

The Cold War and the Policy of Containment



Content Statement

The United States followed a policy of containment during the Cold War in response to the spread of Communism



Objectives:

- Define or describe the following terms:
 - Containment
 - “Iron Curtain”/Berlin Airlift
 - Truman Doctrine/Marshall Plan
- Analyze the policy of containment the United States followed during the Cold War in response to the spread of Communism

The Roots of the Cold War

- Although the United States and the Soviet Union had been allies during World War II, they soon became rivals in the Cold War
 - This war was “cold” in that, because of nuclear weapons, the two superpowers never confronted each other directly in open warfare

The Roots of the Cold War

- The roots of the Cold War lay in their competing ideological systems
 - The United States wanted to spread democracy and free enterprise
 - The Soviet Union wanted other countries to adopt Communism

Important Differences between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Category	Soviet Communism	American Democracy
Political System	One political party, the Communist Party	A multi-party democracy

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Organiza- tions	All labor groups and associations are run by the Communist Party	Unions and other organizations openly negotiate with employers

Important Differences between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Category	Soviet Communism	American Democracy
Economic System	Industries are owned by the state; central planners determine all economic needs; limited private property; education and health care are provided by the state	Free enterprise system; private ownership of property; supply and demand determine prices; people meet their own needs with some limited government involvement

Important Differences between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

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Religion	Religion is discouraged	Free exercise of religion
Individual Rights	Secret police arrest opponents; censorship; no free exercise of beliefs	Freedom of the press and expression

The Roots of the Cold War

- Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, was supposed to be building a classless society that helped all workers, but he actually established a brutal dictatorship over which he exercised absolute control
- Suspected opponents and critics were arrested and often sent to [gulags](#) in Siberia



The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences

- In early 1945, President Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin met at the Yalta Conference to plan the reorganization of Europe at the end of the war



Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin meet at the Yalta Conference.

The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences

- They agreed on the creation of a United Nations
- They also agreed that Germany would be divided into four occupation zones
- Finally, they agreed to allow free elections in the countries liberated from German Rule
- Stalin further pledged free elections in Poland after the war

The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences

- When Truman met with Stalin six months later at the Potsdam Conference in Germany, serious differences began to emerge among the leaders
- President Truman, despite his relative inexperience in having just replaced Roosevelt in the Presidency, thought he held the upper hand in making demands on Stalin

The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences

- At the time, Truman believed the atomic bomb was solely in the hands of the United States and would sway the balance of power in favor of the U.S.



**The “Big Three”
at Potsdam:
Churchill,
Truman, and
Stalin**

The Cold War Begins: The Iron Curtain

- After the war, the Soviets saw a growing threat from Western governments
- Stalin wanted to insure the safety of the Soviet Union and greatly distrusted the West
- Stalin sought to create a wall of “satellite” countries as a buffer against any future invasions from Europe
- As a result, Stalin went back on his promise to allow free elections in Poland

The Cold War Begins: The Iron Curtain

- He had no intention of losing control over a country through which Germany had invaded Russia twice in the last 30 years
- The United States also refused to share their atomic bomb secrets
- The Cold War now began in earnest
- Instead of withdrawing from Eastern Europe, Soviet troops continued to occupy it
- They placed local Communists in power in all the governments of Eastern Europe

The Cold War Begins: The Iron Curtain

- Trade and contact between Eastern and Western Europe was cut off
- An “Iron Curtain” fell over Eastern Europe, closing it off from the West
- Over the next forty years, travel and communication between the East and West remained limited
- Eastern European nations became “satellites” of the Soviet Union

The Cold War Begins: The Iron Curtain



The Origins of U.S. Containment Policy

- American leaders responded to the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe by developing a policy of containment
 - Under this policy, they did not attempt to overturn Communism where it already existed, but they resolved to prevent it from spreading further

The Truman Doctrine, 1947

- President Truman was alarmed by the expansion of Communism in Eastern Europe after the war
- When Communist rebels threatened the governments of Greece and Turkey in 1947, Truman gave these countries millions in military aid
- With this help, the Greek and Turkish governments were able to defeat the Communist rebels

The Truman Doctrine, 1947

- Truman declared that America would provide political, military, and economic assistance to any country fighting Communism
- The Truman Doctrine marked the start of the policy of containment



