# The Cold War, 1945-1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February 4-11</strong></td>
<td>Yalta Conference meeting of FDR, Churchill, Stalin - the 'Big Three' Soviet Union has control of Eastern Europe. The Cold War Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May 8</strong></td>
<td>VE Day - Victory in Europe. Germany surrenders to the Red Army in Berlin</td>
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<td><strong>July</strong></td>
<td>Potsdam Conference - Germany was officially partitioned into four zones of occupation.</td>
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<td><strong>August 6</strong></td>
<td>The United States drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima (20 kiloton bomb 'Little Boy' kills 80,000)</td>
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<td><strong>August 8</strong></td>
<td>Russia declares war on Japan</td>
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<td><strong>August 9</strong></td>
<td>The United States drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki (22 kiloton 'Fat Man' kills 70,000)</td>
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<td><strong>August 14</strong></td>
<td>Japanese surrender - End of World War II</td>
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<td><strong>August 15</strong></td>
<td>Emperor surrender broadcast - VJ Day</td>
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<td><strong>February 9</strong></td>
<td>Stalin hostile speech - communism &amp; capitalism were incompatible</td>
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<td><strong>February 22</strong></td>
<td>Kennan's &quot;Long Telegram&quot; Outlining Containment for dealing with the Soviets.</td>
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<td><strong>March</strong></td>
<td>The Greek Civil War reignites between communists and the conservative Greek government.</td>
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<td><strong>March 2</strong></td>
<td>British soldiers withdraw from their zone of occupation in southern Iran. Soviet soldiers remain in their northern sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 5</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Sinews of Peace&quot; Iron Curtain Speech by Winston Churchill - &quot;an &quot;iron curtain&quot; has descended on Europe&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>March 10</strong></td>
<td>Truman demands Russia leave Iran</td>
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<td><strong>April 5</strong></td>
<td>Soviet forces evacuate Iran after a crisis.</td>
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<td><strong>July 1</strong></td>
<td>Operation Crossroads with Test Able was the first public demonstration of America's atomic arsenal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 25</strong></td>
<td>America's Test Baker - underwater explosion</td>
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## Containment

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 12</strong></td>
<td>Truman Doctrine - Truman declares active role in Greek Civil War</td>
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<td><strong>March 22</strong></td>
<td>Truman issued an executive order which set up a program to check the loyalty of federal employees.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June</strong></td>
<td>Marshall Plan is announced setting a precedent for helping countries combat poverty, disease and malnutrition</td>
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<td><strong>September 2</strong></td>
<td>Rio Pact - U.S. meet 19 Latin American countries and created a security zone around the hemisphere</td>
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<td><strong>September 18</strong></td>
<td>National Security Act Takes effect. Reorganizing the Department of Defense and creating the Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Containment&lt;br&gt;&lt;li&gt;<strong>February 25</strong>: Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia&lt;br&gt;<strong>March 10</strong>: Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk is reported having committed suicide.&lt;br&gt;<strong>March 17</strong>: Brussels Pact organized to protect Europe from Communism&lt;br&gt;<strong>June 24</strong>: Berlin Blockade begins lasting 11 months&lt;br&gt;<strong>September 9</strong>: The Soviet Union declares the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be the legitimate government of all of Korea, with Kim Il-sung as Prime Minister.</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Containment&lt;br&gt;&lt;li&gt;<strong>April 4</strong>: NATO ratified&lt;br&gt;<strong>May 12</strong>: Berlin Blockade ends&lt;br&gt;<strong>May 23</strong>: Civilian Control given back to West Germany by Western Allies&lt;br&gt;<strong>June 8</strong>: The Red Scare reaches its peak, with the naming of numerous American celebrities as members of the Communist Party&lt;br&gt;<strong>29 August</strong>: Russia tested its first atomic bomb&lt;br&gt;<strong>October 1</strong>: Communist Mao Zedong takes control of China and establishes the People's Republic of China&lt;br&gt;<strong>October 7</strong>: Soviets form East German Government, German Democratic Republic&lt;br&gt;<strong>December 1</strong>: Chiang Kai-shek moved to Formosa and created Nationalist government</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td><strong>January 30</strong>: Truman approved H-bomb development&lt;br&gt;<strong>February</strong>: Joe McCarthy begins Communist witch hunt and loyalty tests&lt;br&gt;<strong>June 24</strong>: Korean War begins. Stalin supports North Korea who invade South Korea equipped with Soviet weapons</td>
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selected bibliography at the end of each chapter. The bibliography contains both standard works and, when appropriate, the most recent books on major issues raised in the chapter.

New to the Third Edition

In response to feedback from reviewers, I have made changes throughout the book. These changes are designed to make this third edition easier to teach from and more accessible to students. There are new sections on the Cold War, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, the politics of the 1990s, globalization, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most significantly, the theme of “American Identity” is woven into the fabric of the narrative. “American Identity” has been contested terrain throughout American history where various groups—religious, ethnic, class, racial—have fought for dominance. The objective is to help students understand that many of the issues that dominate the headlines today—immigration reform, race relations, gay rights, fear of global terrorism, and tax policy—are part of a longer conversation that is deeply rooted in competing notions of American identity. The conversation continues today, and students will have a voice in the debate.

Acknowledgments

A number of people helped make this book possible. My first debt is to the scholars of modern America whose work provides the intellectual foundation for this book. I am grateful to Douglas Miller, a talented graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, who read every chapter and offered a number of constructive suggestions. I would also like to thank the colleagues who reviewed the book: Phil McCaskey, Cape Fear Community College; Rick Moniz, Chabot College; Jacqueline Moore, Austin College; Pam Pennock, University of Michigan—Dearborn; Emile Raymond, Virginia Commonwealth University; Patrick Reagon, Tennessee Tech University; Howard Smead, University of Maryland; Jason Sokol, Cornell University; and Karin Zipt, East Carolina University.

At Cengage Learning, I would like to thank Ann West and Megan Chrisman for skillfully overseeing the revisions for this edition, and Margaret Bridges and Joseph Malcolm for seeing it through to publication. I thank also Sandee Milestic, manufacturing planner.

The book is dedicated to the Ryan family. Jim and Kate Ryan have welcomed me into their lives, providing me with an endless supply of affection, support, and guidance. They have also allowed me to experience the joy of spending time with their wonderful children. When I first wrote this book there were three—Will, Sam, and Ben. Since the last edition of this book they have welcomed a fourth child—Phebe—who has added a touch of feminine grace to the Ryan family.

Steven M. Gillon
Norman, Oklahoma

Introduction: The American Paradox

At 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 14, 1945, President Harry S. Truman invited reporters to the Oval Office for a brief, informal press conference. For weeks rumors had circulated about an imminent Japanese surrender. As the horde of reporters rushed into the room, a solemn Truman rose from his desk to greet them. Reading from a prepared text, he announced that he had received a message of surrender from the Japanese government. “Arrangements are now being made,” he said, “for the formal signing of surrender terms at the earliest possible moment.” The president then smiled and sat down.

The nation erupted in celebration. Across the country church bells rang, air raid sirens screeched, horns honked, and bands played. The celebrations, however, were clouded by fears about America’s role in the postwar world and Truman’s ability to shift America to a peacetime economy. Perhaps most of all, Americans brooded about the legacy of the atomic bomb, which had produced such a swift and dramatic end to the war. “For all we know,” warned popular radio host H. V. Kaltenborn, “we have created a Frankenstein.” The bomb, which President Truman hailed as “the greatest achievement of organized science in history,” also possessed
the power to destroy the world. A few weeks after the United States dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, the Washington Post editorialized that the life expectancy of the human race had "dwindled immeasurably."

Despite these worries, most Americans had high hopes for the postwar world. In 1945 the influential columnist Walter Lippmann predicted that "what Rome was to the ancient world, what Great Britain has been to the modern world, America is to be to the world of tomorrow." There were many reasons for such optimism. The nation, which had been mired in depression during the 1930s, was experiencing an unprecedented economic expansion. Unemployment, which stood at 17 percent when Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor, later dropped to nearly unmeasurable levels. National income more than doubled from $81 billion in 1940 to $101 billion five years later. The war also improved the distribution of income—an accomplishment that had eluded New Deal planners. The share of income owned by the richest 5 percent declined from 23.7 to 16.3 percent, while the average wages of workers employed full-time in manufacturing rose from $28 per week in 1940 to $48 in 1944.

An expansion of federal power played a central role in the new prosperity. A growing centralization of power in Washington, begun during the New Deal, accelerated during World War II. Between 1940 and 1945, the number of civilian employees in government posts rose from 1 million to 3.8 million. Federal expenditures from 1940 to 1945 rose from $9 billion to $98.4 billion. The final bill for the war came to more than $251 billion, a sum greater than the total of all government spending in the history of the United States to that point. By comparison, Roosevelt's New Deal responded to the 1938 recession by spending $3 billion on public works.

The spending was matched by regulations that made the federal government a part of the fabric of life for most Americans. Congress dramatically expanded the federal income tax during the war. Most Americans had never filed an income-tax return before World War II because the income tax, on the books since 1913, had been a small tax on upper-income families. Starting with 1942, anyone earning $600 or more annually had to file a return. Income-tax withholding from paychecks went into effect in 1943. But it was the draft that brought the federal government into the homes of millions of Americans. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress ordered the registration of all men between the ages of twenty (lowered to eighteen in 1942) and forty-four for war service. During the war the nation peacefully registered 49 million men, selected 19 million, and inducted 10 million, twice the number who volunteered.

