CHAPTER

24

A Divided World

The Early Cold War, 1945–1963

Origins of the Cold War p. 720

> "Communism is on the march on a worldwide scale, which only America can stop."
>
> Senator ARTHUR VANDENBERG, April 26, 1946

As World War II ended, Soviet and American troops, converging from different directions, met and shook hands on a bridge spanning the Elbe River in Germany. Each side was pleasantly surprised by this first encounter with their wartime ally. "They looked like ordinary people. We had imagined something different," recalled one Soviet soldier of American troops. "I guess we didn't know what to expect from the Russians," an American soldier said after the meeting. "If you put an American uniform on them, they could have been American!" Within two years the lost promise of this friendly encounter was obvious to all. A 1947 U.S. propaganda film replayed footage of this historic meeting and struck a lightning bolt across the frozen image of Soviet and American soldiers shaking hands. "Here two worlds actually met," the narrator thundered, "but this coalition was to be torn asunder" by Soviet postwar incursions in Eastern Europe that the United States viewed as part of a Soviet plan for global conquest.

In the decade after the Allies' victory against Hitler, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union soured dramatically. As the contours of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union took shape, two competing ideological visions, an escalating nuclear arms race, and confrontations in Europe and Asia, including a war in Korea, heightened fears that another world war was in the making.

From 1946 to 1965 most Americans viewed the world as sharply divided into free and totalitarian societies. American leaders proclaimed that the United States was engaged in an epic struggle with the Soviet Union over the future of humankind. Protecting the world from the menace of Soviet-led communism became a key American foreign policy goal in this era. Americans fought the Cold War at home as well, where citizens expressed differing views on whether government tactics in rooting out Soviet spies undermined American democracy or saved it. On the other side of the ideological divide, Soviet leaders developed an abiding distrust of Western motives as they sought to counter the American nuclear advantage with territorial and technological gains. As each nation struggled to extend its world influence, Americans once again confronted the crucial question of defining their nation's role in the world.

What was the significance of this brief 1945 encounter between U.S. and Soviet soldiers?

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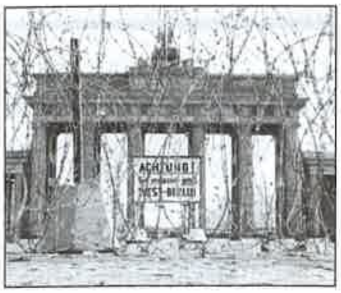
BURN
ALL
REDS
Spies in Our Midst p. 737



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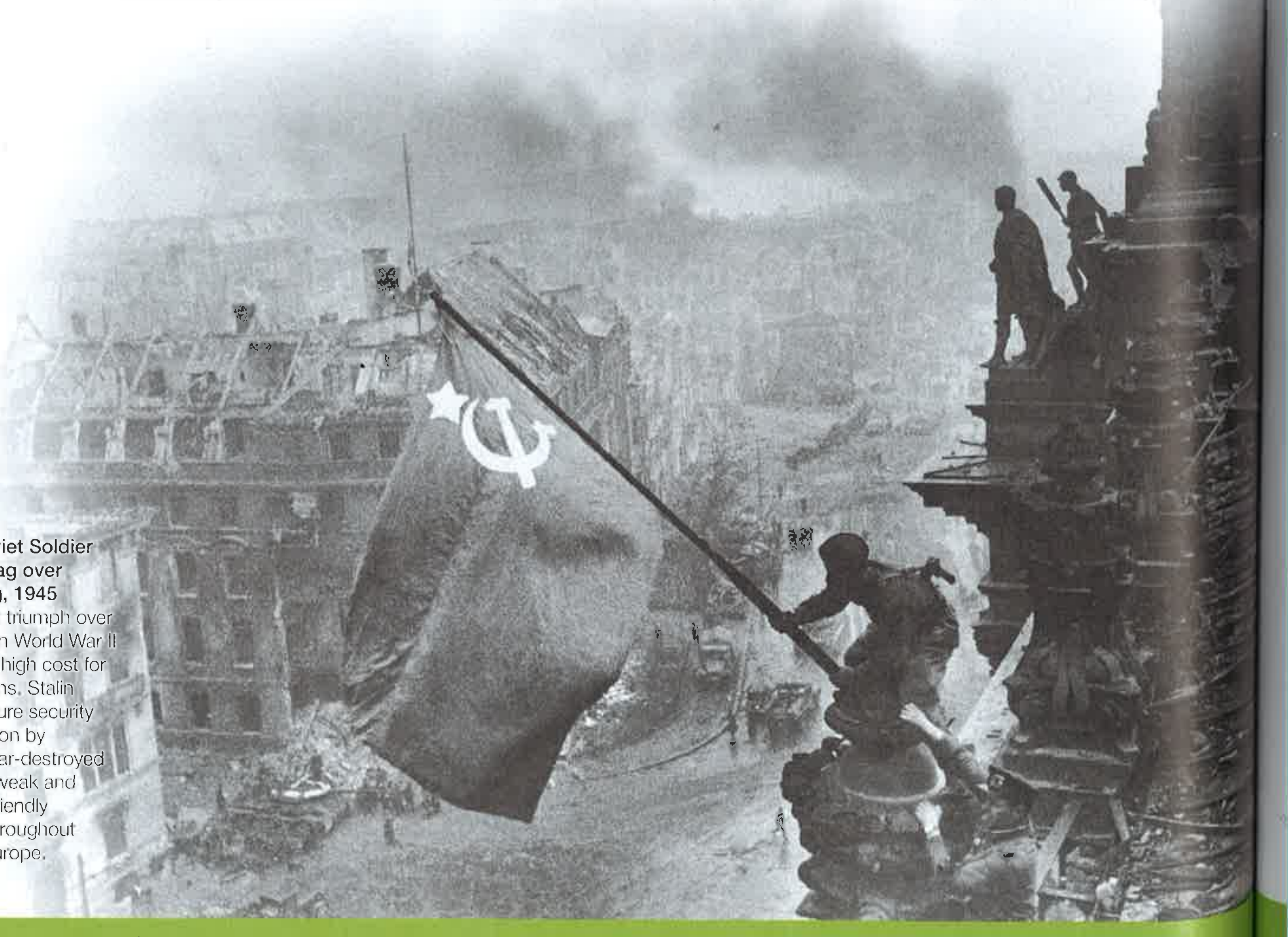
Origins of the Cold War

The United States and the Soviet Union worked effectively together in World War II to defeat Adolf Hitler, but each nation had dramatically different visions of the postwar world. The United States remained dedicated to free markets and democracy, while the Soviet Union embraced a Marxist vision that eschewed private property ownership and celebrated concentrated state authority. Each nation also drew different lessons from the recent war. For the Soviet leader Josef Stalin, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union underscored the need to secure his nation's borders by controlling vast amounts of territory in Eastern Europe. The United States feared that Stalin was another Hitler-like dictator, intent on controlling all of Europe. American political leaders believed that maintaining peace in Europe hinged on spreading capitalism and democracy. These differing, often conflicting, visions triggered an immediate postwar clash between the former allies.

Differing Goals in the Postwar World

The origins of the Cold War hark back to World War II. The victory against Hitler came at a huge cost for the Soviet Union. An estimated twenty-five million Soviet soldiers and civilians died, almost ninety times the 291,551 Americans who perished in combat. Germany had attacked the Soviet Union twice in the last thirty years, a fact that contributed to Stalin's obsession with protecting his nation from future attack. Stalin also suspected that the Americans and British had delayed opening up a second front in Europe (see Chapter 23)



24.1 Soviet Soldier Raises Flag over Reichstag, 1945 The Soviet triumph over Germany in World War II came at a high cost for both nations. Stalin sought future security for his nation by keeping war-destroyed Germany weak and installing friendly regimes throughout Eastern Europe.

What important symbolism does this photograph contain regarding the Soviet victory over Germany?

"I have never been talked to like that in my life,"
Soviet foreign minister VYACHESLAV MOLOTOV to Truman

"Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."
TRUMAN'S retort, angered over the Soviet's refusal to hold Democratic elections in postwar Poland

to further weaken the Soviet Union, causing him to distrust of the United States. This photo (**24.1**) of a soldier waving the Soviet flag from the roof of the Reichstag, the German parliament building, above the ruins of Berlin, illustrated Germany's complete defeat at the end of World War II. It also represented a past that the Soviet Union had no intention of repeating. To protect his nation's borders, Stalin installed friendly Communist governments throughout Eastern Europe to create a buffer zone between Germany and the Soviet Union. He also tried to keep Germany as weak as possible by carting off German heavy machinery to the Soviet Union, disarming the Germany military, and requiring large reparation payments.

In the postwar era Stalin fully expected to retain his firm grip on power within the Soviet Union. Standing only 5 feet tall with a thin mustache, yellowed teeth, and a pockmarked face, Stalin was not physically imposing. In this case, however, images were deceiving. "An unforewarned visitor would never have guessed what depths of calculation, ambition, love of power, jealously, cruelty and sly vindictiveness lurked behind this unpretentious façade," one American diplomat noted. Stalin had been responsible for the deaths of nearly ten million Soviet citizens before World War II, a result of failed agricultural policies that created widespread famine and relentless executions of all suspected political opponents. The Soviet dictator was willing to sacrifice the lives of countless others to achieve his new territorial objectives.

The postwar goals on the American side reflected lingering dismay over the nation's failure to prevent the rise of expansionist regimes in Japan and Germany during the 1930s. Before his death in April 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had argued that American leadership in the newly formed United Nations (UN) could promote a peaceful future by deterring and punishing any aggression before it spun out of control. Roosevelt also stressed the importance of preventing another global depression like the one that had helped bring Hitler to power and had fueled non-interventionist sentiment in the United States.

