CHAPTER 28

THE ONSET OF THE COLD WAR

SUMMARY
Postwar antagonism gradually led the United States and the Soviet Union into the Cold War. The contrasts between the countries were dramatically represented in their leaders—Truman, who believed in the innate goodness of America, and Stalin, the hard-headed realist who was determined to protect Russia’s wartime conquests.

The Cold War Begins
The two countries split over three issues: control of Europe, postwar economic aid, and the control of atomic weapons.

The Division of Europe
The Allies first disagreed over the division of Europe, with each side intent on imposing its values in the areas liberated by its military. The division of Germany between West (where the U.S., Britain, and France exercised authority) and the East (under the Soviets) was most crucial. Had the West regarded Stalin simply as a cautious leader who was trying to protect Russia rather than an aggressive dictator leading a communist drive for world domination, the tension between the two sides might not have escalated into the Cold War.

Withholding Economic Aid
Though the United States knew of the enormous damage done to Russia during the war, Truman and Congress ended lend-lease aid and ignored a Soviet request for a loan that would help them rebuild. This American refusal to provide aid convinced Stalin of Western hostility and contributed to a growing antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Atomic Dilemma
The United States proposed only a gradual abolition of nuclear arms in the Baruch Plan, thus preserving America’s atomic monopoly, while the Soviets proposed immediate nuclear disarmament. Because both proposals were based on each nation’s self-interest, attempts to agree on mutual reduction of atomic weapons failed.

Containment
U.S. foreign policy leaders initiated a major departure in American foreign affairs from the traditional policy of isolationism to one of containment, arguing that only strong and sustained resistance could halt Soviet expansionism.

The Truman Doctrine
In 1947 President Truman asked Congress for economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey to prevent possible communist revolutions. In providing this aid, the United States assumed what had been Great Britain’s role—that of leading Western power in the
eastern Mediterranean—and established that the United States would support any nation that was resisting communist takeover. This, the issuance of the Truman Doctrine, marked the beginning of the Cold War.

**The Marshall Plan**
The American government also decided to contain Soviet influence by financing postwar European recovery as a check on communist power. Through the Marshall Plan, the United States paid for the industrial revival in Western Europe and ended the threat that all Europe might drift into the communist orbit because of economic desperation.

**The Western Military Alliance**
In 1949, the United States entered into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a pact for collective self-defense, with ten European nations and Canada. The move represented an overreaction to Soviet aggression, and tensions between the former allies escalated as NATO intensified Russian fears of the West.

**The Berlin Blockade**
When the Russians blockaded the western access to Berlin, the Truman government responded with an airlift, which maintained the American position in that German city and contributed to Truman’s surprising reelection victory in 1948. The Berlin crisis signaled the end of the initial phase of the Cold War—Europe was divided and the rivalry between the Soviets and Americans was about to spread to the rest of the world.

**The Cold War Expands**
In the late 1940s and the early 1950s, the Cold War expanded. Both sides built up their military might, and diplomatic competition spread from Europe to Asia.

**The Military Dimension**
Committed to winning the growing conflict with Russia, the American government unified its armed services and initiated a massive military buildup, especially in its air force. The National Security Act created the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council. A new national defense policy—NSC-68—took form that was based on the premise that the Soviet Union sought “to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world” thereby “mortalally challenging the United States.”

**The Cold War in Asia**
In Asia, the United States consolidated its Pacific sphere, but failed to avert the Chinese civil war in which Mao Tse-tung and the Communists drove Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists from the mainland to Formosa (renamed Taiwan). The United States refused to recognize the legitimacy of the communist government of China and turned its focus to Japan as its main ally in Asia.

**The Korean War**
The showdown of the Cold War in Asia came in June 1950 when the North Koreans invaded South Korea, perhaps without Soviet approval, leading to war. The United States
secured UN support for a police action to defend South Korea. An attempt to drive the Communists out of North Korea failed, however, and the war settled into a stalemate near the 38th parallel. The most significant result of the war might have been the massive rearming of America and the implementation of NSC-68.

