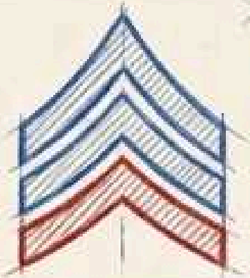
The Second World War and the Early Cold War

[SEC. 4.1]

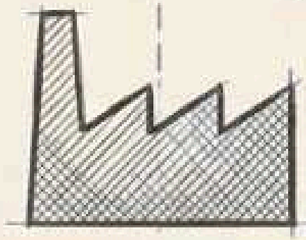
PILLAR 1



TOP SECRET

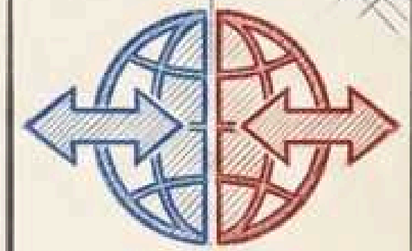
Military Action: How did the United States enter and win the Second World War?

PILLAR 2



Domestic Shift: How did the war change American society?

PILLAR 3



Geopolitics: Why did the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union turn into a long Cold War?

TOP SECRET

ARCHIVAL COPY

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

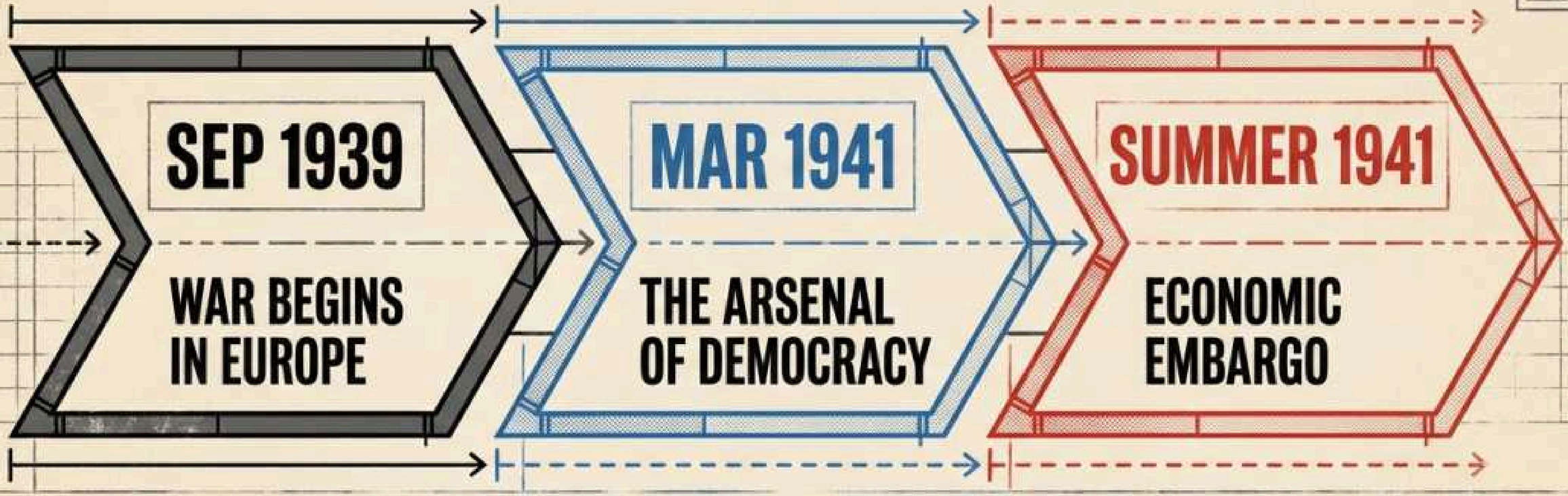
DOSSIER OBJECTIVES

FOUNDATION BLOCK

Gemini Notebook

THE ESCALATION TIMELINE (1939–1941)

[SEC. 4.2]



Germany invades Poland. US remains formally neutral but grows more involved.

Congress passes the Lend-Lease Act to supply Britain and other allies.

US cuts off oil exports to Japan in response to Southeast Asia pushes.

Gemini Notebook

INDEX

[SEC. 4.3]

THE POINT OF NO RETURN: DECEMBER 1941

DEC 7, 1941: PEARL HARBOR

Japanese aircraft attack the American naval base in Hawaii.

⚠ >2,400 Americans Killed.

DEC 8, 1941: DECLARATION OF WAR

Congress immediately declares war on Japan.

DAYS LATER: GLOBAL CONFLICT

Germany and Italy declare war on the United States, cementing a two-front global war.

Gemini Notebook

THE ARSENAL AWAKENS: ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION

[SEC. 4.4]

16 Million

Manpower: Americans who served in the armed forces.

~300,000

Production: Aircraft produced (plus ships, tanks, and millions of rifles from converted factories).

