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The Eisenhower Era, 1952–1960

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. explain how Eisenhower's leadership coincided with the American mood of the 1950s.
2. describe Ike's initially hesitant reactions to McCarthyism and the early civil rights movement.
3. describe the approach that Eisenhower and Dulles took to the Cold War and nuclear policy.
4. list the basic elements of Eisenhower's foreign policy in Vietnam, Europe, and the Middle East.
5. describe the vigorous challenges Eisenhower faced from the Soviet Union and indicate how he responded to them.
6. describe the new American economy of the 1950s.
7. explain the changes in American "mass culture" in the 1950s, including the rise of television and the computer.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **plebiscite** In politics, a single-question universal election or referendum, in which a ruler or government seeks approval of a policy or a mandate to continue in office. "In future years, television made possible a kind of 'plebiscitarian' politics. . . ." (p. 888)
2. **McCarthyism** The practice of making sweeping, unfounded charges against innocent people with consequent loss of reputation, job, and so on. "But 'McCarthyism' has passed into the English language as a label for the dangerous forces of unfairness. . . ." (p. 891)
3. **brass** High-ranking military officers. "The military brass at first protested. . . ." (p. 894)
4. **taboo** A social prohibition or rule that results from strict tradition or convention. ". . . Warren shocked the president and other traditionalists with his active judicial intervention in previously taboo social issues." (p. 895)
5. **self-incrimination** Sworn testimony in a trial or other legal proceeding that forces a person to admit to criminally indictable acts; the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution forbids compelling such testimony. "The millionaire Teamster chief . . . invoked the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination 209 times. . . ." (p. 902)
6. **embezzlement** The fraudulent appropriation or theft of funds entrusted to one's care. "He was later sentenced to prison for embezzlement." (p. 903)
7. **secondary boycott** A boycott of goods, aimed not at the employer or company directly involved in a dispute but at those who do business with that company. ". . . antilaborites also forced into the bill prohibitions against 'secondary boycotts'. . . ." (p. 903)
8. **thermonuclear** Concerning the heat released in nuclear fission; specifically, the use of that heat in hydrogen bombs. "Thermonuclear suicide seemed nearer in July 1958. . . ." (p. 904)
9. **confiscation** The seizure of property by a public authority, often as a penalty. "Castro retaliated with further wholesale confiscations of Yankee property. . . ." (p. 905)

10. **Pentecostal** A family of Protestant Christian churches that emphasize a "second baptism" of the holy spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing, and intense emotionalism in worship. "Televangelists" like the Baptist Billy Graham, the Pentecostal Holiness preacher Oral Roberts. . . ." (p. 911)

PART II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark T. Where it is false, mark F, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. Eisenhower presented himself to the country as a strongly partisan Republican president.
- ___ 2. Eisenhower initially hesitated to oppose Senator Joseph McCarthy because of McCarthy's political popularity and power.
- ___ 3. McCarthy lost his power when he attacked alleged communist influence in the U.S. Army.
- ___ 4. The Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that blacks should be provided additional educational benefits in order to equalize public education.
- ___ 5. Eisenhower used his influence as president to support blacks' push for civil rights in the schools and elsewhere.
- ___ 6. Eisenhower endorsed a major growth of military spending on conventional and nuclear forces to counteract the Soviet Union in the Cold War.
- ___ 7. Eisenhower tried but failed to repeal most of the New Deal economic and social legislation.
- ___ 8. In the Hungarian crisis, the United States retreated from Secretary of State Dulles's talk of "rolling back" communism and liberating the "captive peoples" of Eastern Europe.
- ___ 9. Eisenhower sent the first contingent of American troops to Vietnam in 1954 in order to prevent the communist Vietnamese from defeating the French.
- ___ 10. The Suez crisis was caused by Egyptian President Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal.
- ___ 11. The Soviet *Sputnik* satellite raised American fears that the Soviet Union had forged ahead of the United States in rocketry, science, and education.
- ___ 12. In the 1950s Latin Americans sometimes demonstrated hostility toward the United States for supporting anticommunist dictators and ignoring Latin American interests.
- ___ 13. Senator Kennedy was able to successfully neutralize the issue of his Roman Catholicism during the 1960 campaign.
- ___ 14. Feminist Betty Friedan's manifesto *The Feminine Mystique* was aimed primarily at reviving labor militancy among working-class women in factories and shops.

