

# 8

## PART

### **CHAPTER 24**

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# The Modern State and the Age of Liberalism

## 1945–1980

Between 1945 and 1980, the United States became the world's leading economic and military power. The dates we've chosen to bookend the period reflect two turning points. In 1945, the United States and its allies emerged victorious from World War II. In 1980, American voters turned away from the robust liberalism of the postwar years and elected a president, Ronald Reagan, backed by a conservative political movement. Each turning point, one international and the other domestic, marked the rise of new developments in American history — and thus our periodization endeavors to capture in these decades a narrative of global power and expanding political liberalism.

Internationally, after 1945 a prolonged period of tension and conflict known as the Cold War drew the United States into an engagement in world affairs unprecedented in the nation's history. Domestically, three decades of sustained economic growth, whose benefits were widely, though imperfectly, distributed, expanded the middle class and brought into being a mass consumer society. These international and domestic developments were intertwined with the predominance of liberalism in American politics and public policy. One might think of an "age of liberalism" in this era, encompassing the social-welfare liberalism that was a legacy of the New Deal and the rights liberalism of the 1960s.

Global leadership abroad and economic prosperity at home were conditioned on further expansions in government power. How that power was used proved controversial. Following World War II, a national security state emerged to investigate so-called subversives in the United States and to destabilize foreign governments abroad. Meanwhile, American troops went to war in Korea and Vietnam. At home, African Americans, women, the poor, and other social groups called for greater equality and sought new government initiatives to make that equality a reality. Here, in brief, are the three key dimensions of this convulsive, turbulent era. ▶

## Global Leadership and the Cold War

When the United States officially joined the combatants of World War II, it entered into an alliance with England and the Soviet Union. That alliance proved impossible to sustain after 1945, as the U.S. and the Soviet Union became competitors to shape postwar Europe, East Asia, and the developing world. The resulting Cold War lasted four decades, during which the U.S. extended its political and military reach onto every continent. Under Harry S. Truman, American officials developed the policy of containment — a combination of economic, diplomatic, and military actions to limit the expansion of communism — that subsequent presidents embraced and expanded.

Intervention abroad was a hallmark of the Cold War. Most American interventions took place in developing countries and in recently independent, decolonized nations. In the name of preventing the spread of communism, the U.S. intervened directly or indirectly in China, Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, Indonesia, and the Dominican Republic, among many other nations, and fought major wars in Korea and Vietnam. This new global role for the U.S. inspired support but also spurred detractors.



National Archives.

## The Age of Liberalism

In response to the Great Depression, the New Deal expanded federal responsibility for the social welfare of ordinary citizens. Legislators from both parties embraced liberal ideas about the role of government and undertook such measures as the GI Bill, subsidies for home ownership, and investment in infrastructure and education. Poverty, however, affected one-third of Americans in the 1960s, and discrimination denied millions of nonwhites full citizenship. Lack of opportunity became a driving force in the civil rights movement and in the Great Society under Lyndon Johnson.

Inspired by African American civil rights, other social movements sought equality based on gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. If “New Deal liberalism” had focused on social welfare, this “rights liberalism” focused on protecting people from discrimination and ensuring equal citizenship. These struggles resulted in new laws, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Conservative opponents, however, mobilized in the 1960s against what they saw as the excesses of liberal activism. The resulting conflict began to reshape politics in the 1970s and laid the groundwork for a new conservative movement.



AP Photo/Jack Harris.

## Mass Consumption and the Middle Class

The postwar American economy was driven by mass consumption and suburbanization. Rising wages and increased access to higher education raised living standards and allowed more Americans to afford consumer goods. Suburbs and the Sunbelt led the nation in population growth. But the new prosperity had mixed results. Cities declined and new racial and ethnic ghettos formed. Mass consumption raised concerns that the nation’s rivers, streams, air, and open land were being damaged, and an environmental movement arose in response. And prosperity itself proved short-lived. By the 1970s, deindustrialization had eroded much of the nation’s once prosperous industrial base.

A defining characteristic of the postwar decades was the growth of the American middle class predicated on numerous demographic changes. Women worked more outside the home and spurred a new feminism. Children enjoyed more purchasing power, and a “teen culture” arose on television, in popular music, and in film. The family became politicized, too, and by the late 1970s, liberals and conservatives were divided over how best to address the nation’s family life.



Justin Locke/National Geographic/Getty Images.

# The Modern State and the Age of Liberalism

1945–1980



AP Photo.

This timeline arranges some of the important events of this period into seven themes.

Consider the entries under “America in the World” and “Politics and Power” across all four decades. What connections were there between international developments and domestic politics in this era of the Cold War? Looking at the entries under “American and National Identity” and “Culture and Society,” consider how the civil rights movement shaped these decades.

