

Reading Essentials and Study Guide



The Cold War, 1945–1989

Lesson 1 The Cold War Begins

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does conflict influence political relationships?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

liberate to free

nuclear being a weapon whose destructive power comes from a nuclear reaction

Content Vocabulary

satellite state a country that is economically and politically dependent on another country

policy of containment a plan to keep something, such as communism, within its existing geographical boundaries and prevent further aggressive moves

arms race building up armies and stores of weapons to keep up with an enemy

deterrence during the Cold War, the U.S. and Soviet policies of holding huge arsenals of nuclear weapons to prevent war; each nation believed that neither would launch a nuclear attack since both knew that the other side could strike back with devastating power

TAKING NOTES: *Determining Cause and Effect*

ACTIVITY As you read, create a chart like the one below listing U.S. actions and the Soviet response to them.

American action	Soviet response

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Lesson 1 The Cold War Begins, *continued*

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

World War II ended with political disagreements between the United States and the Soviet Union—countries that had worked together to fight the war. These two new superpowers began competing for political domination, or control, of the world. Europeans were forced to support one side or the other.

Balance of Power After World War II

Guiding Question *Why did the United States and the Soviet Union become political rivals after World War II?*

The defeat of the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) brought out the differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, still feared the capitalist West. Western leaders still feared communism. It was not surprising that the two different systems came into conflict. (Capitalism is a system in which private individuals own land, factories, and businesses. In the communism of the Soviet Union, the government, or the state, controls them.)

The Soviet Union was not ready to give up its control of Eastern Europe after Germany's defeat in World War II. The Soviet Union viewed its control of Eastern Europe as protection for its western border. American leaders were not willing to give up the power and prestige the United States had gained throughout the world. The United States and the Soviet Union were suspicious, or not trusting, of each other's motives. Soon they became rivals.

Eastern Europe was the first area of disagreement. The United States and Great Britain believed that the **liberated** nations should freely determine their own governments. Stalin, on the other hand, feared that these nations would become anti-Soviet if they had free elections. As a result, he opposed the West's plans. The Soviets had freed Eastern Europe from the Nazis. The Soviet army remained in the conquered areas. Pro-Soviet governments were set up in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.

A civil war in Greece created another area of conflict between the superpowers. The Communist People's Liberation Army was fighting anticommunist forces supported by Great Britain for control of Greece in 1946. Britain had its own economic problems, though. It had to withdraw its aid from Greece.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

U.S. President Harry S. Truman was worried about British weakness. He thought that Soviets might expand into the eastern Mediterranean. In 1947 he responded with a new policy. His policy was called the Truman Doctrine. This doctrine said that the United States would give money to countries (in this case, Greece and Turkey) that were threatened by communist expansion. Truman argued that the Soviets had to be stopped in Greece and Turkey. If they were not, then the United States would have to face the spread of communism throughout the free world. In February 1947, U.S. Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson compared communism to a rotten apple in a barrel full of good apples. He declared that it would ruin all other good "apples," or nations, if it were not stopped. He meant that if Greece became communist, the nations around Greece would become communist too.

The Truman Doctrine was soon followed by the European Recovery Program. It was proposed by General George C. Marshall, the U.S. secretary of state, in June 1947. Marshall believed that communism was successful only in countries with economic problems. He proposed to fix countries' economic problems to prevent the spread of communism. The Marshall Plan provided close to \$13 billion to rebuild Europe. Europe was still suffering from the effects of the war.

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The Marshall Plan did not intend to exclude the Soviet Union or the Eastern European satellite states. Those states refused to participate, however. According to the Soviet view, the Marshall Plan guaranteed “American loans in return for the relinquishing by the European states of their economic and later also their political independence.” The Soviets saw the Marshall Plan as an attempt to buy the support of the smaller European countries. These states were economically and politically dependent on the Soviet Union. Those states refused to participate in the plan, however. The Soviets believed that the loans from the Marshall Plan would cause these countries to lose their economic and later their political freedom. The Soviets saw the Marshall Plan as an attempt to buy the support of the smaller European countries.

In 1949 the Soviet Union responded to the Marshall Plan. It established the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). The purpose of the organization was to ensure the economic cooperation among the Eastern European states. However, COMECON largely failed. The Soviet Union was unable to provide much financial aid.

The split between the United States and the Soviet Union had become a fact of life in Europe by 1947. George Kennan was a well-known U.S. diplomat with a great deal of knowledge of Soviet affairs. In July 1947 he argued for a **policy of containment**. This would keep communism within its existing boundaries and prevent further Soviet aggressive moves. Containment of the Soviet Union became formal U.S. policy.

The Division of Germany and the Berlin Airlift

The fate of Germany also became a source of angry disagreement between the Soviets and the West. At the end of World War II, the Allied Powers had divided Germany into four zones. Each was occupied by one of the Allies—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. Berlin was located deep inside the Soviet zone. It was also divided into four zones.

The foreign ministers of the four occupying powers met repeatedly. They tried to arrive at a final peace treaty with Germany. They had little success, however. At the same time, Great Britain, France, and the United States slowly began to merge, or combine, their zones economically. By February 1948, Great Britain, France, and the United States were making plans to unify the three Western sections of Germany (and Berlin). Their plan was to create a West German government.

