

Reading Essentials and Study Guide



The Cold War Begins, 1945–1960

Lesson 2 The Early Cold War Years

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did the Cold War shape postwar international relations? How did Cold War tensions affect American society?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

***insecurity** the state of not being confident or sure

***initially** of or relating to the beginning; to start with

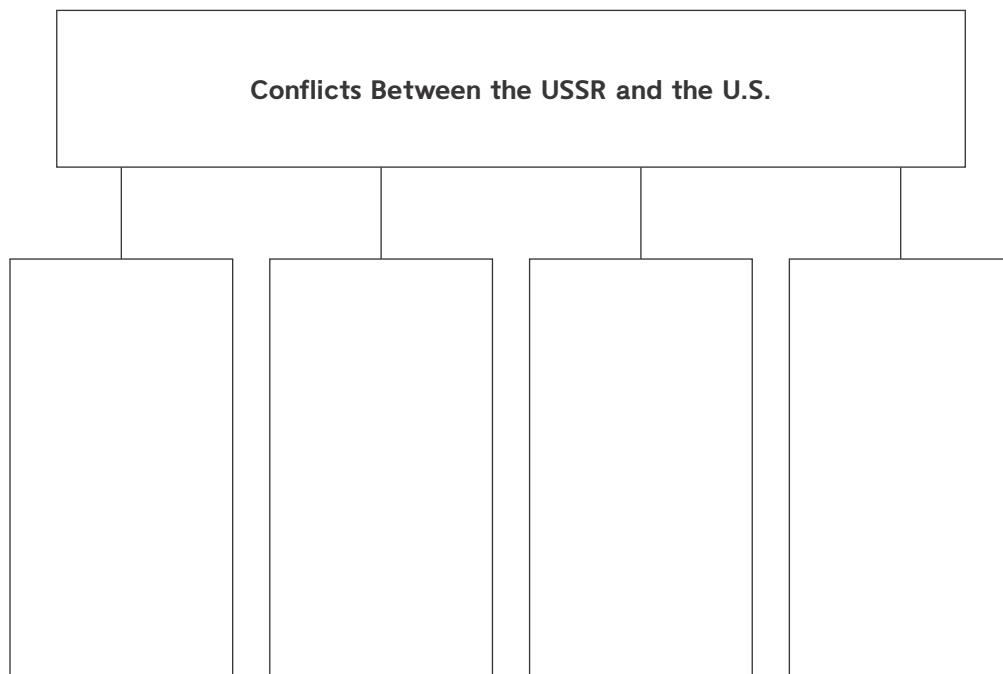
Content Vocabulary

containment the policy or process of preventing the expansion of a hostile power

limited war a war fought with limited commitment of resources to achieve a limited objective, such as containing communism

TAKING NOTES: *Organizing*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list early conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States.



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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

President Truman wanted to keep communism from spreading. To do this, he supported Greece, Iran, and West Germany. When Communist North Korea invaded South Korea, Truman and the United Nations sent troops to help South Korea.

Containing Communism

Guiding Question *What was the policy of containment?*

Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were growing. Yet many U.S. officials continued to believe that it was possible to work together with the Soviets. In late 1945, the foreign ministers of the former Allies met to discuss the future of Europe and Asia. First they met in London and then in Moscow. British and U.S. officials pushed for free elections in Eastern Europe. But the Soviets would not change their views.

The Long Telegram

U.S. officials were getting tired of the Soviets' refusal to cooperate. The U.S. State Department asked the American Embassy in Moscow to explain the Soviets' behaviour. On February 22, 1946, diplomat George Kennan responded. His response became known as the Long Telegram. This message, which was thousands of words long, explained Kennan's views of the Soviets. According to Kennan, the Soviets had a feeling of **insecurity** and fear of the West. The communist ideas of Lenin and Stalin made this view even stronger. Communists believed they were in a struggle against capitalism. Kennan argued that it was, therefore, impossible to reach any permanent agreement with them.

In the Long Telegram, Kennan described an idea that became basic U.S. policy throughout the Cold War: the containment of Soviet expansion. In Kennan's opinion, the Soviet system had big economic and political weaknesses. If the United States could keep the Soviets from expanding their power, in time the Soviet system would fall apart. The United States could, therefore, beat communism without going to war. Much of Truman's administration read the Long Telegram. It became the basis for their policy of **containment**—keeping communism within its present territory through diplomatic, economic, and military actions.

Crisis in Iran

While Truman's administration talked about Kennan's ideas, a series of crises happened during the spring and summer of 1946. These crises seemed to prove that Kennan was right about the Soviets. The first crisis began in Iran.

During World War II, the United States had troops in southern Iran while the Soviets had troops in northern Iran to secure a supply line from the Persian Gulf. After the war, the Soviets had not withdrawn from northern Iran as they had promised. Stalin then began demanding access to Iran's oil supplies. In addition, Soviet troops helped local Communists in northern Iran start a separate government.

