Reconstruction of Japan

1. General MacArthur
   1. created a democracy - women were given the right to vote, ended absentee landlordism so most tenant farmers became land owners.
   2. Article 9 - said the policy of war and armed aggression were renounced and only able to maintain a small military.
   3. Economic reconstruction - original was to dissolve japan’s industrial corporations but decided to rebuild as a base of anticommunism in Asia.
2. Berlin Blockade and Nato
   1. German had been divided into four at the end of the war, but in 1948, the U.S., England and France combined. They brought forth a new currency and the beginning of new government.
   2. In response, the Soviets cut off all road or train access to Berlin
   3. Airlift lasted for 11 months to get food and supplies into Berlin. Blockade was lifted in May 1949.
   4. 1949 Soviets test their own atomic bomb successfully.
   5. Creation of NATO - north atlantic treaty organization. U.S. and 10 European countries pledging mutual defense against future soviet attacks. The Warsaw pact was the Soviet Unions answer in 1955
3. Growing Communist Challenge
   1. China - they had been dealing with a civil war and Communist Mao Zedong was successful in winning control of the government. Truman was blamed for losing China although it was never ours to begin with.
      1. The United States didn’t recognize the new government and still believed that the government in Taiwan was the real government and refused to allow the People’s Republic of China to occupy’s China’s seat at the UN.
   2. NCS-68 - created by the NSA in a response to the “fall of China”. This said that the Cold war was a strgugle between freedom and slavery and at stake was the survival of the freed world. The biggest aspect of this was that it increased military spending.
4. The Korean War
   1. Korea was divided after WWII at the 38th parallel with a communist north and an anticommunist south.
   2. 1950 North Korea invaded south hoping to reunify under a communist regime.
   3. Truman sees this as a test of the policy of containment and urges the UN to send military action. (The USSR was boycotting the meetings so they did not veto)
   4. The US did the bulk of the fighting and was able to push the North Koreans back to the China line, but when they got close in Oct. 1950 the Chinese military joined the fight pushing the UN forces back. MacArthur wanted to continue to push and invade China if necessary but Truman wouldn’t let him. MacArthur went public with his opposition and Truman removed him from command
   5. Stalemate ensued and an armistice was finally signed in1953. The border went back to the original 38th parallel.
   6. Roughly 33,000 Americans died and over 1 million Asians - both soldiers and civilians
   7. Impact - this conflict showed that the Cold war was a global war and that the harmony that was hoped after WWII was not going to be a reality.
5. Cold War Critics - few people supported Communism and its oppressive ways, but some did not see the cold war as one between slavery and freedom, but more of an ideological war (Walter Lippman) he said that if every challenge to the status quo was dealt with individually that the US would need a large military - which emerged and the US would have to intervene consistently
6. Imperialism and Decolonization - WWII brought forth more than just the end of Hitler. Americans, especially African Americans became more aware of imperialism and their own lack of civil liberties. Many countries borrowed language from the US declaration of Independence in asking for their own independence. Truman was encouraged by liberals and blacks to support decolonization.
   1. 1946 - independence was given to the Philippines.
   2. Backed away from pressuring other European nations to follow suit as they wanted a buffer from Communism.

Cuba

1. Cuba had been economically dependent on the U.S. until 1959 when dictator Fugencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro. Castro began to nationalize American holdings (they took them away) and began to sell sugar to the Soviet Union. Eisenhower suspended trade with them.
   1. Bay of Pigs - as a result of the above, the CIA began to train Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro. In April 1961, Kennedy allowed the CIA to launch its invasion. Hoping that this would cause an uprising in Cuba that would topple Castro, but it failed. Over 100 of the 1400 rebels were killed and 1100 were captured.
   2. Cuban Missile Crisis - this came about as a result of deteriorating relations between the US and the USSR. In 1961, The soviets built a wall around East Berlin to stop the flow of East Berliners from fleeing to West Berlin. But the most dangerous encounter was the missile Crisis that took place in 1962.
      1. Spy planes discovered that the Soviets were installing missiles in Cuba. The military wanted to attack but instead Kennedy issued a blockade to quarantine Cuba. A very tense 13 days followed, but eventually Krushechev, Soviet Premier relented and removed the missiles while the US said they would not invade Cuba and would remove their own missiles from Turkey - that were pointed at the USSR.
      2. As a result of this, Kennedy began to look differently at the Cold War and called for an end to the tension between the Soviets and the US. This resulted in a treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere and in space.

