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Cold War and Decolonization

Unit 8
c. 1900 C.E. - the present



Setting the Stage for the Cold War

- Increasing anti-imperial sentiment contributed to the dissolution of empires and the restructuring of states
- Technological and economic gains during WWII shifted the global balance of power



The Cold War

- Two super powers emerged - The democratic U.S. and the communist U.S.S.R.
- This led to a power struggle between capitalism and communism around the world
- Non-Aligned Movement promoted alternatives



Effects of the Cold War

- New military alliances (NATO and Warsaw Pact)
- Nuclear proliferation
- Proxy wars in Latin America, Africa, and Asia



Spread of Communism

- Chinese communists seized power due to internal weakness and Japanese aggression.
- The communist Chinese government controlled the economy through the Great Leap Forward.
- Land and resource redistribution movements emerged in Africa, Asia, and Latin America



Decolonization

- Nationalist leaders in Asia and Africa sought autonomy from imperialist rule
- Some colonies became independent with negotiations, others with armed struggles
- Regional, religious, and ethnic movements challenged colonial power.



Newly Independent States

- New states were created when political boundaries were redrawn post-colonial powers
- New boundaries led to conflict or displacement (partitioning of India and Israel)
- New governments promoted development
- Former colonial subjects migrated to cities of former imperial powers, maintaining previous ties.



Global Resistance to Established Power Structures

- Peaceful groups and individuals opposed conflict
- Nonviolent protest was promoted
- Militaries and states further intensified conflict
- Some movements used violence to achieve political aims (Al-Qaeda)



End of the Cold War

- Advances in U.S. military and technology, the U.S.S.R.'s failure in Afghanistan, economic weakness in communist countries led to the collapse of the U.S.S.R. and end of the Cold War