World War II also refashioned social relations in America, providing African Americans and other racial minorities with new opportunities. The war lured millions of blacks into war plants and labor unions in the North and West. Wartime experience raised the expectations of African American veterans, who had risked their lives to guarantee freedom in Europe and were unwilling to accept second-class citizenship in their own country. "I spent years in the army to free a bunch of Dutchmen and Frenchmen, and I'm changed if I'm going to let the Alabama version of the Germans kick me around when I get home," a discharged army corporal from Alabama exclaimed. "No siree-bob! I went into the Army a nigger; I'm comin' out a man!" World War II also inspired a drive for equal rights among Asian American, Native American, and Hispanic American veterans who returned home to their communities determined to secure full access to American life.

The war also expanded opportunities for women. With men being drafted for the service, employers looked to women to maintain industrial production at home. "Rosie the Riveter," who, according to a popular song of the time, was "making history working for victory," became the media symbol of the woman at work. She could do a man's job without compromising her feminine qualities. Over the next four years nearly 6 million women responded to the call. By the end of the war almost 19 million women (or 36 percent) were working, many at jobs from which they had previously been excluded. Nearly 2 million women—about 10 percent of female workers—took up jobs in defense plants. For many women, working in the factories was "the first time we got a chance to show that we could do a lot of things that only men had done before."

Above all else, the war was responsible for producing the striking paradox that would define postwar America: World War II revolutionized American society, but it did not produce a corresponding change in public attitudes. The war may have transformed America's relationship with Washington, producing a dramatic expansion of federal power, but it did little to challenge deeply rooted fears of centralized power. At the same time that the war contributed to the growth of big government, it reaffirmed American faith in limited government and individualism. In all of the major initiatives of the war—building an army, mobilizing industry, controlling wages and prices—Americans tried to balance the needs of war with the values of democracy. In fact, the brutality of Adolf Hitler's regime made Americans more skeptical of state power. In a war depicted as a struggle between good and evil, the victory over fascism seemed to confirm the continuing relevance of America's democratic experiment.

Although social relations had been transformed by war, American attitudes about race and gender remained remarkably resilient in the wake of extraordinary changes. Women, African Americans, and other racial minorities may have emerged from the war with expanded expectations, but the majority of Americans showed little interest in questioning old stereotypes or changing past practices. Though Rosie the Riveter became a popular symbol of working women during the war, polls showed that majorities of men and women disapproved of working wives, and most women of traditional child-bearing age (twenty through thirty-four) remained at home. As a result, the war did little, in the short run, to challenge traditional notions that a woman's proper place was in the home raising the children. "The housewife, not the WASP or the riveter, was the model woman," observed the historian D'Ann Campbell.

The war gave African Americans a glimpse of a better life, but it did little to change deeply embedded racial attitudes or undermine the structure of
segregation. The army, which in 1940 counted just five African American officers, three of them chaplains, remained rigidly segregated. Black soldiers had to watch the army segregate the blood plasma of whites and blacks. Regulations restricted blacks to their own barracks, movie houses, and commissaries. Conditions on the front were not much better. Management and labor joined forces to limit black access to the base camp. "We will not employ Negroes," declared the president of North American Aviation. "It is against company policy."

This tension between American ideals and social realities, which had roots deep in the nation's past, was sharpened in the years following World War II by what the historian James T. Patterson has described as America's "grand expectations." These expectations touched on nearly every aspect of American society: economists believed they had discovered the tools to guarantee growth, promising a better life for all Americans; marginalized groups—especially African Americans and women—gained new wartime opportunities, which they hoped would translate into tangible peacetime gains; and victory convinced policymakers of the universal appeal of American values and the need to project US power abroad.

While Americans entered the postwar world with hope about the possibilities of change, they remained deeply ambivalent about the consequences of change. The British journalist Geoffrey Hodgson once observed that "Americans love change, but they hate to be changed." This paradox is essential to understanding the dynamics of American history since 1945. Franklin Roosevelt's leadership during the Great Depression and World War II had altered America's relationship with the federal government. Once the war ended, Americans continued to look toward Washington, especially the president, to satisfy their expectations of a better life. The result was a dramatic and sustained expansion of federal power. By the end of the century Washington played a role in the daily lives of most Americans. This expansion of government power, however, did not produce a corresponding change in attitudes toward government power. The tension between expectations of government as a vehicle of change and traditional fears of encroaching state power provides the central narrative of this book.

This paradox has its roots in the nation's revolutionary past. The Founders rebelled against the imperial designs of a distant and impersonal British government. Believing that "power" was antithetical to "liberty," they created a system of government that made it difficult for power to concentrate in any one branch of government. "The constant aim," James Madison explained in The Federalist Papers, "is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner that they may be a check on the other—that the private interest of every individual may be a sentinel over the public rights."

Despite these inhibitions, Americans have witnessed a dramatic increase in the size and scope of government power. This trend was especially pronounced in the years after World War II when Americans, their expectations whetted by prosperity and rising expectations of the "good life," placed enormous pressure on government to increase services and benefits. By the 1980s, 40 percent of all American households, including many with high incomes, received some form of federal entitlement check—unemployment compensation, Medicare, social security, food stamps, pension, veterans benefits, or welfare allotment. (The Federal Register, which lists government rules and regulations, grew from 3,307 pages in 1940 to 68,101 in 1995.)

The irony is that Americans have come to accept the benefits of a modern welfare state without accepting the legitimacy of federal power. Polls, for example, show overwhelming support for the large entitlement programs that make up a significant portion of domestic spending. Yet the same surveys show a dramatic opposition to cuts in government spending: a reduction in Washington's power, and a demand for local control. A bellwether poll conducted by Princeton Survey Associates in 1995 found that by a margin of 61 to 24 percent Americans trusted state government to "do a better job running things" than the federal government. The poll results confirm the historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s assertion that America is "operationally liberal and philosophically conservative." Americans are against big government but they want Washington to provide for social security, Medicare, Medicaid, clean air, water, and safe streets.

The same paradox of grand expectations shaped America's postwar foreign policy. The American victory in the fight against Hitler shattered the myth of isolationism that had dominated thinking during the 1930s and introduced a new consensus in favor of internationalism. America emerged from the struggle as the leading economic and military power in the world. Flush with victory, the United States prepared to launch a new crusade against communism armed with enormous military might and confidence in the universal relevance of American values. But the experience of total war against absolute evil did little to prepare Americans for the prospect of limited war, or for the moral ambiguity of many Third World conflicts. The Cold War raised troubling new questions: How could the United States balance its support for democracy with its fear of communism? Did the expansion of the national security state, and the fear of subversion, threaten democracy and liberty at home? How could a great power in Vietnam to the tension between American expectations of the postwar world and the realities of international power? The end of the Cold War in the 1990s only heightened the tension. The absence of an international rival left many Americans questioning whether the nation needed to maintain a strong presence in the world. The emergence of new threats from amorphous terrorist groups forced the nation to rethink its global interests and the best ways to protect them.

A further dimension of the paradox of expectations and social realities shaped many of the cultural assumptions of postwar America. The war reinforced the image of the melting pot, a singular American identity that transcended racial and class differences. Most Americans emerged from the war with a renewed faith in consensus, a belief in a common American identity and culture. But the war also sowed the seeds of cultural pluralism—a belief in many different American identities based on racial, gender, religious, and cultural differences—by promoting racial consciousness and by raising the expectations of groups that had been excluded from the nation's political and economic life. The clash between these competing...
notions of American identity culminated with the social and political struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. As the historian Daniel T. Rodgers has noted, the last decades of the twentieth century represented an "age of fracture" as a far more complicated and diverse sense of American identity emerged from the remnants of consensus.

The war forged the foundation of postwar America, but it was an ambiguous legacy that rested on a paradox. The war, and the prosperity that came with it, stimulated America's appetite for a better life, producing an ever-widening cycle of expectations about the possibility of change. But the war also produced a celebration of American values that emphasized national unity, limited government, and traditional ideas about race relations and gender roles. The tension between rising expectations and traditional attitudes would define the nature of social and political conflict in America for the remainder of the century.

SELECTED READINGS


Kennan’s analysis, the Soviets were solely to blame for international tensions, negotiations and compromise had reached an impasse, and only military and economic pressure could tame the Russian bear.

Kennan’s telegram caused a sensation in Washington. “Splendid analysis,” exclaimed Secretary of State James Byrnes. The following year Kennan published an expanded public version of the telegram in an article written under the pseudonym “Mr. X.” The Soviets, he argued, saw the world divided into hostile capitalist and communist camps, between which there could be no peace. He recommended a U.S. foreign policy based on the “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” From Kennan’s essay a word emerged to characterize a new experiment in American foreign policy: containment.

1.1 The Sources of Soviet Conduct

George Kennan, a student of Russian language and history, served in the American embassy in Moscow from 1935 to 1937 and again from 1944 to 1946. His understanding of Soviet policy led to his warning in the July 1947 issue of Foreign Affairs under the pseudonym “Mr. X.”

The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances: ideology inherited by the present Soviet leaders from the movement in which they had their political origin, and circumstances of the power which they have now exercised for nearly three decades in Russia.

It is difficult to summarize the set of ideological concepts with which the Soviet leaders came into power. Marxian ideology has always been in process of subtle evolution... But the outstanding features of Communist thought as they existed in 1916 may perhaps be summarized as follows: (a) that the central factor in the life of man, the fact which determines the character of public life and the “physiognomy of society,” is the system by which material goods are produced and exchanged; (b) that the capitalist system of production is a nefarious one which inevitably leads to the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist owning class and is incapable of developing adequately the economic resources of society or of distributing fairly the material goods produced by human labor; (c) that capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction and must, in view of the inability of the capital-owning class to adjust itself to economic change, result eventually and inescapably in a revolutionary transfer of power to the working class; and (d) that imperialism, the final phase of capitalism, leads directly to war and revolution...

