

Chapter 5

Cold War Strategies

Supplemental Materials

The Cold War is a period of history marked by competition between two great powers. Behind it was the Soviet Union expressly pursuing an expansionist policy through the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideology and its internal political need to project an external threat. U.S. national security strategy in the years 1947 through 1989 is identified with a single term—containment—although there were obvious shifts in emphasis across administrations and even within administrations.¹

One of the most notable shifts in the national security strategy of containment was in the perception of available means. Those presidents who believed their means were limited tended toward *asymmetric* responses to Soviet encroachments, that is, to select the place, time, magnitude, and methods of competition. Presidents who believed the American economy could produce the necessary means on demand tended toward *symmetric* responses, countering Soviet adventurism wherever and whenever it occurred.

Correlated with the symmetry of response was the acceptance of Keynesian economics suggesting that increased government spending could produce an expansion in the economy. The belief that government could manage economic expansion without long-term budget deficits, higher taxes, or inflation allowed those presidents so inclined to consider all interests vital, all threats dangerous, and all measures available.²

Table 1 summarizes the Cold War administrations, their acceptance of expansionist economics, and a characterization of their response to Soviet attempts at expansion. The Carter administration is the notable exception, being saddled with extreme inflation following high deficit spending during the Vietnam conflict. Supporting a policy of symmetric response, based on the belief in an expanding economy, was simply not an option. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan pushed Carter toward a symmetric response nonetheless.

Table 1. Cold War Administrations, Economics, and Responses

Administration	Expansionist Economics	Response to Soviets
Truman (1945-1949)	Rejected	Asymmetrical
Truman (1950-1953)	Accepted	Symmetrical
Eisenhower	Rejected	Asymmetrical
Kennedy Johnson	Accepted	Symmetrical
Nixon Ford	Rejected	Asymmetrical
Carter (1977-1979)	Moot	Asymmetrical
Carter (1979-1981)	Moot	Symmetrical
Reagan	Accepted	Symmetrical

Table 2 characterizes the Cold War administrations' strategies as being more Kennan-like or Nitze-like. There's more continuity than change between presidential administrations, and the Carter and Reagan administrations are not exceptions. Still, they are harder to explain with the simple Kennan-Nitze dichotomy. Carter initially elevated human rights over Cold War anti-communism. He began more Kennan-like but adopted a more Nitze-like strategy after the 1979 Soviet invasion of

¹ The principal source for review is John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

² Gaddis, *Containment*, 346.

Afghanistan. Reagan, too, doesn't fit neatly in either category. In terms of force development policy, he pursued an aggressive Nitze-like force buildup, previously characteristic of Democratic administrations. But in employment policy, he was more Kennan-like in his cautious use of force, previously characteristic of Republican administrations.

Table 2. Cold War Administrations and Strategies

Years	Kennan-like	Nitze-like
1947-1949	Truman	
1949-1953		Truman
1953-1961	Eisenhower	
1961-1963		Kennedy
1963-1969		Johnson
1969-1974	Nixon	
1974-1977	Ford	
1977-1979	Carter	
1979-1981		Carter
1981-1989		Reagan

US force levels in Korea and Vietnam are depicted in Figure 1 below.

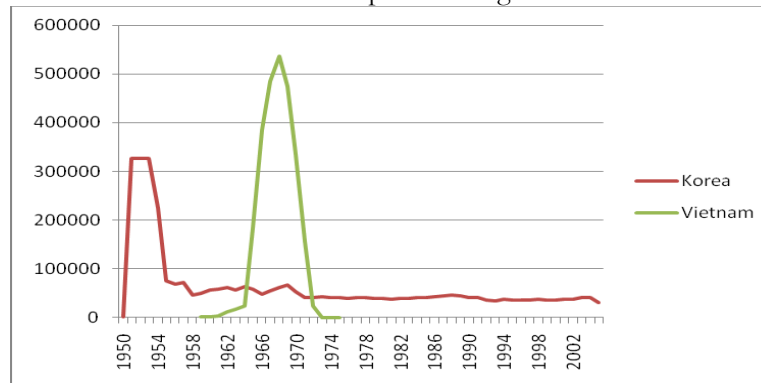


Figure 1. US Force Levels in Korea and Vietnam

US/SU Cold War Doctrines

Many of the events during the Cold War were completely indigenous, and many of those were recast as part of the indirect competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Throughout the Cold War, heads of state came and went, and the personality of each was part of the equation.

Truman Doctrine (1947)

Truman Doctrine

The *Truman Doctrine* was announced on 12 March 1947. Truman's speech proclaimed the United States to be the leader of the free world and that it would both support capitalism and oppose communism. The United States would provide economic and military aid to states threatened by communism—it was "the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure." Although driven by events in Greece and Turkey, the Doctrine was to be a guide to global action.

Khrushchev Thaw (1953-1968)***Khrushchev Thaw***

The *Khrushchev Thaw* spanned the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. It began soon after Joseph Stalin's death in March 1953. By various accounts, the Thaw ended somewhere between 1964 and 1968.

Nikita Khrushchev was elevated to general secretary of the Communist Party in September 1953. In a secret speech given on 25 February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's totalitarianism and announced the end of the "Long winter of sacrifice and persecution." He introduced a "new era of socialism" where private lives would be valued. He announced the possibility of "peaceful coexistence" between the United States and the USSR despite their ideological differences. The speech was disseminated publicly beginning 5 March.

Khrushchev initiated a program of liberalization. He liberalized the arts (including literature, theater, and poetry), international trade, sports, and educational and cultural exchanges. He released millions of political prisoners from the Gulag camps and liberated millions of rural peasants allowing them to travel and settle in urban centers. His reforms received broad support from the people. Alexi Kosygin led Khrushchev's economic reforms. Soon after Khrushchev became premier in 1958, he announced cuts in military spending.

