

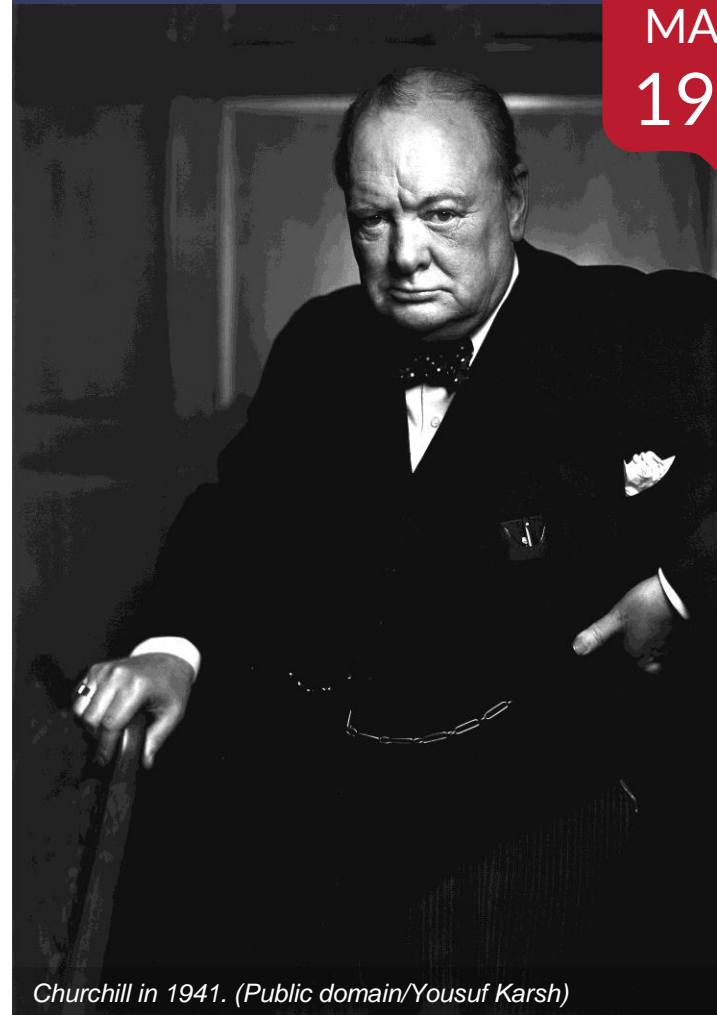


THE IRON CURTAIN

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered a speech warning that “an iron curtain has descended across the [European] continent” and that communism threatened global peace. The “iron curtain” became a household term and defined the division of Western and Eastern Europe for almost 50 years.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN

★
MAR 5
1946



Churchill in 1941. (Public domain/Yousuf Karsh)

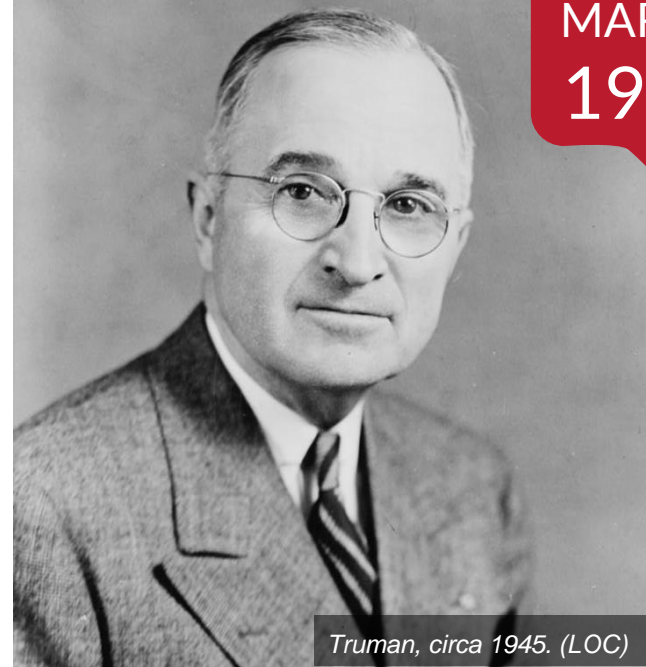


THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

In a joint session, President Harry Truman asked Congress for \$400 million for aid to the Greek and Turkish governments. Turkey and Greece were facing communist and Soviet pressure. Truman argued that

communist victory would undermine political stability and that the U.S. had a moral duty to support “free peoples” and contain the spread of communism. The U.S. was now committed to financially and militarily aiding other nations during peacetime.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN



