By the end of 1949 Europe had been divided into two separate 'spheres of influence'. In September 1949, following the Berlin Blockade, the Federal Republic of Germany (FDR), also known as West Germany, was established. A month later the German Democratic Republic (GDR), also known as East Germany, was established. Thus the two Germanys became the heart of the physical dividing line between the two superpower blocs. The eight key steps listed below show the events that led to this division:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>NATO established, April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Germany established, September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Germany established, October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berlin Blockade, June 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Coup, February 1948</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Army Occupation of Eastern Europe, 1945–1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marshall Plan, June 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truman Doctrine, March 1947 and Cominform, October 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech at Fulton, Missouri, March 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kennan's Long Telegram, February 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wartime Conferences: Tehran 1943, Yalta 1945, Potsdam 1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These steps are covered in this and the next chapter.

As you read these two chapters consider the following essay questions:
- Was the breakdown of the wartime *Grand Alliance* inevitable?
- Can any one personality or country be blamed more than others?
- What issues in post-war Europe caused the most tension?

### Timeline to European Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>German invasion of Poland; Britain and France declare war on Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning of Winter War between USSR and Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Hitler's <em>Blitzkrieg</em> through Europe; takeover of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Battle of Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Germany begins 'Operation Barbarossa' and invasion of USSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Britain and USA sign Atlantic Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearl Harbor attack by Japan brings USA into the war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The breakdown of the Grand Alliance**

When the Nazis attacked Russia in June 1941, both British Prime Minister *Winston S. Churchill* and Roosevelt sent aid to the Soviets. This marked the beginning of the Grand Alliance. However, this did not mark a change in how Stalin's Soviet Union was seen, particularly by the British. Churchill retained his dislike of the Soviet leader, remarking to his secretary, 'If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.' Thus, relations between the West and the USSR were still clouded by mutual suspicion, as they had been in the 1920s and 1930s.

Despite the fact that the two Western powers sent a considerable amount of aid to the USSR, Stalin demanded *more* action – nothing less than the opening of a 'second front' in Europe to take some of the pressure off the USSR in the east. The *Allies* agreed to this 'in principle', but said that they would not be able to open this 'second front' until the time was deemed right. Stalin was suspicious that they were deliberately delaying this offensive in the hope of seeing the Soviet Union permanently weakened by the continuing German onslaught.

At the first of the three wartime conferences, Tehran in 1943, relations between the *Big Three* seemed to improve a little, as the Western leaders proposed a definite date for the Normandy invasion: May 1944. In return, Stalin promised to declare war on Japan once Germany was defeated.
Step One: The wartime conferences
During the war, the decisions of the Grand Alliance determined the territorial and political structure of post-war Europe. There were three historic conferences between the Allies before the end of World War Two. The key issues under discussion at the conferences fall into the following categories:
- the state of the war
- the status of Germany, Poland, Eastern Europe and Japan
- the United Nations.

The Tehran Conference, 1943
The first conference was held in Tehran, Iran in November 1943. Those present were Josef Stalin representing the USSR, President Franklin Roosevelt representing the USA and Prime Minister Winston Churchill representing the United Kingdom. This was the first meeting of what became known as the Big Three. Their discussions focused on these key areas:

The state of the war: By 1943, the Allies had begun to win the war, following critical turning-point victories in 1942. The Soviets were now pushing the Germans into retreat on the Eastern front, while the Americans and the British had driven the Germans from North Africa and had invaded Mussolini’s Italy. However, the UK and the USA had not yet launched the kind of second front that Stalin had been demanding. Therefore, Stalin continued to press his allies to take on more of the burden of confronting the German war machine from the USSR by invading north-western Europe. There was discussion of the war against Japan in the Pacific, which had entered its brutal ‘island hopping’ phase.

Germany: The key question for the Allies was what to do with Germany after it had been defeated. The Soviets had very different views about the future of Germany from those of the USA and Britain. Many of these differences stemmed from the varied wartime experiences of the Allies, the ‘lessons’ that seemed to have been learned from the failure of the Treaty of Versailles, and their widely differing ideologies. Thus there was no agreement on the future of a defeated Germany. However, they did confirm that ‘unconditional surrender’ of Germany was their objective. Roosevelt also supported ‘Operation Overlord’ (the Allied invasion of northern France that began with D-Day on 6 June 1944) as a priority.

Poland: Stalin’s main concern was ‘security’. This coloured not only his demands over the future of Germany, but also over the shape of Poland’s post-war borders. Stalin wanted to secure his western border by gaining territory from Poland, and by ensuring that Poland had a pro-Soviet government. He argued that Poland had been the traditional launching pad for invasions of Russia. It was thus agreed that the USSR was to keep territory seized in 1939, and Poland in turn would be given territory on its western border from Germany. By agreeing to this, the Allies created a situation that no truly independent Poland could agree to, and also ensured future hostility between Germany and Poland. Thus, a puppet regime in Poland looked like a real possibility, and that regime presumably would have to look to the USSR for security. Tensions between the Poles and Soviets were increased in 1943 with the discovery of a mass grave of 10,000 Polish soldiers in the Katyn Forest. These soldiers had been captured by the Soviets in 1939. The Soviets blamed the Germans for the massacre, but many Poles suspected (rightly) that the Soviets were responsible.

Eastern Europe: The Soviets demanded the right to keep the territory that they had seized between 1939 and 1940. This meant remaining in control of the Baltic States, parts of Finland and Romania in Eastern Europe. With much reluctance, the Americans and the British agreed to the Soviet annexation of these territories. However, this was against the 1941 ‘Atlantic Charter’ agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom.
Japan: The United States and the United Kingdom pressed the USSR to enter the war with Japan. They wanted Stalin to open a Soviet 'second front' in Asia. However, Stalin could not be convinced to do this until the war with Germany was won.

The United Nations: The Americans, in particular, were very keen to establish a replacement for the League of Nations. The British and the Soviets gave their general approval to the idea of a new international organization being established. This would, again, be designed to settle international disputes through collective security. The USA hoped that lessons would have been learned from the 'mistakes' that were made in the structure and make up of the League of Nations and that the proposed United Nations Organization could more successfully fulfil this brief.

Conclusions: There were two main positive outcomes from the Tehran Conference:
- agreement on a new international organization
- agreement on the need for a weak post-war Germany.

Roosevelt and Stalin seemed to work reasonably well together. Indeed, on his return to the USA, Roosevelt publicly stated in a radio broadcast: 'I got along fine with Marshal Stalin ... I believe that we are going to get along very well with him and the Russian people...'

However, as the war continued, the next meeting of the Big Three revealed a growing gap between Stalin's post-war aims and those of the Western powers, though these differences seemed more acute between Stalin and Churchill. Churchill did not trust Stalin, and Roosevelt hoped to play the role of 'mediator' between the British and the Russians. Roosevelt seemed to believe that the more serious problem for post-war stability was British imperialism, rather than Soviet strength. Roosevelt is supposed to have told Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, the leader in London of the Poles in exile, '...of one thing I am certain, Stalin is not an imperialist.' Roosevelt did not appear overly concerned about the future of Poland, nor was he worried about the Allies taking the German capital, Berlin, before the Soviets.

The Yalta Conference, 1945

By the time of the February 1945 Yalta Conference on the Black Sea in the southern Ukraine, Stalin's diplomatic position was greatly strengthened by the physical fact that the Red Army occupied most of Eastern Europe. Once again, the Big Three powers were represented by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. The topics under discussion were the same as at Tehran:

The state of the war: Germany was now on the verge of being defeated. With the Normandy landings in 1944, a second front had finally been opened. The Soviets had driven the Germans from Eastern Europe, and were now ready to invade Germany itself. The British and Americans had forced the Germans from France, and were now poised to cross the Rhine and invade Germany from the west. Japan was still fighting on, but had been under heavy aerial bombardment from the Americans. The USA was now in control of the air and sea in the Pacific, and the Japanese were preparing for the final desperate defence of their homeland.

Germany: The Allies decided that Germany would be disarmed, demilitarized, de-Nazified, and divided. It was agreed that post-war Germany would be divided into four zones of occupation between the USA, the USSR, the UK and France. This division was to be 'temporary', and Germany was to be run as one country. An Allied Control Commission (ACC) would be set up to govern Germany. Stalin demanded a large percentage of reparations from Germany after the devastation that the war in the East had wreaked on the Russians. It was agreed that Germany would pay $20 billion, and 50 per cent would go to the USSR.
Poland: Poland presented the greatest problem – where would the lines of its borders be drawn, and what would be the political make-up of her post-war government? At Yalta the new frontiers of Poland were decided. The border between Poland and the USSR was to be drawn at the 'Curzon Line' (see map below). This put the frontier back to where it had been before the Russo-Polish War of 1921. The Poles were to be compensated by gaining territory from Germany. This would be east of the 'Oder-Neisse Line'. Thus, Stalin had got what he had wanted territorially. In return, he agreed to the establishment of a more democratic government in Poland, following 'free elections'. This developed into the key area of disagreement between the British and the Soviets. The British supported the group known as the 'London Poles', who were the pre-war government that had fled to England in 1939, while the Russians wanted the Communist-dominated Lublin Committee in Poland to form the new post-war government.

Eastern Europe: There seemed to be agreement at Yalta over the future nature of the governments of Eastern Europe. Stalin agreed that the countries of Eastern Europe would be able to decide who governed them in 'free elections'. This was perceived as a major victory for the USA and Britain. Indeed, for the British and Americans this was seen as the most significant of the wartime deals made with the Soviet Union.