These considerations make Soviet diplomacy at once easier and more difficult to deal with than the diplomacy of individual aggressive leaders like Napoleon and Hitler. On the one hand it is more sensitive to contrary forces... On the other hand it cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents. And the patient persistence by which it is animated means that it can be effectively countered not by sporadic acts which represent the momentary whims of democratic opinion but only by intelligent long-range policies on the part of Russia’s adversaries—policies no less steady in their purpose, and no less varied and resourceful in their application, than those of the Soviet Union itself.

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics; with threats or blustering or superficial gestures of outward “toughness.” While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means amenable to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness...

In the light of the above, it will be clear that the Soviet power against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be crushed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes.


The "Long Telegram" and the "Mr. X" article provided the ideological justification for a new “get-tough” approach with the Soviets. The strategy of containment fundamentally transformed American foreign policy. It ripped the United States from its isolationist roots, imposed new international obligations on the American people, and created a massive national security state. World War II had reconfigured the international environment and America's place in it, but it had failed to produce a corresponding change in American attitudes toward the world. Once the war ended, most American soldiers planned to return home and most policymakers planned to reduce the nation's military commitments.
abroad. At the same time, victory raised expectations of a peaceful postwar world shaped by American commerce and influenced by American values. As a result, the Cold War confronted America with a paradox: How could the nation assume its new position of world power, and justify the dramatic enlargement of the national security state, while also being true to its democratic faith in limited government?

**Roots of the Cold War**

Who started the Cold War? This question has inspired years of passionate debate among historians. Some scholars place most of the blame on the Soviet Union, charging that its aggressive foreign policy was the logical outgrowth of an ideological commitment to world revolution. Other scholars contend that Russian aggression reflected a legitimate fear of American economic imperialism. In recent years historians studying the origins of the Cold War have emphasized that both nations shared responsibility for the conflict, though these same historians differ greatly on how much responsibility to assign each side. Rather than seeing the Cold War as the product of conspiracies hatched in the Kremlin or in Washington, post-Cold War historians stress how history, ideology, and national interest created serious misperceptions, limited the range of options on both sides, and made confrontation nearly inevitable.

The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States had its genesis in the past. In 1917, relations between the two nations plummeted into a deep freeze when the Bolsheviks seized control of the Russian government. Under V. I. Lenin, the Soviets pulled out of World War I, leaving the West to fight the Central Powers alone. More importantly, the Soviets committed the new state to the goal of world revolution and the destruction of capitalism. Communism challenged the basic tenets of the American dream: it threatened democratic government, supported state power over individual freedom, and cut off free markets.

The brutality of the Soviet regime further inflamed American hostility. Joseph Stalin, who seized control of the Soviet Union following Lenin's death in 1924, consolidated his power through a series of bloody purges that killed nearly 3 million citizens. He initiated a massive effort to collectivize agriculture that led to the deaths of 14 million peasants. In 1939, after Stalin signed a prewar nonaggression treaty with Adolf Hitler, he sent troops pouring into Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. By then most Americans agreed with the Wall Street Journal that "the principal difference between Mr. Hitler and Mr. Stalin is the size of their respective mustaches."

Likewise, the Soviets had reason to distrust the United States. The rhetoric and actions of American policymakers appeared to support one of the principal teachings of Marxist-Leninist doctrine: the incompatibility of capitalism and communism. Western leaders, including President Woodrow Wilson, made no secret of their contempt for Lenin or their desire to see him ousted. Wilson's decision to send American troops on a crusading mission to north Russia in 1918 confirmed the Soviets' suspicion of a Western conspiracy to topple their government. Indeed, the United States did not extend diplomatic relations to the Soviets until 1933—sixteen years after the new government came to power.

Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941 forced the United States and the Soviet Union into a brief alliance to defeat Germany. Wartime cooperation greatly improved the Soviet Union's image in America. Confronted with evidence that the Russian people were willing to fight to defend their country, many Americans jumped to the conclusion that the Soviet Union had suddenly become a democracy. In the best-selling book *Mission to Moscow* (1943), former Ambassador Joseph E. Davies proclaimed that "the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky—the Russia of the Bolshevik Revolution—no longer exists." Life magazine declared in 1943 that Russians "look like Americans, dress like Americans and think like Americans."

The war may have softened American public opinion, but it did little to ease the mistrust between leaders. Franklin Roosevelt, though hopeful about a postwar settlement, recognized that "a dictatorship as absolute as any...in the world ruled Moscow. At the same time, Roosevelt's agreement with Winston Churchill in delaying a second front in Europe, and his refusal to share information about the development and testing of the atomic bomb, convinced Stalin that the Western Allies could not be trusted.

**The Legacy of World War II**

The brutality and destructiveness of World War II set the stage for the Cold War. The conflict devastated nations, crippled societies, and shattered the international system beyond recognition. The war left 60 million people dead, more than half of those—35 million—were Europeans. The Soviet Union lost 24 million people, or 14 percent of its population. An estimated 15 million Chinese soldiers died, along with as many as 15 million civilians, Japan lost 5 million people.

With typically vivid prose, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described postwar Europe as "a rubble heap, a charnel house, a breeding ground of pestilence and hate." Allied bombing had leveled entire cities. The Germans had destroyed many of the cities they occupied. "The odor of death," recalled an American diplomat, "was everywhere." Tens of millions of people had no shelter. Everywhere farmlands had been depopulated, animals slaughtered. In Poland almost three-fourths of all horses and two-thirds of all cattle were gone.

The war produced the most sweeping changes in the international power structure in history. For the previous 500 years, Europe had dominated the international system. Not anymore. European nations that had been among the most powerful in the world before the war—Germany, Britain, Italy, and France—were either defeated and occupied, or crippled and nearly bankrupt. Unable to feed
their own people, these nations could no longer preside over colonial empires, providing an opportunity for nationalist movements in the Middle East and in Asia to break away from their former masters.

As a result, the next few decades witnessed the creation of hundreds of new, independent nations. In 1947, after years of struggle, Britain gave up control of India and Pakistan. Other European powers followed suit, relinquishing control of many of their colonies in Africa and Indonesia.

Only two nations emerged with the ability to project power beyond their borders: the United States and the Soviet Union. Both nations agreed that a new international order needed to be created; otherwise, chaos and conflict would follow. They, however, had very different ideas about the structure of the new order and their role in it. Their visions of the future were shaped by memories of the recent past.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, shaped American views of the postwar world. Before the attack, many policymakers were convinced that geographical distance protected the United States from foreign threats. The surprise Japanese offensive made American military planners recognize that advances in technology, especially air power, meant that the two oceans no longer guaranteed security from potential adversaries. If you imagine two or three hundred Pearl Harbors occurring all over the United States, an official warned in 1944, you will have a rough picture of what the next war might look like.

Technology made the world smaller. For the first time, American planners believed the nation needed a network of defense bases around the world to respond quickly to potential trouble spots. Instability anywhere in the world posed a potential threat to American security. “We are now concerned with the peace of the entire world,” General George C. Marshall warned.

Many American officials were also convinced that the policy of trying to appease Hitler during the 1930s had only produced greater suffering and sacrifice. Never again would the United States allow a potential adversary to gain control of such a large part of Europe. Hitler used the captured manpower and factories of Europe to unleash his war machine against the United States. The United States needed to guarantee that no future adversary would have access to the same resources.

The key was to maintain open markets and free trade to sustain the global economy. The belief in free trade and open markets meshed with American faith in individual rights and democracy. Policymakers assumed that open markets would produce prosperity, and a more prosperous world would also be more stable and peaceful.

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, no American policymakers worried about a direct Soviet assault on the United States, and few believed the Soviets could muster the resources—military, financial, or psychological—for an invasion of Western Europe. The danger was that the Soviets would extend their influence politically by capitalizing on social and economic chaos in Europe, which created a fertile breeding ground for communism.

Americans also emerged from the war with a newfound optimism, not only in the righteous nature of their ideals but also in their ability to impose them on the rest of the world. On V-J day the United States had 12.5 million people serving in the armed forces. Its navy was larger than the combined fleets of all the nations in the world. Washington, not London, was now the capital of finance and power.

Power bred grand expectations. In 1945, the influential publisher Henry R. Luce coined the term “The American Century,” to describe the heightened expectations for the postwar period. “America,” he proclaimed, “must be the elder brother of the nations in the brotherhood of man.”

There was one obstacle to this American vision of the future. In 1945, Life Magazine cautioned that the Soviet Union “is the number one problem for Americans because it is the only country in the world with the dynamic power to challenge our own conceptions of truth, justice, and the good life.”

At the end of the war the Soviets had one overriding goal: to secure their borders from foreign invaders. They had been as shocked by Hitler’s surprise attack in June 1941 as Americans were by the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor a few months later.

The German attack revived old memories of past invasions. In 1812, Napoleon’s armies reached the gates of Moscow. Twice in the twentieth century German armies swept over Russia like hungry locusts. The Soviets, determined to head off another attack, insisted on defenses borders and friendly regimes on their western flank. The sheer size of the Soviet Union—the landmass of one-sixth of the world’s—made that task more difficult. Blocking the Polish invasion route, or “gateway,” was the top Soviet priority. Poland, Stalin declared, was a “matter of life or death” to his country. To minimize the potential threat, Stalin insisted that pro-Soviet governments be installed in Poland and other key Eastern European states, that Soviet borders be expanded as far as possible, and that Germany be permanently crippled with severe reparations. With its army in control of most of Eastern Europe, the Soviets were in a position to enforce their will.