Truman, circa 1945. (LOC)



MAR 12
1947



THE MARSHALL PLAN

Through the Marshall Plan, the United States provided economic aid to rebuild post-war Europe. However, the Soviet Union refused aid for itself and its satellite nations in Eastern Europe, further dividing the capitalist west and communist east.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN



JUNE 5
1947



Marshall Plan financed tractors arrive in France. (NARA, undated)

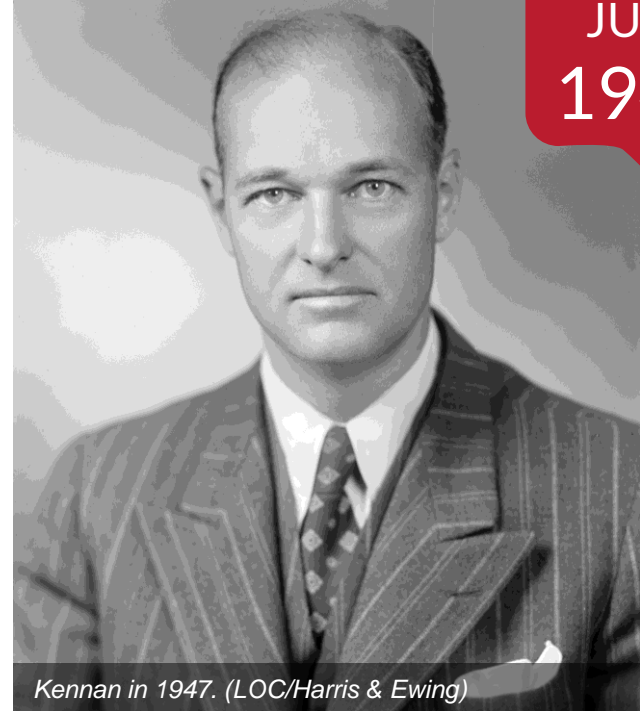


PRESIDENT: TRUMAN

★
JULY
1947

CONTAINMENT

Writing anonymously in *Foreign Affairs*, diplomat George Kennan publicly introduced the idea of containment. Kennan outlined the different values of capitalism and communism and argued that U.S. policy must be long-term containment of the USSR's expanding ambitions. Containment would be debated, defined, and redefined, and would dominate conversations about U.S. foreign policy for much of the Cold War.



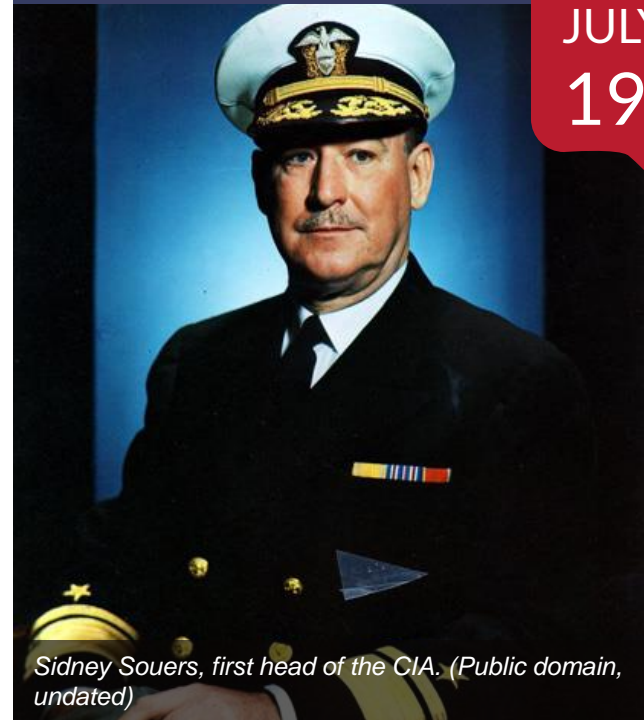
Kennan in 1947. (LOC/Harris & Ewing)



NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947

The National Security Act of 1947 reorganized the United States' military and foreign policy agencies in an effort to promote national security. This act created the Department of Defense (DOD), the National Security Council (NSC), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). These organizations shaped U.S. foreign relations throughout the Cold War.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN



Sidney Souers, first head of the CIA. (Public domain, undated)

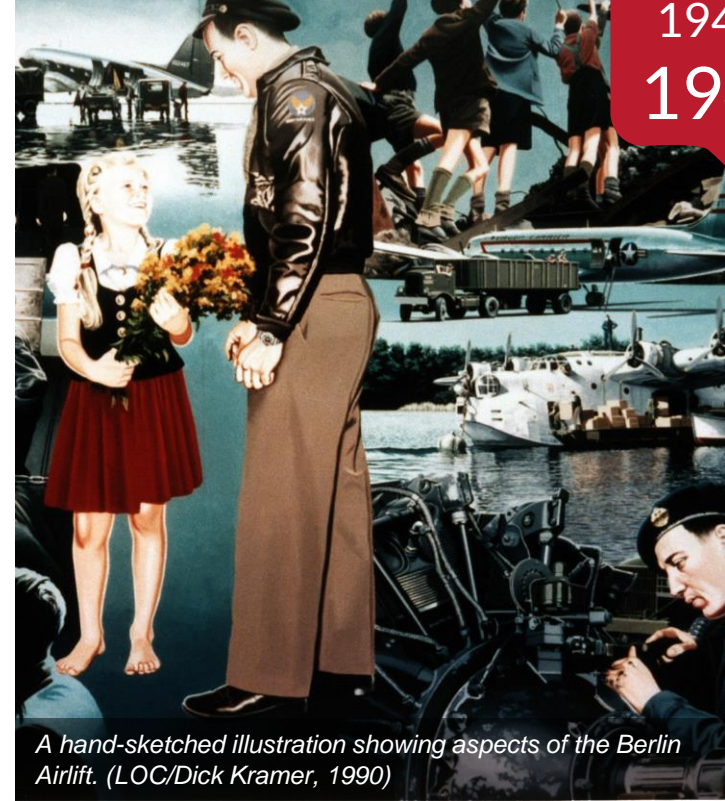


BERLIN BLOCKADE & AIRLIFT

The first major international crisis of the Cold War began in June 1948 when the Soviet Union blocked all supply lines to Allied-controlled West Berlin. In response, the U.S. launched Operation Vittles, one of the largest aerial supply missions in history. By the end of the blockade in 1949, U.S. and U.K. forces had carried out more than 278,000 airdrops and delivered over 2.3 million tons of supplies.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN

★
1948 -
1949



A hand-drawn illustration showing aspects of the Berlin Airlift. (LOC/Dick Kramer, 1990)



NATO FORMED

The United States joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), along with Canada and several western European nations, to encourage European cooperation and bolster collective security against the Soviet Union.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN



A meeting of NATO. (NARA, undated)



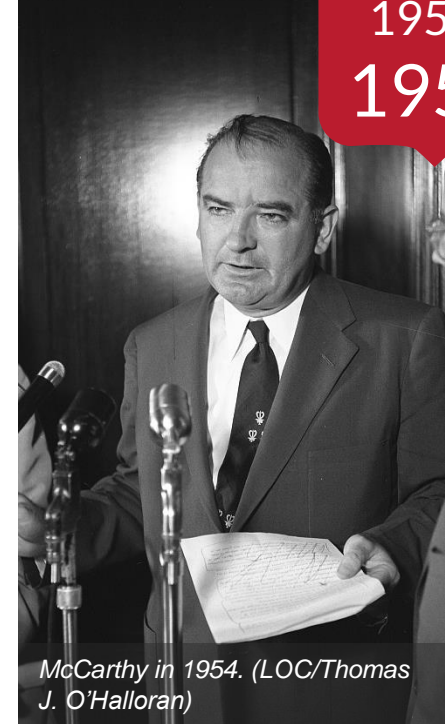


PRESIDENT: TRUMAN

★
1950-
1954

McCARTHYISM

Between 1950 and 1954, Republican Senator Joe McCarthy launched a series of investigations into alleged communist infiltration of the State Department, White House, Treasury Department, and U.S. Army. These investigations created a climate of fear and suspicion. The paranoia around the possibility of communist spies infiltrating American life became known as the “Red Scare.” On December 2, 1954, the Senate formally censured McCarthy for reckless accusations of Communist influence in the U.S. press and federal government. His censure marked the end of McCarthyism.