Japan: Stalin now promised to enter the war with Japan, as soon as the war in Europe was won. However, the Soviets demanded territory in return from Japan as a 'reward'. This would include South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. The Americans and the British accepted these terms.

United Nations: Stalin agreed that the Soviet Union would join the United Nations Organization. The Allies agreed that there would be five permanent members of the Security Council, each with the power of the veto. Stalin went on to demand that all 16 Soviet Republics have separate seats in the UN General Assembly. The British and Americans agreed in the end to only three seats for individual republics: Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus.
Conclusions: There were three main positive outcomes of the Yalta Conference:
- agreement on the United Nations
- Soviet agreement to join the war in the Pacific against Japan
- the Big Three signing a 'Declaration for Liberated Europe' pledging their support for democratic governments based on free elections in all European countries, including Eastern Europe.

Who were the London Poles and the Lublin Poles?

The London Poles: Many thousands of Poles managed to escape from Poland during the two assaults on their country by German and Soviet forces in 1939–1940. These included members of the Polish government and armed forces. Approximately 100,000 refugee Polish troops regrouped in France and contributed to the Allied war effort. Although the Polish government in exile initially was also in France, it moved to London after the fall of France in 1940.

The London Poles were led by General Władysław Sikorski until he died in a plane crash in July 1943. He had also been Commander-in-Chief of the Polish armed forces. He was succeeded as Prime Minister-in-exile by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, who had been leader of the Peasant Party. Mikołajczyk was fairly left-wing, and open to the idea of reaching an agreement with the Soviets. However, the new Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, together with other leading Poles, was opposed to any deals with the Soviets.

Churchill had a very tough time persuading the Poles to accept a shift in their border to the west of the Curzon Line (see map on page 13). The Poles insisted that if they were to sacrifice the land they had gained in war (1920–1921), then they must have cast-iron guarantees that Poland’s government would be ‘free’ after the war.

But, as Soviet forces moved west in 1944, it seemed increasingly unlikely that Poland’s future government would indeed be free of Soviet interference.

The London Poles played an important part in the doomed Warsaw Rising of August 1944. When the Red Army reached Warsaw on its advance to Germany, the Polish underground forces, commanded by the London Poles, rose up against the Germans. Instead of moving in to assist the attack on the Germans, Stalin ordered the Red Army to stop its advance. The Red Army waited outside Warsaw until the Nazis had brutally put down the rebellion, killing almost 200,000 resistance fighters. The Soviets then moved in and ‘liberated’ Warsaw and Poland, putting in their own provisional government – the Lublin Poles.

The Lublin Poles: Not all Poles were anti-Soviet, and some had felt just as patriotic supporting the Communists. In July 1944, a Committee of National Liberation was set up in Soviet-occupied Lublin, a large city in eastern Poland. This group then came to be known as the Lublin Committee, and they stated that they were a coalition of democratic and patriotic forces, who wished to work with the Soviet Union. This group agreed to the Curzon Line boundary and committed itself to a far-reaching programme of social and economic reform. The USSR recognized this group as the only lawful authority in Poland. Indeed, the Red Army was instructed to co-operate only with representatives of the Lublin Committee.

Towards the end of the war, these Lublin Poles became more influential inside Poland than the London group. Although the Lublin Poles were supposed to liaise closely with the London Poles in the post-war Government of National Unity, they dominated post-war politics in Poland. Leading members of the Lublin Committee were Władysław Gomułka and Bolesław Bierut.

Document analysis

Behind the scenes at Yalta

The letter below was written by President Franklin Roosevelt to Stalin on 6 February 1945 while both were at Yalta. It is about the situation regarding Poland:

February 6, 1945

My dear Marshall Stalin,

I have been giving a great deal of thought to our meeting this afternoon, and I want to tell you in all frankness what is on my mind.
In so far as the Polish Government is concerned, I am greatly disturbed that the three great powers do not have a meeting of minds about the political setup in Poland. It seems to me that it puts all of us in a bad light throughout the world to have you recognizing one government while we and the British are recognizing another in London. I am sure the state of affairs should not continue and that if it does not lead our people to think there is a breach between us, which is not the case. I am determined that there shall be no breach between ourselves and the Soviet Union. Surely there is a way to reconcile our differences.

I was very much impressed with some of the things you said today, particularly your determination that your rear must be safeguarded as your army moves into Berlin. You cannot, and we must not, tolerate any temporary government which will give your armed forces any trouble of this sort. I want you to know that I am fully mindful of this.

You must believe me when I tell you that our people at home look with a critical eye on what they consider a disagreement between us at this vital stage of the war. They, in effect, say that if we cannot get a meeting of minds now when our armies are converging on the common enemy, how can we get an understanding on even more vital things in the future.

I have had to make it clear to you that we cannot recognize the Lublin Government as now composed, and the world would regard it as a lamentable outcome of our work here if we parted with an open and obvious divergence between us on this issue.

You said today that you would be prepared to support any suggestions for the solution of this problem which offered a fair chance of success, and you also mentioned the possibility of bringing some members of the Lublin government here.

Realizing that we all have the same anxiety in getting the matter settled, I would like to develop your proposal a little and suggest that we invite here to Yalta at once Mr. Bierut, Mr. Osobka, and Mr. Lubin from the Lublin government and also two or three from the following list of Poles, who according to our information would be desirable as representatives of the other elements of the Polish people in development of a new temporary government which all three of us could recognize and support: Bishop Sapieha of Cracow, Vincente Witos, Professor Zulawski, Professor Koczy, Professor Kuzelka, and Professor Koczy. If, as a result of the presence of these Polish leaders from abroad such as Mr. Bierut and Mr. Osobka, with the United States Government, and if I feel sure the British government as well, would be prepared to examine with you conditions in which they would dissociate themselves from the London government and transfer their recognition to the new provisional government.

I hope that I do not have to assure you that the United States will never lend its support in any way to any provisional government in Poland that would be inimical to your interest. It goes without saying that any interim government formed as a result of our conference with the Poles here would be pledged to the holding of free elections in Poland at the earliest possible date. I know this is completely consistent with your desire to see a new and democratic Poland emerge from the welter of this war.

Most sincerely yours,

Franklin Roosevelt

Document Questions

1. What is the general tone of this letter to Stalin from Roosevelt?
2. Roosevelt shows sympathy for which of Stalin's key concerns?
3. What suggestions are made for resolving the disagreement over the Polish government?
4. What does this suggest about the relationship between Roosevelt and Stalin?
What were the crucial developments that took place between the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences?

There were some crucial events that radically changed the atmosphere of, and the influences on, the next meeting of the Allies in 1945.

- President Roosevelt died in April 1945 and was replaced by Truman, who was to adopt a more hardline, or 'get tough', policy towards the Soviets.
- Germany finally surrendered unconditionally on 7 May 1945.
- Winston Churchill's Conservative Party lost the 1945 UK general election and Churchill was succeeded as Prime Minister by the Labour Party leader, Clement Atlee.
- As the war in Europe ended, the Soviet Red Army occupied territory as far west as deep inside Germany.
- On the very day after the Potsdam Conference began, 17 July 1945, the United States successfully tested its first atomic bomb.

The Potsdam Conference, 1945

The Potsdam Conference took place in July 1945 in Potsdam, Germany. Those participating were Josef Stalin representing the USSR, President Harry S Truman representing the USA and Prime Minister Clement Atlee representing the UK.

The state of the war: In May 1945, Germany surrendered 'unconditionally'. Although war in the Pacific raged on, the Americans were now poised to invade the mainland. By the time the Potsdam Conference began, the USA was planning to use their new atomic weapon against Japan – if the tests on it proved successful.

Germany: The Allies had agreed at Yalta to disarm, demilitarize, de-Nazify and divide Germany, but at Potsdam they could not agree how this should be done. Finally it was decided that they would carry out the de-Nazification and demilitarization of Germany in their own ways in their own respective zones of occupation. The German economy was to be run as a 'whole', but it was to be limited to domestic industry and agriculture (at 74 per cent of 1936 levels). The Soviets were to receive 25 per cent of their reparation bill from the Western zones. The more agricultural Eastern zone was to give food in exchange.
n what took place elsewhere? The new U.S. president, Harry S. Truman, was not happy with the agreements over Poland and Germany, so he challenged the decision over the new western frontier between Poland and Germany (the Oder-Neisse line). Truman also insisted that the Polish government be re-organized. In other words the Americans wanted an entirely new government. They did not feel that there had been a ‘free and democratic’ vote, and Stalin’s offer to include more Poles within the predominantly ‘Lublin’-led government did not appease the USA.

Eastern Europe: The new U.S. leadership was also unhappy about the so-called ‘Percentages Agreement’ that had been made bilaterally between Stalin and Churchill in October 1944 (see page 18). Spheres of influence had been discussed in terms of ‘percentages’ when deciding the future fate of countries in East and South-eastern Europe. Truman challenged the influence at this agreement had given Stalin over Romania and Bulgaria. However, Soviet military control of Eastern Europe was a fact – the Red Army was literally standing on the territories. Thus, it was very difficult for the West to force Stalin to make any changes. Truman did not want to see Eastern Europe become a Soviet ‘sphere of influence’, but without threatening to push the Red Army back with ground forces there was little practically that the United States could do. The Red Army from the East, which had come to liberate the area from the Nazis, as beginning to look like an army of ‘occupation’ to the Americans.

Japan: Truman was told during this conference that the atomic bomb tests had been successful. On 6 August 1945 the first atomic bomb used in war was dropped on Hiroshima. Three days later another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Soon after the Japanese finally agreed to ‘unconditional surrender’. However, although the Americans liaised with their British allies, Truman did not tell Stalin the ‘full story’ about this new super weapon. And, for the first time, at this conference the Americans did not encourage the Soviets to join in the war against Japan.

