

Co-existence and Confrontation: 5 Eisenhower's Cold War, 1953–61

POINTS TO CONSIDER

This is a demanding chapter. It surveys a long period of time and a wide range of countries. Consequently there is a lot of factual material here. Read it in sections. Think about how the methods of containment employed by Eisenhower were different from those used by Truman. Then examine the policy of containment region by region. Assess the successes and failures of policy in each region. You might also think about the ethics of US intervention in developing states such as Guatemala and Iran. Read the section on US–Soviet relations carefully and try to account for the tortuous course of superpower relations under Eisenhower. Finally analyse the role of Eisenhower and assess how effective he was as a Cold War leader.

KEY DATES

1953	5 March	Death of Stalin
	17 June	Uprising by workers in East Berlin against East German government
	27 July	Korean armistice
	19 August	Overthrow of Iranian prime minister Muhammad Mossadeq
	8 December	Eisenhower proposed his 'Atoms for Peace' plan to UN General Assembly
1954	January	Chinese communists bombarded Nationalist islands of Quemoy and Matsu
	7 May	French forces were defeated by the Vietminh at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu
	June	CIA intervention in coup against Guatemala's President Guzman
	20 July	Geneva Accords temporarily partitioned Vietnam
	8 September	SEATO treaty was signed
1955	9 May	West Germany was admitted to NATO
	15 May	Austrian State Treaty
	27 October	Geneva Summit
1956	November	Suez crisis
	4 November	Soviet forces entered Budapest to put down Hungarian rising

1957	January	Announcement of Eisenhower Doctrine
	4 October	Launch of <i>Sputnik</i>
1958	14 February	Rapacki Plan for a nuclear-free central Europe
	15 July	US forces landed in Lebanon
	23 August	People's Republic of China resumed bombardment of Nationalist offshore islands
	29 July	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was set up
	27 November	Khrushchev's ultimatum: Western powers must quit Berlin within six months
1959	1 January	Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba
1960	1 May	American U-2 spyplane was shot down over the Soviet Union
	16–19 May	Paris Summit

-Profile-

DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER 1890–1969

Eisenhower, nicknamed 'Ike', was born in Texas but grew up in the Midwest in Kansas. He graduated from West Point in 1915 and embarked on a career as a professional soldier. His military career was undistinguished prior to 1941: he saw no action in World War One and remained at the rank of major from 1920 to 1936. However, he enjoyed a meteoric rise during the Second World War. His talent for planning and organisation gained him rapid promotion. In 1942 he was appointed Commander of US Forces in Europe and directed successful invasions of North Africa (1942), Sicily (1943) and Italy (1943). In 1943 he was named Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and oversaw the D-Day Normandy landings in June 1944.

After the war he served as US Army Chief of Staff and then returned to civilian life only to be recalled by Truman in 1951 as the first Supreme Commander of NATO. The following year he won the Republican presidential nomination and defeated the Democrat Adlai Stevenson in the ensuing presidential election. His homely and populist electioneering style was effective. His supporters sported campaign badges bearing the slogan 'I like Ike'. He became the thirty-fourth president of the United States.



He was re-elected comfortably in 1956, again defeating Stevenson.

The common perception of Eisenhower was of a relaxed, hands-off president content to leave the details of policy-making to subordinates and more interested in improving his golf swing than in leading America. The reality was rather different. Eisenhower had a quick mind and liked to think for himself. The relationship between the new president and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was a close partnership. Ike formulated the objectives of policy and was never as out of touch with the day-to-day business of government as his critics suggested. Ike and Dulles were bound together by a fierce anti-communism. Dulles was a public and vociferous opponent of the Soviet system. Eisenhower's sentiments were better concealed but just as strongly held.

Eisenhower's period in office has often been seen as a time of relative stability in the Cold War. While it is true that the United States and the Soviet Union had learnt to co-exist with each other, there were also moments of high danger under Eisenhower. America threatened the use of nuclear weapons against the People's Republic of China at least three times. Indeed relations between America and China remained very tense throughout Eisenhower's presidency. There were brief thaws in US-Soviet relations in 1955 and 1959, overtaken on the first occasion by the Hungarian uprising and the Suez crisis and on the second by the shooting down of a U-2 spy plane over Soviet territory. Yet Sino- and Soviet-American relations under Eisenhower were as frequently in crisis as in equilibrium.

1 Containment under Eisenhower: The New Look

KEY ISSUES What methods were employed by Eisenhower to circumscribe communism? What were the similarities and differences between Truman's and Eisenhower's strategies of containment?

Eisenhower's arrival in office prompted a re-examination of how the United States should respond to international communism. By the end of 1953 a new strategy of containment had emerged, entitled the 'New Look'. In fact the New Look was not as novel as its name implied. The objectives of containment remained fixed. The fundamental purpose of containment was still to prevent the extension of Soviet communism outside those areas where it was already estab-

lished. As a Marxist-Leninist state, the Soviet Union, according to the Americans, displayed an innate expansionist impulse. If, however, Soviet communism was placed in a straitjacket, the Soviet system would self-destruct and the Soviet empire in eastern Europe would crumble. This was the classic theory of containment as expounded by George Kennan in 1946.

Moreover, the methods of containment employed by the Eisenhower administration were in many respects similar to those used under Truman. The United States continued to build a global web of anti-communist alliances designed to encircle the Soviet Union and check the spread of communism. American military power also remained an important tool of containment. American servicemen were stationed around the globe, either in place to defend vulnerable areas like West Berlin and South Korea against communist encroachment or to be despatched quickly to a scene of communist aggression from one of America's vast network of overseas bases. Huge sums in aid continued to be sent to states resisting communist insurgency, such as Ngo Dinh Diem's government in South Vietnam after 1954.

Even one of the potential differences between Truman's and Eisenhower's national security policies turned out to be a difference in tone rather than substance. In the presidential election campaign of 1952 Dulles criticised the passive posture of the Truman administration and promised 'rollback', in other words the liberation of eastern European countries under Soviet dominion. At one point Eisenhower had to rein in the aggressive Dulles. He endorsed the objective of liberation but emphasised that it must occur by peaceful means only. Yet, in the event, the pledge of liberation proved to be only campaign rhetoric. Under Eisenhower America acknowledged the integrity of the Soviet sphere of influence and no attempt was made to recover by force territory already in the hands of the communists. After the armistice of 1953 the sovereignty of North Korea was respected by the United States and the status quo in Europe remained intact. Rebellions in East Germany in 1953 and Poland and Hungary in 1956 were tacitly encouraged by the Americans but not exploited as an opportunity to challenge the Soviet Union and force the withdrawal of those states from the eastern bloc.

Nevertheless, there were significant differences between Truman's and Eisenhower's strategies of containment. The most important of these was an increased reliance on nuclear weapons under Ike. Indeed, this was at the heart of the New Look. In the event of war with the Soviet Union nuclear weapons were now to be regarded as a weapon of first and not of last resort. A National Security document in 1953 stated, 'The US will consider nuclear weapons to be available for use as other munitions.' Eisenhower put it in simpler terms to a group of Congressional leaders in 1954. Nuclear weapons would allow the United States 'to blow the hell out of them in a hurry if they start

anything' Dulles labelled this approach the doctrine of massive retaliation. He had a clear-sighted view of how the US nuclear arsenal could not only deter communist aggression but also further the goals of US diplomacy. America could threaten the use of nuclear weapons in order to extract concessions from communist adversaries. Yet the fact that the Soviet Union now possessed nuclear weapons of its own made nuclear blackmail a dangerous tactic. Dulles vividly articulated the diplomacy of brinkmanship in an interview with *Life* magazine in 1956: 'The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.'

The central place of nuclear weapons in the New Look presupposed a smaller role for conventional forces. Ike was determined to cut the number of personnel in the American armed services. In this sense the New Look rejected the conclusions of NSC 68, which had envisaged a build-up of both conventional and nuclear forces. Eisenhower believed that the United States could not afford both. As a soldier he had a keen appreciation of the relationship between the means and ends in any conflict. He was committed to victory in the Cold War, but at a price America could afford. The Cold War must be waged within available means. The rationale of the New Look was to



Dulles in the guise of Superman pushes a reluctant Uncle Sam, symbolising the United States, to the brink of nuclear war.

curb the costs of containing Soviet communism. Eisenhower chose the expansion of America's nuclear arsenal over the continued increase in conventional forces as the cheaper and more effective method of combating communism. It was a high technology/low manpower strategy which in a popular phrase of the day represented 'more bang for the buck'.