The Cold War at Home
President Truman tried, for the most part unsuccessfully, to revive the New Deal reform tradition after World War II. The Cold War controlled American attention, and the Republicans used dissatisfaction with the postwar economy and fear of communism in the United States to revive its political fortunes.

Truman’s Troubles
Truman’s apparent lack of political vision and his fondness for appointing cronies to high office were major weaknesses. Also, the postwar mood of the country was not conducive to further reform. As the economy settled into postwar normality, Truman found himself caught in the middle between union demands for higher wages and the public demand that consumer prices be kept down.

Truman Vindicated
Facing pressure from within his own party (Southern Democrats bolted over a proposed civil rights measure to form the Dixiecrat Party) as well as Republican attacks on his domestic policies, Truman’s reelection hopes in 1948 seemed dubious. The president benefited, however, from Thomas Dewey’s passive campaign and the indecisiveness of the Republican Congress. Reminding the voters of the past successes of the New Deal and of his aggressiveness in the Cold War, Truman confounded the pollsters by winning a decisive victory.

The Loyalty Issue
Fear of Communists led to a government loyalty program and unrelenting investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Former State Department official Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury after allegations of espionage. Thousands of government workers were dismissed by the Loyalty Review Board for dubious loyalty, and following Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed for conspiring with the Soviets.

McCarthyism in Action
Playing on heightened American fears, Senator Joseph McCarthy engaged in tireless pursuits of communist conspirators. He received great support among the American populace because he offered a simple solution to the complicated problems of the Cold War. McCarthy directed his accusations everywhere, from the State Department to the U.S. Army, and would-be critics, fearful of arousing suspicion, remained quiet.

The Republicans in Power
Promising to clean up corruption and to bring the Korean War to an honorable end, Republican Dwight Eisenhower won election as president in 1952. In 1953 Eisenhower succeeded in reaching an agreement with the North Koreans for an armistice. McCarthy
eventually overreached himself when he accused the upper echelons of the Army of communist ties, leading to his public humiliation and censure following Senate hearings in 1954.

**Eisenhower Wages the Cold War**

Together with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower tried to bring the Cold War under control. In particular, Eisenhower was motivated by outrageous defense expenditures and the sober realization of the destructive possibilities of nuclear warfare.

**Entanglement in Indochina**

Having provided aid to the French in the maintenance of their colony in Indochina against communist guerillas led by Ho Chi Minh since 1950, Eisenhower refused to provide increased American assistance in 1954 when the French were on the brink of defeat. Following an international conference dividing Vietnam at the 17th parallel with the provision for a general election by 1956, the United States gradually took over from the French support of the anti-communist government of Ngo Dinh Diem in Saigon.

**Containing China**

While Senate Republicans blamed Truman’s Democratic administration for the “loss” of China, Eisenhower signed a security treaty with Chiang Kai-shek’s government in Formosa and hinted at the use of nuclear retaliation to forestall Chinese attacks on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Eisenhower’s policies were aimed at driving a wedge between the Russians and the Chinese by convincing the Chinese that the Soviet Union could not protect them from the United States should they overstep their boundaries.

**Turmoil in the Middle East**

When Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal in 1956, England and France retaliated with an invasion of Egypt. Both the United States and the Soviet Union supported a UN resolution calling for their withdrawal, establishing the United States as the main western influence in the region and setting up yet another Cold War battleground with the Soviets. In 1958, the United States intervened temporarily in Lebanon to secure establishment of a stable government.

**Covert Actions**

During the 1950s, the United States used the CIA to work behind the scenes on many fronts: to place the Shah of Iran in control of that country, to overthrow a leftist regime in Guatemala, and to oppose the Castro regime in Cuba. The corrupting belief that the ends justify the means would later come back to haunt the United States.

