



COLD WAR NUCLEAR COMPETITION TIMELINE

Supplementary materials to be used with the Cold War Timeline materials.



NUCLEAR COMPETITION

PRESIDENT:
TRUMAN

★
AUG 29
1949

USSR TESTED ATOM BOMB

The Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb. In doing so, it became the second nation with nuclear weapons. Having nuclear weapons both ensured its immediate survival and increased its threat to the United States.



*A mushroom cloud from Soviet nuclear testing in 1951.
(Public domain/Minatom)*



NUCLEAR COMPETITION

PRESIDENT:
KENNEDY

★
OCT
1962

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear conflict during the Cold War. As a result, the Soviet Union removed nuclear missiles it had placed in Cuba, and the United States removed its nuclear missiles from Turkey.



Women from Women Strike for Peace hold signs near the U.N. building in New York City. (LOC/Phil Stanziola, 1962)



NUCLEAR COMPETITION

PRESIDENT:
KENNEDY

★
AUG 5
1963

LIMITED NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY

The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in Moscow. The limited treaty banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, space, and underwater but allowed for underground testing.



A nuclear test in Nevada in 1958. (NNSA)



NUCLEAR COMPETITION

PRESIDENT:
REAGAN

★
APR 26
1986

CHERNOBYL DISASTER



A Soviet helicopter participates in Chernobyl clean-up. (NARA, 1987)

This was the worst Cold War nuclear accident. In what is now northern Ukraine, a Soviet reactor in a nuclear power plant exploded, causing fires and releasing of radioactive materials. The explosion occurred due to poor reactor design and bad safety protocols. The Soviet Union initially denied the incident. But after radioactive debris reached as far as Sweden, the nation finally admitted the accident on April 28. Around 335,000 people had to evacuate the region. Containment efforts and cleanup are expected to last until at least 2065.

THE COLD WAR: A TIMELINE