By themselves these differing ideas on how to maintain peace in Europe did not necessarily guarantee a future clash between the United States and the Soviet Union. During the war the United States and Britain had accepted that the Soviet Union would exert considerable postwar political influence over Eastern Europe. FDR and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, however, had tried to rein in the Soviet dictator by making him promise to hold free elections in the region. Stalin had offered some backing for Western postwar schemes as well, agreeing to support the United Nations and to a joint occupation of a defeated Germany. When Harry Truman assumed the presidency after Roosevelt's death, even the first signs of Soviet intransigence on fulfilling its wartime agreements failed to produce a permanent rift. To put pressure on Stalin to hold free elections in Soviet-occupied Poland, Truman abruptly canceled Lend-Lease payments, thereby denying much needed aid to the war-torn Soviet Union. When the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov called on the new president in the White House, Truman went even further, personally berating Molotov for Stalin's failure to schedule the promised elections. The long-term impact of this heated exchange was minimal, however. Truman quickly sent an emissary to Moscow to patch things up with Stalin. As a gesture of goodwill, he also reversed his initial decision to suspend Lend-Lease shipments to the Soviet Union.

The American Vision Takes Shape: Kennan's Long Telegram

Over time, however, these initial skirmishes between the United States and the Soviet Union developed into the **Cold War**. This intense ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and

How did differing memories of the recent past shape U.S. and Soviet goals in postwar Europe?

their allies led to several hot wars around the globe, although the Americans and Soviets never fought each other directly. In the opening phases of the Cold War, each side focused on defining the exact threat that the other posed. At the heart of this clash lay both conflicting visions of the future and a mutual distrust that only deepened whenever the balance of power threatened to shift dramatically in favor of one nation or the other. To Stalin the American monopoly on nuclear weapons placed the Soviet Union at a distinct strategic disadvantage that he intended to remedy as quickly as possible. For the United States Stalin's attempt in 1946 to use military force to extend his reach into the Middle East and Mediterranean raised concerns that the Soviet leader sought world domination.

Tensions mounted further in 1946 when Stalin gave a belligerent speech predicting the inevitable triumph of communism over capitalism. U.S. State Department officials were now concerned enough to ask the American embassy in Moscow for more information about Stalin's intentions. The response was the "**long telegram**," an influential five-thousand-word missive in which diplomat George F. Kennan outlined why America needed to develop an aggressive foreign policy aimed at containing Soviet expansionist impulses. Kennan concluded that Stalin needed an outside enemy to keep himself in power because an external threat kept the Soviet public from focusing on his ruthless dictatorship. Stalin, Kennan also explained, believed that conflicts between capitalist societies would lead to their demise, thus allowing communism to triumph when capitalist societies collapsed. Given this Soviet mindset, negotiations to resolve differences between the two nations would be fruitless, Kennan advised. Kennan suggested strengthening Western-style capitalist and democratic structures to foil communist efforts to woo impoverished peoples. He predicted that Stalin would moderate his ambitions only if he encountered strong and steady resistance from the West each time he tried to expand beyond the Western-accepted Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. "It is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies," Kennan wrote in a version of the telegram that he published in 1947 under the pseudonym Mr. X in *Foreign Affairs* magazine. With this one statement Kennan articulated the philosophical foundation for **containment**, the label affixed to multiple American foreign policy initiatives meant to prevent the Soviet Union from increasing its influence around the globe. Kennan had economic and political policies in mind when he penned these words, but hard-liners in the Truman administration seized on his analysis to craft a new vision of U.S. military engagement in the world.

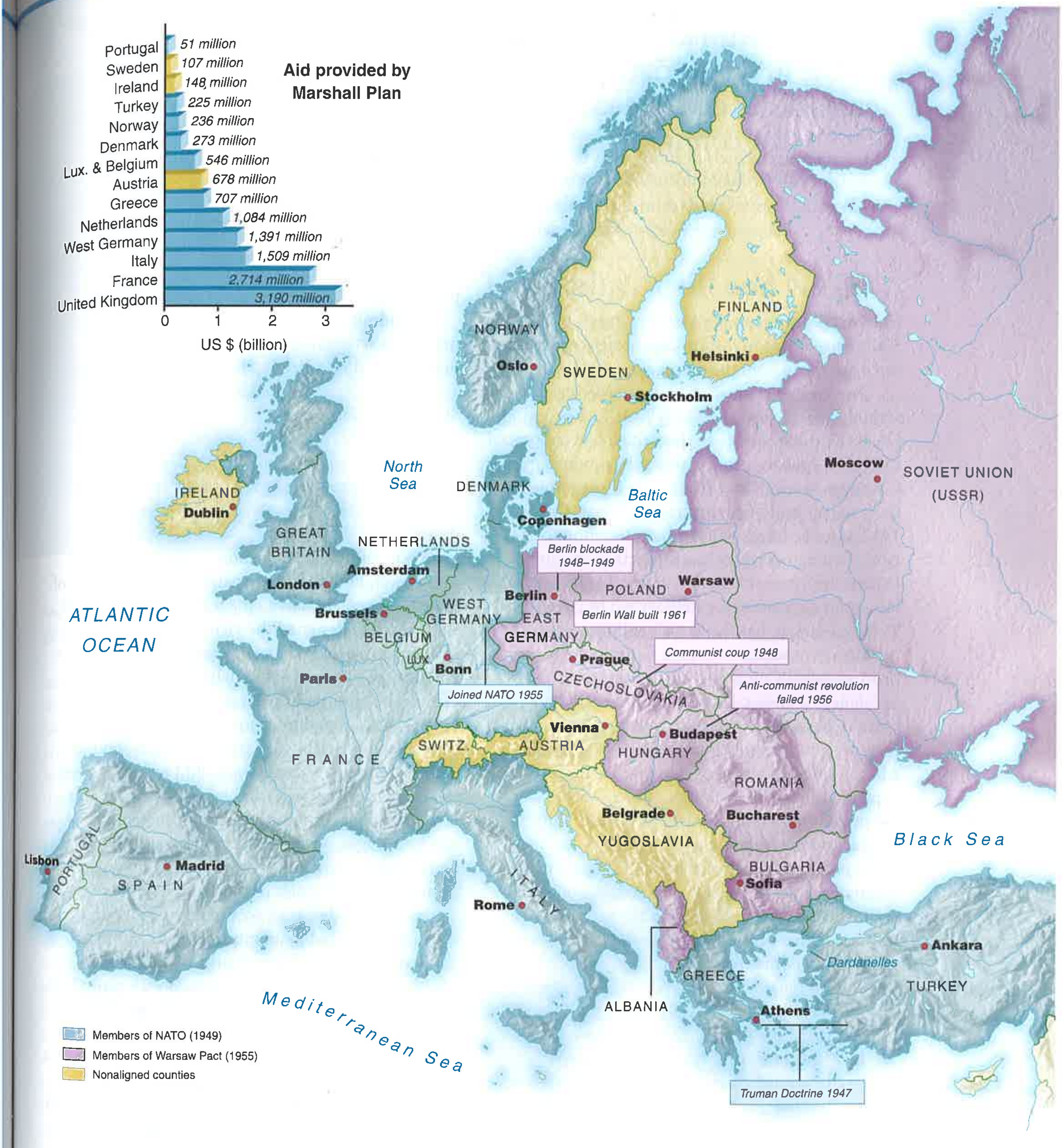
A month after Kennan sent his long telegram, the former British prime minister Winston Churchill visited Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, where he used Kennan's words to underscore that a military, not just ideological, standoff lay ahead. In his speech Churchill declared that there was nothing the Soviets "admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness." Stalin accused Churchill of trying to provoke a war with his comment that an "**iron curtain**," Churchill's characterization of the military and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union, separated Western and Eastern Europe into free and unfree halves. Many American newspapers agreed, denouncing Churchill's speech as too belligerent.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

Turning the principles of containment into concrete action that had public approval took another year. By the end of 1947, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan established containment as the new course of American foreign policy, a direction strengthened even further in 1949 with the creation of a post-World War II military alliance between the United States and Western European powers through the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**(NATO). These initiatives evolved in response to a series of crises in Europe, portrayed in **24.2**.

In 1947 Truman briefly returned to FDR's notion of working through the UN to resolve international disputes. That year the UN successfully pressured Stalin into removing Soviet troops from northern Iran. At the same time Truman stationed the American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to prevent the Soviets from seizing Turkish-controlled shipping lanes through the Dardanelles. Stalin accepted the setback in oil-rich Iran without fanfare, but he continued to demand unrestricted naval access through the Dardanelles passage, the only way for Soviet military and commercial vessels to travel

What analysis did Kennan's Long Telegram offer of Stalin's beliefs and behavior?


Aid provided by Marshall Plan
Portugal 51 million
Sweden 107 million
Ireland 148 million
Turkey 225 million
Norway 236 million
Denmark 273 million
Lux. & Belgium 546 million
Austria 678 million
Greece 707 million
Netherlands 1,084 million
West Germany 1,391 million
Italy 1,509 million
France 2,714 million
United Kingdom 3,190 million
0
1
2
3
US $ (billion)
NORWAY
Oslo
SWEDEN
Stockholm
FINLAND
Helsinki
Moscow
SOVIET UNION (USSR)
North Sea
DENMARK
Copenhagen
Baltic Sea
IRELAND
Dublin
GREAT BRITAIN
London
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
Berlin blockade 1948–1949
Berlin
POLAND
Warsaw
Berlin Wall built 1961
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Brussels
WEST GERMANY
EAST GERMANY
BELGIUM
LUX.
Bonn
Prague
Communist coup 1948
Paris
Joined NATO 1955
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Anti-communist revolution failed 1956
Vienna
Budapest
SWITZ.
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
FRANCE
ROMANIA
Belgrade
Bucharest
YUGOSLAVIA
Black Sea
Lisbon
PORTUGAL
Madrid
SPAIN
ITALY
Rome
BULGARIA
Sofia
Ankara
Dardanelles
GREECE
TURKEY
ALBANIA
Athens
Mediterranean Sea
Truman Doctrine 1947
Members of NATO (1949)
Members of Warsaw Pact (1955)
Nonaligned counties

24.2 The Cold War in Europe
Europe divided into two competing alliance systems after World War II. The United States used the NATO alliance and Marshall Plan aid to strengthen ties with Western Europe.

What new role did the United States play in Western Europe after World War II?

