

# The Cold War Round-Robin

## 1. The Korean War (1950-1953)

- What led to the Korean War?
- Why did President Truman decide to keep U.S. troops south of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel?
- Why – and how – did the war end?
- What do these visual sources tell you about the war?

## 2. The Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)

- What characterized the U.S. relationship with Cuba before the revolution and start of the Castro regime?
- Why was the U.S.S.R. interested in Cuba?
- What were the three main effects of the Bay of Pigs invasion?
- What were the effects of the Cuban Missile Crisis?
- What do the visual sources tell you about the crisis?

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- What was the Tet Offensive?
- What was Vietnamization?
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- Who was Gustav Husak – and what role did he play in both the Prague Spring and Velvet Rev.?
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- What do the photos reflect about Czechoslovakia and the Cold War in Eastern Europe?

## 5. Soviet – Afghan War (1979 – 1988)

- What happened in April of 1978, and how did this lead to the Soviet-Afghan War?
- Why did the Soviet Union intervene in the civil war in Afghanistan?
- What was the Carter Doctrine, and what were some other actions taken by Carter in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?
- What was Reagan's policy regarding Soviet involvement in Afghanistan?
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- What do the visual sources tell you about the war?

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- What different factors/groups/nations influenced or controlled Nicaragua from the time of colonization in the 1500's to the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
- How did the United States influence affairs in Nicaragua?
- What characterized the Somoza regime, and why did opposition to the regime grow?
- Who were the Sandinistas, and what who opposed them?
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- What do the visual sources tell you about Nicaragua in the Cold War era?

## 7. Solidarity (formed 1980)

- What was Solidarity?
- Who was Lech Walesa, and what did his committee call for?
- When – and why – was martial law imposed in Poland?
- What happened in June 1987, and then in 1988?
- What ended the rule of the communist government in Poland?



## Korean War

The Korean War was a conflict on the Korean Peninsula from 1950 to 1953 between communist northern forces and noncommunist southern forces. It began when North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950 and quickly escalated, with U.S.-led United Nations (UN) forces fighting for the south, and Chinese forces entering the war on the side of the north.



After World War II, Korea became a pawn in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both countries agreed that the 38th parallel would be the demarcation line for the surrender of Japanese forces. The Soviets would take Korea north of that line, and the United States would do the same south of it. Efforts to reunify Korea diminished when the communist northern government refused to allow a UN commission into its territory. In May 1948, the commission held elections in the southern half of Korea, and Syngman Rhee was elected president of the Republic of Korea. North Korea responded by inaugurating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with Kim Il Sung, who had ties to China and the Soviet Union, as its premier.

By June 1949, the United States had withdrawn its remaining forces from South Korea and left behind the 500-man Korea Military Advisory Group to train Republic of Korea forces. On January 12, 1950, U.S. secretary of state Dean Acheson defined the U.S. strategic defense perimeter in Asia as excluding the Korean Peninsula. On June 25, 1950, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a well-executed surprise invasion of the Republic of Korea. That act initiated the Korean War and prompted U.S. president Harry Truman to authorize a limited commitment of U.S. air and naval units to South Korea. The United States also forwarded the matter to the UN, and a UN resolution condemning North Korea passed unanimously.

U.S. general Douglas MacArthur, who conducted a personal reconnaissance to Korea on June 29–30, appraised the situation and recommended direct U.S. military action to stem the invasion. Truman then authorized MacArthur to commit U.S. ground combat forces to defend South Korea. The initial U.S. policy was to stop the invasion and restore the territorial integrity of the Republic of Korea. On July 7, the UN passed a resolution that called for a multinational effort under MacArthur's direction.

In July, North Korean forces continued to press deeper into South Korea, and by August, the battered U.S. Eighth Army under Gen. Walton Walker had established the Pusan perimeter near the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. In September, MacArthur's brilliant Inchon landing defeated the Korean People's Army and put UN forces on the offensive. After two months of intense fighting in Korea, the Truman administration decided that to avoid triggering direct intervention by either China or Russia, U.S. ground forces would stay south of the 38th parallel, while South Korean forces could conduct limited operations north of that line. If either Chinese or Russian forces entered the war, MacArthur's forces were to assume the defensive.