The deeply-rooted hostility and suspicion between the United States and the Soviet Union proved too much to overcome. By 1945, the battle lines were clearly drawn. Stalin interpreted U.S. calls for free elections and democratic reform in Eastern Europe as a capital threat. Plotting to surround the Soviet Union. The Americans viewed the Soviet Union’s efforts to consolidate its control over Eastern Europe as the first step of a larger plan of global conquest. Moscow and Washington became ensnared in a “security dilemma”: each step taken by one side to enhance its security appeared an act of provocation to the other.

The Yalta Conference

In February 1945, flush from his electoral victory at home, Roosevelt traveled to Yalta, a resort on the Black Sea coast, to meet with Churchill and Stalin. He hoped the leaders could resolve a number of thorny questions. The leaders reached
compromises on many issues. Stalin promised to declare war on Japan "two or three months" after Germany's surrender. In return, Roosevelt accepted Soviet claims to the Kurile Islands in the Far East. Stalin dropped his demands for $20 billion in reparations from Germany, agreeing to discuss the issue further. Roosevelt, who made establishment of a postwar organization a major diplomatic goal, succeeded in gaining Stalin's support for the creation of the United Nations. All three leaders approved plans for a United Nations Conference in San Francisco in April 1945.

The postwar political status of Poland, which Churchill counted as "the most urgent reason for the Yalta Conference," caused the most controversy at the conference. Two Polish governments demanded recognition. The British and Americans supported the exiled government living in London. Stalin recognized a communist-led provisional government based in Lublin. Roosevelt proposed a government comprising representatives of Poland's five major political parties. The Soviets rejected the proposal, but Stalin agreed to add "democratic elements" to the Lublin regime. To avoid letting arguments over Poland undermine conference harmony, the Allies worked out an agreement that papered over significant differences with vague, elastic language. Stalin agreed to "free and unfettered elections," but at an unspecified time in the future.

Roosevelt left Yalta convinced that he had laid the foundation for a peaceful postwar. Years later, critics would charge Roosevelt with selling out to the Russians by acquiescing to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. But military and political realities had weakened Roosevelt's bargaining position. By the time of the Yalta Conference, the powerful Red Army already dominated most of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and Roosevelt desperately wanted Russian assistance in defeating the Japanese. Knowing that most Americans wanted an end to the hostilities and a return of U.S. servicemen, the president had little choice but to accept Soviet control and focus on building trust between the two nations.

Roosevelt returned home from Yalta a very ill man. On March 1, the president told Congress that Yalta had been "a great success," and he asked the American people to support the agreements reached there. On April 12, Roosevelt retreated to his vacation home in Warm Springs, Georgia to try and recoup his energy. Around noon, he slumped in his chair. "I have a terrific headache," he muttered. A few hours later, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Harry Truman Takes Charge

Roosevelt's sudden death thrust Harry Truman into the presidency. Although he faced one of the most dangerous and complicated international predicaments ever to confront an American president, Truman had little experience in foreign affairs. His views of the world were shaped by his temperament and his background.

Truman, the last American president who had not been to college, was born in 1884 in Lamar, Missouri. He spent most of his early years on the farms and in the small towns of western Missouri. His poor eyesight—doctors called his condition "flat eyeballs"—forced him to wear thick glasses and prevented him from playing sports. It also gave him lots of time to spend at the local library, where he absorbed books about great leaders, especially political and military leaders. His reading of history taught him to see the world in terms of black and white, good versus evil. This very clear moral framework during these early years would guide him the rest of his life.

After a stint in the army during World War I, Truman set up and ran a haberdashery, a store that sold clothing items, in Kansas City until a steep recession in 1921 destroyed the business. A few years shy of his fortieth birthday, Truman confronted a bleak future: he presided over a failed business, faced the real threat of bankruptcy, and had few career options.

His luck changed one day in the summer of 1921 when a representative of the notorious Pendleton political machine, which dominated Kansas City politics, invited Truman to run for county judge. He seized the opportunity, ran for office,
and won election in 1922. Truman served on the court for most of the next twelve years. In 1934, he won election to the U.S. Senate. With the nation mired in depression, Truman supported most of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal agenda. In 1944, FDR selected him as his new running mate.

Truman had barely had time to settle into his new job when FDR died. He was clearly unprepared for the problems that confronted him. The new president knew little about Roosevelt’s growing doubts about Soviet international intentions. He learned quickly when he sought the recommendations of Roosevelt’s advisors, most of whom favored a tougher policy toward the Soviets.

A combative posture fit Truman’s temperament. Impulsive and decisive, he lacked Roosevelt’s talent for ambiguity and compromise. “When I say I’m going to do something, I do it,” he once wrote. On his desk he displayed a sign: “The Buck Stops Here.” Truman viewed the Yalta Accords as contracts between East and West. He was committed to seeing that Stalin honored the agreement.

The new President, emboldened by America’s monopoly of atomic bombs and eager to show critics and the nation that he was in charge, matched Stalin’s insensitivity with calls for self-determination and free elections in Eastern Europe. It was, he declared, time to “stand up to the Russians.”

In reality, Truman had not completely abandoned hope of reaching some settlement with Moscow. In July 1945, he traveled to Potsdam, outside Berlin, for the final meeting of the Grand Alliance. Truman and Stalin squabbled over the sensitive issues of reparations and implementation of the Yalta Accords. By the end of the meeting, the leaders had reached tentative agreements. Russia agreed to permit Anglo-American observers in Eastern Europe and to withdraw its troops from oil-rich Azerbaijan in Iran. In return, the West reluctantly accepted Soviet occupation of German territory and approved Russian annexation of eastern Poland. “I can deal with Stalin,” Truman wrote in his diary, “he is honest—but smart as hell.”

Truman’s optimism proved unfounded. With the 10-million strong Red Army occupying half of Europe at the end of the war, Stalin installed governments subservient to Moscow in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. Refusing to abide by his agreement at Potsdam, he denied Western observers access to Eastern Europe and continued his occupation of Azerbaijan. Stalin’s actions in Poland and Germany were especially troubling to Truman. The Soviet dictator ignored the Yalta Accords and brutally suppressed Polish democratic parties.

Stalin’s words added to the American anxiety. On February 9, 1946, Stalin delivered a rare public speech in which he explained the fundamental incompatibility of communism and capitalism. The American system, he stressed, needed war for raw materials and markets. Time magazine concluded that the remarks were “the most warlike pronouncement uttered by any top-rank statesman since V-J Day.”

Truman struggled with how to respond to Stalin’s provocative actions and words. It was not clear to him why the Soviets were being so intransigent. Why would they oppose reasonable American demands for open trade and free elections? Was Stalin another Hitler? If the United States appealed his demands the way the West had given into Hitler, would it lead inevitably to another protracted war? What could the United States do to protect its interests without provoking a confrontation?

Truman turned for advice to the certifiably members of the American Establishment dubbed “The Wise Men.” Most grew up in the northeastern United States, attending elite prep schools and Ivy League universities. They worked in New York’s big banking houses and law firms and joined the same social clubs. Tied by culture and traditions to Europe, they tended to be patronizing to “lesser” peoples. They detested Marxist dogma and Soviet repression, but were usually pragmatic, nonpartisan, and nonideological in their worldview.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson was perhaps the most influential of the Wise Men. Educated at Groton, Yale, and the Harvard Law School, Acheson worked at a prestigious Washington law firm before joining the State
support, Truman spoke before a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, and explained why Americans should assist the free peoples of the world.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Congress of the United States:

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress. The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved. . . .

The United States has received from the Greek government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance. Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

I do not believe that the American people and the Congress wish to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the Greek Government . . . .

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A Commission appointed by the United Nations Security Council is at present investigating disturbed conditions in northern Greece and alleged border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the government throughout Greek territory. Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

The United States must supply that assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate.

There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn. . . .

Greece's neighbor, Turkey, also deserves our attention.

The future of Turkey, as an independent and economically sound state, is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than the future of Greece. The circumstances in which Turkey finds itself today are considerably different from those of Greece. Turkey has been spared the disasters that have beset Greece. And during the war, the United States and Great Britain furnished Turkey with material aid.

Nevertheless, Turkey now needs our support.

Since the war Turkey has sought financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States for the purpose of effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.

That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East. . . .

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. ... It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of a neighboring minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action....

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

Source:Courtesy of the U.S. Historical Documents Archive.

The Truman Doctrine represented a turning point in American foreign policy. For the first time, the United States intervened in the peacetime affairs of nations outside the Western Hemisphere. The moralistic rhetoric of Truman used to justify U.S. involvement reflected America's penchant to view the world as divided between the forces of good and evil. The experiment in "nation-building" in Greece and Turkey assumed the superiority of American values and the universal appeal of democracy. By rooting America's response to a local conflict in universal language, Truman hoped to prepare the American people for their responsibility as a world power. Presidential aide Clark Clifford called it "the opening gun in a campaign to bring the people up to [the] realization that the war isn't over by any means."

The administration realized that military assistance might deter the Soviets in Greece and Turkey, but it would not save war-torn Western Europe from economic disaster. Worried that Russia, might take advantage of the situation, administration officials moved to shore up Europe's battered economy. As new Secretary of State George C. Marshall observed: "The patient is sinking while the doctors deliberate."

On June 5, 1947, the "doctor" offered his prescription for recovery. Marshall chose the Harvard University commencement ceremony to announce a bold new plan of economic assistance to Europe. Marshall explained that the aid program was "directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos." Marshall invited the participation of any country, including the Soviet Union, which was "willing to assist in the task of recovery." Truman realized that Stalin would never accept a plan that required him to share vital economic information with the United States and leave in Western hands the control of how funds would be distributed.