**Waging Peace**

Eisenhower’s repeated efforts to end the nuclear arms race failed although a temporary suspension of testing did occur for the remainder of his presidency. The Soviet launching of *Sputnik*, however, contributed to an intensification of Americans’ fears. In 1960 Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin’s successor, agreed to a summit conference with Eisenhower, but later refused to attend after an American spy plane was shot down over Soviet territory.
Conclusion: The Continuing Cold War
Disappointed with the breakup of the Paris summit, Eisenhower made one last attempt to moderate the Cold War when he warned Americans of the unwarranted influence of a growing military-industrial complex.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. Explain the origins of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union following World War II.

2. Evaluate the responses of the Truman administration to the onset of the Cold War.

3. Discuss the origins, developments, and results of the Korean War.

4. Assess Truman’s action in the Berlin Crisis. What were his alternatives? Did he make the right choice?

5. Discuss the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. How effective were they as foreign policies?

6. Explain the reasons for Truman’s surprise reelection as president in 1948.

7. Evaluate Truman’s success in extending the New Deal policies of FDR.

8. Explain the rise and fall of McCarthyism in the United States from 1950 to 1954.


10. Evaluate Eisenhower’s success or failure in waging the Cold War.

11. Explain the expansion of the Cold War in the 1950s into Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.
GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **reparations** payments by a defeated nation to victors for war damages and losses. “Truman and Stalin clashed . . . over such difficult issues as reparations . . .”

2. **coalition** union or alliance, often temporary, among factions, parties, or nations. “Communist regimes replaced coalition governments . . .”

3. **coup** a successful decisive action, especially the overthrow of a government. “a coup in Czechoslovakia . . . gave the Soviets a strategic foothold in Central Europe.”

4. **demobilization** disbandment, especially of military forces. “Eisenhower . . . cited the rapid demobilization of American armed forces . . .”

5. **appeasement** bringing peace, especially when done with conciliatory concessions. “Recalling the lesson of Munich, he opposed appeasement . . .”

6. **trusteeship** control of the administration of a territory, usually by appointment of an international organization. “A trusteeship arrangement . . . merely disguised the fact that the United States held full control over the . . . islands.”

7. **mediation** the attempt to resolve differences through an intermediary. “Political mediation had failed, military intervention was out of the question.”

8. **collective security** pertaining to the organization of a group of nations to guarantee the security of each member nation. “the President . . . secured a resolution . . . calling on the member nations to engage in a collective security action.”

9. **satellite** a country dominated by a more powerful nation. “the United States was at war with a Soviet satellite in Asia.”

10. **tactical** pertaining to maneuvers for gaining an advantage over an adversary. “he waited ready to dazzle an opponent with tactical mastery.”

11. **intelligence** secret information, usually about an adversary. “the act created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to coordinate the intelligence-gathering activities . . .”

12. **legitimacy** a state of lawfulness according to accepted standards. “the state department refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new regime in Peking.”
13. **truce** a temporary end to fighting by agreement of the belligerents. “as truce talks with the Communists bogged down.”

14. **bipartisan** involving cooperation or agreement between two parties (usually, in American history, Republicans and Democrats). “The Republicans, committed to support the bipartisan policy of containment.”

15. **red herring** something used to divert attention from the basic issue. “Although Truman tried to dismiss the loyalty issue as a ‘red herring’.”

**IDENTIFICATION**

Briefly identify the meaning and significance of the following terms:

1. Potsdam Conference

2. Iron Curtain

3. NATO

4. Truman Doctrine

5. NSC-68

6. Taft-Hartley Act of 1947

7. McCarthyism
MATCHING

A. Match the following American leaders with the appropriate description:

_____ 1. Bernard Baruch a. head of Policy Planning Staff who drafted NSC-68

_____ 2. George C. Marshall b. senator who suggested that Truman “scare hell” out of Americans to get their backing for aid to countries resisting communism

