

# The Core of the Cold War

From Eisenhower to Nixon

# The Eisenhower Era

- Rhetoric Hot rollback - liberation - strong anticommunism (John Foster Dulles)
- Policy - relatively cool, subdued, more of a domestic politics focus
- Implementing Containment Confronting the Soviet Union
  - Nuclear weapons buildup
  - massive retaliation
  - Nuclear superiority - brinksmanship
  - Pactomania (SENTO, SEATO, ANZUS)
- The Developing World - client state problems
  - Covert operations - Iran, Guatemala, Cuba
  - Overt operations - Yes (Lebanon - 1958) - No Indochina (1954),
  - Rollback - (No North Korea, No - Hungary 1956)
- A brief thaw in the Cold War - 1959-1960 -- Cuba, Laos and the U2 incident

## JFK 1961-3

1. Election Politics -- "The Missile Gap," Too Complacent - particularly in the struggle with Communism in the developing world (the do nothing Eisenhower administration)
2. 2. Strategy to confront the Soviet Union Even though there was a missile gap (The U.S. was substantially ahead) Out with massive retaliation and in with "flexible response" - more nuclear weapons - more conventional capability - rising military expenditures - a new counterforce doctrine and the beginning of a move toward Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) - development of the strategic triad -- - the arms race of the 60's is on
3. 3. Dealing with developing world problems - the wars of national liberation -- The real driving force of Kennedy Foreign Policy What was on the plate -- Laos, Vietnam, Cuba, Congo The Kennedy approach - aggressive, technological, counterinsurgency Laos - Problem - Marxist forces winning a war against the U.S. supported Royal Laotian Forces - Solution - A reasonable but weak response - A coalition neutralist regime Cuba - Problem - Communism 90 miles from the U.S. - a major domestic political headache "Solution" - A big "covert" military operation to oust Castro --

## JFK - continued

4. April 1961-The first big foreign policy splash for JFK and "the best and the brightest"- The Bay of Pigs - a major foreign policy disaster Pressure for success –
5. Vietnam becomes the unlikely place to invest in success --  
Kennedy and his advisers begin a move up the escalatory path to help and save a increasingly important client state (1961-1963)  
military aid, economic aid, military advisers (15,000), bombing in S. Vietnam, strategic hamlets ---  
By the Fall of 1963 - really no success - The decision to support the coup of S. Vietnamese leader Diem.
6. Relations with the Soviets Vienna (Late Spring 1961)  
Berlin (Late Summer 1961)  
The Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)  
Assassinations Diem Early November 1963,  
Kennedy Late November 1963

# Nixon 1969-1973

- 1. Ending the War
- 2. Opening to China and Détente with the Soviet Union (Nixon and Kissinger's grand strategy)
- 3. Inflation and Oil
- 4. Watergate and the "demise of the Imperial Presidency – The universe falls apart
- Ending the War 1968 - "peace with honor" - and a secret plan to end the war -- campaign rhetoric
- A. A secret plan emerges (secret)
- B. Vietnamization (public) Nixon administration reject 1) overt escalation 2) continuing Kennedy/Johnson policies, 3) bringing troops home Secret plan - The Madman strategy - threaten N. Vietnam with massive escalation to get bargain - secretly bomb Cambodia and begin the concerns for leaks which leads to the plumbers and Watergate Fails
- The public plan of Vietnamization works - gradual U.S. withdrawal - returning war to the S. Vietnamese, reduces U.S. casualties, silences peace movement and keeps Democrats in Congress at bay Works Domestically - but not a solution to the war Why? - - Need leverage to get the North Vietnamese to end the war on terms acceptable to the U.S. and the South Vietnam - But how when the U.S. is constantly reducing its role in S. Vietnam

# Nixon continued

- 2. The Grand Plan -  
A Stubborn Enemy  
No bargaining leverage  
Growing Strategic Problems (an out of control nuclear arms race)  
Growing economic problems (inflation, low productivity)
- Solution -- Opening to China - The politics of the triad - pressure on the Soviet Union for a better relationship with the U.S. - Détente and a new set of friends to influence the North Vietnamese - and the process of arms control (SALT I)
- The Nixon Doctrine (containment retrenchment)  
1971 - End to floating international exchange rates pegged to Gold - Decline of the dollar and international monetary control

## Nixon - continued

- How the War ends - After reelection - Public negotiations, Secret Negotiations continue - Christmas bombing -- "Secret negotiations succeed" -- U.S. withdraws - with continued U.S. pledges to help South Vietnam
- 3. Inflation and Oil - War driven inflation and then the shock of the Oil embargo in the fall of 1973 - an economy in trouble –
- 4. Watergate does not go away - The cover-up the smoking gun - the forced resignation (8/74) The end of the imperial presidency??
- The Universe falls apart - 25 years after NSC-68 Things are very bleak Internal (domestic) Politics - President forced out - major political divisions (high partisanship), Congressional/Presidential struggle over foreign policy - War Powers, budget authority - Democrats vs. Republicans External SALT I only a start  
Shadow of Vietnam  
Retrenchment -  
Economic weakness