<2%

~~THE GREAT DEPRESSION IS OVER.~~

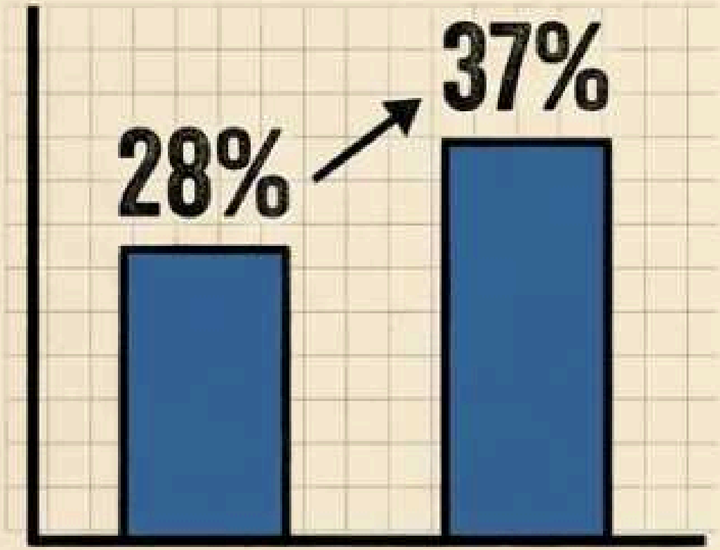
Economy: National unemployment rate.

Gemini Notebook

[SEC. 4.5]

THE HOME FRONT: SOCIAL SHIFTS & CIVIL RIGHTS

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE



Millions took jobs in war plants, sharply increasing the share of women holding or seeking paid work.

BLACK AMERICANS

1941: Philip Randolph threatens march on Washington

FDR bans discrimination in defense industries.

Crucial Contrast: The armed forces remained rigidly segregated, even as Black pilots trained at Tuskegee won wide respect.

Gemini Notebook

CIVIL LIBERTIES VIOLATED: EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

[SEC. 4.6]

FEBRUARY 1942

WARNING LABEL

Roosevelt signs EO 9066. ~120,000 people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast (two-thirds of them American citizens) are removed to inland camps.

1944

WARNING LABEL

The Supreme Court upholds the internment policy in the landmark case Korematsu v. United States.

1988

WARNING LABEL

Congress formally apologizes for the policy.

FEDERAL RESTITUTE

$20,000 paid in restitution to each survivor.

Gemini Notebook

TOP SECRET
ARCHIVAL USE

GLOBAL STRATEGY: THE TWO THEATERS

[SEC. 4.7]

OVERALL STRATEGY: DEFEAT GERMANY FIRST

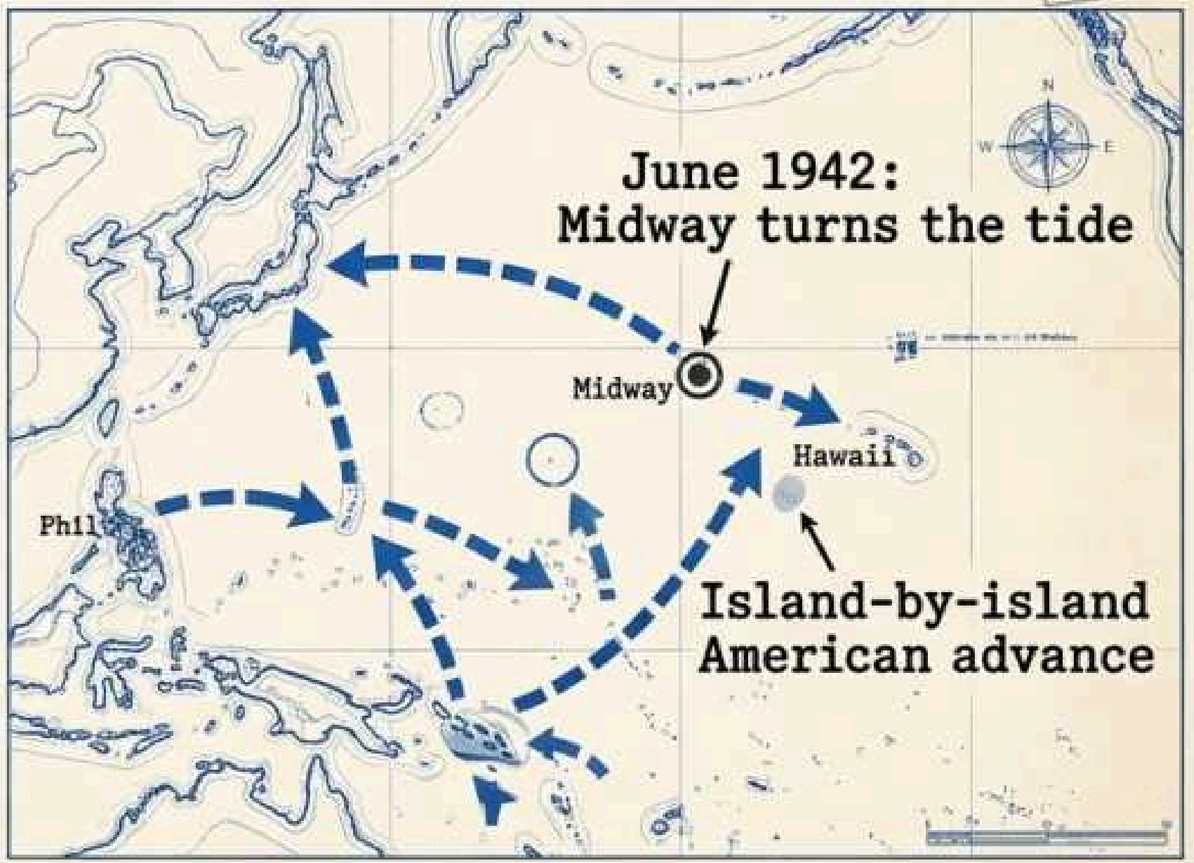
EUROPEAN THEATER



THE SOVIET BURDEN:

The Soviet Union bore the heaviest burden, with its armies destroying most of the German army.