United Nations: The United Nations became a reality. It was officially created at the Treaty of San Francisco in 1945. The USSR was the only Communist power of the ‘Big 5’ (the USA, the USSR, France, Britain and Nationalist China), who were the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Stalin used the power of veto this gave the USSR to block any initiatives that he perceived to be against Soviet interests.
Conclusions: There were two positive outcomes from the Potsdam Conference:

- agreement for the immediate, practical control of the defeated Germany
- the establishment of the United Nations.

The Percentages Agreement of October 1944

On 9 October 1944, at a meeting in Moscow, Stalin and Churchill devised what is known as the ‘Percentages Agreement’, which relates to influence and control the Western Powers and the USSR would want to have in various areas after the defeat of Germany. Churchill apparently was concerned that it would appear rather cynical that the two leaders scribbled the fate of millions on a piece of paper. He suggested to Stalin that he burn the paper it was written on. ‘No, you keep it,’ said Stalin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>United Kingdom 90% <em>(in accord with USA)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>50% – 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>50% – 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Russia 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others 25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review questions

1. Look over the issues that were discussed at the three conferences. Which issues were satisfactorily resolved?
2. Which decisions were likely to cause tension in the future?
3. From what you have read so far in both Chapters 1 and 2, what do you consider to be the ‘seeds’ of East–West conflict that were sown from 1917 onwards?

Key developments 1946–1947

Before moving on to Step Two it is important to look at some key developments that were to have an impact on U.S.–Soviet relations.

Salami tactics

One way the Soviet Union gained increasing political control over Eastern Europe was by the method known as ‘salami tactics’. This term is said to have come from a remark made by the Hungarian Communist leader, Rakosi, commenting on how the USSR secured Communist control in Eastern Europe, ‘like slicing off salami, piece by piece’:

- Stage One: The Soviets supervised the organization of governments in the Eastern European states, initially establishing a broad alliance of anti-fascists.
- Stage Two: Each of the parties was ‘sliced off’, one after the other.
- Stage Three: The Communist ‘core’ was left, and then ultimately the local Communists were replaced (if need be) with Moscow-trained people.

By the end of 1946, the so-called ‘Baggage Train’ leaders had returned to Eastern Europe. These were the men who had spent much of the war in Moscow, and were considered by the Soviets to be ‘trustworthy’, for example, Bierut (who returned to Poland), Kolarov (who returned to Bulgaria), Pauter (who returned to Romania) and Rakosi (who returned to Hungary). These leaders would thus ensure that the post-war governments of their respective countries would be dominated by Moscow-backed, ‘Stalinist’ Communists.

Case study: Poland

The ‘free elections’ promised by Stalin at Yalta to occur in a matter of ‘weeks’, were not held until 19 January 1947. Before the elections there had been a campaign of murder, censorship and intimidation. It is estimated that over 50,000 people were deported to Siberia before the elections.
During the elections in January, Mikolajczyk's Polish Peasant Party had 246 candidates disqualified; 149 were arrested and 18 murdered. One million voters were taken off the electoral register for some reason or another. As Desmond Donnelly contends in his book Struggle for the World, 'In these appalling circumstances of intimidation, it was not surprising that Bierut's Communists secured complete control in Poland'.

The Soviet perspective on these elections was quite different from that of the West, where they were seen as a breach of the Yalta agreements. The Soviets, however, saw them as a victory over 'Western expansionism:

"The political goals set by Mikolajczyk in cahoots with Churchill required that Warsaw be liberated (by British and American) forces before the Soviet army reached the city. That way a pro-Western government supported by Mikolajczyk would already be in control of the city by the time the Soviets arrived. But it didn't work out that way. Our troops under Rokosovsky got there first."

Nikita Khrushchev in Khrushchev Remembers, Volume One (Little, Brown and Co., 1970)

This pattern of securing Soviet-Communist-style governments was emerging in the other Eastern European countries that the Red Army had occupied at the end of World War Two – Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. In Czechoslovakia and Finland there remained only a semblance of democracy.

Soviet pressure on Iran

Another place in which the USSR tried to increase its political control in the aftermath of the war was Iran. At the Tehran Conference, it had been agreed that both the British and the Soviets would withdraw their troops from Iran after the war. The UK took its troops out, but Stalin left 30,000 of his in the north, claiming that they were needed there to help put down internal rebellion.

However, these Soviet troops encouraged a Communist uprising, and the Iranian government complained to the USSR's former allies. The British and Americans demanded that Stalin remove his troops immediately. They also saw this as another breach in the wartime agreements. On 1 January 1946, Stalin refused. He believed that after the war he had as much right to the Black Sea Straits and to Iranian oil as did his former allies. Four days later, Truman wrote to his Secretary of State, James Byrnes. In this letter Truman revealed that he thought the USSR was planning an invasion of Turkey and the Black Sea Straits. He also wrote, '... unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language, war is in the making'. In March the United Nations had its first crisis to deal with – Iran. Iran had made a formal protest to the UN concerning the continued presence of Soviet forces. Under this new pressure, Moscow finally pulled its troops out.

Instability in Greece and Turkey

After World War Two there were anti-imperialist, nationalist and, to a certain extent, 'pro-Communist' rebellions in Greece and Turkey. The British, and to a lesser degree the USA, believed that these rebellions were being directed and supported by the Soviets. Churchill, in particular, was annoyed at Stalin’s apparent disregard for their 'Percentages Agreement'.

Communist parties in Italy and France

Communist parties in both these 'Western democracies' grew stronger in post-war Europe, their membership increasing due to the economic deprivations and hardships at the end of the war in Europe. The Americans and the British were suspicious that these newly popular Communist parties were receiving 'encouragement' from Moscow. Indeed there was concern that Italy and France could be 'weak links' in anti-Communist Western Europe.
Examiner’s hint: In Question 3 you need to make sure that you structure your answer clearly. Start your answer with ‘The overall message is...’ and then give details from the cartoon to support your answer.

Cartoon analysis
1. Who is the dancer in the cartoon?
2. What do the daggers represent?
3. What is the message of the cartoon?

This French cartoon from 1950 is entitled ‘Caucasian Dance.’

Step Two: Kennan’s long telegram, February 1946

In February 1946, a key U.S. diplomat in Moscow, George F. Kennan, sent a telegram to the U.S. State Department on the nature of Soviet conduct and foreign policy. His views on the motives behind Soviet foreign policy were to have a lasting influence on the State Department. The key idea in this telegram was that the Soviet system was buoyed by the ‘threat’ of a ‘hostile world outside its borders’, that the USSR was ‘fanatically and implacably’ hostile to the West: ‘Impervious to the logic of reason Moscow [is] highly sensitive to the logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw – and usually does – when strong resistance is encountered at any point.’

To summarize, the key points of Kennan’s telegram were:

- The USSR’s view of the world was a traditional one of insecurity.
- The Soviets wanted to advance Muscovite Stalinist ideology (not simply ‘Marxism’).
- The Soviet regime was cruel and repressive and justified this by perceiving nothing but evil in the outside world. That view of a hostile outside environment would sustain the internal Stalinist system.

- The USSR was fanatically hostile to the West – but they were not ‘suicidal’... ‘Impervious to the logic of reason Moscow [is] highly sensitive to the logic of force’.

Kennan’s ‘logic of force’ argument helped to harden attitudes in the USA and was to play a key role in the development of the U.S. policy of containment (see Chapter Six).
Step Three: Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech, March 1946

On 5 March 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, with President Harry S Truman sitting just behind him on the speakers' platform. This speech is now seen as one of the defining moments in the origins of the Cold War.

Churchill's speech warned of a new danger for Europe:

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive proselytizing tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my war-time comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is sympathy and goodwill ... toward the peoples of all the Russias ... We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers from all renewal of German aggression. We welcome her to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world ... It is my duty, however, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind the line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe – Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia. All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow ... The Russian-dominated Polish government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed of are now taking place. The Communist Parties, which were very small in all these eastern states of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case ... Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts ... this is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of a permanent peace ...  

On the other hand I repulse the idea that a new war is inevitable; still more that it is imminent ... I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines ... Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be relieved by a policy of appeasement ... From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness ... If the western democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering these principles will be immense ... If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty ... then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all.

Winston S. Churchill, Address at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**Document and review questions**

1. Why did Churchill use the phrase 'iron curtain' to describe events in Europe?
2. In what way does Churchill allude to the idea of 'salami tactics' taking place in Eastern Europe?
3. Imagine that you are Stalin reading this speech. What might your reaction be?
What was the basis for the Iron Curtain speech?
In his Iron Curtain speech, Winston Churchill was referring to the fact that by 1946, Soviet-dominated Communist governments were set up in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. This was in spite of the hopes expressed at Yalta that there would be free and democratic elections in Eastern Europe after the war. Communist regimes not linked directly to Moscow had been established in Albania and Yugoslavia as well. Within two to three years this Soviet influence would be extended to East Germany and Czechoslovakia. His remarks were also prompted by the presence of the Red Army in those countries 'liberated' from Germany by the Russians – and by the cloak of secrecy which descended over Eastern Europe within a few months of the end of the war.

Soviet reaction to Churchill's speech
The response from the Soviet leadership was quick and one of outrage. Within a week Stalin had compared Churchill to Hitler. He saw the speech as both 'racist' and as 'a call to war with the Soviet Union'. Within three weeks the Soviets had taken several steps:
- They withdrew from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- They stepped up the tone and intensity of anti-Western propaganda.
- They initiated a new five-year plan of self-strengthening.