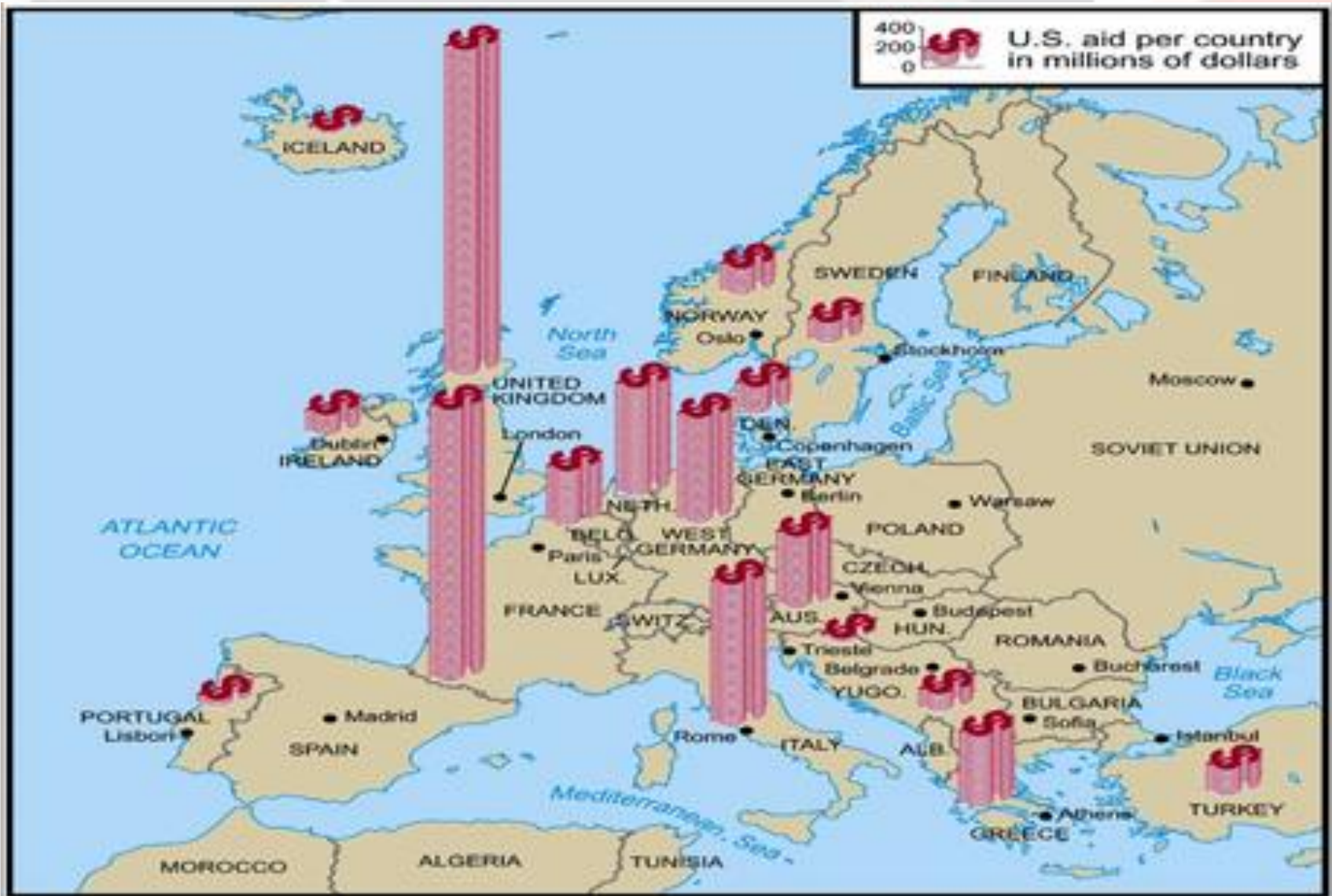
The Marshall Plan, 1948

- Truman was convinced that Communism attracted people only when they were desperate and miserable
- He believed that fighting poverty in Europe would make them more resistant to Communism by raising their living standards
- His Secretary of State, George Marshall, proposed that aid be given to the countries of Western Europe to help them rebuild their economies

The Marshall Plan, 1948

- Marshall and Truman hoped to avoid the economic chaos that had followed World War I
- They believed that economic aid would create strong European allies and future trading partners for the United States
- The Marshall Plan, as it became known, was extremely successful: it speeded the economic recovery of Western Europe and created new good will towards the U.S.

