

Beyond the New Look

VIETNAM AND THE COLD WAR IN THE THIRD
WORLD

A Change in Quiz Format

CHANGES IN COUNTING FOR GRADES

3 Quizzes—10%

Highest grade – 15%

Second highest grade- 10%

Lowest Grade--- 5%

FIVE THINGS TO UNDERSTAND:

1. THE MOVE IN US STRATEGIC THINKING FROM MASSIVE RETALIATION TO FLEXIBLE RESPONSE: WHY? WITH WHAT CONSEQUENCES
2. THE IMPORTANCE OF DECOLONIZATION (AND STRATEGIES)
3. THE ESSENTIAL LIE BEHIND THE GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION
4. THE MOTIVATIONS OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND CREDIBILITY
5. THE IMPACT OF VIETNAM ON US SOCIETY

REVIEW:

Where are we after the Cuban Missile Crisis?

The United States :

The Truman Doctrine makes containment a global struggle against communism

The “loss” of China, the Soviet atomic bomb and genuine spies bring about red scare and McCarthyism

Eisenhower uses US superiority to create strategy of retaliation

The Soviet Union:

After Stalin's death, must deal with threat of nuclear war

Khrushchev: Soviet nuclear weapons deter imperialists, create statement

Stalemate allows Soviet Union to fight imperialists with economic, political means

Looks for allies among nationalist movements in decolonized world

The Cuban Missile Crisis:

Both sides acknowledge danger

Move to stable nuclear balance

1. Strategic Thinking in the United States: The Issue of Extended Deterrence

Soviet intercontinental capability raises question about Eisenhower

Massive Retaliation strategy

The question: Will the United States “trade Washington for Frankfurt?”

One Answer: Nuclearize NATO, and esp. Germany and France

Another Answer: A conventional alternative

Kennedy's Response: Flexible Response

Kennedy's Answer: Flexible Response

Demonstrate credibility by being able to respond at every level

Conventional defense against conventional attack

Limited nuclear response to limited nuclear attack

All the way up the “escalation ladder”

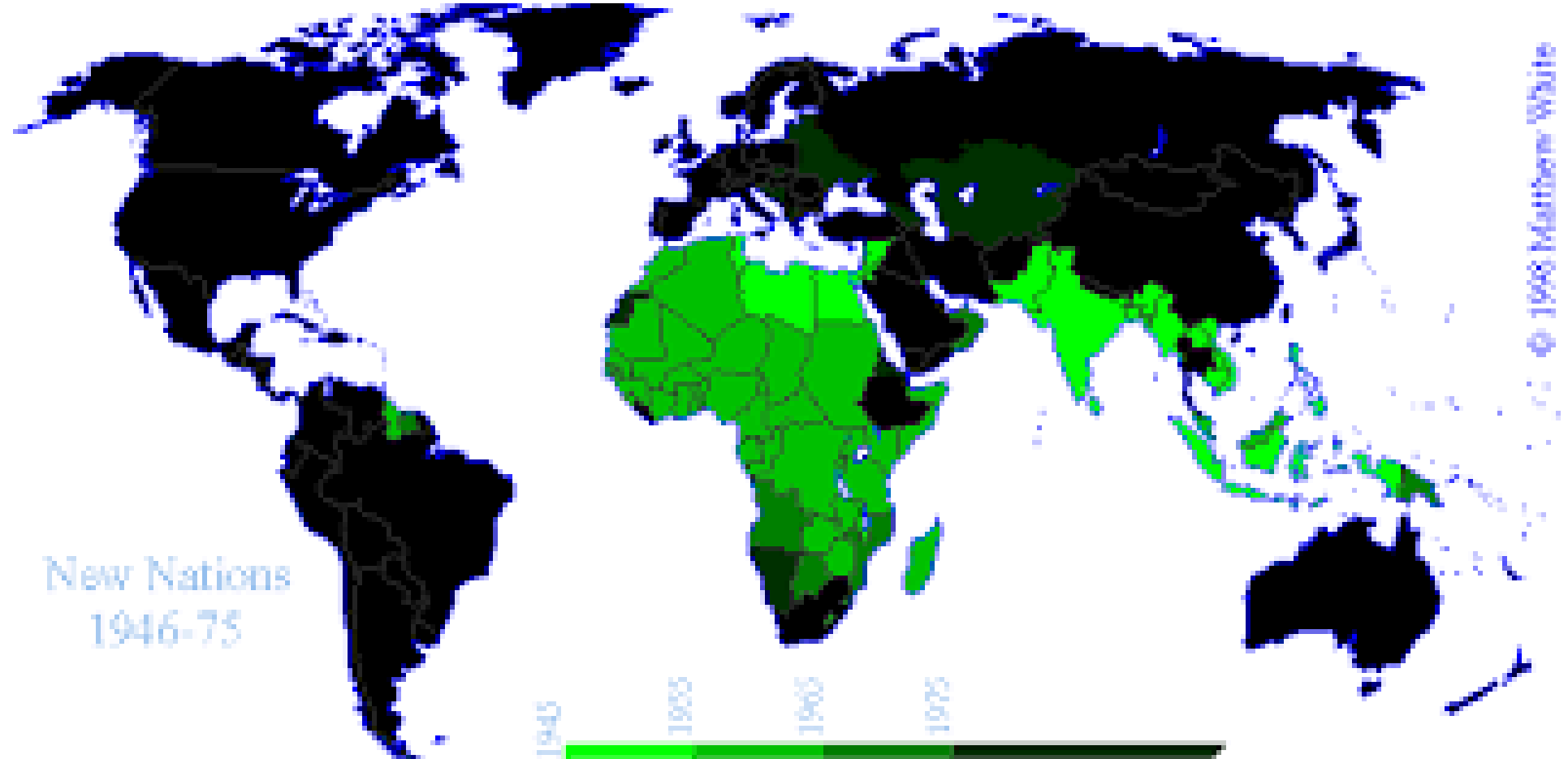
Issues: Unlike Massive Retaliation, have to respond everywhere