In December 1947, Truman submitted the plan to Congress, with a recommendation that the U.S. spend $17 billion over four years. At first, congressional leaders were cool to the idea. Critics condemned the plan as "a bold Socialist blueprint." While Congress held hearings during the fall, Europe sank deeper into its economic abyss. England announced it was cutting individual meat rations to twenty cents' worth per week.

Inadventurously, the Soviet Union provided the Marshall Plan with the boost it needed. During the summer of 1947, an increasingly paranoid Stalin established the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) to coordinate Communist party activity around the globe. The Cominform tightened Stalin's control in the Eastern bloc and within Russia at the same time that it called upon communists in the underdeveloped world to accelerate "their struggle" for liberation. A U.S. diplomat called the creation of the Cominform "a declaration of political and economic war against the U.S. and everything the U.S. stands for in world affairs."

In February 1948, communists staged a coup in Czechoslovakia, overthrowing a freely elected coalition government. Western leaders interpreted the coup as part of an aggressive Soviet plan to conquer Europe before it could be revived. According to Kennan, a "real war scare" swept Washington. Once again, top policymakers were aware that the hysteria was exaggerated and war was unlikely. But they were not above using fear to help sell their new approach to the Soviets. Sometimes, said Dean Acheson, "it is necessary to make things clearer than the truth."

Opposition to the Marshall Plan wilted in the heated atmosphere. On April 2, the House approved the plan by a lopsided vote of 318 to 75. The Senate roared its approval by an overwhelming voice vote. In April the SS John H. Quick sailed from its port in Galveston, Texas, with 19,000 tons of wheat for starving Europeans. Within months it was joined by 150 ships carrying food and fuel to Europe every day. Between 1948 and 1951, American aid to Europe amounted to a staggering $12.5 billion. Thanks in part to the plan, Europe's industrial production increased 200 percent between 1948 and 1952. Perhaps the Marshall Plan's greatest export was hope. British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin called the plan "a life-line to a sinking man."

The Marshall Plan also added to the mutual misperception that contributed to the Cold War. The plan reassured American European allies but worried Stalin, who was convinced that the United States designed the aid program to lure Eastern European nations out of the Soviet orbit and to rebuild Germany. In response,
The Marshall Plan at Work in Austria World War II devastated the European landscape and economy, making it difficult for citizens to acquire even basic necessities. The United States feared the Soviet Union would exploit the anxiety, spreading communist ideology across the continent. Marshall and other policymakers believed that massive aid would enable European nations to resist communism and build loyalty to the United States. They certainly won a friend in this little boy, who is obviously thrilled with his new shoes, brought by American planes and distributed by Red Cross workers. (Source: Courtesy of the American Red Cross, all rights reserved in all countries)

The Kremlin cracked down on dissent in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria; encouraged the coup in Czechoslovakia; and blockaded Berlin. "For Stalin," concluded two scholars familiar with new archival information in Moscow and Eastern Europe, "the Marshall Plan was a watershed."

The Soviet moves in turn magnified the sense of threat in Washington, leading to a massive expansion of federal power in the traditionally antistatist United States. By approving the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Congress institutionalized the Cold War. In 1947, it passed the National Security Act, which has been called the "Magna Carta of the national security state." The act created the skeleton of what would become an overpowering national security apparatus; it expanded executive power by centralizing previously dispersed responsibilities in the White House. It established the Department of Defense to oversee all branches of the armed services and formed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which included the generals of the three services and the Marines. The act also created the National Security Council (NSC), a cabinet-level body to coordinate military and foreign policy for the president. In addition, it created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which carried out espionage operations directly under the authority of the National Security Council.

Berlin Blockade

The hardening of positions on both sides produced the first major crisis of the Cold War. Yalta had divided Germany into four zones (U.S., USSR, British, and French) and Berlin into four sectors. The Soviets were determined to prevent Germany from reemerging as an industrial power. But America, wanting to rebuild the world economy for the benefit of U.S. markets, initiated financial reforms that produced a remarkable economic revival in its sector.

The Russians retaliated on June 24 by clamping a tight blockade around West Berlin, which lay 110 miles within the Soviet occupation zone. West Berlin was in essence a small Western enclave deep inside the Soviet zone. Using its geographical advantage, Stalin blocked all surface transportation into West Berlin, depriving some 2.5 million people of food and fuel.

Occupation Zones of Postwar Germany At the Yalta Conference in early 1945, the Allied powers decided that after Germany surrendered unconditionally the Allies would dismember the enemy, dividing Germany and its capital, Berlin, into zones of occupation. After Germany's official surrender May 8, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, and France established control over their zones, with the hope of keeping their policies relatively uniform so that Germany could remain a single nation once disarmament and demilitarization took place. However, as the Cold War intensified, conflicting political and economic systems made compatible zone standards impossible. In December 1946, the American and British zones merged, and in 1948 France agreed to join them, resulting in the Soviet Union's blockade of West Berlin. (Source: Melvyn P. Leffler, Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War [ Palo Alto, Calif: Stanford University Press], p. 65. Copyright © 1992.)
The situation was full of danger and Truman searched for a response that would demonstrate American resolve without forcing a direct confrontation. Treading a careful middle path, Truman decided to counter the Russian move by ordering a massive airlift operation. For the next 324 days, American and British planes dropped 2.5 million tons of provisions to sustain the 10,000 troops and the 2 million civilians in Berlin. Truman threatened to use the "bomb" if the Soviets shot down the relief planes. "We are very close to war," he wrote in his diary. On May 12, 1949, the Russians accepted defeat and ended the blockade.

The Berlin crisis catalyzed western leaders to present a unified front to the Soviets. In January 1949, Truman proposed committing the United States to the defense of Europe. In April, he pledged American involvement in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a mutual defense pact that bound twelve signatories (Britain, France, Canada, Italy, the Benelux countries, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, and Portugal) to fight against aggression. Article 5 provided "that an armed attack against one or more... shall be considered an attack against them all."

While challenging the Soviets' claim to a "sphere of influence" in Europe, the United States consolidated its own sphere in the Western Hemisphere. In 1947, Secretary of State Marshall led a delegation of American officials to Brazil where, on September 2, he signed the Rio Treaty. The signatories agreed that "any armed attack by any state against an American state shall be considered an attack against all the American states." The following year, North and Latin American countries created the Organization of American States (OAS).

The Soviets matched the Western initiatives by intensifying their domination of Eastern Europe. In October 1949, Stalin created a separate government in East Germany, the German Democratic Republic. Moscow sponsored an economic association, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance or COMECON (1949), and a military alliance for Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact (1955). The Soviets poured massive amounts of aid into Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria to accelerate industrialization and increase Russian control. The only exception to Soviet control was Yugoslavia, which managed to develop as an independent socialist state.

The Birth of Israel

The Cold War also shaped American policy in the Middle East. After World War II, many Jews who had survived Nazi concentration camps resettled in British-controlled Palestine. In 1947 the British, weakened by World War II, turned over control of Palestine to the United Nations, which voted to partition the region into separate Jewish and Arab states. Violence between Arabs and Jews escalated as each side tried to maximize their territorial position in advance of the British partition.

The president's military advisors feared recognition of the Jewish state of Israel would anger Arab oil-producing nations. Other factors weighed in Truman's mind. Since Stalin had already announced his support of Israel, Truman worried about the possibility of a close Soviet-Israeli relationship that would exclude the United States. On an emotional level, the president empathized with the suffering of Jews during World War II. Political considerations supported recognition. "In all of my political experience," Truman during the campaign of 1948, "I don't ever recall the Arab vote swinging a close election."

On May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence. Eleven minutes later, the United States recognized the new state. Less than a week later, five Arab neighbors invaded Israel, which beat back the attack and expanded its control over territory designated for the Palestinian Arab State. Jordan and Egypt occupied the other parts of the territory. Over half the Palestinian population fled or were expelled. Between six hundred and seven hundred thousand Palestinians became refugees, forced to live in squalid conditions in the West Bank and along the Gaza Strip. The "Palestinian Issue" would remain a source of anger and frustration in the Middle East for years to come.

Debating Containment

The adoption of the containment policy thrust upon the United States political and military responsibilities as a "world policeman" that went far beyond anything ever contemplated by the American people. It also raised new and troubling questions that went to the heart of American identity. The Cold War, and the need for an expanded military, presented the American people with a conundrum: Could the nation adapt to the demands of total war without losing its democratic identity? Or, as the New York Times asked in 1947, "how can we prepare for total war without becoming a 'garrison state' and destroying the very qualities and virtues and principles we originally set out to save?"

Many conservatives believed it was impossible to reconcile the administration's new national security goals with the nation's democratic traditions. The new military bureaucracy, built on the foundation of the New Deal's expansion of federal power, threatened to regiment American life and take the nation down the same road as Nazi Germany. "We are having our initial experience with the garrison state," complained a congressman, "in which the conduct of our lives is made secondary to the demands of the Military Establishment." Concentration of power in the hands of the executive would inevitably lead to higher levels of taxation and an erosion of the traditional American commitment to fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget. "We must not let our fear of Communism blind us to the danger of military domination," warned a Republican congressman.
Many conservatives feared that an expansive foreign policy would distort national and international priorities. Powerful Republican senator Robert Taft of Ohio observed that the traditional purpose of U.S. involvement in the world was "to maintain the liberty of our people" rather than "reform the entire world or spread sweetness and light and economic prosperity to peoples who have lived and worked out their own salvation for centuries." The country should expand the international security state only "as far toward preparing for war as we can go in time of peace without weakening ourselves... and destroying forever the very liberty which war is designed to protect."

