

US History

The Cold War

Learning Target:

I can examine how the threat of nuclear war influenced American life during the Cold War.

7. The Nuclear Age and Anxiety

Alliances

NATO –

- April 1949 – Formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- Formed in response to communist expansion
- Included United States, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal
- All countries agreed that an attack on any country was an attack on all of them

Warsaw Pact –

- Formed in 1955 by the Soviet Union in response to the rearmament of West Germany
- Included the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania

The Bomb

August 1949 –

- USSR joins the nuclear club by detonating a nuclear bomb

The Arms Race –

- Due to Soviet acquisition of the bomb the US increased production of nuclear weapons and began production of the Hydrogen Bomb (H-Bomb)
- H-bomb would be 67 times the power of WWII nuclear bombs
- Many scientists questioned the morality of developing such a weapon
- US beat the Soviets to the H-bomb, but the Soviets developed one less than a year later

Brinkmanship –

- Strategy of Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, his secretary of state
- Willingness to go to the edge of all-out war with the Soviets, including nuclear force if necessary – led to increase in public fear in the U.S.

Calming Public Fears:

Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) –

- Used to help calm public fears about nuclear warfare
- Tactics included:
 - Films, TV shows, magazines, pamphlets and the duck and cover show
 - Advised Americans to build bomb shelters for safety

Space Race:

Sputnik (Oct. 1957) –

- First artificial satellite
- Its launch seemed to prove the US was falling behind in technological development
- November 1957 – Soviets launched Sputnik II with a dog aboard

- Gov. Williams of Michigan wrote a poem describing his feelings
 *“Oh little Sputnik, flying high
 With made-in-Moscow beep,
 You tell the world it’s a Commie sky
 And Uncle Sam’s asleep.”*

Explorer I (Jan. 1958)–

- US launched its first satellite in an attempt to catch up to the Soviets

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) –

- Developed by Eisenhower to promote space technology

National Defense Education Act (1958) –

- Appropriated millions of dollars to improve education in science, math, and foreign languages

Tension Increases Under Eisenhower:

Secret Surveillance Flights –

- CIA had been conducting secret high-altitude flights over Soviet territory
- U-2 planes took pictures of missile sites and troop movement

Eisenhower Becomes Concerned –

- US officials became nervous because the Soviets started firing at our planes
- Eisenhower decided to have the program discontinued
- Summit between Eisenhower and Khrushchev supposed to take place
- If plane shot down it would ruin our credibility for the summit
- Secretary of State Dulles convinced him to allow one last flight

U-2 Plane Shot Down –

- May 1, 1960, Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Soviet territory
- Was captured and sentenced to ten years in Soviet prison

Summit Canceled

- Khrushchev demanded a stop to the program and an apology
- Eisenhower denied the program at first but later had to admit to it
- Stopped the program but refused to apologize
- Khrushchev called off summit and withdrew Eisenhower’s invitation to USSR