In two other important respects Eisenhower's policy of containment diverged from Truman's. Truman had used covert operations selectively, but his successor was far more willing to authorise such actions. He was familiar with intelligence operations from his time as a soldier and often referred to the importance of intelligence as a basis for decision-making. The fact that the Director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, was the brother of the Secretary of State also made for a closer relationship between the CIA and the executive than had existed under Truman. Indeed Eisenhower's presidency has been seen as a milestone in the history of the CIA. Both the scale and the frequency of CIA operations grew and Ike regarded undercover action as a routine instrument of foreign policy. Covert actions also had the advantage of being quick, cheap and beyond the scrutiny of Congress.

Ike also regarded negotiation both with the Soviet Union and with the People's Republic of China as a legitimate part of the policy of containment. Within Eisenhower a gut hostility to communism vied with an instinct to act as a peacemaker and improve US-Soviet relations. He was a great believer in personal diplomacy and was gloomy about the future course of the Cold War unless personal initiatives were taken by leaders to reduce tension. In 1953 he confided in his aide Emmett Hughes: 'We are in an armaments race. Where will it lead us? At worst, to atomic warfare. At best, to robbing every people and nation on earth of the fruits of their own toil.' There was a full US-Soviet summit in 1955, a further meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev in 1959 and one abortive summit in 1960. In 1954 Secretary of State Dulles met the Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) to discuss the situation in Vietnam. Negotiations at ambassadorial level between China and the United States continued intermittently for the remainder of Eisenhower's presidency. For much of Truman's presidency, diplomacy of this kind would have been unthinkable. Under Truman the last meeting even at foreign minister level between the superpowers had occurred in 1948.

2 Containment in Practice: The Global Cold War under Eisenhower

KEY ISSUE How was communism contained in Europe?

a) Europe

Europe formed a relatively stable theatre in the Cold War during Eisenhower's administration. Rebellions against communist rule in eastern Europe provided opportunities for American intervention in the region and the loosening of the Soviet bloc. On the other side, Soviet proposals for a nuclear-free central Europe and renewed pressure on the Western powers in Berlin in 1958 threatened to alter the balance of power in Europe. Ultimately, however, the status quo continued and the frontier between the American sphere of influence and the eastern bloc remained unchanged.

The first signs of protest against Soviet rule occurred in East Germany shortly after Stalin's death in June 1953. Workers mounted anti-Soviet demonstrations in the streets of East Berlin and went on general strike. They also demanded better living standards and free elections. The insurrection was put down by Soviet troops and in East Berlin Russian tanks drove protesters off the streets. This was the first test of the promise made by Dulles during his Senate confirmation hearings to bring about 'the liberation of these captive peoples'. In the event the only action taken by the United States was to broadcast the demands of the East German protesters across Germany on the airwaves of the American-sponsored Radio Free Europe.

Events in Hungary in 1956 also exposed the emptiness of Dulles's promise. In October 1956 the reformer Imre Nagy was installed as premier and immediately called for the evacuation of Soviet troops from Hungary and the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact. Free elections were also part of the reformers' manifesto. Briefly it appeared as if this revolution had been successful, yet on 4 November 200,000 Soviet troops and 4,000 tanks entered Budapest, according to the Russians, 'to help the Hungarian people crush the black forces of reaction and counter-revolution'. On that day an estimated 50,000 Hungarians lost their lives. Nagy was replaced by the pro-Soviet Janos Kadar as leader.

Again the Americans did no more than broadcast anti-Soviet propaganda and the demands of the rebels on Radio Free Europe. In the first volume of his presidential memoirs published in 1963, *Mandate for Change*, Eisenhower explained the American position.

1 The Hungarian uprising, from its beginning to its bloody suppression, was an occurrence that inspired in our nation feelings of sympathy and admiration for the rebels, anger and disgust for their Soviet oppressors.

An expedition across neutral Austria, Titoist Yugoslavia or Communist Czechoslovakia, was out of the question. The fact was that Hungary could not be reached by any United Nations or United States units without traversing such territory. Unless the major nations of Europe would, without delay, ally themselves spontaneously with us, we could do nothing. Sending United States troops alone into Hungary through hostile or neutral territory would have involved us in general war. And too, if the United Nations overriding a certain Soviet veto, decided that the military and other resources of member nations should be used to drive the Soviets from Hungary, we would inevitably have a major conflict.

For their part the Russians made two attempts to change the situation in Europe in their favour. The first was the Rapacki Plan (1958), named after Poland's Foreign Minister. The Plan proposed a phased reduction in conventional forces and a nuclear-free zone in central Europe encompassing East and West Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The United States promptly rejected the Plan. The removal of nuclear weapons from West Germany was at odds with the nuclear-based theory of deterrence enshrined in the New Look. Also a nuclear-free West Germany would be without its safety net. It would be exposed to invasion from the east by numerically superior Warsaw Pact ground forces. At the end of 1958 Khrushchev demanded that the Western powers quit Berlin within six months. The United States refused to do so for much the same reasons as in 1948. Ike warned that a Soviet takeover of West Berlin ran the risk of massive retaliation, but said that he would be happy to discuss the whole issue of Berlin in return for the Soviets lifting their ultimatum. This the Soviet Union did and Berlin was one of the matters discussed at the 1959 meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.

The United States encountered difficulties in Europe not only with the Soviet Union but with its own partners in the Western alliance, principally France. In 1954 the French changed their position on West German rearmament. Previously France had agreed to accept West German rearmament inside a European Defence Community (EDC), a European army with a separate identity from NATO. Now, however, the French government rejected the EDC treaty and called for further safeguards to be imposed on West German rearmament. The importance the United States attached to rearming West Germany was illustrated by Dulles's response to the French. He spoke of 'an agonising reappraisal' of America's military commitments in western Europe. The threat was clear: the United States might withdraw its troops from western Europe and leave the region vulnerable to Soviet land armies. Moreover, the western part of the continent might no longer enjoy the protection offered by US nuclear weapons. This was a real threat in 1954, since no west European state had a nuclear deterrent of its own (Britain had possessed an atomic bomb since 1952).

Eventually a solution was brokered by the British Prime Minister,

Anthony Eden. West Germany would be admitted to NATO subject to certain severe restrictions designed to mollify the French: Britain would maintain four divisions and a tactical air force on the continent as a security guarantee to the French; Germany would not be allowed to manufacture atomic, biological or chemical weapons (the so-called ABC); the German armed forces must not exceed 500,000 and would be placed under the command of the NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. In May 1955 West Germany joined NATO. West German membership of NATO was accepted not only by France but by the Soviet Union. The Soviets recognised the West German state during a visit by Chancellor Adenauer to Moscow in 1955. The Soviet Union had finally reconciled itself to the fact that West Germany would be neither neutral nor part of a single German state within the Soviet bloc. Just as the Americans were forced to accept the integrity of the eastern bloc, so the Russians had to acquiesce in the sovereignty of the states belonging to the Western alliance.

b) Asia

KEY ISSUE What methods were employed by the United States to contain communism in Asia?

i) Korea

Under Eisenhower Asia was an altogether more volatile arena in the Cold War than Europe. The first outstanding issue was the resolution of the Korean conflict. During his presidential campaign Eisenhower had announced that he would himself go to Korea and, once in office, he was personally committed to a speedy end to the war. Negotiations for an armistice foundered on the issue of repatriation of North Korean and Chinese prisoners who did not want to return to their native countries. Having agreed to send such prisoners to neutral countries which would decide their fate, the United States and China could not agree on which neutral countries. Ike applied pressure to the Chinese by hinting that the US might use atomic weapons against the Chinese mainland. In July 1953 the two sides agreed an end to hostilities. Eisenhower warned the Chinese that any breach of the terms of the armistice might also bring a nuclear reprisal from the United States. Yet the American resort to nuclear blackmail was not the principal reason for the armistice. Both America and the People's Republic of China were keen to extricate themselves from an expensive and bloody war and the death of Stalin in March 1953 removed an obstacle to the end of hostilities. The party least content with the armistice was Syngman Rhee, whose hopes of a united Korea under his leadership had now been extinguished.

ii) China, Taiwan and the Offshore Islands

Two small island groups lying in the Taiwan Straits between Taiwan

and mainland China, the Quemoy and Matsu islands, were the cause of two major crises in Sino-American relations under Eisenhower. Both Quemoy and Matsu were garrisoned by Nationalist forces and seen by Jiang Jieshi as a platform for a military invasion of the mainland. In 1954 Jiang announced a 'holy war' against Chinese communism and promised an imminent attack. China in return threatened to invade Taiwan. In 1954 a foray against Quemoy and Matsu by Chinese communists was followed by a sustained bombardment of the islands. At the beginning of 1955 the Chinese communists also attacked the Tachen islands, another group of Nationalist-held islands near to Taiwan.