Therefore, the 'Iron Curtain' speech led to a further hardening of opinions on both sides. Churchill had defined publicly the new front line in what was now being seen as a new war.
### Document B

Stalin's March 1946 response to the 'Iron Curtain' speech:

Hitler began his work of unleashing war by proclaiming a 'race theory', declaring that only German-speaking people constituted a superior nation. Mr Churchill sets out to unleash a war with a race theory, asserting that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world. There can be no doubt that Mr Churchill's position is a call for war on the USSR.

It is absurd to speak of exclusive control by the USSR in Vienna and Berlin, where there are allied control councils made up of the representatives of four states and where the USSR has only one-quarter of the votes. The Soviet Union's loss of life in the war has been several times greater than that of Britain and the USA put together. Possibly in some quarters an inclination is felt to forget about these colossal sacrifices of the Soviet people, which secured the liberation of Europe from the Hitlerite yoke. But the Soviet Union cannot forget about them. And so what can there be surprising about the fact that the Soviet Union, anxious for its future safety, is trying to see to it that governments loyal in their attitude to the Soviet Union should exist in these countries?

### Questions

1. Explain the message of the Soviet cartoon on page 22.
2. In what ways does the cartoon support the ideas expressed in Stalin's speech?

### Review activities

Review these key Cold War issues up to 1946. Add brief notes to the bullet point subheadings. In your notes, consider how each point added to tension between East and West:

- The opening of a second front
- The Warsaw uprising
- Tensions at Yalta
- Clear divisions at Potsdam
- Hiroshima
- Red Army in Eastern Europe
- Salami tactics
- Germany
- Iran
- Kennan's 'Long Telegram'
- Churchill's Fulton speech
- Instability in Greece and Turkey
- Communist party success in Italy and France

### Examining the cartoon

ToK Time

How can changes in language affect our understanding of the past?

In what ways can our culture impact our interpretation of historical events?

- **Examiner's hint**: In Question 2 you are looking for ways in which the sources say the same thing. Focus on this and not on differences. Be specific in your comparisons: pick out phrases in the speech which you can quote in support of the cartoon.
STEPS TO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY DIVISION OF EUROPE: PART II

Confrontation and containment

In Steps One to Three in Chapter Two, we examined the breakdown of the Grand Alliance of World War Two. In this chapter, Steps Four to Eight, the confrontation between the USA and the USSR intensifies as political, economic and military divisions develop.

Step Four: The Truman Doctrine

Truman made a key speech to the U.S. Congress on 12 March 1947. In this speech he put forward the belief that the United States had the obligation to ‘support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures’. This became known as the ‘Truman Doctrine’.

It was a radical change in U.S. foreign policy, a policy which had been traditionally isolationist. Truman’s new ‘doctrine’ was in response to the unstable situations in Turkey and, in particular, Greece. At the end of the war the British had restored the Greek monarchy, but Communist guerrillas continued to resist in the countryside. The British government could no longer offer assistance to the Greek government, as its own economy had been devastated by the war, leaving the British government £3000 million of debt. In February 1947, the British told the USA that they could no longer maintain troops in Greece. The United States did not want to risk a potential Communist takeover of a strategically important European country, so Truman issued his ‘doctrine’ and, in the name of preserving democracy over Communism, U.S. aid and military advisers were sent to Greece.

The Soviets saw this as evidence of the determination of the United States to expand its sphere of influence, and they did not recognize any legitimacy in this new American involvement in Europe. Truman’s decision was affected not only by Churchill’s perception of the expansionist threat, as outlined in his ‘Iron Curtain’ speech, but also by George Kennan’s Long Telegram. As already mentioned, this ‘doctrine’ marked a departure from the United States’ traditional policy of isolation, and it was the beginning of the American policy of ‘containment’ of Communism. The philosophy of containment would, in the years to come, draw the USA into the affairs of nations well beyond Europe.

On the longer-term significance of the Truman Doctrine, political historian Walter LaFeber wrote:

_The Truman Doctrine was a milestone in American history … the doctrine became an ideological shield behind which the United States marched to rebuild the Western political and economic system and counter the radical left. From 1947 on, therefore, any threats to that Western system could be easily explained as Communist inspired, not as problems which arose from difficulties within the system itself. That was the most lasting and tragic result of the Truman Doctrine._

Walter LaFeber in America, Russia and the Cold War, 5th ed (Knopf, 1985) pp.57–8
II

...and Alliance is... the USA

The main objec... he put those populations who... This became

...of political perspec... in Turkey. Initially, the British were reluctant to... in the name... sent to them.

...pressures on... American perception of George Marshall. Marshall believed that the economies of Western Europe needed immediate help... from the USA. In a broadcast to the nation he declared, 'The patient is sinking... of the Truman Doctrine - it was the economic extension... the President.

Marshall introduced his plan in a speech at Harvard University on 5 June 1947:

It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is not directed against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist... Any government which is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation... on the part of the United States Government.

Before the United States Government can proceed much further in its efforts to alleviate the situation and help start the European world on its road to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by this Government. It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe.

George C. Marshall, Address at Harvard University, 5 June 1947, in Department of State Bulletin XXVII, 15 June 1947, pp.1159-6
Dollar imperialism?
The Marshall Plan was designed to give immediate economic help to Europe. The problem of whether or not to 'allow' the Soviets to join the plan, or indeed to avoid specifically excluding them, was solved by setting down strict criteria to qualify for American economic aid. This involved allowing the United States to investigate the financial records of applicant countries. The USSR would never tolerate this condition.

Thus, the United States invited the USSR to join the Marshall Plan and claimed that this 'aid' was not directed for or against any country or doctrine. The stated aims of Marshall Plan aid were to:
- revive European working economies so that political and social stability could ensue
- safeguard the future of the U.S. economy.

However, to avoid the interpretation that the United States was in any way coercing European governments to accept the aid plan, it was made clear that 'the initiative must come from Europe'.

The bill allocating the four-year aid programme of $17 billion did not pass the U.S. Congress until March 1948. The eventual success of the bill was due mainly to the effect of the Czechoslovakian Coup of February 1948 (see Step Seven).

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Document analysis
Study the statistics on which countries received Marshall Aid.
Can you explain why so much money went to
a The United Kingdom
b France and Italy (refer back to Chapter Two)
c West Germany (Step Eight may also help you)?
Soviet reaction to the Marshall Plan

The Soviets rejected the Marshall Plan – as the USA probably intended them to – because the Americans had asked to see recipients’ financial records. The Soviets saw this as a prime example of American ‘dollar imperialism’. In other words, the Soviets felt the USA was establishing a European empire, and that its method was economic domination and dependence, which would ultimately give it political control.

Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky gave the following speech at the United Nations in September 1947:

The so-called Truman doctrine is a particularly glaring example of the way in which the principles of the United Nations are violated, of the way in which the United Nations is ignored. The United States has moved towards giving up the idea of international co-operation and joint action by the great powers. It has tried to force its will on the other independent countries, whilst at the same time obviously using the money distributed as relief to needy countries as an instrument of political pressure.

This is clearly proved by the measures taken by the United States government with regard to Greece and Turkey, which ignore and bypass the United Nations. This policy conflicts sharply with the principle expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution of 11th December 1946, which declares that relief supplied to other countries should, at no time, be used as a political weapon.

The Marshall Plan is merely a variant of the Truman Doctrine. It is becoming more and more evident to everyone that the implementation of the Marshall Plan will mean placing European countries under the economic and political control of the United States and direct interference by the latter in those countries.

Moreover this plan is an attempt to split Europe into two camps and, with the help of the United Kingdom and France, to complete the formation of a bloc of several European countries hostile to the interests of the democratic countries.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Discussion and review questions

1. To what extent was the Soviet objection to the Marshall Plan ‘ignoring’ or ‘bypassing’ the United Nations valid?

2. Vyshinsky suggests that the Marshall Plan will lead to the formation of ‘two camps’ in Europe. Why?

3. Now look at the cartoon above from Krokodil. Which part of Vyshinsky’s speech supports the cartoon’s message?

Previously the United States had attempted to unite the West with economic tactics; now they were on a path towards military unity. Historian Walter LaFeber pointed out the significance of the Marshall Plan:
The plan’s approach ... soon evolved into military alliances. Truman proved to be correct in saying that the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are two halves of the same walnut. Americans willingly acquiesced as the military aspects of the doctrine developed into quite the larger part.

The Soviet response

In response to the Marshall Plan, the Soviets came up with the Molotov Plan, which was a series of bilateral trade agreements aimed to tie the economies of Eastern Europe to the USSR. The outcome was the creation of COMECON in January 1949. COMECON was the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. This was a centralized agency that linked Eastern bloc countries to Moscow. It was designed to 'stimulate' and control their economic development, and support the collectivization of agriculture and the development of heavy industry.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Cartoon analysis
1. How are:
   a) the USA and
   b) the USSR portrayed in the Punch cartoon?
2. What is the message of the cartoon regarding Stalin's policy in Eastern Europe?

Punch cartoon, June 1947
Passengers are being given a choice of two buses, one driven by Stalin and the other by Truman.
Cominform and the 'Two Camps' doctrine

Before moving on to Step Six, it is important to consider two developments on the Soviet side of the Iron Curtain:

**Cominform:** This was the Communist Information Bureau set up in September 1947. It was created as an instrument to increase Stalin's control over the Communist parties of other countries. It was initially comprised of Communists from the USSR, Yugoslavia, France, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. The West was concerned that this organization would actively spread Communism (and destabilize the democratic governments) in the West's own 'sphere of influence' – Western Europe.

