

Lesson 8.1 (Pageant Ch.36-37) Express Notes:

Using your textbook **OR** britannica.com, determine the meaning of the following key events, people, and terms.

Lesson Topic: The 1950s

Key Events:

1946: Kennan's "Long Telegram" establishes "Containment Doctrine": This "Mr. X" telegram indicates that the Soviet Union is intending to spread its influence across the globe resulting in literal communist world domination. This event establishes the "Containment Doctrine" which indicates that the U.S. should contain communism by any means necessary. However, this results in a slow escalation of force. At first, the U.S. starts with "soft power" approaches such as the Marshall Plan where money was used to make American style democracy/capitalism more appealing than Soviet communism. By 1950, however, the containment doctrine escalated to military action such as the Korean War (more on that in lesson 8.4)

1949: Communists defeat Nationalists in China: The result of this Chinese Civil War dramatically shaped the rest of the 20th Century. The U.S.-backed Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Shek, misused their funds (specifically by using money to buy dresses and jewels for Chiang Kai-Shek's wife) and was defeated at the hands of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communists. The Nationalists were exiled to Taiwan. The U.S. retaliated by refusing to recognize Mainland ("Communist/Red China") and recognizing Taiwan as "Free China."

1950: Rosenbergs convicted of treason: Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted and later executed for funneling atomic secrets to the Soviets. Thanks to their efforts, the Soviet get the atomic bomb in 1949. This event completely undermined U.S. atomic diplomacy since that strategy only worked if only one country has atomic weapons.

1951: McCarthy Red Hunt begins: Triggered and emboldened by the Rosenberg atomic espionage conviction, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin formed the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). HUAC was responsible for targeting suspected communist spies and prosecuting them. Hollywood was specifically targeted for its liberal agendas. Hollywood responded by blacklisting actors, screenwriters, and directors preventing them from working.

1957: Little Rock School Desegregates: The Little Rock 9 were escorted by the military under the order of President Eisenhower. Eisenhower's decision was justified by the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955). This ruling overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* which established segregation as the norm under the phrase "separate but equal accommodations." Although the *Brown* decision overturned this Supreme Court decision, a decade would pass before the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965) would give the legal framework for enforcing the *Brown* decision.

Key Terms:

Postwar Adjustments:

GI Bill of Rights: Also called **Servicemen's Readjustment Act**, U.S. legislation passed in 1944 that provided benefits to World War II veterans. Through the Veterans Administration (VA), the bill provided grants for school and college tuition, low-interest mortgage and small-business loans, job training, hiring privileges, and unemployment payments. Amendments to the act provided for full disability coverage and the construction of additional VA hospitals. Later legislation extended the benefits to all who had served in the armed forces.

Sunbelt: A region comprising 15 southern states in the United States and extending from Virginia and Florida in the southeast through Nevada in the southwest, and also including southern California. After World War II, these regions of the country experienced a population explosion as the GI Bill of Rights encouraged nationwide resettlement.

Baby Boom: An historic increase in the birth rate between 1946 and 1964. After World War II, there was a state of economic prosperity triggered by the GI Bill of Rights, affordable housing such as Levittowns and a higher standard of living.

Levittown: A revolutionary invention of affordable housing. These manufactured/"cookie cutter" style houses popped up all over the country. Many of these communities triggered white flight because they had whites only guidelines in their Homeowners Associations (HOAs).

Truman's Fair Deal: A progressive expansion of civil and economic rights for whom President Harry S. Truman was responsible. Truman's Fair Deal policies included the outlawing of discrimination based on race per the Fair Employment Practices Act. Truman's Fair Deal also desegregated the federal bureaucracy and the armed forces. Truman also expanded social security.

Operation Dixie: A pro-union effort made by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to unionize Southern factories, specifically textile factories. Its outcome resulted in the American Federation of Labor merging with the resulting in the AFL-CIO.

Employment Act of 1946: A facet of Truman's Fair Deal which attempted to make amends between the Federal Government and organized labor always ensuring jobs.

Suburbia: New communities and small towns that exist along the lines of major cities. The creation of affordable housing such as Levittowns helped make this possible. The invention of suburbia facilities a large scale migration from the inner cities to these new communities. Most

of these relocating residents were predominantly white. This phenomenon resulted in “inner city” carrying the connotation of being predominantly people of color.

“White Flight”: A phenomenon by which white/Anglo-Saxon communities leave a community usually triggered by the “encroachment” of people of color in the community. A common expression for this phenomenon is the phrase “There goes the neighborhood.” When POCs move into a community, the predominantly white households move away.

Cold War Origins:

Cold War: A modern style of war categorized by covert operations and proxy wars instead of blatant military conflicts. Diplomacy and soft power are championed over military weapons and hard power.

Iron Curtain: A symbolic term used to describe the boundary between Western Democratic Europe and the Communist dominated Eastern Europe. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared: “An iron curtain has descended across the continent of Europe.” The iron curtain metaphor was later used throughout the Cold War to refer to the Soviet satellite states of Western democracies to hat the expansion of communism.

