

The Beginning of the Cold War

Decisions made at the conferences towards the end of World War II set the boundaries for Post-War Germany, Poland, and other Eastern European nations. **Disagreements between the main leaders would be the onset of the Cold War.**

After the **Tehran Conference** in 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin discussed plans for the post-war world. The following conference in **Yalta in 1945** outlined the division of Germany and the planning of the war crimes trials. **Germany was to be divided into four zones**, each controlled by the four main allied nations, Great Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union. Stalin also promised to allow those Eastern European nations liberated by his troops to hold elections, however this never took place.

The **Potsdam Conference in 1945** was after Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, with the new U.S. President, Harry S. Truman representing the United States.



The new "Big Three" at Potsdam

The United States had emerged as the world's greatest military power after World War II as it had suffered less physical damage compared to the nations of Europe. In addition, the United States was for a short time, the only nation with nuclear capabilities.

American Foreign Policy After World War II

There were two major factors that determined the actions of American after the war:

1. The motivation to assure **peacekeeping** efforts around the world
2. **Containment** – stopping the spread of communism

There was a growing distrust regarding Soviet Union policies after the war, especially relating to the spread of communism in Eastern Europe. Winston Churchill's famous **Iron Curtain** speech in 1946 openly warned of Soviet expansion and influence in postwar Europe.

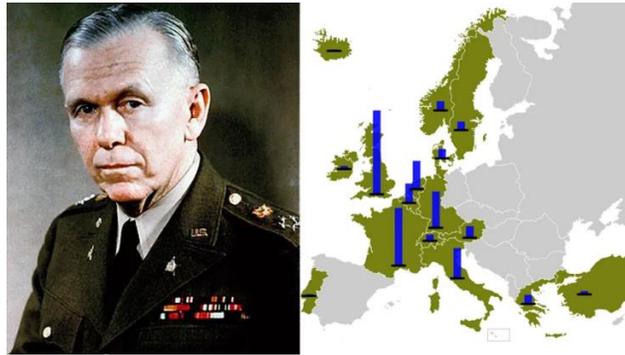
The Truman Doctrine

On March 12, 1947, President Truman asked Congress for \$400 million in aid to **Turkey and Greece** to retaliate against Soviet expansion in the region. Part of this plan was to place missiles in both countries, aimed at the Soviet Union. Congress approved Truman's request and by 1950, more than \$600 million in aid had been given to these two nations.

This policy of economic and military aid became known as the **Truman Doctrine**. It does however, relate to a major change in American foreign policy that once focused on neutrality and isolationism.

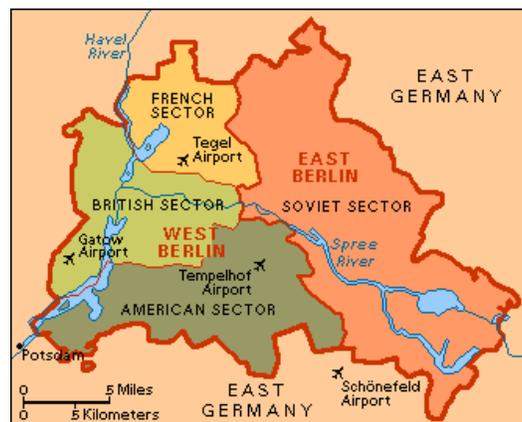
The Marshall Plan

To prevent the spread of communism in war-torn Europe and to finance economic aid to those democratic nations in need, **General George C. Marshall, Secretary of State**, headed a relief plan known as the **Marshall Plan**. In a 1947 speech, Marshall announced that the United States was against “*hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos.*”



Between 1948 and 1952, the United States the Republican-dominated Congress granted close to **\$13 billion in aid**, the largest amounts going to Great Britain, France, Italy, and West Germany. The United States believed that by giving this aid it would stabilize and improve the economies of Europe and therefore halt the spread of communism.

The Berlin Blockade began when the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union could not agree on the eventual unification of Germany. The three western nations decided to unify their zones without Soviet involvement and in 1949, the **Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)** was established. The Soviets strongly opposed these actions and on June 24, 1948, the Soviet Union cut off all access to West Berlin by blockading the roads and railways leading to the city. All relief aid had previously to go through the Soviet-controlled sector of Germany. The Soviets hoped that the Berlin Blockade would force the Western powers out of Berlin.



The United States, Great Britain, and France did not back down regarding the Berlin Blockade. They began the **Berlin Airlift**, flying food, clothing, coal, medicine, and other vital supplies into Berlin. This huge movement of goods lasted for over a year and on May 12, 1949, the Soviets recognized that their blockade had failed.



Shortly afterwards, the Soviet Union announced the creation of the **German Democratic Republic**, a region that would be known as **East Germany**.

The United States also saw that the Soviet expansion was not just aimed at Europe but also looking to spread communism to **developing nations** around the world, In 1950, Congress approved Truman's **Point Four Program**. This bill provided nearly \$400 million for technical development programs in **Latin America, Asia, and Africa**. The Point Four Program wanted to modernize and strengthen the economies of developing nations and therefore halt the spread of communism.

