

## Unit 7: The Cold War and Its Thawing

More than seventy years have passed between the end of World War Two and today. However, many of the problems that plagued the world then continue to be an issue today. Hatred based on race and religion may manifest differently, but this xenophobia—fear of the other—is just as relevant today as it was during the time of the Holocaust, Comfort Women, and Japanese-American internment. In the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have witnessed [Islamophobia](#) throughout the world, the [migrant crisis in Europe](#), and [continued racism in the United States](#). The world continues to engage in genocidal activity, learning little from the horrors of the Holocaust, while nine countries now have nuclear capabilities. In this unit, we will look at the many ways the Cold War changed the world—and the many ways it didn't.

At the [Yalta Conference](#) in February of 1945, Germany was divided between the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union. Berlin, the capital city, was divided in half—one half going to Soviet Union and the other half going to the other Allied Powers. Two years later, in 1947, President Truman issued the [Truman Doctrine](#), which made containment of communism a central aim of American foreign policy. The United States began a concerted effort to keep communism from spreading beyond the Soviet Union. Within three years, the United States failed when the Communist Party won the [Chinese Civil War](#).

1949 was a big year in the Cold War. In April, Truman signed on to be a part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ([NATO](#)), which created a security alliance between the United States, Canada and European countries. The original NATO countries included the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. NATO worked to contain the “Soviet threat,” and it became instrumental in ending the Cold War. Within a few months of the creation of NATO, the Soviet Union announced the successful creation of a nuclear bomb. Soon after, the USSR and the USA would be caught up in a nuclear [arms race](#) focused on militarizing and preparing for what many believed would be the inevitable outbreak of a military conflict.

Although the Soviet Union and the United States never engaged in direct warfare, they fought through proxy nations for much of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first of these wars was the [Korean War](#), which took place between South Korea (supported by the United States) and North Korea (supported by China and the Soviet Union). This civil war lasted from 1950 to 1953 and the main goal was the unite Korea after World War II. Although the war lasted 3 years, it ended much the same way it began—with Korea divided along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. To this day, Korea remains divided. North Korea is controlled by a totalitarian regime, while South Korea exists as a democratic, capitalist society.

The Korean War was the first post-atomic bomb example of [limited warfare](#). Limited warfare is war in which the government chooses to use only a limited supply of its full resources, with the goal of only beating the enemy—not destroying the enemy. If the United States chose to use total war at all times, we would be constantly dropping nuclear bombs, as total war relies on the country using *all* of its resources to defeat the enemy. During the [Vietnam War](#), the United States also supported the southern region of a country torn apart by civil war. This war, which spanned

the 1960s and 1970s, pitted the communist Viet Cong against the southern Vietnamese and their American allies. In this war, American presidents used a policy of gradual escalation, in which they sent only a limited number of troops to Vietnam and the surrounding countries at a time, hoping to end the war with each successive mission. Many American citizens, especially college-age students who saw their friends drafted to fight in a war around the world, protested against the war. Eventually, the United States pulled out, leaving Vietnam to the communists. Today, Vietnam is united under the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.<sup>1</sup> Both Korea and Vietnam are examples of a Western conflict playing out in an Eastern theater.

History is rife with Western powers using the East—Asia and Australia—and the Global South—Latin America and Africa—to fulfill their own desires, without acknowledging the needs of the native populations. Throughout this course we have discussed the arrival of Spain in the New World, the introduction of the African slave trade by the Portuguese, the rise of the British Empire—on which the sun never set, the Scramble for Africa, and the colonization of most of the world by European powers. Now, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the world began the process of decolonization. In 1947, after years of peaceful protest led by Mahatma Gandhi, India—one called the Jewel of the British Empire—achieved [independence](#). Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first Prime Minister in 1948, but he inherited a region torn apart by

religious differences. The British, before leaving, divided the province of India into India—which was primarily Hindu—and Pakistan—which was primarily Muslim. As shown in the map<sup>2</sup>, the Indian regions of Punjab and Bengal were split in two and refugees fled east or west depending on their religious affiliation. A war between the regions of India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan broke out, focused on the northern region of Kashmir, which was claimed by both



<sup>1</sup> "Vietnam." January 1, 2001. Accessed June 24, 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>.