Hitherto relations between Jiang and Washington had been strained. Both Ike and Dulles suspected that Jiang wanted to use US soldiers to invade the Chinese mainland, which would have triggered a full-scale war with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the United States now fully supported Jiang and renewed its commitment to defend Taiwan. The shelling of the Quemoy and Matsu islands led to a mutual defence pact. The Americans promised to defend Taiwan against communist invasion. But in a simultaneous secret agreement Jiang had to accept that any invasion of the mainland must be subject to US approval. Washington had clipped Jiang's wings and lessened the likelihood of a major conflict involving the United States, China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese seizure of the Tachen Islands had two immediate consequences. Firstly Congress passed the Formosa Resolution allowing Eisenhower to take whatever military action he thought was necessary to defend Taiwan, and secondly Eisenhower announced that any move by the Chinese communists against Taiwan would be met by the use of nuclear weapons against a military target on mainland China. At this point the Chinese back-pedalled. The Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai said that China would only free Taiwan by peaceful means. An informal cease-fire now operated in the Taiwan Straits.

In 1958 the cease-fire broke down and the renewed bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu brought China and the United States to the brink of war. Dulles stated that Washington viewed these actions as the first stage of an attack on Taiwan. The Seventh Fleet was ordered into the Taiwan Straits, US forces in the Far East were put onto a war footing and a veiled threat of a nuclear strike against China was again issued. At the same time the Americans offered the Chinese the chance to negotiate, which they accepted. The outcome was the ending of skirmishes in the Taiwan Straits. Dulles now entered into negotiations with Jiang. While he underlined the American pledge to defend Taiwan, he informed Jiang that the United States could in no way support an invasion of the mainland. He also persuaded Jiang to reduce the Nationalist military presence on the Quemoy and Matsu islands.

It is worth asking why America was prepared to risk war with China and the Soviet Union in order to defend the Quemoy and Matsu islands. Under Eisenhower, as under Truman, any instance of communist

aggression was regarded as a test case of America's determination to defend the 'free world'. If the United States did nothing, it would send the wrong signals to anti-communist forces everywhere. Eisenhower firmly believed that to allow the communist Chinese to overrun the offshore islands would lead to a collapse of morale in Taiwan and its surrender to the People's Republic. An important outpost on the Asian perimeter would then disappear. American public and Congressional opinion also demanded a tough posture towards China. The 'China Lobby' was still active and campaigned for the recovery of mainland China. Neither the president nor Dulles was opposed as a matter of principle to negotiations with the Chinese, but the state of American opinion simply did not allow an accommodation with the regime in Beijing. The United States was still tied to a 'Two Chinas' policy, which meant denying diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic and ensuring that China's place both in the United Nations General Assembly and on the UN Security Council was occupied not by the People's Republic but by Taiwan. The 'Two Chinas' policy would continue until 1971.

There is also convincing evidence that Dulles was aware that a firm American stance on the issue of the offshore islands might create cracks in the Sino-Soviet alliance. American pressure on the Chinese would confront the Soviet Union with an awkward choice about whether or not to support its communist ally in Asia. He noted in 1954 that Moscow's failure to support the Chinese over the offshore islands would 'put a serious strain on Soviet-ChiCom relations'. In talks with the Taiwanese Foreign Minister he observed, 'The whole communist domain is overextended. The communist regimes are bound to crack. The leaders will fall out among themselves.' Other matters contributed to the growing rift between Beijing and Moscow, such as ideological differences and the legacy of mistrust created by Stalin's breach of his promise to provide Soviet air cover for Chinese troops in North Korea in 1950. But Mao was disappointed that the Russians were not more supportive on the question of the offshore islands. For his part Khrushchev wanted any confrontation with the United States to occur on his terms and at a time and place of the Soviet Union's choosing. He did not want to challenge the United States on the issue of the future of two tiny island chains in the Taiwan Straits.

iii) Indochina

American policy-makers continued to invest Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) with great strategic importance. Indochina held the key to south-east Asia. Eisenhower employed the well-worn domino theory to justify American intervention in the region. If Indochina fell to the communists, Thailand, Burma and Indonesia might follow. Indochina guarded the entrance to the rice-bowl of south-east Asia, which as a whole was vital to American interests. It was an important location for US military bases, a supplier of raw materials and a marketplace for Japanese goods.

The view that Ho Chi Minh was a Moscow-trained communist had led the Americans to sink \$4 billion in aid into France's war against the Vietminh. The war had reached a critical phase by 1954. The French had chosen Dien Bien Phu in northern Vietnam as the site for a major battle with the Vietminh. The French forces were positioned in a valley while the Vietminh under the command of General Giap occupied the surrounding mountains. At this point the United States considered military intervention. The use of nuclear weapons against the Vietminh was discussed but Eisenhower dismissed it as an ineffective option in the circumstances. The deployment of American troops was also considered, but Ike attached two important conditions to such action. One was Congressional approval, the other was British participation. The message from Congress was 'no more Koreas', while Britain showed no interest in military action. Eisenhower therefore rejected the option of US military intervention. Meanwhile, starved of air supplies and subjected to heavy artillery bombardment, the French surrendered. Their defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 marked the end of the French empire in Indochina.

The French and the Vietminh now opened negotiations in the presence of America and China and concluded the Geneva Accords in 1954. These agreements formally ended hostilities between France and Ho Chi Minh's forces, temporarily divided Vietnam along the 17th parallel and made provisions for national elections to unify the country within two years. Importantly, the United States did not sign the Geneva Accords, but promised not to break the agreements by the use of force. America's response to the Geneva agreement was to build up South Vietnam as a stable non-communist state capable of resisting communist incursion from the north. The Americans wanted South Vietnam to develop along the lines of a second South Korea. A South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was established in September 1954. Its members were the US, France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan. It was modelled on NATO and its purpose was to prevent communist interference in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In reality, though, it was a pale imitation of NATO. Two of the region's major powers, India and Indonesia, refused to join. The circumstances under which SEATO members would use military force against an aggressor in the region were also unclear.

Within South Vietnam the United States removed the French-backed Bao Dai and installed their own candidate, Ngo Dinh Diem, as president. Some Americans doubted Diem's credentials as a rallying point for non-communist nationalism. He had collaborated with the Japanese during the war and was a Roman Catholic in a country where 90 per cent of the population were Buddhists. The Americans also opened a military mission in South Vietnam in 1954 designed to advise the South Vietnamese on methods of resisting communist infiltration from the north. Thus began America's long military

commitment to the defence of South Vietnam. Two years later Eisenhower decided that South Vietnam would not participate in the nationwide elections agreed at Geneva on the grounds that Ho would have won such elections and overseen the creation of a united communist Vietnam. It has been estimated that Ho would have gained about 80 per cent of the vote in 1956.

Yet the decision not to hold elections did not secure South Vietnam against communism. To the north Ho Chi Minh consolidated his regime, while in the south in the late 1950s small bands of communists (Vietcong) formed themselves into military units and began to conduct guerrilla warfare against Diem's government. In 1960 they established a political arm, the National Liberation Front (NLF). They were supported by segments of the local population and by North Vietnam, which in 1959 had publicly affirmed its commitment to unite Vietnam by whatever means possible. Guerrilla warfare in the south was part of Ho's longer-term project to reunify the country.

The situation in adjacent Laos was also a source of concern in Washington. The pro-Western government of Laos created with the assistance of the CIA in 1959 was encountering opposition from the Pathet Lao, an indigenous communist group. There was evidence that Laos was being used as a conduit for supplies from North Vietnam to communist guerrillas in the south. By 1961 policy makers in Washington were more worried about the fate of Laos than about that of Vietnam. Eisenhower's successors would discover that communism in Indochina was a problem that would not go away.

c) The Developing World

KEY ISSUE How did America attempt to contain communism in new theatres of the Cold War in the developing world?