McCarthy in 1954. (LOC/Thomas J. O'Halloran)



ROSENBERGS CONVICTED OF ESPIONAGE

American citizens Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of espionage. They passed secret information about the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. The United States executed the Rosenbergs in 1953. They were the first U.S. civilians executed for espionage.

PRESIDENT: TRUMAN

★
MAR 29
1951



The Rosenbergs leave the courthouse after being found guilty. (LOC/Roger Higgins, 1951)

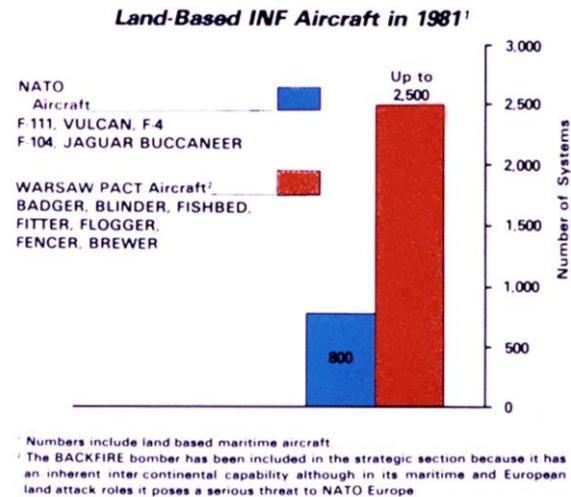
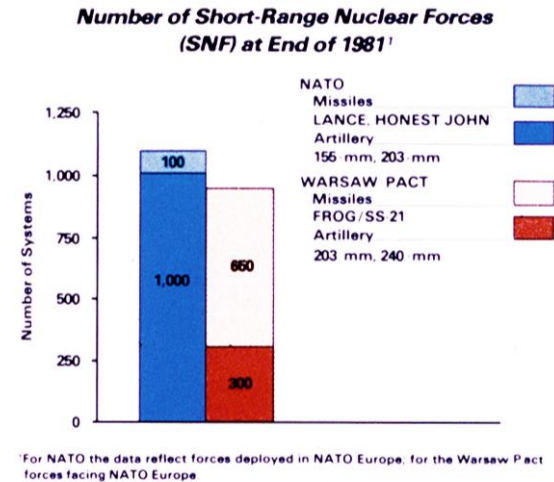


PRESIDENT: EISENHOWER



WARSAW PACT

The Soviet Union and seven other Soviet satellite states in Eastern and Central Europe entered a defensive alliance. The Warsaw Pact was created in response to West Germany joining NATO. The Pact was dissolved in 1991.



Graphs comparing NATO and Warsaw Pact resources in 1981. (NARA, 1983)



PRESIDENT: EISENHOWER

★
JAN 5
1957

EISENHOWER DOCTRINE

The Eisenhower Doctrine promised U.S. military and economic aid to any nation facing “armed aggression” from a communist nation. This doctrine was part of U.S. containment policy to stop the global spread of communism.



On October 31, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower gives a radio address on the crisis in the Middle East. (NARA)



KITCHEN DEBATE

In a model American kitchen at a Moscow exhibition, Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier

Nikita Khrushchev debated the quality of life in their respective countries. Nixon argued that Cold War supremacy should be based on economic and cultural indicators, not just military power (ex. number of televisions vs. number of nuclear weapons). He praised American technology and capitalism, while Khrushchev praised Soviet technology and communism.

PRESIDENT: EISENHOWER



*Khrushchev and Nixon during the Kitchen Debate.
(LOC/Thomas J. O'Halloran, 1959)*

★
JULY 24
1959



PRESIDENT: EISENHOWER

★
MAY 1
1960

U - 2 INCIDENT

American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down in Soviet airspace while on a secret mission to monitor Russian military activity. The Soviets convicted Powers of espionage and sentenced him to three years of imprisonment plus seven years of hard labor. The incident damaged Soviet-American relations. Khrushchev canceled meetings in Paris, where the two powers had planned to discuss easing tensions. On February 10, 1962, the Soviet Union released Powers in a prisoner exchange.