Very Expensive—Largest peacetime defense buildup until

Reagan

Aimed both at Europe, and at Third World

2. Decolonization between 1946 and 1975



Cold War in the Global South: The Birth of the “Third World”

1945-1955: Nationalism in Middle East and South India

Eisenhower builds alliances:

SEATO (Thailand, Philippines, Britain, France,
Australia, New Zealand)

CENTO (Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, UK)

The Non-Aligned Movement

India(Nehru), Egypt (Nasser), Indonesia (Suharto),
Yugoslavia (Tito)

1955-1965: Rapid Decolonization of Africa

The Cold War Competition

Opportunities and Threats to the Superpowers

Instability in the wake of decolonization means can be influenced

Some mineral wealth, but relatively little strategic value

Demonstration of ideological legitimacy, strength

USSR: particularly with regard to competition with China

United States: Suggests people want to be “free”

The Domino Theory

If Vietnam goes, then Thailand, then Burma,

then may even Phillipines or India

Domestic costs

Response to National Liberation Movements

Soviet Union

Khrushchev: national liberation will win if USSR can hold off intervention

China attacks Khrushchev, says he sacrifices revolution to peaceful coexistence

Khrushchev replies in 1961 will support national liberation movements more United States under Kennedy:

National Liberation nationalist more than communist, but US must still show credibility: otherwise other national liberation movements will grow

Domino Theory

Anti-insurgency fighting

JFK: "Now we have a problem making our power credible and Vietnam looks like the place."

Vietnam Before 1964:

- ▶ French Colony
- ▶ Ho Chi Minh defeats French at Bien Dien Phu, 1954
- ▶ Geneva Conference: Divide Vietnam, hold nationwide elections in 1956
- ▶ South Vietnamese leader Diem calls off elections with support from US
- ▶ Eisenhower sends troops to train troops in South Vietnam
- ▶ 1959-1960: Diem becomes increasingly unpopular, N. Vietnam send troops, supplies to South Vietnamese communists
- ▶ Kennedy increases "advisors" from 900 to 16,000
- ▶ The US approves coup removing Diem in August 1963
- ▶ Increased instability in South
- ▶ Kennedy Shot in November 1963

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl8VGchVk7E>

Background:

Kennedy's Successor, Vice President Lyndon Johnson

Domestic Politics, Not Foreign Policy

Ambitious Domestic Agenda

Relied on John F. Kennedy's advisers for foreign policy

Robert MacNamara

Election in 1964 coming up

South Vietnam government clearly losing hold, as did Nationalist
China

US Escalation in Vietnam, 1965

South Vietnam threatens to fall, needs US troops

March 8, 1965: 3,500 ground troops

By 1966: 386,000 ground troops

By 1968: The Peak: 536,100 ground troops

The US continually says it is winning, based on body counts

1968: The Tet Offensive. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPgWqgpgVRc>

Johnson drops out

The Reasons for Escalation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OaiR9xdyWg>

A. Flexible Response: Have to show the flag, have to show credibility

Issue of Credibility

B. Domestic Politics:

“I knew that Harry Truman and Dean Acheson had lost their effectiveness from the day that the Communists took over in China...The loss of China played a large role in the rise of Joe McCarthy. And I knew that all of these problems, taken together, were chickenshit compared with what might happen if we lost Vietnam.”

C. Johnson continually assures people US is winning

The Tet Offensive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPgWqgpgVRc>

The Impact of Vietnam: No More Consensus

“Make America Great Again”. Reference to US before Vietnam

The Consensus Endangered: The Civil Rights Movement

The Baby Boom reaches adolescence

The draft and its impact

The “Credibility Gap”

The Tet Offensive

The “Pentagon Papers”

The Elites Start Debating, and the Newscasters pick it up

Chicago, 1968. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv0rl-5ycBU>

The Nixon Presidency

The war cannot be won

How to get out without damaging credibility

Vietnamization: By 1972 only 69,000

Peace Talks

To strengthen bargaining position