> “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent.”
>
> Former British Prime Minister WINSTON CHURCHILL in Fulton, Missouri, March 1946

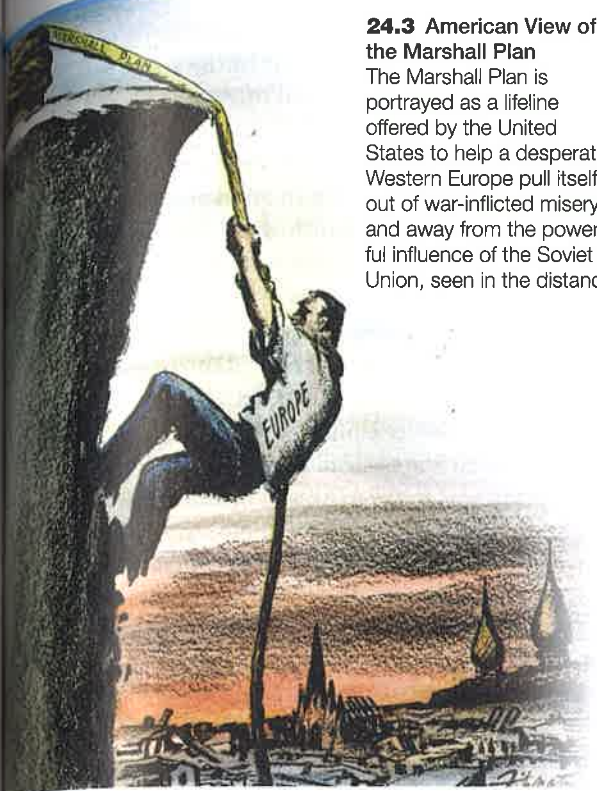
from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. In 1947 Stalin sent troops to the Turkish-Soviet border to force Turkey to keep the passage open.

The sense of crisis in the eastern Mediterranean soon deepened, encompassing both Turkey and Greece. Throughout 1946 the British had supported the Greek monarchy in its efforts to subdue Greek Communist rebels and sent aid to Turkey to help the country stand firm against the Soviet Union. In 1947 as part of a general decision to renounce its world-wide imperial role, a financially strapped Britain informed the United States that it could no longer give economic or military aid to Greece and Turkey. Fearing that the British withdrawal meant certain Communist success in Greece and Turkey, Truman asked Congress to grant American assistance to these countries. Secretary of State Dean Acheson outlined the threat to America in a meeting with congressional leaders. “Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one,” Acheson explained, “the corruption of Greece” would “carry the infection” of communism to Western Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

In preparing his speech before Congress in 1947, Truman pondered how to convince the public that events in far-off Greece and Turkey necessitated an unprecedented peacetime interference in European affairs. “Scare [the] hell out of the American people,” Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg suggested. Truman followed this advice. Dividing the world into “us” and “them,” Truman told Americans that “at the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.” The Western side of the divide championed democracy and freedom. On the other were Communist states where “terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedom” were parts of daily life. Drawing a line in the sand to stop the spread of communism was the nation’s responsibility to the world and the only way to protect the American way of life at home. While asking specifically to help Greece and Turkey, in this speech Truman set forth a more expansive view of America’s global responsibilities, asking the country to abandon its traditional noninterventionist stance. Instead the president proposed the **Truman Doctrine**, a foreign policy initiative that gave the United States an active role in stopping the global spread of communism by supporting “free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”

The administration almost immediately used the principles articulated in the Truman Doctrine to justify extending a helping hand to Western Europe as well. In the eastern Mediterranean the United States wanted to prevent Communist armies from taking over the region. In war-torn Western Europe, the American government feared that hungry, exhausted citizens might voluntarily turn to communism, which promised bread for all, out of despair. Free elections in Western Europe offered the grim possibility that Communists might be voted into power. Embracing Kennan’s vision, Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the former army chief of staff who had designed the victorious American strategy in World War II, suggested offering massive amounts of financial aid to help European capitalistic economies recover. **The Marshall Plan** (1948–1952) aimed to restore Europeans’ faith in capitalism by sending $13 billion ($119 billion in today’s dollars) overseas to rebuild Europe’s ruined roads, bridges, factories, and farms. “Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos,” the secretary of state claimed, avoiding the dualistic “us” against “them” rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine. Certain that widespread economic suffering in the thirties had caused desperate people to embrace fascism, which then led to World War II, the Marshall Plan explicitly linked peace with prosperity. All European nations (including the Soviet Union) were invited to submit proposals for aid. Stalin briefly entertained the idea of applying for American funds to rebuild his devastated nation, but as Marshall and Truman expected, he quickly abandoned this idea. Instead the Soviets publicly denounced the plan as an American plot to colonize Europe and refused to allow Eastern European nations to participate. Besides cash, the Marshall Plan offered European nations technical and management advice that helped spread American farming

How did the Truman Administration convince the public to accept a new direction in U.S. foreign policy?



24.3 American View of the Marshall Plan The Marshall Plan is portrayed as a lifeline offered by the United States to help a desperate Western Europe pull itself out of war-inflicted misery and away from the powerful influence of the Soviet Union, seen in the distance.

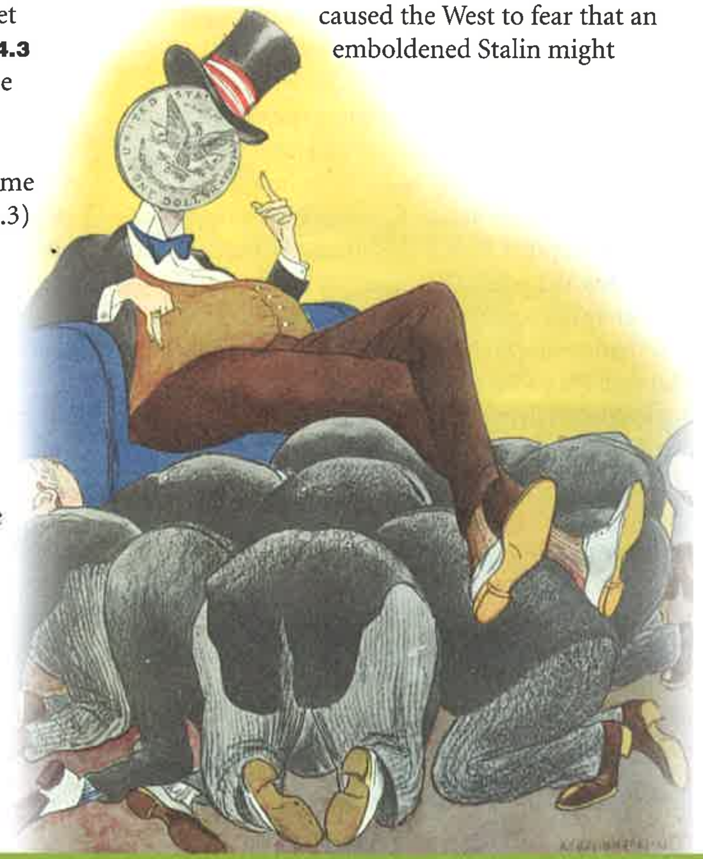
techniques, labor policies, and manufacturing practices.

The recovery of Western European markets under the Marshall Plan furthered the ideological divide between the United States and the Soviet Union. These conflicting political cartoons (**24.3** and **24.4**) reflected the American view that free markets fostered independence and the contrasting Soviet critique of capitalism as an exploitive, class-based system that enriched some at the expense of others. In his illustration (24.3) the American cartoonist Daniel R. Fitzpatrick viewed the Marshall Plan as a lifeline to Western Europe pulling people out of war-inflicted misery and away from the looming Soviet menace in the distance (represented in the cartoon by the distant towers of the Tsar's former palace in Leningrad, a readily recognizable symbol of the Soviet Union to Americans). Americans took pride in the wave of Western European prosperity that resulted from the Marshall Plan, making it one of the great economic success stories of the Cold War. In sharp contrast the Soviet magazine *Krokodil* showed European leaders groveling at the feet of their American lord, depicted in the cartoon (24.4) as a paunchy Uncle Sam relaxing with his feet on their backs. This cartoon implied that the Marshall Plan, rather than fostering recovery, enslaved Western Europe to the United States, which grew richer by the day. There was some truth to the Soviet claim that the Marshall Plan, which ran from 1948 to 1952, strengthened the American economy. Western European nations spent most of their funds in the United States on raw materials, food, machines, and fuel, creating a taste for American goods that continued even after the Marshall Plan ended.

The Berlin Airlift and NATO

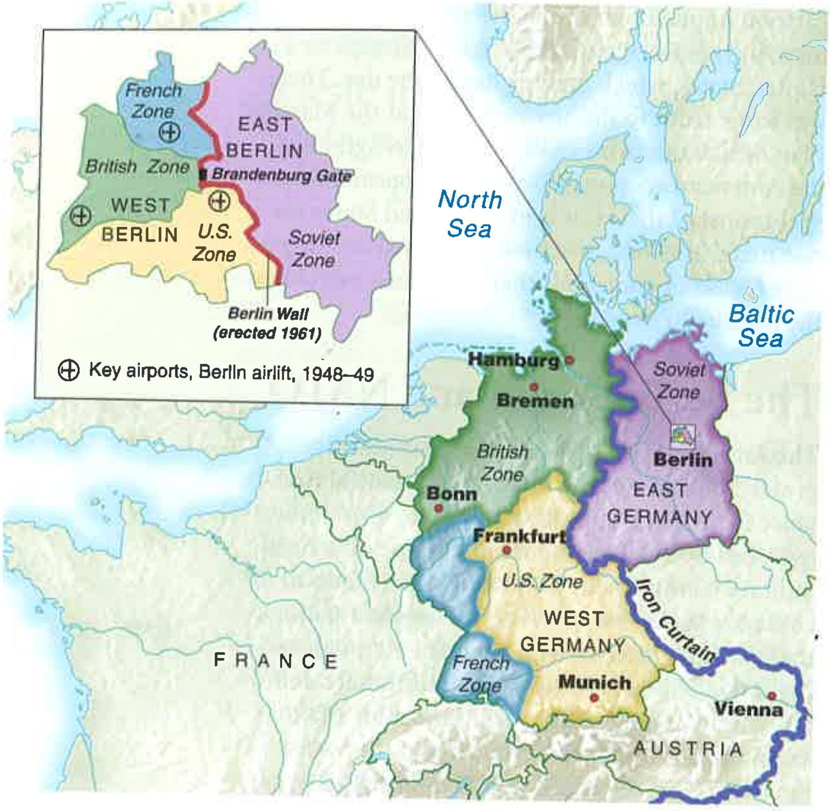
The American policy of containment quickly evolved into more than a vision of financial assistance for struggling governments and economies overseas. By 1949 containment also meant a firm military commitment from the United States to come to the defense of Western European nations that allied themselves with America. Almost overnight the United States shed its traditional reluctance to intervene militarily in European affairs as Americans became convinced that they were the only ones who could stop Stalin from controlling Europe.