A few voices on the Left joined the chorus of criticism, though often for different reasons. In a series of newspaper columns, later published in book form as The Cold War, the journalist Walter Lippmann charged that containment would increase executive power at the expense of the other branches of government and divert energy and resources away from domestic needs. The policy of containment, he wrote, "can be implemented only by recruiting, subsidizing and supporting a heterogeneous array of satellites, clients, dependents, and puppets."

Most of all, he argued, containment would militarize American foreign policy and force the United States to support corrupt dictators. Unlike many conservatives, however, Lippmann supported the administration's effort to strengthen the Western alliance and criticized conservatives as outdated isolationists.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

### 1.3 The Last Chance for Peace

**HARRY WALLACE**

President Truman's postwar get-tough policy with the Soviet Union troubled many Americans, including liberal members of his own party. Former Vice President and current Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace sent Truman a twelve-page, single-spaced letter in July 1945 expressing his opposition to Truman's aggressive stance against the Soviets.

I should list the factors which make for Russian distrust of the United States and of the Western world as follows. The first is Russian history, which we must take into account because it is the setting in which Russians see all actions and policies of the rest of the world. Russian history for over a thousand years has been a succession of attempts, often unsuccessful, to resist invasion and conquest... The Russians, therefore, obviously see themselves as fighting for their existence in a hostile world.

Second, it follows that to the Russians all of the defense and security measures of the Western powers seem to have an aggressive intent. Our actions to expand our military security system... appear to them as going far beyond the requirements of defense. I think we might feel the same if the United States were the only capitalistic country in the world, and the principal socialist countries were creating a level of armed strength far exceeding anything in their previous history.

Finally, our resistance to her attempts to obtain warm-water ports and her own security system in the form of "friendly" neighboring states seems, from the Russian point of view, to clinch the case. After twenty-five years of isolation and after having achieved the status of a major power, Russia believes that she is entitled to recognition of her new status. Our interest in establishing democracy in Eastern Europe, where democracy by and large has never existed, seems to her an attempt to reestablish the encirclement of unfriendly neighbors which was created after the last war, and which might serve as a springboard of still another effort to destroy her.

If this analysis is correct, and there is ample evidence to support it, the action to improve the situation is clearly indicated. The fundamental objective of such action should be to allay any reasonable Russian grounds for fear, suspicion and distrust... We should make an effort to counteract the irrational fear of Russia which is being systematically built up in the American people by certain individuals and publications. The slogan that communism and capitalism, regimentation and democracy, cannot continue to exist in the same world is, from a historical point of view, pure propaganda.


The administration argued that a new era of total war required the country to take unprecedented steps to defend its interests. "Total war" could not be confined to the battlefield; it required the full participation of the home front as well. All of the nation's resources had to be mobilized to defeat the enemy, blurring the line between civilian and military. Every citizen was a soldier, responsible for defending the American way of life. In an age of total war, Americans had to abandon traditional objections to a standing army and enlarged federal power. "Wars are no longer fought solely by armed forces," explained navy Admiral Ernest J. King. "Directly or indirectly, the whole citizenry and the entire resources of the nation go to war."

Supporters of containment won the argument by claiming that Americans faced a new situation that required unprecedented steps. A drastic departure from the antimilitaristic tradition of our peace-loving America is now necessary," argued a congressman. The greatest threat to American liberty came not from the expansion of state power produced by national security needs, but from the threat from abroad. "The loss of Europe, Asia, and Africa," claimed Democratic senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, "would bring an irresistible drive toward isolationism in the United States and the consequent erection of a garrison state. The effort to build an unconquerable bastion while surrounded by a Communist world would bring in its train the suppression of many of our precious liberties."
How would you define containment?

Containment, associated with the American diplomat George F. Kennan, was the central post-war concept of the US and its allies in dealing with the Soviet Union. Containment kept the cold war from being a hot war. At the end of the second world war, when it became clear that the Soviet Union was not going to continue to be a reliable ally, many people in the West fell into despair. They saw two choices lying ahead—getting into a third world war with a massive country that already dominated Europe, or appeasement. That vision of George Orwell’s “1984”, of democracy being stamped out altogether, came close to capturing the mood of many people after WWII. It was George Kennan who showed a way out of Orwell’s grim vision.

How?

What Kennan did, in his famous “Long Telegram” from Moscow in February 1946 and through a briefly anonymous article in Foreign Affairs in 1947 was to lay out a third path between the extremes of war and appeasement—containment. Stalin, he said, is not Hitler. He does not have a fixed timetable for aggression. He is determined to dominate Europe and, if possible, the world, but there is no hurry about it. If the US and its allies could be patient and contain Soviet expansionism without war or appeasement over a sufficiently long period of time the Russians would change their priorities. If we could develop a coherent strategy on non-provocative resistance, this third path would lead to a settlement with the Soviet Union or even to the break-up of the Soviet Union. Kennan foresaw internal contradictions within the Soviet system that would probably cause it to fall apart. The first major initiative that he proposed was the Marshall Plan, providing American aid for the recovery of Western Europe so that
Europe would not despair and feel it had to look to the Soviet Union as an alternative.

On what were Kennan's predictions based?

Kennan was one of the first group of trained Soviet specialists in the American Foreign Service, trained back in the 1920s before the US developed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Kennan then went to the Soviet Union in 1933 with the first US ambassador, William C. Bullitt. You would think his insight into why patience would pay off might come from the study of the Soviet economy or of Russian history, but it came from reading the great Russian literature of the 19th century—Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Chekhov. The Bolshevik revolution, he felt, had not fundamentally changed the national character, reflected in these novels. It was that character that would eventually reassert itself to overthrow or subvert the Soviet system. When Kennan’s plane stopped to refuel in Omsk during his first visit to Siberia in June 1945, he stood under the wing and read Tolstoy aloud to an illiterate babushka he had befriended in-flight. All the passengers gathered around to listen. That moment shows that at the high point of the Soviet system, there was something else in Russia, quite alien to Marxism-Leninism.

Suggested reading: Lev Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” (1869) and “Anna Karenina” (1873-77), “The Steppe” by Anton Chekhov (1888). Kennan’s mother died when he was two years old; recounting this Chekhov story about a lonely boy had him in tears at the age of 99.

It is fascinating that someone who lacked a mother’s care was so aware of how vital containment would be for the rest of us.

And his own physical health was very precarious throughout his long life.

He said he had to contain his own passions as a way to survive. He talked about that personally in the 1930s before he talked about it as a policy in the 1940s.

He must have been delighted to watch his strategy work.

That was his paradox. The chief strategist of containment soon became its chief critic. Kennan served for two and a half years under Marshall, but by the time he left he was at odds with almost everything the United States was doing. NATO, the H-bomb decision, and military build-up at the time of the Korean War were decisions made by others in the name of containment. Kennan became a great critic of American foreign policy, and gave the Keith lectures on the BBC in 1957 calling for Soviet, American, British and French disengagement from the centre of Europe, causing a major diplomatic incident.


He must have been very excited in the late 1980s, though—his policy worked and his predictions were right.

He was absolutely not pleased by the events of the late 1980s. He thought Ronald Reagan was the most dangerous leader of the cold war, despite the fact that Reagan actually came close to implementing Kennan’s recommendations from the late 1940s. The cold war ended as Kennan had predicted it would, but it was extremely difficult to get him to see this. When the Berlin wall finally came down and Germany finally reunified, he wrote in his diary that nothing good can come of this. The wall came down; he wrote, because of East German youths lustig after the fleshpots of West Berlin. He never accepted his own vindication.
**Vladislav Zubok on: Stalin's 1946 Speech**

Vladislav Zubok is professor of international history at the London School of Economics. Zubok is a specialist in the history of the Cold War and 20th century Russia.

Q: Tell me about the speech Stalin made at the Bolshoi Theater in February 1946. It was a speech that made a big impression in the West didn't it?

VZ: Well, if we just take today and read Stalin's speech, we wouldn't be shocked by anything...He praised the Party; he praised the Socialist regime. He justified all the policies of the 30s -- collectivization, industrialization. Said, that's what enabled us to win the war. And then he switched to international analysis and he used again Leninist concept of imperialism to say that division of, redivision of the markets, struggle for world resources will produce conflicts and will produce wars. So that was not a war that happened by chance, the Second World War. It was inevitable. It stemmed from contradictions of capitalism.

So given this analysis, he proposed a solution. We should gear up to -- you know, the big leap forward. He didn't use the Chinese word of course, but that was the essence of his proposal. Three more five-year plans, which meant of course everybody remembered what first two five-year plans were in the 30s. Extreme tension, no luxury, no consumer goods, everything for defense, people sleeping five hours, working for fifteen hours, stuff like that. So that was pretty clear for the contemporaries. And many war veterans or just normal people who expected that they would relax after the war, that Stalin would finally say you deserve some peace and relaxation, my brothers and sisters -- that's how he talked to people in '41. That's how he talked to people even in May '45. Russians, brothers and sisters, you trusted your government, your government, you know, made some mistakes. He changed the tone so abruptly in February of '46...

And we know that at the same time -- a little bit earlier -- Stalin returned his master of propaganda from Finland, where he was in charge of -- he was the like commissioner in Finland -- he returned him to Moscow and put him in charge of propaganda apparatus. He needed to turn the country to the idea of exerting maximum efforts for rearmament. And I'm sure, again -- that's my belief -- it was linked to the atomic project. Not only atomic project -- Stalin, of course, simultaneously gave a green light to other projects -- missiles, for instance. I mean, if you take only two of these projects you put the country under immense stress economically. And propaganda is important to motivate people to tolerate all the hardships, to sustain all their hardships. And take note that Stalin could not tell them, my countrymen, you are suffering basically because we are trying to build the atomic build and missiles so fast. There was a complete secrecy. So he needed to come up with something else to justify all this. So, in a sense, Stalin was always a ruthless pragmatist and for him it was not ideology per se that mattered. It was that, that was the obvious tool to make people work hard and to put up with hardships in life.

