

From the Cold War to Camp David: Reviewing U.S. Foreign Policy in Post-World War II Era (1948 – 1979)

Center for Legislative Archives

Graphic Organizer 1, Primary Source Document 1

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died.

We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

HARRY S. TRUMAN.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 12, 1947.*

Excerpt from NAID 2668751p. 2

The Truman Doctrine asserted U.S. leadership in containing communism.

In a March 12, 1947 speech to Congress, President Harry S. Truman requested funds to combat Soviet-supported communist subversion in Greece and Turkey. In doing so, Truman called on Congress to accept a global commitment to opposing the spread of communism. He asserted that “the free people of the world look to (the U.S.) for support in maintaining their freedom.”

Known as the Truman Doctrine, his proposal set the U.S. on a new course in world events.

Unlike the pre-World War II policy of “isolationism” and neutrality in world affairs, after the war the U.S. would assume world leadership lead in the military and economic resistance to the expansion of communism.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 27, 1950

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

In Korea the Government forces, which were armed to prevent border raids and to preserve internal security, were attacked by invading forces from North Korea. The Security Council of the United Nations called upon the invading troops to cease hostilities and to withdraw to the 38th parallel. This they have not done, but on the contrary have pressed the attack. The Security Council called upon all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution. In these circumstances I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.



The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116192>

President Harry S. Truman sent U.S. troops to Korea to lead the United Nations military response to an invasion by communist forces.

President Harry S. Truman issued this press release on June 27, 1950 when communist North Korean troops invaded the South. Truman stated that "communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war." Truman's statement signaled the start of U.S. engagement in the Korean War and also reflected a new military order. Although the United States took the lead in the Korean action, it did so under the flag of the United Nations.

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NAID 5743241

During the 1950s, U.S. and NATO allies relied on missiles to deter Soviet aggression in Europe.

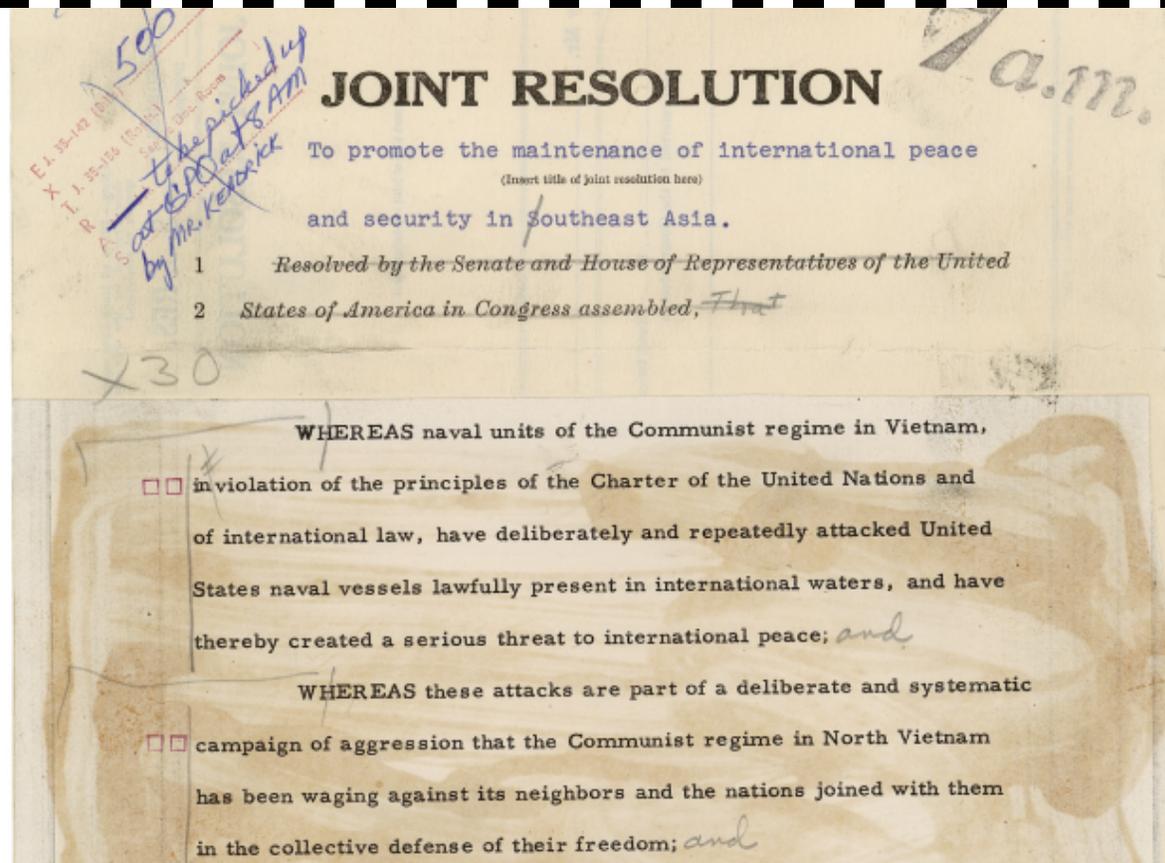
This cartoon by artist Jim Berryman, which appeared in the *Washington Evening Star* on May 6, 1957, illustrated the important role of missiles in deterring Soviet aggression in Europe. The U.S. and its partner states in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization' (NATO) relied on a strategy referred to as "massive retaliation," meaning the threat of a counter-attack using missiles armed with nuclear warheads, to counterbalance the Soviet Union's advantages in conventional military forces during a high-tension decade of hostile military stand-off.

