

# The Cold War



**In conventional wars, armies battle in plain sight. In the Cold War, spies and governments wrestled in the shadows. From 1945 to 1991, this new type of conflict prevailed, fought not by soldiers but by information gatherers, informants, and other covert agents. The Cold War may have been intelligence’s finest hour; due to key information gathered, American and Soviet leaders avoided escalating their conflict into full-blown warfare. Many exhibits at the International Spy Museum highlight specific actions, key people, and the tense environment of the Cold War.**

## IN THE MUSEUM

Exhibit areas in bold. See map for location.

### Lobby Area



It’s easy to miss, but the very first object you encounter at the Museum is a Cold War relic that hangs above as you wait for the elevator in the **Rear Lobby**. It is a replica of the statue of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, “father of the KGB,” that stood in front of KGB headquarters in Moscow until it was toppled in 1991 by Soviet citizens. The KGB was the state intelligence and security agency of the Soviet Union. After the Bolshevik Revolution, in 1917, Dzerzhinsky elevated spy craft to a new level of organized terror that was felt throughout the Cold War.

To discuss with students:

- Look at the photo next to the elevator of the statue being pulled down. What do you think this act symbolized to the people of the Soviet Union and the world?

## Cold War Spy Tradecraft



The Cold War coincided with an era of technological innovation and advancement both in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The public saw this play out in competitive student test scores and the space race. Behind the scenes, spies used new technologies to shrink cameras and bugs and to construct undetectable concealment devices for top secret items. In **Ninja**, check out Cold War surveillance cameras, lock picks, and bugs. **Cloak** features ingenious disguise and concealment devices used to smuggle everything from dot-size documents to people across enemy lines. In **Dagger**, examine deadly weapons hidden in umbrellas and cosmetics that Soviet and U.S. agents employed in covert action. **Shadow** presents specific examples of remote surveillance and tracking, including artifacts related to KGB infiltrations of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

To discuss with students:

- Consider the story of Oleg Gordievsky's escape in **Cloak**, and the Moscow schoolchildren bug caper in **Shadow**. How did spies use technology and human expectations to pull off these deceptions?
- Spy weapons are primarily used in self-defense. Look closely at the artifacts in **Dagger** for clues that support this fact.

## The Bolshevik Revolution—Institutional Espionage



In 1917, the Bolshevik revolution reshaped Russia—and the world. Russian leaders had made use of secret police for centuries, but the Soviet-established Cheka brought spying on citizens and terror to a new level. Enter **Red Terror** and explore the power of Soviet state. On the world front, interest in Communism as a form of government drew many young idealists to consider spying for the Soviets. In **Streetscape**, meet international "red" spies, including the Cambridge Five—a group of British students who became some of the Soviets' most powerful agents in the Western world.

To discuss with students:

- Why did international perspectives on Communist Russia vary so widely, from idealistic support to extreme fear?
- How did the establishment of a strong secret police force help the Soviets develop a powerful new state?
- What do you think attracted young Westerners to Communism?



## The Atomic Spies



The Museum depicts the build-up to and key events of the Cold War, both in the U.S. and abroad. In **Atomic Spies**, hear a riveting account of Soviet infiltration of the Manhattan Project in the 1940s. The loss of the atomic secret and Soviet tests of their first atomic bomb in 1949 made it clear that the Cold War would not be just a war of information and intrigue but one with potentially deadly consequences.

As you descend the staircase to the first floor, you will see images of Cold War era Americans engaged in atomic readiness exercises, as well as propaganda posters from the period.

To discuss with students:

- How would you decide which scientific work should be kept secret? Whose responsibility is it to make that decision?

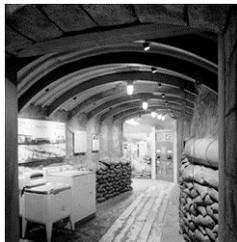
## The Red Scare in America



**Red Alley** examines the Red Scare in America. Here, view excerpts of the congressional hearings and see Senator Joseph McCarthy in action. Examine the cases of key communist spies like Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Alger Hiss, Elizabeth Bentley, and Whittaker Chambers. To discuss with students:

- Assess the reaction of government officials and civilians to communism in America. How do you think the threat of atomic war affected perspectives towards communism in the U.S.?

## Berlin—Spy Central



With its four international sectors, divided Berlin served as a microcosm for mounting Cold War tensions. Take a seat in the **Berlin Café** and listen to stories of what it was like to work for the CIA at this time. Follow the Moscow Rules as you walk through **East Berlin**, avoiding the KGB and East German Stasi informants lurking behind every corner. At **Checkpoint Charlie**, learn more about the pervasiveness of Stasi agents and informers, and the dire consequences of getting caught. Learn the end of the story of the Cambridge Five and their contributions to the Soviet intelligence during the Cold War. Dig your way into the surprising story of the **Berlin Tunnel**, an elaborate secret passage that American and British agents used to gather information on Stasi—KGB communication. This case has all the markings of a great Cold War spy story: a British mole, an impossible revelation...draw your own conclusions about the effectiveness of the tunnel.

To discuss with students:

- Many of the most damaging Cold War spies were double agents (working for the enemy). Discuss some examples of how the Stasi and the KGB used double agents during the Cold War. What complications do double agents introduce?

## The Legacy of the Cold War



In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, and two years later, the War of the Spies ended. In **Checkpoint Charlie**, examine pieces of the Berlin Wall. The fall of the Wall signified both a physical and symbolic end to the secrecy, division, and strife of the Cold War. However, many aspects of the Cold War did not fade as quickly. In **Silent Sentries**, study the evolution of overhead reconnaissance, a Cold War innovation that led to the prevalence of spy satellites in our world. Learn about traitors, defectors, and Cold War spies in **Wilderness of Mirrors**, which contains fascinating video clips of CIA, KGB, and FBI officers discussing their roles in the cases of Robert Hanssen, Aldrich Ames, and others.

To discuss with students:

- What kind of relationship did the U.S.S.R. and East Germany have during the Cold War?
- Many surveillance tools developed during the Cold War are still in use today. How does this legacy of “constant surveillance” affect your life?

## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Artifacts in the Spy Museum are a great springboard for discussion and learning back in the classroom. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Research the history of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). What was its original purpose? How did its function change over time? Does it still exist? Make a chart comparing the powers and actions of the HUAC to modern day congressional committees on intelligence.
- Hold a debate between American and Soviet “representatives” about the role of domestic spy organizations (like the FBI and the Cheka) in protecting national security at home. How did the Communist and Democratic views on this differ?
- What evidence was used to convict the Rosenbergs? Explore the VENONA documents on <http://www.nsa.gov/venona/venon00017.cfm> to discover what the government revealed 40 years after the case was closed. Reopen the case in your classroom and debate the Rosenbergs’ innocence or guilt.
- There are many stories, both personal and political, behind the Berlin Wall. Using the questions proposed by eighth graders on <http://www.websterschools.org/classrooms/dunne/BerlinWall.html> as a model, compose and try to answer your own questions about the Berlin Wall. In particular, try to uncover the role of spies on both sides of the wall. Check out <http://www.websterschools.org/classrooms/dunne/BWproj.html> for more Berlin Wall-related project ideas.
- Interview parents, grandparents, and other adults in the community about their experiences during the Cold War. Ask about their experiences at home and about their connection to major events, such as the construction and fall of the Berlin Wall.
- Investigate the history of a famous Cold War double agent or mole. Develop a psychological profile of the spy, and try to explain why he/she chose to spy and how he/she ultimately felt about that choice.

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