	AMERICAN AND NATIONAL IDENTITY	POLITICS AND POWER	WORK, EXCHANGE, AND TECHNOLOGY
<b>1940</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “To Secure These Rights” (1947)</li> <li>• Desegregation of armed services (1948)</li> <li>• <i>Shelley v. Kraemer</i> (1948)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GI Bill (1944)</li> <li>• Loyalty-Security Program (1947)</li> <li>• Taft-Hartley Act (1947)</li> <li>• Truman reelected (1948)</li> <li>• Truman’s Fair Deal (1949)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bretton Woods system established: World Bank, International Monetary Fund (1944)</li> <li>• Baby boom establishes new consumer generation</li> </ul>
<b>1950</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954)</li> <li>• Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955)</li> <li>• Little Rock Central High School desegregation battle (1957)</li> <li>• Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded (1957)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold War liberalism</li> <li>• McCarthyism and Red Scare</li> <li>• Eisenhower’s presidency (1953–1961)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor-Management Accord struck in major industries (1950s)</li> <li>• Military-industrial complex begins to rise</li> <li>• National Defense Education Act (1958) spurs development of technology</li> </ul>
<b>1960</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greensboro sit-ins (1960)</li> <li>• <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> (1963)</li> <li>• Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts (1964–1965)</li> <li>• National Organization for Women founded (1966)</li> <li>• Alcatraz occupation (1969)</li> <li>• Black Power (1966)</li> <li>• Student and antiwar activism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier</li> <li>• John F. Kennedy assassinated (1963)</li> <li>• Lyndon B. Johnson’s landslide victory (1964)</li> <li>• War on Poverty; Great Society</li> <li>• Riots at Democratic National Convention (1968)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic boom</li> <li>• Government spending on Vietnam and Great Society</li> <li>• Medicare and Medicaid created (1965)</li> </ul>
<b>1970</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal Rights Amendment (1972)</li> <li>• <i>Roe v. Wade</i> (1973)</li> <li>• Siege at Wounded Knee (1973)</li> <li>• <i>Bakke v. University of California</i> (1978)</li> <li>• Harvey Milk assassinated (1978)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard Nixon’s landslide victory (1972)</li> <li>• Watergate scandal; Nixon resigns (1974)</li> <li>• Jimmy Carter elected president (1976)</li> <li>• Moral Majority founded (1979)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy crisis (1973)</li> <li>• Inflation surges, while economy stagnates (stagflation)</li> <li>• Deindustrialization</li> <li>• Tax revolt in California (1978)</li> </ul>

CULTURE AND SOCIETY	MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT	GEOGRAPHY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	AMERICA IN THE WORLD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World War II migrations produce vibrant, diverse cities</li> <li>• Bebop jazz</li> <li>• Red Scare and anticommunism suppress dissent (1947–1950s)</li> <li>• Advent of television changes entertainment (1940s–1950s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War production and expansion of military reshape the Sunbelt</li> <li>• Wartime southern migration (black and white) to northern and western cities</li> <li>• First Levittown opens (1947)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued South-North migration of African Americans</li> <li>• First Levittown opens (1947)</li> <li>• FHA and VA subsidize suburbanization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truman Doctrine</li> <li>• Israel created (1947)</li> <li>• Marshall Plan (1948)</li> <li>• Containment strategy emerges</li> <li>• NATO created; West Germany created (1949)</li> </ul>	<b>1940</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergence of rock 'n' roll and youth culture</li> <li>• Disneyland opens (1955)</li> <li>• McDonald's restaurants lead emergence of fast food</li> <li>• Beat culture flourishes in New York and San Francisco</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracero program revived (1951)</li> <li>• Surging middle-class migration to suburbs</li> <li>• Patterns of racial segregation in cities and suburbs reinforced</li> <li>• Migration to Sunbelt (1950s–1970s)</li> <li>• McCarran-Walter Act (1952)</li> <li>• Puerto Rican "great migration" to New York</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disneyland opens (1955)</li> <li>• National Interstate and Defense Highways Act (1956)</li> <li>• Growth of suburbia and Sunbelt</li> <li>• Atomic bomb testing in Nevada and Pacific Ocean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent mobilization as a result of NSC-68</li> <li>• Korean War (1950–1953)</li> <li>• Geneva Accords regarding Vietnam (1954)</li> </ul>	<b>1950</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil rights movement merges protest and gospel music</li> <li>• Major antiwar protests (1965–1969)</li> <li>• Counterculture</li> <li>• Black Arts movement</li> <li>• Stonewall Inn riot (1969)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965</li> <li>• Reflecting the new law, immigration from Asia, Latin America, and Africa increases (1960s–1990s)</li> <li>• Rustbelt begins to lose population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Society environmental initiatives</li> <li>• Urban riots (1964–1968)</li> <li>• Kerner Commission Report (1968)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuban missile crisis (1962)</li> <li>• Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)</li> <li>• Johnson sends ground troops to Vietnam; war escalates (1965)</li> <li>• Tet offensive (1968); peace talks begin</li> </ul>	<b>1960</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's and gay rights movements flourish</li> <li>• Cultural and political conflict over the nuclear family</li> <li>• Evangelical Christian resurgence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After 1975, Vietnamese refugees fleeing communist regime arrive in U.S.</li> <li>• Rustbelt population decline and Sunbelt population growth produce regional realignment in congressional power (1970s–1990s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Earth Day (1970)</li> <li>• Environmental Protection Agency established (1970)</li> <li>• Endangered Species Act (1973)</li> <li>• Three Mile Island accident (1979)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nixon invades Cambodia (1970)</li> <li>• Paris Accords end Vietnam War (1973)</li> <li>• Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel (1978)</li> <li>• Iranian Revolution (1979) and hostage crisis (1979–1981)</li> </ul>	<b>1970</b>

# 24

## C H A P T E R

# Cold War America

1945–1963

### Containment in a Divided Global Order

Origins of the Cold War  
The Containment Strategy  
Containment in Asia

### Cold War Liberalism

Truman and the End of Reform  
Red Scare: The Hunt for Communists  
The Politics of Cold War Liberalism

### Containment in the Postcolonial World

The Cold War and Colonial Independence  
John F. Kennedy and the Cold War  
Making a Commitment in Vietnam

### AP<sup>®</sup> LEARNING FOCUS

**In the first two decades of the Cold War, how did competition on the international stage and a climate of fear at home affect politics, society, and culture in the United States?**

In the autumn of 1950, a little-known California congressman running for the Senate named Richard M. Nixon stood before reporters in Los Angeles. His opponent, Helen Gahagan Douglas, was a Hollywood actress and a New Deal Democrat. Nixon told the gathered reporters that Douglas had cast

“Communist-leaning” votes and that she was “pink right down to her underwear.” Gahagan’s voting record was not much different from Nixon’s. But tarring her with communism made her seem un-American, and Nixon defeated the “pink lady” (meaning nearly *red*, or communist) with nearly 60 percent of the vote.