NATO – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

This was a **collective security agreement** formed by the United States and 11 other countries to act together for their common defense. An attack on any one member would be an attack on the entire group. Their emblem, the **“Sword and the Shield”** was created to signify their unity.

In response to NATO, Stalin and his Soviet government would form an opposing alliance of 7 Eastern European countries that would become the **Warsaw Pact**.

In 1949, President Truman announced that the Soviet Union had successfully exploded its first atomic bomb. In response, the United States committed several billion dollars more in assistance in Western Europe and around the world.

In 1951, six European nations formed the **Coal and Steel Community** and by 1957, it was expanded to include transportation and the elimination of tariff barriers within Europe. By the end of the year, the six nations of **Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands** signed a treaty that would create the **EEC – European Economic Community, which would also be known as the Common Market**.

Today this organization is known as the **EU – European Union**. The Union currently consists of 27 EU countries. The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union on 31 January 2020.

Containment in Asia

During World War II, the United States and China had been allies but after the war the United States reversed its political alliances. Japan had become a constitutional democracy after the war so it was now an ally and the communist takeover in China changed the American political acceptance.

In 1949, the civil war in China ended, with the communist forces led by **Mao Zedong** defeating the nationalist regime led by **Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)**.

Communist China now became the **People's Republic of China** and the Nationalist Party fled to the island of **Taiwan** and formed the **R.O.C. – Republic of China**.

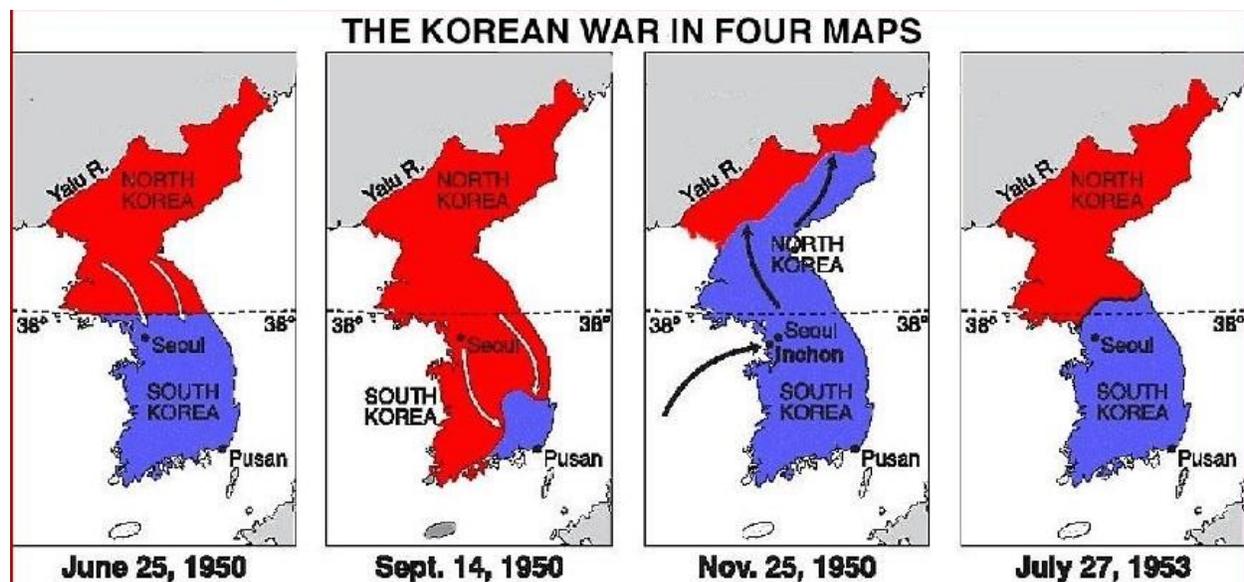
The United States was alarmed by this development as it now feared that communism would now spread beyond China.

The Korean War

During World War II, Korea had been occupied by the Japanese. At the end of the war it was divided at the **38th Parallel**, the northern zone influenced by the Soviet Union and the southern zone controlled by the United States.

By 1948, the **southern zone** elected an anti-communist government led by **Syngman Rhee** and was now called the **Republic of Korea**. The **northern zone** now took the name **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, ruled by a communist government.

In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to unify the country. President Truman responded by committing American troops in the Korean conflict. **General Douglas MacArthur** was sent to command the U.S. military. Troops from the United States along with a small number of soldiers from the United Nations, were soon involved in fierce battles. A major loss was at the Yalu River when Chinese forces entered the conflict and pushed UN troops back to the south. By the middle of 1951, the war had reached a **stalemate** with neither side able to advance successfully.



Disagreements over objectives and military strategies took place between President Truman and General MacArthur. As the President is **Commander-in-Chief** of the armed forces his decisions were final and the arguments ended with MacArthur being recalled to the United States and dismissed from his command.



Talks to end the Korean War had started in June 1951, but no agreements had been reached before the **Election of 1952**. In his campaign promises, the **Republican candidate, Dwight D. Eisenhower** promised that if elected he would go to Korea to aid in the peace negotiations. Eisenhower won the election and did go to Korea but a truce, or cease-fire, was not officially signed until **July 27, 1953**.