Powers at a U.S. Senate committee hearing on the U-2 incident. (NARA/Warren K. Leffler, 1962)



FAILED BAY OF PIGS INVASION

CIA-backed Cuban exiles invaded the Bay of Pigs on the south coast of Cuba in a plan to overthrow Fidel Castro and place a non-communist government in power. The Cuban military easily defeated the counterrevolutionaries. The failed attack was deeply embarrassing for the Kennedy administration and empowered Castro to strengthen ties with the Soviet Union.

PRESIDENT: KENNEDY

★
APR 17
1961





RISE OF BERLIN WALL

The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) built the Berlin Wall, physically dividing Berlin into two parts: communist East Berlin and capitalist West Berlin. The wall was intended to stop East Germans from fleeing to West Berlin, the only area in East Germany that was not under communist control. Originally a barbed wire fence, the wall was later rebuilt as a concrete wall with watchtowers, mines, and guards instructed to shoot anyone trying to escape.

PRESIDENT: KENNEDY



*East German workers reinforcing the Berlin Wall.
(NARA, 1961)*

AUG 12
1961

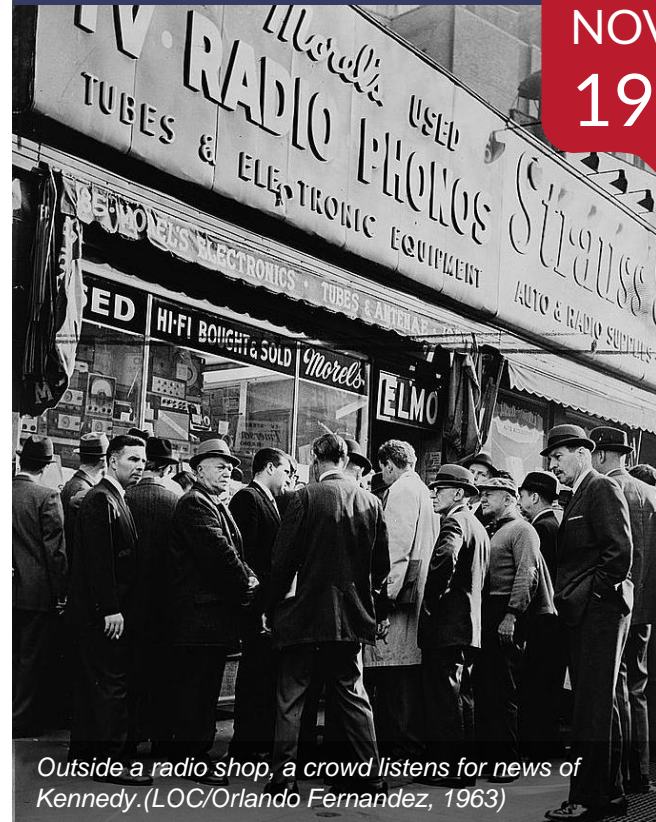


JFK ASSASSINATION

President John. F. Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald while riding in a motorcade through Dallas, Texas. Kennedy's death shocked the nation and sparked widespread mourning around the world. President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Warren Commission to investigate Kennedy's death and found that Oswald was working alone. Kennedy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

PRESIDENT: KENNEDY

★
NOV 22
1963



Outside a radio shop, a crowd listens for news of Kennedy. (LOC/Orlando Fernandez, 1963)



GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION

The United States Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution granting President Johnson the authority to take “all necessary measures” to maintain peace in southeast Asia. Presidents Johnson and Nixon both used the resolution to escalate military action in Vietnam without the Senate’s approval or a formal declaration of war. The resolution was repealed in 1970.

PRESIDENT: JOHNSON

AUG 7
1964



President Johnson signs the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 10, 1964. (NARA/Cecil Stoughton)



MARCH TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

On April 17, 1965, over 10,000 students from universities across the country met in Washington, D.C. to protest the Vietnam War.

Students planned this protest in response to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to escalate the war. This was one of many protests against the Vietnam War.