Khrushchev's liberalization had its limits. Demonstrations took place in Georgia, Stalin's homeland, demanding independence. The revolt was met with a Russian military intervention. Democratic reform movements were crushed in Hungary and suppressed in Poland in October and November 1956.

Stalin's death exposed a deep schism between the conservative, pro-Stalinist wing and those backing Khrushchev's liberalization. The conservatives plotted a failed attempt to overthrow Khrushchev in May 1957. Khrushchev had Stalin's corpse removed from Lenin's mausoleum in 1961.

The Opportunity Costs of Military Expenditures (1953, 1961)

Eisenhower, more than other presidents, understood the true costs of war and the limits of military force. He expressed his belief that a strong economy was the true basis of national security soon after his inauguration and in his farewell address.

The Opportunity Costs of Military Expenditures

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. This is, I repeat, the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

– Dwight David Eisenhower, "The Chance for Peace," speech given to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 16 April 1953. Also known as the Cross of Iron speech.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

– Dwight David Eisenhower "Farewell Address to the Nation," 1961.

Eisenhower Doctrine (1957)***Eisenhower Doctrine***

The *Eisenhower Doctrine* followed directly from the resolution of the Suez Crisis. Economic and military assistance would be provided if requested by states in the Middle East. National interests and world peace were tied to preserving the independence of Middle Eastern states and the flow of oil. Eisenhower's proposal was submitted to Congress on 5 January 1957, debated, and approved by Joint Resolution on 9 March. The Doctrine was never explicitly invoked, although the administration was actively engaged in the region. By late 1958, the Doctrine was moderated by relying less on military backing and giving greater emphasis to accommodation with Arab nationalists to improve US influence in the region.

Kennedy Doctrine (1961)***Kennedy Doctrine***

The *Kennedy Doctrine* emphasized the East-West competition in Latin America. It continued the containment of communism globally but also asserted *offensive rollback* of communism in the Western Hemisphere. The inaugural address of 20 January and the Alliance for Progress address of 13 March 1961 are the basis of the Doctrine.

Johnson Doctrine (1965)***Johnson Doctrine***

The *Johnson Doctrine* followed the Dominican crisis in 1965. Domestic revolution in the Western Hemisphere would no longer be a local matter when "the object is the establishment of a Communist dictatorship."

Nixon Doctrine (1969)***Nixon Doctrine***

The *Nixon Doctrine* emphasized international alliance structures. The new burden-sharing arrangement required allies to behave less like protectorates. The US may provide equipment, advisors, and moral support, but the assisted state would have to fight its own wars with its own troops. The Doctrine manifest in Vietnamization—shifting Vietnamese forces to combat and shifting US forces to training and support. It also manifest in the Persian Gulf as a dramatic increase in direct military sales to Saudi Arabia and Iran. Direct intervention in civil wars in Pakistan (between East and West Pakistan) and in Nigeria (secession of Biafra) was avoided.

Carter Doctrine (1977, 1980)***Carter Doctrine***

In his first policy speech Carter encouraged the abandonment of containment, to move beyond the belief that Soviet expansionism is inevitable and be "free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in our fear." Instead, Carter called "for a new American foreign policy, a policy based on constant decency in its values and on optimism in our historical vision." Support would be tied to a country's human rights record. But what is called the Carter Doctrine came following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Rather than interpret the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan as a response to turmoil on its periphery, Carter interpreted it as increasing the potential for Soviet hegemony in the Persian Gulf. "The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position," that constitutes "a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil." The *Carter Doctrine* was announced in his third State of the Union address given in January 1980. In it, Carter said, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Brezhnev Doctrine (1968-1979)***Brezhnev Doctrine***

Brezhnev ousted Khrushchev and put him under house arrest in 1964. The conservative wing of the Communist Party considered Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" with the United States to be an expression of weakness. Brezhnev reversed Khrushchev's liberalization and returned toward Stalin's totalitarianism. Khrushchev's economic reforms, led by Alexei Kosygin, were overturned and replaced with increased military-industrial development. Brezhnev's reversal of the Khrushchev/Kosygin economic reforms led to the later collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Brezhnev Doctrine was announced in a speech given in Warsaw on 13 November 1968 in response to international condemnation of the August Soviet intervention into Czechoslovakia in the closing days of the Johnson administration. The Soviets saw Eastern Europe as a defensive buffer from attack by Western European powers. Under the Doctrine, the USSR had the right to intervene in satellites' internal political affairs if communist rule was challenged. It was a restatement of past positions, but it was defensive in nature without the expansionist language of old. The Doctrine would remain in place until the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Politburo began debating assertion of its own national interests over spreading socialist ideology. The Doctrine was defunct as evidenced by the Soviet Union's failure to counter the Polish revolution in December 1989.

Kirkpatrick Doctrine (1979)***Kirkpatrick Doctrine***

The Kirkpatrick Doctrine provided the justification for the United States alignment with rightwing dictators that opposed socialist movements. According to Kirkpatrick, rightwing autocrats were authoritarians who allowed existing hierarchies, great disparity in wealth, and traditional practices. Leftwing autocrats, created by Marxist revolutionaries, were totalitarians who destroyed social hierarchies, redistributed wealth, disallowed social traditions, and created refugees as a result. Rightwing dictators who were staunch opponents of communist challengers and friendly to the United States were preferable to communist dictators. Furthermore, rightwing dictatorships were more likely than leftwing dictatorships to transition to liberal democracies precisely because they had preserved some form of traditional society.

