



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 11.9.3**

The Cold War and Containment of Communism

Specific Objective: Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences of the Cold War and containment policy, including the era of McCarthyism, the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, atomic weapons testing and policies, the Vietnam War, and Latin American policy.

Read the summary to answer the questions on the next page.

Origins of the Cold War and the Policy of Containment

- The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as dominant after World War II. The Soviets declared that communism and capitalism were incompatible.
- Faced with Soviet aggression, the United States articulated the policy of containment in 1946. Economic and military measures were necessary to prevent the spread of communism to other countries.
- Both superpowers engaged in a nuclear arms race. The United States threatened to use any means, including nuclear weapons, to halt communist aggressors. A doctrine of mutually assured destruction kept both countries on the brink of nuclear war.

Consequences of the Cold War and the Policy of Containment

- The Truman Doctrine (1947) said the United States would provide aid to countries that were trying to resist communism.
- In response to the Berlin Blockade by the Soviets, the United States and Great Britain airlifted supplies into West Berlin and kept the Soviets from taking over the entire city.
- In the Korean War (1951–1953), communist North Korea invaded the democratic South. U.S. and UN troops contained the communist threat.
- The Korean War increased fear of communist activity at home and abroad. Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy made unsupported accusations against members of government. This practice was known as McCarthyism. The lives of many innocent people were ruined.
- In Cuba, communist dictator Fidel Castro received aid from the USSR. In 1961, President Kennedy approved CIA support for an invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs by Cuban exiles. The invasion was a failure and hurt American prestige. In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis took the two superpowers to the brink of nuclear war for six days. The crisis was averted when both sides made concessions.
- In 1954, President Eisenhower articulated the domino theory—the belief that if one country in Southeast Asia fell to communism, all would fall. American involvement in the region grew into the Vietnam War. In spite of almost 20 years of guerilla war, the United States was unable to stop the spread of communism. The war sharply divided American opinion.
- Atomic weapons testing in western states such as Nevada harmed the environment. In 1963, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to a Limited Nuclear Test Ban treaty that barred nuclear testing in the atmosphere.
- The policy of containment also affected Latin American policy. The United States used the CIA to support anticommunist groups in many countries. Many of the U.S.-supported regimes were undemocratic and used brutal tactics to remain in power.