**Stalin's 'Two Camps' Doctrine:** Soviet leader Josef Stalin developed his idea of a Europe divided into two opposing camps in the 1920s and 1930s. Following World War Two, this idea, in the divisive context of post-war international relations, became a firm foundation for Soviet foreign policy. Indeed, in February 1946 (before Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech) Stalin had delivered a speech emphasizing the creation of 'two camps' opposing each other. At the inaugural meeting of Cominform in Warsaw, Soviet delegate Andrei Zhdanov delivered an important speech on Soviet foreign policy. He stated that the Americans had organized an 'anti-Soviet' bloc of countries that were economically dependent upon them – not only those in Western Europe, but also in South America and China. The 'second camp' was the USSR and the 'new democracies' in Eastern Europe. He also included countries he deemed 'associated' or 'sympathetic' to their cause – Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Egypt and Syria. This Soviet doctrine was very similar to the 'new world order' outlined by Truman.

Step Six: Red Army occupation of Eastern Europe, 1945-1947

The Soviet Union came to control various Eastern European states by creating what became known as a 'satellite empire'. These countries kept their separate legal identities – separate from each other and the USSR – but they were tied into following Moscow's line by the following factors:

- Soviet military power (later formalized in the Warsaw Pact in 1955)
- 'Salami tactics' (see Step One) which transferred the machinery of government into the hands of obedient, pro-Soviet Communists
- State police and security/spy networks
- COMECON (see Step Five).

As discussed under Step One, Soviet control was in place in most East European countries by 1947. There just remained Czechoslovakia. Salami tactics were taking a little longer there, and Stalin decided that a coup to finally oust non-Communist members of the government would be necessary (see Step Seven).

Thus, by the end of 1948, the satellite states were economically and militarily under the control of the USSR. The USA and its Western allies saw this 'occupation' of Eastern Europe as a direct breach of the agreements made at Yalta and Potsdam and, perhaps more importantly, as clear evidence of Soviet expansionist policies in practice.

The 'Mr X article'

Before moving on to Step Seven, this is a good point to look at the now infamous 'Mr X article' written by George F. Kennan for *Time Magazine* in 1947. In it he says:
It is clear that the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena.

An extract from the 'Mr. X article', Time Magazine, July 1947

Kennan was still a strong influence on President Truman, and his reputation as the United States’ key expert on Soviet policy also gave him influence over American public opinion. In view of the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe, a policy to contain the spread of Communism seemed all the more essential.

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**Discussion point**

From what you have read so far, whom do you consider to be most responsible for the growth of hostility between East and West up to 1947, the USA or the Soviet Union?

**Step Seven: The Czechoslovakian Coup, February 1948**

The Soviets continued into 1948 to attempt to consolidate their control over Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia, however, was seen as moving towards the West. What was most worrying to Stalin was that Czechoslovakia had expressed interest in receiving aid from the Marshall Plan. In addition, there was a certain amount of sentimental feeling in the West for the Czechs after their ‘abandonment’ (or, as some would say, betrayal) in the Munich Agreements of 1938.

In February 1948, Stalin organized pressure on the Czechoslovak coalition government. Twelve non-Communist members were forced to resign. The Czech Communist Party leader demanded the formation of a Communist-led government. Under heavy pressure from Moscow, coupled with loosely veiled threats of armed intervention, Czech President Eduard Benes agreed. He felt that his country, once again, was isolated.

Two weeks later, the staunchly independent Czech Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, was found dead, in suspicious circumstances. President Truman responded quickly, calling the events in Czechoslovakia a ‘coup’. He also said that through the cynical application of force the Soviets had ‘sent shock waves throughout the civilized world’.

At this point, the financing for the Marshall Plan had not been passed by Congress. This was mainly due to hesitation over the huge amount of money it would commit the United States to invest. Truman now used the events in Czechoslovakia to push the bill through. Thus, the ‘Czech Coup’ was directly responsible for the implementation of the Marshall Plan in Europe. Bloody purges of non-loyal Communists continued during 1948, not only in Czechoslovakia, but throughout the Eastern bloc. Nevertheless, there remained a key area of ‘weakness’ in the heart of Stalin’s sphere of influence and control – Berlin.

**Step Eight: The Berlin Crisis of 1948**

**Post-war Germany**

The fact that Germany had been invaded on several fronts by Soviet and Western forces meant that, unlike Japan, it was much more difficult to leave it undivided during
occupation at the end of World War Two. Accordingly, at Yalta and Potsdam, it was agreed that Germany should be divided temporarily into four zones of occupation, administered by the Allied Control Council (ACC), with Berlin's governance being the responsibility of the Allied Kommandantura made up of four military governors. This was all seen as a temporary arrangement while Germany's future was being worked out at a peace conference yet to be arranged. It is important to note, however, that at all times it was the intention to treat Germany as one economic unit, and it was expected that Germany would eventually emerge as a united independent state again. However, by 1949, Germany had become permanently divided into two separate states.

Why did the post-war powers fail to unify Germany?

This was due to several factors.

- **Germany's key strategic position and the differing aims of the main powers.** Germany's geographic position in the center of Europe, and its potential economic strength, made it an area of vital concern to all countries, and an area over which they could not agree. The USSR did not wish to see a resurgent united Germany that would pose a threat to its security. At the same time, it wished to get as much out of Germany as possible in terms of reparations. The Soviets were looking for reparations of some US$20 billion. France likewise feared a united Germany rising again on its eastern flank and was not keen to hasten Germany's recovery after the war. The USA had come to see that the best hope for European peace would lie in the rapid economic recovery of Germany, and that the best way of containing the spread of Communism would be to bolster the war-torn economies of Western Europe with massive injections of U.S. aid. The UK found it best to endorse the U.S. view. As it was almost bankrupt, it would greatly benefit from American aid.

- **The increasing lack of trust between East and West as the Cold War developed.** The differences in aims and attitudes that the four Allied Powers had in 1945 would have been enough on their own to delay any permanent peace settlement for Germany. However, as the Cold War developed, mutual suspicions between the USSR and the Western powers began to harden. Both the West and the Soviet Union became concerned...
that a powerful Germany could be a threat if it ever joined forces with the other side. Thus its speed of recovery after 1945 was a central issue in the early days of the Cold War. By 1946 it became very apparent that Germany was, and would probably remain, divided in both economic and political terms between the Soviet Zone on the one hand and the Western Zones on the other.

- **The specific disputes between the post-war powers within Germany itself.** Specifically, the division intensified for a number of reasons. One major factor was economic conflict. Reparations were the key problem. The arrangements set up at Potsdam whereby the USSR was to take 25 per cent of German industrial equipment from the Western Zones in return for supplying those zones with food and raw materials did not work. Food was a huge problem in war-torn Germany, especially with the flood of refugees from Eastern Europe swelling the population. The USSR was not delivering enough food to the Western Zones and was also being increasingly secretive about what it was taking from the Soviet Zone. Thus the United States and the United Kingdom stopped supplies to the Soviet Zone. German coal was another important area of disagreement. The Soviets wanted coal from the Western Zones, but the Americans wanted to use German coal from these areas to assist in the economic reconstruction of Western Europe. Accordingly, 25 million tonnes of Western Zones coal was exported to Europe, rather than to the USSR. Then, early in 1947, the British and American zones were merged into one unit called Bizonia.

There was also political conflict. New evidence suggests that Stalin was planning as early as 4 June 1945 to incorporate a reunified Germany within Moscow’s sphere of influence. This was to be done by using the Red Army to control the Soviet Zone while the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) would attempt to get popular support in the other zones. As a first step to achieving this, in April 1946 the Soviets forced through a merger of political parties in their zone to form just one party – the Socialist Unity Party (SED). However, this party was not successful in winning over the West Germans. Several political parties had been established after the war and West Germans were unlikely to vote for a Soviet-controlled party, which, even if it might lead to a unified Germany, would bring minimal economic assistance (compared to the promise of Marshall Aid after 1948) and no chance of democracy. As they saw the impossibility of the situation, the SED leaders began planning their own separate regime in the East.

Similarly, by 1948, the Western powers were beginning to think seriously about consolidating their occupation zones and establishing within them a provisional German government. The **London Conference of Ministers** in 1947, which should have considered the German peace treaty, ended in the Western powers and the Soviets throwing recriminations at each other, indicating that any agreement on Germany’s future was remote. Therefore, at the London Conference in 1948, France, Britain and the United States met to draw up a constitution for a new West German state, which would come into existence the following year. As part of the plan of setting up a new West German government, it was also agreed to introduce a new currency into the Western sectors. The old German currency had lost its value and in many areas Germans were operating a barter economy. Stalin rightly saw that the introduction of the new currency signalled the establishment of a new Germany in the West. His action in setting up the blockade of Berlin was to thwart this plan. Stalin also probably hoped that his action would force the West out of Berlin.

- **The Berlin Blockade, 1948.** As agreed at Potsdam, Berlin had been divided between the four occupying powers. The problem for the Western powers was that Berlin lay 100 miles within the Soviet occupation zone, which had been sealed off from the rest of
Germany since 1946. The Western forces in Berlin and the West Germans in Berlin thus had to rely on receiving their food and energy supplies from the West, delivered along road, rail and air ‘corridors’. (See map below.)

In March 1948, Stalin started putting a stranglehold on Western interests in West Berlin, mainly through transport restrictions. Then, in response to the introduction of the new currency into the Western sectors of Berlin, Stalin began the total blockade of Berlin on 23–24 June 1948. The roads, railways and waterways linking Berlin to the Western sector of Germany were all closed. The supply of electricity from East to West was also cut. The USSR also left the Berlin Kommandantur, having already left the ACC in March.

