviet Union boycotted Olympic events at various times to protest what the other was doing. The US did so in 1980 to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets did so in 1984, protesting what they viewed as an anticommunist environment.

Panel Five: The Cold War at Home

The Cold War was the dominant foreign policy issue of the late twentieth century, but it also dramatically affected each nation’s domestic policies. To some degree, each nation suppressed political freedoms, monitored civilians, and limited opportunities for them. Usually done in the name of national security, this was often an attempt to control political and cultural power. Political repression was nothing new in Russia, but as it transitioned into the Soviet Union, it reached new levels, particularly under Joseph Stalin. Under Stalin, any challenge to the state was met with terrifying brutality. Gulags, or political work prisons, were established all over the country, where millions of people were sent. After Stalin’s death, there was a brief thaw, particularly under Nikita Khrushchev; however, human rights violations, especially anti-semitic violations, became commonplace again under Leonid Brezhnev.

While not as politically repressive as the Soviet Union, the United States has long had a wary eye on socialist and communist organizations operating within the nation. In the early part of the twentieth century, during the first Red Scare, the federal government conducted a series of raids, known as the Palmer Raids, to quickly arrest and deport suspected anarchists, communists, and socialists. During the 1940s and '50s, during the height of the early Cold War, the government again targeted anyone with communist sympathies. Particularly targeting Hollywood, the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC, railed against the film industry. The Hollywood Ten—directors, writers, and producers who refused to cooperate—were blacklisted by the industry as a result.

Senator Joseph McCarthy went even further than the film industry. His investigations into communist influence focused on the military and the government itself. Building on fears during the second Red Scare, he accused people, without evidence, of being communist sympathizers, to build his own power. This strategy, and his dominance, ultimately failed after he targeted the US Army. Throughout the twentieth century, groups in both the Soviet Union and the United States struggled for human and civil rights. Often overlooked in the context of the Cold War, it is worth noting that groups like African Americans in the United States and Jews in the Soviet Union and laborers in both strove to achieve their own sense of equality and continue to do so even today.

Guiding Questions

- How did nations respond to differing political opinions and beliefs? Find an example on the panel that demonstrates this.
- According to the panel, what were some of the additional “battles” of the Cold War?

Potential Activity

The Politics of Protest: Students should research the politics of protest, particularly comparing the Red Scare and the anti-war movement. There is a potential tie-in to the modern political atmosphere.

For Further Exploration

- **Gulags:**
<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/death-and-redemption-the-gulag-and-the-shaping-soviet-society>
and <https://gulag.online/articles/historie-gulagu?locale=en>
- **House Un-American Activities Committee:**
<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/house-un-american-activities-committee>

Interesting Tidbit/Fun Fact

Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon in 1969. Two years later, Alan Shepard (the first American in space) used a contraband six-iron to hit a golf ball on the Moon. He shanked it and it flew into a crater.

Panel Six: Detente

As the Cold War entered its fifth decade, it did so with both sides rethinking their relationships with each other. President Nixon and his successors attempted a new policy of detente with the Soviet Union and normalization of relations with China. This ultimately paved the way for the collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union. Recognizing that the United States had become bogged down by conflicts like Vietnam, President Richard Nixon shifted the United States' foreign policy toward a more sustainable plan of "realpolitik," or practical approach. In doing so, the United States focused less on ideological battles against communism and more on policy that directly affected the nation. To that end, President Nixon became the first sitting president to visit mainland China, hastening a wedge between them and the Soviet Union.

Throughout the 1970s, detente was mostly a successful policy between the two nations. There were crises, such as the Yom Kippur War, that momentarily drew the superpowers back to their proxy wars; however, they were resolved relatively quickly. With the election of Ronald Reagan, a candidate who had run on a strong anti-communist message, the heated rhetoric of the Cold War returned. Coupled with the increasing power of technology, such as computers, the risk of accidental or even intentional nuclear war rose. Twice in 1983, miscommunication and misinformation almost led to war. Realizing their positions, both powers looked to reform.