The Korean People's Army, clearly defeated in the south, retreated into North Korea but refused to surrender. On October 1, South Korean forces entered North Korea against minimal resistance. MacArthur reorganized the UN forces with the intent of destroying the People's Army. In early October, the United States pressed the General Assembly for a resolution to guide follow-on actions. With that new "guidance," planning began for the occupation of

North Korea and a phased program under UN auspices leading to a reunified and democratic Korea. Despite specific warnings from Beijing and growing evidence of a Chinese build-up in Manchuria, U.S. forces entered North Korea on October 7, 1950.

A UN Command military victory appeared to be within reach until Chinese forces began to deploy into North Korea in October. Truman was determined not to widen the war, while MacArthur argued the military necessity of hitting targets in Manchuria that supported the Chinese deployment. The growing feud between Truman and MacArthur over how to deal with China culminated with the general's removal from command in April 1951.

The size and initial success of a late-November Chinese offensive changed the complexion of the conflict. UN Command forces, after losing Seoul for a second time, finally stopped the Chinese, mounted a major offensive, and were able to restore a defensive line just north of the 38th parallel. By May 1951, the war had settled into a costly stalemate. The unification by force of the Korean Peninsula was no longer possible without expanding the conflict. The Truman administration now was willing to settle for a diplomatic solution and a return to the prewar status quo, and the Soviets and the Chinese were also ready to negotiate.

Meetings over a settlement began on July 10, 1951. However, the negotiations were delayed over the next 18 months as disagreements over such issues as cease-fire agreements, the exchange of prisoners, and the withdrawal of foreign forces prolonged the complicated negotiations. In the meantime, both sides attempted to display their resolve by continuing limited military actions with significant additional casualties.

Finally, on July 27, 1953, the Korean Armistice Agreement (1953) was signed. Critical to the negotiations was South Korean president Rhee, who opposed a settlement that would leave Korea divided and Chinese troops in North Korea. To secure his support, the Eisenhower administration had to promise substantial additional aid and a postconflict security pact. Rhee was placated, but the armistice that ended the fighting left Korea politically and geographically divided.

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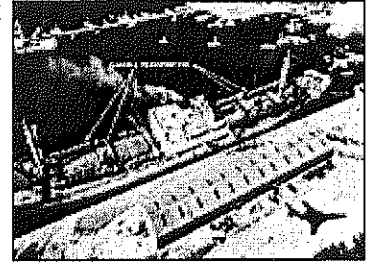
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## Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis is considered the climax of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. The crisis, which occurred in 1962, consisted of a standoff between U.S. president John F. Kennedy and Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev over the Soviet plan to install nuclear missiles on the island nation of Cuba, just 100 miles away from Florida. Though Khrushchev ultimately backed down on that aspect of his nuclear armament program, the crisis elucidated the vulnerability of the United States to nuclear attack, an unsettling threat from a neighbor in the Americas.



The United States and Cuba had grudgingly maintained rocky relations since the U.S. military forced Spain to surrender Cuba at the turn of the 20th century. Although Cuba was inaugurated as an independent nation, President William McKinley introduced the Platt Amendment, which allowed U.S. intervention in Cuban affairs, in 1901. That legislation was valid until 1934. Since that time, various dictators had run the Cuban government, and the national climate was ripe for revolution. In 1959, Fidel Castro stepped forward to lead that revolution. Castro's anti-American stance, admiration for the successes of Soviet communism, and close geographical proximity to the United States made Cuba under his leadership an able pawn for Khrushchev to wield in the Cold War.

Since Cuba was heavily dependent on the U.S. purchase of its sugar to buy oil and other essentials, the Soviet Union began exchanging sugar for oil in 1960. Freed economically of ties to the United States, Castro now saw a distinct advantage to Cuba's communist alignment with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Khrushchev's ambition to expand communism in the Western Hemisphere found a foothold in the small, revolutionary nation. Their symbiotic relationship progressed through 1961: Castro gained resources to fund his revolution; Khrushchev gained power and a potential offensive battleground in the West.

By that point, the Kennedy administration had committed itself to the overthrow of Castro by covert means. The Bay of Pigs invasion, one such attempt to oust Castro from power, was a disaster. On April 17, 1961, U.S. forces transported about 1,500 Cuban dissidents to the island. Having been trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the dissidents' mission was to instigate an uprising, gain national support, and overthrow Castro. However, the renegade force was quickly quelled by Castro's military, which caused two crucial effects: Kennedy and the CIA were humiliated, and Cubans pulled together in the wake of the invasion to support Castro. In December 1961, Castro formally declared his conversion to Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The nationalization of Cuban communism opened a window of opportunity for the Soviet Union, which desired both the expansion of communist doctrine worldwide and the threat to the United States in its own backyard. The installation of Soviet nuclear warheads in Cuba was carefully considered by Khrushchev and his advisers, several of whom pointed out that U.S. warheads already installed in Turkey could destroy Moscow, Kiev, and other major Soviet cities at any moment. Although it was anticipated that the Kennedy administration would balk at Soviet nuclear arms in Cuba, Khrushchev thought that if the missiles were secretly installed, Kennedy would have no choice but to accept their presence.