_____ 3. Dean Acheson c. secretary of state who offered American economic aid to rebuild western Europe

_____ 4. George Kennan d. undersecretary of state who hoped to see the U.S. take Britain's role as a leading world power

_____ 5. Arthur M. Vandenberg e. financier who drafted a plan that preserved America's monopoly of the atomic bomb

f. head of Policy Planning Staff who first advocated U.S. containment of Soviet power
B. Match the following Cold War figures with the appropriate description:

_____1. Andrei Gromyko  
   a. Chinese communist leader who won control of the Chinese mainland

_____2. Mao Tse-tung  
   b. North Korean who launched attack on South Korea in 1950

_____3. Kim Il-Sung  
   c. Vietnamese nationalist whose Saigon government received backing by the U.S.

_____4. Ho Chi Minh  
   d. Vietnamese communist who led opposition to the French return in Indochina

_____5. Nikita Khrushchev  
   e. Russian diplomat who proposed a total ban on atomic bombs
   f. Soviet leader who denounced the U.S. after an American spy plane was shot down

COMPLETION

Answer the question or complete the statement by filling in the blanks with the correct word or words.

1. World War II had resulted in the loss of 15 to 20 million lives, over 30,000 factories, and over 40,000 miles of railroad track in the nation of ________________.

2. When the British informed the United States it could no longer provide aid to the eastern Mediterranean nations of __________ and __________ in 1947, President Truman announced a policy pledging American support to any countries resisting communism.

3. The Berlin airlift helped President Truman win reelection in 1948 over Republican candidate ________________.

4. Following the Soviet explosion of the atomic bomb in 1949, the United States planned for building of the more destructive ________________ bomb.

5. Truman convened the United Nations Security Council in June 1950 to protest the military aggression of ________________.

6. Members of the Democratic splinter group who bolted from the party in 1948 and nominated Strom Thurmond for the presidency were known as ________________.
7. The most famous case of possible American espionage involved prominent U.S. State Department official ____________________________.

8. Contrary to popular myth, President Eisenhower, rather than his Secretary of State ____________________________, made all major foreign policy decisions during his administration.

9. Following a catastrophic defeat at ____________ in 1954, the French decided to withdraw all forces from Indochina.

10. Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser sparked an international crisis in July 1956 with his seizure of the ____________________________.

TRUE/FALSE

Mark the following statements either T (True) or F (False).

_____1. When compared to the blunt and belligerent Stalin, Harry Truman seemed cautious and cunning.

_____2. The Russians refused to participate in the Marshall Plan because they saw it as an attempt to weaken their control of eastern Europe.

_____3. NSC-68 argued that the United States could afford to spend no more than thirty percent of its gross national product for military security.

_____4. As the spheres of influence were defined at Yalta, China fell between the American and Russian spheres.

_____5. Secretary of State Dean Acheson argued that the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States.

_____6. Secretary Acheson and General MacArthur warned President Truman of the dangers of Chinese entrance into the Korean War.

_____7. The most important issue in the 1948 presidential election was the waging of the Cold War.

_____8. When it became apparent that the communist Chinese forces were winning the struggle for China, the response of the United States was full-scale military intervention in support of Chiang Kai-shek.

_____9. When General MacArthur called for a renewed offensive in Korea, President Truman decided to relieve the popular commander and bring him home.
10. The defection of the Dixiecrats from the Democratic party and the unpopularity of Truman’s reform policies led to a Republican victory in the 1948 presidential election.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Which of the following was not a major postwar issue between the United States and the Soviet Union?
   a. the division of Europe
   b. the punishment of German war criminals
   c. postwar economic aid
   d. control of atomic weapons

2. With his Truman Doctrine speech President Truman hoped to
   a. “scare hell” out of Americans so they would support the policy of containment.
   b. “scare hell” out of the Russians to take advantage of the American atomic monopoly.
   c. provide economic assistance for the rebuilding of Europe.
   d. establish a Western military alliance to “contain” communism.

