

**Module 10: The Cold War**  
**Topic 2 Content: Chinese Revolution**

Chinese Revolution

Chinese Revolution

Early War World War II War Ends

The slide is presented in a window-like format with a title bar at the top and a navigation bar at the bottom. The main content area is a red rectangle divided into two halves. The left half features a black and white portrait of Chiang Kai-shek in a military uniform, with the flag of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to his right. The right half features a black and white portrait of Mao Zedong in a military cap, with the flag of the People's Republic of China to his left. The text 'Chinese Revolution' is centered in yellow. The navigation bar at the bottom consists of a horizontal bar with three colored segments: green for 'Early War', red for 'World War II', and blue for 'War Ends'. Each segment has a small circular icon above it.

## Early War

### Nationalists

**Chinese Revolution**

#### Nationalists

**1911**  
Imperial government replaced by a republic

**Allies**

- Nationalist Party (KMT) under Sun Yat-sen
- Communist Party

Chiang Kai-shek leads Nationalists

**1927**  
Nationalists massacre Communists

**1931**  
Japan takes Manchuria

**1937**  
Japan and China at war

Chiang Kai-shek meets with FDR and Churchill at Cairo Conference 1943

**Nationalists**

Early War      World War II      War Ends

The roots of the Chinese Revolution date back to 1911, when the Chinese imperial government was replaced by a republic. This led to a period of instability in which China was dominated by regional warlords, as well as by Japan and the Western powers. In the 1920s, two new groups emerged which challenged the existing order - the Nationalist Party under Sun Yat-sen, and the Communist Party.

At first, these two groups worked together to reunite the country, which had splintered into regional governments. After Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, he was replaced by General Chiang Kai-shek. He used his military to unify much of the country. In 1927, Chiang Kai-shek turned his forces against his Communist allies, massacring them in Shanghai. The Nationalists now controlled much of China. This group was especially popular in the urban areas. Britain and the United States also supported the Nationalists.

During the 1930s, Japan attacked northeastern China, taking Manchuria in 1931 and then other provinces. By 1937, Japan and China were fighting a full-scale war that would last until the end of World War II.

## Communists

**Chinese Revolution**

### Communists

Peasants supported Communists

Mao Tse-Tung (Mao Zedong) moved headquarters to southwestern China

Party became a peasant-based movement

1934-35 - Long March

Communists controlled much of China until 1945

Route of Long March

Communists

Early War      World War II      War Ends

Although the Communists were driven out of the cities by the Nationalists, they were still popular in the countryside. The peasants were angry since the Nationalists did not reform land ownership as they promised to do once they were in power. Since the peasants supported the Communists, Mao Tse-tung, the leader of the Communists, moved the group's headquarters to a mountainous region in southwestern China. Here, the Communists became primarily a peasant-based movement based in the countryside. This was the opposite of communism in the Soviet Union, which had its greatest support among urban factory workers.

When the Nationalists continued to attack the Communists, Mao and his supporters went on the Long March. This was a journey that took more than a year and passed through some of China's harshest geography. It was during this march that Mao solidified his control over the party. Meanwhile, the Japanese were attacking the Nationalist Army, putting Chiang Kai-shek on the defensive. As a result, the Communists ruled over much of China until the end of the war in 1945.

# World War II

## WWII

Chinese Revolution

WWII

Second Sino-Japanese War a.k.a. WWII (1937-1945)

- Nationalists and Communists 'allied' against Japan
- Nationalists lost popularity
- Communists increased popularity

WWII

Early War World War II War Ends

Fighting between the Nationalists and the Communists started in 1927 and continued until 1949. During World War II, however, the two sides were officially allies against the Japanese. Although they were allies, the Nationalists and Communists sides cooperated very little in their fight against Japan.

During the war, the Nationalists lost even more support due to corruption and other factors. Meanwhile, the Communists became more popular, especially in the countryside for their support of land reform. Later on, popular support was crucial because the Communists were able to recruit huge numbers of soldiers while the Nationalists actually lost troops when soldiers deserted.

## War Ends

### Negotiations



After Japan was defeated in World War II, there was a brief period when the Nationalists and the Communists held negotiations to try and find a peaceful resolution to the civil war. The United States was influential in this process, although it was clear which side the U.S. supported. American planes helped airlift Nationalist troops into Manchuria after Japan withdrew, in order to protect the territory from falling under control of the Communists. President Truman was pursuing his policy of containment by using the Nationalists to limit the Communists from gaining any more territory.

## War Erupts

The image shows a presentation slide titled "War Erupts" under the heading "Chinese Revolution". The slide content includes:

- June 1946**
  - Full-scale civil war
  - U.S. supported the Nationalists
  - Soviets supported Communists

At the bottom of the slide is a timeline with three segments: "Early War" (green), "World War II" (red), and "War Ends" (blue). A label "War Erupts" is positioned above the "War Ends" segment.

After the truce between the Communists and Nationalists broke down in June 1946, they started fighting a full-scale civil war. The U.S. supported the Nationalists by sending them weapons captured from the Japanese troops as well as over two billion dollars in direct aid and loans. Despite their huge advantage, the Nationalists were losing support among the Chinese people, as well as their own soldiers, due to corruption and other factors.

The Communists were able to recruit an almost unlimited number of soldiers because of their popularity in the countryside. They also enjoyed the support of the communist Soviet Union which helped supply the troops for the war.

Although the Cold War had not yet started, the two superpowers were already lining up on separate sides of a conflict that was based in ideology. The Soviets supported the Communists in their goal of establishing a communist society, and the United States supported the Nationalists in order to stop the spread of communism.

## Communists Win

The image shows a presentation window titled "Chinese Revolution". Inside, there is a sub-slide titled "Communists Win". The sub-slide contains a list of events for the year 1949:

- Communists win
- Nationalists retreat to Taiwan
- China divided into two nations

At the bottom of the presentation window is a timeline with three main segments: "Early War" (green), "World War II" (red), and "War Ends" (blue). A white callout box labeled "Communists Win" points to a blue arrow on the timeline that spans the end of the "War Ends" segment and extends further to the right.

In 1949, the Communists defeated the Nationalists and formed a new government called the People's Republic of China with Beijing as its capital.

Chiang Kai-shek and approximately two million of his supporters retreated from mainland China to the island of Taiwan. China was now divided into two nations.

## Aftermath



At first, the Nationalist government was isolated on Taiwan, since few countries thought it would be able to hold out against the Communists for long. With the start of the Korean War and Truman's philosophy of containment, however, the United States decided to protect Taiwan and sent in warships to patrol the waters separating it from mainland China. The United States refused to recognize the communist Chinese government as legitimate and sent aid to the government in Taiwan, which America argued was the true government of China.

The Soviet Union supported the communist government on the mainland. Communist China was not interested in becoming a puppet state of the Soviets and followed its own path. China did go on to support the spread of communism in Asia by providing aid to the North Koreans and the North Vietnamese in their respective wars.

The Nationalists and the Communists never signed a formal agreement to end the civil war. Communist China still claims that Taiwan is part of its territories and threatens to attack the country if Taiwan proclaims its independence. As a result, Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, since it is not formally recognized as an independent country.

The unresolved situation between these two countries causes tension from time to time. Communist China often conducts military exercises off its coast in the waters separating it from Taiwan. This tension also affects the relationship between China and the United States, since the Americans see Taiwan as their ally.

*[Image courtesy of Ssolbergj.]*