The Soviets reacted with a blockade of West Berlin. It allowed no trucks, trains, or barges to enter the city’s three Western zones. Food and supplies could no longer reach the 2.5 million people in these zones. The Soviets hoped the blockade would secure economic control of all Berlin. They hoped that Western powers would be forced to stop the creation of a separate West German state.

The Western powers faced a dilemma, or a difficult choice. No one wanted to risk World War III. Therefore, they rejected the idea of breaking through the Soviet blockade with tanks and trucks. They needed to find a way to keep people in the Western zones of Berlin alive when the whole city was inside the Soviet zone and was blockaded by the Soviets. The solution was the Berlin Airlift. American and British airplanes flew supplies into Berlin. Over a period of 10 months, more than 200,000 flights carried 2.3 million tons (1.4 million t) of supplies. At the height of the Berlin Airlift, 13,000 tons (11,800 t) of supplies were flown daily to Berlin. The Soviets also did not want war, and they finally gave in. They removed the blockade in May 1949.

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networks

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The blockade of Berlin increased tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. It also separated Germany into two states. The Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany, was formally created in September 1949. Its capital was Bonn. Less than a month later, the Soviets set up a separate East German state, the German Democratic Republic. East Berlin became its capital. The city of Berlin was now divided into two parts. It served as a reminder of the division of West and East.



Reading Progress Check

Comparing What did the Marshall Plan and COMECON have in common?

The Spread of the Cold War

Guiding Question *What was the result of increased tensions between the superpowers?*

The Cold War spread from Europe to the rest of the world in 1949. The Chinese Communists won the Chinese civil war. They then created a new Communist regime. These events strengthened U.S. fears about the spread of communism.

New Military Alliances

Much of the Cold War was a search for security. This search led to the beginning of new military alliances, agreements between countries to work together and to protect one another. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in April 1949. Belgium, Luxembourg, France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, and Iceland signed a treaty with the United States and Canada. In the treaty, all the powers agreed to provide mutual, or shared, help if any one of them was attacked. Greece and Turkey joined a few years later. West Germany followed.

The Eastern European states soon followed suit with their own military alliance. In 1955 the Soviet Union joined with Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Their formal military alliance was known as the Warsaw Pact. The alliance worked a lot like NATO. Like NATO, its member states were required to help each other if any member was attacked. The Soviet Union also hoped to use the alliance to have even more control over the militaries of its Eastern European allies. Europe was once again divided into hostile alliance systems, just as it had been before World War I.

The United States then became involved in the Korean War. As a result, the new military alliances spread to the rest of the world. The Korean War began in 1950. North Korea tried to take over South Korea. The Communist government of North Korea was allied with the Soviet Union. The Korean War confirmed American fears of communist expansion. The United States became more determined than ever to contain Soviet power. As a result, it extended its military alliances around the world. The United States was in military alliances with 42 different nations by the mid-1950s.

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The Arms Race Begins

By the mid-1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union had become involved in a growing **arms race**. Both countries built up their armies. They also increased the sizes of their weapons arsenals. **Nuclear** weapons added an increasingly frightening element to the arms race. Each superpower raced to build deadlier bombs. They also created farther-reaching delivery systems to carry the bombs.

The Soviet Union set off its first atomic bomb in 1949. In the early 1950s, both the Soviet Union and the United States developed the even more deadly hydrogen bomb. The United States feared that the Soviet Union was gaining ground in the arms race by the mid-1950s. However, by the late-1950s, both had intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The missiles could send bombs anywhere.

Both countries now worked to build up stockpiles, or large supplies, of nuclear weapons. The search for security soon took the form of **deterrence**. The policy of deterrence meant that huge arsenals of nuclear weapons on both sides prevented war. The belief was that neither side would launch a nuclear attack. They both knew that the other side would be able to strike back with devastating power.

The Soviets sent the first human-made satellite, *Sputnik 1*, into orbit around the Earth in 1957. New fears grew in the American public. They worried there was a “missile gap” between the United States and the Soviet Union. They feared the Soviet Union would build a military base in outer space. Then the Soviets could dominate the world. One American senator saw the launch of *Sputnik 1* as a danger to the survival of United States and the free world.

A Wall in Berlin

Nikita Khrushchev (kroosh-CHAWF) became the new leader of the Soviet Union in 1955. He tried to take advantage of the American concern over missiles to solve the problem of West Berlin. West Berlin remained a “Western island” of prosperity in the middle of the relatively poverty-stricken East Germany. Many East Germans were tired of Communist repression. Some managed to escape East Germany by fleeing to West Berlin.

Khrushchev wanted to stop the flow of refugees from East Germany through West Berlin. In August 1961, the East German government began to build a wall to separate West Berlin from East Berlin. Eventually it became a massive concrete block wall 15-feet (4.5 m) high topped with barbed wire. Hundreds of watchtowers guarded by soldiers with machine guns lined the wall. The wall stretched 28 miles (45 km) through the city. Another 75-mile- (120.7-km-) long section of wall separated West Berlin from the surrounding East German countryside. The Berlin Wall became a powerful symbol of the division between the two superpowers.



Reading Progress Check

Making Connections How were the theory of deterrence and the arms race related?