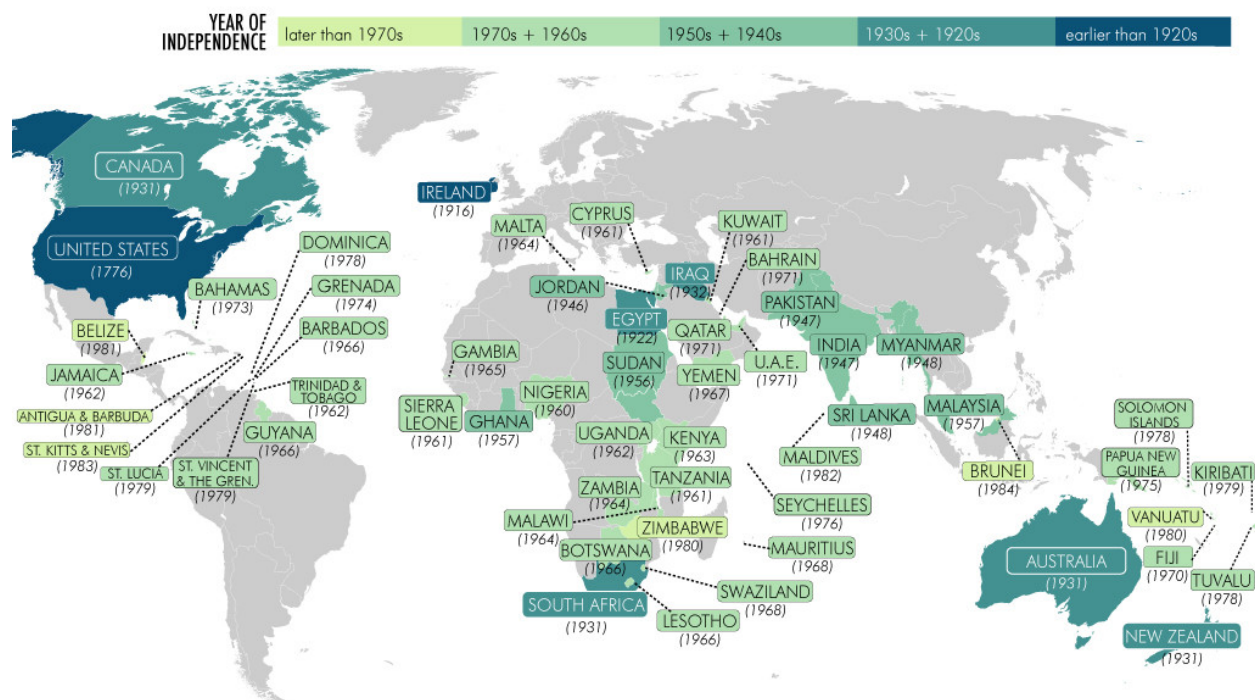
<sup>2</sup> Partition of India. Infobase Learning. Accessed June 24, 2016. <http://online.infobase.com/Article/ImageDetails?imageId=56425>.

countries. In 1949, Kashmir became the only Muslim-majority state in India, effectively ending the [First Indo-Pakistani War](#).

After India declared its independence, European colonies around the world quickly fought for independence as well. Many of these new countries were wrecked by civil war, capitalist exploitation, and lack of central governments—they continue to be “Third-World Countries” today. The map below shows when each of Britain’s colonies achieved independence.<sup>3</sup> Many of these countries, especially those who did not achieve independence until later, remain impoverished and politically unstable today. Some of these tensions may arise from the arbitrary borders created by the British that continue into postcolonial governance—as in India, where Muslims and Hindu people were not given their own regions, even though they so desired such a separation, British removal resulted in bloody conflict.

## Independence from the United Kingdom:

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Source: TheCommonwealth.org, United Nations: Member States

Simran Khosla / GlobalPost

Many of the Third World Countries, both former British colonies as well as countries throughout Latin America, became chess pieces in the Cold War. The United States supported government coups in Iran, Guatemala, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Chile, as well as others which have not yet been officially recognized by the American government.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviet Union regularly crushed rebellions throughout their Union, including in Hungary and

<sup>3</sup> TheCommonWealth.Org. “Independence from the United Kingdom.” 2014. Accessed June 25, 2016. <http://media.salon.com/2014/09/EJCINQf.jpg>.

