

SSUSH20 – Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social changes during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

c. Examine the influence of Sputnik on U.S. technological innovations and education.

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first man-made earth satellite - **Sputnik I**. Sputnik I was not an unexpected development. United States intelligence had photographed the launch site using spy planes. However, the public and political outcry in America regarding the Soviet success over the United States led to several developments including the following:

1. dramatic increase in funding for **science and math education**
2. creation of a national space program - National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
3. inspired a generation of engineers and scientists to develop new technology, which in turn led to the eventual development of the Internet
4. contributed to the perception of a "missile gap" between the United States and the Soviet Union. The fear was that the Soviets could use sudden (perceived) superiority in missile technology to launch an attack on the U.S. and its allies.
5. Although he did not create the Cold War, President Eisenhower devised policies to counter the perceived Soviet military threat. His "domino theory" led to American intervention in Vietnam. His "massive retaliation" stance proclaimed that the United States would answer any military attack with all out military and atomic capacity.

Define

Sputnik

1. What was the impact of Sputnik on technological innovation?

SSUSH21 – Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social changes during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

a. Analyze the international policies and actions taken as a response to the Cold War including U.S. involvement in Cuba and the escalation of the war in Vietnam as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

The United States continued to be guided in its approach to foreign affairs by the Truman Doctrine, which emphasized the importance of containing communism. The 1960s was a time when the Cold War escalated to what could have potentially become direct military action between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both nations were equipped with massive nuclear capability that threatened the safety of the entire world. The period was tense, dangerous, and became internally divisive as Americans disagreed with each other about the merits of military involvement in distant locations.

Cuba was a major exporter of sugar to the United States and received special incentives from the U.S. government. Cuba, being a Caribbean island just 90 miles off the coast of Florida, was also a major tourist destination for Americans. In 1952, General Fulgencio Batista overthrew the elected government of Cuba and established a military dictatorship. He allied himself with leading multi-national businesses and mafia controlled hotels, casinos, and brothels. Batista exacted huge bribes for allowing these businesses to continue as usual in Cuba. In 1953, the 26th of July Movement led by Fidel and Raul Castro attempted to overthrow the Batista government. The movement's stated goal was to restore democracy in Cuba. The coup attempt failed. In 1955, the Castro brothers were exiled from Cuba. In 1956, the brothers returned with a group of guerilla soldiers. After a couple of years of intense fighting, they were able to overthrow the Batista government in 1958. Upon gaining control of Cuba, Fidel Castro named himself president for life. Castro's plans to nationalize foreign businesses and land reform policies alienated American businessmen and Cuba's wealthy citizens. The United States responded by applying economic sanctions against Cuba.

The United States began planning for the overthrow of Fidel Castro after realizing that Cuba's new leader had become a Communist. Unwilling to be seen as directly involved in the overthrow of a populist government such as Castro's, the United States used the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to train and carry out a coup against the Castro government. The plan was to land along the Bay of Pigs and use U.S. supplied aircraft to support the landing. On April 5, 1961, Cuban exiles landed but were crushed by the Cuban Army and Air Force. The newly elected Kennedy administration refused to use U.S. air support to cover the invasion forces. Captured exiles revealed the U.S. backing and Castro went to the Soviet Union for military and economic support. The Soviet Union saw Castro's gesture as a way to expand the Cold War into the western hemisphere and to throw U.S. strategic planners off their game. The relationship between the United States and Cuba was further strained in 1962, when Castro allowed the installation of medium-range nuclear missiles on Cuba. The Soviet government was worried that U.S. nuclear weapons held a tactical and strategic edge over their own stockpile. The Soviet government decided to place nuclear missiles on Cuba in order to shorten the time that Soviet missiles would have to reach targets in the U.S. These missiles would have placed most of the United States, Canada, and Latin America within the range of attack. Castro saw the placement of Soviet missile batteries and their supporting troops as a way of preventing future interference in Cuban affairs by the United States.

When the missiles were discovered, the Kennedy administration ordered a naval blockade on Cuba rather than a direct military strike on the missiles. The President feared that such an attack would escalate into an all-out war with the Soviets. As nuclear warheads made their way to Cuba on Soviet ships, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its missiles from Cuba if the United States

would secretly withdraw its missiles from Turkey and pledge not to invade Cuba. Both sides agreed and the crisis was concluded after 13-days of uncertainty. Kennedy emerged from the crisis with renewed public confidence after the missteps of the Bay of Pigs had hurt his approval ratings the year before.