A few months earlier, U.S. tanks and planes had arrived in French Indochina. A French colony since the nineteenth century, Indochina (present-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) was home to an independence movement led by Ho Chi Minh and supported by the Soviet Union and China. In the summer of 1950, President Harry S. Truman authorized \$15 million worth of military supplies to aid France, which was fighting Ho’s army to keep possession of its Indochinese empire. “Neither national independence nor democratic evolution exists in any area dominated by Soviet imperialism,” Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned ominously as he announced U.S. support for French imperialism.

Connecting these coincidental historical moments, one domestic and the other international, was a decades-old force in American life that gained renewed strength after World War II: anticommunism. The events in Los Angeles and Vietnam, however different on the surface, were part of the Cold War: the global geopolitical struggle between the capitalist, democratic United States and the communist, authoritarian Soviet Union. Beginning in Europe as World War II ended and extending to Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa by the mid-1950s, the Cold War reshaped international relations and dominated global politics for more than forty years (AP<sup>®</sup> Interpreting the Past).

In the United States, the Cold War fostered suspicion of “subversives” in government, education, and the media. The arms race that developed between the two superpowers prompted Congress to boost military expenditures. The resulting military-industrial complex enhanced the power of the corporations that built planes, munitions, and electronic devices. In politics, the Cold War stifled liberal initiatives as the New Deal coalition tried to advance its domestic agenda in the shadow of anti-communism. In these ways, the line between the international and the domestic blurred—and that blurred line was another enduring legacy of the Cold War.



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**The Perils of the Cold War** Americans, like much of the world, lived under the threat of nuclear warfare during the tense years of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. This 1951 civil defense poster, with the message "It can happen Here," suggests that Americans should be prepared for such a dire outcome. swin ink 2/Corbis via Getty Images.

DET

## CHAPTER CHRONOLOGY

As you read, ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and identify the links among related events.

<b>1945</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ End of World War II; Yalta and Potsdam conferences</li><li>▶ Senate approves U.S. participation in United Nations</li></ul>	<b>1950–1953</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Korean War</li></ul>
<b>1946</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ George F. Kennan outlines containment policy</li><li>▶ U.S. sides with French in war between French and Vietminh over control of Vietnam</li></ul>	<b>1950</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ NSC-68 leads to nuclear buildup</li><li>▶ Joseph McCarthy announces “list” of Communists in government</li></ul>
<b>1947</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Truman Doctrine</li><li>▶ House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigates film industry</li></ul>	<b>1952</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Dwight D. Eisenhower elected president</li></ul>
<b>1948</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Communist coup in Czechoslovakia</li><li>▶ Marshall Plan aids economic recovery in Europe</li><li>▶ State of Israel created</li><li>▶ Stalin blockades West Berlin; Berlin Airlift begins</li></ul>	<b>1954</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Army-McCarthy hearings on army subversion</li><li>▶ Geneva Accords partition Vietnam</li></ul>
<b>1949</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) founded</li><li>▶ Soviet Union detonates atomic bomb</li><li>▶ Mao Zedong establishes People’s Republic of China</li></ul>	<b>1956</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Nikita Khrushchev emerges as Stalin’s successor</li><li>▶ Suez Canal crisis</li></ul>
		<b>1960</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ John F. Kennedy elected president</li></ul>
		<b>1961</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Kennedy orders the first contingent of Special Forces (“Green Berets”) to Vietnam</li></ul>
		<b>1963</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Ngo Dinh Diem assassinated in South Vietnam</li></ul>

## Containment in a Divided Global Order

The Cold War began on the heels of World War II and ended in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While it lasted, this conflict placed two far-reaching questions at the center of global history: Would capitalism or communism shape the nations of Europe and Asia? And how would the European colonies in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa gain their independence and take their places on the world stage? Cold War rivalry framed the possible answers to both questions as it drew the United States into a prolonged engagement with world affairs unprecedented in the nation’s history.

### Origins of the Cold War

World War II set the basic conditions for the Cold War. With Germany and Japan defeated and Britain and France weakened by years of war, only two geopolitical powers remained standing in 1945. Even had nothing divided them, the United States and the Soviet Union would have jostled each other as they moved to fill the postwar power vacuum. But, of course, the two countries were divided — by geography, history, ideology, and strategic interest. Little united them other than their commitment to defeating the Axis powers. President Franklin Roosevelt understood that maintaining the U.S.-Soviet alliance was essential for postwar global stability. But he also believed that permanent peace and long-term U.S. interests depended on the Wilsonian principles of collective security, self-determination, and free trade (Chapter 20).