PACIFIC THEATER



ARCHIVAL USE
ARCHIVAL USE
Gemini Notebook

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE AMERICAN RESPONSE

[SEC. 4.8]

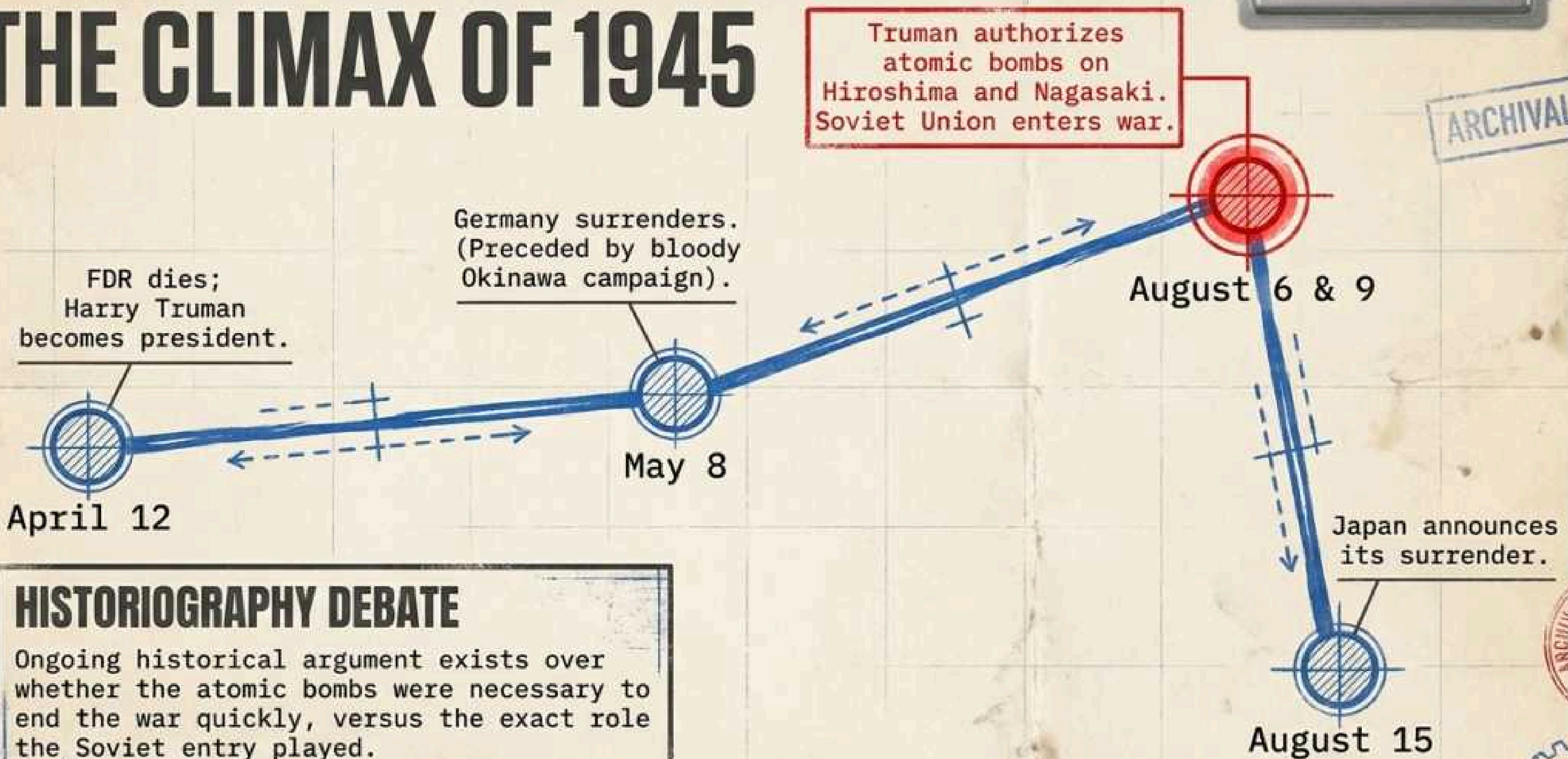
THE ATROCITY: The Nazi murder of 6 million Jews and millions of others.

THE TRAGEDY	THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
1942	Initial Response: Government is aware of the killings but does little. Strict immigration rules block most refugees.
JAN 1944	Late Action: Creation of the War Refugee Board.

HISTORICAL LENS: Historians continue to fiercely debate whether the United States could have done more to save lives.

Gemini Notebook

THE CLIMAX OF 1945



HISTORIOGRAPHY DEBATE

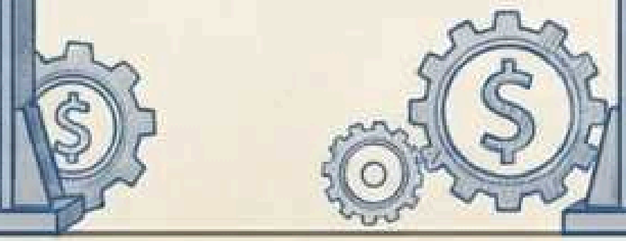
Ongoing historical argument exists over whether the atomic bombs were necessary to end the war quickly, versus the exact role the Soviet entry played.