In 1948 Stalin supported a coup by Czech Communists that overthrew the only democratic government in Eastern Europe. The quick demise of democracy in Czechoslovakia caused the West to fear that an emboldened Stalin might



24.4 Soviet View of the Marshall Plan In this Soviet cartoon, European leaders grovel at the feet of their American capitalist master, who has used the Marshall Plan to conquer Europe.

What conflicting views of the Marshall Plan are presented in these two cartoons?



24.5 A Divided Berlin
Key showdowns during the Cold War took place in Berlin, including the Berlin airlift in 1948–1949 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

have Germany, with its wrecked economy and nonexistent military, in mind as the next target for a Soviet-inspired communist revolution. With the country still divided into four occupied zones, the German economy was in shambles. Keeping Germany weak to punish it for World War II, initially a shared American and Soviet objective, increasingly made little strategic sense as the Soviet menace grew. By 1948 the United States saw strengthening Germany as a way to halt the Soviet expansionist drive across Europe. With this goal in mind, the United States, Britain, and France began discussing the possibility of consolidating their separately occupied sections of Germany to form a new democratic German government and offering it Marshall Plan funds to bolster the economy. The Soviet Union firmly opposed any plan for rebuilding Germany and protested that its former allies were violating the 1945 Yalta agreement that all four nations had to agree before any restructuring of Germany could occur.

As the West and the Soviet Union argued over how to deal with Germany, the stakes rose precipitously. Trying to pressure the United States, Britain, and France to abandon either their plan to reunify Germany or their stake in Berlin, Stalin ordered his army to stop all road, railroad, and canal traffic between the Western and Soviet zones of Germany. Berlin lay in the heart of the Soviet-occupied sector, but at the end of World War II the Allies had agreed to divide the German capital into four zones of occupation, portrayed on the map (**24.5**). To supply and reach their respective zones in Berlin, the Americans, British, and French needed to travel on roads, rail lines, and waterways that ran through the Soviet sector of Germany. Stalin now barred them from using these transportation facilities, setting in motion the first direct military confrontation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The United States faced a set of difficult choices. One option was to try to breach the blockade by sending an armed convoy down the autobahn (the German name for freeway) with permission to fire back if attacked by Soviet forces. In the midst of a difficult reelection campaign, Truman doubted Americans' willingness to fight the Soviet Union to help a recent enemy. The other option was to try to circumvent the blockade by supplying the Western-occupied sectors of Berlin from the air. The chances of an airlift working appeared slim since each plane could carry only 3 tons of supplies and the West normally sent an average of 12,000 tons of supplies a day to sustain a combined population of 2.3 million in their three zones. Faced with two unappealing choices, Truman gambled on the airlift and won.

> "The situation was dark and full of danger."
>
> State Department official GEORGE F. KENNAN on the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948

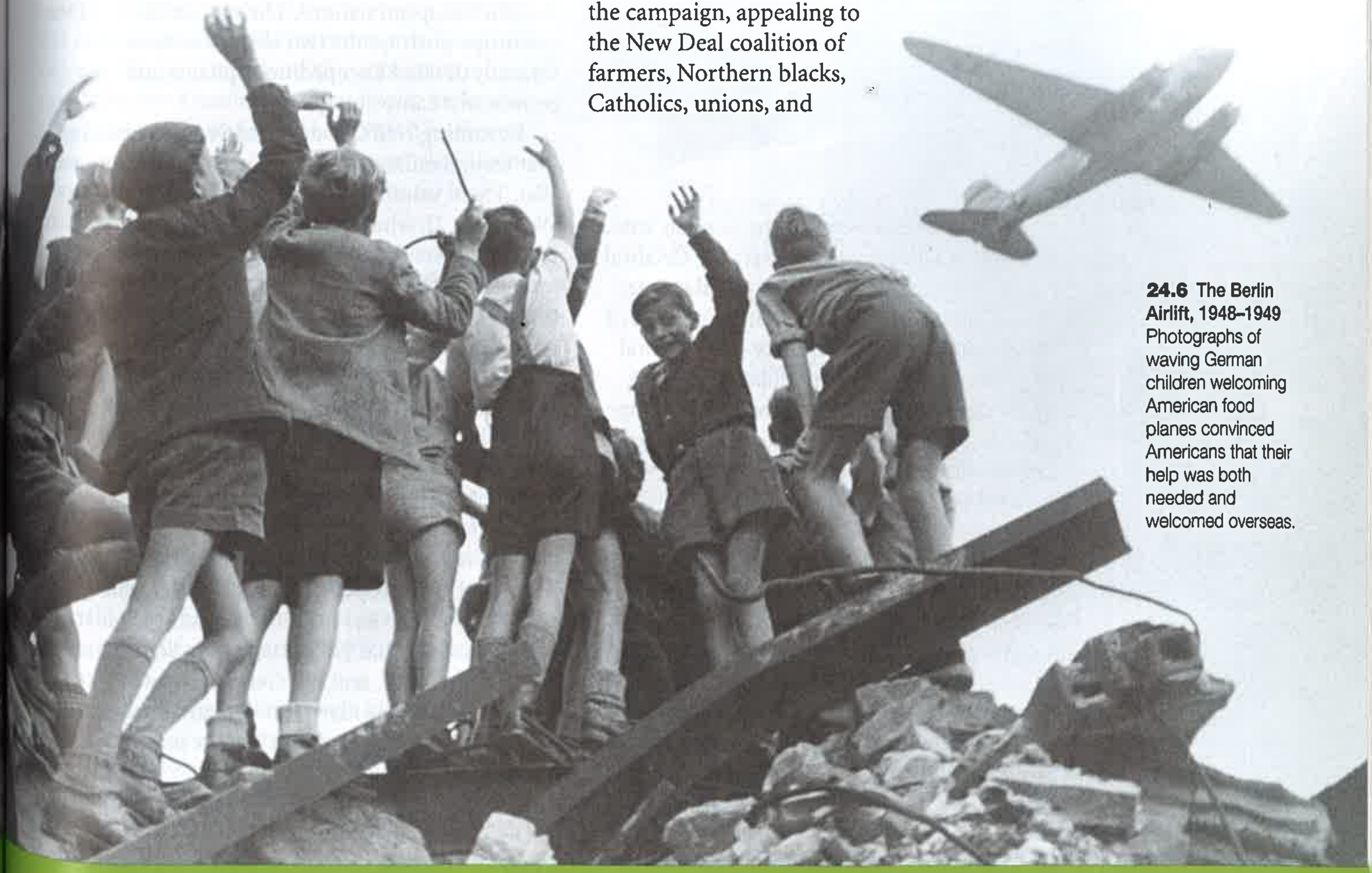
In the **Berlin airlift (1948–1949)**, American and British planes resupplied West Berlin for nearly a year to stymie the Soviet blockade of the city. It was a brilliant success, both a spectacular logistical feat and a propaganda coup for the United States worldwide. In sharp contrast to dour Soviet soldiers turning away convoys carrying needed food and medicine, the world saw photographs of German

Which international disputes led to the 1948–1949 Soviet blockade of Berlin?

children cheering the arrival of American and British planes. This photo (**24.6**) underscored how much the world had changed in a mere three years. The children stood on the rubble from a building destroyed by Allied bombers during the war. Instead of fleeing for their lives as American planes approached, they now welcomed the Americans as saviors for a city where strict rationing meant most children received only gruel (hot milk and flour) for their noontime meal. One American pilot was so touched by the sight of children scanning the skies for food planes that he attached miniature parachutes to candy bars and gum to drop to them when he flew by. "The spectacle of the British and Americans trying to feed the 2,000,000 Germans in Berlin, while the Soviet Union was trying to starve them, has been an object lesson to the German people far beyond anything that words could convey," Churchill noted.

Images like these convinced Americans that their help was both welcome and needed overseas. They also boosted Truman in the 1948 presidential campaign as he squared off against the Republican challenger, Thomas Dewey, who led in the polls, and two other third party candidates. Faced with public dissatisfaction over rampant inflation at home and a badly divided Democratic Party, these photos bolstered Truman's image as a resolute leader.