Internationally, of course, that speech produced such a turmoil, particularly in London and Washington. And both ambassadors -- British and American -- sent alarmist reports about the speech. And of course just two weeks later George Kennan sent his long telegram to Washington, which was a bombshell...So what happened was that Stalin's return to ideology and to this interpretation of the international situation confirmed some suspicions that cropped up in the minds of Western politicians who kept asking themselves the question, what actually Stalin wanted after the war? Would he be prepared to limit himself, or his ambitions were unlimited? His expansion would continue on and on and on?
At the same time, what happened in December of '45, Stalin applied a maximum pressure on Turkey. There was his public campaign for annexation of some Turkish territories, and for granting the Soviet Union military bases in the Turkish straits. Even more so, at the same time, Stalin began to apply pressure to Iran. And in December, two autonomous republics or puppet republics were set in the zone of Soviet military occupation in northern Iran -- the Kurdish Republic, and the ethnic Azerbeijani Republic, which were widely regarded as, as tools in Stalin's hands to obtain oil concessions in Iran, to subjugate Iran, to turn it into a Russian sphere of influence.

So, well the truth is that from the Soviet perspective, from Stalin's perspective, those requests were limited. I mean, the Turkish straits and the total demands to Turkey was on the agenda of Czarist Russian imperialism for decades, if not centuries. Same with Iran. Russia did have a sphere of influence in Iran. But Stalin never bothered to, to provide his Western counterparts with any clear rationale for his foreign policy. He was an opportunist; he preferred to keep his options open. So that sowed immense mistrust, immense uncertainty about his intentions in the West. So when his speech, that speech gave, was like a fuse. Oh, suddenly people in the West people realized, ch, that's why he's doing all this. He's still a Marxist; he's a Marxist-Leninist. He's bent on unlimited Communist expansion. He can never be satisfied. That combination, dangerous combination of Communist universalism with old Czarist, Czarist expansionism is what motivates Russia. And that produced, that produced, that hardened up the West, particularly the Truman administration, to stop really trusting Stalin, to stop negotiating with Stalin, but instead building a -- unilaterally building up the power to contain the Soviet Union.
Comrades!

Eight years have passed since the last elections to the Supreme Soviet. This has been a period replete with events of a decisive nature. The first four years were years of intense labor on the part of Soviet people in carrying out the Third Five-Year Plan. The second four years covered the events of the war against the German and Japanese aggressors — the events of the Second World War. Undoubtedly, the war was the main event during the past period.

It would be wrong to think that the Second World War broke out accidentally, or as a result of blunders committed by certain statesmen, although blunders were certainly committed. As a matter of fact, the war broke out as the inevitable result of the development of world economic and political forces on the basis of present-day monopolistic capitalism.

Marxists have more than once stated that the capitalist system of world economy contains the elements of a general crisis and military conflicts, that, in view of that, the development of world capitalism in our times does not proceed smoothly and evenly, but through crises and catastrophic wars. The point is that the uneven development of capitalist countries usually leads, in the course of time, to a sharp disturbance of the equilibrium within the world system of capitalism, and that group of capitalist countries regards itself as being less securely provides with raw materials and markets usually attempts to change the situation and to redistribute “spheres of influence” in its own favor — by employing armed force. As a result of this, the capitalist world is split into two hostile camps, and war breaks out between them.

Perhaps catastrophic wars could be avoided if it were possible periodically to redistribute raw materials and markets among the respective countries in conformity with their economic weight by means of concerted and peaceful decisions. But this is impossible under the present capitalist conditions of world economic development.

Thus, as a result of the first crisis of the capitalist system of world economy, the First World War broke out; and as a result of the second crisis, the Second World War broke out.

This does not mean, of course, that the Second World War was a copy of the first. On the contrary, the Second world differed substantially in character from the first. It must be borne in mind that before attacking the Allied countries the major fascist states — Germany, Japan and Italy — destroyed the last remnants of bourgeois-democratic liberties at home and established there a cruel terrorist regime, trampled upon the principle of the sovereignty and free development of small countries, proclaimed as their own the policy of seizing foreign territory, and shouted from the rooftops that they were aiming at world domination and the spreading of the fascist regime all over the world; and by seizing Czechoslovakia and the central regions of China, the Axis Powers
showed that they were ready to carry out their threat to enslave all the freedom-loving peoples. In new of this, the Second World War against the Axis Powers, unlike the First World War, assumed from the very outset the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one of the tasks of which was to restore democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the Axis Powers could only augment — and really did augment — the anti-fascist and liberating character of the Second World War.

It was on this basis that the anti-fascist coalition of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and other freedom-loving countries came into being and later played the decisive role in defeating the armed forces of the Axis Powers.

That is how it stands with the question of the origin and character of the Second World War.

Everybody, perhaps, now admits that the war was not nor could have been an accident in the lives of the peoples, that it actually became a war of the peoples for their existence, and that for that very reason could not have been a swift or lightning war.

As far as our country is concerned, for her this war was the fiercest and most arduous ever fought in the history of our Motherland.

But the war was not only a curse. It was also a great school which examined and tested all the forces of the people. The war laid bare all facts and events in the rear and at the front, it ruthlessly tore down all the veils and coverings that concealed the actual features of states, governments and parties, and brought them onto the stage without masks and without make-up, with all their defects and merits. The war was something in the nature of an examination of our Soviet system, of our State, of our Government and of our Communist Party.........

This is one of the positive sides of the war............

And so, what is the summation of the war?

There is one principal summation upon which all the others rest. This summation is, that towards the end of the war the enemies sustained defeat and we and our Allies proved to be the victors. We terminated the war with complete victory over our enemies — this is the principal summation of the war. But this summation is too general, and we cannot put a full stop here. Of course, to defeat the enemies in a war such as the Second World War, the like of which has never been witnessed in the history of mankind before, means achieving a victory of world historical importance. That is true. But still, it is a general summation, and we cannot rest content with it. To appreciate the great historical importance of our victory we must analyze the matter more concretely.

And so, how should our victory over the enemies be interpreted? What can this victory signify from the point of view of the state and the development of the internal forces of our country?

Our victory signifies, first of all, that our Soviet social system was victorious, that the Soviet social system successfully passed the test of fire in the war and proved that it is fully viable.
As we know, the foreign press on more than one occasion asserted that the Soviet social system was a “dangerous experiment” that was doomed to failure, that the Soviet system was a “house of cards” having no foundations in life and imposed upon the people by the Cheka, and that a slight shock from without was sufficient to cause this “house of cards” to collapse.

Now we can say that the war has, refuted all these assertions of the foreign press and has proved them to have been groundless. The war proved that the Soviet social system is a genuinely people's system, which grew up from the ranks of the people and enjoys their powerful support; that the Soviet social system is fully viable and stable form of organization of society.

Secondly, our victory signifies that our Soviet state system was victorious, that our multinational Soviet state passed all the tests of the war and proved its viability.

As we know, prominent foreign journalists have more than once expressed themselves to the effect that the Soviet multinational state is an “artificial and short-lived structure,” .........

Now we can say that the war refuted these statements of the foreign press and proved them to have been devoid of all foundation. The war proved that the Soviet multinational state system successfully passed the test, grew stronger than ever during the war, and turned out to be quite a viable state system. These gentlemen failed to realize that the analogy of Austria-Hungary was unsound, because our multinational state grew up not on the bourgeois basis, which stimulates sentiments of national distrust and national enmity, but on the Soviet basis, which, on the contrary, cultivates sentiments of friendship and fraternal cooperation among the peoples of our state.

Incidentally, after the lessons of the war, these gentlemen no longer dare to come out and deny the viability of the Soviet state system. The issue now is no longer the viability of the Soviet state system, because there can be no doubt about its viability. Now the issue is that the Soviet state system has proved to be a model multinational state, that the Soviet state system is a system of state organization in which the national problem and the problem, of the collaboration of nations have found a better solution than in any other multinational state.

Thirdly, our victory signifies that the Soviet Armed Forces, our Red Army, was victorious, that the Red Army heroically withstood all the hardships of the war, utterly routed the armies of our enemies, and emerged from the war the victor. (A voice: “Under Comrade Stalin’s leadership!” All rise. Loud and prolonged applause, rising to an ovation.)

Now, everybody, friends and enemies alike, admit that the Red Army proved equal to its tremendous task. But this was not the case six years ago, in the period before the war. As we know, prominent foreign journalists, and many recognized authorities on military affairs abroad, repeatedly stated that the condition of the Red Army roused grave doubts, that the Red Army was poorly armed and lacked a proper commanding staff, that its morale was beneath criticism, that while it might be fit for defense, it was useless for attack, and that, if struck by the German troops, the Red Army would collapse like “a colossus with feet of clay.” Such statements were made not only in Germany, but also in France, Great Britain and America.

Now we can say that the war refuted all these statements and proved them to have been groundless and ridiculous. The war proved that the Red Army is not “a colossus with feet of clay,” but a first-class
modern army, equipped with the most up-to-date armaments, led by most experienced commanders and possessing high morale and fighting qualities.