Most notably, reform started with the Soviet policies of glasnost and perestroika. In the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, along with an increasingly interconnected world, the Soviet Union could no longer afford to stay isolated. Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and President Ronald Reagan worked to gradually ease tensions. As democratic reforms swept across Europe, the Soviet Union realized it was no longer able to hold on to its once-formidable territory. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down, symbolically ending the Cold War. This became official with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world entered a new stage. Eastern European nations quickly established their own democratic reforms and enjoyed the benefits of the global marketplace. Russia, too, began incorporating its own democratic programs. Military operations shifted toward smaller, more specific missions, like humanitarian missions in Bosnia and Somalia. The threat of generalized war between major powers had dissipated but new threats were on the horizon. Even so, the Cold War had subsided and the world looked to a new era.

Guiding Questions

- How did national policies encourage a lasting peace between the superpowers? Find an example on the panel that demonstrates this.
- According to the panel, which events contributed most to the end of the Cold War?

Potential Activity

“The Man Who Saved the World”: Students should research Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov’s 1983 incident as well as other near misses in history. There is a potential tie-in to the modern-day Ukrainian Crisis.

For Further Exploration

- **President George H. W. Bush’s 1992 State of the Union:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2SDqiPbS2Y>
- **Nuclear Weapons:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujfC0NgdU48>

Interesting Tidbit/Fun Fact

One technological development of the Cold War that did not work was the Strategic Defense Initiative.

On the other hand, American Cold War engineers were able to figure out a way to mask the radar signature of the next generation of bombers, also known as stealth bombers.

Panel Seven: The End of the Cold War

With the end of the Cold War, the world saw a dramatic and speedy end to the Soviet Union. Protesters dismantling the Berlin Wall became an iconic image of the end of the era. East and West Germany were reunified as a single state within a year and the dissolution of the Soviet Union quickly followed. In that new era, Russia aimed to become a member of a more globalized community, looking to increase economic opportunities and limit the spread of nuclear weapons.

One of the first issues the former Soviet nations had to reconcile was their place in the world. NATO quickly moved east, welcoming former Warsaw Pact nations into the security alliance. Ukraine, the second largest former Soviet nation in Europe after Russia, established its own sovereignty in 1991. To do so, they relinquished control of Cold War era nuclear weapons back to Russia.

Former Cold War weaponry was a major problem for both Russia and the United States. To counter the spread of nuclear weapons, both nations worked to enforce the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 and in 1994, both nations participated in the Strategic Arms and Reduction Talks (START) which required mutual inspections and a decrease in nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, showing a desire to become part of a more globalized society, Russia joined international organizations like the World Trade Organization and began working to incorporate democratic and capitalist systems into their society. They also began to collaborate with other nations in the development and expansion of technological systems. In 1998, the International Space Station, a symbol of nations working together, became operational.

Guiding Questions

- What challenges did the post-Cold War world face? Find an example on the panel that demonstrates this.
- According to the panel, which events were symbols of the end of the Cold War and Russia's role in the world?

Potential Activity

- Students should research current efforts to reduce weapons of mass destruction and the legacy of the non-proliferation treaty.

For Further Exploration

- **Russia in the 1990s:**
<https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2022/11/hidden-trauma-new-series-looks-beyond-the-freedom-of-1990s-russia?lang=en>

Interesting Tidbit/Fun Fact

McDonalds, perhaps the most iconic western restaurant ever, opened in Moscow in 1990.

STUDENT GLOSSARY

Panel Two: The Cold War Begins

- **Communism:** The Soviet Union's economic system. The goal was to create a classless society in which the state controlled the means of production and wealth.
- **Capitalism:** The United States' economic system. Private ownership controls the means of production and prices are determined by supply and demand. It is a system that also encourages a free exchange of ideas.
- **Harry Truman:** The 33rd American president. His administration's policies were instrumental in defining the early years of the Cold War.
- **Joseph Stalin:** The general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He led the Soviet Union through World War II, but also used terror and torture to repress any political opposition.
- **Mao Zedong:** The chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. As the leader of China, he oversaw the creation of the largest communist nation on the planet.
- **Iron Curtain:** The nickname given to the imaginary line separating the capitalist-oriented Western Europe from the communist-oriented Eastern Europe. The name was first used by Winston Churchill.
- **Truman Doctrine:** President Truman's plan to contain the spread of communism. It offered financial and military aid to any nation that wanted to resist authoritarianism.