This was the first crisis of the Cold War and direct military confrontation was always a possibility. However, the West did not try to defeat the blockade by force, but rather supplied Berlin from the air. During the blockade, American and British planes flew more than 200,000 flights to Berlin in 320 days, and delivered vital supplies of food and coal to 2.2 million West Berliners. Always there was the threat of a Soviet military response. By early 1949, it was clear that Stalin’s gamble was failing and he finally ended the blockade in May of that year.

What were the results of the Berlin Blockade?

This was the first time since 1945 that war had become a possibility and it had a significant impact on the development of the Cold War. It was now clear that any agreement between the two sides would be difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, the failure of the Berlin Blockade had three important consequences. It led to:

- the division of Germany
- the continuation of four-power control in Berlin
- the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The division of Germany: The failure of the blockade meant that the division of Germany was bound to go ahead. The West moved quickly to set up the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). It came into existence in September 1949 and a month later Konrad Adenauer became the first Chancellor of the FRG (West Germany).
In response, the Soviets set up the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the Soviet occupation zone. The inevitability of these arrangements stemmed from the fact that neither side could contemplate the idea of a united Germany which could possibly become an ally to the other side. Certainly, for the West, a divided Germany protected by the USA was preferable to a neutral unified Germany. Europe was now clearly divided both economically and politically.

**The continuation of four-power control in Berlin:** The division of Germany meant that Berlin also remained a divided city. It remained under four-power occupation within the new GDR. As will be explained in Chapter Eight, this continued to be a major source of friction between the West and the Soviet Union.

**The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization:** The Soviet threat to Berlin, following the Czech coup, reinforced the suspicions that the West already had about Stalin and, combined with the resource demands of the Berlin airlift, emphasized the need for a U.S. defence commitment to Europe. This resulted in the formation in April 1949 of NATO between the USA, Canada, the Brussels Pact powers, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Portugal. At the same time the U.S. Congress approved a military assistance programme to help build up Europe's armed forces. Thus, from this time, there was a major U.S. military presence in Europe, which was clearly a departure from previous U.S. foreign policy.

In May 1954, West Germany was admitted to NATO. This confirmed the Soviet Union's worst fears concerning the dangers of a return of an armed Germany on its borders. Within a week, the Soviet Union had announced the formation of the Warsaw Pact. This brought all the states of Eastern Europe into a single military command. Although it lacked organization, and was initially more of a political than a military alliance, its existence nevertheless meant that Europe was now divided militarily, as well as economically and politically.

### ToK Time

**Consider the events leading up to the Berlin Blockade.** How does hindsight affect our understanding of the causes of the blockade? How would perspectives differ in the Soviet Union, the USA and Germany at the time of this crisis, compared to views from other countries around the world?

### What conclusions can be drawn about Europe’s situation at the end of 1949?

- Europe was now clearly divided along political, economic and military lines. (See again the diagram on page 9.)
- Germany was not to be reunited as had been the original aim of the Allies at the end of World War Two. There were now two clear states, although neither side was prepared to recognize the existence of the other (until Ostpolitik in the 1970s).
- The USA had abandoned its peacetime policy of avoiding commitments and was now involved economically - through the Marshall Plan - and militarily — through NATO — in Europe.
- No peace treaty had actually been signed with Germany, which meant that the borders of Central Europe were not formalized. This was particularly worrying for Poland as it now included territory taken from Germany in 1945. (This was not finally resolved until 1975.)
- Western countries had developed a greater sense of unity due to the Soviet threat.

### What did this situation mean for international relations beyond Europe?

- From this time on, many conflicts, wherever they were in the world, would be seen as part of the struggle between Communism and Capitalism.
- The USA's policy of containment, which had been developed to fight Communism in Europe, was to lead the USA into resisting Communism anywhere in the world where it perceived that Communism was a threat. This would involve the USA fighting in both the Korean War and the Vietnam War.
- The United Nations was never to play the role envisioned in the original discussions between Roosevelt and Churchill at the time of its foundation. With the USA and the USSR now opposing each other and able to use their respective vetoes, the UN could not act effectively to resolve international conflicts.

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**What is a history essay?**

Essays are a central part of your IB course. They are the means by which you demonstrate your historical knowledge and understanding.

The diagram below outlines the key points that you must remember each time you write an essay. Use it as a guide each time you have an essay assignment.

**How do I write a history essay?**

1. **The Essay Question**
   - **What is the question asking?**

2. **Introduction**
3. **Main Body**
   - Para 1
   - Para 2
   - Para 3
   - Para 4
   - Para 5
   - Para 6

4. **Conclusion**

- You must be absolutely clear on this so that you fully address the actual question and do not just write generally around the topic. You will have to address this question throughout your essay and come back to it in your conclusion.

- Address the question clearly and indicate the direction that your argument will take.
- Define key terms/concepts that are in the question, as your understanding of these words will determine the direction of your essay.

- Each paragraph should address a new point.
- Make it clear what the topic of the paragraph is.

- Ensure each paragraph refers directly to the question; use the wording of the question if possible.

- Use detailed knowledge!
- Support all general statements with specific examples.

- Link your paragraphs so that each one is part of a developing argument building up to your conclusion.

- Show your knowledge of current historiography.

- Your conclusion must come back to the question.
- Look back at the main thrust of your arguments and evidence in the essay and give a conclusion based on what you have said: this should be a direct answer to the question.
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLD WAR?

This map shows the East-West divide after 1949.
Cold War historiography

This chapter examines different historians’ viewpoints on why the Cold War developed after World War Two. This historiography is specifically focused on the origins of the Cold War. Throughout the other chapters there is more specific historiography on each theme/case study within the Cold War era.

The Orthodox view

The historical position known as the Orthodox or traditional view generally holds that the Soviet Union was responsible for the Cold War. It states that the Soviets were inevitably expansionist, due to their suspicion of the West, and in accordance with their Marxist theory, which advocated the need to spread revolution throughout the world. Thus, Stalin violated the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, occupied and imposed Soviet control in Eastern Europe and ‘plotted’ to spread Communism throughout the world with Moscow at its centre. The United States, therefore, had to act defensively, from the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan to the establishment of NATO.

Political historian Arthur M. Schlesinger gives a clear analysis from the Orthodox perspective:

Marxism-Leninism gave the Russian leaders a view of the world according to which all societies were inexorably destined to proceed along appointed roads by appointed stages until they achieved the classless nirvana. Moreover, given the resistance of the Capitalists to this development, the existence of any non-Communist state was by definition a threat to the Soviet Union. … An analysis of the origins of the Cold War which leaves out these factors – the intransigence of Leninist ideology, the sinister dynamics of a totalitarian society and the madness of Stalin – is obviously incomplete.


Other historians who have presented the Orthodox view include W.H. McNell and H. Feis.

The Revisionist view

The alternative perspective, which flourished when the consensus over foreign policy in the United States was crumbling during the Vietnam War, held the USA responsible for the Cold War. Revisionists, such as William Appleman Williams, explained the onset of the Cold War in terms of ‘dollar diplomacy’. Revisionists see the motives behind U.S. foreign policy as inherently linked to the needs of Capitalism. Thus, containment of Communism was driven by the requirement to secure markets and free trade, and penetrate Eastern Europe. This followed on from the United States’ traditional ‘open door’ policy of the late 19th century.

This stance was taken further by Revisionist historians Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, who view Soviet action as even less relevant to U.S. foreign policy. They see American policy as determined by the nature of its Capitalist system and by fears of recession. Similarly, Thomas Patterson wrote that ‘coercion characterized United States reconstruction diplomacy’. Moreover, many Revisionists hold that Stalin himself was a pragmatic leader, and had the Americans been more willing to understand the Soviets’ need for security and offer some compromises, Stalin would have also made concessions.

Perhaps the most radical thesis from the Revisionists comes from the Cambridge political economist, Gar Alperovitz. This followed on from an idea put forward by British physicist, P.M.S. Blackett, who wrote that the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not important as the last military campaign of World War Two, but rather as the first
diplomatic move by the United States in the Cold War. Alperovitz suggests that Japan was already defeated, and that this 'new' weapon of awesome power was used to warn and intimidate the Soviets.

Post-revisionist view

This school of thought does not exactly combine the Orthodox and Revisionist views, but Post-revisionists do stress that neither the USA nor the USSR can be held solely responsible for the origins of the Cold War. One of the key figures of this group was American historian John Lewis Gaddis. He declared in 1983 that there was a growing 'consensus' of opinion that followed the 'Post-revisionist' line of argument.

The Cold War grew out of a complicated interaction of external and internal developments inside both the United States and the Soviet Union. The external situation — circumstances beyond the control of either power — left Americans and Russians facing one another across prostrated Europe at the end of World War Two. Internal influences in the Soviet Union — the search for security, the role of ideology, massive post-war reconstruction needs, the personality of Stalin — together with those in the United States — the need for self-determination, fear of Communism, the illusion of omnipotence fostered by American economic strength and the atomic bomb — made the resulting confrontation a hostile one. Leaders of both superpowers sought peace, but in doing so yielded to considerations, which, while they did not precipitate war, made resolution of differences impossible.


John Lewis Gaddis and Walter LaFeber both agreed at this time that misperceptions played an important part at the beginning of the Cold War. Both superpowers overestimated the strength and threat of the other, and much of the growing tension of the 1940s was a result of a pattern of 'action and reaction'. Both sides were 'improvising', rather than following a well-defined 'plan of action'. Stalin's search for security was not deterred initially by strong lines being drawn, while at the same time the West did not fully recognize the Soviets' motives.

Views of the post-Cold War historians

... as long as Stalin was running the Soviet Union, a Cold War was unavoidable.

