General Cold War Vocabulary

Berlin Airlift Event in 1948-1949 where Britain, US and France sent supplies by air to their sector of blockaded Berlin.

Berlin Wall Wall built in 1961 by the Communist government of East Berlin to keep the people of West and East Berlin separate. It was torn down in 1989.

Berlin Blockade An attempt in 1948 by the Soviet Union to drive western powers out by blocking off the British, American and French sectors of Berlin

Containment Practice by US to prevent Communism from spreading outside of countries already allied with USSR

Cuban Missile Crisis 13-day longs standoff between US and USSR in November, 1962 over USSR placed missiles in Cuba; US threatened to invade Cuba if missiles were not removed. USSR eventually removed missiles in exchange for US not invading Cuba

Cuban Revolution From 1953-1959. The US-backed dictator of Cuba was forced out by Communist rebels who soon allied Cuba with the Soviet Union. One of the only times that a country went Communist without invasion by USSR

Détente Word meaning “relaxation” of tensions between US and USSR from 1969-1980

Eastern Bloc Countries of Central/Eastern Europe allied with the USSR

Fidel Castro Leader of Cuban Revolution and Government of Cuba from 1959-2008

Glasnost Policy of transparency created by Gorbachev to reduce corruption in USSR in later 1980s

Iron Curtain Name for the invisible barrier in Europe that separated Soviet allied countries and US allied countries

Mao Zedong Leader of Communist Chinese forces during Chinese civil war and China after achieving the Nationalist forces were driven out in 1950

Marshall Plan American plan to aid in rebuilding post-WWII Europe to prevent the spread of Communism

Mutually Assured The idea that if either side in the Cold War decided to engage in nuclear

Destruction (MAD) war, the other side would retaliate leaving both sides destroyed

Nikita Khrushchev Successor to Stalin after Stalin died in 1953

North Atlantic Group of democratic countries around the Atlantic that formed in 1949

Treaty Org. (NATO) with the agreement to mutually defend each other if attacked

Nuclear Arms Race Competition between US and USSR to build up nuclear weapons arsenal

Perestroika Russian for “restructuring”, late 1980s policy change in USSR where the government was reorganized for more efficient running of the country

Potsdam Conference Meeting in summer of 1945 where Britain, US and USSR decided how to punish Germany after it surrendered on May 9, 1945

Space Race The competition between US and USSR to get to the moon

Sputnik 1 1st ever man-made satellite launched by USSR on October 4, 1957

Strategic Arms Known as SALT, treaty that reduced amount of missiles possessed by both

Limitation Talks US and USSR, negotiated in 1969

Superpowers A country that is economically, politically and culturally dominant throughout the world

Truman Doctrine Practice put forth by President Truman that US would economically and politically support Greece and Turkey to prevent them from allying with the USSR, this practice led to “Containment”

Soviet War in 1979-1988 USSR led war against US backed Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan Afghanistan

Yalta Conference Post-WWII meeting; Britain, US and USSR discussed rebuilding Europe

Warsaw Pact Treaty signed by 8 Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe pledging to defend each other if attacked

Western Bloc Countries of Western Europe allied with the US