

## ***The Untold History of the United States, Chapter 5: “Eisenhower, the Bomb, and the Third World”***

### **Main topics and key words**

The Korean War, President Eisenhower, the Red Scare, the hydrogen bomb, new leadership in the USSR, lost opportunities for reconciliation and co-existence, the rise of the MIC (Military Industrial Complex), the threat and use of massive destruction to obtain political goals, the threat of nuclear attack to obtain political goals, the anti-nuclear movement, promotion of “atoms for peace” (nuclear energy), wars for independence in Vietnam, Laos, Algeria and elsewhere, the Non-Aligned Movement, coup d’états by the CIA in Guatemala, Iran, Congo, and Indonesia, the Civil Rights Movement, Eisenhower’s farewell speech—a warning to Americans about the MIC, “a legacy of ashes”

- 
1. In 1953, when President Eisenhower came to power, the US was prosperous, the middle class was enjoying rising living standards.
  2. Progress and positive attitude were based on the Constitution and God.
  3. The first hydrogen bomb test was in 1953.
  4. As a general in the military during WWII, Eisenhower opposed the use of atomic bombs on Japan.
  5. Eisenhower at first had good relations with Stalin.
  6. Stalin died and Khrushchev came in denouncing Stalin and seeking better relations with the US.
  7. Churchill was re-elected in the UK and pushed for talks between the US and USSR. He feared nuclear war.
  8. This desire for better relations was undermined by the Secretary of State, Foster Dulles, and the head of the CIA, Allen Dulles. Both of them had helped the Nazis before, during and after the war. They viewed the USSR as the real enemy, not Germany so much.
  9. The Korean war was going badly. Truman fired MacArthur when he started talking about using a nuclear weapon in Korea.
  10. US and Soviet fighter planes were in direct combat in Korea, but the public didn’t know.
  11. The US could fight successfully only by using massive amounts of bombs, and committing war crimes by destroying civilian infrastructure. The US strategy seemed to be to kill millions and threaten to kill more in order to achieve its goals.
  12. Eisenhower considered using nuclear bombs. The threat may have succeeded in getting an armistice agreement. This agreement settled on the boundary where the war had begun. Was that a victory? Did the US really not lose? Was not losing winning?
  13. Vice President Nixon saw that the nuclear threat had worked, and he used it later when he was president fighting against Vietnam. (this was referred to as “madman theory”—make the enemy think you are crazy enough to use a nuclear weapon)
  14. The US denied China recognition and it did not get a seat at the UN until 1971.
  15. There was a massive increase in the military budget after the Korean War.
  16. Anti-communism was good for business.
  17. Senator McCarthy led the anti-communist witch hunt (Red Scare). Ex-president Truman denounced him, but Eisenhower was afraid to criticize him publicly.
  18. The Red Scare led to purging of government, schools, journalism, filmmaking and television.

19. The head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, executed the Red Scare. He accused communists of driving the civil rights movement. He spied on American citizens. He provoked fear of a dirty bomb being used inside the US.
20. COINTELPRO was the FBI program that broke up all citizen groups that criticized government power. Public debate dried up. The Communist Party of the US disappeared. It had been a strong influence in American politics during the 1920s and 1930s.
21. The public started to demand military budget cuts by the end of the 1950s.
22. Eisenhower became more hostile toward the USSR and started threatening the use of nuclear weapons. He said, "I would rather be atomized than communized." He promoted "atoms for peace" (nuclear energy) unconcerned that this would lead to the spread of nuclear weapons.
23. Churchill was shocked by the extremism of the US in this period, even though Churchill himself was a strong anti-communist. He was the person who created the phrase "Iron Curtain" to describe Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as a sort of prison.
24. The Soviets tested an H bomb in 1954.
25. The Bravo Hydrogen Bomb Test failure in 1954 caused world awareness of nuclear dangers to increase. It became clear that these nuclear tests were probably going to cause cancer in millions of people.
26. US leaders were denounced throughout the world. They were seen as reckless, hegemonic, and dangerous.
27. In 1954, Iran was overthrown by a CIA coup in order to gain control of its oil. Allen Dulles and Foster Dulles were a powerful combination. They were a government separate from the executive branch that Eisenhower lost control of.
28. Guatemala got the same treatment as Iran in 1954.
29. "Communist" became a label for any country that wanted independent development. The non-aligned movement was created in 1954 by Sukarno, Indonesian president. Members of this movement wanted to be neutral in the Cold War and set their own development policies.
30. France tried to recover its colony in Vietnam, but it lost eventually to independence fighters. The US paid 80% of the cost of the war—a situation similar to Ukraine today.
31. The French left and the US eventually took over the war.
32. Vietnam was split in the middle, with an agreement that elections would decide which party would lead the unified country. South Vietnam was a client state of the US. It would never win an election to decide the issue of reunification. Ho Chi Minh had overwhelming popular support.
33. France fought against Algerian independence from 1954-62, and lost.
34. In 1955, the fascist leader of Spain was recognized by the US as legitimate. The US made alliances throughout the world with such governments (reactionary governments).
35. In the developing world, people understood that anti-communism was a war against the poor.
36. The Dulles brothers condemned the neutrality of the non-aligned movement. According to them, to be neutral was to be in sympathy with communist states.
37. Leaders from the non-aligned countries were forced out of power one after the other over the next decade.
38. In 1956, Khrushchev denounced the crimes against citizens committed during Stalin's rule, but this reform movement led to people in Eastern Europe thinking they could get free of the USSR. Khrushchev had to react harshly against the Hungarian uprising.
39. There were US attempts to overthrow Sukarno in Indonesia, and they eventually succeeded in 1965.

40. Eisenhower made limited progress in civil rights, protecting black students as they integrated into schools and universities where they had not been allowed before.
41. Democrats attacked Republicans as being too soft on communists. They said there was a “missile gap”—implying that the Soviets had superior power in nuclear weapons. It was a lie. The US was always stronger during this decade.
42. The Cuban Revolution brought to power a government that was hostile to American corporations. It wasn’t communist at first, but as conflict with the US increased, it adopted socialist ideology and took protection from the USSR.
43. In the Congo, the hope of progress was crushed when the US and Belgium killed the country’s first black leader, Patrice Lumumba. Mobutu became the US-supported dictator who ruled over and plundered Congo for the next thirty years.
44. Eisenhower was supposed to have the final say in whether nuclear weapons would be used, but in fact the power to decide had been given to generals and officers far from Washington.
45. In Eisenhower’s farewell speech in 1961, he recognized that he had created a monster called the Military Industrial Complex (MIC). He warned Americans that they had to get control of this monster or they would lose their democracy.
46. The irony of the 1950s is that they are remembered as both a time of peace and prosperity and a time when the world was made far more dangerous than it had ever been. The US now had 22,000 nuclear bombs, and the USSR had a similar number. Nuclear weapons made these countries undemocratic and obsessed with secrecy and security.
47. Eisenhower told people close to him that he was leaving behind a “legacy of ashes.”