U.S. officials saw these actions as the Soviets' way to gain influence in the Middle East. The secretary of state sent Stalin a strong message telling the Soviet forces to withdraw. At the same time, the battleship USS *Missouri* sailed into the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The pressure seemed to work. Soviet forces withdrew. The Soviets were promised a share in a Soviet-Iranian oil company, but the Iranian parliament later rejected the plan.

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The Truman Doctrine

Having made no progress in Iran, Stalin turned northwest to Turkey. A key route from Soviet ports on the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea went through the straits of the Dardanelles. For centuries, Russia had wanted to control this important route. In August 1946, Stalin demanded joint control of the Dardanelles with Turkey.

Presidential adviser Dean Acheson saw this move as part of a Soviet plan to control the Middle East. He advised Truman to make a show of force. The president ordered the new aircraft carrier *Franklin D. Roosevelt* to join the *Missouri*. Together, these ships would protect Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, Britain tried to help Greece. In August 1946, Greek Communists started a guerrilla war against the Greek government. British troops helped fight the guerrillas. In February 1947, Britain told the United States that it could no longer afford to help Greece because the British economy had weakened after the war.

Shortly after, Truman went before Congress. He asked for \$400 million to fight Communist aggression in Greece and Turkey. His speech outlined a policy that became known as the Truman Doctrine. Its goal was to aid those who worked to resist being controlled by others. In the long run, it promised that the United States would fight the spread of communism worldwide.

The Marshall Plan

Meanwhile, postwar Western Europe faced serious problems. Economies were ruined. People faced starvation. The political situation was confused and agitated. In June 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed the European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan. The plan would give European nations American aid to rebuild their economies. Truman saw both the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine as necessary parts of containment. Marshall offered help to all nations planning a recovery program.

The Marshall Plan was also offered to the Soviet Union and its satellite nations. However, the Soviets rejected it and developed their own economic program. This action split Europe into competing regions even more. The Marshall Plan pumped billions of dollars in supplies, machinery, and food into Western Europe. The region's recovery weakened people's interest in communism. In addition, it opened new markets for trade.

In his 1949 inaugural address, Truman offered assistance to poor countries outside the former war zone. The Point Four Program aimed to give these countries the scientific and industrial tools necessary to help their improvement and growth. The Department of State ran the program until its merger with other foreign aid programs in 1953.

The Berlin Airlift

Truman and his advisers believed Western Europe's success depended on Germany's recovery. The Soviets, however, still wanted Germany to pay reparations. This argument brought the nations to the edge of war. By early 1948, U.S. officials had decided that the Soviets were actively trying to hurt Germany's economy. In response, the United States, Britain, and France merged their zones in Germany. They allowed the Germans to have their own government. They created the Federal Republic of Germany, which became known as West Germany. They also agreed to merge their zones in Berlin and make West Berlin part of West Germany. The Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany. West Germany was mostly independent, but it was not allowed to have a military.

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networks

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The creation of West Germany convinced the Soviets they would never get the reparations they wanted. In June 1948, Soviet troops blockaded West Berlin. The Soviets wanted to force the United States to rethink its decision or give up West Berlin. Truman sent bombers that could carry atomic weapons to bases in Britain. He ordered the U.S. Air Force to use the bombers to fly supplies into Berlin, rather than troops.

The Berlin Airlift began in June 1948 and continued through the spring of 1949. It brought more than 2 million tons of supplies into Berlin. Stalin finally lifted the Soviet blockade on May 12, 1949. The airlift showed how determined the United States was to contain communism and not give in to Soviet demands.

The Creation of NATO

The Berlin blockade convinced many Americans that the Soviet Union's goal was to take over new lands. The public began to support a military alliance with Western Europe. By April 1949, an agreement had been made to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—a mutual defense alliance.

NATO **initially** included 12 countries: the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, and Iceland. NATO members agreed to come to the aid of any member country that was attacked. For the first time, the United States had committed itself to keeping the peace in Europe. Six years later, NATO allowed West Germany to rearm and join its organization. This decision worried Soviet leaders. They responded by organizing a military alliance in Eastern Europe. It was known as the Warsaw Pact.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying Central Issues What was the main idea behind containment?

Developments in Asia and the Korean War

Guiding Question *Why was the Korean War a major turning point in the Cold War?*

The Cold War soon spread far beyond Europe. Conflicts also took place in Asia, where events in China and Korea changed the way the U.S. felt toward Japan. Less than five years after World War II had ended, American troops went back into battle in another part of Asia.

The Chinese Revolution

In China, Chiang Kai-shek ran the Nationalist government. Communist forces run by Mao Zedong had been fighting against the Nationalist government since the late 1920s. During World War II, the two sides put aside their war to fight against Japanese occupation. When World War II ended, however, civil war in China broke out again. Mao made great gains, but neither side could win nor could they agree to a compromise.

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The United States did not want a Communist revolution in Asia. So starting in the mid-1940s the United States sent the Nationalist government \$2 billion in aid. The Nationalists, however, wasted this advantage through poor military planning and corruption. By 1949, the Communists had taken the Chinese capital of Beijing. Support for the Nationalists had fallen.

