Former prime minister Winston Churchill warns of an “iron curtain” descending across Europe in a speech at Fulton, Missouri.

In 1947 puppet communist regimes were set up by the Soviet Union in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and East Germany.

The United States intervenes in the civil war in Greece as part of the Truman Doctrine to prevent the spread of communism.

The Soviets begin a blockade of Berlin from 1948 to 1949.

5) West Germany is established in May of 1949, with the protection of U.S. troops based in the new country.

In October 1949 the Soviets help establish the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany.

In 1949 the Soviet Union creates an alliance with Mao’s communist People’s Republic of China.

The Korean War lasts from 1950-1953, pitting the two sides against each other and resulting in a truce.

The United States establishes long-term military bases in alliances with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines.

In 1952 aid from the United States’ Marshall Plan is given to Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands (Holland), Luxembourg, Denmark, West Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

In 1956 Eisenhower uses nuclear superiority to curtail Soviet intervention in the Suez Crisis in Egypt.

The Soviets invade Hungary in 1956 to quell revolution.

The Soviets announce from Moscow the launching of the first earth satellite, Sputnik, in October 1957.

In July 1958 Congress creates NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Agency) in Washington, D.C. to compete in the space program.

The United States intervenes and ultimately loses in a battle against the spread of communism, the Vietnam War, from 1959-1975.

On March 1, 1961, the Peace Corps is established by executive order in Washington, D.C, waging small victories to help America’s standing in less developed countries around the world.


The first nuclear standoff between the two superpowers occurs in October 1962—the Cuban Missile Crisis.

President Johnson lands 22,000 troops in the Dominican Republic in order to avoid a communist threat from Latin America.

U.S. ally Israel invades Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula following a Soviet-backed troop buildup in 1967.

The United States begins bombing communist sanctuaries in Cambodia during the Vietnam War.

NASA in Houston successfully lands Apollo 11 on the moon on July 20, 1969.


President Nixon travels to communist Beijing, China in February of 1972 to meet with Mao.

Controversy marks the Soviet Union defeat of the United States Olympic basketball team in Munich, West Germany in 1972.

Soviet ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov defects to Toronto, Canada in 1974, soon working in the United States.

During the 1970’s the Cold War was being waged in conflicts in Africa: The Unites States provided arms and aid to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Somalia. The Soviet Union provided arms and aid to Algeria, Libya, Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique. Many African countries received aid and arms from both superpowers.

U.S. backed Iranian regime was ousted in 1979 during the country’s revolution.

In 1979 pro-U.S. regimes in Nicaragua were ousted by revolution.

Pope John Paul II promotes nationalism against communism in a visit to his native Poland in 1979.

The Soviets begin their intervention into war in Afghanistan in 1979, lasting until 1988.

The United States hockey team defeats the Soviet Union in the Olympics at Lake Placid, New York in 1980.

Due to the intervention in Afghanistan, the United States boycotts the Summer Olympics in Moscow, Russia in 1980.

Romanian national gymnastics team coach Bela Karolyi defects from Romania to the U.S. with his wife in 1981.

On March 23, 1983 President Reagan announces the Star Wars defense program, protecting the United States from missile attack.

President Reagan intervened in the civil war in Lebanon in 1983 until American Marines were killed in a barracks bombing.

President Reagan invaded the island of Grenada to overthrow communist rule in 1983.

The Soviet Union boycotts the Olympic Games hosted by Los Angeles, California in 1984 in response to the previous American boycott of the Games in Moscow.

President Reagan ordered the bombing of Libya in response to terrorist attacks on American servicemen in Europe in 1986.

On June 12, 1987, President Reagan asks Mikhail Gorbachev to “ Tear down this wall” in West Berlin, Germany.

After failed negotiations in Reykjavik, Iceland, President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987, reducing nuclear arms.

In November 1989, Germans began the destruction of the Berlin Wall.

While meeting in Malta in 1989 President George H.W. Bush and Gorbachev declare the end of the Cold War.

In 1990 Gorbachev consents to the reunification of Germany.

In 1991 the collapse of the Soviet Union was final: the country was officially dissolved. Fifteen countries now make up the former Soviet Union, leaving the United States as the world’s sole superpower.