<sup>4</sup> “Mapped: The 7 Governments the U.S. Has Overthrown,” *Foreign Policy*, August 20, 2013, accessed June 25, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/20/mapped-the-7-governments-the-u-s-has-overthrown/>; “US History Timeline: Cold War,” Department of History, University of Washington, 2008, accessed June 25, 2016, [http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a\\_us\\_history/cold\\_war\\_timeline.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a_us_history/cold_war_timeline.htm).

Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union supported the communist takeover of Cuba, led by Fidel Castro, and worked with Cuba to establish a communist government in Angola in 1976.<sup>5</sup> The world became a board game on which the USA and the USSR could play out their Cold War—without engaging in direct conflict.

The central point of contention between the USSR and the USA and its allies was socioeconomic ideologies. Much of Western Europe, rooted in democratic, capitalist dogma, supported the containment of the socialist ideals of Communist Russia. One of the central tenants of the West was freedom of speech, which resulted in rapid social change, beginning in the late 1950s with the [Civil Rights](#) movement gaining national attention. In the 1960s, counterculture exploded onto the political scene, bringing with it a second sexual revolution, second-wave feminism, and the gay rights movement. Culturally, the Western world was changing every day, and the right to free speech was a central reason for this change.

Student protests were a major manifestation of free speech in the late 1960s. This worldwide phenomenon kicked off at the [University of California at Berkeley](#) in 1964. In the fall of 1964, Berkeley students began soliciting money for civil rights groups. They were quickly banned from doing so by school administration, which only allowed political activity from the college clubs for Democrats and Republicans. The students quickly launched protests in the forms of petitions, pickets, vigils, and rallies, which pushed for the freedom to raise money and the freedom to distribute political literature. The University made early concessions, but the students were still unsatisfied, and they continued to protest. When a small sample of students were selected for punishment, the other students staged a sit-in, demanding that all students be equally punished and that the University clarify which policies were actually broken. Throughout the 1964 fall semester, rallies, sit-ins, and other protests continued. Students laid down in front of police cars to prevent arrests, held sit-ins when people were arrested, and eventually succeeded in making the Free Speech Movement a legal campus organization by January 4, 1965.

Two years after the launch of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, [German](#) college students launched a campaign for democracy. Their goals were preventing the government from allowing undemocratic reforms, including reforms for universities and the return to military force, the end to police brutality, press censorship, and government corruption, and the democratization of university administration. On June 22, 1966, 3,000 German students from the Free University Berlin held a sit-in to protest against the lack of student involvement in university governance and the lack of transparency in university decisions. Although minor student protests continued for the next year, the next major protest did not occur until June 1967, when the Iranian Shah (government and religious leader) was scheduled to visit Germany. When the Shah was watching an opera on June 2, 1967, the Socialist German Student Union planned a march through Berlin, right in front of the opera house. Their goal was to highlight the horrors of the Shah's brutal dictatorship of Iran and the hypocrisy of the West supporting this dictator solely because he was not a communist. During this protest, police violently attacked the students, killing Benno Ohnesorg and leading to nationwide protests against police brutality throughout Germany. By August, the police brutality protests forced both the mayor and the chief of police in Berlin to resign. In April of 1968, one of the leaders of the Socialist German Student Union was attacked

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<sup>5</sup> "US History Timeline: Cold War," Department of History, University of Washington, 2008, accessed June 25, 2016, [http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a\\_us\\_history/cold\\_war\\_timeline.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a_us_history/cold_war_timeline.htm).

by a would-be assassin, bringing world-wide recognition to the German protests. French college students and workers soon followed in the footsteps of California and Germany. The French students led what became known as the [“May Revolt”](#) in 1968, aimed towards taking down the De Gaulle government in place, forcing social reform, and the rise of socialism.