**Yalta** At the **Yalta Conference** of February 1945, Wilsonian principles yielded to U.S.-Soviet power realities. As Allied forces neared victory in Europe and advanced toward Japan in the Pacific, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met in Yalta, a resort on the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. Roosevelt focused on maintaining Allied unity and securing Joseph Stalin’s commitment to enter the war against Japan. But the fate of Eastern Europe divided the Big Three. Stalin insisted that Russian national security required pro-Soviet governments in Eastern European nations. Roosevelt pressed for an agreement, the “Declaration on Liberated Europe,” that guaranteed self-determination and democratic elections in Poland and neighboring countries, such as Romania and Hungary. However, given the presence of Soviet troops in those nations, FDR had to accept a lesser pledge from Stalin: to hold “free and unfettered elections” at a future time. The three leaders

Turn to the **Glossary of Academic & Historical Terms** in the back of the book for definitions of bolded terms.

#### AP® EXAM TIP

Evaluating the role of the Yalta Conference in undermining wartime cooperation among the Allied powers is essential for the AP® exam.

## Why Was There a Cold War?

During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union forged a “Grand Alliance” with Great Britain to defeat Hitler’s Nazi Germany. In the wake of victory, however, this marriage of necessity quickly dissolved, leaving the Americans and Soviets to face each other in a Cold War that lasted until the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1991. For decades, these superpowers viewed each other’s intentions with suspicion and, while avoiding direct and open conflict, waged proxy wars around the globe to advance the security interests they believed the other threatened. But what caused the Cold War, and why was there such hostility between the two nations?

Historians continue to debate these questions. Stephen Ambrose’s account of postwar America’s rise to global dominance offers a traditional explanation of the Cold War. His argument differs from that of Odd Westad, who shifts the geographical focus of the Cold War rivalry from Europe to the Global South.

### STEPHEN AMBROSE

SOURCE: Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 102–103.

Whatever date is chosen to mark the declaration of [the Cold War], it is certain that the issue that sparked it, gave it life and shaped its early course, was East Europe. For centuries East and West have struggled . . . for control of the huge area running from the Baltic to the Balkans, an area rich in human and industrial resources and one that is strategically vital to both sides. . . . Neither the West nor the East has been willing to allow East Europe to be strong, independent, or neutral. Russia and the West each have wanted the area to be aligned with them and open for their own economic exploitation. . . . [During World War II], the West made no significant contribution to the liberation of East Europe and when the end came the Red Army was in sole possession of the area. . . . This crucial result of World War II destroyed the Grand Alliance and gave birth to the Cold War.

### ODD WESTAD

SOURCE: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3–5.

[T]he argument that the Cold War conceptually and analytically does not belong in the south [i.e., Africa, South Asia, and Latin America] is wrong. . . . US and Soviet interventionisms . . . shaped both the international and the domestic framework within which political, social, and cultural changes in Third World countries took place. . . . The United States and the Soviet Union were driven to intervene in the Third World by the ideologies inherent in their politics. . . . Washington and Moscow needed to change the world in order to prove the universal applicability of their ideologies, and the elites of the newly independent [Third World] states proved fertile ground for their competition. . . . [B]oth powers saw themselves as assisting natural trends in world history and as defending their own security at the same time. Both saw a specific mission in and for the Third World that only their own state could carry out and which without their involvement would flounder in local hands.

### AP<sup>®</sup> SHORT ANSWER PRACTICE

1. Identify the major difference in these two scholars’ understanding of the Cold War’s geographical focus.
2. To what extent do these scholars agree on the factors driving the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union?
3. Which interpretation of the origins of the Cold War does the narrative in Chapter 24 seem to support?

also formalized their commitment to divide Germany into four zones, each controlled by one of the four Allied powers (including France), and to similarly partition the capital city, Berlin, which was located in the Soviet zone.

At Yalta, the Big Three also agreed to establish an international body to replace the discredited League of Nations. Based on plans drawn up at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference in Washington, D.C., the new organization, to be known as the **United Nations**, would have both a General Assembly, in which all nations would be represented, and a Security Council composed of the five major Allied powers—the United States, Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union—and seven other nations elected on a rotating basis. The Big Three determined that the five permanent members of the





**East Meets West** Soviet soldiers celebrate with U.S. soldiers from the First Army near the Elbe River in Torgau, Germany, on April 25, 1945. Soviet and American forces had converged on Hitler's Germany from opposite directions, finally meeting in Torgau. The meeting symbolized the Grand Alliance, in which U.S.-Soviet cooperation was essential, that secured victory over the Axis Powers in World War II. However, as these ordinary infantrymen optimistically toast one another and look forward to the end of fighting, Germany was already being divided in two: between a western sector held by the Allies and an eastern sector held by the Soviet Union. Within a few years, the division of Germany between "East" and "West" would stand at the center of a split in the entire European continent at the dawn of the Cold War. AFP/Getty Images.

Security Council should have veto power over decisions of the General Assembly. They announced that the United Nations would convene for the first time in San Francisco on April 25, 1945.

**Potsdam** Following the Yalta Conference, developments over the ensuing year further hardened relations between the Soviets on one side and the Americans and British on the other. At the **Potsdam Conference** outside Berlin in July 1945, Harry Truman replaced the deceased Roosevelt. Inexperienced in world affairs and thrown into enormously complicated negotiations, Truman's instinct was to stand up to Stalin. "Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language," he said, "another war is in the making." But Truman was in no position to shape events in Eastern Europe, where Soviet-imposed governments in Poland, Hungary, and Romania were backed by the Red Army and could not be eliminated by Truman's bluster. In Poland and Romania, in particular, Stalin was determined to establish communist governments, punish wartime Nazi collaborators, and win boundary concessions that augmented Soviet territory.

Yalta and Potsdam thus set the stage for communist rule to descend over Eastern Europe. The elections called for at Yalta eventually took place in Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, with varying degrees of democratic openness. Nevertheless, Stalin got the client regimes he desired in those countries and would soon exert

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near-complete control over their governments. Stalin's unwillingness to honor self-determination for nations in Eastern Europe was, from the American point of view, the precipitating event of the Cold War.