Reagan Doctrine (1981)***Reagan Doctrine***

The Carter Doctrine rested on the use of military force to keep the Soviets out of the Persian Gulf region. The *Reagan Corollary* extended the Carter Doctrine to include military intervention into the internal affairs of the region without reference to the Soviet Union or communism. The Corollary was announced in October 1981 in response to the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). The United States would intervene to protect Saudi Arabia's independence, which was perceived to be threatened by the Iraqi invasion of Iran following the Iranian Revolution.

The *Reagan Doctrine* supported anti-communists everywhere with a special interest in Central America, a return to a JFK-like posture. The Doctrine was more anti-communist than prodemocracy. Under the Doctrine, Reagan supported Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries (Contras) to overthrow the Sandinista government, supported the rightwing Salvadoran government against communist insurgents, supported the mujahidin against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and supported the bloody civil war in Angola.

Weinberger Doctrine (1985)

Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger was deeply affected by the Marine Barracks bombing in Lebanon. Delayed until after President Reagan was inaugurated for a second term, Weinberger announced what would later be called the Weinberger Doctrine.

Weinberger Doctrine

1. The United States should not commit forces to combat unless the vital national interests of the United States or its allies are involved.
2. US troops should only be committed wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning. Otherwise, troops should not be committed.
3. US combat troops should be committed only with clearly defined political and military objectives and with the capacity to accomplish those objectives.
4. The relationship between the objectives and the size and composition of the forces committed should be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.
5. US troops should not be committed to battle without a “reasonable assurance” of the support of US public opinion and Congress.
6. The commitment of US troops should be considered only as a last resort.

European Theater**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1946)*****North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)***TBD.³**Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955)*****Warsaw Pact***TBD.⁴**Reagan pushes Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war (1983)*****Reagan pushes Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war⁵***

The Reagan administration pushed the Soviet Union close to a nuclear first strike. US intermediate-range nuclear missiles deployed to Europe in May 1981 were capable of detonation in the Soviet Union within four to six minutes after launch. Reagan’s bellicose campaign rhetoric contributed to deteriorating relations between the United States and USSR. General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and KGB chairman Yuri Andropov, having determined that the United States was preparing for a first strike against the USSR, initiated Operation RYAN—the largest peacetime intelligence collection effort in Soviet history—to monitor signs of launch preparation. The Soviets were prepared for a first strike of their own if they detected US preparations.

Naval operations from 1981 to 1983 were interpreted as part of US preparations. Fleet exercises in 1983 were the largest to date. To probe Soviet air defenses, flight activity was conducted directly toward Soviet airspace with last minute avoidance. Reagan delivered his Strategic Defense Initiative speech on 23 March 1983. Brezhnev and Andropov saw SDI as a US attempt to win a nuclear war. A major scheduled NATO exercise, Able Archer, tested nuclear release procedures and was conducted from 2 to 11 November 1983. The Soviets viewed the exercise as a potential deception. Soviet nuclear forces were on their highest alert level should US launch preparations begin.

³ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>

⁴ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/warsaw-treaty>

⁵ <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb533-The-Able-Archer-War-Scare-Declassified-PFIAB-Report-Released/2012-0238-MR.pdf>

Southeast Asia

Indigenous forces in Vietnam, the Viet Minh, formed to oppose Japanese occupiers and their French collaborators. The French returned to reclaim colonial prerogatives with military force after Japan's withdrawal. In the *First Indochina War* (1946-1954), Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap led Viet Minh resistance forces. In 1952, Truman authorized \$60 million in aid to France. In 1953, Eisenhower upped the US commitment to six times Truman's support to the French.

Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (1955-1977)

Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, also called the Manila Pact, was signed 8 September 1954 in Manila. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization came into force 18 February 1955 with the United States, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan as member states.

Most regional states preferred non-aligned status during the Cold War. Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were prohibited from membership in such treaties by the Geneva Agreements of 1954, but they were included as protectorates by separate protocol. U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was conducted under the legal framework provided by SEATO. Member states began to withdraw, some over the Vietnam War. The primary purpose for the treaty organization ended along with the Vietnam War and was disbanded 30 June 1977.⁶

Dien Bien Phu: The End of French Indochina (1954)

Dien Bien Phu: The End of French Indochina

The communist Viet Minh, formed to oppose Japanese occupiers and their Vichy French collaborators during WWII, fought the return of the French throughout Indochina. Vietnamese development of elaborate supply lines through Laos and Cambodia, later to be called the Ho Chi Minh Trail, were thought to be vulnerable by the French. To exploit that vulnerability, French expeditionary forces occupied a remote outpost at Dien Bien Phu in northwest Vietnam near the Laotian border.

Approximately 50,000 Viet Minh laid siege to the outpost from 13 March to 7 May 1954. French forces peaked at about 16,000 with nearly 12,000 becoming prisoners of war. The day after French surrender, Ho Chi Minh entered the Geneva Conference with a greatly strengthened hand. The historical legacies of Ho's political leadership and General Vo Nguyen Giap's military leadership were cemented. French prestige, weakened in WWII, eroded even further. Independence movements began in North Africa. Six months after surrender at Dien Bien Phu, the Algerian War began.

⁶ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>

Second Indochina War (1962-1975)

Second Indochina War (1962-1975)

The 1954 Geneva Accords, following French withdrawal from Indochina, left Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam struggling for post-colonial self determination. Vietnam was divided north and south. The North was dominated by an indigenous, nationalist, and communist movement backed by China and the Soviet Union, each with different theories of revolutionary warfare. The South, led by a Catholic minority, was backed by the French and supported by the United States. Elections to unify North and South would not take place.