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Graphic Organizer 2, Primary Source Document 1



NAID 2127364 (excerpt)

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution as it was introduced in the United States Senate.

On August 2 and 4, 1965 North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked U.S. naval ships on patrol off the coast of North Vietnam. In response President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered air strikes and asked Congress to approve the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizing U.S. military action. The resolution quickly passed with overwhelming support. As in the war in Korea, the U.S. justified its involvement in Vietnam as a "vital national interest" and a treaty commitment. By 1967 over 500,000 U.S. troops, along with air and naval forces, were fighting in Vietnam. By 1968, the War had become very unpopular, triggering anti-war protests across the U.S. as well as evasion of the military draft. Congress signaled its disapproval of alleged Executive Branch deceptions underlying the initial resolution by repealing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in December, 1970.

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NAID 194674

President Richard Nixon points to a map during an April 30, 1970 televised address in which he announced that U.S. troops would cross from Vietnam into Cambodia.

President Richard Nixon inherited a long-running war in Vietnam when he became President in 1969. Nixon worked to withdraw U.S. ground forces from the war and simultaneously expanded the fighting to adjacent countries. This map shows the President point to Cambodia during a 1970 televised address to the nation in which he announced that U.S. troops would attack North Vietnamese positions along its border. Nixon would continue the unpopular war and rely on intensive bombing of Cambodia and Vietnam while concurrently engaging in peace talks with the communist leaders of North Vietnam.

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FLASH
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FM THE WHITE HOUSE

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

~~TOP SECRET~~ SENSITIVE VIA MARTIN CHANNELS WH50782

TO: AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. THE PRESIDENT HAS MET WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS:

A. IF THE AIRPORT IS OPEN FOR FIXED-WING OPERATIONS TODAY, YOU ARE TO CONTINUE THE EVACUATION OF HIGH RISK VIETNAMESE BY FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT. YOU ARE ALSO TO EVACUATE BY THE END OF THE DAY ALL AMERICAN PERSONNEL AT TAN SON NHUT AS WELL AS ALL BUT BARE MINIMUM PERSONNEL FROM THE EMBASSY.

B. WHILE YOU SHOULD NOT SAY SO, THIS WILL BE THE LAST REPEAT LAST DAY OF FIXED-WING EVACUATION FROM TAN SON NHUT.

C. IF THE AIRPORT IS UNUSABLE FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT OR BECOMES SO DURING THE DAY AS A RESULT OF ENEMY FIRE, YOU ARE IMMEDIATELY TO RESORT TO HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF ALL REPEAT ALL AMERICANS, BOTH FROM THE DAO COMPOUND AND FROM THE EMBASSY COMPOUND. FIGHTER CAP AND SUPPRESSIVE FIRE WILL BE USED AS NECESSARY IN THE EVENT OF HELICOPTER EVACUATION.

2. ADMIRAL GAYLER WILL BE RECEIVING IDENTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEFENSE.

3. WARM REGARDS.

0200

NAID 7367498

Telegram from Henry Kissinger to Ambassador Graham Martin on the Evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam.

Throughout his presidency, Richard Nixon had pursued “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam, meaning a policy of gradually withdrawing U.S. combat troops while strengthening non-communist South Vietnam’s ability to resist attacks by communists originating within its borders as well as from across the border in North Vietnam. After years of negotiation, the Vietnamese and Americans reached a peace accord in January, 1973 that called for the withdrawal of the last U.S. combat troops. Two years later, renewed attacks by communist forces resulted in the military defeat and sudden collapse of the government of South Vietnam. In April, 1975 U.S. military personnel, diplomats, and South Vietnamese supporters



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of the Americans scrambled to escape by helicopter as communist forces closed in on Saigon, the South Vietnamese capital.