Germany represented the biggest challenge of all. American officials at Potsdam believed that a revived German economy was essential to ensuring the prosperity of democratic regimes throughout Western Europe—and to keeping ordinary Germans from turning again to Nazism. In contrast, Stalin hoped merely to extract reparations from Germany in the form of industrial machines and goods. In exchange for American recognition of a new German-Polish border, Truman and Secretary of State James Byrnes convinced the Soviet leader to accept German reparations only from the Soviet zone, which was largely rural and promised little wealth or German industry to plunder. The Yalta and Potsdam agreements paved the way for the division of Germany into East and West (Map 24.1).

Yalta and Potsdam demonstrated that in private negotiations the United States and the Soviet Union had starkly different objectives. Public utterances only intensified those differences. In February 1946, Stalin delivered a speech in which he insisted that, according to Marxist-Leninist principles, “the unevenness of development of the capitalist countries” was likely to produce “violent disturbance” and even another war. He seemed to blame any future war on the capitalist West. Churchill responded in kind a month later. While visiting Truman in Missouri to be honored for his wartime



**MAP 24.1** Cold War in Europe, 1955

This map vividly shows the Cold War division of Europe. The NATO countries (colored green) are allies of the United States; the Warsaw Pact countries (in purple) are allied to the USSR. In 1955, West Germany had just been admitted to NATO, completing Europe's stabilization into two rival camps. But Berlin remained divided, and one can see from its location deep in East Germany why the former capital was always a flash point in Cold War controversies.

**AP** PRACTICES & SKILLS**POINT OF VIEW**

How did American and Soviet viewpoints differ over the postwar fate of Europe?

**AP** EXAM TIP

Being able to explain the policy of containment is critical to success on the AP® exam.



To see an excerpt from the Long Telegram, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

leadership, Churchill accused Stalin of raising an “iron curtain” around Eastern Europe and allowing “police government” to rule its people. He went further, claiming that “a fraternal association of English-speaking peoples,” and not Russians, ought to set the terms of the postwar world.

The cities and fields of Europe had thus barely ceased to run with the blood of World War II before they were menaced again by the tense standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States. With Stalin intent on establishing client states in Eastern Europe and the United States equally intent on reviving Germany and ensuring collective security throughout Europe, the points of agreement were few and far between. Among the Allies, anxiety about a Nazi victory in World War II had been quickly replaced by fear of a potentially more cataclysmic war with the Soviet Union.

## The Containment Strategy

In the late 1940s, American officials developed a clear strategy toward the Soviet Union that would become known as **containment**. Convinced that the USSR was methodically expanding its reach, the United States would counter by limiting Soviet influence to Eastern Europe while reconstituting democratic governments in Western Europe. In 1946–1947, three specific issues worried Truman and his advisors. First, the Soviet Union was pressing Iran for access to oil and Turkey for access to the Mediterranean. Second, a civil war was roiling in Greece, between monarchists backed by England and insurgents supported by the Greek and Yugoslavian Communist parties. Third, as European nations suffered through terrible **privation** in 1946 and 1947, Communist parties gained strength, particularly in France and Italy. All three developments, as seen from the United States, threatened to expand the influence of the Soviet Union beyond Eastern Europe.

**Toward an Uneasy Peace** In this anxious context, the strategy of containment emerged in a series of incremental steps between 1946 and 1949. In February 1946, American diplomat George F. Kennan first proposed the idea in an 8,000-word cable—a confidential message within the U.S. State Department—from his post at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Kennan argued that the Soviet Union was an “Oriental despotism” and that communism was merely the “fig leaf” justifying Soviet aggression. A year after writing this cable (dubbed the Long Telegram), he published an influential *Foreign Affairs* article, arguing that the West’s only recourse was to meet the Soviets “with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.” Kennan called for “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” *Containment*, the key word, came to define America’s evolving strategic stance toward the Soviet Union.

Kennan contended that the Soviet system was unstable and would eventually collapse. Containment would work, he reasoned, as long as the United States and its allies opposed Soviet expansion anywhere in the world. Kennan’s attentive readers included Stalin himself, who quickly obtained a copy of the classified Long Telegram. The Soviet leader saw the United States as an imperialist aggressor determined to replace Great Britain as the world’s dominant capitalist power. Just as Kennan thought that the Soviet system was despotic and unsustainable, Stalin believed that the West suffered from its own fatal weaknesses. Neither side completely understood or trusted the other, and each projected its worst fears onto the other.

In fact, Britain’s influence in the world was declining. Exhausted by the war, facing budget deficits and a collapsing economy at home, and confronted with growing independence movements throughout its empire, particularly in India led by Mohandas Gandhi, Britain was waning as a global power. “The reins of world leadership are fast slipping from Britain’s competent but now very weak hands,” read a U.S. State Department report. “These reins will be picked up either by the United States or by Russia.” The United States was wedded to the notion—dating to the Wilson administration—that

communism and capitalism were incompatible on the world stage. With Britain faltering, American officials saw little choice but to fill its shoes.

It did not take long for the reality of Britain's decline to resonate across the Atlantic. In February 1947, London informed Washington that it could no longer afford to support the anticommunists in the Greek civil war. Truman worried that a communist victory in Greece would lead to Soviet domination of the eastern Mediterranean and embolden Communist parties in France and Italy. In response, the president announced what became known as the **Truman Doctrine**. In a speech on March 12, he asserted an American responsibility “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” To that end, Truman proposed large-scale assistance for Greece and Turkey (then involved in a dispute with the Soviet Union over the Dardanelles, a strait connecting the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara). “If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world,” Truman declared (AP® Thinking Like a Historian). Congress quickly approved Truman's request for \$300 million in aid to Greece and \$100 million for Turkey.

