From 1949 to 1960, the Cold War escalated as a result of a nuclear arms race, space race, & espionage.

The U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons ended in 1949 when the USSR successfully tested an atomic bomb.

The Soviet development of the atomic bomb led to a nuclear arms race between the USA & USSR.
In 1952, the USA tested the first hydrogen bomb which is 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb.

The Soviet Union responded by detonating its own hydrogen bomb in 1953.

By 1959, both the USA & USSR developed rockets called intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that could deliver nuclear warheads to distant targets.
Dwight Eisenhower was elected president in 1952. He served until 1961.

Eisenhower was a war hero who planned the D-Day invasion during World War II.

His military experience gave Americans confidence that he could face the threat of the USSR during the Cold War.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Soviet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,010 Intercontinental ballistic missiles</td>
<td>1,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>640 Submarine-launched missiles</td>
<td>983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260 Long-range bombers</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24,700 Nuclear warheads</td>
<td>36,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Antiballistic missile launchers</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Aircraft carriers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,143,955 Armed forces personnel</td>
<td>5,130,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 1950s, President Eisenhower escalated the Cold War by using brinkmanship: threatening to use nuclear weapons & willingness to go to the brink of war.
If the USSR attacked a NATO member, the U.S. would use massive retaliation: attack every major Soviet city & military target.

As a result, the USA & USSR began stockpiling nuclear weapons & building up their militaries.

Throughout the Cold War, the USA & USSR looked for ways to gain first strike capability.

With the USA & USSR in possession of large nuclear stockpiles, each side could destroy each other: this was known as **Mutually Assured Destruction** (MAD).
To combat American fears of a nuclear attack, the U.S. government responded in a number of ways.


Cities and schools practiced building evacuations and "duck & cover" drills.
In response to the threat of a Soviet nuclear attack, Congress created the Interstate Highway System in 1956.

- 41,000 miles of highway connected U.S. cities and promoted trade & travel.
- Highways served as a means to evacuate cities during a potential nuclear attack.
U.S.–Soviet relations changed in 1953 when Stalin died after 30 years of absolute rule over the Soviet Union.

Nikita Khrushchev took over and began to aggressively challenge U.S. influence in the world.

In 1955, Khrushchev formed a communist alliance to rival NATO, called the Warsaw Pact.

In 1956, the Soviet Union threatened expansion into the Middle East.

President Eisenhower responded with the Eisenhower Doctrine, pledging the USA to protect the Middle East from Communism.
In 1957, the USSR used its first ICBM to launch Sputnik, the first satellite into space.

Sputnik shocked Americans who feared the U.S. had fallen behind the USSR in science & technology.

As a result of Sputnik, the Cold War escalated into a space race to show American & Soviet dominance.
The U.S. government reacted to Sputnik by passing the National Defense Education Act to promote math, science, and technology education and to fund university research.
In 1958, the USA created the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) to catch up to the USSR. The USSR repeatedly beat the USA in space by launching the first man into orbit and orbiting the moon.
By 1960, Eisenhower's presidency was coming to an end and the Cold War was as tense as ever.

Eisenhower effectively limited communist expansion during his eight years as president.

...but...

Eisenhower's build-up of nuclear weapons and use of brinkmanship created the potential for nuclear annihilation.

Americans seemed to be losing the technology race against the USSR.
In his farewell speech, Eisenhower warned against the "military industrial complex"—overspending & over-prioritizing military over basic American needs.

"A nation that continues year after year, to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift, is approaching spiritual death."

Martin Luther King Jr.
From 1945 to 1960, the United States experienced successes and failures in the Cold War with the USSR.

Truman successfully contained communism in Western Europe... but saw communism to spread in Asia & the USSR match America’s nuclear weaponry.

Eisenhower used the CIA & brinkmanship to limit Soviet global influence... but the USSR was winning the space race & Americans were anxious about a nuclear war.
Closure
Activity

Using the provided word bank, match each word to its appropriate definition.