- ____ 15. Social critics like David Riesman and Daniel Bell attacked the conformity and consumerism that they believed was undermining the older American character and work ethic.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ____ 1. In the 1952 campaign, the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket made the first really effective use of
- a. the Cold War as a campaign issue.
 - b. television.
 - c. political advertising.
 - d. political appeals targeted at special-interest groups.
- ____ 2. As president, Eisenhower enjoyed great popularity by presenting a leadership style of
- a. reassurance, sincerity, and optimism.
 - b. aggressiveness, boldness, and energy.
 - c. political shrewdness, economic knowledge, and hands-on management.
 - d. vision, imagination, and moral leadership.
- ____ 3. The Korean War ended with
- a. an agreement to unify and neutralize Korea.
 - b. a peace treaty that provided for withdrawal of American and Chinese forces from Korea.
 - c. an American and South Korean military victory.
 - d. a stalemated armistice and continued division of North and South Korea.
- ____ 4. Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist crusade finally collapsed when
- a. the Cold War wound down.
 - b. Eisenhower publicly attacked him as a threat to the Republican party.
 - c. McCarthy failed to force the alleged communists out of the federal government.
 - d. McCarthy attacked the U.S. Army for alleged communist influence.
- ____ 5. The precipitating event that made Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. the most prominent civil rights leader was
- a. the lynching of Emmett Till.
 - b. the Little Rock school crisis.
 - c. the Montgomery bus boycott.
 - d. the passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Act.
- ____ 6. The primary impetus for civil rights within the federal government came from
- a. the Supreme Court.
 - b. Congress.
 - c. President Eisenhower.
 - d. the armed forces.

- 7. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights organization, the SCLC, rested on the institutional foundation of
 - a. black business.
 - b. the black churches.
 - c. black colleges.
 - d. northern philanthropic foundations.
- 8. Eisenhower's basic approach to domestic economic policy was
 - a. to seek to overturn the Democratic New Deal.
 - b. to propose major new federal social programs.
 - c. to turn most New Deal programs over to the states.
 - d. to trim back some New Deal programs but keep most in place.
- 9. Despite his fiscal conservatism, Eisenhower actually outdid the New Deal with his massive federal spending on
 - a. a continental interstate highway system.
 - b. a system of medical care for the elderly.
 - c. intercontinental military bombers and civilian aircraft.
 - d. agricultural subsidies for American farmers.
- 10. The United States first became involved in Vietnam by
 - a. providing economic aid to the democratic Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem.
 - b. providing economic aid to the French colonialists fighting Ho Chi Minh.
 - c. providing aid to Ho Chi Minh in his fight against the French colonialists.
 - d. sending American bombers to defend the French at Dien Bien Phu.
- 11. Senator John F. Kennedy's main issue in the campaign of 1960 was that
 - a. as a Catholic he would better be able to deal with Catholic Latin America.
 - b. the United States should seek nuclear disarmament agreement with the Soviets.
 - c. the United States had fallen behind the Soviet Union in prestige and power.
 - d. the Eisenhower administration had failed to work hard enough for desegregation.
- 12. When the 1950s began, a majority of American women were
 - a. working in blue-collar factory or service jobs.
 - b. raising children and not employed outside the home.
 - c. pursuing training and education to prepare them for the new positions in service and high technology.
 - d. agitating for federal child care and other assistance to enable them to assume a larger place in the work force.
- 13. The primary force shaping the new consumerism and popular culture of the 1950s was
 - a. the computer.
 - b. magazines like *Playboy*
 - c. television.
 - d. evangelical Protestantism.

- ____ 14. One major breakthrough in American literature in the early post-World War II years was
- a. the realistic depiction of war and industrial poverty.
 - b. angry social criticism of the "American dream."
 - c. satirical and comic novels by Jewish writers.
 - d. an optimistic vision of nature and love in the work of American poets and playwrights.
- ____ 15. A key economic transformation of the 1950s was
- a. the displacement of large corporations by smaller entrepreneurial businesses.
 - b. the growth of "white collar" jobs into a majority that increasingly replaced "blue collar" factory labor.
 - c. the turn from World War II military and defense industries to civilian production.
 - d. the replacement of "mass consumer production" by "target marketing" aimed at particular segments of the population.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. Term for making ruthless and unfair charges against opponents, such as those leveled by a red-hunting Wisconsin senator in the 1950s
- _____ 2. Supreme Court ruling that overturned the old *Plessy v. Ferguson* principle that black public facilities could be "separate but equal"
- _____ 3. The doctrine upon which Eisenhower and Dulles based American nuclear policy in the 1950s
- _____ 4. An Asian alliance, set up by Secretary Dulles on the model of NATO, to help support the anticommunist regime in South Vietnam
- _____ 5. The British-and-French-owned waterway whose nationalization by Egyptian President Nasser triggered a major Middle East crisis
- _____ 6. A Soviet scientific achievement that set off a wave of American concern about Soviet superiority in science and education
- _____ 7. Major international corporation that symbolized the early computer and "information age"
- _____ 8. High-flying American spy plane, whose downing in 1960 destroyed a summit and heightened Cold War tensions
- _____ 9. Latin American nation where a 1959 communist revolution ousted a U.S.-backed dictator
- _____ 10. Betty Friedan's 1963 book that launched a revolution against the suburban "cult of domesticity" that reigned in the 1950s

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Dwight D. Eisenhower | A. Eloquent Democratic presidential candidate who was twice swamped by a popular Republican war hero |
| ___ 2. Joseph R. McCarthy | B. Anticommunist leader who set up a pro-American government to block Ho Chi Minh's expected takeover of all Vietnam |
| ___ 3. Earl Warren | C. Latin American revolutionary who became economically and militarily dependent on the Soviet Union |
| ___ 4. Martin Luther King, Jr. | D. Eisenhower's tough-talking secretary of state who wanted to "roll back" communism |
| ___ 5. Ho Chi Minh | E. Red-hunter turned world-traveling diplomat who narrowly missed becoming president in 1960 |
| ___ 6. Ngo Dinh Diem | F. Black minister whose 1955 Montgomery bus boycott made him the leader of the civil rights movement |
| ___ 7. Betty Friedan | G. The soldier who kept the nation at peace for most of his two terms and ended up warning America about the "military-industrial complex" |
| ___ 8. Adlai E. Stevenson | H. Popular religious evangelical who effectively used the new medium of television |
| ___ 9. Billy Graham | I. Youthful politician who combined television appeal with traditional big-city Democratic politics to squeak out a victory in 1960 |
| ___ 10. James R. Hoffa | J. Blustery Soviet leader who frequently challenged Eisenhower with both threats and diplomacy |
| ___ 11. John Foster Dulles | K. Reckless and power-hungry demagogue who intimidated even President Eisenhower before his bubble burst |
| ___ 12. Nikita Khrushchev | L. A Vietnamese nationalist and communist whose defeat of the French led to calls for American military intervention in Vietnam |
| ___ 13. Fidel Castro | M. Writer whose 1963 book signaled the beginnings of more extensive feminist protest |
| ___ 14. Richard Nixon | N. Tough Teamster-union boss whose corrupt actions helped lead to passage of the Landrum-Griffin Act |
| ___ 15. John F. Kennedy | O. Controversial jurist who led the Supreme Court into previously off-limits social and racial issues |

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- ___ Major crises in Eastern Europe and the Middle East create severe challenges for Eisenhower's foreign policy.
- ___ An American plane is downed over the Soviet Union, disrupting a summit and rechilling the Cold War.
- ___ Eisenhower refuses to use American troops to prevent a communist victory over a colonial power in Asia.

- _____ Eisenhower orders federal troops to enforce a Supreme Court ruling over strong resistance from state officials.
- _____ Eisenhower's meeting with Soviet leader Khrushchev marks the first real sign of a thaw in the Cold War.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
_____ 1. Joseph McCarthy's attacks on the U.S. Army	A. Set off "massive resistance" to integration in most parts of the Deep South
_____ 2. <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	B. Led to continuing nuclear tests and the extension of the arms race
_____ 3. Governor Orval Faubus's use of the National Guard to prevent integration	C. Caused the United States to begin backing an anticommunist regime in South Vietnam
_____ 4. The 1956 Hungarian revolt	D. Created widespread resentment of the United States in parts of the Western Hemisphere
_____ 5. The Communist Vietnamese victory over the French in 1954	E. Forced Secretary of State Dulles to abandon his plans to "roll back" communism
_____ 6. Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal	F. Exposed the senator's irresponsibility and brought about his downfall
_____ 7. The fears of both the United States and the Soviet Union that the other nation was gaining a lead in rocketry and weapons	G. Forced President Eisenhower to send federal troops to Little Rock
_____ 8. The downing of the U-2 spy plane	H. Undermined the Paris summit and weakened Eisenhower's goodwill diplomacy
_____ 9. American intervention in Latin America and support for anti-communist dictators in that region	I. Enabled the Democrats to win a narrow electoral victory in 1960
_____ 10. Kennedy's television glamour and traditional political skills	J. Led to the 1956 British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt

G. Developing Historical Skills

Comparing and Interpreting Election Maps

Read carefully the maps for the elections of 1956 (p. 902) and 1960 (p. 907). Answer the following questions.

1. Which was the only nonsouthern state to vote for Democrats Stevenson in 1956 and Kennedy in 1960?
2. Which three southern states (states of the old Confederacy) voted for Republicans Eisenhower in 1956 and Nixon in 1960?
3. Which two southern states switched from Republican in 1956 to Democratic in 1960?
4. How many more electoral votes did Kennedy get in the West (not counting Texas) in 1960 than Stevenson got in the same region in 1956?
5. How many electoral votes did Kennedy win from states that Stevenson also carried in 1956? (Note the divided electoral vote in one state.)

PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. In what ways was the Eisenhower era a time of caution and conservatism, and in what ways was it a time of dynamic economic, social, and cultural change?
2. How did Eisenhower balance assertiveness and restraint in his foreign policies in Vietnam, Europe, and the Middle East?
3. What were the dynamics of the Cold War with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and how did Eisenhower and Khrushchev combine confrontation and conversation in their relationship?
4. How did America's far-flung international responsibilities shape the U.S. economy and society in the Eisenhower era? Was the American way of life fundamentally altered by the nation's new superpower status, or did it remain largely sheltered from world affairs?
5. How did television and other innovations of the "consumer age" affect American politics, society, and culture in the 1950s?
6. Despite widespread power and affluence, the 1950s were often described as an "age of anxiety." What were the major sources of anxiety and conflict that stirred beneath the surface of the time? Could they have been addressed more effectively by Eisenhower and other national leaders? Why or why not?