Soviet expansionism was but one part of a larger story. Europe was sliding into economic chaos. Already devastated by the war, in 1947 the continent suffered the worst winter in memory. People were starving, wages were stagnant, and the consumer market had collapsed. For both humanitarian and practical reasons, Truman's advisors believed something had to be done. A global depression might ensue if the European economy, the largest foreign market for American goods, did not recover. Worse, unemployed and dispirited Western Europeans might fill the ranks of the Communist Party, threatening political stability. Secretary of State George C. Marshall came up with a remarkable proposal: a massive infusion of American capital to rebuild the European economy. In a June 1947 speech, Marshall urged the nations of Europe to work out a comprehensive recovery program based on U.S. aid.

This pledge of financial assistance required approval by Congress, where the plan ran into opposition. Republicans castigated the **Marshall Plan** as a huge “international WPA.” But in the midst of the congressional stalemate, on February 25, 1948, Stalin supported a communist-led coup in Czechoslovakia. Congress rallied and voted overwhelmingly to approve the Marshall Plan. Over the next four years, the United States contributed nearly \$13 billion to a highly successful recovery effort that benefited both Western Europe and the United States. European industrial production increased by 64 percent, and the appeal of Communist parties waned in the West. Markets for American goods grew stronger and fostered economic interdependence between Europe and the United States. Notably, however, the Marshall Plan intensified Cold War tensions. U.S. officials invited the Soviets to participate but insisted on restrictions that virtually guaranteed Stalin's refusal. An embittered Stalin rejected participation and ordered Soviet client states to do so as well.

**East and West in the New Europe** The flash point for a hot war remained Germany, the most important industrial economy and the key strategic nation in Europe. When no agreement could be reached with the Soviet Union to unify the four zones of occupation into a single state, the Western allies consolidated their three zones in 1947. They then prepared to establish an independent federal German republic. Marshall Plan funds would jump-start economic recovery. Some of those funds were slated for West Berlin, in hopes of making the city a capitalist showplace 100 miles inside the Soviet zone.

Stung by the West's intention to create a German republic, in June 1948 Stalin blockaded all traffic to West Berlin. Instead of yielding, as Stalin had expected, Truman and the British were resolute. “We are going to stay, period,” Truman said plainly. Over the next year, American and British pilots improvised the Berlin Airlift, which flew 2.5 million tons of food and fuel into the Western zones of the city—nearly a ton for each resident. General Lucius D. Clay, the American commander in Berlin, was nervous and on edge, “drawn as tight as a steel spring,” according to U.S. officials. But after a prolonged stalemate, Stalin backed down: on May 12, 1949, he lifted the blockade.

**AP EXAM TIP**

Describe how the use of international aid impacted the policy of containment.

**AP PRACTICES & SKILLS****CONTEXTUALIZATION**

Why did the United States enact the Marshall Plan, and how did the program illustrate America's new role in the world?

## The Global Cold War

Until 1950, the U.S. policy of containment was confined to economic measures, such as financial assistance to Greece and Turkey and the Marshall Plan, and focused on Europe. That changed between 1950 and 1954. In those years, containment became militarized, and its scope was expanded to include Asia and Latin America. What had begun as a limited policy to contain Soviet influence in war-torn Europe had by the mid-1950s become a global campaign against communism and social revolution.

- 1. President Harry S. Truman, address before joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947.** *Known as the Truman Doctrine, this speech outlined Truman's plan to give large-scale assistance to Greece and Turkey as part of a broader anticommunist policy.*

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. . . .

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

- 2. Syngman Rhee, president of South Korea, criticizing U.S. policy in 1950.** *The Korean War, 1950–1953, represented the militarization of the Truman Doctrine.*

A few days ago one American friend said that if the U.S. gave weapons to South Korea, she feared that

South Korea would invade North Korea. This is a useless worry of some Americans, who do not know South Korea. Our present war is not a Cold War, but a real shooting war. Our troops will take all possible countermeasures. . . . In South Korea the U.S. has one foot in South Korea and one foot outside so that in case of an unfavorable situation it could pull out of the country. I daresay that if the U.S. wants to aid our country, it should not be only lip-service.

- 3. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's testimony before the Senate Armed Forces and Foreign Relations Committee, 1951.**

The attack on Korea was . . . a challenge to the whole system of collective security, not only in the Far East, but everywhere in the world. It was a threat to all nations newly arrived at independence. . . .

This was a test which would decide whether our collective security system would survive or would crumble. It would determine whether other nations would be intimidated by this show of force. . . .

As a people we condemn aggression of any kind. We reject appeasement of any kind. If we stood with our arms folded while Korea was swallowed up, it would have meant abandoning our principles, and it would have meant the defeat of the collective security system on which our own safety ultimately depends.

- 4. Shigeru Yoshida, prime minister of Japan, speech before the Japanese Diet (parliament), July 14, 1950.**

It is heartening . . . that America and so many members of the United Nations have gone to the rescue of an invaded country regardless of the heavy sacrifices involved. In case a war breaks out on an extensive scale how would Japan's security be preserved [since we are disarmed]? . . . This has been hotly discussed. However, the measures taken by the United Nations have done much to stabilize our people's minds.