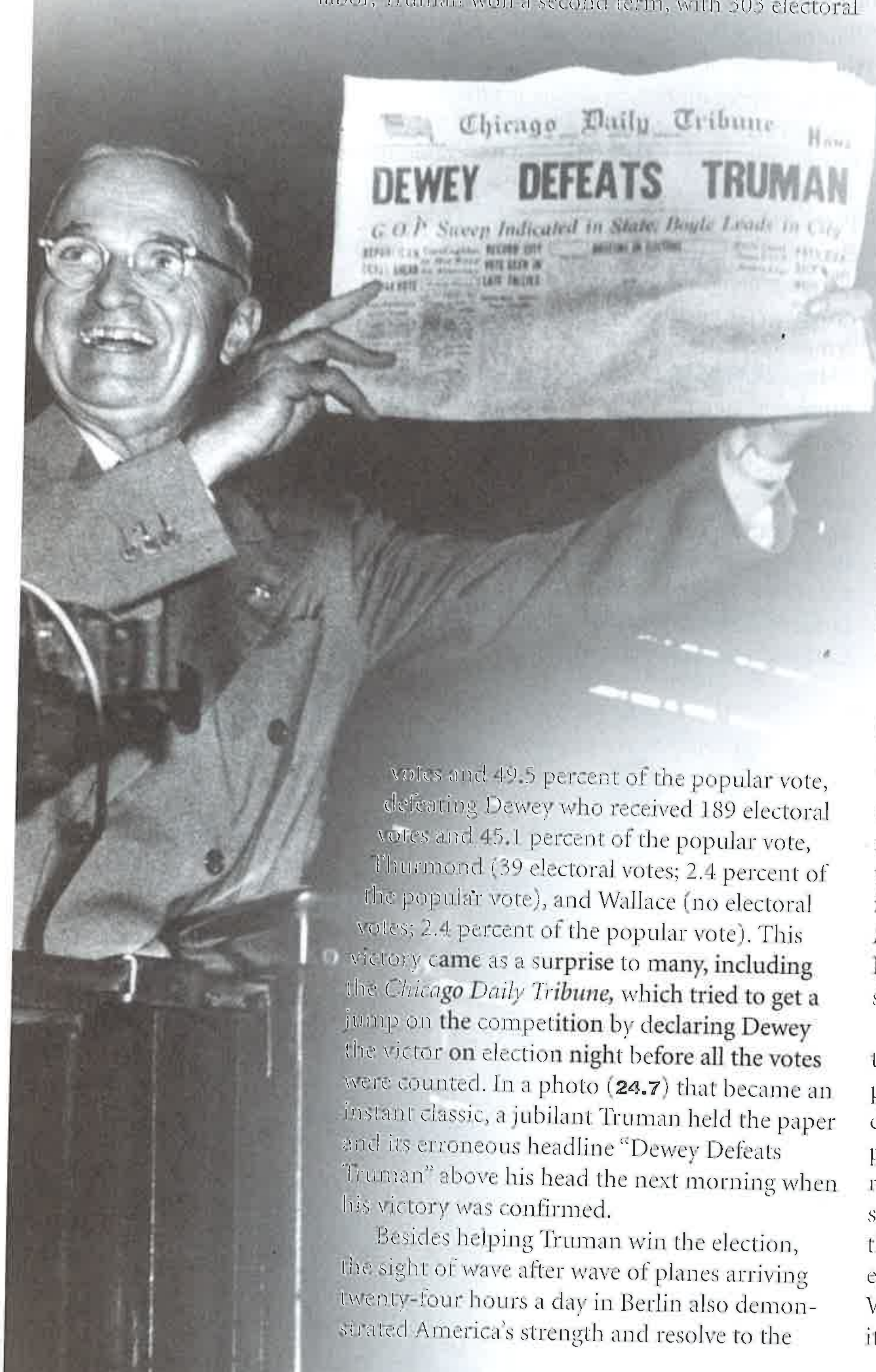
Truman could not correct all his political problems with photographs, however. The 1948 presidential campaign presented voters with sharply competing visions of what direction the country should take. Angry over Truman's proposal that the federal government investigate racial discrimination in voting and employment, many conservative Southern Democrats supported Strom Thurmond, the governor of South Carolina, in his presidential bid as a segregationist candidate for the States' Rights Party. Meanwhile liberal factions of the Democratic Party, upset with Truman's tepid reform agenda (see Chapter 25), formed the Progressive Party and nominated Henry A. Wallace who championed national health insurance. The former vice president's downplaying of the Soviet threat brought charges that Wallace had communist sympathies. Dewey, who had run against FDR in 1944, was a moderate Republican who, like Truman, supported civil rights and containing communism. Many believed that the president's unpopularity and the three-way split within the Democratic Party assured Dewey's election. Determined to "give them hell," Truman traveled nearly 32,000 miles during the campaign, appealing to the New Deal coalition of farmers, Northern blacks, Catholics, unions, and



24.6 The Berlin Airlift, 1948–1949 Photographs of waving German children welcoming American food planes convinced Americans that their help was both needed and welcomed overseas.

What political impact did this photo have?

liberals that had secured FDR's victory in 1936. Dewey's unwillingness to attack the president's foreign policies during this time of international crisis also helped Truman. In the summer of 1948, Truman issued an executive order desegregating the military to prevent the defection of black voters to Wallace, who called for an immediate end to Jim Crow. Thanks to votes from African Americans and labor, Truman won a second term, with 303 electoral votes and 49.5 percent of the popular vote, defeating Dewey who received 189 electoral votes and 45.1 percent of the popular vote, Thurmond (39 electoral votes; 2.4 percent of the popular vote), and Wallace (no electoral votes; 2.4 percent of the popular vote). This victory came as a surprise to many, including the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, which tried to get a jump on the competition by declaring Dewey the victor on election night before all the votes were counted. In a photo (**24.7**) that became an instant classic, a jubilant Truman held the paper and its erroneous headline "Dewey Defeats Truman" above his head the next morning when his victory was confirmed.


Chicago Daily Tribune
DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN
G.O.P. Sweep Indicated in State; Boyle Leads in City

24.7 Truman's Triumph
On election night in November 1948, Truman celebrated his election by holding the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, with its mistaken headline, from his campaign train.

Besides helping Truman win the election, the sight of wave after wave of planes arriving twenty-four hours a day in Berlin also demonstrated America's strength and resolve to the Soviet Union. After nearly a year, Stalin finally admitted defeat and revoked the blockade on Ma 12, 1949. The capitalist enclave in the heart of th Soviet sector of Germany had survived. By that ti the Americans, British, and French had merged th zones within Berlin and the rest of Germany to create the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany. In response the Soviets organized a Communist-led German government in their sect the German Democratic Republic, or East Germa Germany was now formally divided into two separate nations.

In the wake of the Soviet-backed coup in Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin, the United States refined its policy of containment eve further. These events had shattered any chance of creating consensus within the Truman administration around Kennan's vision that economic aid through the Marshall Plan was enough to safeguar democracy and prosperity in Western Europe. If peace were to prevail, it would be an armed peace. Western European nations took the first step by allying themselves in the Brussels Pact in 1948. Thi alliance blossomed into the American-led NATO alliance in April 1949. The Soviet Union responde with their own alliance, the Warsaw Pact, among Eastern European nations. The map of the Cold W in Europe portrays the two alliance systems that formally divided Europe into capitalist and communist camps (see 24.2).

By joining NATO the United States created its first formal military alliance since the Revolutionar War. There would be no repeat of World War I or World War II, when the United States had waited over two years each time before declaring war. As a member of NATO, the United States was obligated to come immediately to Western Europe's defense in the event of a Soviet attack. Besides putting American bases and soldiers permanently in Europ NATO extended the protection of America's atomic shield to its NATO partners.

Like the Marshall Plan NATO was designed to do many things at once. Besides creating a permanent role for the United States overseas and containing communism, NATO also helped keep peace among European nations that had clashed repeatedly in the last hundred years. A popular saying claimed that NATO kept "the Soviets out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" by ensuring that West Germany remained friends wit Western democracies even after the nation regaine its economic vigor.

Why was NATO an important development in the Cold War?

Fighting Communism: Cold and Hot War

As the Cold War took shape, the United States did not gain any noticeable advantage from its atomic monopoly in dealing with Stalin. Losing it, nonetheless, caused great angst in the United States. In 1949 the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb, challenging Americans' view of their own nation as the world's dominant military power. Suddenly the chances of an international crisis escalating into nuclear war appeared greater. As Americans digested this news, the epicenter of the Cold War shifted to Asia. By 1950 a Communist government controlled China, and the Korean War had begun. In the **Korean War (1950–1953)**, the United States fought Communist North Koreans and Chinese to a stalemate, frustrating Americans.

Communism Rising: 1949

The United States did not have long to celebrate its achievements during the Berlin airlift. Three months after Stalin admitted defeat in Berlin, an American spy plane detected a large amount of radioactive fallout in the desert of Kazakhstan, a Soviet republic. This unusual finding could mean only one thing: the Soviet Union had successfully tested its own atomic bomb. This news shattered the American certainty that it would retain a nuclear monopoly for at least ten years. Waiting impatiently for a formal announcement from the Kremlin, Truman finally broke the news to the world in September 1949. The Soviet Union confirmed the American report, but gave no other information about Stalin's plans for his nuclear-building program.

Fearful that Stalin might use nuclear weapons to expand beyond the iron curtain, the Truman administration broadened the scope of America's containment strategy beyond NATO and the Marshall Plan. Truman decided to station American troops in Western Europe permanently to both deter and, if necessary, respond to a nuclear attack. At the same time the United States began stockpiling atomic bombs to gain a numerical advantage over the Soviet Union. Finally Truman authorized the development of a "superbomb," a thermonuclear hydrogen bomb that was a thousand times more powerful than the uranium-enriched atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and the plutonium one that destroyed Nagasaki.

Americans were still recovering from the shock of the Soviet bomb when they received more bad news. The twenty-five-year-old Chinese Civil War had finally ended with the Communist Mao Zedong victorious over the Nationalist leader Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), who fled with his government to Taiwan, an island off the southeast coast of mainland China. Mao was an avid swimmer who refused even as an old man to be deterred by the human waste floating in China's polluted rivers. A master of staying afloat in water and in politics, Mao adopted Stalin and Soviet-style policies as his model, inflicting similarly painful waves of famine and political oppression on the Chinese people that killed more than twenty million. Fearful that the United States intended to attack China and restore Jiang to power, Mao immediately reached out to Stalin. "There should be some division of labor between us," Stalin suggested, with the Soviet Union furthering the communist cause in Europe and Mao doing the same in Asia. Accepting Stalin's offer Mao spent two months in Moscow devising a joint strategy that resulted in the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty, which pledged mutual assistance in the event of an enemy attack. This alliance created a second front in the Cold War that forced the United States to divide its attention between Europe and Asia.