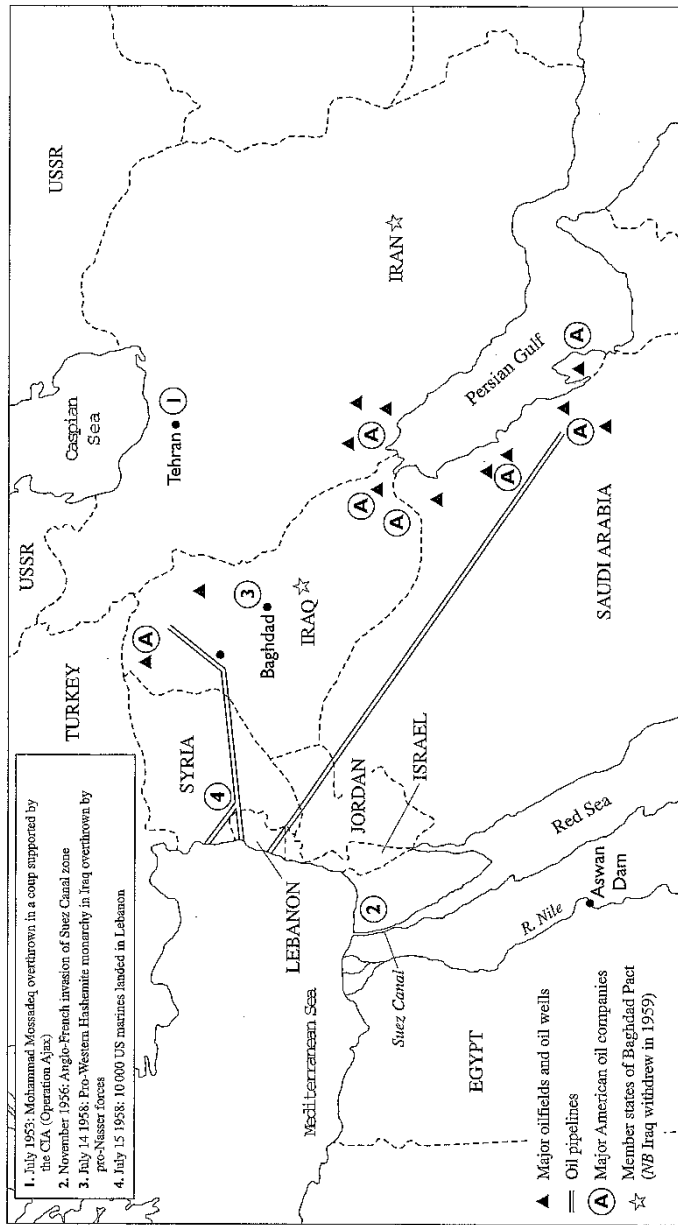
The global character of the Cold War in the 1950s was underlined by its intrusion into new areas of the world. The less developed countries became an important new theatre in the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The dissolution of the old European empires created a host of new nation states and potential allies for the two superpowers. Each competed with the other to recruit these new states into their alliance systems. Post-Stalinist Soviet diplomacy was more flexible and innovative and Russian leaders enticed emerging nations with offers of substantial economic and military aid. Decolonisation represented both an opportunity and a threat to the United States. America proved generally successful in drawing newly independent nation states into its orbit, but communism proved better placed to ride the tide of nationalism across those parts of the developing world which were still under colonial rule.

i) The Middle East

The broad outlines of American policy in the Middle East were to remain on friendly terms with the Arab states, minimise Soviet influence and maintain oil supplies to the West. At one level the United States had always seen the Cold War as a battle for control of vital material resources and thus the containment of communist power in an oil-rich region such as the Middle East was a key policy objective. Yet the projection of American influence in the Middle East was not an easy matter. Anti-American feelings ran deep in the region for two principal reasons. The post-war Middle East was in the grip of nationalism and America was seen as an ally of the old colonial powers in the region, Britain and France. In addition the fact that the United States had sponsored the creation of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948 provoked Arab hostility. No Arab state had yet recognised Israel.

The first attempt to contain communism in the Middle East occurred in Iran in 1953. The instrument of containment was the CIA in what was the first major undercover operation of Eisenhower's presidency. In 1951 the Shah of Iran in response to public pressure had appointed the nationalist Mohammad Mossadeq as prime minister. One of Mossadeq's first actions was to regain control of a national resource by nationalising the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which was half-owned by Britain. Britain and the United States then led a boycott of Iranian oil on the world market. The Americans were worried about Mossadeq's links with the Iranian communist party, the Tudeh. The British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, reported that Eisenhower was obsessed by the fear of a communist Iran. In fact Mossadeq was not a communist, but the economic problems triggered by falling revenues from oil sales had dented his popularity and forced him into a closer partnership with the Tudeh in the Iranian parliament (*Majlis*).

In July 1953 Mossadeq appealed to the United States for aid, but the Americans had already decided to overthrow him in a plan code-named Operation Ajax. The royalist General Zahedi was waiting in the wings to replace him. Washington now secured the Shah's support for the removal of Mossadeq, but initially the plan backfired. Mossadeq ignored the Shah's decree dismissing him from office and a political crisis ensued. The Shah fled his country in panic, Mossadeq dissolved the *Majlis* and turned to Moscow for help. CIA agents now exploited the situation by orchestrating fake communist demonstrations on the streets of the Iranian capital Tehran, aimed at arousing fears of a communist takeover. They then mounted massive counter-demonstrations in favour of the Shah. American money was paid to street mobs who marched into the centre of Tehran and seized key government buildings. Nine hours of fighting followed in which soldiers loyal to Mossadeq were overcome. Mossadeq himself quit office, General Zahedi became the new Prime Minister and the Shah returned to Iran. Mossadeq had been unpopular with sections of the



The Cold War in the Middle East under Eisenhower

Iranian public, but there is no doubt that intervention by the CIA was partly responsible for his downfall. The CIA had participated in what amounted to a coup.

In the short term the results were favourable to the United States. Firstly, US oil companies acquired a stake in the distribution of Iranian oil. Secondly, Iran was now clearly aligned with the United States. Iran was of great geopolitical importance: it shared an extensive border with the Soviet Union and provided a northern entrance to the oilfields of the Middle East. Both the Shah of Iran and the new Prime Minister were now firmly pro-American. The alliance was subsequently primed by large amounts of American economic and military aid.

The Baghdad Pact was a further measure designed to exclude Soviet influence from the Middle East. It was formed in 1955 and its original members were Britain and Iraq, joined later by Iran and Pakistan. After 1959 it was known as the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). For the British the Pact was a means of maintaining their influence in the Middle East and their military bases in Iraq. The United States supported but did not join the Pact, occupying only observer status. The Americans feared that membership of the Pact might antagonise other Arab states, such as Egypt, and push those states closer to Moscow. Nevertheless, the Americans saw the Pact as the Middle Eastern link in the chain of anti-communist alliances which emerged in the 1940s and 1950s. A collection of friendly states on the southern flank of the Soviet Union grouped together in a security pact under British and American auspices was part of the global strategy of containment.

Egypt was the scene of the greatest Cold War crisis in the Middle East under Eisenhower. The Egyptian leader was President Nasser. He was a reformer, a moderniser and above all a nationalist. His ultimate ambition was a pan-Arab coalition of states under the leadership of Egypt. The construction of the Aswan Dam on the River Nile was part of his programme of modernisation. The project would generate hydro-electric power and reclaim fertile cotton-growing land. Nasser played off the two superpowers against each other in an attempt to secure aid for Egyptian economic development. In 1955 he received a shipment of arms from the Soviet bloc. In order to avert an alignment between Egypt and the Soviet Union, the United States offered to part-finance the construction of the Aswan Dam. However, Nasser did not entirely sever his ties with the communist world and, when he recognised the People's Republic of China in 1956, the United States cancelled economic aid to Egypt. Nasser aimed to make up for the shortfall in revenue by nationalising the British-owned Suez Canal Company.