The North supported indigenous communist movements in the South, Cambodia, and Laos. Sophisticated supply lines were developed by sea and overland. China and the Soviet Union largely supplied by sea to Haiphong harbor in North Vietnam. Supplies then flowed south overland via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Some supplies flowed to the port of Sihanoukville in Cambodia and then north via the Sihanouk Trail. The two trail systems interconnected and crossed the frontier east to west into South Vietnam. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations conducted a secret, illegal war in Laos led by the ambassador through the mechanisms of the CIA and USAID. The US Navy conducted interdiction at sea while the USAF conducted interdiction in Laos and Cambodia.

Nixon inherited the Indochina war from Johnson with the campaign promise to end the war and achieve peace with honor. The Nixon Doctrine was announced 25 July 1969. Transfer of combat operations from US to Vietnamese forces and the withdrawal of US forces began in earnest. Nixon restarted Johnson's peace talks in Paris. Talks were on again and off again. Viet Cong escalations in the South were met by escalations in air interdiction operations. Nixon made peace overtures publicly; privately he reiterated the peace offering accompanied by threats to restart the bombing of North Vietnam halted by Johnson in 1968.

The Gulf of Tonkin (1964) and Rolling Thunder (1965-1968)

The Gulf of Tonkin and Rolling Thunder

The contrived Gulf of Tonkin Incident of 2 August 1964 led war hawks in Washington to call for a strong response. The Soviets and Chinese provided material support to the North by land and sea. The North, in turn, provided material support to communist forces in the South. The uniformed military specifically wanted large-scale air attacks against the North's transportation network. Johnson feared an escalation that would bring the US, USSR, and China into a direct confrontation.

Johnson chose instead to initiate a series of tit-for-tat airstrikes in retaliation for the Tonkin incident and subsequent attacks in the South. In response to the airstrikes, the Viet Cong increased ground attacks on US airbases. Johnson responded by sending marines to defend the airbase at Danang. Operation Rolling Thunder—a major air offensive—began 2 March 1965.

Rolling Thunder was initially designed for psychological effect over 8 weeks. It was to bolster morale in the South and demoralize the North. At the same time, it was not to draw the Soviet Union and China into direct conflict with the United States. But the use of American airpower was a clear admission that the South could not defend itself. Ending the operation was eventually offered to encourage the North Vietnamese into negotiations.

The Johnson administration has been widely criticized for extreme micromanagement of air operations, specifically for target selection and details of mission planning. Buffer zones were established along the Chinese border and around Hanoi and Haiphong. Airfields in the North were off limits. The belief was that the combination of diplomatic and military pressure would bring the communists to the negotiating table. Pressure would be gradually increased until the North realized the futility of resistance.

On 3 April 1965, targets selected for psychological effect were replaced by supply lines with military significance. Ineffective attacks on petroleum sites were conducted between 29 June and 4 September 1966. After three and a half years flying against the most punishing air defense system ever fielded, Rolling Thunder came to an end 31 October 1968. Considering the cost of prisoners of war and 800 tons per day of ordnance, the operation had little effect on supply and troop flows.

The Tet Offensive (1968)

The Tet Offensive

The Tet Offensive included near simultaneous attacks on over one hundred population centers, mostly along the east coast, including the capital of Saigon in the south and the ancient capital of Hue near the border with North Vietnam. The previous phase of the General Offensive included what were later called the Border Battles along the western border with Laos and Cambodia. Isolated Special Forces camps and the remote Marine Corps base at Khe Sahn were targeted and fixated Westmoreland's attention away from the coastal cities.

Battle of Khe Sahn (21 January – 8 April 1968). The Battle of Khe Sahn pitted 40,000 regular North Vietnamese Army troops against 6,000 at Khe Sahn. Marines at Khe Sahn were pounded by rocket and artillery, while the NVA was pounded by an extraordinary concentration of artillery, tactical aviation, and strategic bombers. Land supply routes were severed. USAF and USMC innovations, however, established an air bridge that prevented a successful siege. US Army forces reestablished the land route, NVA forces dissipated, and Khe Sahn was abandoned.

The Tet Offensive commenced 31 January. The main operation engaged over one hundred urban centers the next day, including Saigon. Many attacks were quickly repulsed by National Police and forces of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). But in some cases, aided by surprise, the Communists made impressive initial gains. But all were decisively reversed by US and ARVN forces.

Battle of Saigon. US Army Lieutenant General Frederick Weyland, US commander in III Corps, sensed the intentions of the North and urged Westmoreland to return forces from the border regions to defend the capital of Saigon. The defense was decisive, and Weyland would later be called the "savior of Saigon." Penetrating the new US embassy compound in Saigon, however, was a major psychological victory for the Communists.

Battle of Hue (31 January – 3 March 1968). Tactical activities increased on 30 January near the DMZ. In the ancient capital of Hue, the NVA achieved a major initial success. The Battle of Hue saw intense marined street fighting unseen since Korea. In the end, the NVA was driven out but only after the city was destroyed. Mass graves would attest to NVA atrocities against civilians.

My Lai Massacre (16 March 1968). A US Army platoon massacred 300 to 500 peasants, mostly women, children, and elderly. The My Lai Massacre was reported to the hierarchy in Vietnam by an Army witness to the event but was initially covered up. A year later, it was investigated by the Army and charges brought. The revelation fueled public opinion, US and international, that the war was immoral.

The Easter Offensive and Operation Linebacker (1972)

The Easter Offensive and Operation Linebacker

North Vietnam initiated a massive conventional forces assault into the South on 20 March 1972. The objective was to seize territory below the demilitarized zone and improve its negotiating position at the Paris peace talks. The combined-arms attack comprised infantry, armor, and artillery forces, a strong departure from insurgency. The Easter Offensive (Nguyen Hue Offensive) continued with additional assaults until 22 October. The North Vietnamese Army sustained heavy military losses. Nixon renewed bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong on 16 April and soon initiated Operation Linebacker (9 May – 23 October 1972) to interdict supply lines supporting the North Vietnamese offensive including the mining of Haiphong Harbor. Supplying the conventional forces of the NVA was more demanding than supplying the indigenous insurgent forces of the Viet Cong, and air interdiction proved more effective than earlier interdiction efforts. Unlike Johnson, Nixon left planning to the military. But the tipping point had been reached in 1968, and these aggressive moves, considered long overdue by those fighting the war, rekindled antiwar sentiments in the public and in Congress.