> "There is only one thing worse than one nation having the atomic bomb—that's two nations having it."
>
> American physical chemist
> HAROLD ULREY, September 1949

In light of these new threats on the world stage, Truman ordered a full review of American foreign

How did the USSR acquiring nuclear weapons and the rise of communist China change the contours of the Cold War?

policy. The State Department responded with a document known as National Security Council Memorandum 68, or NSC-68. Not mincing words NSC-68 declared that "the issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself." Secretary of State Acheson later admitted that NSC-68's cataclysmic vision of a Soviet enemy "animated by a new fanatic faith" and bent on worldwide domination was meant to convince the president to use all means "short of war" to halt the apparent Soviet drive for world conquest. NSC-68 crystallized the piecemeal developments of the last four years into one clear vision: The United States must build up "the political, economic, and military strength of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will." This message was transmitted to the public not only through political speeches but also through films and novels. Perhaps no writer better encapsulated the public's fears of worldwide communist domination than George Orwell in his classic novel *1984,* which hit bookstores in 1949. In the novel Orwell envisioned a future where totalitarianism has triumphed and the people's loyalty to a Stalin-like dictator "Big Brother," who watches over everyone and censors their behavior, is ensured by a cycle of endless wars and torture. As the main character Winston Smith undergoes another round of torture, his tormentor tells him, "Imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever." This image neatly encapsulated the American public's view of communism in the Cold War.

The Korean War

At the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to divide the former Japanese colony of Korea, a peninsula along the Asian Pacific Coast, into two zones of occupation. The country was split along the 38th parallel, with the USSR occupying the north and the United States in the south. In 1945 partitioning the country seemed like a good way to both deprive Japan of Korean resources and prevent the Soviet Union from completely taking over the peninsula. When the Soviet Union organized a Communist government under Kim Il-sung in North Korea and the United States selected Syngman Rhee to head a capitalist government in the south, the previously unified nation appeared permanently divided.

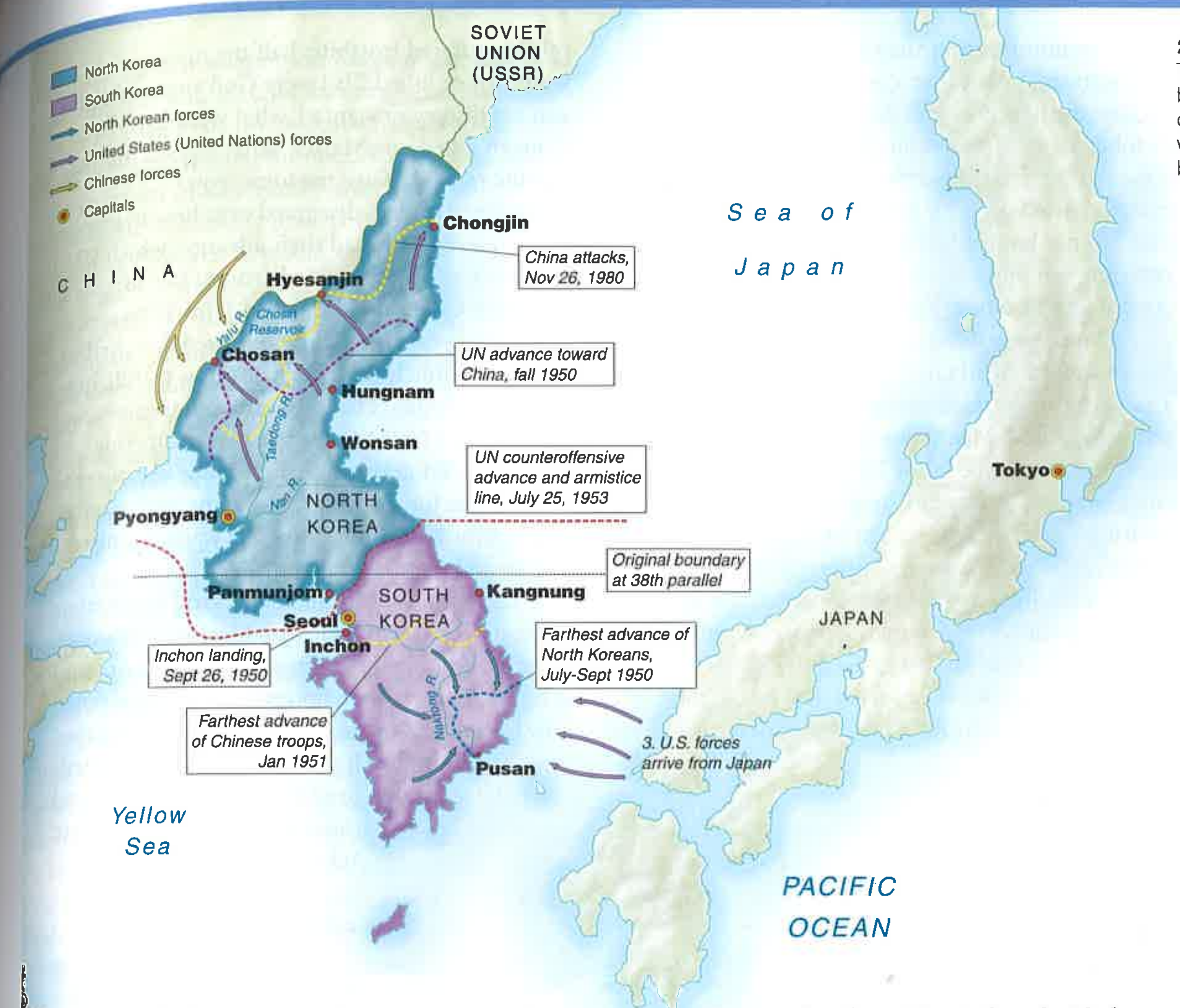
By 1949, however, the United States had begun to reevaluate its military commitment in South Korea. The military occupation was expensive to maintain, and Pentagon officials increasingly doubted the strategic importance of the peninsula. The State Department agreed, believing that economic aid and political reforms could strengthen South Korea enough to discourage a North Korean attack. In January 1950 Secretary of State Acheson openly questioned the importance of South Korea to the overall defense of American interests in East Asia. In a speech before the National Press Club, Acheson outlined a defensive perimeter in the Pacific that the United States would defend against Communist incursions that included Japan, Okinawa, Formosa, and the Philippines, but not South Korea. Accordingly Truman began withdrawing American soldiers from South Korea. To deter North Korea from attacking, the United States left a stockpile of conventional weapons and promised continued financial aid.

Yet when North Korea launched a surprise invasion of South Korea in June 1950, Truman dramatically reversed course. Within days Truman decided to send American ground troops to help roll back the offensive. The speed and success of the North Korean attack alarmed Truman. Within two days North Korean troops had entered Seoul, the capital of South Korea (**24.8**), and by the end of one week North Korea had pushed the bulk of the South Korean army into the toe of the Korean peninsula around Pusan. Viewing this overpowering offensive as confirmation of the vision encapsulated in NSC-68, Truman immediately suspected that the USSR was behind the attack. Truman was partly right. Kim Il-sung had secured reluctant support from Stalin and Mao Zedong for the invasion by promising an easy victory. In the event that the United States intervened in Korea, Stalin saw advantages to diverting American attention away from Europe.

Other global and domestic events by June 1950 left many Americans feeling that the West was losing the Cold War. Worldwide these events included China falling to communism and the explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb. At home sensational spy trials fueled continued doubts about Truman's leadership. In this political climate doing nothing was hardly an option for Truman.

Truman's intimate understanding of World War I (he had served as an artillery captain in France) and World War II encouraged him to break with the precedent set by these recent conflicts. In each of these wars, Americans had debated the merits of fighting for more than two years before declaring war. "I remembered how each time the democracies

Why did the United States decide to fight in Korea?


North Korea
South Korea
North Korean forces
United States (United Nations) forces
Chinese forces
Capitals
SOVIET UNION (USSR)
CHINA
Sea of Japan
Chongjin
China attacks, Nov 26, 1980
Hyesanjin
Chosin Reservoir
Yalu R.
Chosan
UN advance toward China, fall 1950
Hungnam
Taedong R.
Wonsan
UN counteroffensive advance and armistice line, July 25, 1953
Nam R.
NORTH KOREA
Pyongyang
Original boundary at 38th parallel
Panmunjom
Seoul
SOUTH KOREA
Kangnung
Inchon
Inchon landing, Sept 26, 1950
Farthest advance of North Koreans, July-Sept 1950
Farthest advance of Chinese troops, Jan 1951
Naktong R.
Pusan
3. U.S. forces arrive from Japan
Tokyo
JAPAN
Yellow Sea
PACIFIC OCEAN

24.8 **The Korean War** The advantage on the battlefield changed quickly during the war's first year before becoming a stalemate.

failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead," Truman noted. Determined to respond quickly this time, Truman committed American troops to combat within a matter of days. Although Truman consulted Congress, he never asked for a declaration of war against North Korea. Truman instead decided to work through the UN, which authorized the use of force to restore the original 38th-parallel boundary between North and South Korea. Sixteen nations sent troops to Korea to serve in the UN police force, but the United States provided the bulk of troops and commanded military operations. When polled three-quarters of Americans approved of Truman's decision to send military aid to South Korea. Americans, for the time being anyway, subscribed to Truman's vision that "the future of civilization depends on what we do."

The situation on the battlefield, however, was grim, with South Korean soldiers holding on precariously around Pusan. To reverse the situation General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme United Nations commander, devised a dramatic and risky strategy. Rather than simply confronting the North Koreans head-on, MacArthur decided to stage an amphibious landing at Inchon, a port city near Seoul. This attack on the North Koreans' rear would cut their supply lines and force them to fight on two fronts. The tides at Inchon, however, were the second highest in the world, varying twenty-nine feet between high and low tides. Within a matter of minutes, the quickly receding tide could mire a boat in mud. Inchon, MacArthur reasoned, was the right place to attack precisely because it was so uninviting and would take the enemy by surprise. As he predicted the North Koreans had stationed only 2,000 troops there, and the UN force of 70,000 encountered little resistance in taking the city. The success of this operation turned MacArthur, already famous for his feats in World War II, into a national hero. Following the Inchon invasion UN forces quickly drove North Korean troops out of South Korea.