- **Marshall Plan:** Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the plan offered financial assistance to ALL European nations for rebuilding after World War II. It was rejected by countries under Soviet control.
- **Berlin Airlift:** The operation that supported the people of Berlin after they were blockaded by Soviet forces. At its height, more than 1,500 planes were arriving daily.
- **Potsdam:** The city where leaders met to determine what the post-WWII world would look like.
- **NATO:** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This is a mutual defense pact created between the United States and many Western European nations to counter the military of the Soviet Union. It is still the largest military alliance on the planet.
- **Warsaw Pact:** This was founded to counter the power of NATO. Nations in the Eastern Bloc were forcibly persuaded to join and had to occasionally turn on their allies to maintain power.
- **United Nations (UN):** This international organization was formed after World War II. It has the express aim of preventing future world wars and providing a forum for national discussions. It currently has nearly 200 member states.
- **Korean War:** This was the first major flare-up of the Cold War. The Soviet Union supported the communist forces in the North and the United States supported pro-democratic forces in the South. The US military intervened, under a UN police action. Nearly 40,000 Americans died.

Panel Three: The Cold War Heats Up

- **Military-Industrial Complex:** This term was first used by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to depict the growing relationship between the military and the defense economy that supports it.
- **Dwight Eisenhower:** The 34th President of the United States. As president, he oversaw the U-2 Crisis and moved the United States toward a foreign policy that was shaped by economic power, covert action, and a reliance on nuclear weapons for defense.
- **Nikita Khrushchev:** After a brief power struggle, he succeeded Joseph Stalin. He moved to “de-Stalinize” the Soviet Union and make it less repressive. Even so, his time in office saw some of the tensest moments of the Cold War.
- **Sputnik:** The name given to the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth. It was launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957, and ushered in the Space Race.
- **NASA:** Established in 1958 to counter the Soviet Union in the Space Race. It ultimately achieved key successes with the Mercury program, which put Alan Shepard and John Glenn into space. This paved the way for the Apollo program, which landed a man on the Moon in 1969, definitively winning the Space Race.
- **Berlin Wall:** Constructed in 1961 to prevent East German (Soviet-controlled) citizens from escaping to the West. It stood as a symbol of the Cold War until it was torn down in 1989.

Panel Four: The Global Cold War

- **KGB:** The intelligence organization of the Soviet Union. It was in charge of covert operations in the Cold War as well as monitoring the citizens of the Soviet Union.
- **CIA:** The intelligence organization of the United States. It was, and remains, the organization most responsible for collecting intelligence about other nations.
- **John F. Kennedy:** The 35th President of the United States. Best remembered for his cool-headedness during the Cuban Missile Crisis, he was also responsible for sending some of the first military advisors to Vietnam.
- **Fidel Castro:** The president of Cuba for the second half of the twentieth century. He allowed Soviet nuclear missiles to be placed in Cuba, greatly increasing their efficiency and sparking the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- **Bay of Pigs:** An attempted invasion of the island of Cuba, with the intention of overthrowing Fidel Castro. While the United States was not directly involved, it was instrumental in providing support. The invasion was a failure and pushed Cuba even closer to the Soviet Union.
- **Cuban Missile Crisis:** A thirteen-day stretch of time when the United States and the Soviet Union came as close as ever to nuclear war. Resolution required constant communication at the highest levels, and any misstep could have led to war.
- **Lyndon Johnson:** The 36th President of the United States. As president, he escalated the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.
- **Ho Chi Minh:** The president of Vietnam. After requests for political autonomy in Vietnam were overlooked during the Versailles Peace Conference, he found support from the Soviet Union.
- **Mujahadeen:** Afghan freedom fighters who resisted the Soviet occupation. They were trained and supplied by the CIA.