Peace talks appeared to be bearing fruit, and Kissinger announced that peace was at hand. The North Vietnamese, however, sensed Nixon's political weakness at home and renewed their tough negotiating positions. The Nixon administration issued a 72-hour ultimatum and initiated Operation Linebacker II (18–29 December 1972). Linebacker II shifted the load from primarily tactical aircraft to heavy strategic bombers with payloads unseen since the closing days of World War II.

South Asia

Political Warfare in Iran (1953)

Political Warfare in Iran

Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi was installed by the British and Russians after the 1941 invasion. Under public pressure, the shah appointed Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh prime minister in 1951. Mossadegh nationalized Iranian oil reserves over British opposition during the 16th Congress (1950-1952). He was elected prime minister in his own right in 1953. The 17th Congress nationalized the telecommunications system and broke ties with Britain.

The shah was driven into exile. Eisenhower authorized Operation TPAjax in 1953, and the CIA restored the shah. Upon his return, he immediately dissolved the elected parliament. The eccentric but popular Mossadegh was arrested 19 August 1953. The shah crushed his political opponents and rapidly modernized Iranian infrastructure. For many, particularly conservative Muslims and rural populations, modernization meant Westernization. Rather than the neutrality that brought 35 years of positive relations between Iran and the United States, Eisenhower's political warfare set the stage for the Iranian Revolution. Seen as a positive example at the time, political warfare became a prominent but covert part of American Cold War statecraft spilling over to actions in Guatemala and Cuba.

Baghdad Pact (1955-1979)

Baghdad Pact (METO, CENTO)

The Baghdad Pact—a mutual defense pact between Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Great Britain—was signed in 1955. The United States quickly joined the military council. To some, including Westerners, the Pact was seen as a complement to NATO and the “northern tier” to contain the Soviet Union by blocking access to the Middle East; it was also known as the Middle East Treaty Organization. To others, including Egypt, it was seen as a continuation of British power in the region after the loss of India, thus fanning Arab nationalism. After a military junta overthrew the Iraqi monarchy, Iraq withdrew from the Pact, and the name Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) followed. Having already proven ineffective, CENTO was officially dissolved in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution and Iran's withdrawal from the treaty.⁷

⁷ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/cento>

Partition of British India (1947) and Indo-Pakistani Wars

World War II was followed by a spate of European powers abandoning colonial holdings and endorsing self-determination. Border disputes and ethnic-based civil wars ensued as new states struggled to find their footing.

The 1947 partition divided what was left of British India between Pakistan and India. India would be a secular democracy with a strong Hindu majority. East and West Pakistan, separated by a thousand miles of northern India, would be Muslim. The partition respected religion rather than national identity. The Pashtu were divided between Afghanistan and West Pakistan. Baluchistan was divided between Iran, Afghanistan, and West Pakistan. Punjabis and Kashmir's Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims were divided between West Pakistan and India. Bengal—including Hindus, Muslims, Bengalis, and Biharis—was divided between East Pakistan and India, as was Bihar.

The first Indo-Pakistani War (1947-1948) began soon after partition leaving India with about two-thirds of Kashmir. China seized its share of Kashmir in the Indo-Sino War of 1962. A second Indo-Pakistani War over Kashmir took place in 1965. Kashmir solidified as the military focus of both India and Pakistan. Most of Pakistan's military spending was in the West, the great majority of troops were from the West, and the majority of troops were deployed in the West, leaving the East under-served and under-defended.

East Pakistan had a larger population, but political power was concentrated in the Punjabi-dominated West. Muslims in the West saw themselves as proper Muslims and Muslims in the East as inferior. The Pakistani government declared Urdu—a language spoken widely in the West—as the only official language in 1948. The Bengali Language Movement centered in Dacca and its prestigious university formed in response. The Bengali Nationalist Movement gathered momentum.

Following serious flooding in August, the 12 November 1970 cyclone further devastated the East killing 300 to 500 thousand. The international humanitarian response was strong and visible. The response from the government in the West was slow and weak adding to existing East-West tensions.

National parliamentary elections were held only a month later. Due to its larger population, the East was allotted 162 of the 300 general seats and seven of the thirteen seats set aside for women. In a landslide, the Awami League, led by the charismatic Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won 160 general seats and seven women's seats thus earning the right to form a government. Having almost swept the East with its provincial autonomy platform, the League won no seats in the West.

The electorate in the West was more divided. The dominant party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (a Sindh), ran on a platform promoting a socialist economic system, Islamic faith, and democratic political system. The PPP split votes in the West with several smaller parties including right-wing Islamic parties that favored strong central government and found socialism and democracy incompatible with Islam. The PPP won no seats in the East.

A third political component represented the entrenched power of military rule led by president and chief martial law administrator, General Yahya Khan. Military rulers anticipated a strong Awami League showing but expected that a coalition government would be formed from the two dominant parties. But the Awami League's overwhelming victory required no coalition. Entrenched powers proposed a power-sharing arrangement between PPP's Bhutto and AL's Rahman.

The Awami League's landslide victory in the 7 December 1970 parliamentary elections required no coalition, but on 1 March 1971, the military government postponed seating the new parliament indefinitely. Sheikh Rahman called for an independence struggle 7 March 1971. Strikes and protests quickly became a guerrilla war in the East. An article published in Britain's *Sunday Times* (13 June 1971) generated worldwide attention dealing Indira Gandhi a stronger hand; she was able to elicit British and French support in spite of U.S. opposition.