BLUEPRINTING THE POSTWAR WORLD

[SEC. 4.10]

BRETTON WOODS (1944)

Establishes the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.
Places the US Dollar at the center of the global system.



UNITED NATIONS (1945)

Founded as the central forum for international diplomacy and conflict resolution.



YALTA & POTSDAM

Germany divided into occupation zones.



Allies clash over Soviet control of Eastern Europe.

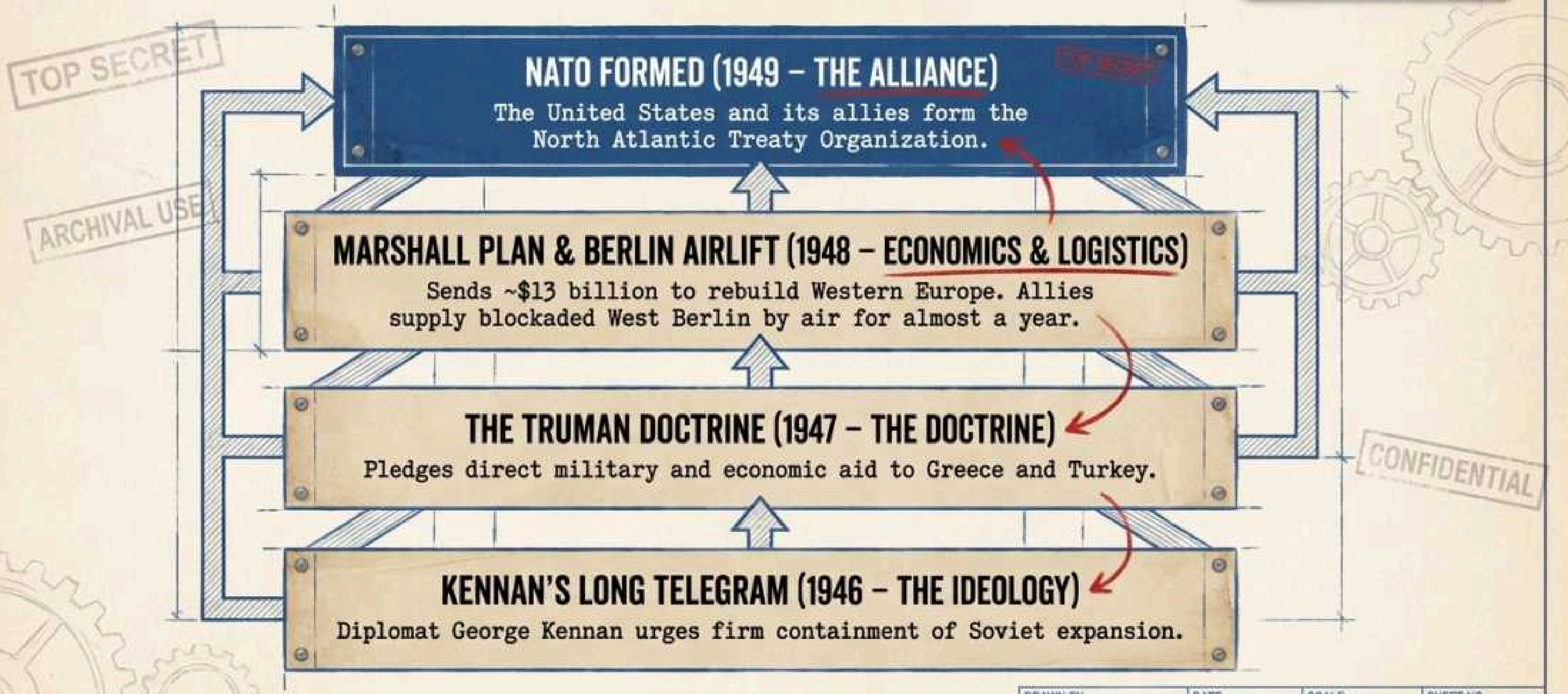


DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:
		8.11L
	DATE: 23.28/21	SCALE: RHO

Gemini Notebook

THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONTAINMENT (1946–1949)

[SEC. 4.11]



TOP SECRET

ARCHIVAL USE

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:

Gemini Notebook

THE COLD WAR TURNS HOT IN ASIA

[SEC. 4.12]

1949 — THE SHIFTS

Soviets test an atomic bomb. Communist forces under Mao Zedong win the civil war in China.

1950 — THE INVASION

North Korea invades South Korea (June). The US leads a United Nations force in response.

1953 — THE STALEMATE

July armistice leaves the border near where it began.

CASUALTY REPORT:
~36,000 Americans died.



