

CHAPTER
16
SECTION 5

Section Summary

NIXON AND THE COLD WAR

President Richard Nixon changed the way the United States approached the world. **Henry Kissinger**, his top adviser on international affairs, helped him.

Nixon and Kissinger shared the idea of **realpolitik**, which said that a government should make decisions based on what is good for the nation, not just on ideologies. Nixon and Kissinger insisted on a flexible, pragmatic foreign policy. They believed that this approach would have many benefits for the United States.

Nixon had always been a strong opponent of communism. When he decided to create better relations with communist China, many people were surprised. The United States had no official relationship with communist China in the 1960s. Nixon wanted to reach out to China for several reasons. He hoped to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union. Nixon thought that China could be a good trading partner. He also hoped that China might help persuade North Vietnam to end the Vietnam War. In 1972, Nixon traveled to China to meet with Premier **Zhou Enlai** and Chairman Mao Zedong. The trip greatly improved the relations between the two countries.

Nixon's trip to China also led the Soviet Union to invite him to visit Moscow. There, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the first **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty**. This agreement limited each nation's missiles. It was a first step toward limiting the arms race.

The United States and Soviet Union now tried a new policy called **détente** to reduce tensions between them. Détente replaced diplomatic policies based on suspicion and distrust.

Nixon's foreign policy changed the nation's views about communism. The new relationships he made helped to end the Vietnam War. Nixon's policies also moved the world closer to the end of the Cold War.

Review Questions

1. Why did Nixon want to reach out to communist China?

2. What was the effect of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty?

READING CHECK

What is realpolitik?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *pragmatic* mean in the underlined sentence? Circle the words in the underlined sentence that could help you learn what *pragmatic* means. The word describes Nixon's foreign policy.

READING SKILL

Categorize Circle the statement that most accurately reflects President Nixon's attitudes toward communism.

- If Vietnam fell to communism, its closest neighbors would follow, spreading communism throughout the region.
- A flexible, pragmatic foreign policy would benefit the United States in many ways.
- The United States should support all independence movements, no matter what their political beliefs.