John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History (OUP, 1998) p.292

With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989–90, many new Soviet sources were made available. Russian historians were also now free to write their own accounts of the Cold War without Communist Party censorship. John Lewis Gaddis, who had formerly been a key spokesperson of the 'Post-revisionists', also had access to the new material and the initial writings of the post-Soviet era Russian historians. He used this material to revise his Post-revisionist view, now putting even more focus on the role of Stalin in the origins of the Cold War. He suggests that it was Stalin's policies coupled with the Soviet totalitarian/authoritarian government that drew the West into an escalation of hostility and the protracted arms race. Gaddis considered the role of all other key leaders and players in the early stages of the Cold War, and concludes that if Stalin (rather than any of the others, from President Truman to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles) is removed from the equation, the Cold War was unlikely to have developed.
What emerges generally from the post-Cold War 'new' historians is that individuals and their actions, rather than the policies of whole governments, are of vital importance in explaining key events in the Cold War. This is particularly obvious in the origins of the Korean War and in the Berlin Crisis of 1961 (see Chapter Five and Chapter Eight).

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**Review questions**

1. Summarize the key ideas of the historiographical schools listed below.
   - Orthodox/Traditional
   - Revisionist
   - Post-revisionist
   - 'New' historians

2. Add examples from Steps One to Eight (see Chapters Two and Three) which could be used to support each of the historiographical viewpoints.

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**European and Soviet perspectives**

What was the role of the Europeans in the development of the Cold War?

In the 1980s, mainly due to the end of the '30 year rule' period that secured the confidentiality of government records, historians brought Europe and its role in the origins of the Cold War into clearer focus. Many European governments, economically devastated by war, harboured deep anxieties about Soviet expansionism, and this had an important impact on U.S. foreign policy. The British in particular did much to heighten the U.S. awareness/perception of the 'Soviet threat'. Churchill's Iron Curtain speech is an obvious case in point. European contributions suggested that both the Revisionist and the Post-revisionist historians had not satisfactorily considered the complexity of U.S. foreign policy. A Norwegian scholar, Geir Lunestad, in an article in *Diplomatic History*, asserted that the guiding motives for American foreign policy in the early period of the Cold War can only be properly understood by taking into account the influence of external factors, such as European fears and opinions.

What is the Soviet perspective?

The historiography so far considered is all from a 'Western' perspective. Indeed, as a parallel with the Western historians, it is possible to call the Soviet historians who wrote during the Cold War, (due to the censorship and other controls) the 'Soviet Orthodox' group, and those that began to write following the fall of the Soviet Union, who focused on the role of Stalin, the 'Soviet Revisionists'.

During the initial stages of the Cold War itself, the Soviet line held that the Americans were pursuing a policy of aggressive 'dollar imperialism' dictated by the needs of Capitalism. The Soviet Foreign Minister Sergei Molotov himself wrote a book, *Problems of Foreign Policy*, in which he accused the United States of trying to take over Europe economically and put it under the control 'of strong and enriched foreign firms, banks and industrial companies'. Thus, in response to this, Molotov said the Soviets were only attempting to 'find security', to rebuild after the 'Great Patriotic War' (World War Two) and, where and when possible, to aid in the liberation of the exploited working classes of the world.

Since the end of the Cold War and the opening of former Soviet and Eastern European archives, historians on both sides of the Iron Curtain have reconsidered the role of ideology
and the search for security in Soviet foreign policy. Many historians believe that the furthering of socialist objectives became tied to the search for security following World War Two. This also meant that in the crucial initial stages of the Cold War the Soviets believed that the triumph of Socialism was unavoidable and that the USSR should aid Communist groups around the world to fulfil this aim. Other historians using the Soviet archives see the greatest motive for the USSR's foreign policy as being the fear of renewed German and Japanese aggression, and of aggression from the rest of the capitalist world.

In line with the post-Cold War historians mentioned earlier, some Eastern European historians, such as Vojtech Mastny, focus on Stalin's role in the origins of the Cold War. This perspective could be called 'Soviet Revisionism'. Mastny sees Stalin's role as pivotal, and believes that Soviet foreign policy during this period can be explained in terms of 'Stalinism' and Josef Stalin's own specific modus operandi of paranoia and suspicion.

'Balance of Power' versus ideology: What is the debate?

Some historians perceive the origins of the Cold War to be simply a traditional 'balance of power' conflict. This thesis can be supported by the insightful, if not prophetic, writings of French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote the following in 1835:

There are at the present time two great nations in the world … I allude to the Russians and the Americans … Their starting point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.


De Tocqueville wrote this before Karl Marx's Das Capital or the 'Communist Manifesto', and long before the Bolshevik Russian Revolution. So, is it possible that the conflict between the USA and USSR is not really about ideology at all? Walter LaFeber and Louis Halle consider the conflict in similar terms, as both see the USA and the Soviets as expansionist powers. Therefore, the hostility that followed 1945 was a continuation of policies they had respectively pursued since the 19th century. LaFeber writes:

The two powers did not initially come into conflict because one was Communist and the other Capitalist. Rather, they first confronted one another on the plains of Asia in the late nineteenth century. That meeting climaxed a century in which Americans had expanded westward over half the globe and Russians had moved eastward across Asia.

Walter LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War 1945–84, 5th ed (Knopf, 1985) p.1

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, writing in the 1980s, also claimed that the USSR's motives were not based on ideology, but considers them as a continuum of the long history of Tsarist empire building. However, those commentators and historians who see the origins of the Cold War being initiated by the ideological struggle between Capitalism and Communism identify the starting point of the conflict as 1917 with the Bolshevik Revolution. André Fontaine suggests that the aggressive policies of the USSR in foreign policy were dictated by its Communist ideology. Indeed, some Western revisionists would also highlight the ideological nature of U.S. foreign policy as a spur. Ideology in the USA can be seen as increasingly important in the origins of the Cold War, culminating in the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s (see Chapter Five).
NEW LEADERS, NEW IDEAS?

When you have read this chapter you should attempt the following essay question:

- To what extent was there a thaw in the Cold War after 1953?

**Timeline of U.S.-Soviet relations 1953-1962**

1953  Eisenhower inaugurated as U.S. President  
      Death of Stalin, who is succeeded by Malenkov and Khrushchev  
      Korean armistice  
      U.S. Secretary of State Dulles announces ‘massive retaliation’ policy

1955  Geneva Summit  
      Austrian State Treaty ends four-power occupation of Austria

1956  Khrushchev denounces Stalin and promotes ‘peaceful co-existence’ policy  
      Polish workers revolt  
      Suez crisis  
      Soviets crush Hungarian rising

1957  USSR announces Sputnik satellite success

1958  Khrushchev issues ultimatum to West over Berlin

1959  Khrushchev visits USA and meets Eisenhower at Camp David

1960  U-2 spy plane shot down and Paris Summit collapses  
      Kennedy elected U.S. President

1961  Khrushchev and Kennedy meet at Vienna Summit  
      Yuri Gagarin is the first man to make an earth-orbiting space flight

1962  Cuban Missile Crisis

Between 1945 and 1950, developments in the Cold War had been affected by events in Europe. After 1950, the course of the Cold War was influenced by other factors, including:

- events in Asia (see Chapters Five and Six)
- the nuclear arms race (See Chapter Ten)
- changes in leadership in the United States and USSR, and a move to establish better relations between East and West. These particular changes will be examined in this chapter.

**Eisenhower and Dulles in the United States: roll-back, Brinkmanship and the New Look**

Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected U.S. president in 1952. Nicknamed 'Ike', he had a distinguished military background having commanded the Allied armies in Normandy in 1944. After the end of World War Two he served as U.S. Army Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of NATO.
Eisenhower's background meant that he was unlikely to be criticized as being 'soft on Communism'. In fact both he and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, were strongly anti-Communist. Dulles was vociferous in his condemnation of the Soviet system:

_Soviet Communism believes that human beings are nothing more than ... superior animals ... and that the best kind of a world is that world which is organized as a well managed farm is organized, where certain animals are taken out to pasture, and they are fed and brought back and milked, and they are given a barn as shelter over their heads ... I do not see how, as long as Soviet Communism holds those views ... there can be any permanent reconciliation ... This is an irreconcilable conflict._

_U.S. Senate, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, on the nomination of Dulles, 15 January 1953_

In the 1952 presidential election campaign, Dulles had also talked about 'roll-back', by which he meant liberating countries currently held by the Soviets in Eastern Europe, but in reality this never happened. No attempt was ever made under Eisenhower to free countries from Soviet control. Although the United States quietly encouraged rebellions in Eastern Europe in 1953 and 1956 (see Chapter Sixteen), it did not use these opportunities to extend the U.S. sphere of influence.

Rather than carrying out roll-back, under Eisenhower the U.S. administration developed a policy of containment it called the 'New Look'. This meant preventing the extension of Soviet Communism outside of the areas where it was already established, in the belief that without any opportunity to expand, the Soviet system would collapse in on itself. Eisenhower put his containment policy into practice by:

- Setting up alliances to encircle the Soviet Union, for example, SEATO.
- Using military power to protect vulnerable areas, for example, West Berlin.
- Assisting forces fighting Communism, for example, Diem's government in South Vietnam.
- Using the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) for covert operations more extensively than had been done before (see the box on page 74).
- Initiating an increased reliance on nuclear weapons. A national security document in 1953 stated 'The U.S will consider nuclear weapons to be available for use as other munitions.' Conventional weapons would thus play a smaller role in defence.
- Brinkmanship. This involved threats of massive retaliation as an instrument of containment. It entailed going to the brink and threatening nuclear war to intimidate the aggressor into backing down.