TOP SECRET

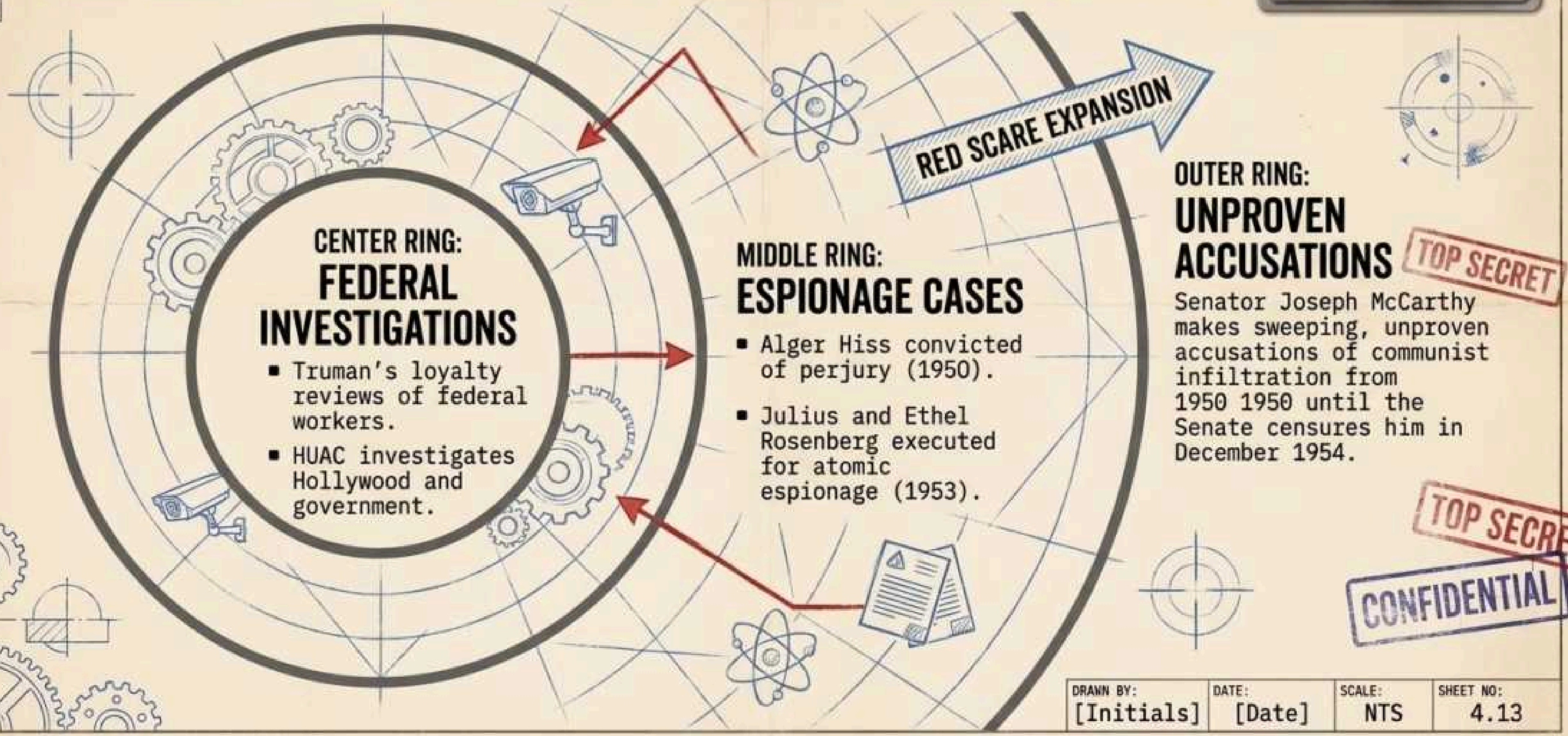
CONFIDENTIAL

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.12

Gemini Notebook

THE DOMESTIC SHADOW: FEAR OF COMMUNISM

[SEC. 4.13]