Nasser's action brought Anglo-Egyptian relations to the verge of breakdown. France sided with Britain and was keen to bring Nasser down since he was supplying aid to Algerian nationalists fighting

against the French in a bloody war of independence. The response of the United States was to propose an international agreement governing use of the Canal. But the commitment of Britain and France to negotiations was always half-hearted and both were secretly preparing a military operation with Israel to regain the Suez Canal zone. The first military action occurred when Israel invaded the Sinai desert. This was followed by the British bombing of Egyptian airfields and the dropping of British and French paratroops into the Suez Canal zone on 5 November. The Soviet Union immediately branded Britain, France and Israel as aggressors and threatened to intervene militarily in defence of Egypt. At the same time Moscow contacted Washington with a view to a joint US-Soviet military operation against Britain and France. Eisenhower rejected this proposal. He could not side with the Soviet Union against America's allies. The military intervention of both superpowers also risked world war. Nevertheless, he condemned the whole Anglo-French operation. The United States sponsored a resolution in the United Nations, supported by the Soviet Union, for an immediate cease-fire. Under severe diplomatic pressure from the United States, the British, French and Israeli forces withdrew. Eisenhower used America's financial muscle to force a British retreat. In support of Egypt, some Arab states had cut oil supplies to Britain. A run on sterling had followed and Ike refused to extend to Britain the dollar credits it needed to purchase oil on the international market. The Anglo-French attempt to recover the Suez Canal zone by force behind the smokescreen of an Israeli invasion of Egypt had failed and the Canal remained under Egypt's control.

Eisenhower opposed the British and French decision to use force for a number of reasons. He was furious at the attempt by the two countries to act without the knowledge of the United States. He also calculated that US military intervention on the side of Israel and two colonial powers would have destroyed American efforts to win friends and cement alliances in the Arab world, in addition to inviting the risk of Soviet military action and igniting a major conflict. In the second volume of his presidential memoirs, *Waging Peace* (1965), he provides a further clue to his thinking.

1 At nine o'clock that morning a meeting began with an intelligence review. 'The occurrences in Hungary are a miracle. They have improved that a popular revolt can't occur in the face of modern weapons. Eighty percent of the Hungarian army has defected. Except in Budapest, 5 even the Soviet troops have shown no stomach for shooting down Hungarians.' The problem in Hungary, he [Foster Dulles] concluded, was the lack of a strong guiding authority for the rebels; Imre Nagy was failing and the rebels were demanding that he resign.

Turning to the Middle East, Foster Dulles reviewed the history of 10 recent weeks ... 'It is nothing less than tragic that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long hoped-for

victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe, we should be forced to choose between following in the footsteps of Anglo-French colonialism in Asia and Africa, or splitting our course away from their course. 15 Yet this decision must be made in a mere matter of hours'.

We could not permit the Soviet Union to seize the leadership in the struggle against the use of force in the Middle East and thus win the confidence of the new independent nations of the world.

The Suez crisis had several important and long-lasting effects on American policy. A Soviet-Egyptian alliance emerged in the aftermath of Suez. The actions of Britain and France pushed Nasser away from the Western powers and towards Moscow. Nasser's ties to Moscow aroused new fears about the penetration of Soviet power into the Middle East. The response was the Eisenhower Doctrine announced in January 1957. Congress passed a resolution granting the President powers to send economic or military aid to any Middle Eastern state seeking assistance against 'overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism'. Nasser's stock in the Arab world was high after Suez and pro-Nasser demonstrations occurred in a number of Arab countries. Because of Nasser's alliance with the Soviet Union some of these were interpreted by the United States as instances of support for communism.

The Eisenhower Doctrine was first invoked in 1957. The King of Jordan feared a coup by pro-Nasser forces within his country and appealed to the United States for help. The US Sixth Fleet moved into the eastern Mediterranean and \$10 million in aid was sent to Jordan. The following year saw the first post-war American military intervention in the Middle East when 10,000 marines landed on the beaches of Lebanon in July. The operation was prompted by the apparent growth of Nasser's influence in the region. Inevitably Washington saw the hand of Moscow behind such developments. A new United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) had been formed in 1958 and in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, supporters of Nasser had been protesting against the country's President, Camille Chamoun. Then the pro-Western Hashemite monarchy in Iraq was overthrown in a left-wing coup. The landings in Lebanon could have caused a Cold War crisis. However, in the event, the Soviet Union limited its actions to diplomatic protests and the US marines left in October after the election of a new president defused anti-government protests. The United States also recognised the new regime in Iraq, even though it had withdrawn from the Baghdad Pact. The Americans were satisfied that it was not pro-Soviet and that the Russians had played no part in the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy.

American policy in the Middle East under Eisenhower was not an unqualified success. Admittedly the interests of US oil companies had been safeguarded and Western access to oil reserves maintained. Communism had made few advances in the region, but this was due

to its limited appeal to the peoples of the Middle East rather than to American actions. Once again the Americans had confused nationalism with communism. Nasser was not a communist and pursued his own nationalist agenda, using Soviet funds to raise his prestige and build Egypt as a regional power. The Baghdad Pact was a weak security organisation. Divisions among Arab states, hostility to the Western powers and the withdrawal of Iraq in 1959 meant that it could never function properly as an anti-Soviet military alliance along the lines of NATO. Israel and some of the smaller Arab states like Lebanon and Jordan may have been US allies, but the hostility of other countries handicapped American efforts to forge alliances in a region which had emerged as a vital area in the Cold War.

ii) Central America and the Caribbean

The United States had always viewed Latin America and the Caribbean as its backyard. It was an axiom of US policy that communist states must not be allowed to establish themselves so close to America's own borders. Significantly, the first post-war security treaty negotiated by the United States was the Rio Pact in 1947 which stated that an attack on any one country in the Americas would be treated as an attack on all. In 1948 the Organisation of American States (OAS) was formed as the political arm of the Rio Pact. Its charter stipulated that international communism was inconsistent with the 'concept of American freedom'. Both the OAS and the Rio Pact were American-inspired devices to exclude communism from the Western hemisphere.

In 1953 a potential communist threat was identified in Guatemala. The country's president Jacobo Arbenz Guzman had been elected in 1951. Guatemala was a poor country in which 50 per cent of the population lived off only 3 per cent of the land and one of Arbenz's priorities was land reform. In 1953 he seized unused land owned by the US United Fruit Company. The already suspicious Eisenhower administration saw the seizure of US assets as the prelude to a communist reform programme. The US ambassador's report to Eisenhower after a meeting with Arbenz gives a flavour of the almost hysterical anti-communism of some American policy makers in this period.

- 1 It seemed to me that the man thought like a communist, and if not actually one, would do until one came along. I so reported to Secretary Dulles and I expressed the view that unless the communist influences in Guatemala were counteracted, Guatemala would within six months fall completely under Communist control.

There were a smattering of communists in the trade unions and Ministry of Education but only four in the Guatemalan parliament. Arbenz himself was not a communist, nor was he in receipt of aid from Moscow. However, Eisenhower believed that there was sufficient evidence to authorise a CIA plan to overthrow him, Operation PB

Success. The man chosen to lead the coup was Castillo Armas, a staunch anti-communist. The CIA supplied him with funds, mercenaries and a base in neighbouring Honduras. Arbenz now attempted to strengthen his position by purchasing a small amount of arms from the Soviet bloc, further proof to the Americans of his communist inclinations.

Armas invaded Guatemala with 150 men in June 1954 and at a crucial juncture Eisenhower agreed to supply him with two planes flown by US pilots. The subsequent bombing of civilian targets led to a collapse of popular support for Arbenz and the defection of his armed forces. He fled to Mexico and after a short interval Armas became president. Armas had suffered only one casualty but had ordered the massacre of hundreds of political opponents during the coup. Once again a covert CIA operation had deposed a foreign government suspected of links with the Soviet Union and installed a pro-American regime. An anti-communist military dictator served American interests better than a liberal reformer.

The spectre of communism loomed even closer to home when in 1959 Fidel Castro assumed the leadership of the island of Cuba which was only 90 miles from the US mainland. The United States had controlled Cuba since the Spanish-American war of 1898. Since 1934 (apart from the period 1944 to 1952) the island had been ruled by General Fulgencio Batista, an American-sponsored military dictator. Under Batista Cuba was tied closely to the United States both politically and economically. The island was a playground for rich American tourists and most of Cuba's assets were owned by US corporations. In 1956 the forces of the 26th July Movement under the leadership of the Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro landed on Cuba in an attempt to overthrow Batista. They almost met with immediate defeat, but they retreated into the mountains and established a base of support among the poor Cuban peasantry. By 1958 they were winning their war against government forces and on New Year's Day 1959 Castro triumphantly entered the Cuban capital, Havana.

