

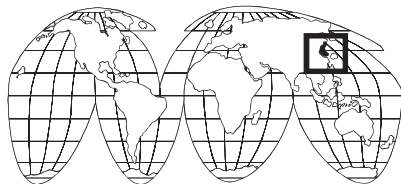
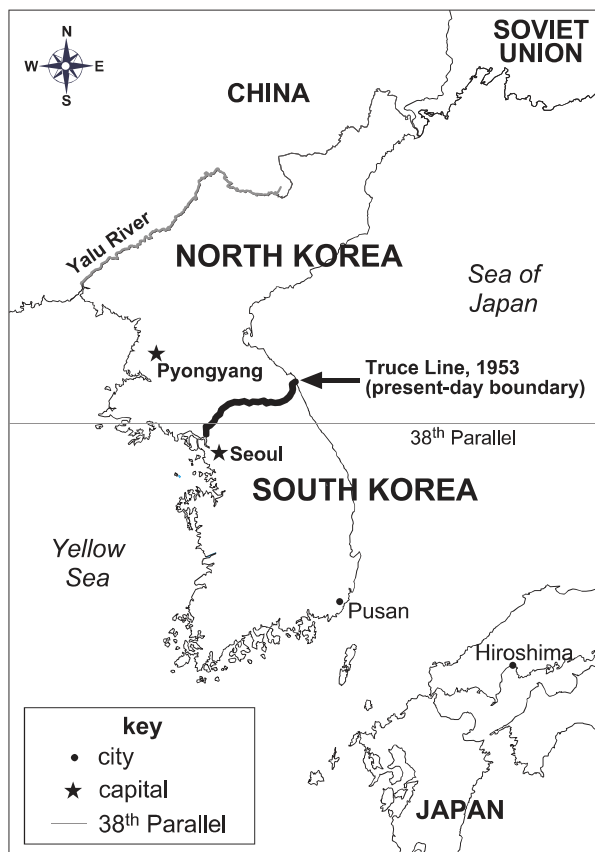
## Introduction

President *Harry S Truman*, a Democrat, was in office in the first years of the Cold War, from 1945–1952. In 1952 the Republican candidate, former General *Dwight D. Eisenhower* or “Ike,” was elected President by a large number of votes. During his two terms in office, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union continued. In the United States during the 1950s, African Americans protested unfair treatment and expanded their civil rights movement.



*President Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## Foreign Relations



*Civil War in Korea, 1950-1953*

During the 1950s, the United States government faced many foreign problems. In Korea, a civil war broke out. An American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union, and the United States entered the war between Communists and American allies in Indochina, or Southeast Asia. To complicate world affairs, the United States and the Soviet Union developed the potentially devastating **H-bomb**, or *hydrogen bomb*—a bomb that used hydrogen to create a more powerful blast.

### Civil War in Korea

In 1950 Communist North Korea, aided by Communist China, invaded non-Communist South Korea. At President Truman’s request,

the United Nations Security Council agreed and sent an international force under UN support to defend South Korea. The UN forces, however, were unsuccessful in restoring peace in Korea.

After his election in 1952, Eisenhower arranged an **armistice**, or a cease-fire, between North Korea and South Korea. They agreed to stop fighting and hold talks. The talks resulted in the division of Korea at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in July, 1953. North Korea remained Communist, and South Korea would stay non-Communist. Despite many years of fighting and many lives lost, Korea remained divided as before.



*President Harry S. Truman*

America's experience in Korea is important for several reasons. First, it was the first time the United Nations sent forces to fight in a war. Second, it was the first *hot* conflict, or military engagement, between the United States and a Communist country.

Third, the United States Congress supported President Truman's decision not to declare war on North Korea and to limit America's military actions. Fourth, the United States had the atomic bomb but chose not to use it. Korea was not an American victory, but it did stop Communist expansion without starting a world war.

### **Relations with Soviet Union**

*Nikita Khrushchev* became the Soviet leader in 1953 after *Joseph Stalin* died. Khrushchev and Eisenhower held talks to try to ease tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. Khrushchev wanted to be able to live peacefully with the United States. The desire for **peaceful coexistence** improved relations between the two countries.

### **Other Foreign Problems**

New foreign problems faced President Eisenhower during his second term in office. In 1956 a democratic uprising against the Communist government in Hungary was crushed by the Soviets. In the oil-rich Middle East, there was fighting between Egypt and Israel, and unrest in Iran and Lebanon. In 1958 the Soviet government again told the Western powers they had to get out of West Berlin.



## War in Indochina

Eisenhower also had to decide how to deal with problems in Indochina. Indochina is a region in Asia that contains three countries: Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. France controlled the area until the Japanese drove them out during World War II.