National Security Act: A law which established the modern national defense system. This includes the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Council (NSC) and the Department of Defense.

Central Intelligence Agency: A covert operations organization charged with using secret agents to change the internal politics of other nations. This covert approach seemed less objectionable than employing U.S. troops and also proved less expensive

National Security Council: An organization of military leaders charged with maintaining the well-being of the United States. In the National Security Council Paper 68 (**NSC-68**), the U.S. laid out its strategy: aggressively stop the spread of communism while also promoting democracy to the rest of the world as a more attractive alternative.

Department of Defense: A reframed executive cabinet position formerly known as the War Department. This Department is responsible for managing the armed forces and bridging the gulf between the government (public) sector and government contractors (aka the private sector).

Marshall Plan: A demonstration of soft power in which the U.S. spent \$12 billion in Western Europe. The Marshall Plan worked exactly as Marshall and Truman had hoped. The massive infusion of U.S. dollars helped Western Europe achieve self-sustaining growth by the 1950s and ended any real threat of Communist political success in that region.

Containment Doctrine: A political ideology which indicates that the U.S. should contain communism by any means necessary. However, this results in a slow escalation of force. At first, the U.S. starts with “soft power” approaches such as the Marshall Plan where money

was used to make American style democracy/capitalism more appealing than Soviet communism. By 1950, however, the containment doctrine escalated to military action such as the Korean War (more on that in lesson 8.4)

Berlin Airlift: A reaction to the Berlin Blockade (1948) in which the Soviets restricted supplies to the democratically operated West Berlin. The Americans responded by sending supplies via aircraft (hence the airlift part). The Soviets abandoned the blockade in 1949.

NSC-68: An important National Security Council memorandum in which the U.S. laid out its strategy: aggressively stop the spread of communism while also promoting democracy to the rest of the world as a more attractive alternative.

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a military alliance between the U.S., Canada and ten European countries. Under the terms of NATO, if one country is under attack, the combined forces of U.S., Canada and the European member nations would come to its assistance.

United Nations: Much like the League of Nations after the First World War, the United Nations is a peacekeeping cooperative arrangement between countries of the world. Its purpose is to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to world problems. Unlike the League of Nations, however, the U.S. did join this organization and is a high ranking member of the UN Security Council.

UN Security Council: The “inner circle” of the United Nations consisting of the United States, China, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. In terms of committing troops for war, all members of the UN Security Council must agree to a binding resolution.

Eisenhower Era Domestic Trends:

Nixon’s Checker Speech: An impassioned speech made by Eisenhower’s running mate Richard Nixon in response to allegations that he misused campaign funds. Nixon went on television and won the support of millions of viewers by tugging at their heartstrings. With his wife and daughters around him, he emotionally vowed never to return the gift of their beloved dog, Checkers. The Eisenhower-Nixon ticket went on to win over 55 percent of the popular vote and an electoral college landslide victory of 442 to 89.

Eisenhower’s Modern Republicanism: Being the first Republican president post-Hoover, this political ideology emphasized fiscal responsibility and running the government like a business. Eisenhower’s leadership emphasized the delegation of authority. He filled his cabinet with successful corporate executives who gave his administration a businesslike tone. His secretary of defense, for example was Charles Wilson, former head of General Motors.

Highway Act: A benchmark law under the Eisenhower administration which authorized construction of 42,000 miles of interstate highways linking all of the nation’s major cities.

Interstate Highway System: A massive component of our nation's domestic defense. In the event of an attack or enemy occupation, the military can easily use the interstate to transport military personnel and equipment. To this day, for example, bridges over interstates must be high enough for military transports carrying nuclear missiles to safely pass under them.

Operation "Wetback": A military operation under the Eisenhower administration in 1954 which forcibly deported over 300,000 Mexican Americans on the grounds that they took jobs away from American citizens.

Rock and Roll: A new style of music brought on by African American music trends such as rhythm and blues and gospel. While white performers such as Elvis Presley gained more notoriety above African American performers such as Chuck Berry, the music played a major role in shaping the decade. Many teenagers turned to the music for expression. Many conservative Americans interpreted the music as devil worship and anti-establishment.

Dating Training Films: An attempt made by conservative America to use mass media to promote "correct" behavior, specifically concerning dating and courtship. These films promote heteronormativity and productive civic engagement.

Army McCarthy Hearings: A famous event triggered by Senator Joe McCarthy's House of Un-American Activities Committee. McCarthy alleged that communists and communist sympathizers infiltrated the Army. Army lawyer Joseph Welch confronted McCarthy during the hearing with his famous question "Have you no sympathy at long last, sir?"

Kitchen Debate: A famous confrontation between Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev about the superiority between the Soviet and American ways.

Eisenhower Era Foreign Policy

Red China: Also known as the People's Republic of China (PRC) established after 1949. Once Mao Zedong and the Communist Chinese won the Chinese Civil War, they established their country as a communist satellite state.