Like Arbenz in Guatemala, Castro quickly initiated a programme of land redistribution. On a visit to the United States he was enthusiastically received and met Vice-President Richard Nixon, who concluded that the revolutionary was not an outright communist. Indeed, most historians believe that Castro only became a Marxist at some point in 1960 or 1961. Nevertheless, Castro's confiscation of US assets on the island and his recognition of communist China aroused American fears that he might become Moscow's newest ally in the developing world. Castro also signed trade agreements with the Soviet Union. Traditionally America had bought Cuba's sugar crop but the Soviet Union now opened its market to Cuban sugar in return for exporting oil and manufactured goods to Cuba. Eisenhower responded with an embargo on Cuban sugar imports and instructed the CIA to train Cuban exiles in Guatemala for an invasion of the

island. Castro continued to seize US assets in Cuba and the United States now blocked all trade with Cuba except for a few essential items. In January 1961 the two countries broke off diplomatic relations. The situation in Cuba was one of the difficult problems bequeathed by Eisenhower to his successor, John F. Kennedy, and within two years the small island in the Caribbean would be the scene of the most dangerous US–Soviet confrontation of the Cold War.

3 US–Soviet Relations under Eisenhower

KEY ISSUE How and why were US–Soviet relations volatile during Eisenhower's presidency?

Eisenhower's arrival in the White House and Stalin's death in 1953 produced new Cold War leaders. Yet new leaderships in Washington and Moscow did not bring about a complete change in US–Soviet relations. Eisenhower and Dulles shared the deep anti-communism of their generation. Cold War attitudes meant that both men found it hard to envisage the Soviet Union as a constructive partner in negotiations. Events on the ground also made a diplomatic breakthrough unlikely. American and Chinese soldiers were killing each other in Korea until July 1953. Eisenhower had to keep an eye on Congress too. Senator McCarthy and his supporters were still riding high (see Chapter 7) and any overture to Moscow would have left him vulnerable to accusations of being soft on communism and poisoned relations with both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The nature of the collective leadership which had succeeded Stalin also made diplomacy difficult. The two leading figures in the Soviet government, Nikita Khrushchev and Georgi Malenkov, were engaged in a power struggle and it was often difficult to know who held the reins of power. It was not until 1955 that Khrushchev emerged as the dominant figure within the Soviet leadership.

One early diplomatic initiative by Eisenhower came to nothing. At the United Nations in 1953 he put forward his 'Atoms for Peace' Plan. He proposed that the major powers should deposit a portion of their nuclear stockpiles in a bank of nuclear materials supervised by the UN. The material would then be used for the peaceful generation of nuclear energy. The Soviets rejected the plan as a diversionary tactic designed to thwart their own programme of harnessing nuclear energy to military ends. Nevertheless, there were signs of a more conciliatory approach to Cold War problems on the part of the Soviet Union. The post-Stalin Soviet Union was a different kind of enemy. The Soviets put pressure on Kim Il Sung to agree to an armistice in Korea in 1953 and persuaded Ho Chi Minh at the Geneva Conference in 1954 to end the war with France and accept the partition of Vietnam as the price of peace. In 1955 the Soviet Union recognised

West Germany and in the following year abolished the Cominform. Khrushchev suggested that relations between capitalist and communist states should proceed in a context of 'peaceful co-existence'. He also denounced the crimes of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. In addition to pursuing a more constructive foreign policy, Russian leaders were relying less on brutality and terror at home.

Agreement on the future of Austria was a further example of improving Soviet–American relations. Like Germany, Austria had been divided into four occupation zones in 1945. All four powers now agreed to withdraw their occupying forces and unify Austria in return for Austrian neutrality. Austria regained its sovereignty and took its place as a united and neutral state in central Europe. The agreement was initialled in May 1955 and Dulles and the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov appeared together on a balcony in Vienna. The Austrian State Treaty cleared the way for the Geneva summit later in the same year. Eisenhower sat down with Khrushchev and Bulganin in the first meeting between American and Soviet heads of state since the Potsdam Conference in 1945. Yet little of substance was achieved at the summit and Eisenhower's one concrete proposal was rebuffed. On the last day of the summit he delivered his 'Open Skies' proposal whereby the Soviets and Americans would exchange a blueprint of their military installations and allow mutual aerial inspection of weapons sites. Khrushchev dismissed the plan as a cover for US espionage. There was some truth in this allegation. Since 1954 the Americans had been developing the U-2 reconnaissance plane which was far superior to anything possessed by the Soviet Union. 'Open Skies' would have allowed U-2s to overfly the Soviet Union openly under international agreement. In spite of the absence of tangible results, the Geneva Summit provided an opportunity for dialogue and created a climate of goodwill. There was talk of a 'spirit of Geneva' and at evening parties diplomats joked about 'co-existence cocktails – you know, vodka and Coke'.

The Hungarian rising and the Suez crisis soon dissipated the 'spirit of Geneva'. Tension between Moscow and Washington was accompanied by heightened fears of the Soviet threat within the United States. On October 4 1957 a Soviet R-7 rocket launched the first ever satellite into space. It had been given the ideologically correct name of *Sputnik* (Fellow Traveller). Travelling at 18,000 miles per hour, it emitted an electronic signal and circled the earth every 92 minutes. *Sputnik* caused panic in the United States. Politicians and media fuelled the sense of public unease. There was talk of America losing the space race. Space was a new frontier in the Cold War. It both captured the popular imagination and aroused fears of a new form of the Soviet threat. The Soviets could use space as a platform for launching nuclear missiles against the United States. America had lost its traditional immunity from attack. Fortress America could now be breached. Lyndon Johnson chaired a Senate Subcommittee on

Preparedness. In November 1957 he announced dramatically, 'We meet today in the atmosphere of another Pearl Harbor. We are in a race for survival and intend to win that race.' The governor of Michigan caught the prevailing mood.

Oh little *Sputnik*
With made-in-Moscow beep,
You tell the world it's a Commie sky
And Uncle Sam's asleep.

Democrat politicians and the media warned of a 'missile gap.' If Soviet missiles could carry the payload of a space satellite, then they could deliver warheads to the United States. Soviet missiles must be better and more numerous than American missiles. The alleged 'missile gap' was blamed on a 'technology gap'. Universities and industry were not training enough engineers and scientists. Faltering public confidence in the administration was compounded by events. On November 25 1957 Ike suffered a stroke – his third bout of ill health in two years. The ageing and ailing president somehow symbolised US defeat in the arms race. In December a public relations disaster ensued. An attempt at Cape Canaveral in Florida to launch an American satellite into space on the back of a Vanguard rocket failed. The headline 'Oh What a Flopnik' in the British *Daily Herald* was typical of media reporting of the event. Coincidentally a special commission appointed by Eisenhower to examine America's security needs delivered its findings shortly after the launch of *Sputnik*. The Gaither Report recommended the building of fallout shelters and an increase of \$44 billion in defence spending over five years. The newspapers trumpeted the Gaither Report's recommendations and editorialised about the new vulnerability of the United States.

The outcry over *Sputnik* was a testing time for Eisenhower. His public approval ratings slumped and political opponents accused him of complacency. His response was measured. He did do something to alleviate public anxiety in the aftermath of *Sputnik*. He set up the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) in 1958 to oversee missile development and space exploration. The National Defence Education Act was also passed in 1958. It released \$1 billion of funds over seven years to finance loans, grant and fellowships for students majoring in science, engineering and mathematics. Yet he rejected the Gaither Report's proposal to bolster defence spending on grounds of cost and dismissed talk of a 'missile gap'. He knew from U-2 photographs taken since 1956 that the missile deficit was a myth. In reality the 'missile gap' favoured the United States. But he could not reveal his sources without compromising the U-2 flights and publicly admitting that the United States was engaged in aerial espionage.