Panel Five: The Cold War at Home

- **Gulag:** The term given to Soviet work prisons. They were often used to suppress political opposition: 18,000,000 people passed through the system between 1920 and 1950 and more than 1,000,000 died.
- **Joseph McCarthy:** As a senator from Wisconsin, he used his political position to search for Communist influence within the American political, military and cultural establishments. Often without merit or proof, his accusations significantly contributed to a “Red Scare.”
- **Hollywood Ten:** Writers, directors, and producers of Hollywood movies who refused to cooperate with Congress's investigation of communist influence. As a result, they were blacklisted (refused employment) by the Hollywood establishment.
- **Bert the Turtle:** The star of *Duck and Cover*, a 1952 documentary that helped children understand what to do in the event of a nuclear attack.
- **Richard Nixon:** The 37th President of the United States. His administration began the process of normalizing and opening relations with the People's Republic of China and pursuing a policy of detente with the Soviet Union.

- **Gerald Ford & Jimmy Carter:** The 38th and 39th Presidents of the United States. Domestic issues were more dominant during their administrations, but both presidents tried to follow the detente path.
- **Kent State Massacre:** On May 4, 1970, four unarmed students were shot and killed at Kent State University in Ohio. They were protesting the expansion of the Vietnam War and the draft.

Panel Six: Detente

- **SALT I:** The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) were the first time the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to limit the number of nuclear missiles each country could have.
- **Mutually Assured Destruction:** This idea was a driving force behind the buildup of nuclear weapons. If you had enough weapons to guarantee the destruction of the other side, it would deter aggressive action. Ironically, this concept's creator, Thomas Schelling, won the Nobel Peace Prize.
- **The Strategic Defense Initiative:** Popularly known as “Star Wars,” it was a program that, if it had worked, could have protected the United States from incoming ballistic missiles. While it never worked, it is an example of the technological development that ushered in a new era of weapons development.
- **Chernobyl:** The nuclear power plant that suffered a catastrophic explosion in April 1986. Among other causes, Soviet isolationism during the Cold War contributed to the disaster.
- **Perestroika:** This was a policy to “restructure” the Soviet economy. It was not intended to end the Soviet style of economics, but it did lead to some market-based reforms.
- **Glasnost:** Along with the economic restructuring, Gorbachev began to allow limited open discussion of national policy and even some dissent. Totalitarian control was slipping away.
- **Ronald Reagan:** The 40th President of the United States. While he initially committed to a large arms build-up, he worked with Soviet leader Michail Gorbachev to bring the Cold War to a close.
- **Mikhail Gorbachev:** The last leader of the Soviet Union. Recognizing that the Soviet Union could no longer hold power as it once had, he instituted policies that led to normalizing relations with the United States.
- **Tiananmen Square:** Increasing market-economic opportunities in China had led to some limited economic opportunities. Additionally, the Chinese Communist Party was facing challenges to its legitimacy. In 1989, large-scale protests were met with a forceful response from the government. Economic reforms since the protest have allowed China to become the second-largest economy in the world. However, political control is still centralized within the Communist Party.

Panel Seven: The End of the Cold War

- **Boris Yeltsin:** The first democratically elected leader of the new Russian Federation.
- **George H. W. Bush:** The 41st President of the United States. During his administration, the Cold War officially ended, and his administration oversaw a restructuring of the world.
- **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):** Signed in 1968 by the Soviet Union and the United States, this aimed to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. This became a more serious issue in the post-Cold War era as the Soviet Union broke up.

- **Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START):** Beginning in 1982, the Soviet Union and the United States made an effort to *limit* the number of nuclear weapons in their arsenals. New START, its successor, is in effect until 2026.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO):** This group represents nearly all global trade and is a major way for nations to regulate commerce equitably.
- **International Space Station (ISS):** Build for educational and scientific research, the ISS has also acted as a diplomatic tool, encouraging former adversaries to cooperate in the name of human advancement.