South Asian Crisis (1971)

Tremendous instability followed the Partition of British India, including the overlapping Bangladesh War of Independence, Bangladesh Genocide, and Indo-Pakistani War. West Pakistani forces killed 300 thousand to 3 million and raped 200 to 400 thousand in the East. Ten million fled to India and another 30 million were internally displaced. Thousands of East Pakistanis were interred in the West. Biharis, who identified with the West, were persecuted in the East. India intervened on behalf of East Pakistan and quickly dealt West Pakistan a humiliating defeat. East Pakistan emerged as independent Bangladesh.

Bangladesh War of Independence (1971)

After deporting foreign journalists from the East, the West initiated Operation Searchlight (25 March 1971 to 25 May 1971) to eliminate Bengali nationalism. Sheikh Rahman signed a formal declaration of independence and was jailed in the early morning hours of 26 March. India's prime minister, Indira Gandhi, declared full support to the East the next day. The Mukti Bahini, a self-organizing national liberation army formed from defectors and volunteers, announced establishment of the Independent People's Republic of Bangladesh by radio message 27 March. The State Department informed the White House of atrocities as early as 28 March 1971.⁸ The East announced a provisional government 17 April.

Millions fled across the border into Bengali India representing a massive humanitarian disaster and imposing a heavy economic burden on India. India responded with training and assistance to the East's nascent Mukti Bahini. India bolstered defenses in the Kashmir region and prepared for a full-scale invasion in East Pakistan with a massive military buildup on the border.

Indo-Pakistani War (1971)

India's support to East Pakistan led to West Pakistan initiating the Indo-Pakistani War on 3 December 1971 with pre-emptive strikes on Indian air fields modeled on Israel's strikes on Egypt in the 1967 war. Extermination of intellectuals began on 14 December 1971 to eliminate future movement leaders. Hindus bore the brunt of attacks. The war immediately spread to the Kashmir region where India had strengthened border defenses. In the East, India quickly established air superiority. Naval action prevented the West from reinforcing and resupplying troops in the East. West Pakistan committed 3 divisions that were met by 9 divisions organized into 3 corps from India buttressed by Bengali regular and irregular forces.

West Pakistan thought it would be a quick war and did not anticipate the resistance that followed Operation Searchlight. Having no follow-on plan, Pakistan surrendered 16 December leaving 90 thousand prisoners of war in Indian hands. Although India's initial intentions in the West were defensive, it did seize land. Most of the land was returned, and prisoners of war, having been treated according to the Geneva Convention, were returned when West Pakistan recognized Bengal's independence.

War on the subcontinent took place in the context of the Cold War. Eisenhower emphasized alliance formation to contain Soviet expansion and added CENTO and SEATO to complement NATO. Pakistan joined both and received arms from the US. Seeing its historical enemy bolstered militarily, India shifted from being leader of the non-aligned movement to signing a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union 9 August 1971; stiffening of US support for Pakistan followed.

Nixon placed the highest priority on his initiative to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union. China was a long-time ally of Pakistan and Pakistan's president, General Yahya Khan, was the critical go between. The Nixon administration provided additional military assistance to West Pakistan in violation of congressional sanctions and deployed an aircraft carrier task force to the Bay of Bengal. Seen as a nuclear threat by India, the Soviet Union matched the carrier with nuclear-capable surface ships and submarine. China was restrained and responded diplomatically calling for a cease fire.

⁸ [Telegram #959](#) from Archer Blood, U.S. consul general in Dacca, East Pakistan, 6 April 1971. For a more complete collection of official documents, see the National Security Archive's collection, *The Tilt: The U.S. and the South Asian Crisis of 1971*, at nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/. For a thorough treatment, see Gary Jonathan Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

Middle East

Suez Crisis (1956)

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With French funding and management, coupled with Egyptian land and forced labor, the Suez Canal was completed in 1869. The concession to operate the canal would run 99 years from canal opening. After opposing French efforts, the British became a major investor in 1875 by purchasing Egypt's shares. The British began a "temporary occupation" of the Canal in 1882 that would last 74 years. On 19 October 1954, Britain agreed to relinquish the canal and withdraw its 80,000 troops within two years.

Eisenhower thought Egypt had turned toward communism as early as 27 September 1955. The Arab world still reeling from its failure to prevent establishment of in Arab Palestine, Egypt made a major arms purchase from Czechoslovakia (the Israelis used Czech-supplied weapons to wage the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948). Iraq, under Hashemite rule, was Egypt's main contender for leadership of the Pan-Arab movement. When Iraq turned to the West's Baghdad Pact, Egypt turned to the East. Egypt recognized the Peoples Republic of China on 16 May 1956. The United States interpreted the sequence of events as communist encroachment rather than rising Arab nationalism.

The US withdrew financial support for the Aswan Dam project in 1956, the British immediately withdrew their grant, and the World Bank loan fell through. Gamal Abdul Nasser saw nationalization of the Canal as a way to finance Aswan. Nasser seized the Canal on 26 July 1956, announced its nationalization, froze assets, and agreed to pay stockholders at that day's price on the Paris Stock Exchange. Conservatives pressured Great Britain with the appeasement-at-Munich analogy.

Israel, Great Britain, and France conspired to reestablish a "neutral" canal. Claiming it a reprisal against Arab attacks following the establishment of Israel, Israeli forces would move across the Sinai to the Canal. Great Britain and France would move in as peacemakers and announce a ceasefire in place with the Canal under Anglo-French control. The Tripartite Aggression was initiated on 29 October 1956.