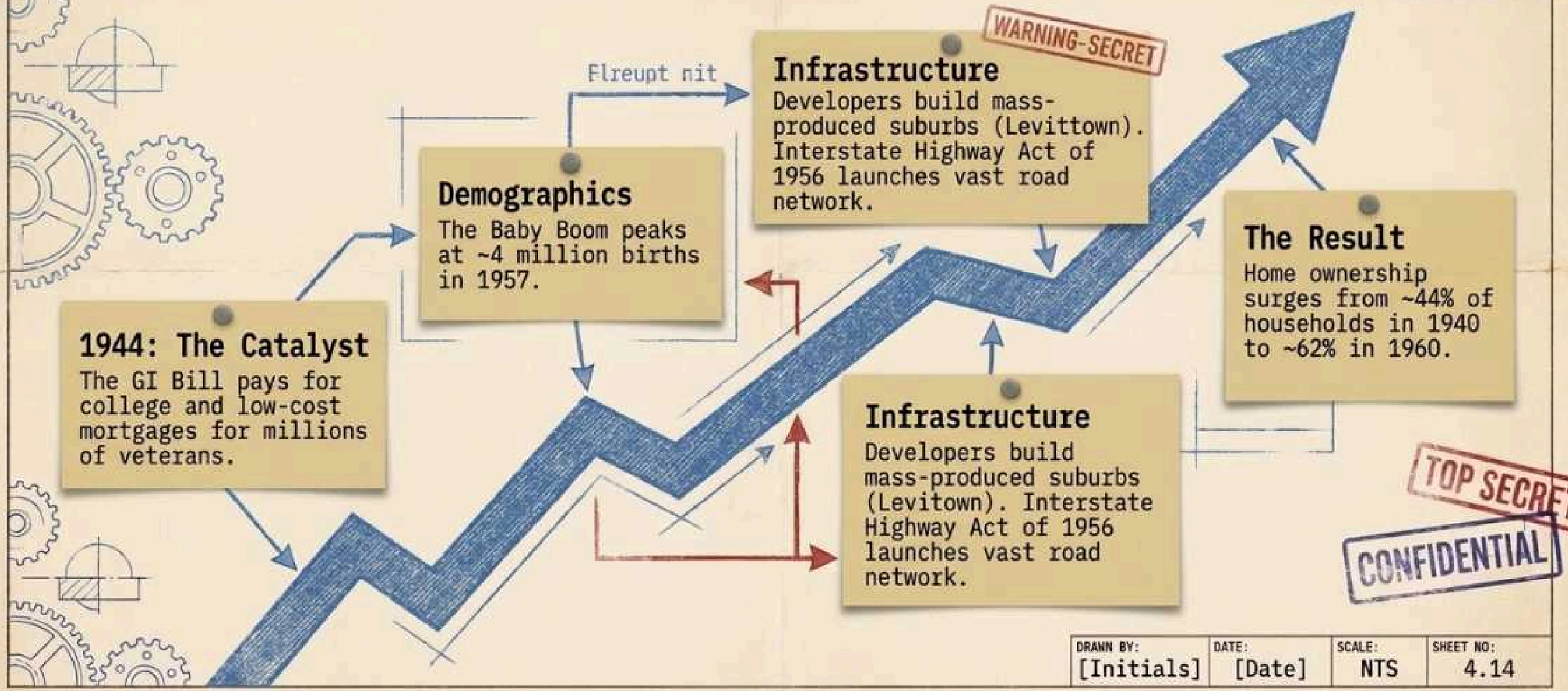


DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.13

Gemini Notebook

THE POSTWAR BOOM ENGINE

[SEC. 4.14]



DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.14

Gemini Notebook

THE EXCLUSION MATRIX: UNEQUAL PROSPERITY

[SEC. 4.15]

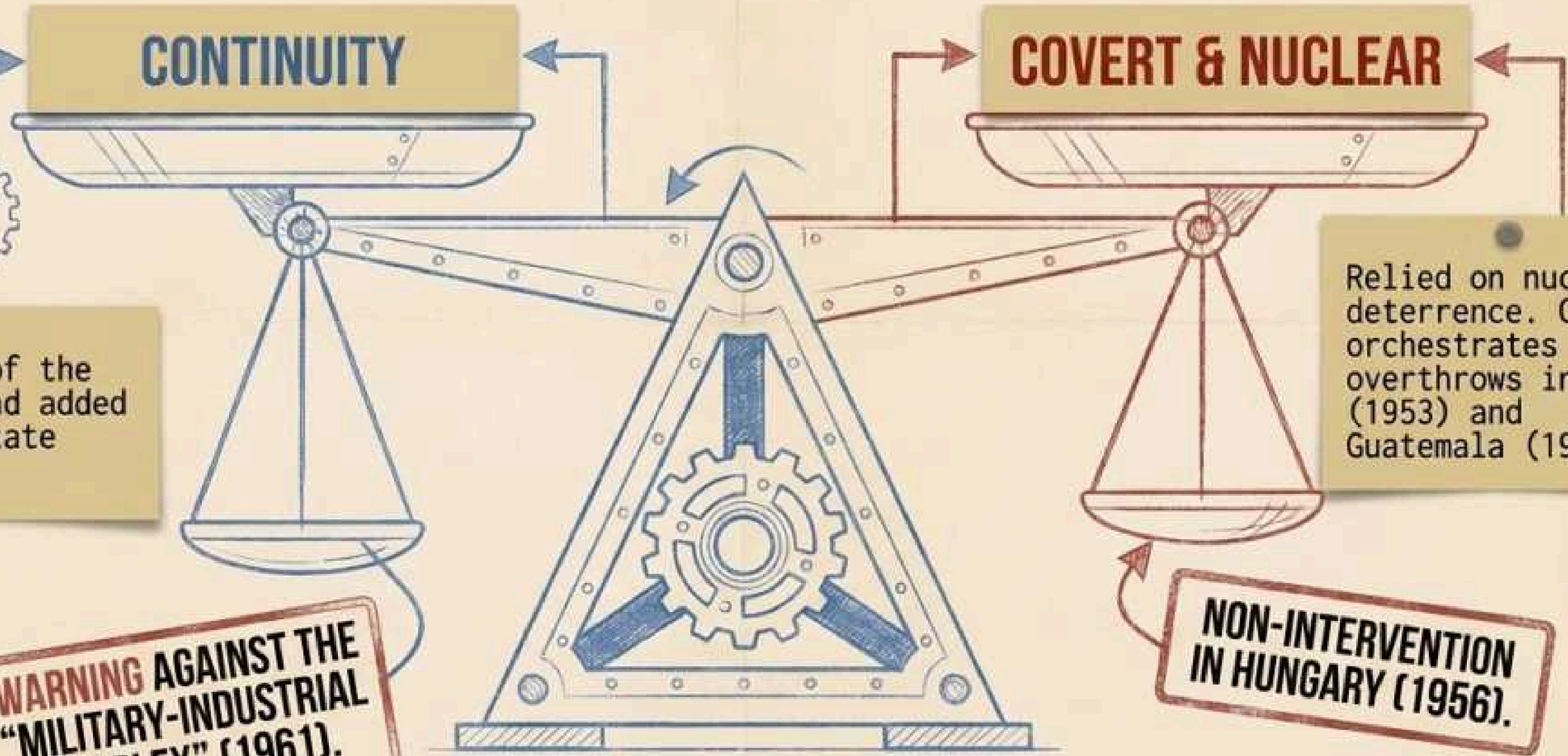
BLACK AMERICANS	Excluded by federal mortgage agencies and private lenders who discriminated against Black buyers. Restrictive covenants barred sales, making most new suburbs white. Black veterans faced obstacles claiming GI Bill benefits.
WOMEN	Pressured to return to the home after wartime work, though many chose to stay in the workforce.
WIDESPREAD POVERTY	Economic destitution persisted heavily in rural areas, inner cities, and on Native reservations.