Graphic Organizer 3, Primary Source Document 1

FOR FLAT RELEASE 7:00 P. M. , E. D. T.

OCTOBER 22, 1962

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.

NAID 193897 p1

The opening paragraph of President John F. Kennedy's Radio and Television Report to the Nation on Cuba.

The Cold War struggle threatened to explode into a World War in October, 1962. Two years earlier, revolutionary leader Fidel Castro had instituted a communist government in Cuba, a Caribbean island less than one hundred miles from Florida. The crisis emerged in 1962 when Soviet missiles were discovered on the island. The missiles could carry nuclear weapons and could strike any East Coast city. The sudden standoff between the U.S. and Soviet Union was the most dangerous and dramatic of the Cold War. President John F. Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of Cuba and for four days the world stood on the brink of nuclear war. Diplomacy prevailed, however, and tensions calmed with an agreement negotiated between Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev calling for removal of the missiles in exchange for a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba.

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Graphic Organizer 3, Primary Source Document 2



NAID 66394288

President Richard Nixon and General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev Signing the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and Interim Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) Agreement 1972.

President Lyndon Johnson called for strategic arms limitations talks (SALT) in 1967 when the United States learned that the Soviet Union had started on a massive buildup of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. Negotiations between the countries continued for several years and yielded an agreement to limit the development of both offensive and defensive missile systems. This agreement would help calm Cold War tensions and stabilize U.S.-Soviet relations. On May 26, 1972, President Richard Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev met in Moscow and signed the ABM Treaty and interim SALT agreement. The agreement was very important because for the first time during the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union had agreed to limit the number of nuclear missiles in their arsenals. A second SALT treaty was signed in 1979.

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NAID 7268166

President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon Visiting the Great Wall of China.

When the communists led by Mao Zedong came to power in 1949, the U.S. refused to recognize the legitimacy of their regime, choosing instead to consider the non-communist government established by Chiang Kai-shek on the tiny island of Taiwan as the legitimate government of all China. For the next two decades, the U.S. also blocked the communist People's Republic of China from joining the United Nations. This policy of disengagement began to thaw in the early 1970s when Henry Kissinger, a Nixon administration official and later Secretary of State, initiated secret negotiations between the two powers. The negotiations culminated in a visit to China by President Nixon in 1972. The Nixon visit was a surprising break with decades of U.S. policy, and suggested that diplomacy might resolve the long-running Cold War standoff between the U.S. and China.

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NAID 5743214

"I Thought I had an Appointment" Cartoon by Jim Berryman, Washington, DC, *The Evening Star*, November 1, 1955

The shouting in this 1955 political cartoon is over the ongoing conflict between the newly established state of Israel and its Arab neighbors, led by Egypt. The conflict began immediately after Israel was founded in 1948, reflecting Arab resentment of the new Jewish state created on historically Arab land. The tensions grew as the Soviet Union armed the Arab states and the U.S. armed Israel. This cartoon appeared at a time when the U.S. criticized Soviet meddling in the unstable region. Tensions between the Arab states and Israel led to a war that broke out a year later in 1956.

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Graphic Organizer 4, Primary Source Document 2



NAID 181392

Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin at the Camp David Accords Signing Ceremony in the White House in March, 1979.

Four years after the Yom Kippur war, peace talks between Israel and Egypt began in 1977 when Israeli Prime Minister invited Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to visit Israel. When the talks stalled in September, 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Begin to a summit conference at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland. The three leaders negotiated for two weeks. On September 17, Carter invited the leaders to the White House to announce a “framework” for a peace treaty. The leaders returned to the White House on March 26, 1979 to sign the treaty ending three decades of sporadic war between Egypt and Israel.

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Graphic Organizer 4, Primary Source Document 3



NAID 548170

One of Many Service Stations in the Portland, OR Area Carrying Signs Reflecting the Gasoline Shortage.

In the midst of the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and its Arab neighbors, OPEC (The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) announced they would no longer ship oil to countries supporting Israel. The U.S. had been the foremost ally of Israel since 1948, so the embargo hit the U.S. especially hard. The embargo was especially painful because the explosion in the use of automobiles and trucks in recent decades left the U.S. dependent on imported oil. At the same time as it imposed the embargo, OPEC raised the price of oil by 400%. The twin shocks produced months of economic chaos in the U.S. and Europe. And, although the oil embargo soon ended, the price of energy in the U.S. continued to skyrocket, ending an era of cheap fuel.

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