Cooked up in secrecy, when exposed to the light of day, the world saw it for what it was. Eisenhower was furious with his World War II allies for concocting such a scheme to continue colonial empire. Rather than employing military force, he employed economic diplomacy. The United States, a leading supplier of world oil, stopped oil shipments from the Gulf of Mexico to Europe. Egypt stopped British oil from flowing through the Suez to refineries in Haifa on the Mediterranean Coast. The British were operating under unsustainable debt with their reserves held in the US giving Eisenhower considerable control over the value of the pound sterling. The IMF refused a loan to Britain where economic pressure was most intense.

Withdrawal of forces was announced 3 December 1956. Oil supplies from the Gulf of Mexico resumed to Europe within three days. The IMF approved a British draw within 10 days. The American Export-Import Bank announced an additional loan to Britain on 21 December. Khrushchev offered financial aid to the Middle East in October 1958, including funding for the Aswan Dam project. Ruble Diplomacy would challenge Dollar Diplomacy. The two super powers would wage economic warfare with each other over the Third World.

Southern Lebanon (1978)

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Arab armies failed to prevent establishment of a Jewish state in Arab Palestine in the 1948 war, but Palestinian resistance continued as a guerilla war against Israel. Israel retaliated against Lebanon and Jordan for guerrilla actions carried out from their soil by the Palestinian Liberation Organization and other Palestinian militants. Driven out of Jordan in 1970, the PLO relocated to Lebanon, disrupted the Christian/Muslim balance, eventually leading to civil war. On 11 March 1978, 11 Fatah militants conducted a raid into Israel killing 37 Israelis, mostly civilians. Israel responded to the *Coastal Road Massacre* three days later with an invasion force of 25,000. One or two thousand Lebanese and Palestinians were killed, mostly civilians, and a quarter million refugees fled.

Lebanon Hostage Crisis (1982-1992)***Lebanon Hostage Crisis (1982-1992)***

The Lebanon Hostage Crisis included the taking of nearly 100 hostages, mostly Westerners, by a small number of men from clans within Hezbollah, strongly aligned with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hezbollah formed to oppose Israel in southern Lebanon after Israel's 1982 invasion. Hostages were held as insurance against reprisals for terrorist attacks against the United States and France and to induce Americans to apply pressure against Israel, who had invaded Lebanon pursuing the PLO.

Africa

Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970)

Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970)

Britain established the state of Nigeria in 1914 as part of its colonial empire. The borders both separated British, French, and German colonies and embraced 60 million people from 300 ethnic groups. Great Britain granted independence 1 October 1960 with Nigeria divided three ways along ethnic lines. The existing rifts developed into coups and eventually civil war when the southeastern region declared its independence from Nigeria as Biafra 30 May 1967.⁹ Biafra surrendered 12 January 1970, and Nigeria was reunited. Estimates of deaths range from one to three million, mostly civilians, and mostly from starvation.

Nigeria comprises three major ethnic groupings distinguished by language, religion, and legal system: the Hausa and Fulani concentrated in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast. The more liberal and better educated southeast, largely Christian, favored cosmopolitanism and democratic structure. In the largely Muslim north, youth and intellectuals were leaning toward modernism, but the conservative ruling class favored tribal traditions.

Following independence, Nigeria attempted a democratic federal system with power sharing between the central and regional governments. Northern dominance, corruption, and incompetence created widespread political unrest. Igbo living in the North were persecuted. In August 1965, one Yoruba and four Igbo army majors began to plot a coup that came to pass 15 January 1966. The Army chief, also an Igbo but not a coup conspirator, contained the coup. He quickly seized power and replaced the civilian-led federal system with a military-led unified system concentrating policy-making power in central government leaving only implementation to the regional governments. That and the murder of prominent northerners in the coup led many to interpret events as attempted Igbo domination.

The North initiated a counter coup 29 July 1966 and hostilities continued. Igbos and other southerners were massacred in the North, and Igbo mobs massacred outsiders in the southeast. A short-lived agreement was reached 4 January 1967 for a confederal system with a weak central government and considerable autonomy for the regional governments, but it was not to be.

Biafra announced its independence 30 May 1967. The Nigerian government responded strongly and quickly blockading Biafra by air, land, and sea, denying it oil revenues and relief flows. The land war took place mostly in Biafra. Televised images of starving Biafran babies challenged global sensitivities, but adequate humanitarian assistance from foreign governments, including food, medicine, and clothing, did not follow. The dramatic humanitarian suffering gave birth to a new generation of non-governmental organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) established in 1971.

Because casualties and displacement were largely inflicted on the Igbo, many called it genocide. Rather than intentional destruction of a targeted people, international authorities characterized it as a civil war to prevent secession, and no international military peacemaking forces were deployed. The British and Soviet governments backed the Nigerian Federal Government. France backed the Igbo and along with Israel provided weapons to both sides. The Johnson administration, consumed by the war in Vietnam, expressed neutrality, and the Nixon administration avoided meaningful involvement in yet another civil war. Nixon personally favored intervention on behalf of Biafra and ordered a review of U.S. policy toward Nigeria, [NSSM 11](#), on 28 January 1969. But the State Department saw U.S. interests better served by favoring the Nigerian Federal Government and reunification of oil-rich Nigeria. U.S. assistance was limited to provision of equipment, including trucks and generators.

⁹ http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Nigerian_Civil_War

Ogaden War (1977-1978)

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The Ogaden War was a conventional conflict between the armed forces of Somalia and Ethiopia. Initially, Ethiopia was backed and equipped by the United States, and Somalia was backed by the Soviet Union. Ethiopia switched to Soviet backing causing the United States to shift its backing to Somalia. For a brief period, the Soviet Union found itself backing both sides.