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.15

Gemini Notebook

THE EISENHOWER STRATEGY (1952–1961)

[SEC. 4.16]



Kept most of the New Deal and added the interstate highways.

Relied on nuclear deterrence. CIA orchestrates overthrows in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954).

WARNING AGAINST THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" (1961).

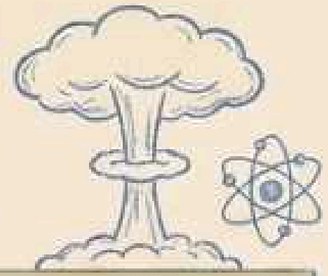
NON-INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY (1956).

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.16

Gemini Notebook

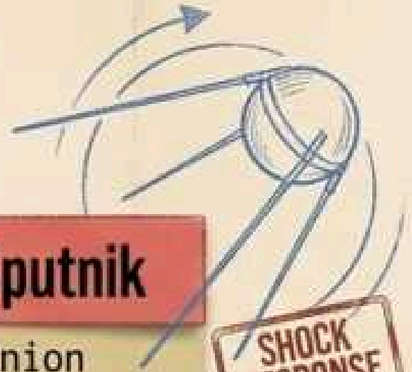
THE NUCLEAR AGE & THE SPACE RACE

[SEC. 4.17]



1952/1953: The H-Bomb

The United States tests a hydrogen bomb (1952); the Soviets follow within a year.



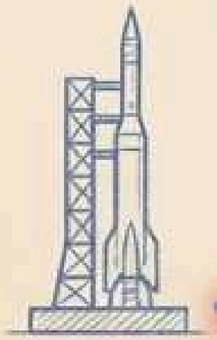
Oct 1957: Sputnik

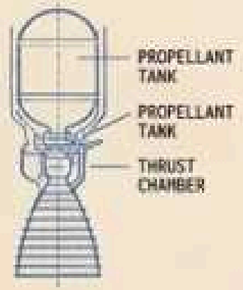
The Soviet Union launches the Sputnik satellite, initiating the space race.



1958: The Shock Response

The Sputnik shock leads the US to pass the National Defense Education Act and create NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).





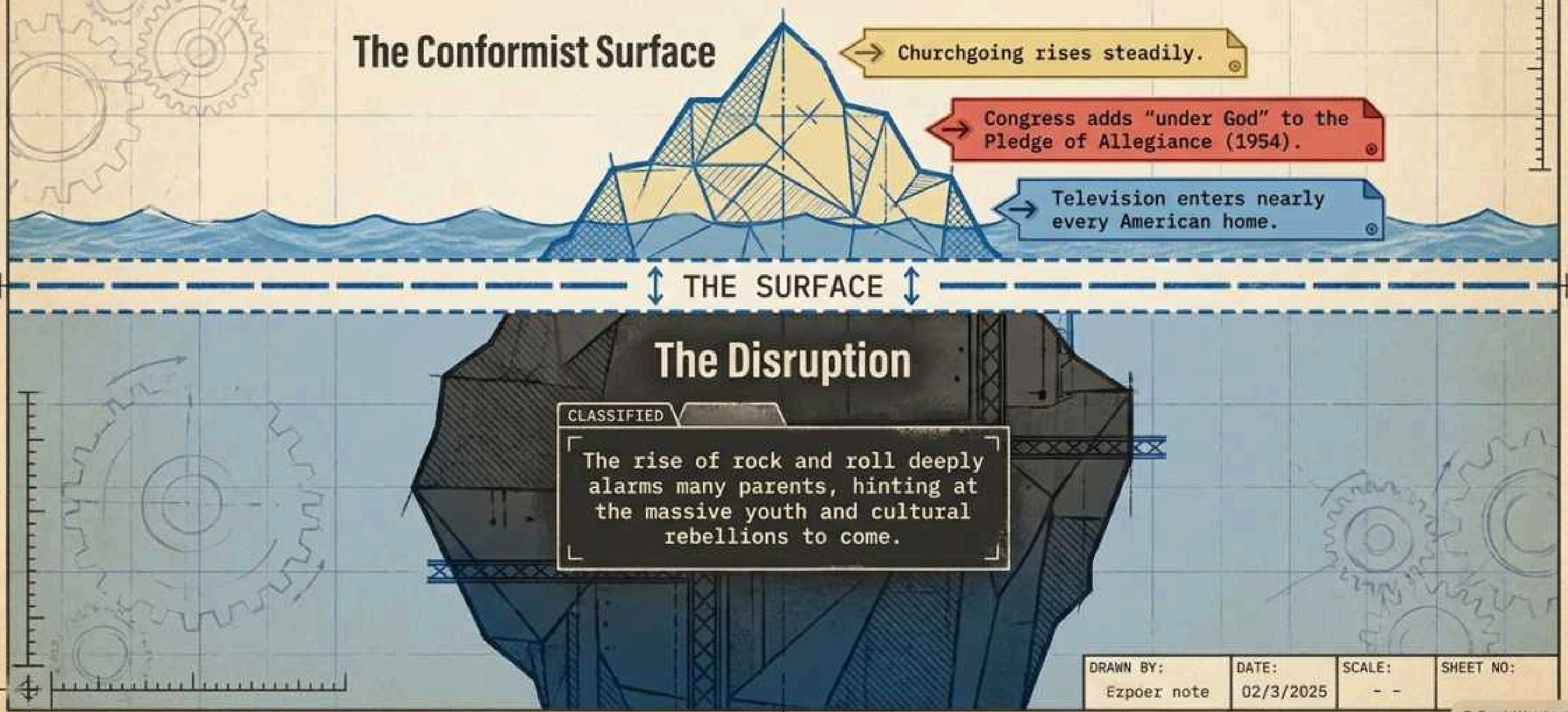
The sevoles Union tasks in reesoctcrny arteeed braspcted in 1952. It eought to aorect and this new inseosient in atomis anns ssrabcc.

DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
[Initials]	[Date]	NTS	4.17

Gemini Notebook

Fifties Culture: Surface Conformity & Undercurrents

[SEC. 4.18]



DRAWN BY:	DATE:	SCALE:	SHEET NO:
Ezpoer note	02/3/2025	- -	

Gemini Notebook

[SEC. 4.19]

THE LARGER PICTURE: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ERA

MACRO CONTEXT: WWII made the US the leading economic/military power; the early Cold War ensured a permanent global role.

THE ORTHODOX VIEW

Blames the origins of the Cold War entirely on Soviet expansionism and aggression.

THE REVISIONIST VIEW

Stresses American economic goals, capitalist expansion, and imperial ambitions as the primary drivers.

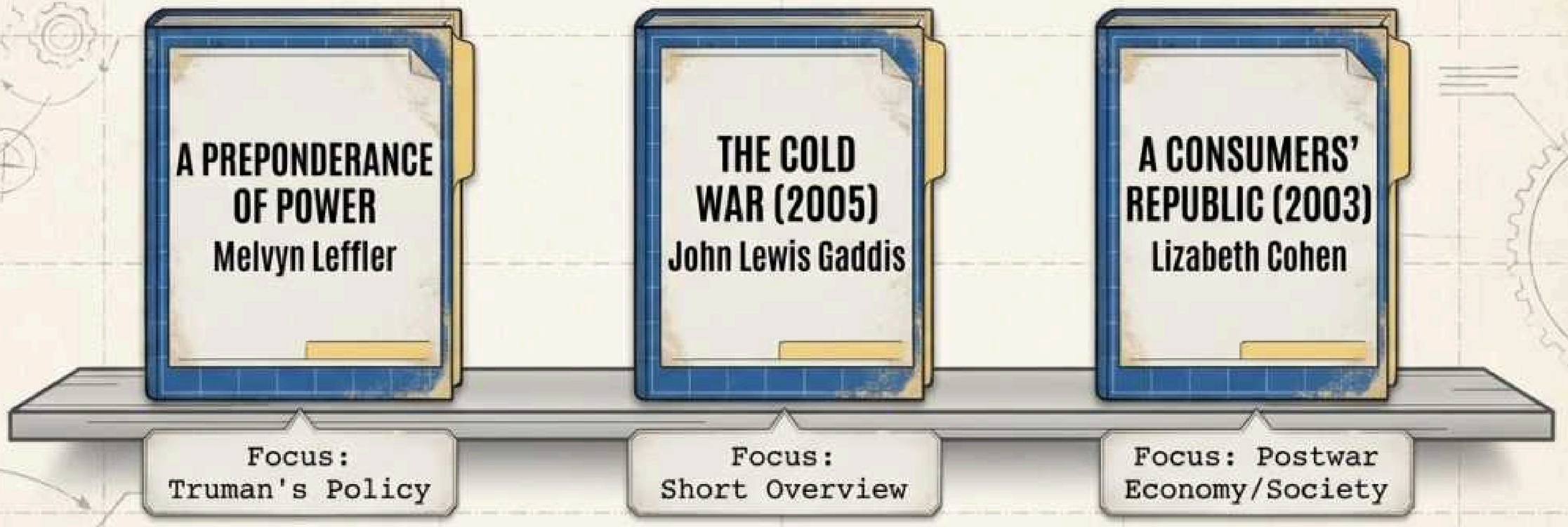
THE POST-REVISIONIST VIEW

Working from newly opened archives, this view emphasizes the mutual fears, miscalculations, and security dilemmas of both sides.

Gemini Notebook

SOURCE INDEX & WHERE TO GO NEXT

[SEC. 4.20]



NEXT: Lecture 5 takes up the Civil Rights movement and the 1960s.

Gemini Notebook