PRESIDENT: JOHNSON

★
1965 -
1972



In 1969, Coretta Scott King leads a march to the White House as part of a protest against the Vietnam War. (LOC)



END OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

During the Vietnam War, the United States drafted nearly two million men. As the war continued, many Americans grew opposed to the war and protested the draft. In response to the growing discontentment with the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon promised to end the draft during his presidential campaign in 1968. In 1973, Congress ended the draft and established today's all-volunteer force.

PRESIDENT: NIXON



JUNE 30
1973



*Poster stating, "No Draft, No War, No Nukes."
(LOC, ca. 1970)*



IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

Several hundred students occupied the American Embassy in Iran, taking the military and diplomatic personnel inside hostage. The

captors released women and African American hostages during the first several weeks, but 53 Americans remained captive for 444 days. Failed negotiations between the Carter Administration and the new fundamentalist government of Iran revealed the United States' decreasing influence in the region.

PRESIDENT: CARTER



On November 22, 1979, at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, a man speaks in front of a group that includes released hostages. (LOC/Marion S. Trikosko)

★
NOV 4
1979



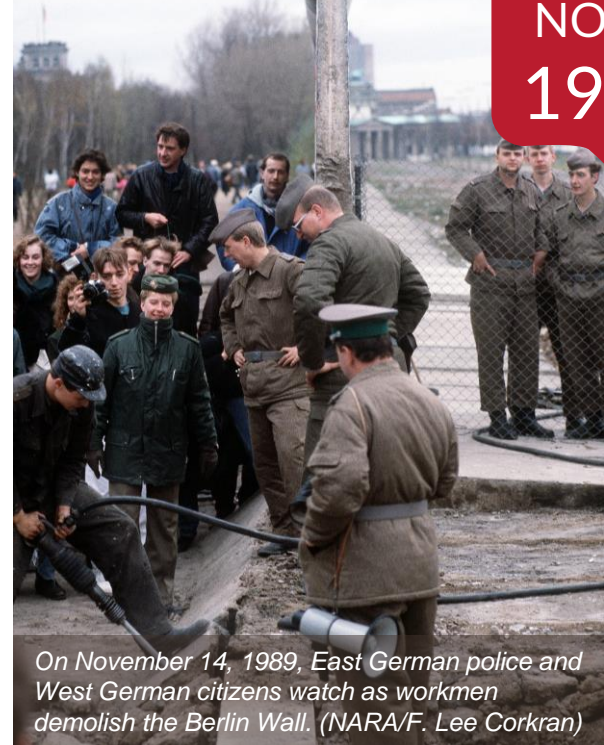
FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

After physically dividing the communist east and the capitalist west for almost 30 years, the Berlin Wall came down. In October 1989, Egon Krenz became leader of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and began reopening East Germany's borders.

On November 9, the Politburo (legislative body) legalized crossings between East and West Germany. That night, Germany citizens began dismantling the Berlin Wall. The following October, Germany was reunified.

PRESIDENT: BUSH

★
NOV 9
1989



On November 14, 1989, East German police and West German citizens watch as workmen demolish the Berlin Wall. (NARA/F. Lee Corkran)

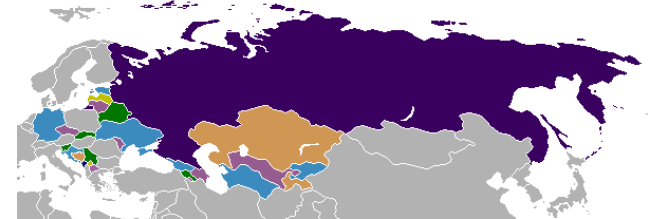


PRESIDENT: BUSH

★
DEC
1991

DISSOLUTION OF USSR

In 1985, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began introducing liberal reforms — *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika*



Two maps show the boundaries of the Soviet Union and countries after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R.
(Public domain/Aivazovsky, 2006)

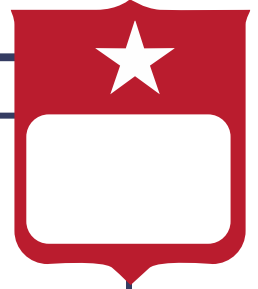
(restructuring). In August 1991, communists opposed to the reforms attempted a coup against Gorbachev. They failed, but the coup marked the end of the Soviet Union. When he returned to office, Gorbachev dissolved the Communist Party. Between August and December 1991, multiple nations declared their independence from the U.S.S.R., including Ukraine and Russia. With no nation left to lead, Gorbachev resigned on December 25, 1991.