When the war ended, the French returned, but the Vietnamese wanted their independence. They turned to the Chinese Communists for help in fighting the French. The Vietnamese defeated the French in 1954, and the country was divided into North and South Vietnam. North Vietnam was Communist; South Vietnam had a non-Communist government.



Vietnam, 1955-1956

A man named *Ho Chi Minh* (hoh chee mihn), the former leader of the independence movement, became the leader in North Vietnam. His

followers were called *Vietminh*. South Vietnam was controlled by the former Vietnamese emperor. The emperor mistreated the people, and by 1957 Communists in South Vietnam began to fight him. The South Vietnamese Communists called themselves **Vietcong**.

The United States first became involved in Indochina by sending France money and supplies to fight the Vietnamese Communists. When the French were defeated, the United States government believed the Communists would take over the region. The United States decided to help South Vietnam fight the *Vietcong*. The emperor was replaced by Ngo Dinh Diem (noh din zee em), a leader with a more favorable attitude toward the United States, and President Eisenhower continued to send aid to South Vietnam.

## The H-Bomb Increases the Threat of War

By 1953 both the United States and the Soviet Union had developed a new bomb—the *H-bomb*. It was *500 times more powerful* than the atomic bomb. The United States also had a fleet of new long distance B-52 planes which could deliver the bomb to the Soviet Union. There were fears that the new global conflicts would result in a **nuclear war**, a war in which atomic weapons would be used.

People were relieved when, in 1959, President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev agreed to hold a series of peace talks. Their talks ended in 1960 when the Soviets shot down an American spy plane, the U-2, over the Soviet Union. The United States had to admit it was spying on the Soviet Union. Khrushchev refused to meet again with Eisenhower.

## Events in Latin America

In 1958 the United States tried to prevent communism from spreading to the Western Hemisphere by improving relations with Latin America. Vice President *Richard M. Nixon* went on a goodwill tour to South America, but he received an angry reception. Some countries in Latin America viewed the United States unfavorably for taking advantage of the Latin American people. Meanwhile, *Fidel Castro* led a revolution in Cuba and set up a Communist government there, only 90 miles from the United States.

## Events in the United States

Problems and events within the United States were as important as those occurring overseas. A United States senator was increasing Americans' fears of communism. African Americans continued their civil rights movement. American culture was equally affected by the changing world: technology influenced art, and the automobile continued to change how and where people lived.







### RED SCARE

The *Red Scare* got its name from the color of the Communist Party's flag—its red symbolized Marxist revolution. Magazines and newspapers were full of sensational reports of anti-communist riots. This led many people to take quick action against anyone or anything that seemed at all anti-American.

### A New Red Scare

At home, in 1953, many Americans were alarmed by the worldwide Communist threat. Republican Senator *Joseph McCarthy* used this fear to further his own career. He accused the Democrats of letting Communists have jobs in the United States government. McCarthy claimed he could prove his charges.

President Eisenhower did not believe McCarthy, but he issued an order concerning government employees. The order said that anyone suspected of Communist activity could be fired.

During this new Red Scare, or fear of communism, many people lost their jobs because they were accused of being a Communist. Investigations showed that McCarthy had lied. In 1954 the Senate censured him, or condemned his misconduct.

### The Civil Rights Movement Begins

America's schools and public facilities were still **segregated**, or separated on the basis of race, in the 1950s. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a leading civil rights organization which began in 1909, used court cases to end segregation. In 1954 the NAACP won its most important victory when the Supreme Court decided that *segregated* schools were unconstitutional. This important decision was called ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas***. The Court insisted that schools must be desegregated, or open to all races. The Southern states tried to resist integration. White mobs became violent when African-American children tried to enter public schools. President Eisenhower sent federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, to protect African Americans entering schools. Across the South, several schools closed to prevent African Americans from attending them.

Meanwhile, in Montgomery, Alabama, African Americans actively protested segregated public facilities. In Montgomery and throughout the South, city buses were segregated. African Americans had to sit in the rear of the bus or make room for white passengers when necessary. In 1955 an

African-American woman named *Rosa Parks* was arrested because she would not give up her bus seat to a white man. African Americans decided to **boycott**, or refuse to use, the Montgomery buses until they were desegregated.

### Rosa Parks (1913-2005)

Rosa Parks was born in Tuskegee, Alabama and is best known for protesting the segregation laws, which led to the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. After briefly attending Alabama State College, she married Raymond Parks, a barber and activist. Parks worked as a seamstress and was involved in several African-American organizations—the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, the Montgomery Voters League, and other civic groups.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man. This was a violation of the city's racial segregation ordinances. The African-American community was inspired by Parks' strength, and a young pastor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led the Montgomery bus boycott. For 381 days, the majority of the African-American community refused to use public transportation. The boycott lasted until December 20, 1956, when the United States Supreme Court declared that Montgomery's segregated seating was unconstitutional.