The student protests throughout the Western world were fighting to a more socialist approach to government at the same time that the Cold War was growing brutally frigid. The late 1960s and early 1970s were the height of the Vietnam War, and protests throughout the United States focused on keeping more troops from ending up in Vietnam. In 1970, at Kent State University in Ohio, students protested against the United States sending soldiers in Cambodia. The protest was put down by the National Guard, which killed four non-protesting students and injured nine students. Known as the [Kent State Massacre](#), this event rocked the student protest movement, leading to further protests around the country.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, tension between the United States and the Soviet Union continued to escalate. In 1961, the United States and allied Cuban immigrants launched the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#), a covert operation aimed at overthrowing Fidel Castro, the communist leader of Cuba, and installing a government friendly to the United States. This operation failed because the United States overestimated the desire of local Cubans to be rid of Castro. That same year, the Soviet Union had the [Berlin Wall](#) built to separate West Berlin (free) and East Berlin (soviet). From this point forward, the differences between the USSR and the USA continued to polarize. At the same time, however, internal tensions grew within the USSR, resulting in the Polish Workers’ Strike in 1980, which created the Solidarity Union—the first non-Soviet trade union to exist in a Soviet-controlled country.<sup>6</sup> The times were, in fact, changing.

[Mikhail Gorbachev](#) became President of the Soviet Union in 1985. Within a year of his rise to power, [Chernobyl](#), a nuclear facility in the Ukraine, exploded, killing or injuring over 600,000 people. Soon after, Gorbachev implemented two new policies—Glasnost, which allowed for openness, specifically for the press to discuss the problems that plagued the Soviet Union—and Perestroika, which means restructuring. By 1988, Soviet countries were declaring their independence from the USSR; by 1989, the Berlin Wall came down; and on December 31, 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

One of the regions to claim independence from the USSR was Yugoslavia. The fall of the Soviet Union allowed for renewed nationalist struggles, and within Yugoslavia nationalist aspirations pitted the various provinces against one another. By 1990, Serbia had taken control of much of the nationalist rhetoric, hoping to create a powerful, Serbian-controlled country. On June 25, 1991, Slovenia kicked off the [Yugoslav Wars](#) by declaring independence from Yugoslavia. The Ten-Day War pitted Slovenian nationalists against the Yugoslav People’s Army and ended with Slovenian victory and independence.

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<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2016), s.v “Solidarity | Polish Organization” by The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed June 25, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Solidarity>.

## SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA AS OF JANUARI 1991



[Croatia](#) also declared independence on June 25, 1991 as well. Unlike Slovenia, however, Croatian nationalism was not quite unified, and there was a large Serbian minority living within Croatia who wished to remain a part of Yugoslavia. The Serbs living within Croatia's borders declared a chunk of Croatia to be their own independent Serbian state and, with the help of the Yugoslav People's Army and the province of Serbia, this new nation forced other ethnicities out of their territory in an open campaign of [ethnic cleansing](#), a program geared towards clearing an entire area of a specific ethnic group—often by any means necessary. In 1992, the United Nations forced Croatia and its Serbs into a ceasefire, which gave Croatia time to expand its government. In 1995, Croatia began targeted attacks to reclaim their land from the Serbs. The Serbs moved to Bosnia and Herzegovina and then on to Serbia. By 1998, Croatia was an independent country with control of its full territory.

In [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), the ethnicity of the citizens was almost equally split—43% were Bosnian Muslims and 33% were Bosnian Serbs. The rest of the population was divided in Bosnian Croats and other minorities. In 1991, Croatia and Serbia met in secret and decided to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving only a small piece of land for Bosnian Muslims. In March of 1992, Bosnian citizens voted to leave Yugoslavia. However, Bosnian Serbs rejected this vote and used military force to create their own independent region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, soon after, Bosnian Croats made the same decision. A three-way war began, targeting not just soldiers of other regions, but civilians as well.

Over 100,000 people died in the Yugoslav Wars, thousands of women were systematically raped, and approximately 2 million people were forced out of their homes. Srebrenica, declared a United Nations safe zone, was attacked in the summer of 1995 by forces led by Serbian Ratko Mladić. Over the span of two days, from July 11<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>, 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were killed, while Bosnian Muslim women were raped and then forced from the town with their children. Responding to this event, as well as the entirety of the Yugoslav Wars, the United States brokered the [Dayton Peace Accords](#) in Dayton, Ohio. Despite declaring peace on December 4, 1995, the three factions did not seem to accept peaceful terms. Bosnian Croats destroyed the territory that was supposed to go to Bosnian Serbs in what is known as a “scorch earth policy,” where they burn the land to render it unusable. Although NATO and the United States independently had troops to keep the peace, war broke out again in 1998.