In August 1949, the U.S. State Department stopped sending aid to the Chinese Nationalists. The Nationalists then fled to the small island of Formosa (now called Taiwan). The Communists had won. In October 1949 they established the People's Republic of China.

China's fall to communism shocked Americans. To make matters worse, in September 1949 the Soviet Union announced that it had tested its first atomic weapon. Then, early in 1950, the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of friendship and alliance. Many Western leaders feared that China and the Soviet Union would support Communist revolutions in other nations.

The United States kept formal diplomatic relations with only the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan. The United States used its veto power in the UN Security Council to keep representatives of the new Communist People's Republic of China out of the UN. As a result, the Nationalist Chinese kept their seat at the UN.

New Policies in Japan

The Chinese revolution brought about a big change in U.S. policy toward Japan. At the end of World War II, General Douglas MacArthur had taken charge of occupied Japan. His job was to introduce democracy and keep Japan from threatening war again. Once the United States lost China as its main ally in Asia, it adopted policies to encourage the quick recovery of Japan's industrial economy. Just as the United States saw West Germany as the key to defending all of Europe against communism, it now saw Japan as the key to defending Asia.

The Korean War

At the end of World War II, U.S. and Soviet forces had entered Korea to disarm the Japanese troops based there. The Allies divided Korea at the 38th parallel of latitude. Soviet troops controlled the north. U.S. troops controlled the south.

As the Cold War began, talks to reunify Korea broke down. A Communist Korean government was set up in the north, while a U.S.-backed government controlled the south. Both governments claimed authority over Korea, and border fights were common. The Soviets gave military aid to the North Koreans, who quickly built an army. On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops invaded the south. They quickly drove back the poorly equipped South Korean forces.

Truman saw the Communist invasion of South Korea as a test of the containment policy. He ordered U.S. naval and air power into action. He then called on the United Nations to act. The Soviet Union had been boycotting the Security Council over its China policy. Without the Soviet Union in the UN, Truman succeeded in getting UN support. With the pledge of UN troops, he ordered General MacArthur to send U.S. troops from Japan to Korea.

The North Koreans drove back South Korean forces into a small area near the port of Pusan. Inside the "Pusan Perimeter," the troops resisted the North Koreans, which gave MacArthur time to send additional troops.

On September 15, 1950, MacArthur ordered a daring invasion behind enemy lines at the port of Inchon. The Inchon landing took the North Koreans by surprise. Within weeks they were in full retreat back across the 38th parallel. Truman then gave the order to chase after the North Koreans beyond the 38th parallel. MacArthur pushed the North Koreans north to the Yalu River, the border with China.

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China Enters the War The Communist People’s Republic of China saw the advancing UN troops as a threat. They warned them to stop their advance. When warnings were ignored, Chinese forces crossed the Yalu River in November. They drove the UN forces back across the 38th parallel.

As his troops fell back, an angry MacArthur demanded approval to expand the war against China. He asked for a blockade of Chinese ports. He wanted to use Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist forces. He even wanted to bomb Chinese cities with atomic weapons.

Truman Fires MacArthur President Truman refused MacArthur’s demands. Truman did not want to expand the war into China or use the atomic bomb. MacArthur publicly criticized the president and said that it was a mistake to keep the war limited. He felt that a limited war was a form of appeasement and would lead to an even bigger war. As president, Truman had to keep control of policy and show that he commanded the military. He fired MacArthur in April 1951 for not following orders.

MacArthur remained popular and came home to parades and a hero’s welcome. Congress and military leaders, however, supported his decision and his strategy in Korea. U.S. policy in Asia remained committed to **limited war**—a war fought to achieve a limited objective, such as containing communism.

Armistice Ends Fighting By mid-1951, UN forces had pushed the Chinese and North Korean forces back across the 38th parallel. The war settled into a series of small battles. In 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected to the presidency. The former general traveled to Korea to talk with commanders and their troops. He became determined to bring the war to an end.

Eisenhower quietly hinted to the Chinese that the United States might use a nuclear attack in Korea. In July 1953, negotiators signed an armistice. The battle line between the two sides in Korea, which was very near the prewar boundary, became the border between North Korea and South Korea. A “demilitarized zone” (DMZ) separated them. U.S. troops are still based in Korea, helping to defend South Korea’s border. There has never been a peace treaty to end the war. More than 33,600 U.S. soldiers died in action during the war. Over 20,600 more died from accidents or disease.

Changes in Policy The Korean War marked a turning point in the Cold War. Until 1950, the United States had preferred to use political pressure and economic aid to contain communism. After the Korean War began, the United States started to build up its military. Before 1950 U.S. efforts to contain communism focused on Europe. With the Korean War, the nation became more militarily involved in Asia. By 1954 the United States signed defense agreements with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The United States also formed the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) with seven other countries in 1954. At the same time, aid started going to French forces fighting Communists in Vietnam.



Reading Progress Check

Analyzing How did the Korean War change the course of the Cold War?