The Marshall Plan, 1948



MARSHALL PLAN AID TO EUROPE, 1948-1952

A Divided Germany and the Berlin Airlift, 1948

- In 1948, the French, British and Americans decided to merge their occupation zones into a single state – West Germany
- Berlin, the former German capital, was located in the Soviet zone
- It had also been divided into four sectors, each occupied by a different power
- The Soviets reacted to the merging of the Western zones by blockading West Berlin

A Divided Germany and the Berlin Airlift, 1948

- They closed all highway and railroad links leading to the West
- The Allies refused to abandon West Berlin
- They began a massive airlift to feed and supply the city
- The airlift saved over 2.5 million Berliners without firing a single shot by delivering about 2.3 million tons of supplies to West Berlin over a fifteen-month period
- [Video](#)

A Divided Germany and the Berlin Airlift, 1948

- Within a year, Stalin lifted the Soviet blockade
- More importantly, the Allies prevented West Berlin from falling under the control of the Soviet Union
- The United States and its allies had overcome another Cold War obstacle – showing that they would not retreat when faced with Soviet aggressive behavior

A Divided Germany and the Berlin Airlift, 1948



The division of Berlin after the Second World War.

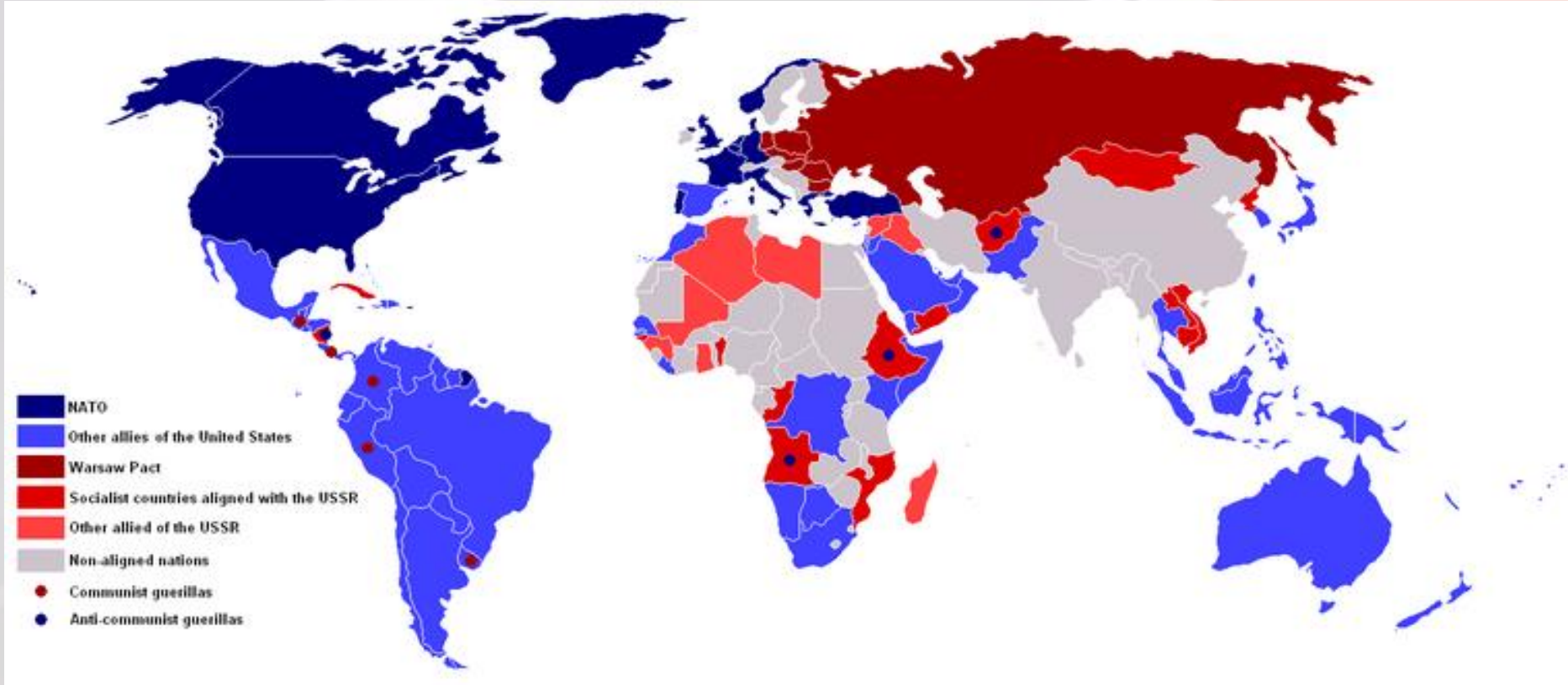
The Formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact

