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**The Cold War and Its Many Parts**

**The Cold War: Containment** By the time [World War II](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii) ended, most American officials agreed that the best defense against the Soviet threat was a strategy called “**containment**.” In 1946, in his famous “Long Telegram,” the diplomat George Kennan (1904-2005) explained this policy: The Soviet Union, he wrote, was “a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the U.S. there can be no permanent modus vivendi [agreement between parties that disagree]”; as a result, America’s only choice was the “long-term, patient but firm and **vigilant** containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” President [Harry Truman](http://www.history.com/topics/harry-truman) (1884-1972) agreed. “It must be the policy of the [United States](http://www.history.com/topics/states),” he declared before Congress in 1947, “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted **subjugation**…by outside pressures.” This way of thinking would shape American foreign policy for the next four decades.

**The Cold War: The Atomic Age The** containment strategy also provided the rationale for an **unprecedented** arms buildup in the United States. In 1950, a National Security Council Report known as NSC–68 had echoed Truman’s recommendation that the country use military force to "contain" communist expansionism anywhere it seemed to be occurring. To that end, the report called for a four-fold increase in defense spending. In particular, American officials encouraged the development of atomic weapons like the ones that had ended World War II. Thus began a deadly "arms race." In 1949, the Soviets tested an atom bomb of their own. In response, President Truman announced that the United States would build an even more destructive atomic weapon: the hydrogen bomb, or "super bomb." Stalin followed suit. As a result, the stakes of the Cold War were **perilously** high. The first H-bomb test, in the Eniwetok atoll in the Marshall Islands, showed just how fearsome the nuclear age could be. It created a 25-square-mile fireball that **vaporized** an island, blew a huge hole in the ocean floor and had the power to destroy half of Manhattan. **Subsequent** American and Soviet tests spewed poisonous radioactive waste into the atmosphere. The ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation had a great impact on American domestic life as well. People built bomb shelters in their backyards. They practiced attack drills in schools and other public places. The [1950s](http://www.history.com/topics/1950s) and [1960s](http://www.history.com/topics/1960s) saw an epidemic of popular films that horrified moviegoers with depictions of nuclear devastation and mutant creatures. In these and other ways, the Cold War was a constant presence in Americans’ everyday lives.

**The Cold War Extends to Space** Space exploration served as another dramatic arena for Cold War competition. On October 4, 1957, a Soviet R-7 intercontinental ballistic missile launched Sputnik (Russian for "traveler"), the world's first artificial satellite and the first man-made object to be placed into the Earth's orbit. Sputnik's launch came as a surprise, and not a pleasant one, to most Americans. In the United States, space was seen as the next frontier, a logical **extension** of the grand American tradition of exploration, and it was crucial not to lose too much ground to the Soviets. In addition, this demonstration of the overwhelming power of the R-7 missile–seemingly capable of delivering a nuclear warhead into U.S. air space–made gathering intelligence about Soviet military activities particularly **urgent**. In 1958, the U.S. launched its own satellite, Explorer I, designed by the U.S. Army under the direction of rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, and what came to be known as the [Space Race](http://www.history.com/topics/space-race) was underway. That same year, President [Dwight Eisenhower](http://www.history.com/topics/dwight-d-eisenhower) signed a public order creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), a federal agency dedicated to space exploration, as well as several programs seeking to exploit the military potential of space. That May, after Alan Shepard become the first American man in space, President [John F. Kennedy](http://www.history.com/topics/john-f-kennedy) (1917-1963) made the bold public claim that the U.S. would land a man on the moon by the end of the decade. His prediction came true on July 20, 1969, when Neil Armstrong of NASA’s [Apollo 11](http://www.history.com/topics/apollo-11) mission, became the first man to set food on the moon, effectively winning the Space Race for the Americans. U.S. astronauts came to be seen as the ultimate American heroes, and earth-bound men and women seemed to enjoy living **vicariously** through them. Soviets, in turn, were pictured as the ultimate **villains**, with their massive, relentless efforts to surpass America and prove the power of the communist system.

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**The Cold War and Its Many Parts-Vocabulary Analysis**

**Directions**: Using the context from the article, ***The Cold War and Its Many Parts***, write in your opinion what the word means. Then, look the words up in a dictionary and write out the definition.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Words** | **My Thoughts** | **Actual Definition** |
| 1. **Containment** |  |  |
| 1. **Vigilant** |  |  |
| 1. **Subjugation** |  |  |
| 1. **Unprecedented** |  |  |
| 1. **Perilously** |  |  |
| 1. **Vaporized** |  |  |
| 1. **Subsequent** |  |  |
| 1. **Extension** |  |  |
| 1. **Urgent** |  |  |
| 1. **Vicariously** |  |  |
| 1. **Villains** |  |  |