5. **John Foster Dulles, secretary of state (1953–1959), June 30, 1954, radio and television address to the American people.**

In 1951, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was elected president of Guatemala. Arbenz Guzmán pursued reform policies that threatened large landholders, including the United Fruit Company. In 1954, the United States CIA engineered a coup that overthrew Arbenz Guzmán and replaced him with Carlos Castillo Armas, a colonel in the Guatemalan military.

Tonight I should like to speak with you about Guatemala. It is the scene of dramatic events. They expose the evil purpose of the Kremlin to destroy the inter-American system, and they test the ability of the American States to maintain the peaceful integrity of the hemisphere.

For several years international communism has been probing here and there for nesting places in the Americas. It finally chose Guatemala as a spot which it could turn into an official base from which to breed subversion which would extend to other American Republics.

This intrusion of Soviet despotism was, of course, a direct challenge to our Monroe Doctrine, the first and most fundamental of our foreign policies.

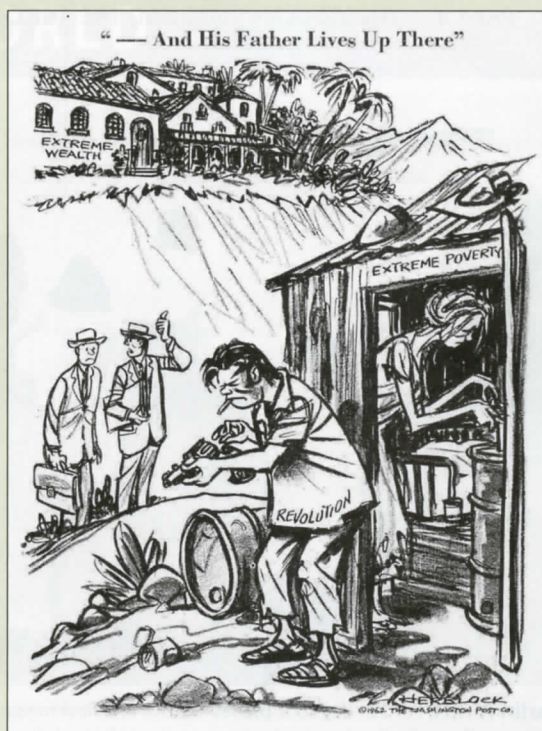
6. **Guillermo Toriello, Guatemalan foreign minister, speech to delegates at the Tenth Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States in Caracas, Venezuela, March 5, 1954.**

What is the real and effective reason for describing our government as communist? From what sources comes the accusation that we threaten continental solidarity and security? Why do they [United States] wish to intervene in Guatemala?

The answers are simple and evident. The plan of national liberation being carried out with firmness by my government has necessarily affected the privileges of the foreign enterprises that are impeding the progress and the economic development of the country. . . . With construction of publically owned ports and docks, we are putting an end to the monopoly of the United Fruit Company. . . .

They wanted to find a ready expedient to maintain the economic dependence of the American Republics and suppress the legitimate desires of their peoples, cataloguing as “communism” every manifestation of nationalism or economic independence, any desire for social progress, any intellectual curiosity, and any interest in progressive and liberal reforms.

7. **Herblock cartoon from the Washington Post, February 11, 1962.** Many Latin American countries were beset by a wide gap between a small wealthy elite and the mass of ordinary, much poorer citizens. American officials worried that this made social revolution an attractive alternative for those at the bottom.



SOURCE: A 1962 Herblock Cartoon, © The Herb Block Foundation.

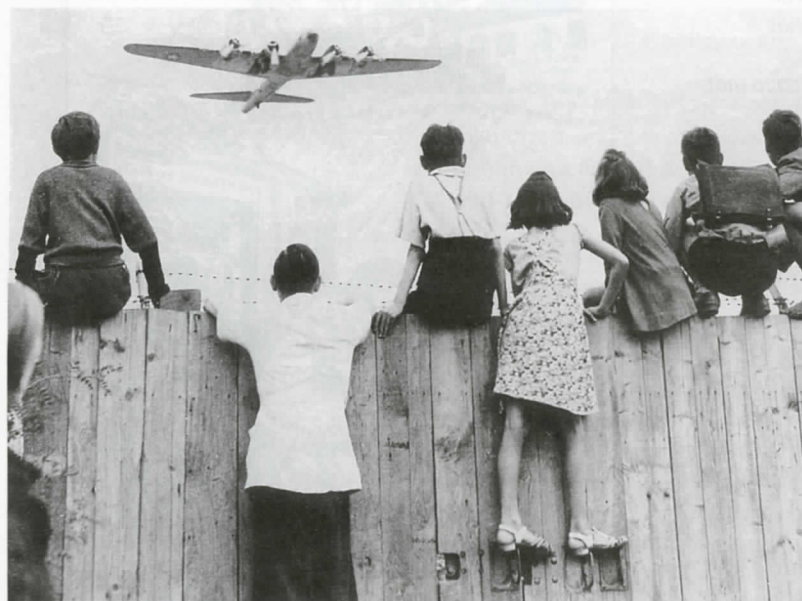
SOURCES: (1) The Avalon Project at [avalon.law.yale.edu](http://avalon.law.yale.edu); (2) Reinhard Drifte, “Japan’s Involvement in the Korean War,” in *The Korean War in History*, ed. James Cotton and Ian Neary (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989), 43; (3) Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 175–176; (4) Drifte, 122; (5) Jonathan L. Fried et al., eds., *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History* (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 78; (6) Stephen C. Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 143–144.

### ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. In source 1, Truman presents the choice facing the world in stark terms: totalitarianism or democracy. Why would he frame matters in this way in 1947? How did Truman anticipate the militarization of American foreign policy?
2. Analyze the audience, purpose, and point of view presented in the documents dealing with the war in Korea (sources 2–4). What does Acheson mean by “collective security”? Why is Yoshida thankful for the UN intervention? What can you infer about U.S. involvement in world affairs during the postwar period based on these documents?
3. In document 6, how does Toriello characterize accusations that the elected Guatemalan government is communist? What are his accusations of the United States?
4. How does source 7 express one of the obstacles to democracy in developing nations?

### AP DBQ PRACTICE

Using these documents, and based on what you have learned in class and in this chapter, write an essay in which you analyze the goals of American foreign policy during the early years of the Cold War.



**The Berlin Airlift** For 321 days U.S. planes like this one flew missions to bring food and other supplies to Berlin after the Soviet Union had blocked all surface routes into the former German capital. The blockade was finally lifted on May 12, 1949, after the Soviets conceded that it had been a failure. AP Photo.

Until the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the Berlin crisis was the closest the two sides came to actual war, and West Berlin became a symbol of resistance to communism.

The crisis in Berlin persuaded Western European nations to forge a collective security pact with the United States. In April 1949, for the first time since the end of the American Revolution, the United States entered into a peacetime military alliance, the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**. Under the NATO pact, twelve nations—Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States—agreed that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.” In May 1949, those nations also agreed to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), which eventually joined NATO in 1955. In response, the Soviet Union established the German Democratic Republic (East Germany); the

Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON); and, in 1955, the **Warsaw Pact**, a military alliance for Eastern Europe that included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. In these parallel steps, the two superpowers formalized the Cold War through a massive division of the continent.

By the early 1950s, West and East were the stark markers of the new Europe. As Churchill had observed in 1946, the line dividing the two stretched “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic,” cutting off tens of millions of Eastern Europeans from the rest of the continent. Stalin’s tactics had often been ruthless, but they were not without reason. The Soviet Union acted out of the sort of self-interest that had long defined powerful nations—ensuring a defensive perimeter of allies, seeking access to raw materials, and pressing the advantage that victory in war allowed.

#### AP EXAM TIP

Summarize the debates over increasing reliance on nuclear weapons and the power of the military-industrial complex.

**NSC-68** Atomic developments, too, played a critical role in the emergence of the Cold War. As the sole nuclear power at the end of World War II, the United States entertained the possibility of international control of nuclear technology but did not wish to lose its advantage over the Soviet Union. When the American Bernard Baruch proposed United Nations oversight of atomic energy in 1946, for instance, the plan assured the United States of near-total control of the technology, which further increased Cold War tensions. America’s brief tenure as sole nuclear power ended in September 1949, however, when the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb. Truman then turned to the U.S. National Security Council (NSC), established by the National Security Act of 1947, for a strategic reassessment.

In April 1950, the NSC delivered its report, known as **NSC-68**. Bristling with alarmist rhetoric, the document marked a decisive turning point in the U.S. approach to the Cold War. The report’s authors described the Soviet Union not as a typical great power but as one with a “fanatic faith” that seeks to “impose its absolute authority.” Going beyond even the stern language used by George Kennan, NSC-68 cast Soviet ambitions as nothing short of “the domination of the Eurasian landmass.”

To prevent that outcome, the report proposed “a bold and massive program of rebuilding the West’s defensive potential to surpass that of the Soviet world” (AP® America in the World). This included the development of a hydrogen bomb, a **thermonuclear** device that would be a thousand times more destructive than the

## Arming for the Cold War

To fight the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union increased overall military spending and assembled massive arsenals of nuclear weapons.

**TABLE 24.1**

**Worldwide Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945–1975**

Country	1945	1955	1965	1975
United States	2	3,057	32,135	27,235
USSR	0	200	6,129	19,443
United Kingdom	0	10	310	350
France	0	0	32	188
China	0	0	5	185
Israel	0	0	0	20*

\*Estimated

SOURCE: Adapted from *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, National Resources Defense Council, and *Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation* (2007).

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Do you see evidence of the effects of NSC-68 in this table? What kinds of changes did NSC-68 bring about?
2. In what ways does the data in this table suggest the emergence of two “superpowers” after World War II?

atomic bombs dropped on Japan, as well as dramatic increases in conventional military forces. Critically, NSC-68 called for Americans to pay higher taxes to support the new military program and to accept whatever sacrifices were necessary to achieve national unity of purpose against the Soviet enemy. Many historians see the report as having “militarized” the American approach to the Cold War, which had to that point relied largely on economic measures such as aid to Greece and the Marshall Plan. Truman was reluctant to commit to a major defense buildup, fearing that it would overburden the national budget. But shortly after NSC-68 was completed, events in Asia led him to reverse course.

### Containment in Asia

As with Germany, American officials believed at the conclusion of World War II that restoring Japan’s economy, while limiting its military influence, would ensure prosperity and contain communism in East Asia. After dismantling Japan’s military, American occupation forces under General Douglas MacArthur drafted a democratic constitution and paved the way for the restoration of Japanese sovereignty in 1951. Considering the scorched-earth war that had just ended, this was a remarkable achievement, thanks partly to the imperious MacArthur but mainly to the Japanese, who embraced peace and accepted U.S. military protection. However, events on the mainland of Asia proved much more difficult for the United States to shape to its advantage.

**Civil War in China** A civil war had been raging in China since the 1930s as Communist forces led by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) fought Nationalist forces under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). Fearing a Communist victory, between 1945 and 1949 the United