For Rosa Parks' role in igniting the successful campaign and for her role in the anti-segregation movement, she became known as the "mother of the Civil Rights Movement." In 1957, she and her husband moved to Detroit, Michigan where she later founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. Parks also received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor a civilian can receive in the United States.

The *boycott*, which lasted over a year, was led by an African-American Baptist minister named Dr. *Martin Luther King, Jr.* This encouraged boycotts throughout the United States. The Supreme Court finally ruled that segregation on buses was not legal. The federal government began to make laws which protected the civil rights of African Americans. For years to come, African Americans continued to use **nonviolent protests** in the civil rights movement as a means to oppose unjust laws. Nonviolent refers to the use of peaceful methods.



*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## American Society Experiences Change

By 1960 the American population reached 179 million. One reason for the increase was that the American birthrate was up. Another reason was the arrival of thousands of **refugees** from wars. *Refugees* are people seeking safety from hostile or unfair political situations. These refugees came from countries all over the world.

People were on the move in the United States. They were moving from farms to cities. By 1960 over half of all Americans lived in urban areas. City dwellers were moving to the suburbs, or residential areas near cities. People in the North were moving to the South and Southwest. African Americans continued to move from the South to find jobs in the factories of the North. Most people moved in order get better jobs and improve their lives. Unfortunately, jobs were filled quickly and many African Americans met discrimination in the North as well.

## A Growing Economy

Modern technology, or machines, made work faster and more productive. This made it possible to keep up with the increased demand for goods and technical services. The **Gross National Product (GNP)**—the value of all goods and services produced in a year—rose from \$350 billion in 1945 to \$720 billion in 1965.

The computer was one of the new technological advances. The computer enabled industry to become **automated**, or self-moving, and also required workers with better educations. There were many opportunities for those with training; unemployment rose, however, among untrained and unskilled people.

Salaries increased, and the standard of living for most Americans continued to improve. People were able to buy new machines that made life easier. They could buy television sets, washing and drying machines, deep freezers, and many other new products.

## Impact of the Automobile

For many, the most important item was a new automobile complete with radio and turn signals. Increased use of the automobile created a need for new highways. In 1956 the federal government began to build a modern *interstate highway system* across the United States called the National

System of Interstate and Defense Highways. One of the main purposes of the interstate highway system was to offer quick mobilization of United States military troops in case of an attack on United States soil by Cold War enemies.

As more people traveled, gasoline companies began to sell gas on *credit cards*, which allowed people to make purchases on credit. The automobile made travel from work to home faster. This increased the growth of suburbs around cities and led to two new problems—traffic jams and air pollution.

### Growth of Education

After World War II, more people than ever began to enter schools and colleges. The government provided money for a program called the **GI Bill of Rights** that helped veterans go to college or technical schools.

A Soviet achievement spurred America's interest in science education. In 1957 the Soviets sent **Sputnik**, the first artificial satellite, into space. Fearing the United States could not compete with the Soviets, the federal government funded new programs in space and engineering.

### American Art and Literature

Modern technology also influenced the arts. Adventurous new artists like *Jackson Pollack* created a new painting style called *abstract expressionism*. These paintings did not look like photographs or copies of their subjects. They did not present people or landscapes in their natural forms. Instead, these paintings showed their painters' own private visions. This led some people to wonder if these works could be called *art*.

Writers tried to explain complex issues about the changes taking place in American life. Their work ranged from books about the war to the loneliness of individuals in modern society.



*These paintings did not look like photographs or copies of their subjects.*

## Election of 1960

President Eisenhower could not run for a third term in the 1960 election. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1951, limited a President to two terms in office. Vice President Richard Nixon became the Republican candidate. His Democratic opponent was Senator *John F. Kennedy* from Massachusetts.



Vice President  
Richard Nixon

The 1960 campaign was the first in which candidates held televised **debates**, or arguments. Millions of American voters watched the Kennedy and Nixon *debates*. Television greatly affected the American election process. It gave millions of people the chance to both hear and see their candidates simultaneously. Some say this benefitted Kennedy because he was viewed as being more handsome and charismatic than the elder Nixon.



Senator John F.  
Kennedy

The 1960 election results were close, but John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon and became America's 35<sup>th</sup> President.

## Summary

The Korean War ended with an *armistice* which left North and South Korea divided between Communists and non-Communists. President Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Khrushchev tried to ease Cold War tensions with their agreement to peacefully coexist. Khrushchev broke off the dialogue with Eisenhower when an American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union. In addition, fighting began or continued in a number of countries in the world, including Vietnam, throughout the 1950s.

In the United States, people experienced a Red Scare when Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed that Communists had gained government jobs. During the Eisenhower administration, the issue of civil rights grew to a large political movement to ultimately end segregation through needed legislation. American society underwent many changes during this period as new technology became available. Technology inspired new interests in education and new styles of art and literature.