3. Which of the following did not coincide with the U.S. policy of containment?
   a. extension of lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union
   b. extension of economic aid to western Europe
   c. offering of protection to Greece and Turkey
   d. establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

4. Truman responded to the Russian blockade of Berlin in 1948 by
   a. yielding to the blockade with a vigorous protest in the United Nations.
   b. airlifting supplies into the city.
   c. sending American tanks through the blockade.
   d. escalating the conflict with a counter blockade of Soviet positions.

5. The National Security Act of 1947 created the
   a. Department of Defense.
   b. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
   d. all of the above
6. The most significant result of the Korean War was the
   a. massive rearmament by the United States.
   b. American determination to avoid land wars in Asia.
   c. firing of General Douglas MacArthur.
   d. unification of the military services.

7. Most Americans wished to convince the “lost sheep” of the Korean War to return home because they
   a. wanted to promote the cause of peace.
   b. wished to reward them for their loyalty.
   c. feared they would contribute to communist propaganda efforts.
   d. all of the above

8. The postwar mood of the American people could best be described as one that
   a. desired the extension of New Deal reforms.
   b. wished to back away from global efforts to halt the spread of communism.
   c. favored the retention of wartime price and wage controls.
   d. favored swift conversion to a peacetime economy.

9. McCarthy drew a disproportionate backing from which of the following groups?
   a. upper-middle-class businesspeople and professionals
   b. writers, teachers, artists, and other intellectuals
   c. working-class Irish, Polish, and Italian Catholics
   d. farmers, Hispanics, and African Americans

10. Bernard Baruch and General Eisenhower insisted on preserving American postwar monopoly on atomic weapons to
    a. offset the Soviets’ conventional military strength.
    b. intimidate the Russians in important diplomatic negotiations.
    c. turn back a Soviet plan for world conquest.
    d. balance the American government’s budget by reducing defense costs.

11. The principal goal of Eisenhower’s foreign policy was to
    a. liberate eastern Europe from communist control.
    b. relax tensions and initiate disarmament.
    c. prevent the fall of China to the Communists.
    d. win the arms race with a technological breakthrough.

12. As a result of the Army-McCarthy hearings,
    a. McCarthy was publicly ridiculed and censured by the Senate.
    b. most of McCarthy’s allegations were found to be accurate.
    c. McCarthy was subsequently tried and convicted of perjury.
    d. the army responded by purging its ranks of revealed Communists.
13. Eisenhower supported limited U.S. military intervention to
   a. help the French regain control of Indochina.
   b. aid Chiang Kai-shek’s invasion of the mainland of China.
   c. capture control of the Suez Canal.
   d. establish a stable government in Lebanon.

14. In which of the following nations did the U.S. conduct covert actions during the 1950s?
   a. Iran
   b. Guatemala
   c. Cuba
   d. all of the above

15. The launching of Sputnik convinced Americans that the Soviets were
   a. winning the arms race.
   b. engaged in spying from outer space.
   c. intent on a policy of détente with the United States.
   d. more interested in the economic rather than military applications of technology.

**THOUGHT QUESTIONS**

To check your understanding of the key issues of this period, solve the following problems:

1. What were the causes of the Cold War? Which side was more to blame for it—the United States or the Soviet Union?

2. How did the Truman administration respond to the onset of the Cold War? Was he successful? Explain.

3. Why was Truman’s reelection as president in 1948 such a surprise? Was Truman a successful president in domestic affairs?

4. Why did the Cold War escalate during the late 1940s and early 1950s? What were the major consequences?

5. What factors contributed to the rise and fall of Joseph McCarthy as a political power in the U.S. from 1950 to 1954? What lessons might be learned from the experience of McCarthyism?

6. Who were the “lost sheep” of the Korean War? How did Americans respond to them? Explain why.
7. Explain the objectives of President Eisenhower’s foreign policy and evaluate its long-term as well as short-term success.

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE

Read the following selections: “Testimony Before the House Un-American Activities Committee” (1947) by Ronald Reagan and “Decision not to Intervene at Dien Bien Phu” (1954) by Dwight D. Eisenhower. Answer the questions following the reading selections.