- In response to the Cold War, the U.S., Canada, and ten Western European countries formed NATO – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949
- NATO was based on the concept of collective security – each member pledged to defend every other member if any one was attacked

The Formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact

- Through NATO, the U.S. extended its umbrella of protection from nuclear weapons to Western Europe
- The Soviet Union responded by creating the Warsaw Pact with its Eastern European satellites in 1955
- The formation of the Warsaw Pact was seen as a response to the creation of NATO, although it did not occur until six years after NATO came into existence

The Formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact



Friction Behind the Iron Curtain

- Although Americans condemned Soviet actions, the U.S. never intervened in uprisings taking place behind the Iron Curtain
- Soviet leaders did all of the following without active interference by the U.S. or its allies
 - Successfully suppressed an anti-Communist revolution that broke out in Hungary in 1956
 - Built the Berlin Wall in 1961 to prevent East Germans from escaping to the West
 - Invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 to overthrow a Czech reform government

Friction Behind the Iron Curtain



The Soviets claimed the Berlin Wall was to keep Westerners out of East Germany, but it mainly served to stem mass defections from the West.

The U.S. Containment Policy in Asia

- Just when America believed its containment policy had checked the spread of Communism in Europe, China – the world's most populous nation – adopted Communism
- This raised a new question:
 - Could American leaders check the spread of Communism, not only in Europe, but around the globe?

China Falls to Communism, 1949

- Since the 1920s, Chinese Communists had sought to overthrow the Nationalist government in China
- They were helped by the Soviets after 1945
- Led by Mao Zedong, they finally defeated the Nationalists in 1949



Mao Zedong leading the Chinese people to revolution

The Korean War and the Vietnam War

- In Asia, the policy of containment became the basis for U.S. involvement in the Korean and Vietnam wars
- In 1950, Communist North Korea invaded South Korea, starting the Korean War
- President Truman came to the aid of South Korea and sent U.S. forces into the conflict



The Korean War and the Vietnam War

- In 1954, Vietnam in Southeast Asia was divided into two: North Vietnam came under Communist control, while South Vietnam had the support of the West
- When South Vietnamese leaders opposed elections to re-unify the country, the Vietcong launched a [guerilla war](#) to control the country, leading to the Vietnam War



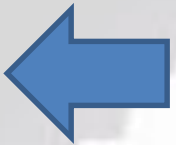
The Korean War and the Vietnam War



End of
Notes

Ideological

- An adjective that describes political, cultural, or religious beliefs



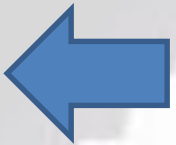
Gulags

- Forced labor camps



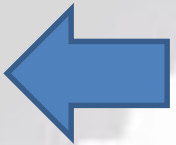
Liberate

- To help someone or something to be free



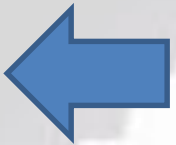
Satellite Nation

- These were nations that were aligned with, but also under the influence and pressure of, the Soviet Union



Earnest

- Resulting from or showing sincere and intense conviction



Guerrilla Warfare

- A form of irregular warfare in which a small group of combatants such as paramilitary personnel, armed civilians, or irregulars use military tactics including ambushes, sabotage, raids, petty warfare, hit-and-run tactics, and mobility to fight a larger and less-mobile traditional military