While the Soviets had produced the world's first ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile), the United States possessed 42 ICBMs at the end of 1960 and 224 by the end of 1961. During the same period

the Soviet Union's ICBM stockpile remained constant at four R-7s. American missiles were superior in quality too. In 1960 the first solid-fuel nuclear missile, Polaris, was successfully tested. The warheads on solid-fuel nuclear missiles could be launched immediately, while the liquid-fuel systems used by the Soviets were slow and highly unstable. In other respects also the balance of advantage lay with the United States. In the absence of missiles in large numbers until 1962, the Soviets only had a small fleet of long-range Bison bombers to deliver nuclear weapons, whereas Strategic Air Command (SAC), the strategic bombing arm of the US armed forces, had hundreds of long-range bombers. American forays into space may have lacked the propaganda value of *Sputnik* but were just as important. In January 1958 the US Army placed its first satellite, *Explorer 1*, in space and in August 1960 *Discoverer* followed. Satellites revolutionised intelligence-gathering. The first roll of film delivered by *Discoverer* covered over one million square miles of Soviet territory. Those pictures alone delivered more data than four years of U-2 flights over the Soviet Union.

Confident in US nuclear superiority, Eisenhower showed a renewed commitment to negotiating with the Soviet Union in the closing period of his presidency. He knew that the United States could bargain from a position of strength. The first substantive issue on which he hoped for progress was a ban on the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. America's advantage in this field meant that he could safely contemplate a moratorium on testing. America ceased testing in October 1958 and the Soviets immediately followed suit. The prospects for a formal test ban treaty looked good. Soviet-American relations worsened temporarily when Khrushchev issued an ultimatum giving the Americans six months to leave Berlin, but Eisenhower ignored the ultimatum and kept lines of communication to Moscow open. His suggestion of further talks on the issues of Berlin and a test ban led to an agreement by Eisenhower and Khrushchev to exchange visits. The Soviet leader visited the United States briefly in September 1959. As unpredictable as ever, Khrushchev emphasised the importance of friendship while at the same time issuing the boast, 'We will bury you.' Three days spent by Khrushchev with Eisenhower at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland, produced reports of the 'spirit of Camp David'. Plans were laid for a summit in Paris in May 1960 to be followed by a visit to the Soviet Union by Eisenhower. Everything seemed set fair.

Yet the Paris summit collapsed on the first day. On 1 May 1960 a U-2 flown by Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union. U-2 reconnaissance had been going on since 1956. The Soviets knew about the flights but could do nothing about them, since the U-2s flew at an altitude which was beyond the range of Soviet fighters and ground-to-air missiles. On three occasions the Soviet Union had protested privately to Washington but the flights continued. Improved

anti-aircraft missiles had enabled the Soviets finally to destroy a U-2. Miraculously Powers himself had ejected and had been captured uninjured. He confessed the nature of his mission. Khrushchev now set a trap for the Americans. He announced only that an American plane had been shot down in Soviet airspace. The Eisenhower administration, unwilling to admit publicly that the United States was spying on the Soviet Union from the air, then issued a prepared cover story that the plane was a weather reconnaissance aircraft which had lost its way. Officials assumed that Powers had been killed and that there would be scarcely any evidence of his mission. The Soviets then produced Powers and exposed the American version of events as the lie it was, so scoring a propaganda victory. Eisenhower then told the full story, justifying aerial surveillance as a 'distasteful but vital necessity'.

Both leaders turned up in Paris. Khrushchev demanded that Eisenhower condemn U-2 flights and punish those responsible for them. He also cancelled the invitation to the American President to visit the Soviet Union. Eisenhower rejected Khrushchev's demands and agreed only to suspend U-2 flights. The meeting broke up in acrimony. The U-2 incident had ruined the summit, prevented further progress on the key issues of Berlin and a test ban and plunged US-Soviet relations to their lowest point under Eisenhower.

One puzzling issue remains: why did Eisenhower authorise the flight at such a delicate moment in East-West relations? American historian Michael Beschloss writing in 1986 offers the following account of the decision-making process behind the flight.

1 [Allen] Dulles and Bissell [Director of U-2 programme] appealed for another mission. They wished to get a fresh look at Soviet military-industrial landmarks such as Sverdlovsk. But the most vital target was
5 six hundred miles north of Moscow at Plesetsk. The April 9 flight had found evidence that the first operational ICBMs were being deployed there. Another run would reveal Soviet progress. Bissell argued that if they waited they might miss the chance to see the missiles under construction. In the northern latitudes the sun's angle was judged critical for U-2 photography. It was argued that a mission over Plesetsk could
10 only be flown effectively from April through July. If they waited until July and the weather was poor, the U-2 might be barred from taking clear pictures of Plesetsk until April 1961.

The president was eager to build a lasting detente and knew how each incursion provoked the Russians. Still Khrushchev had not com-
15 plained of the April flight and had not been able to knock it down. Perhaps it was caution enough to close down the programme for the weeks immediately before the Paris conference. Thus Eisenhower sent the U-2 into the Soviet Union one more time.

Eisenhower himself recalled the decision in the second volume of his memoirs *Waging Peace* (1963).

1 We knew that on a number of occasions Soviet fighters scrambled from nearby air bases to attempt interception, but they could never come close enough to damage a U-2. However, I said that while I wholeheartedly approved continuation of the programme, I was convinced in
5 the event of accident we must be prepared for a storm of protest. But, with a record of successful flights behind us, the intelligence people became more and more confident that the outcome of each future venture was almost a certainty. Furthermore, the information obtained was important. So when a spring programme for 1960 was proposed, I again
10 approved.

4 Eisenhower and the Cold War: An Assessment

KEY ISSUE How successful was Eisenhower as a Cold War leader?

Eisenhower has emerged from recent historiography with an enhanced reputation. Many historians see him as America's finest post-war president and have awarded him high marks for his conduct of foreign policy in the Cold War. In many areas of the world communism was successfully contained. Western Europe, an area vital to the United States, offered a secure frontier against communism. The United States had enlisted West Germany into NATO and its firm stance on the issue of Berlin had prevented the Soviets driving the Western powers out of the city. In spite of differences with Britain and France, the US-led alliance structure in Europe remained intact. In East Asia the doctrine of massive retaliation had helped to deter a Chinese takeover of the Quemoy and Matsu islands and a possible invasion of Taiwan. Nor had there been a significant increase in communist influence on the periphery. In the Middle East America found it difficult to recruit allies among nationalist Arab states and Moscow's wooing of Nasser showed that the Soviet Union was a serious competitor for the allegiance of developing nations, but Lebanon and Jordan were US allies in the region in addition to the Jewish state of Israel and communism had made few significant advances. The CIA-inspired coup in 1953 had also ensured a friendly Iran. Ike's management of the Suez crisis possibly showed him at his most statesmanlike. His opposition to the use of force avoided a major split with Arab states and potential war with the Soviet Union. His response was consistent with his policy of avoiding direct military intervention wherever possible. Only once, in the Lebanon, did he send US armed forces into action during his presidency. Elsewhere on the periphery CIA action in Guatemala eliminated a perceived communist threat.

Eisenhower also deserves some credit for controlling the costs of the Cold War. Between 1953 and 1959 he reduced the size of the US Army by 671,000, and total defence spending in his first term fell from \$50.4 billion in 1953 to \$40.3 billion in 1959. Military spending

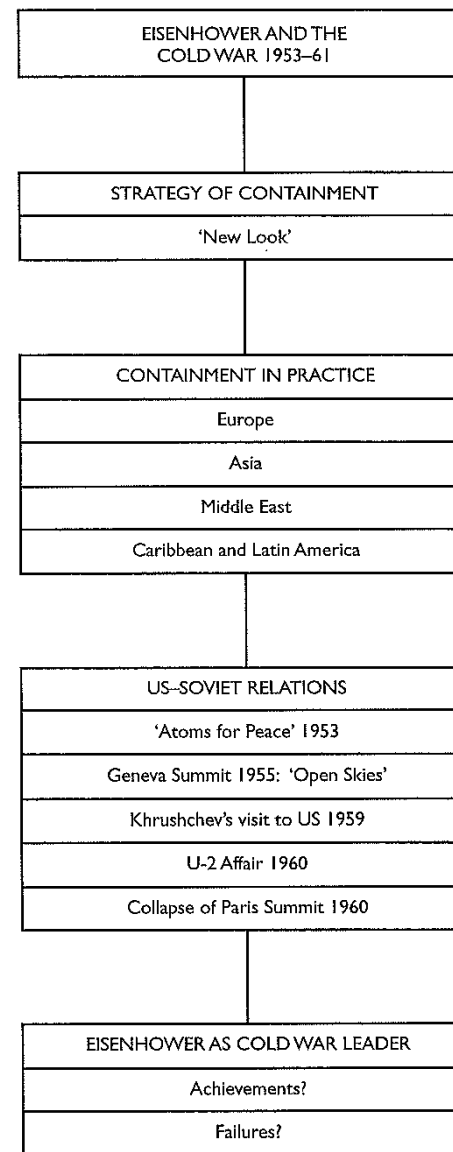
rose to \$46.6 billion in 1960, but Eisenhower steadfastly refused the massive increases demanded by the public and political opponents alike in the late 1950s, while maintaining American nuclear superiority. The same strategic superiority only reinforced his genuine commitment to negotiations with the Soviet Union. His diplomacy ultimately failed, but Soviet–American relations were often warmer under Eisenhower than they had been in any previous phase of the Cold War.