Ronald Reagan, Testimony Before the House Un-American Activities Committee (1947)

The Committee met at 10:30 A.M. [October 23, 1947], the Honorable J. Parnell Thomas (Chairman) presiding.

THE CHAIRMAN: The record will show that Mr. McDowell, Mr. Vail, Mr. Nixon, and Mr. Thomas are present. A Subcommittee is sitting.

Staff members present: Mr. Robert E. Stripling, Chief Investigator; Messrs. Louis J. Russell, H. A. Smith, and Robert B. Gatson, Investigators; and Mr. Benjamin Mandel, Director of Research.

MR. STRIPLING: When and where were you born, Mr. Reagan?

MR. REAGAN: Tampico, Illinois, February 6, 1911.

MR. STRIPLING: What is your present occupation?

MR. REAGAN: Motion-picture actor.

MR. STRIPLING: How long have you been engaged in that profession?

MR. REAGAN: Since June 1937, with a brief interlude of three and a half years—that at the time didn't seem very brief.

MR. STRIPLING: What period was that?

MR. REAGAN: That was during the late war.

MR. STRIPLING: What branch of the service were you in?

MR. REAGAN: Well, sir, I had been for several years in the Reserve as an officer in the United States Calvary, but I was assigned to the Air Corp.

MR. STRIPLING: Are you the president of the guild at the present time?

MR. REAGAN: Yes, sir.

MR. STRIPLING: As a member of the board of directors, as president of the Screen Actors Guild, and as an active member, have you at any time observed or noted within the organization a clique of either Communists or Fascists who were attempting to exert influence or pressure on the guild?

MR. REAGAN: Well, sir, my testimony must be very similar to that of Mr. [George] Murphy and Mr. [Robert] Montgomery. There has been a small group within the Screen Actors Guild which has consistently opposed the policy of the guild board and officers of the guild, as evidenced by the vote on various issues. That small clique referred to has been suspected of more or less following the tactics that we associated with the Communist Party.

MR. STRIPLING: Would you refer to them as a disruptive influence within the guild?

MR. REAGAN: I would say that at times they have attempted to be a disruptive influence.
MR. STRIPLING: You have no knowledge yourself as to whether or not any of them are members of the Communist Party?

MR. REAGAN: No, sir, I have no investigative force, or anything, and I do not know.

MR. STRIPLING: Has it ever been reported to you that certain members of the guild were Communists?

MR. REAGAN: Yes, sir, I have heard different discussions and some of them tagged as Communists.

MR. STRIPLING: Would you say that this clique has attempted to dominate the guild?

MR. REAGAN: Well, sir, by attempting to put over their own particular views on various issues. . . .

MR. STRIPLING: Mr. Reagan, there has been testimony to the effect here that numerous Communist-front organizations have been set up in Hollywood. Have you ever been solicited to join any of those organizations or any organization which you consider to be a Communist-front organization?

MR. REAGAN: Well, sir, I have received literature from an organization called the Committee for a Far-Eastern Democratic Policy. I don't know whether it is Communist or not. I only know that I didn't like their views and as a result I didn't want to have anything to do with them. . . .

MR. STRIPLING: Would you say from your observation that this is typical of the tactics or strategy of the Communists, to solicit and use the names of prominent people to either raise money or gain support.

MR. REAGAN: I think it is in keeping with their tactics, yes, sir.

MR. STRIPLING: Do you think there is anything democratic about those tactics?

MR. REAGAN: I do not, sir.

MR. STRIPLING: Mr. Reagan, what is your feeling about what steps should be taken to rid the motion-picture industry of any Communist influences?

MR. REAGAN: Well, sir, ninety-nine percent of us are pretty well aware of what is going on, and I think, within the bounds of our democratic rights and never once stepping over the rights given us by democracy, we have done a pretty good job in our business of keeping those people's activities curtailed. After all, we must recognize them at present as a political party. On that basis we have exposed their lies when we came across them, we have opposed their propaganda, and I can certainly testify that in the case of the Screen Actors Guild we have been eminently successful in preventing them from, with their usual tactics, trying to run a majority of an organization with a well-organized minority. In opposing those people, the best thing to do is make democracy work. . . .