The Soviet Union began the transport of nuclear ballistic missiles in October 1962. Kennedy received aerial photos of


the missiles in transit on October 16, and after several heated EXCOMM (Executive Committee of the National Security Council) meetings, he imposed a naval quarantine of Cuba. The most dangerous point in the crisis occurred when an American U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba on October 27. Although the Kremlin had not ordered the firing, Kennedy weighed different proportional response scenarios in light of the incident.

Ultimately, Kennedy and Khrushchev defused the crisis with the following agreement: on October 28, Khrushchev decided to withdraw the nuclear arms from Cuba on the condition that the United States declared publicly that it would not attack Cuba and privately withdrew its nuclear arsenal from Turkey. Castro was unaware of those negotiations, which reveals the degree to which Cuba was viewed as a minor player by the Soviet Union.

Although the Cuban Missile Crisis lasted only 13 days, its repercussions were considerable. Having come closer to nuclear war than ever before, both the United States and the Soviet Union were more cautious about offensive deployment of nuclear arms during the remainder of the Cold War. The crisis also served to expose an American vulnerability to nuclear attack that had not been evident previously. Yet another consequence of the Cuban Missile Crisis was the economic embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba since 1962.

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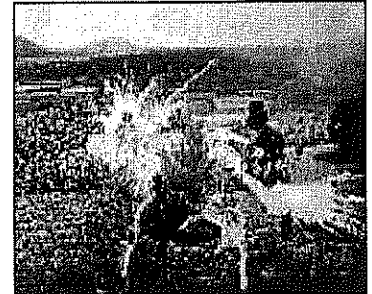
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## Vietnam War

The Vietnam War spanned more than a decade and caused massive disruption both in Southeast Asia and the United States. One of the most important military encounters of the Cold War period, the war ended in the complete communist takeover of Vietnam in 1975.



The Vietnam War grew out of Indochina's struggle for independence, first against the French and then against the United States. In 1946, the Indochina War erupted when the French tried to reassert their colonial rule in Southeast Asia following World War II. The French were defeated and withdrew their forces from the country as Vietnamese independence was acknowledged at the Geneva Conference of 1954. The Geneva Accords called for an election to unite the communist forces of North Vietnam, who were led by Ho Chi Minh, with the noncommunist people of South Vietnam.

In 1955, the United States dedicated itself to building a strong Vietnamese nation in the south under the leadership of the enigmatic Ngo Dinh Diem. In 1956, Diem announced that the Geneva-mandated reunification elections would not be held, as he feared the communists would win such a contest. Furthermore, with the assistance of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Diem successfully ousted Emperor Bao Dai, converted the State of Vietnam into the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), and claimed its presidency. Although the RVN was not the citadel of democracy that the United States proclaimed, the United States stuck by Diem.

In 1961, under U.S. president John F. Kennedy's administration, the U.S. government began to increase its military aid to South Vietnam to help Diem's faltering government in its civil war against the communist Viet Cong. In November 1963, Diem was overthrown and assassinated. Kennedy was killed later that same month, and U.S. vice president Lyndon B. Johnson inherited a growing political and military quagmire.

Johnson retained the Kennedy team to run the war, and he continued the same basic policies. On August 2, 1964, the North Vietnamese attacked the USS *Maddox*, which was engaged in electronic espionage in the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Vietnamese coast. The United States launched air strikes against North Vietnam, and Johnson seized the moment to extort from the frenzied U.S. Congress the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which authorized the president to employ military power against communist North Vietnam.

Beginning in early March 1965, Johnson authorized a series of retaliatory air strikes against the North Vietnamese that continued nearly unabated until October 31, 1968. Even though the scope and magnitude of the air war continued to increase, the incremental approach permitted the communists to make adjustments at successive levels and to put in place a continuously improving air defense system. Johnson eliminated the airstrike program altogether in early November 1968.

Meanwhile, in June 1964, Gen. William C. Westmoreland had taken command of U.S. land forces in Vietnam and devised the strategy of attrition and search-and-destroy tactics that characterized the ground war through the end of his tenure. Westmoreland's measure of merit became the body count, and the defining objective became the point at which enemy soldiers were being killed at a greater rate than they could be replaced.