On the debit side, the Eisenhower administration's policy in Indochina was a failure. The decision not to participate in elections in 1956 suggested that the United States supported the principle of free elections only so long as the likely victors were not going to be communists. President Diem was a corrupt and repressive ruler. His regime did not command the support of substantial sections of the South Vietnamese population; nor was it capable of resisting communist insurgency. The government installed by the Americans in neighbouring Laos proved equally vulnerable to internal communist opposition.

While policy-makers at the time believed that CIA actions in Iran and Guatemala pre-empted the entry of those states into the Soviet orbit, the verdict of historians has been harsher. The overthrow of Mossadeq and Arbenz rested on the false assumption that nationalist and reforming leaders in the world's emerging nations were likely to be communist fellow travellers. The coups in both countries have been seen as among the worst examples of American neo-imperialism in the Cold War era. Arguably Ike's reliance on covert CIA operations made the agency too powerful, unaccountable not only to Congress but to the President himself. Unknown to Eisenhower the CIA was laying plans for the assassination of Castro and other communist leaders in 1960. Probably Eisenhower's greatest failure occurred in the last year of his presidency. His authorisation of a U-2 flight on the eve of the Paris summit was a major error of judgement and destroyed his cherished ambition of achieving a permanent thaw between Moscow and Washington. Indeed Eisenhower left his young successor, John Kennedy, a difficult legacy: unresolved problems in Laos, Vietnam and Cuba and a crisis in US–Soviet relations. It would not take the inexperienced Kennedy long to find out just how problematic his inheritance was.

Summary Diagram

Co-existence and Confrontation: Eisenhower's Cold War 1953–61



Working on Chapter 5

Use the end-of-chapter summary diagram and the chapter headings as the basis for your notes. When you start making notes on the chapter, approach the material with the following question in mind. What was the purpose of the 'New Look'? It might then be a good idea to make a table of the similarities and differences between Truman's and Eisenhower's policies of containment. Make sure that your notes cover how containment was applied in practice under Eisenhower. Consider each of the major regions of the world separately. You might also organise the information on each region into the successes and failures of the policy of containment. In this way you will avoid a mass of detail and your notes will have an analytical framework. Next you should examine Eisenhower's record in the field of US–Soviet relations. Once again you might wish to distinguish between his successes and his failures. At the end of your notes you should compile an assessment of Eisenhower, citing his strengths and weaknesses as a Cold War leader. Such an assessment should reflect your own opinion and attempt to measure what Eisenhower achieved against what his aims were.

Answering structured and essay questions on Chapter 5

Here are several examples of structured questions on US policy in the Cold War under Eisenhower.

1. 'The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.' (Extract from an interview between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and reporter James Shepley, *Life* magazine, 1956)
 - a) Use the source and your own knowledge to explain the term 'to go to the brink'. (3 marks)
 - b) Where and when did the United States threaten to use nuclear weapons during Eisenhower's presidency? (7 marks)
 - c) How far and why was the role of nuclear weapons different in Eisenhower's and Truman's strategies of containment? (10 marks)
2. | Khrushchev: The President referred to Open Skies. I heard about Open Skies in Geneva in 1955. We declared then that we were opposed to it and I can repeat it now. We don't understand what devil pushed you into doing this provocative act to us just before the
5 Conference.
Eisenhower: do not know what decision the next president will make. However the flights will not be resumed for the entire duration of my term.

Exchange between Eisenhower and Khrushchev at the Paris Summit, May 16 1960

- a) Explain the reference to the term 'Open Skies'. (3 marks)
 - b) Why did Eisenhower order a U-2 flight over the Soviet Union on the eve of the Paris summit? (5 marks)
 - c) What was the impact of (i) the Geneva Summit, (ii) the Paris Summit on US–Soviet relations? (12 marks)
3. a) By what means did the United States seek to contain communism in either Indochina or the Middle East or Latin America under Eisenhower? (6 marks)
 - b) How successful was the US policy of containment in any one of those regions? (14 marks)

For question 3 you must first choose the area of the world you are going to discuss. Then examine the methods employed by the United States to contain communism in that region. This part of your answer will largely be descriptive, as is often the case with answers to at least some parts of structured questions. Next comes the analysis. 'With what success' invites you to consider successful examples of containment in the region of the world under discussion, but you should also be willing to mention failures. Only then will your response to the question be balanced.

Two examples of conventional essay questions on the United States and the Cold War under Eisenhower follow.

1. Analyse US policy towards China under Eisenhower.
2. 'A series of missed opportunities.' Evaluate this judgement of Eisenhower's handling of US–Soviet relations.

Question 1 is a broad and open-ended question. The issue under discussion is US policy towards China and the time-frame is 1953–60. The advantage of this question is that within those limits you can more or less set your own terms of reference. 'Analyse' is our cue word. To analyse a topic is to study it in depth and to describe and explain its main characteristics. In a question of this sort it is easy just to narrate. You can avoid a purely descriptive answer by focusing on particular aspects of US policy towards China. For example, you might consider the goals, methods and outcomes of policy, examining how far the outcomes fulfilled the goals. You might also want to cite and explain changes in policy.

Question 2 is an altogether different type of question. In inverted commas you are given a hypothesis or proposition and you have to decide how well that hypothesis fits Eisenhower's conduct of US–Soviet relations. You are asked to 'evaluate' the hypothesis, which means you have to consider its worth and pinpoint its advantages and limitations. In the first part of your answer you might give examples of missed opportunities for which Eisenhower was to blame. A striking instance was the Paris summit in 1960. On the other side of the argument you might give examples of Ike's role in improving US–Soviet relations. Think about the Geneva summit in 1955 and the

invitation to Khrushchev to tour the United States in 1959. On this side of the argument you might also point out that not all the failures in US-Soviet diplomacy were attributable to Eisenhower. Until 1955 it was not clear which member of the Soviet leadership exercised real power. Subsequently Eisenhower had to contend with a difficult and unpredictable opponent.

Crisis and Compromise: Kennedy's Cold War, 1961–3

POINTS TO CONSIDER

This chapter examines one of the most tense phases of the Cold War. Think about how Kennedy's background and political apprenticeship shaped his attitudes towards the Cold War. Try to appreciate the significant differences between Kennedy's and Eisenhower's strategies of containment, while also noting parallels. Are some historians right to see Kennedy's approach to communism in south-east Asia as a new departure in US policy? The first two years of Kennedy's presidency were crisis-ridden. How well did he deal with the Berlin and the Cuban missile crises? Examine America's gains and losses in each crisis. Finally, assess Kennedy as a Cold War leader. Did his successes outstrip his failures or vice versa?

KEY DATES

1961

- June 4** Kennedy and Khrushchev met at the Vienna Summit
- August 13** East German building workers sealed the border between East and West Berlin
- August 17–18** East German building workers began constructing the Berlin Wall

1962

- July 23** The United States and the Soviet Union signed an agreement in Geneva respecting the neutrality of Laos
- October 14–28** Cuban missile crisis

1963

- June 20** The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to establish a 'hot line' from the White House to the Kremlin
- August 5** The United States, the Soviet Union and Britain signed a nuclear test-ban treaty
- November 1** President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam was assassinated in an army coup
- November 22** President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas