

COMPARING PRIMARY SOURCES

On the Cold War

The struggle with the Soviets provoked a range of responses from American leaders in the 1960s.

As you read the passages below, try to relate each speaker's view of the cold war with his proposed strategies for dealing with cold-war issues.

FOR CIVILITY IN THE COLD WAR

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, speech at the University of California, Berkeley, March 20, 1961

The cold war was not invented in the West; it was born in the assault upon freedom which arose out of the ashes of World War II. We might have hoped that the fires of that struggle might have consumed ambitions to dominate others. . . . But such has not been the case. The issues called the cold war are real and cannot be merely wished away. They must be faced and met. But how we meet them makes a difference. They will not be scolded away by invective [harsh words] nor frightened away by bluster. They must be met with determination, confidence, and sophistication. Unnecessary or pointless irritations should be removed; channels of communication should be kept open to make it the more possible to find points at which tension might be relieved. Our discussion, public or private, should be marked by civility; our manners should conform to our own dignity and power and to our good repute throughout the world. But our purposes and policy must be clearly expressed to avoid miscalculation or an underestimation of our determination to defend the cause of freedom. Perhaps most important of all, we should keep our eyes on the world beyond the cold war, the world we see when men come to their senses, the world which men have dreamed about for centuries. For, in building that world, we shall have friends in all parts of the earth, we shall find strength in the very nature of man, we shall share purposes which make natural allies of us all. If defending freedom is to be called waging the cold war, then wage it we must, but we would prefer to bring it to an end. For we look forward to a time when contest will be unnecessary because the freedom of man will be firmly established.

FOR AGGRESSION IN THE COLD WAR

Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona), address to the U.S. Senate, July 14, 1961

[I]t is our purpose to win the cold war, not merely wage it in the hope of attaining a standoff. . . . [I]t is really astounding that our government has never stated its purpose to be that of complete victory over the tyrannical forces of international communism. I am sure that the American people cannot understand why we spend billions upon billions of dollars to engage in a struggle of worldwide proportions unless we have a clearly defined purpose to achieve victory. . . .

I suggest that our failure to declare total victory as our fundamental purpose is a measure of an official timidity that refuses to recognize the all-embracing determination of communism to capture the world and destroy the United States. . . .

[T]he American people have nothing to which they can point as a positive indication that the New Frontier means to stand up to the forces of international communism, after the fashion of a great world power. . . . These are the things, I believe, that our nation needs right now, instead of more excuses for inaction and more justifications for an expanding foreign-aid program, which needs drastic alterations before it can yield results. We need a declaration that our intention is victory. We need a careful cost accounting of what will be required to meet this objective within the framework of our economic ability. And we need an official act, such as the resumption of nuclear testing, to show our own people and the other freedom-loving peoples of the world that we mean business.