In the wake of this victory, Truman pondered giving the war a new purpose. Instead of simply restoring the status quo of a divided Korea, Truman now decided to try to reunify Korea under an

What accounted for America's initial successes on the battlefield?

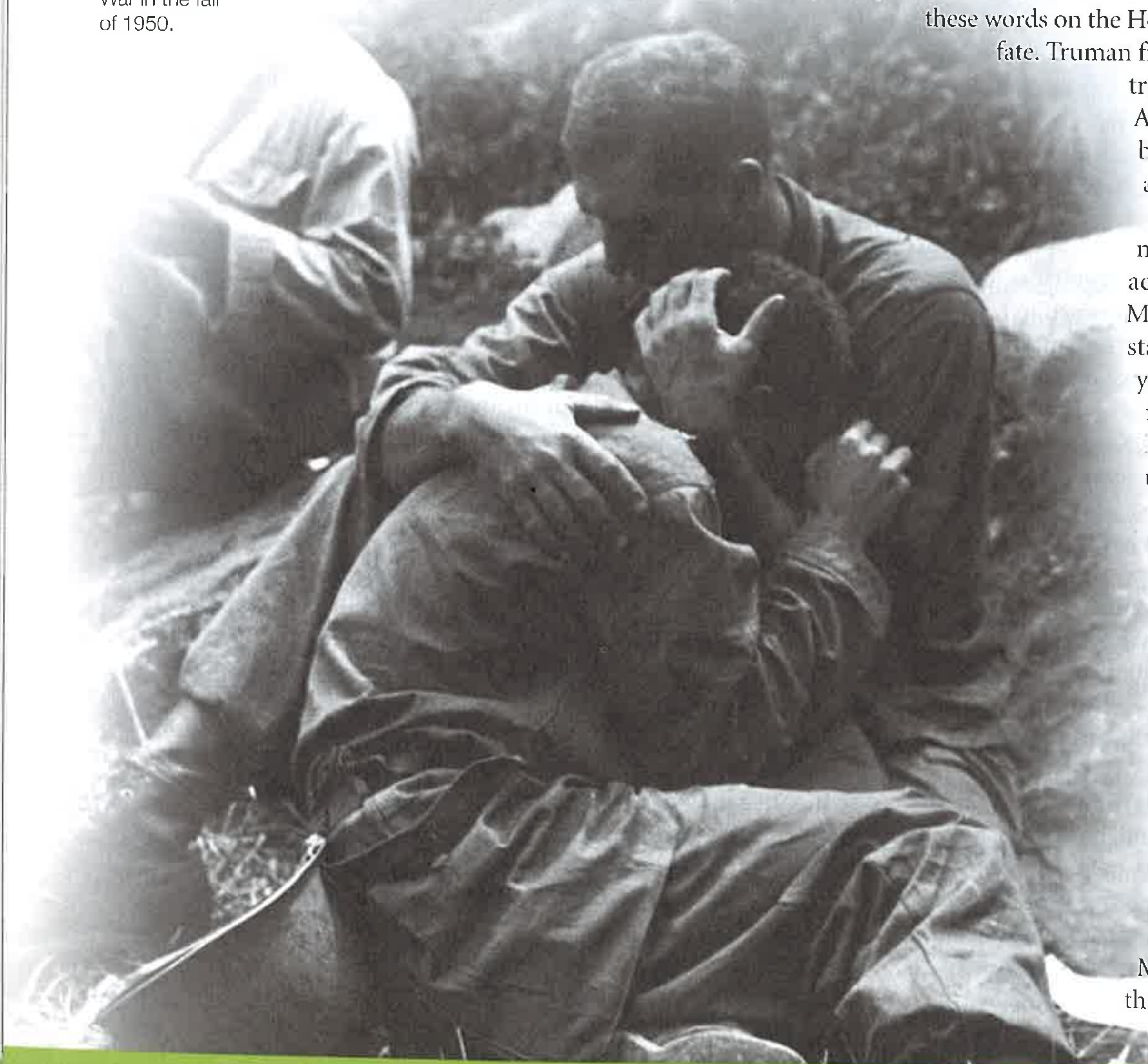
anti-Communist government. Rolling back communism, rather than containing communism, became the new goal sanctioned by the UN in October 1950. At that same moment, however, China was preparing to aid North Korea. When American troops crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea, they did not know that Mao had already resolved to enter the war and was massing Chinese troops and guns along the North Korean-Chinese border.

Still unaware of Mao's intentions, American troops moved swiftly up the peninsula to celebrate Thanksgiving by the Yalu River. Imminent victory seemed assured: MacArthur promised Truman that the troops would be home by Christmas. Then in late November waves of Chinese troops began pouring across the border, shrieking and blowing bugles. Terrified UN forces suffered heavy casualties as they withdrew in the harsh winter cold. *Life* photographer David Douglas Duncan, warming his camera in his coat pocket to keep the film from breaking, chronicled the bitter retreat of 10,000 Marines who fought their way to safety. Nearly every soldier suffered frostbite; half the men were wounded or killed. "If I were God and could give you anything you wanted, what would you ask for?" Duncan asked one Marine. After several minutes the Marine replied, "Give me tomorrow."

Military leaders disagreed over how to respond as the Chinese continued their advance, which UN forces eventually contained around the 38^{th} parallel. The Joint Chiefs of Staff urged Truman to seek a negotiated peace, advice he followed. MacArthur, however, publicly endorsed all-out war utilizing nuclear weapons. The president and theater commander now began to pursue two competing visions. As Truman made diplomatic overtures to the Chinese for a ceasefire along the 38th parallel, MacArthur issued the Chinese a warning: surrender or face complete destruction.

"There is no substitute for victory," MacArthur wrote to Congressman Joseph Martin of Massachusetts, echoing the feelings of countless Americans at home. This was not, however, Truman's vision of how to end the war successfully; when Martin read these words on the House floor, he sealed MacArthur's fate. Truman fired MacArthur the next week, triggering, as Secretary of State Acheson had predicted, "the biggest fight of your administration."

MacArthur came home, not in disgrace, but to great acclaim. Many Americans shared MacArthur's frustrations with the stalemate on the battlefield. Six years after defeating two great military powers in World War II, the United States found itself unable to reunify Korea under an anti-Communist government. Responding to MacArthur's vision of total victory, huge crowds greeted the general when his ship docked in San Francisco, and he reveled in a ticker-tape parade held in his honor in New York City. Congress debated impeaching Truman but then opted instead to hold hearings into MacArthur's removal. During the hearings MacArthur's critics interrogated the general about the possibility



24.9 "The Price of Victory: A Soldier Grieves for His Lost Buddy" An American soldier comforts a comrade distraught over the death of a friend during the Korean War in the fall of 1950.

How did the entry of the Chinese into the Korean War affect political and military debates within the United States?

that using nuclear weapons in Korea might lead to a global nuclear war. MacArthur's response, "that doesn't happen to be my responsibility," caused the general's popularity to plummet. The cooling enthusiasm for MacArthur's vision of all-out war did little to bolster public confidence in Truman, however. In public opinion polls only 24 percent of Americans approved of how Truman was handling the presidency, reflecting public disappointment over the situation in Korea, continued anger at Truman over "losing China," and several well-publicized Soviet spy scandals that together revived the image of Truman as an ineffectual leader. Truman's aggressive support for civil rights and his domestic reform agenda (see Chapter 25), too much for conservatives and too little for liberals, also contributed to his poor rating.

24.10 **"We Like Ike"** The enthusiasm for his candidacy displayed by Republicans in 1952 convinced Eisenhower to run for president.

Korea was the last American war that the public viewed primarily through photographs. Only 34 percent of American homes were equipped with television sets in 1952, rising to 86 percent by 1960. In 1950 *Newsweek* published the photograph "The Price of Victory: A Soldier Grieves for His Lost Buddy" (**24.9**). One reader's suggestion that this image should serve as the iconic photo of the Korean War, just as "Old Glory Goes Up on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima" had served to represent World War II, revealed a significant shift in the public's attitudes over the last five years (see *Images as History: Combat Photography,* Chapter 23, page 706). The World War II image of five marines and one navy corpsman raising the flag suggested teamwork, victory, and the triumph of democracy. In sharp contrast "The Price of Victory" looked at the personal cost of war—the sorrow and compassion that drew men together on the battlefield—even as the photograph reaffirmed the willingness of soldiers to die for their country. Photographers and the public were beginning to probe the impact of fighting on the ground soldier, stoking the ambivalence that the country increasingly felt about the war.