With a force of just over half a million men, Westmoreland mounted large multibattalion operations aimed at bringing communist main force units to battle. The first of those engagements took place in the Ia Drang Valley in November 1965, with U.S. forces inflicting heavy casualties on the communists.

Over the next few years, the U.S. military establishment in South Vietnam grew larger and more pervasive, but the Viet Cong infrastructure in the hamlets and villages continued essentially undisturbed. In January 1968, the Viet Cong launched the massive surprise attack known as the Tet Offensive. The largest single battle of the war, the offensive saw the communists attack five of South Vietnam's six major cities, as well as hundreds of smaller towns and villages. Although surprised by the attacks, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces rallied quickly and managed to push back the communist surge within a matter of weeks. However, the Tet Offensive proved to be a major turning point in the conflict, as it undermined Westmoreland's optimistic forecasts for the progress of the war.

By 1969, as U.S. public opinion went increasingly against the war, U.S. policy changed to Vietnamization, and President Richard Nixon began to withdraw U.S. troops in August. Nevertheless, earlier that year, Nixon had authorized the secret Cambodian bombing, aimed at North Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. In the spring of 1970, Nixon authorized U.S. forces to carry out cross-border raids into Cambodia and Laos to go after enemy sanctuaries. U.S. forces and South Vietnamese units captured thousands of tons of weapons and ammunition. In late January 1971, there followed another attempt to sweep enemy sanctuaries and interfere with logistical operations along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the major supply line from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. That effort consisted of a large-scale raid by South Vietnamese forces into southern Laos and again resulted in the capture or destruction of tons of North Vietnamese materiel.

In March 1972, in what came to be known as the Easter Offensive, communist forces struck in force at three key locations—along the Demilitarized Zone, north of Saigon around An Loc, and in the Central Highlands at Kontum. That fall, peace talks hit a snag in Paris, and on December 18, Nixon unleashed the most concentrated bombing campaign of the war on North Vietnam. The onslaught continued until December 31, when the North Vietnamese agreed to resume the peace talks.

On January 27, 1973, the Paris Peace Accord (1973) was signed, officially ending U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The war itself did not end until April 1975, when North Vietnam captured Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and united the nation under a communist regime.

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## The Cold War, 1945-1991 / The Prague Spring / What was the significance and impact of the Prague Spring?



This image captures a dramatic moment during the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring, a period of reform in Czechoslovakia that brought freedoms to the country that were unprecedented since the establishment of a repressive communist regime there in the wake of World War II. The movement began when Czechoslovak Communist Party leader Alexander Dubcek announced the Action Program in April 1968, a reform agenda aimed at creating what he called "socialism with a human face." Despite Dubcek's assurances that he had no intention of breaking away from the Soviet bloc, the Soviet leadership in Moscow clearly demonstrated that they would not tolerate unilateral behavior in the Soviet bloc by invading Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968.

Although the Prague Spring reform movement collapsed in the face of Soviet military intervention, it was nevertheless one of the greatest challenges to the repressive status quo within the Soviet bloc during the Cold War. The repercussions for Czechoslovakia were far-reaching, but the subsequent course of events during the next two decades culminated in the complete collapse of communism in Eastern Europe beginning in 1989. It is thus worth examining the significance and impact of the Prague Spring, both within Czechoslovakia and throughout the Soviet realm.

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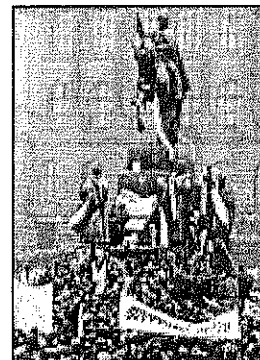
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## Velvet Revolution

The Velvet Revolution took place in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and resulted in the ousting of the communist regime that had been in place since the end of World War II and the subsequent creation of a democratic system. Led by intellectuals, it was called the Velvet Revolution because of the peaceful nature of the uprising and the relatively smooth transition to a new form of government.



During the late 1980s, the reforms enacted by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began to encourage popular political movements in much of Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, however, though there had long been dissident underground organizations, President Gustav Husak was unwilling to sanction any relaxation of political controls. He had come to power in 1968 to shut down the reformist Prague Spring movements and was committed to the continuation of hard-line government.