It must be noted that the “critics” of the Red Army are becoming fewer and fewer. More than that. Comments are more and more frequently appearing in the foreign press noting the high qualities of the Red Army, the skill of its men and commanders, and the flawlessness of its strategy and tactics. This is understandable. After the brilliant victories the Red Army achieved.

This is how we concretely understand the victory our country achieved over her enemies.

Such, in the main, is the summation of the war.

It would be wrong to think that such a historical victory could have been achieved without preliminary preparation by the whole country for active defense. Bravery alone is not enough to overpower an enemy who possesses a vast army, first-class armaments, well-trained officers and fairly well-organized supplies. To withstand the blow of such an enemy, to resist him and then to inflict utter defeat upon him it was necessary to have, in addition to the unexampled bravery of our troops, fully up-to-date armaments, and in sufficient quantities, and well-organized supplies, also in sufficient quantities. But for this it was necessary to have, and in, sufficient quantities, elementary things such as: metals — for the production of armaments, equipment and industrial machinery; fuel — to ensure the operation of industry and transport; cotton — to manufacture army clothing; grain — to supply the army with food.

Can it be said that before entering the Second World War our country already possessed the necessary minimum of the material potentialities needed to satisfy these main requirements? I think it can. To prepare for this immense task we had to carry out three five year plans of national-economic development. It was these three five-year plans that enabled us to create these material potentialities.

What were the material potentialities at our country’s disposal before the Second World War?

The difference, as you see, is colossal.

This unprecedented growth of production cannot be regarded as the simple and ordinary development of a country from backwardness to progress. It was a leap by which our Motherland became transformed from a backward country into an advanced country, from an agrarian into an industrial country.

This historic transformation was brought about in the course of three five-year plans, beginning with 1928 with the first year of the First Five-Year Plan. Up to that time we had to restore our ruined industries and heal the wounds inflicted upon us by the First World War and the Civil War. If we take into consideration the fact that the First Five-Year Plan was carried out in four years, and that the execution of the Third Five-Year Plan was interrupted by the war in the fourth year, it works out that the transformation of our country from an agrarian into an industrial country took only about thirteen years.
It cannot but be admitted that thirteen years is an incredibly short period for the execution of such a gigantic task........

By what policy was the Communist Party able to create these material potentialities in so short a time?

First of all by the Sovie: policy of industrializing the country.

The Soviet method of industrializing the country differs radically from the capitalist method of industrialization. In capitalist countries, industrialization usually starts with light industry. In view of the fact that light industry requires less investments, that capital turnover is faster, and profits are made more easily than in heavy industry, light industry becomes the first object of industrialization, in those countries. Only after the passage of a long period of time, during which light industry accumulates profits and concentrates them in the banks, only after this, does the turn of heavy industry come and accumulation begin gradually to be transferred to heavy industry for the purpose of creating conditions for its expansion. But this is a long process, which takes a long time, running into several decades, during which you have to wait while the light industry develops and does without heavy industry. Naturally, the Communist Party, could not take this path. The Party knew that war was approaching, that it would be impossible to defend our country without heavy industry, that it was necessary to set to work to develop heavy industry as quickly as possible, and that to be belated in this matter meant courting defeat. The Party remembered what Lenin said about it being impossible to protect the independence of our country without heavy industry, and about the likelihood of the Soviet system perishing without heavy industry. The Communist Party of our country therefore rejected the “ordinary” path of industrialization and commenced the industrialization of the country by developing heavy industry. This was a very difficult task, but one that could be accomplished. It was greatly facilitated by the nationalization of industry and the banks, which made it possible quickly to collect funds and transfer them to heavy industry.

There can be no doubt that without this it would have been impossible to transform our country into an industrial country in so short a time.

Secondly, by the policy of collectivizing agriculture.

To put an end to our backwardness in agriculture and to provide the country with the largest possible amount of market grain, cotton, and so forth, it was necessary to pass from small peasant farming to large-scale farming, for only large-scale farming can employ modern machinery, utilize all the achievements of agricultural science and provide the largest possible quantity of market produce. But there are two kinds of large-scale farming — capitalist and collective. The Communist Party could not take the capitalist path of developing agriculture not only on grounds of principle, but also because that path presupposes an exceedingly long process of development and requires the preliminary ruination of the peasants and their transformation into agricultural laborers. The Communist Party therefore took the path of collectivizing agriculture, the path of organizing large farms by uniting the peasant farms into collective farm’s............

There is no doubt that without the policy of collectivization we would not have been able to put an end to the age-long backwardness of our agriculture in so short a time.
It cannot be said that the Party’s policy met with no resistance. Not only backward people, who always shrink from everything new, but even many prominent members of the Party persistently tried to pull our Party back, and by every possible means tried to drag it onto the “ordinary” capitalist path of development. All the anti-Party machinations......... all their “activities” in sabotaging the measures of our Government, pursued the one object of frustrating the Party’s policy and of hindering industrialization and collectivization. But the Party yielded neither to the threats of some nor to the howling of others and confidently marched forward in spite of everything. It is to the Party’s credit that it did not adjust itself to the backward, that it was not afraid to swim against the stream, and that all the time it held on to its position of the leading force. There can be no doubt that if the Communist Party had not displayed this staunchness and perseverance it would have been unable to uphold the policy of industrializing the country and of collectivizing agriculture.

Was the Communist Party able to make proper use of the material potentialities created in this way for the purpose of developing war production and of supplying the Red Army with the armaments it needed?

I think it was, and that it did so with the utmost success.

Leaving out of account the first year of the war, when the evacuation of industry to the East hindered the work of developing war production, we can say that during the three succeeding years of the war the Party achieved such successes as enabled it not only to supply the front with sufficient quantities of artillery, machine guns, rifles, airplanes, tanks and ammunition, but also to accumulate reserves......

.........As you see, it does not resemble the picture of the way our army was supplied during the First World War, when the front suffered a chronic shortage of artillery and shells, when the army fought without tanks and aircraft, and when one rifle was issued for every three men.

As regards supplying the Red Army with food and clothing, it is common knowledge that the front not only felt no shortage whatever in this respect, but even, had the necessary reserves.

This is how the matter stands as regards the activities of the Communist Party of our country in the period up to the beginning of the war and during the war.

Now a few words about the Communist Party’s plans of work for the immediate future. As you know, these plans are formulated in the new five-year plan, which is to be adopted in the very near future. The main tasks of the new five-year plan are to rehabilitate the devastated regions of our country, to restore industry and agriculture to the prewar level, and then to exceed that level to a more or less considerable extent. Apart from the fact that the rationing system is to be abolished in the very near future (loud and prolonged applause ), special attention will be devoted to the expansion of the production of consumers’ goods, to raising the standard of living of the working people by steadily reducing the prices of all commodities (loud and prolonged applause ), and to the extensive organization of scientific research institutes of every kind (applause ) capable of giving the fullest scope to our scientific forces. (Loud applause.)

I have no doubt that if we give our scientists proper assistance they will be able in the very near future not only to overtake but even outstrip the achievements of science beyond the borders of our country. (Prolonged applause.)
As regards long-term plans, our Party intends to organize another powerful upswing of our national economy that will enable us to raise our industry to a level, say, three times as high as that of prewar industry. We must see to it that our industry shall be able to produce annually up to 50,000,000 tons of pig iron (prolonged applause), up to 60,000,000 tons of steel (prolonged applause), up to 500,000,000 tons of cmeal (prolonged applause) and up to 60,000,000 tons of oil (prolonged applause).

Only when we succeed in doing that can we be sure that our Motherland will be insured against all contingencies. (Loud applause.) This will need, perhaps, another three five-year plans, if, not more. But it can be done, and we must do it. (Loud applause.)

This, then, is my brief report on the activities of the Communist Party during the recent past and on its plans of work for the future. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

It is for you to judge to what extent the Party has been and is working on the proper lines (applause), and whether it could not have worked better. (Laughter and applause.)

It is said that victors are not judged (laughter and applause), that they must not be criticized, that they must not be enquired into. This is not true. Victors may and should be judged (laughter and applause), they may and should be criticized and enquired into. This is beneficial not only for the cause, but also for the victors (cries of approval and applause); there will be less swelled-headedness, and there will be more modesty. (Laughter and applause.) I regard the election campaign as the voters’ judgment the Communist Party of our country as the ruling party. The result of the election will be the voters’ verdict. (Loud cries of approval and applause.) The Communist Party of our country would not be worth much if it feared criticism and investigation. The Communist Party is ready receive the verdict of the voters. (Loud applause.)

In this election contest the Communist Party does not stand alone. It is going to the polls in a bloc with the non-Party people. In the past Communists were rather distrustful of non-Party people and of non-Partyism. This was due to the fact that various bourgeois groups, who thought it was not to their advantage to come before the voters without a mask, not infrequently used the non-Party flag as a screen. This was the case in the past. Times are different now. Non-Party people are now separated from the bourgeoisie by a barrier called the Soviet social system. But on the other side of the barrier the non-Party people are united with the Communists in one, common, collective body of Soviet people. Within this collective body they fought side by side to consolidate the might of our country, they fought side by side and shed their blood on the various fronts for the sake of the freedom and greatness of our Motherland, and side by side they hammered out and forged our country’s victory over her enemies. The only difference between them is that some belong to the Party and some don’t. But this difference is only a formal one. The important thing is that all are engaged in one common cause. That is why the bloc of Communists and non-Party people is a natural and vital thing. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

In conclusion, permit me to express my thanks for the confidence which you have shown me by nominating me as a candidate for the Supreme Soviet. You need have no doubt that will do my best to justify your confidence.

Source: I. V. Stalin, Speeches Delivered at Meetings of Voters of the Stalin Electoral District, Moscow (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950), pp. 19-44.