Sir, I detest, I abhor their philosophy, but I detest more than that their tactics, which are those of the fifth column, and are dishonest, but at the same time I never as a citizen want to see our country become urged, by either fear or resentment of this group that we ever compromise with any of our democratic principles through that fear or resentment. I still think that democracy can do it.

**Dwight D. Eisenhower, Decision Not to Intervene at Dien Bien Phu (1954)**

Dwight D. Eisenhower to Alfred Gruenther, April 26, 1954

As you know, you and I started more than three years ago trying to convince the French that they could not win the Indo-China war and particularly could not get real American support in that region unless they would unequivocally pledge independence to the Associated States upon the achievement of military victory. Along with this—indeed as a corollary to it—this administration has been arguing that no Western power can go to Asia militarily, except as one of a concert of powers, which concert must include local Asiatic peoples.

To contemplate anything else is to lay ourselves open to the charge of imperialism and colonialism or—at the very least—of objectionable paternalism. Even, therefore, if we could by some sudden stroke assure the saving of the Dien Bien Phu garrison, I think that under the conditions proposed by the French, the free world would lose more than it would gain.
Dwight D. Eisenhower to Swede Hazlett, April 27, 1954

In my last letter I remember that I mentioned Dien Bien Phu. It still holds out and while the situation looked particularly desperate during the past week, there now appears to be a slight improvement and the place may hold on for another week or ten days. The general situation in Southeast Asia, which is rather dramatically epitomized by the Dien Bien Phu battle, is a complicated one that has been a long time developing. . . .

For more than three years I have been urging upon successive French governments the advisability of finding some way of "internationalizing" the war; such action would be proof to all the world and particularly to the Viet Namese that France's purpose is not colonial in character but is to defeat Communism in the region and to give the natives their freedom. The reply has always been vague, containing references to national prestige, Constitutional limitations, inevitable effects upon the Moroccan and Tunisian peoples, and dissertations on plain political difficulties and battles within the French Parliament. The result has been that the French have failed entirely to produce any enthusiasm on the part of the Vietnamese for participation in the war. . . .

In any event, any nation that intervenes in a civil war can scarcely expect to win unless the side in whose favor it intervenes possesses a high morale based upon a war purpose or cause in which it believes. The French have used weasel words in promising independence and through this one reason as much as anything else, have suffered reverses that have been really inexcusable.

James C. Hagerty, Diary, Monday, April 26, 1954

Indochina. The President said that the French "are weary as hell." He said that it didn't look as though Dienbienphu could hold out for more than a week and would fall possibly sooner. Reported that the British thought that the French were not putting out as much as they could, but that he did not necessarily agree with their viewpoint. "The French go up and down every day-they are very volatile. They think they are a great power one day and they feel sorry for themselves the next day." The President said that if we were to put one combat soldier into Indochina, then our entire prestige would be at stake, not only in that area but throughout the world. . . . The President said the situation looked very grim this morning, but that he and Dulles were doing everything they could to get the free countries to act in concert. In addition, he said "there are plenty of people in Asia, and we can train them to fight well. I don't see any reason for American ground troops to be committed in Indochina, don't think we need it, but we can train their forces and it may be necessary for us eventually to use some of our planes or aircraft carriers off the coast and some of our fighting craft we have in that area for support."

1. Does Reagan believe that the Communist party had exerted an influence in the motion picture industry? Why was he called to testify?

2. Why do you think Hollywood was a particular target of the House Un-American Activities Committee?

3. According to Reagan, what steps should be taken by the county to rid the motion picture industry of any communist influences?

4. Why did Eisenhower oppose American assistance to the French in Indochina? For what purposes were the French fighting?

5. How would Eisenhower’s observations about intervention in a civil war prove prophetic?