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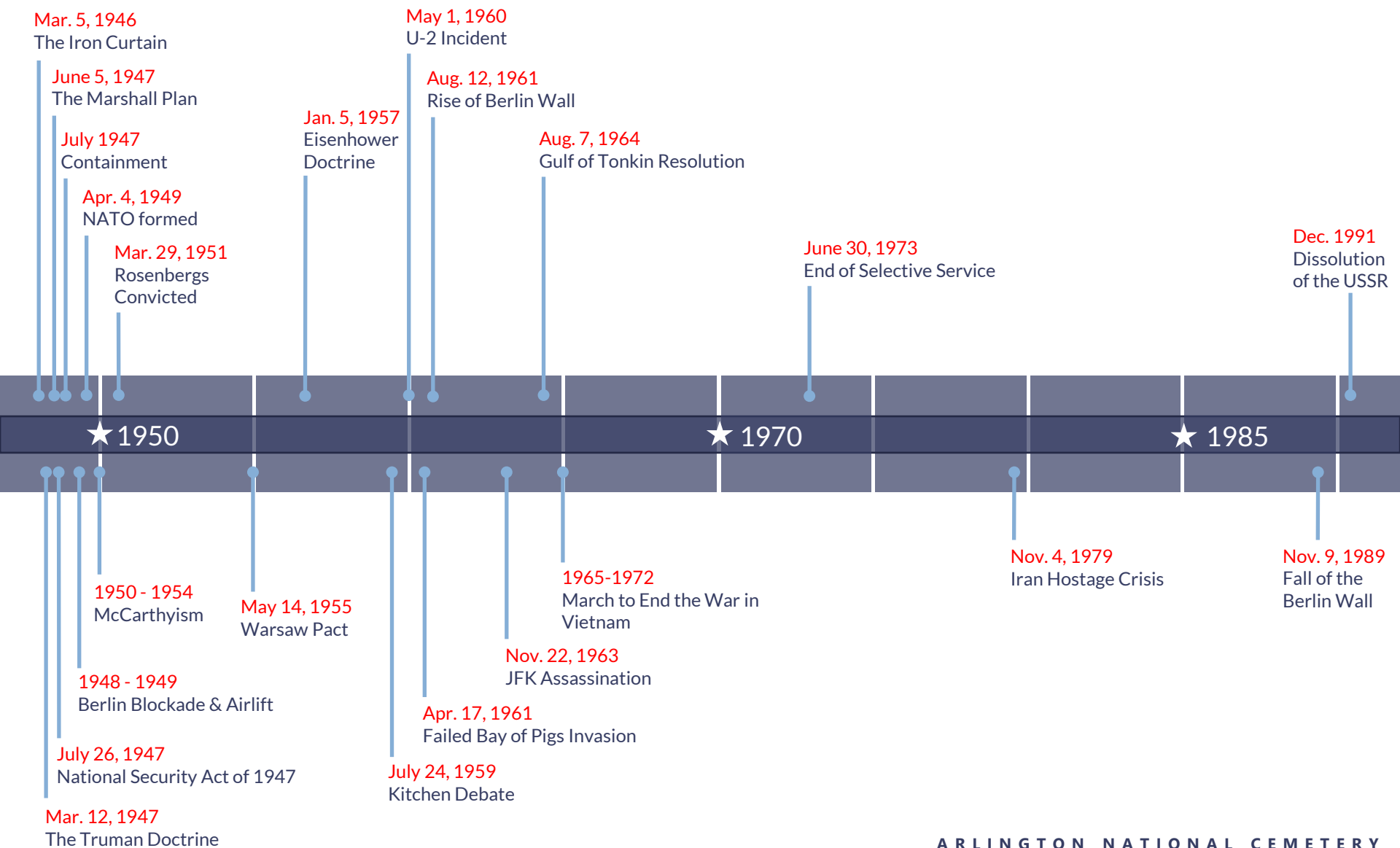
EVENT DESCRIPTION:

PRESIDENT:



CAPTION:

THE COLD WAR: A TIMELINE



1946



1950



1955



1960



1965



1970



1975



1980



1985



1990



1991

