VUS 13c-e Backup Notes

American military forces during the Cold War

* President Kennedy pledged in his inaugural address that the United States would “pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” In the same address, he also said, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”
* During the Cold War era, millions of Americans served in the military, defending freedom in wars and conflicts that were not always popular. Many were killed or wounded. As a result of their service, the United States and American ideals of democracy and freedom ultimately prevailed in the Cold War struggle with Soviet communism.
* President Kennedy, a World War II veteran, was assassinated in 1963 in Dallas, Texas, in an event that shook the nation’s confidence and began a period of internal strife and divisiveness, especially spurred by divisions over United States involvement in Vietnam.
* Unlike veterans of World War II, who returned to a grateful and supportive nation, Vietnam veterans returned often to face indifference or outright hostility from some who opposed the war.

It was not until several years after the end of the Vietnam war that the wounds of the war began to heal in America, and Vietnam veterans were recognized and honored for their service and sacrifices.

Internal problems of the Soviet Union

* Increasing Soviet military expenses to compete with the United States
* Rising nationalism in Soviet republics
* Fast-paced reforms—market economy
* Economic inefficiency
* Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* (openness and economic restructuring)

Role of President Ronald Reagan

* Challenged moral legitimacy of the Soviet Union, for example, in a speech at the Berlin Wall (“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”)

Increased United States military and economic pressure on the Soviet Union

Selected post Cold War era goals and policies

* Foreign aid
* Humanitarian aid
* Support for human rights

President George H. W. Bush, 1989–1993

* Fall of communism in Eastern Europe
* Reunification of Germany
* Collapse of Yugoslavia
* Breakup of the Soviet state
* Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991
* First war in which American women served in a combat role
* Operation Desert Storm

President William J. Clinton, 1993–2001

* North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
* Full diplomatic relations with Vietnam
* Lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa when her government ended the policy of apartheid
* NATO action in former Yugoslavia

President George W. Bush, 2001–2009

* Terrorists attacks on United States soil on 9/11/2001
* War in Afghanistan
* War in Iraq