- The Korean War lasted for more than three years
- It cost the United States more than \$15 billion
- Approximately 34,000 Americans, one million Chinese and Koreans were killed
- The war ended with at cease-fire at the **38th parallel** and the conflict still continues today
- A **DMZ – Demilitarized Zone** was created between North and South Korea

The Korean War was a major change in American foreign policy. Previous efforts at containment involved economic aid but now the United States showed its **willingness to use military action** against communism when necessary. The Korean War was a warning of future global confrontations between democracy and communism.

The Korean War has been sometimes referred to in the English-speaking world as "**The Forgotten War**" or "**The Unknown War**" because of the lack of public attention it received both during and after the war, relative to the global scale of World War II, which preceded it, and the subsequent Vietnam War, which succeeded it.



The Korean War Veterans Memorial is located near the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It was dedicated on July 27, 1995.

The Cold War At Home

The fear of communism in America dates back to the 1930's with the **HUAC (House Unamerican Activities Committee)** but the growing strength of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism in Asia led some Americans to fear that communism would spread to America. The HUAC operated for over 30 years and was the organization for probing the movie industry in the 1940's and 1950's that resulted in the blacklisting for many actors, writers, and directors.

J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation, often helped HUAC investigations. Some Americans believed that communist agents were trying to destroy the American political system. Other Americans believed that anticommunists were more subversive of American values and were a danger to the nation and violated the civil rights of Americans.

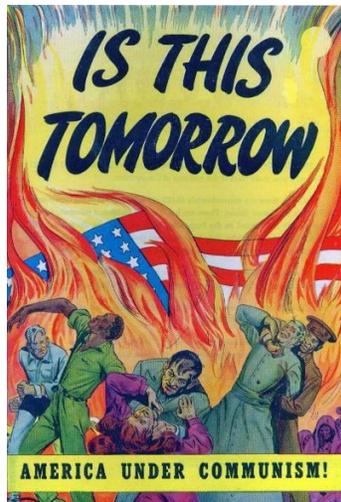
The **Smith Act of 1940** saw Congress making it illegal for anyone to advocate overthrowing any U.S. government by force or affiliate with any organization calling for these actions,

The 1951 Supreme Court case of ***Dennis v. United States*** upheld the Smith Act. Eugene Dennis was the general secretary of the Communist Party in America. He and ten others were convicted of advocating the violent overthrow of the government.

However, two Supreme Court decisions in 1957 weakened the intent of the Smith Act.

Watkins v. United States ruled that the HUAC could not punish witnesses who refused to cooperate with its investigations.

Yates v. United States ruled that the Smith Act applied to only those who teach or advocate direct “action” to overthrow the government, and not to those who simply agree in its principle.



The **Loyalty Program of 1947** was backed by President Truman and his **Loyalty Review Board** to conduct security checks on government employees. Those whose loyalty was considered doubtful were dismissed from their jobs. In the early 1950's, **Robert Oppenheimer**, voiced his opinion against building a more destructive hydrogen bomb. He was determined to be a “loyal citizen” but his security clearance was removed and he was barred from future government research by the Loyalty Review Board.

The Hiss Case in 1948 led many Americans to fear that communism had infiltrated the American government. **Alger Hiss** was a former advisor to President Roosevelt and he was charged of being a communist spy during the 1930's. Whittaker Chambers, a former Communist party member made these charges, which Hiss denied. The issue was investigated by a congressional committee.

A young Republican committee member from California, **Richard Nixon**, believed Hiss was guilty and he pursued the case and Hiss was convicted on perjury charges. Richard Nixon was now a national figure and his Republican party charged that both the Roosevelt and Truman presidencies had not been altered to the spread of communism in America.

McCarthyism

Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin began a purge against communists. In 1950, he charged that he had a list of State Department employees known to be communists. Over the next four years, McCarthy charged many other people and government agencies of being corrupted by communism. He used the term **"infiltrated"** to describe how the accused people had secretly obtained government positions. McCarthy made accusations without any evidence. The tactic became known as **McCarthyism**.



The Rosenberg Case in 1950 was when **Ethel and Julius Rosenberg along with Morton Sobell** were charged with giving atomic secrets to the Soviets during World War II. After a highly controversial trial, they were convicted of espionage. The Rosenbergs were given the **death penalty**, executed in 1953, and Sobell put in prison.

Also in 1950, the **McCarran Internal Security Act** limited the actions of anyone who the government saw as a threat to the nation's security. It was updated with the **McCarran-Walter Act in 1952** that restricted the immigration of persons from communist Asia, as well as from Southern and Eastern Europe.

In 1954 McCarthy charged that the army was full of communists and he televised his investigations. Millions of Americans saw his bullying tactics and public support for his purges declined rapidly. In December 1954, **Congress censured (denounced) him for "conduct unbecoming a member."**

The fall of McCarthy ended the Red Scare. The term **McCarthyism** is now associated with methods of investigation and accusation that are unfair, in order to suppress opposition.