Another dramatic escalation in Cold War tension emerged in Southeast Asia. **Vietnam** became the site of a long struggle between communist and non-communist forces, each aided by their respective ideological superpower. Vietnam had been a colony of France during the late 19th century. The Japanese seized the region during World War II. In response to the takeover, the Vietnamese people organized a resistance movement, known as the Vietminh. They warred against both the Japanese and French. The organization was dominated by the communist party and led by Ho Chi Minh.

When World War II ended, the French assumed they would regain control of the region. The Vietminh resisted the takeover and defeated the French in 1954. The United Nations attempted to broker the creation of new nations in what had been French Indochina. The nations of Cambodia and Laos were created. However, the people of southern Vietnam did not want to be ruled from Hanoi in the north and did not wish to be communist. The United Nations divided the nation at the 17th parallel and planned for an election that was to be held two years later to decide the unification of north and south. The South Vietnamese government rejected an all-Vietnam election because a communist-backed guerilla movement, the Vietcong, had begun a terror campaign in the south. The Vietcong targeted village chiefs, schoolteachers, and government officials.

South Vietnam requested and received U.S. military support in the form of training for its armed forces. The United States believed a communist takeover of South Vietnam would lead to further expansion of communism in Asia. President Eisenhower invoked the image of a row of falling dominoes, thereby creating the Domino Theory. In keeping with the U.S. policy of containment, the United States began its involvement in Southeast Asia. The United States increased aid, but remained largely in an advisory role under President John Kennedy. But, the United States assisted in a 1963 coup against the perceived weak South Vietnamese government. In the ensuing chaos that followed the coup, communist forces were able to strengthen their hold over South Vietnam. United States naval units in the Gulf of Tonkin supported the South Vietnamese Marine and Naval units as they staged a series of raids into North Vietnam. On August 2, 1964, North Vietnamese naval vessels were accused of attacking the United States Navy destroyers *Maddox* and *Turner Joy*. President Johnson responded by ordering an air attack on North Vietnamese naval bases. Prior to the U.S. attack, Johnson requested and received Congress's approval.

Congress issued the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, which gave the President authorization to conduct military operations in Southeast Asia without a formal declaration of war. Meanwhile, the Vietcong intensified their effort and decisively defeated larger South Vietnamese forces twice in 1964-1965. President Johnson made a marked change in U.S. policy by placing ground troops into combat in South Vietnam. The United States sent troops to Vietnam to protect its bases. This increase in troop strength gradually grew to more than 500,000 men by 1968. The growth of U.S. military influence in the region led the communist strongholds of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to give North Vietnam military aid.

The United States took action in both Cuba and Vietnam to contain communism. The situation in Cuba could have easily escalated to direct conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States but was averted when the Soviets backed down. The world was on the brink of yet another war, but the issue was resolved at the last minute. In Vietnam, the United States was gradually increasing its involvement in the region to contain communism. What began as military aid to the South Vietnamese, gave way to military training and eventually American forces engaged in combat with the communist fighters in the region. Both presidents Kennedy and Johnson made their foreign policy decisions based on what they believed would be important for protecting the United States and stopping the spread of communism.

Congress issued the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, which gave the President authorization to conduct military operations in Southeast Asia without a formal declaration of war. Meanwhile, the Vietcong intensified their effort and decisively defeated larger South Vietnamese forces twice in 1964-1965. President Johnson made a marked change in U.S. policy by placing ground troops into combat in South Vietnam. The United States sent troops to Vietnam to protect its bases. This increase in troop strength gradually grew to more than 500,000 men by 1968. The growth of U.S. military influence in the region led the communist strongholds of the

Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to give North Vietnam military aid.

The United States took action in both Cuba and Vietnam to contain communism. The situation in Cuba could have easily escalated to direct conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States but was averted when the Soviets backed down. The world was on the brink of yet another war, but the issue was resolved at the last minute. In Vietnam, the United States was gradually increasing its involvement in the region to contain communism. What began as military aid to the South Vietnamese, gave way to military training and eventually American forces engaged in combat with the communist fighters in the region. Both presidents Kennedy and Johnson made their foreign policy decisions based on what they believed would be important for protecting the United States and stopping the spread of communism.

Define

Cuban Missile Crisis

Vietnam War

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

2. **What are the international policies and actions developed as a response to US Involvement in Cuba?**
3. **What are the international policies and actions developed as a response to the war in Vietnam?**
4. **What are the international policies and actions developed as a response to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution?**