November 17, 1989 was the 50-year anniversary of a historic demonstration that had taken place to protest Nazi Party rule just before World War II. A legal assembly was organized in Prague to commemorate this event, but once the student demonstrators came together, they began to address demands for greater democracy to the current government. Riot police assembled and beat the demonstrators with night sticks, injuring more than 160. News of this event inflamed the country, leading to demonstrations in most of the major cities and calls for a general strike on November 27.

Huge public discussion meetings began to take place in theaters. These led to the organization of the Civic Forum, led by Vaclav Havel, and the Public Against Violence in the country's Slovak areas. Both organizations served as "spokesgroups" to direct the people's demands to the government. The government responded by replacing many high officials, but these superficial changes were not satisfactory to the public.

Responding to the massive demonstrations and the crippling general strike, the communist government gradually crumbled. On December 10, Husak resigned, and a new government was organized. In the subsequent meeting of the Federal Assembly, Alexander Dubcek (ill-fated leader of the Prague Spring) was elected speaker of the Assembly, and Havel was elected president of the nation.

The new government turned its attention to human rights and freedoms, business law, and creating the framework for the first free elections to be held in Czechoslovakia in more than 40 years.

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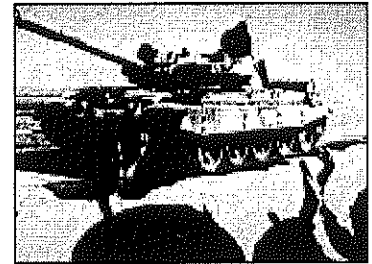
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## Afghanistan invasion

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan initiated a war that destroyed the U.S.-Soviet détente of the 1970s; inaugurated a new, dangerous stage in the Cold War; and badly weakened the Soviet military and economic establishments. The Soviet-Afghan War represented the culmination of events dating to April 1978, when Afghan communists, supported by left-wing army leaders, overthrew the unpopular, authoritarian government of Muhammad Daoud and proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Although the extent of Soviet involvement in the coup remains unclear, Moscow certainly welcomed it and quickly established close relations with the new regime headed by Nur Mohammad Taraki, who was committed to bringing socialism to Afghanistan.



With the ambitious, extremely militant foreign minister Hafizullah Amin as its driving force, the Taraki regime quickly alienated much of Afghanistan's population by conducting a terror campaign against its opponents and introducing a series of social and economic reforms at odds with the religious and cultural norms of the country's highly conservative, Muslim, tribal society. Afghanistan's Muslim leaders soon declared a jihad against "godless communism," and by August 1978 the Taraki regime faced an open revolt, a situation made especially dangerous by the defection of a portion of the army to the rebel cause.

As Afghanistan descended into civil war, Moscow grew increasingly concerned. Committed to preventing the overthrow of a friendly, neighboring communist government and fearful of the effects that a potential Islamic fundamentalist regime might have on the Muslim population of Soviet Central Asia, specifically those in the republics bordering Afghanistan, the Soviets moved toward military intervention. During the last months of 1979, the Leonid Brezhnev government dispatched approximately 4,500 combat advisers to assist the Afghan communist regime while simultaneously allowing Soviet aircraft to conduct bombing raids against rebel positions. Although Soviet deputy defense minister Ivan G. Pavlovskii, who had played an important role in the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, counseled against full-scale intervention in Afghanistan, his superior, Defense Minister Dmitry Ustinov, convinced Brezhnev to undertake an invasion, arguing that only such action could preserve the Afghan communist regime. He also promised that the Soviet presence there would be short.

Brezhnev ultimately decided in favor of war, the pivotal factor arguably being the September 1979 seizure of power by Hafizullah Amin, who had ordered Taraki arrested and murdered. Apparently shocked by Amin's act of supreme betrayal and inclined to believe that only a massive intervention could save the situation, Brezhnev gave approval for the invasion. Beginning in late November 1979 and continuing during the first weeks of December, the Soviet military concentrated the Fortieth Army, composed primarily of Central Asian troops, along the Afghan border. On December 24, Soviet forces crossed the frontier, while Moscow claimed that the Afghan government had requested help against an unnamed outside threat.

Relying on mechanized tactics and close air support, Soviet units quickly seized the Afghan capital of Kabul. In the process, a special assault force stormed the presidential palace and killed Amin, replacing him with the more moderate Barak Kemal, who attempted, unsuccessfully, to win popular support by portraying himself as a devoted Muslim and Afghan nationalist. Soviet forces, numbering at least 50,000 men by the end of January 1980, went on to occupy the other major Afghan cities and secured major highways. In response, rebel mujahideen forces resorted to

guerrilla warfare, their primary goal being to avoid defeat in the hopes of outlasting Soviet intervention.

Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan had immediate and adverse international consequences, effectively wrecking détente that was already in dire straits by December 1979 thanks to recent increases in missile deployments in Europe. Having devoted much effort to improving relations with Moscow, U.S. president Jimmy Carter believed that he had been betrayed. He reacted swiftly and strongly to the Afghanistan invasion.

On December 28, 1979, Carter publicly denounced the Soviet action as a "blatant violation of accepted international rules of behavior." Three days later, he accused Moscow of lying about its motives for intervening and declared that the invasion had dramatically altered his view of the Soviet Union's foreign policy goals. On January 3, 1980, the president asked the U.S. Senate to delay consideration of SALT II. Finally, on January 23, in his State of the Union Address, Carter warned that the Soviet action in Afghanistan posed a potentially serious threat to world peace because control of Afghanistan would put Moscow in a position to dominate the strategic Persian Gulf and thus interdict at will the flow of Middle East oil.

The president followed these pronouncements by enunciating what soon became known as the Carter Doctrine, declaring that any effort to dominate the Persian Gulf would be interpreted as an attack on U.S. interests that would be rebuffed by force if necessary. Carter also announced his intention to limit the sale of technology and agricultural products to the Soviet Union, and he imposed restrictions on Soviet fishing privileges in U.S. waters. In addition, he notified the International Olympic Committee that in light of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, neither he nor the U.S. public would support sending a U.S. team to the 1980 Moscow Summer Games. The president called upon the United States's allies to follow suit.

Carter also asked the U.S. Congress to support increased defense spending and registration for the draft, pushed for the creation of a Rapid Deployment Force that could intervene in the Persian Gulf or other areas threatened by Soviet expansionism, offered increased military aid to Pakistan, moved to enhance ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), approved covert U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assistance to the mujahideen, and signed a presidential directive on July 25, 1980, providing for increased targeting of Soviet nuclear forces.

Carter's sharp response was undercut to a certain extent by several developments. First, key U.S. allies rejected both economic sanctions and an Olympic boycott. Second, Argentina and several other states actually increased their grain sales to Moscow. Third, a somewhat jaded U.S. public tended to doubt the president's assertions about Soviet motives and believed that he had needlessly reenergized the Cold War.

Ronald Reagan, who defeated Carter in the November 1980 presidential election, took an even harder stand with the Soviets. Describing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" that had used détente for its own nefarious purposes, the Reagan administration poured vast sums of money into a massive military buildup that even saw the president push the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)—labeled "Star Wars" by its critics—a missile defense system dependent on satellites to destroy enemy missiles with lasers or particle beams before armed warheads separated and headed for their targets. The Soviet response was to build additional missiles and warheads.

Meanwhile, confronted with guerrilla warfare in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union remained committed to waging a limited war and found itself drawn, inexorably, into an ever-deeper bloody quagmire against a determined opponent whose confidence and morale grew with each passing month. To make matters worse for Moscow, domestic criticism of the war by prominent dissidents such as Andrei Sakharov appeared early on, while foreign assistance in the form of food, transport vehicles, and weaponry (especially the Stinger antiaircraft missile launchers) from the United States began reaching the mujahideen as the fighting dragged on.

Neither the commitment of more troops, the use of chemical weapons, nor the replacement of the unpopular Kemal could bring Moscow any closer to victory. Accordingly, by 1986 the Soviet leadership, now headed by the reformist General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, began contemplating ways of extricating itself from what many observers characterized as the "Soviet Union's Vietnam."

In April 1988, Gorbachev agreed to a United Nations mediation proposal providing for the withdrawal of Soviet troops over a 10-month period. One month later the departure of Soviet military forces, which had grown to an estimated 115,000 troops, commenced—a process that was finally completed in February 1989.

Although the Soviets left Afghanistan with a procommunist regime, a team of military advisers, and substantial quantities of equipment, the nine years' war had exacted a high toll, costing the Soviets an estimated 50,000 casualties. It seriously damaged the Russian Red Army's military reputation, further undermining the legitimacy of the Soviet system, and nearly bankrupted the Kremlin. For the Afghans, the war proved equally costly. An estimated 1 million civilians were dead, and another 5 million were refugees. Much of the country was devastated.

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## Nicaragua

Long divided by a civil war between right-wing and leftist rebels, Nicaragua, which is located in the heart of Central America, is slowly attempting to recover from the conflict and build itself into a cohesive nation-state.

Prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1502 and the subsequent Spanish colonization, Nicaragua was populated by several Native American groups. Agricultural tribes lived in the areas surrounding lakes Nicaragua and Managua. The Sumo inhabited the northern part of the country, and the Miskito resided in the eastern part. The name Nicaragua is believed to be derived from the name of the Native American leader Nicarao. In 1522, Spanish conquistador Gil González de Avila founded the first European settlements in the region. Nicaragua remained under Spanish rule for the next 300 years as part of the captaincy general of Guatemala. On September 15, 1821, the region declared itself independent and joined the Mexican Empire of Augustin de Iturbide for a brief period. During 1825-1838, it remained a part of the Central American Federation. On April 30, 1838, the region declared independence from the federation. However, a consolidated nation did not transpire until 1854 due to divisions between liberals and conservatives, who were based in León and Granada, respectively.

During the mid-1800s, the country's political scene was aggravated by Great Britain's claim of ownership over the eastern Mosquito Coast. The United States was also attracted to the region due to American interest in a transisthmian canal after its acquisition of the Pacific Coast. In 1853, Nicaraguan liberals invited U.S. adventurer William Walker to aid in their fight. Walker and his army of thousands from the United States, who hoped for land grants in the Central American country, captured Granada. By 1856, Walker was elected president. Walker was defeated in 1857 and was later captured and executed by the British. The conservatives seized power in 1863 and ruled for a period of relative quiet for the next 30 years. In 1894, liberal leader José Santos Zelaya became president and instituted a dictatorship. Under his rule, Nicaragua gained back most of the Mosquito Coast territory. Zelaya also promoted economic development and attempted to make Nicaragua prominent in regional affairs. Zelaya was deposed in 1909 after a conservative revolt. The United States stepped in to support the rule of provisional president Adolfo Díaz in 1912 and remained in Nicaragua until 1925. During that time, a treaty was ratified that gave the United States rights for a Nicaraguan canal. A year after the U.S. pullout, Emiliano Chamorro attempted to seize power, which prompted the return of American troops. Anti-occupation leader Gen. Augusto Sandino led a guerrilla uprising until U.S. Marines left in 1933.

In 1936, Anastasio Somoza García seized power and started the Somoza dynasty of rulers. Somoza held power for the next 20 years. He ousted the winning candidate in 1947 presidential elections in order to ensure continuation of his rule. After Somoza's assassination in 1956, power was passed to his sons, Luís Somoza Debayle, who became president, and Anastasio Somoza Debayle, who became head of the armed forces and later became president. The Somoza regime was marked by economic growth but also by widespread corruption. After Anastasio Somoza Debayle's presidential term ended (1967–1972), he retained control of the country as head of the armed forces. It is believed that Somoza Debayle pocketed half of the international aid sent to Nicaragua after a massive earthquake devastated the country in 1972.

Meanwhile, opposition to the Somoza rule increased. The opposition was divided into two main factions: the Marxist Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional—FSLN—also known as Sandinistas) and the Democratic Liberation Union. Somoza Debayle moved to quell the rebels by unleashing the Nicaraguan

National Guard. The repression continued in the 1970s. The 1978 murder of opposition leader Pedro Joaquín Chamorro prompted national outrage and spread the civil war. In 1979, the Sandinistas seized power and formed a coalition government. Under the structure of its leftist ideology, the Sandinistas improved social conditions and nationalized many economic institutions and resources. However, moderates, the private sector, and the Roman Catholic Church opposed the Sandinistas. The United States, suspicious of the party's amicable relations with Cuba and the Soviet Union, cut off aid to Nicaragua in 1981, citing the Sandinistas' support of leftist rebels in El Salvador. The U.S. government also started to support anti-Sandinista forces, which were known as Contras. The U.S. assistance continued throughout the next decade. As opposition fomented, the Sandinistas tightened their authoritarian grip on the nation. In 1984, FSLN leader Daniel Ortega became president during elections that most opposition parties rejected. The country suffered economically, as the government put the nation's sparse resources toward its military.

