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Michael Tampellini 1/16/12 How and why did the Cold War end? Be sure to include in your analysis the historical developments from the 1960s to the 1990s. The Cold War began in the late 1940's following the aftermath of World War Two. The two new world powers, Soviet Union and the United States, fought for governmental influence around the globe. This quiet war would last for over 30 years affecting the way in which we live today. In 1961 the Kennedy administration sought out to defeat communist threat in third world countries. The CIA and Eisenhower devised a plan to do so by training a group of Cuban exiles. On April 17, 1961, 2, 000 of the armed exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba expecting American air support and then a spontaneous uprising by the Cuban people (The Unfinished Nation pg. 771). Neither the air support nor uprising took place, as the Cuban government crushed the exiles. This led to severe tensions with Cuba and the Soviet Union. In the aftermath of this event Kennedy tried to meet with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to lower tensions between the two but it did not help. Khrushchev also did not like the mass fleeing of Germans that moved from East to West Germany. In order to stop this, he sent plans to the German government to built the Berlin Wall. This move only received criticism as tension only increased even more. The rising tensions then culminated into the most dangerous and dramatic crisis of the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis (The Unfinished Nation pg. 772). When aerial and reconnaissance photos gave evidence that the Soviets were placing construction sites for nuclear weapons in Cuba it was taken as an act of aggression by the Soviets toward the U. S. Almost two weeks later after days of preparation, Khrushchev sent President Kennedy a message that the

Soviet Union would remove the missile bases in exchange for an American pledge not to invade Cuba (The Unfinished Nation pg. 773). The crisis then ended finally leading to lower tensions between the Soviet Union and America. After a long period of time with no major altercations with the Soviet Union, the US created a new approach to foreign affairs. In the early 1970's, president Nixon came up with the initiative known as " détente. " Meaning the ease of strained relations especially in politics. For the next few years leading up to the Reagan administration, détente would become a huge part in the demise of the Soviet Union. President Richard Nixon became the first president to travel to China, his reason was to exploit the tensions between China and the Soviet Union. By using his relations with the Soviets and China he was able to help end the Vietnam War and produce a small armistice with the Soviet Union (History to know- Détente to the end of the cold war). When Ronald Reagan stepped into office, he came in more aggressive than last president Jimmy Carter. His plan was to forgo détente and put an end to the communist regime. Reagan instituted more nuclear arms reductions, and increased defense spending on a laser missile defense system (History to know-Détente). What seemed to increase tensions with Russia eventually put an end to it. The Soviet Union's economy was falling apart and the problems of an increasingly costly arms race would lead to the demise of the Soviets. Then in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power and took control of the Soviet Union. He was determined to end the Cold War and to bring new political and economic reform to the Soviets. He comprised dramatic new agreements with the United States, involving unilateral concessions in the armaments race. He brought an end to Soviet support of

client governments in Eastern Europe and in Cuba. He also relaxed the police state repression in the Soviet empire and took steps to introduce a democratic political process. These initiatives rapidly improved relations with the United States and brought an end to the Cold War. After a grueling 30 years, the Cold War was finally over. *Make sure Double spaced and 12 pt font, times new roman.