Brinkmanship: The practice supported by President Eisenhower of pursuing a dangerous policy to the limits of safety before stopping. In other words aggressively pushing until war breaks out.

Covert Operations: Actions done by secret agents and other clandestine organizations such as the CIA.

1953 CIA overthrow in Iran: When Iran attempted to nationalize the holding of foreign oil companies (a symptom of communism). Eisenhower retaliated by having the CIA overthrow the government. The overthrow of the elected government allowed for the return of Reza

Pahlavi as shah (monarch) of Iran. The shah in return provided the West with favorable oil prices and made enormous purchases of American weapons.

OPEC: Also known as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries consisting of the Arab nations of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran and oil-rich Venezuela. This organization was responsible for setting the price of oil in international trade.

Military Industrial Complex: A post-WWII agreement between private businesses and the military. Companies that make consumer goods (like DOW Chemical Company and saran wrap) also make weapons of war (like DOW chemical making napalm). Fun fact, for UFO aficionados: the military industrial complex is blamed for UFO coverups alleging that the military captures the flying saucers and the private companies reverse engineer the alien technology like computer chips.

1960 U-2 Incident: A failed covert operation, in which the Soviets shot down a top secret U-2 aircraft over the Soviet Union. The Soviets captured its pilot Francis Gary Powers proving that the U.S. was trespassing on Soviet territory.

Key People:

American Leaders:

Harry S. Truman: President of the United States post-WWII. He is responsible for the containment doctrine and the Fair Deal.

Dwight D. Eisenhower: President of the United States after Truman. His crowning achievements are brinkmanship, the Interstate Highway System, and modern Republicanism.

Joe McCarthy: Junior Republican Senator from Wisconsin alleging that communists had infiltrated all levels of American culture. When his allegations proved false, McCarthy drank himself to death.

George F. Kennan: U.S. ambassador to Europe. Responsible for penning the “Long Telegram” under the moniker “Mr. X.” His recommendations helped set up the Containment Doctrine.

George C. Marshall: Truman’s Secretary of State and Defense, most noted for the establishment of the Marshall Plan which reconstructed wartorn Western Europe.

Richard Nixon: At this stage, President Eisenhower's Vice President. He is responsible for participating in the kitchen debate, turning Cuba communist by criticizing Fidel Castro, and running for President in 1960.

John F. Dulles: Director of the CIA. He is responsible for CIA overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz (more on that in Lesson 8.4) and the Iran Coup.

American 50's Cultural Icons

Elvis Presley: American Rock and Roll icon responsible for kicking off rock culture.

Marilyn Monroe: American film actress known for her curvaceous body type and her relationship with President John F. Kennedy.

Dr. Benjamin Spock: Noted child psychologist (not to be confused with the *Star Trek* character). His crowning doctrine was the notion of indulging a child's desires. Because of this doctrine, he was widely blamed for the creation of the counterculture in the 1960s.

Little Richard: African American rock and roll artist.

Rosa Parks: African American civil rights activist responsible for starting the Montgomery Bus Boycotts.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: African American civil rights activist and member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As a student of Mohandas K. Gandhi, King's signature philosophy was civil disobedience and nonviolence.

World Leaders

Joseph Stalin: Premier of the Soviet Union post-WWII. He is responsible for aggressive communist expansion resulting in countermeasures such as the Marshall Plan and the Korean War.

Nikita Khrushchev: Premier of the Soviet Union post-Stalin. He is responsible for a slightly more nuanced approach to communist expansion. While not as overtly aggressive as his predecessor, Khrushchev was known for covert operations to promote his side, like the placement of nuclear missiles in Cuba as a deterrent against U.S. aggression.

Chang Kai-Shek: Leader of the Chinese Nationalist as an anti-communist. Although backed by the United States, he was notorious for misusing funds resulting in the defeat of the nationalists. Chang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Army fled to Taiwan creating "Free China."

Mao Zedong: Leader of the Chinese Communist Party. His victory allowed for Mainland China to reorganize itself as the People's Republic of China (PRC), also known as "Red China."

Fidel Castro: Cuban revolutionary and opponent of U.S. backed Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. While not communist originally, his July 26th movement is responsible for turning Cuba into a communist satellite state. This is mostly because Richard Nixon insulted him by calling him “naive” about possible Soviet aid for his country.

Fulgencio Batista: U.S. backed Cuban dictator who was dethroned by Fidel Castro and the July 26th movement.

Gamal Abdel Nasser: Second President of Egypt responsible for courting the Soviet Union and encouraging its involvement in the Middle East.

Ho Chi Minh: Vietnamese intellectual who promoted decolonization. His theories were responsible for eliminating the French at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. His communist philosophies are directly responsible for the Vietnam War.

Reza Pahlavi: The Shah of Iran installed by the U.S. after the 1953 CIA backed overthrow.