Dulles explained the policy of Brinkmanship in 1952 in an interview in _Life_ magazine:

_You have to take chances for peace, just as you must take chances in war. Some say that we were brought to the verge of war. Of course we were brought to the verge of war. The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it, you inevitably get into wars. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost._

Despite the aggressive nature of Brinkmanship, Eisenhower was also keenly aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons and prepared to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Thus there were U.S.–Soviet Summits in 1955 and 1959.
The activities of the CIA
The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was set up in 1947 by the U.S. government as an intelligence-collecting body, and it undertook extensive covert anti-Communist activities. Historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote of it:

As the Eisenhower administration took office, the CIA was regularly attempting to infiltrate spies, saboteurs, and resistance leaders into the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. It was financing ostensibly independent radio stations broadcasting to those countries, as well as labor unions, academic conferences, scholarly journals, and student organizations – some of them inside the United States.


The CIA was also involved in the overthrow of governments it considered too left-wing. In 1953 it helped to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran and in 1954 it played a role in overthrowing Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala.

Cartoon analysis
“Don’t Be Afraid—I Can Always Pull You Back”

1. How is Secretary of State Dulles portrayed in this cartoon? Who is he pushing to the Brink? Why does this character look reluctant?
2. What do you think the cartoonist’s attitude is towards the idea of Brinkmanship?
3. Find an example from the previous two chapters of where Dulles can be said to have successfully used Brinkmanship.

Review questions
1. How did the new administration’s attitude to defence differ from the proposals set out in the Truman administration’s NSC-68?
2. How was Eisenhower’s New Look a) different from and b) similar to the ideas and policies on containment put forward by Truman?
Khrushchev and co-existence

The fact that U.S.—Soviet summits took place during the 1950s was due not only to Eisenhower’s willingness to negotiate, but also due to the attitudes of the new leadership in the Soviet Union.

Following the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, and the subsequent removal of Stalin’s secret-police chief, Lavrenti Pavlovich Beria, Soviet foreign policy came under the control of George Malenkov who, with Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin, formed a collective leadership. Malenkov formulated the idea of a ‘New Course’ with the West. This was later picked up by Khrushchev who, having won the struggle for leadership, renamed it ‘peaceful co-existence’.

This was a move away from the Leninist doctrine of the inevitability of war. ‘Peaceful co-existence’ meant that capitalism and Communism should accept the continuing existence of one another, rather than using force to destroy each other. Just as the Americans believed that, deprived of opportunities for expansion, Communism would collapse, Khrushchev declared that in any case capitalism would die out due to its own inherent weaknesses. Thus there was no need to risk nuclear war.

What other factors encouraged a change in international relations?

It was not just Eisenhower and Khrushchev who were keen to avoid a nuclear war. Other world leaders, such as Winston Churchill, also supported the idea of more communication between East and West in order to avoid a nuclear holocaust.

Economic factors also played a role in pushing the two superpowers into a friendlier relationship. In the USSR, approximately one third of the economy was directed towards the military, while consumer goods were scarce and living standards very low. The economy of the United States was in much better shape than that of the Soviet Union, but 12 per cent of the GNP was still spent on the military. If improved relations could lead to a decrease in military spending, this would be good news for the economies of both countries.

Also, by 1954 the Korean War had ended, removing a major source of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

East–West relations in the 1950s: the reality

An example of improved U.S.—Soviet relations after 1953 was agreement over Austria. In April 1955, the Soviet Union proposed a formal peace treaty with Austria. The Austrian State Treaty ended the four-power occupation of Austria and created an independent and neutral country. Following on from this, the Geneva Summit took place in July 1955. This was the first meeting of the heads of government of the major powers since 1945. However, little of substance was achieved at this meeting and proposals concerning the arms race and the issue of Germany got nowhere. The table below shows the proposals and responses made by the United States and the Soviet Union at this time:
Was the Geneva Summit a failure?

Despite the failure to achieve any concrete progress on Germany or disarmament, the Geneva Summit nevertheless was a breakthrough, in that discussions were carried out in an atmosphere of cordiality. The Summit also led to better relations in terms of trade exhibitions, exchanging of certain scientific information and cultural exchanges. Thus the phrase 'spirit of Geneva' was given to the events surrounding 1955.

Why did East–West tension increase again after 1955?

In February 1956, Khrushchev gave his de-Stalinization speech, which led to challenges to Soviet rule throughout the Eastern bloc (see Chapter Sixteen, page 199). At the same time as Khrushchev faced problems in Hungary, the West was involved in the Suez Crisis (see Chapter Fourteen, pages 172–4). Both of these crises helped to dissipate the good feeling achieved at Geneva. The Suez Crisis also raised fears of growing Soviet influence in the Middle East, and this led to the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. This clearly stated that the United States would assist any country in the Middle East to fight against Communism.

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**The Eisenhower Doctrine: document analysis**

> There is a general recognition in the Middle East, as elsewhere, that the United States does not seek either political or economic domination over any other people. Our desire is a world environment of freedom, not servitude. On the other hand, many, if not all, of the nations of the Middle East are aware of the danger that stems from international Communism and welcome closer co-operation with the United States to realize for themselves the United Nations' goals of independence, economic well-being and spiritual growth. If the Middle East is to continue its geographic role of unifying rather than separating East and West, if its vast economic resources are to serve the well-being of the peoples there, as well as that of others, then the United States must make more evident its willingness to support the independence of the freedom-loving nations of the area.

The action which I propose would have the following features:

- It would first of all authorize the United States to co-operate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence.
- It would, in the second place, authorize the Executive to undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and co-operation with any nation or group of nations, which desires such aid.
The technology race

In addition to this mounting tension between East and West, the Americans now became increasingly worried about a Soviet threat against the United States. On 4 October 1957 the Soviets launched the world’s first artificial satellite – Sputnik – ‘travelling companion’, to be followed a month later by Sputnik II. This sent the Americans into a state of panic as they became convinced of Soviet superiority in missile technology. This impression was reinforced by Khrushchev, who made the most of the situation:

_The Sputniks prove that socialism has won the competition between socialist and capitalist countries ... that the economy, science, culture and the creative genius of the people in all spheres of life develop better and faster under socialism._

Khrushchev used every opportunity to insist that he could wipe out any American or European city:

_He would even specify how many missiles and warheads each target might require. But he also tried to be nice about it: at one point, while bullying an American visitor, Hubert Humphrey [a senator from Minnesota, who later became vice-president], he paused to ask where his guest was from. When Humphrey pointed out Minneapolis on the map, Khrushchev circled it with a big blue pencil. ‘That’s so I don’t forget to order them to spare the city when the rockets fly,’ he explained amiably._

_As reported in John Lewis Gaddis, _The Cold War_ (Penguin 2005) p.70_

The missile gap

The U.S. Congress and the media promoted the idea of a ‘missile gap’. This scenario was confirmed by the Gaither Report – the findings of a top-secret investigating committee. The report recommended:
- a vast increase in offensive defence power, especially missile development
- a build-up of conventional forces capable of fighting a limited war
- a massive building programme of fallout shelters to protect U.S. citizens from nuclear attack.

In actual fact, U.S. Air Force U-2 spy planes flying over the Soviet Union had revealed that, despite Khrushchev’s threats, there was no missile gap – the Soviet Union did not have more missiles than the USA. Despite this, Eisenhower had to do something to alleviate public anxiety, and so he supported the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958 to promote missile development and space exploration. He also provided federal aid to promote science education in schools.
How did events of 1958–1960 affect East–West relations?

By 1958 Eisenhower was confident about U.S. nuclear superiority and, therefore, could contemplate initiating a ban on atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. The United States stopped this form of testing in October 1958 and was immediately followed by the Soviet Union. It was hoped that this might lead to a formal test-ban treaty. However, Khrushchev heightened East–West tensions at this time by issuing an ultimatum to the West to leave Berlin within six months (see Chapter Eight). In the face of Western determination to stand firm, Khrushchev had to back down. By the early months of 1959, the Berlin Crisis had subsided and talks began about another summit meeting. Khrushchev accepted an invitation to visit the United States in September 1959 – making him the first Soviet leader to visit the USA – and arranged with President Eisenhower for a summit meeting in Paris, scheduled for May 1960.
This Herblock cartoon shows Eisenhower and Khrushchev together in 1959 in the United States.

Question
Why do you think the cartoonist has shown both leaders crossing their fingers?

The U-2 incident
Again, although the meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev in the United States produced few concrete results, the talks were a success in terms of generating a positive atmosphere, which led people to talk of the 'spirit of Camp David' (Eisenhower's presidential retreat in Maryland). This optimism was short-lived, however, as a few days before the summit meeting convened in Paris, the Soviets announced that an American plane had been shot down over the Soviet Union on 1 May 1960. The Americans tried to claim it was only a weather plane, which had gone off course, but the Soviets were able to reveal that the aircraft was a high altitude, photo-reconnaissance plane. Even more damaging, the pilot, Gary Powers, who had been captured, confessed to the 'spy' nature of his task. Eisenhower then admitted the truth about the U-2 spy planes and took personal responsibility for the incident.

At the Paris Summit, Eisenhower refused to apologize for the U-2 incident – or to condemn U-2 flights – saying that aerial surveillance was 'a distasteful, but vital necessity'. Khrushchev then cancelled Eisenhower's planned visit to the Soviet Union and the meeting broke up with no further progress being made on a settlement for Berlin or a test-ban treaty. By 1962, any 'thaw' that might have been achieved was shown to be quite definitely at an end when the USA and the USSR had their most intense and dangerous conflict yet over Cuba (see Chapter Nine).