The Horn of Africa is one of many areas badly divided by colonial powers. Italy colonized what is now southern Somalia. Great Britain colonized the north. The French took up residence in Djibouti and built a railroad connecting the natural port to the capital of Ethiopia. The Ogaden Desert—inhabited by nomadic Somalis—constitutes a very large part of Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and Somalia. Britain gave independence to the north (Somaliland and Puntland) in 1960, and north and south soon joined into today's Somalia.

Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by the Derg, his military council, in September 1974. An internal power struggle ensued. Mengistu Haile Mariam was elected to head the Derg. The Derg proclaimed Ethiopia to be a Marxist-Leninist state in May 1975, leading to Soviet support and a brutal civil war.

With Ethiopia in disarray, Said Barr's Somali armed forces attacked into Ethiopia's Ogaden on 13 July 1977 with troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and Soviet MiG-21 jet aircraft. Ethiopia, equipped with American Northrop F5 jets, responded. But with Ethiopia increasingly appearing to align with international communism, the United States shifted its support to Somalia with hundreds of millions in arms aid. Finding itself supporting both sides, the USSR withdrew support from Somalia and provided massive support to Ethiopia. Cuba and other Soviet aligned states provided troops.

The conventional war ended on 15 March 1978 but an insurgency continued for two more years. Corruption, brutality, and central economic planning took Ethiopia to new depths. Gorbachev's reduced aid exacerbated the situation. The Derg collapsed and its members prosecuted. Somalia remained a US client state until 1988. Ethiopia has achieved some degree of recovery. Somalia has not.

Western Hemisphere

Guatemala: Dictatorship to Democracy and Back (1944-1996)

Guatemala: Dictatorship to Democracy and Back

Juan José Arévalo Bermejo and Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, two of the October Revolutionaries, participated in a coup d'état overthrowing dictator Jorge Ubico in 1944. The revolt was a pro-democracy movement following continuous dictatorships since Guatemala gained independence from Spain. Arévalo served as president from 1944 to 1951 with Árbenz as his defense minister. Árbenz was democratically elected to the presidency in 1951 and overthrown by a military junta in 1954. His campaign promises were nationalistic: ending the colonial dependence on the United States, making Guatemala a capitalist state, and extending democracy to all citizens. His policies were nationalistic and leftist, including the typical socioeconomic reforms begun by his predecessor Arévalo. Land reform measures purchased uncultivated land from large land owners and redistributed it to peasants. The United Fruit Company was significantly affected, and the entrenched oligarchy was threatened. Over 20 coup attempts were made against Árbenz, one of them led by Carlos Castillo, an army officer who was shot, jailed, and went into exile after escaping.

A leftist government in Guatemala was not seen as a direct threat in Washington, but its perceived potential to become a Soviet client state was. The CIA saw the Árbenz government rapidly moving toward international communism. The intelligence community recommended providing support to anti-communist forces within the country. State's view was less threatening and more cautious. According to State, the policy should be to end cooperative assistance to Guatemala and draw closer to the rightwing governments in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. The inept Árbenz government, opposed by natural indigenous anticommunist forces, would eventually resolve the problem, thought State.

Truman's Operation PBFortune was reenergized and renamed PBSuccess. Exiled Guatemalan General Carlos Castillo Armas, another of the October Revolutionaries, would lead the effort. After the coup, Castillo was declared president and ruled dictatorially from 1954 until his assassination in 1957. He immediately reversed the liberal reforms of Arévalo and Árbenz, including land reforms and expanded suffrage. A civil war followed from 1960 until 1996.

Cuba from Batista to Castro (1959)*Cuba from Batista to Castro*

Fidel Castro and his brother Raul were sons of a wealthy Cuban plantation owner who leased land from, and sold sugar cane to, the United Fruit Company. The Castros were joined by the Argentine radical, Che Guevara, in waging an initially student-led revolution in the mountains against corruption and commercial imperialism.

Batista's army—his main source of power—was ill suited to guerilla war in the jungle. Soldiers deserted to Castro's side in droves. In a surprise move, supporters attending Batista's 1958 New Year's Eve party were flown out of the country. Batista's plane went to Trujillo's Dominican Republic. Castro marched into Havana on 8 January 1959.

Eisenhower chose not to intervene, but rather to wait and see. Many saw it as a change from one pro-American government to another. Castro appeared to be a free enterprise nationalist who declared neutrality in the Cold War as had India's Nehru and Egypt's Nasser. Some thought that US loans would be a sufficient policy lever. A prominent school of thought posits that subsequent US actions forced Castro into the Soviet orbit for survival.

Nicaragua: from Somoza to the Sandinistas (1979-1990)*Nicaragua: from Somoza to the Sandinistas (1979-1990)*

The Sandinistas came to power in 1979 overthrowing the rightwing Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas supported leftist guerrillas opposing the rightwing government in neighboring El Salvador. On 4 January 1982, Reagan signed NSDD-17 authorizing the CIA to organize the disparate factions, including former Somoza National Guardsmen, into a more coherent counterrevolutionary movement, the Contras, and to provide them with \$19 million in aid. The same year, the Boland Amendment specifically prohibited expenditure of funds to support the Contras. The Contras conducted sabotage and terrorism against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

In 1984, Reagan announced the end of support in response to congressional pressure. The same year, the Sandinistas won election monitored by international observers and filed suit in the International Court of Justice against the United States. On 27 June 1986, the World Court found in Nicaragua's favor holding the United States responsible for the Contras' human rights violations. The Court ordered the United States to cease its support to the Contras and to pay reparations. The United States rejected the order. The UN General Assembly directed the United States to comply with the World Court order by a vote of 94 to 3. The US vetoed the related UN Security Council resolution.

On 3 February 1988, the House rejected a White House request for \$36 million in support to the Contras. In 1990, the Sandinistas lost elections to the US-backed candidate, Violeta Barros de Chamorro.