In February 25, 1990, elections, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro won a surprising victory by taking 54% of the vote and defeating Ortega. Chamorro's National Opposition Union (Unión Nacional Opositora—UNO) won a majority of seats in the National Assembly. Although the Chamorro administration attempted to revive the nation's sluggish economy and consolidate the country, it was hampered in its efforts. During the early part of her administration, Chamorro was criticized for retaining Sandinistas in key military posts. The UNO withdrew its support for Chamorro in 1993 and claimed that the president was too reliant on the Sandinistas. Washington, D.C., concerned over Sandinista influence in Chamorro's administration, suspended much-needed aid in 1992, which prompted Chamorro to dismiss 12 high-ranking Sandinista police officers. The Chamorro administration also faced the problem of reintegrating former combatants from both sides of the civil war into the economy and redistributing land as promised. Administrative slowness in that area provoked renewed skirmishes between former contras (who then called themselves re-contras) and former Sandinistas (re-compas). In 1995, Chamorro reluctantly agreed to constitutional changes that would bar presidents from successive terms and ban relatives of presidents from running for office. She was succeeded by Arnaldo Aleman of the Liberal Alliance in 1997, and in 2002 Aleman was succeeded by his former vice president, Enrique Bolanos. In the 2006 election, former president Ortega returned to power, 16 years after his first term ended, by winning 38% of the votes cast.

### Further Reading

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## Solidarity

The Independent Self-Managing Trade Union Solidarity, usually referred to simply as Solidarity, is a worker-based movement that culminated during 1980-1981 in popular demands for the reform of the Polish economic and political system. Solidarity was the first independent labor organization in a country belonging to the Soviet bloc and was instrumental in bringing about free elections in 1989, which brought about the fall of communism in Poland as Solidarity came to power in a government led by Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

The group takes its name from the federation of trade unions set up in 1980 by striking Polish workers in the shipyards of the Baltic port of Gdansk. Though workers initially concentrated on economic issues, an Inter-Factory Strike Committee led by Lech Walesa began to politicize the strike, calling for the legitimization of independent trade unions, the lifting of censorship, the release of political prisoners, the strengthening of the Roman Catholic Church, and other changes in government priorities. The Gdansk Agreement was signed in August 1980 by Walesa and representatives of the communist government. The agreement acknowledged the right to strike, to form independent trade unions, and other previously limited freedoms.

In the following month, delegates of many other trade unions met in Gdansk to merge their organizations into an all-Polish union named Solidarity. A separate union called Rural Solidarity came into existence as farmers contributed to the movement. At its height, Solidarity claimed some 10 million members, more than 50% of all Polish workers. In the 16 months between the formation of Solidarity and its suppression by martial law in December 1981, Solidarity politicized the entire country.

As some of Solidarity's demands were granted, the union became increasingly political, calling for changes in the whole structure of unions. Those activities were controlled by the Polish United Workers Party, the communist party that ran the government. Solidarity pushed further and formulated plans for a national referendum to address confidence in the communist regime of First Secretary-General Wojciech Jaruzelski. Relations between the union and the government deteriorated as Solidarity's popularity began to threaten the government. On December 13, 1981, Jaruzelski imposed martial law, Solidarity was disbanded, and all concessions were revoked. After the suppression of the party, many of its leaders were arrested and imprisoned.

Martial law was lifted in July 1983, but Solidarity remained outlawed. Though party leaders were continually harassed by the government, they continued to lead resistance to the government throughout the following years. The movement received an important boost in June 1987, when Pope John Paul II visited Poland and declared that the outlawed Solidarity was a model for the worldwide struggle for human rights. A new wave of strikes in 1988 further galvanized Solidarity followers as strike leaders demanded its relegalization. Finally, negotiations between Walesa and Minister of the Interior Gen. C. Kiszczak brought an end to the strikes and plans for the Round Table Negotiations that led to the legalization of Solidarity and the announcement of free national elections to take place in June 1989.

Those elections meant the end of the communist government since Solidarity candidates won all 161 of the unreserved seats in the Sejm (lower house) and 99 of the seats in the new 100-member Senate. Almost immediately, however, schisms occurred as Mazowiecki and Walesa battled between themselves for the presidential election in late 1990. Walesa won, but by that time, Solidarity membership had shrunk to around 2.5 million

members. Walesa resigned his position at the head of the trade union and was replaced by Marian Krzaklewski, with whom he had poor relations. Those disagreements further reduced Solidarity's electoral support, which sank to 5% of the vote in 1991 by-elections. Embittered by those disappointments, Solidarity moved toward the political right, supporting the increasingly political Catholic Church and a radical program to remove communists from government.

By the mid-1990s, a profusion of small political parties competed for Polish votes. Though many of those traced their origins to Solidarity, the kind of grand alliance that had once given the movement such power seemed to be a thing of the past.

### Further Reading

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