II. The Cold War (1945-1991): The Cold War was fought between the only 2 superpowers after WWII – the Soviet Union and the United States. The Cold War was basically about the fear of Communism. It lasted over 40 years and included the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam.

1) The Cold War Begins: The Cold War began in 1945 when the dictator of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, took over several countries in Eastern Europe.

   a) **Communism vs. Capitalism:**
      - **Communism** is an economic system based on the idea that money should be shared between the common people. Therefore, instead of businesses and farms being privately owned, they are under the governments control so that the government can divide money evenly between all of the citizens. The Soviet Union was a communist country.
      - **Capitalism** is the opposite of communism. Capitalism is an economic system where farms and businesses are privately owned. The United States is a capitalist country.

   b) **The Soviet Union vs. the United States:** Stalin had made the Soviet Union into a communist country, and was now trying to spread communism to other countries. The U.S. was capitalist and did not want communism to spread.

   c) **Foreign Policy of Containment:** President Truman responded to the threat of communism with a new foreign policy known as **containment.** The goal of this policy was to keep communism from spreading to any further by containing, or limiting it from spreading to any new countries.

2) The Nuclear Arms Race: When the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan in 1945, the Atomic Age began. Soon both the United States and the Soviet Union began competing to build the most destructive weapons.

   a) **McCarthyism:** After the Soviet Union successfully tested an atomic bomb, Americans feared that communist spies were everywhere in the United States. Senator Joseph McCarthy took advantage of those fears and created a campaign to uncover suspected communists. McCarthy's practice of publicly
accusing people of being disloyal with little or no evidence became known as McCarthyism. This period is also referred to as the "red scare" because communism was associated with the color red. During McCarthy's spy hunt, many innocent Americans lost their jobs and reputations.

b) The Arms Race: a competition to develop ever more powerful and destructive weapons. By 1953, both superpowers had tested their first hydrogen bombs. By 1960, both superpowers could launch nuclear missiles at each other from the land, air, and sea. When John F. Kennedy became president in 1961, each superpower had enough nuclear weapons to destroy the other many times over.

3) Proxy Wars: Since both superpowers (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) had nuclear weapons that could destroy the world, they did not want to fight each other directly. Instead they fought through Proxy Wars, where each superpower supported opposite sides of a conflict without fighting each other directly.

a) The Korean War (1950): Korea had two different governments; a communist government in North Korea that was backed by the Soviets, and a government that favored capitalism in South Korea that was backed by the U.S. The treaty ending the war left Korea divided into two separate governments.

b) The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962): In October 1962, American spy planes photographed secret missile bases in Cuba that were built by the Soviet Union. For the next 6 days, the whole world feared that nuclear war was going to erupt at any second. The Cuban Missile Crisis ended when the Soviets agreed to remove the missile bases if Kennedy promised not to invade Cuba.

c) Vietnam (1959-75): South Vietnam was controlled by a capitalist government but communist rebels (Viet Cong) controlled the Northern part of the country. America backed the Southern Vietnam the Soviet Union supported the communist rebels in the North. Hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were sent to Vietnam. Many Americans were very against the war and protested it all over American streets. A peace agreement was finally worked out in January of 1973, and the war was over. The United States had lost a war for the 1st time in history.

4) The Cold War Ends
a) The Fall of the Soviet Union: The Cold War officially ended in 1991 when the communist government in the Soviet Union collapsed. A new Russian leader banned (or outlawed) communism. The Soviet Union was going to be called Russia once again. Still, Communism survives today in such countries as China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba.

b) Presidents During the Cold War:
33rd – Harry Truman (1945-53)
34th – Dwight Eisenhower (1953-61)
35th – John F. Kennedy (1961-63)
36th – Lyndon Johnson (1963-69)
37th – Richard Nixon (1969-74)
38th – Gerald Ford (1974-77)
40th – Ronald Regan (1981-89)
41st – George H. Bush, Senior (1989-93)

SINCE THEN:
42nd – Bill Clinton (1993-2001)
44th – Barack Obama (2008-2016)