

Cold War and Decolonization

AP World History ■ Unit 8

AP World History



What we will cover

- 1 Setting the Stage for the Cold War
- 2 The Cold War
- 3 Effects of the Cold War
- 4 Spread of Communism After 1900
- 5 Decolonization After 1900
- 6 Newly Independent States

Setting the Stage for the Cold War

Unit 8 covers the period after 1945, and two processes run through it at once: a **global ideological rivalry** and the **end of empire**. Most of the unit's questions turn on how those two interacted.

In the years following World War II, **increasing anti-imperialist sentiment** 反帝情绪 built momentum in colonised regions, and this time it produced independence rather than promises.

The Cold War

The shifted balance **rapidly evolved into the Cold War** 冷战 – a rivalry between the democracies led by the United States and the communist states led by the Soviet Union, conducted as an **ideological struggle** 意识形态斗争 rather than direct war between the two principals.

Leaving the non-aligned states out of an answer describes a two-sided world that did not exist.

Effects of the Cold War

The rivalry produced concrete institutions and conflicts:

- **New military alliances** 军事同盟 – **NATO** 北约 and the **Warsaw Pact** 华沙条约组织.
- **Nuclear proliferation** 核扩散 – the spread of nuclear weapons to more states.
- **Proxy wars** 代理人战争 between and within states, in which the two blocs supported opposing sides in conflicts elsewhere rather than fighting each other directly.

Effects of the Cold War, continued

The comparison this topic sets up is *how* each superpower maintained influence over other states – through alliances, aid, military support, and intervention.

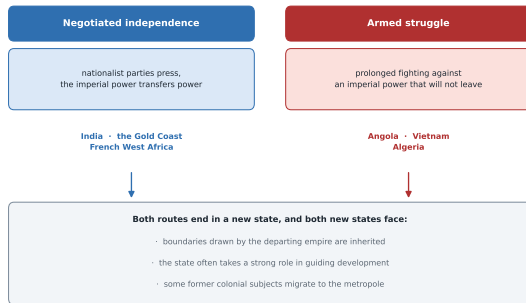
Both used all four, which is why the comparison question is answerable in both directions.

Spread of Communism After 1900

Two examinable threads run here. First, **China**: as a result of **internal tension** 内部矛盾 and **Japanese aggression** 日本侵略, Chinese communists seized power, and the CED notes this eventually contributed to communist revolutions elsewhere.

The CED presents these as a matched pair, which is exactly how a comparison question will ask for them.

Decolonization After 1900



The difference that earns marks: what the new state inherits - a working administration, or a war-damaged one.

the distinction this unit turns on

Decolonization After 1900

After World War II, **some colonies negotiated their independence** 通过谈判独立 while **others achieved it through armed struggle** 通过武装斗争. India and the Gold Coast are the standard negotiated cases; Angola, Vietnam, and Algeria the standard armed ones.

Those boundaries are the reason so many post-independence conflicts were about borders rather than about the departing power.

Newly Independent States

The **redrawing of political boundaries** after colonial withdrawal led to the creation of new states, and in some cases to **conflict, population displacement, and resettlement** 人口流离与重新安置. The partition of British India is the standard case of all three at once.

Economically, governments in newly independent states **often took a strong role in guiding economic life to promote development** 主导经济以推动发展 – a continuity with the interwar pattern of Unit 7, arrived at from a completely different direction.

Global Resistance to Established Power Structures

Although conflict dominated much of the twentieth century, many individuals and groups – **including states** – opposed that trend. The CED names three distinct patterns, and they should not be blurred:

- Groups and individuals **challenged the wars** of the century, and some – **Mohandas Gandhi** 甘地, **Martin Luther King Jr.** 马丁·路德·金, and **Nelson Mandela** 曼德拉 – **promoted non-violence** 非暴力 as a method of change.
- **Militaries and militarised states** often responded to the proliferation of conflicts in ways that **further intensified** them.
- Some movements **used violence against civilians** in an effort to achieve political aims.

Global Resistance to Established Power Structures, continued

Both the third and second points are examinable content, not asides.

A question on "reactions to existing power structures" expects the full range, not only the non-violent one.

End of the Cold War

The CED gives a compound cause here too: advances in **United States military and technological development**, the Soviet Union's **costly and ultimately failed invasion of Afghanistan** 阿富汗战争, **public discontent** 公众不满, and **economic problems** 经济困难 within the Soviet system.

An answer that explains the end of the Cold War purely as external pressure has missed the CED's own weighting.

Causation in the Age of the Cold War

The unit's reasoning task is to explain the **extent** to which the effects of the Cold War were **similar in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres**. "Extent" is a comparison word: it asks for similarity *and* difference, with a judgement about which dominates.

Exam tips

- The Cold War was **not two-sided**. The **Non-Aligned Movement** is examinable content, and including it lifts an answer immediately.
- Give the effects as the CED does: **alliances, nuclear proliferation, proxy wars**. Three named effects beat one described at length.
- **Negotiated versus armed** independence is the highest-value comparison in the unit, because it explains what the new state inherited.
- **Inherited imperial boundaries** explain post-independence conflict better than any other single factor. Use the phrase.
- For resistance, give all three CED patterns – **non-violence, militarised response, and violence against civilians**.
- The end of the Cold War was **mostly internal** to the Soviet system. Weight the causes that way and say why.