Vietnam

1. Vietnam had been in turmoil since the end of WWII. They wanted their independence, but the French who had previously controlled them did not want to give it up. When the French were defeated, the Americans financed the creation of a pro-American South Vietnamese government which was in violation of the Geneva Accords of 1954 that promised elections to unify Vietnam. Although the new regime was corrupt, the US still supported them. Vietnam was seen as a test if the US could use “counterinsurgency” as an intervention to counter internal uprisings in non-communists countries. The US sent financial aid and military advisors, but the South leader Ngo Dinh Diem lost control of the countryside to the North Vietnamese. The US urged Diem to make changes, but he didn’t. Then in 1963, a group of Buddhist demonstrators were killed after protesting him. The US organized a coup that led to his death. Kennedy was assassinated the next month and over 17,000 American military advisors were in Vietnam.
2. President Johnson - knew little about foreign policy and was not happy about being involved in Vietnam. But since the Republicans used the “loss” of China to beat Truman, he did not want to be the President that saw Southeast Asia go the way China went.
3. August 1964, Gulf of Tonkin - Two north Vietnamese vessels fired upon an American spy ship off its coats. Johnson proclaimed this as an attack and said the US was a victim of aggression.
   1. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution which basically said that the president could take “all necessary measure to repel armed attack in Vietnam. only two members of Congress voted against it. There was no discussion of American goals or strategy. It took America almost 40 years to release information that there had been no attack.
   2. Johnson campaigned in 64 that he was not going to send american troops, but once he won the election the NSA recommend that the US begin airstrikes and bring in ground troops.
      1. Feb. 1965 - North Vietnamese attacked an American air base in South Vietnam, and Johnson enacted the recommendations
4. 1968 - American forces in Vietnam were more than 1/2 million and the war was more brutal.
   1. Hanoi Hilton - prisoner of war camp - men were brutally treated
   2. More bombs were dropped in North and South Vietnam than all of WWII, they used chemicals such as agent orange and napalm that destroyed forests that the Viet Cong were hiding in.
   3. Search and destroy missions were completed that often did not see the difference between civilian and Viet Cong.
   4. Body counts were weekly counts of deaths as they were reported to the American people.
   5. Battle of Khe Sanh - January 21, 1968 - was an attack on a Marine Base in Khe Sanh near the Laos Border. Lasted 77 days. roughly 5000 American Marines faced 20,000+ NVA. Some thought it was done to distract Gen. Westmoreland from the next attack - the Tet Offensive
   6. Tet Offensive - Tet is the Vietnamese Lunar New years. The Viet Cong used that day to smuggle weapons and men into South Vietnamese cities. 100 cities were attacked simultaneously. Americans were able to defeat the uprising, but the body count showed something different. Americans were not believing that the U.S. was winning the war.
5. Nixon and the war
   1. Nixon was elected in 1968 with a secret plan to end the war in Vietnam. His plan was called Vietnamization - Americans would gradually withdraw while South Vietnamese soliders would take a more active role. but it didn’t have the intended effect.
   2. Cambodia - Camboida was a neutral country that was believed to be a smuggling route for the NVA. In 1970, Nixon ordered the invasion of it. It did not achieve the military goals, but it did destablalize the Cambodian Government that ultimately brought in a Communist leader - Khmer Rouge who led all Cambodians into rural communes and committed widespread massacres.
   3. My Lai Massacre -this occurred in 1968, but was not reported till 1969 in the New York Times. My Lai was a Vietnamese village in while 350 South Vietnamese civilians were killed.
   4. Pentagon Papers - a series of classified reports that showed how American Presidents had mishandled Vietnam
6. 1973 - The beginning of the end of the war
   1. Congress passed the War Power’s Act - required the President to seek congressional approval for the commitment of American troops.
   2. Paris Peace agreement - took 5 years but finally allowed the American ground troops to be removed. But it didn’t solve the ultimate question - would Vietnam be one country or two. That was solved in 1975 when North Vietnamese troops attacked once again. The south vietnamese government fell and the US didn’t do anything other than to evacuate the American embassy
7. Final toll - the war is the only one that was ever lost by America. 58,000 Americans had been killed and 3-4 million Vietnamese. cost $100 billion dollars, but it also undermined American’s confidence in their own institutions.