In 1998, ethnically Albanian Serbians hoped to declare the independence of [Kosovo](#) from Serbia. In response, Serbia attacked Kosovo’s civilian population, forcing many to leave their homes. In response, NATO carried out a 78-day air strike campaign in Kosovo and Serbia to end the violence. Eventually, Serbia agreed to international governance of Kosovo, which continues to this day. However, in 2001 the Albanian National Liberation Army attacked Macedonia, the only country to peacefully split from the rest of Yugoslavia in 1991. Violence lasted for a few months, resulting in a ceasefire and peacekeeping missions sponsored by NATO.

The violence against Bosnian Muslims was one of the first modern acts of Islamophobia. Bosnian Serbians believed that Bosnian Muslims shared their ethnic background—the only difference was their religion. Impregnating Bosnian Muslims became a central part of the systematic rape of Bosnian Muslim women, as Serbian sperm could create Serbian babies.<sup>7</sup> The Bosnian Serbs wanted to erase the Muslim identity of their fellow citizens. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, [Islamophobia](#) is “closed-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims.”

The Yugoslav Wars were not the only manifestation of violence against Muslim-majority regions in the West in the 1990s. [Chechnya](#) is a mountainous region to the West of Russia, still claimed by the Russians despite their bid for independence in November 1991. The Chechens are mostly Muslim and have been fighting for independence from their Christian and Muslim neighbors for about four centuries now. When the Soviet Union fell, they believed they finally had a chance at real independence, but Russian president Boris Yeltsin refused to let Chechnya, a region rich in oil, leave the Russian Federation. Although the early 1990s was a time of all-out war between the Russians and Chechens, since 1999 Chechens have engaged primarily in guerilla warfare to fight the Russians.

In 1979, [Saddam Hussein](#) became President of Iraq after a fascist coup of the Iraqi government, believed to be supported by the United States government and the CIA, although this information is not officially confirmed. At a time when the United States was willing to accept any country not ruled by Communists, regardless of how brutal their regime may be. By the 1990s, Hussein’s rhetoric became violently anti-America. After the horrific events of 9/11 in 2001, President George W. Bush launched the War on Terror, and in 2003 President Bush called

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<sup>7</sup> Karen Engle, “Feminism and Its (Dis)contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *The American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 4 (October 2005), doi:10.2307/3396669.

for Hussein to abdicate power. Hussein was eventually put on trial for his crimes against humanity and found guilty in 2006. He was killed by hanging on November 4, 2006. Long time Islamist terrorist Osama Bin Laden, who operated out of Afghanistan, was targeted for his involvement in 9/11 and became the world's most wanted criminal. On May 1, 2011, the United States military and Central Intelligence Agency led a coordinated attack on Bin Laden, resulting in his death.

Islamic Extremism exists, in much the same way that Christian Extremism and Jewish Extremism and Hindu Extremism exist. In the United States, Christian Extremists are represented by the Neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. In Israel, Jewish Extremists cut off water and power to Palestinian homes. In India, Hindu Extremists attack Muslims and Christians for "defiling India."<sup>8</sup> In each instance, the extremists make up only a small percentage of the religious population, and the extremists do not speak or act for the majority of the population. As we move towards the future, we need to look at history and see how fear and hatred have caused such horrors as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, European exploitation of Africa and Asia, chemical warfare in World War I, the Holocaust, the use of atomic bombs in Japan, Comfort Women, the Cold War, the Yugoslav Wars, or the human rights abuse of Chechnya. Learning from history will allow us to make real changes in the future, and hopefully end the hate and fear that color the stories of the past.

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<sup>8</sup> "Christians and Muslims Face More Persecution by Hindu Extremists in India, Groups Say," *Vice News*, March 17, 2016, accessed June 26, 2016, <https://news.vice.com/article/christian-and-muslims-are-facing-more-and-more-persecution-by-hindu-extremists-in-india>.