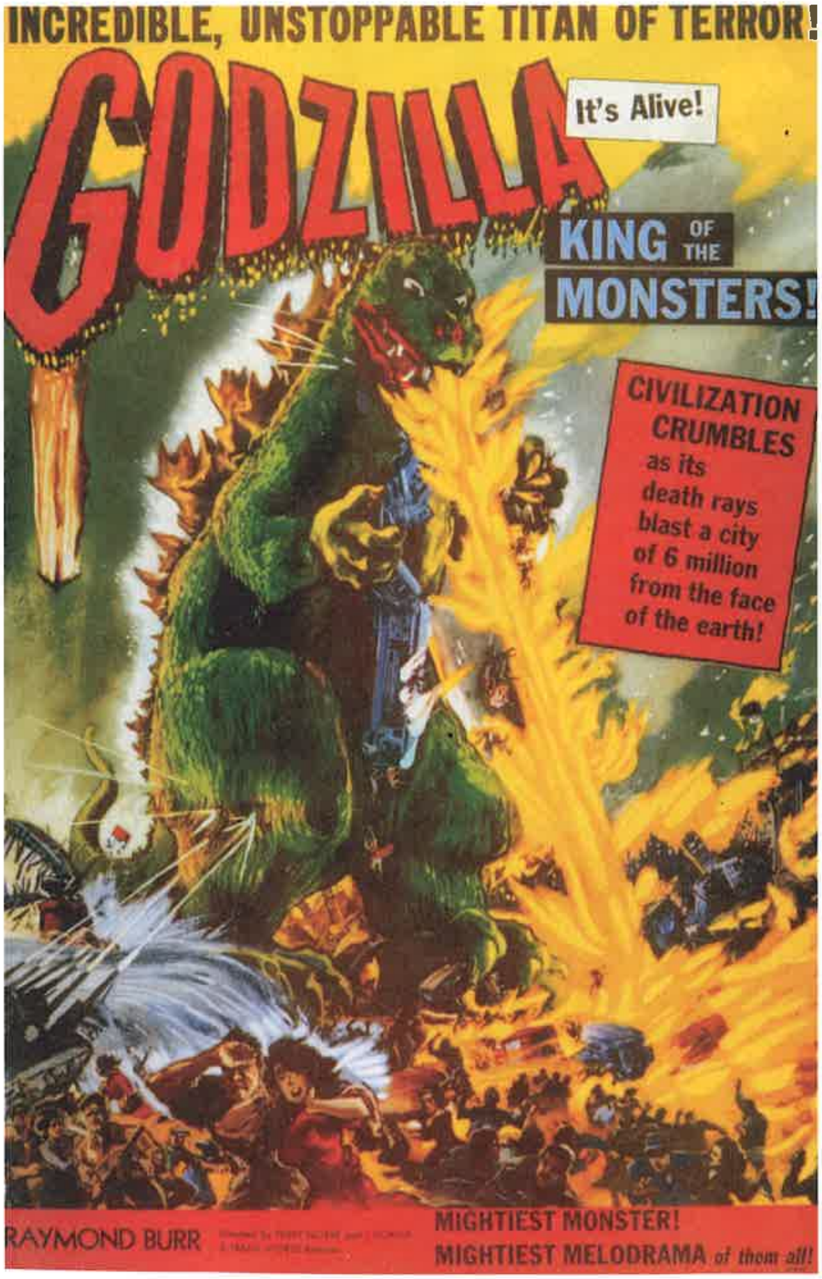
With MacArthur out of the picture, General Matthew Ridgway took over command of UN operations in 1951 and armistice negotiations began. Talks were still underway two years later when a new president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, took office. Eisenhower's sunny demeanor offered a sharp contrast to Truman's more combative and coarser personality. Whereas Truman cussed, told off-color jokes, and picked fights with reporters, Eisenhower was gregarious and friendly to all. Some Democrats had tried to draft Eisenhower as a presidential candidate in 1948. Four years later the Republican "We Like Ike" campaign finally convinced Eisenhower to seek office. The young women adorned here (**24.10**), with "Ike" dresses and umbrellas, illustrate Republicans' enthusiasm for Eisenhower on the eve of the nominating convention where delegates enthusiastically selected him as their presidential candidate.

Admired by Americans for his command of the D-Day invasion in World War II, Eisenhower's military experience convinced Americans that he would be a capable leader in a time of war. The negotiations remained deadlocked, however, until Eisenhower threatened to reconsider the question of employing nuclear weapons. Finally the two sides agreed to a permanent ceasefire in July 1953.

The war was costly on all sides. More than 600,000 Chinese soldiers and nearly two million North and South Koreans perished. For the first time in its history, the United States could not claim outright victory over its opponent despite nearly 33,000 men killed in combat and 103,000 men wounded. "What the hell is there to celebrate?" remarked one soldier when news of the armistice reached the front. The silence at home offered a marked contrast to the jubilant demonstrations that had filled the streets eight years earlier when Japan surrendered. China embraced a competing vision of the stalemate, reveling in their ability to hold their own against the United States.

The Korean War had major geopolitical consequences by turning the Cold War into a global conflict. The war tied South Korea and Japan, economically resurgent thanks to American aid, even more closely to the United States, and these two nations became staunch allies in creating a defensive perimeter against communism in East Asia. Holding the line against communism in Korea increased America's interest in other regional civil wars, including one underway in Vietnam. The war poisoned relations with China, and the two nations did not reestablish diplomatic relations until 1979. Pledged to defend South Korea, the United States to this day maintains a large military presence along what continues to be the most heavily armed border in the world.

24.11 Godzilla
A 1954 Japanese horror film used the ravages of a nuclear-spawned dinosaur named Godzilla to criticize American use and testing of its nuclear arsenal. This political message was edited out of the version shown in the United States.


INCREDIBLE, UNSTOPPABLE TITAN OF TERROR!
GODZILLA
It's Alive!
KING OF THE MONSTERS!
CIVILIZATION CRUMBLES as its death rays blast a city of 6 million from the face of the earth!
RAYMOND BURR
MIGHTIEST MONSTER!
MIGHTIEST MELODRAMA of them all!

Nuclear Fallout and Fear

While soldiers fought and died on the battlefield, Americans at home waged their own defensive war against nuclear weapons. The government sponsored atmospheric and underwater tests of nuclear bombs in the 1940s and 1950s both in the United States and on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific. Even when the United States had a secure monopoly on nuclear weapons, many Americans expressed concern about **nuclear fallout**, the deadly pollution that descends through the air after a nuclear bomb explosion.

Over the course of the decade, popular science fiction writers and filmmakers tapped into this preoccupation with nuclear fallout. In the Japanese film classic *Godzilla,* for example, a nuclear explosion awakes a fire-breathing monster who, as the film's promotional poster (**24.11**) illustrated, terrorizes Tokyo. Like the atomic bomb that ravaged Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Godzilla is an unstoppable nuclear force that obliterates everything in his path. Americans, however, saw only a carefully edited version of the film, with all critical commentary on America's ongoing nuclear testing program in the Pacific carefully excised. In a similar vein two popular Marvel comic book characters, the Incredible Hulk and Spiderman, were spawned by contact with radioactive material. In the *Incredible Hulk*, a scientist exposed to gamma rays is transformed into a green, 300-pound giant, while a bite from an irradiated spider turns nerdish lab assistant Peter Parker into Spiderman.

Teaching Americans how to live with the constant threat of nuclear war meant convincing citizens to remain vigilant and calm. To combat both indifference and panic, governmental propaganda underscored the seriousness of the threat, while also reassuring the public that they could survive an atomic bomb blast if they took precautionary measures such as building fortified fallout shelters or remembering to "duck and cover." *Images as History: Surviving an Atomic Bomb Blast* explores how government-generated images presented competing visions that both reassured and frightened Americans about the likely effect of a nuclear bomb attack.

What insights does popular culture offer into Americans' concerns about nuclear weapons?

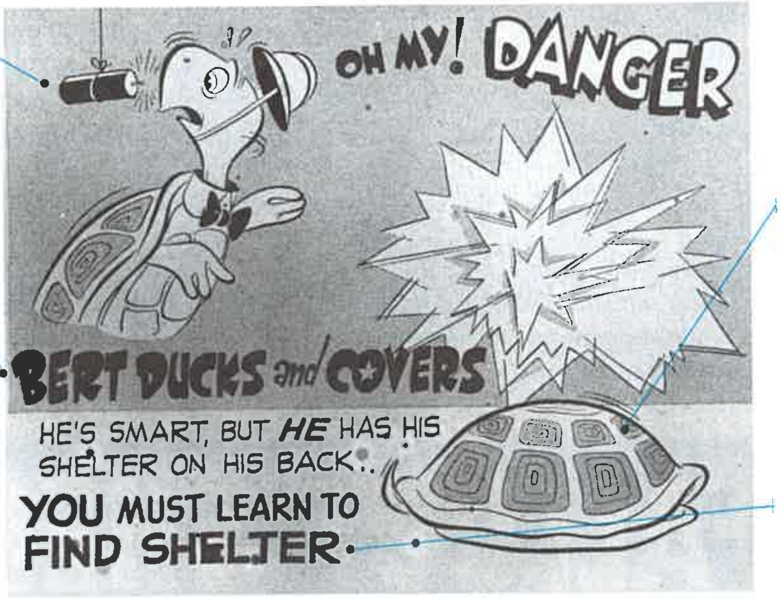
Images as History

SURVIVING AN ATOMIC BOMB BLAST

Controlling how people react to advice or propaganda can be difficult to predict. What was the government's purpose in disseminating images of a possible nuclear attack? What were the possible unintended effects that these images could have on the Americans viewing them?

By 1950 schoolchildren throughout the nation had learned to jump out of their seats and under their desks with their hands clasped firmly over their heads when their teachers shouted "Drop!" during civil defense drills. In government-produced civil defense films and comic books distributed to schools, a cartoon character named Bert the Turtle instructed children to "duck and cover" during a nuclear attack. Advocates of the "duck and cover" approach argued that flying debris and shattered windows had killed many victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; therefore, teaching children to "duck and cover" was practical advice.

To ensure that Americans remained vigilant in preparing for a nuclear attack, the government also released "before" and "after" photographs from a test explosion in the Nevada desert on March 17, 1953. *Time* magazine estimated that nearly three-quarters of the nation saw these pictures.

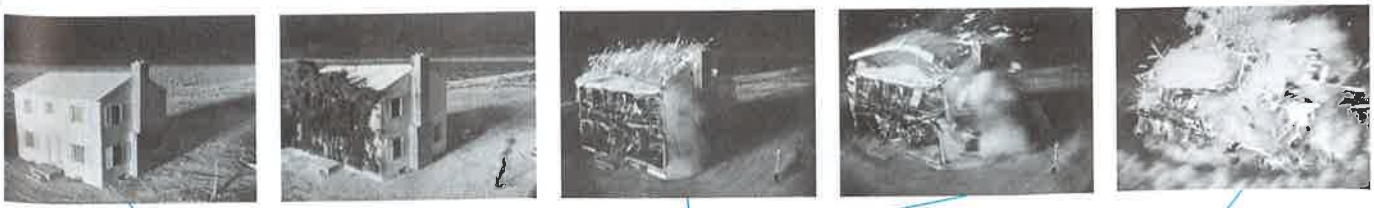

OH MY! DANGER
BERT DUCKS and COVERS
HE'S SMART, BUT HE HAS HIS SHELTER ON HIS BACK..
YOU MUST LEARN TO FIND SHELTER

The stick of dynamite dangling from a stick symbolized a nuclear attack, exactly the kind of danger children needed to learn to recognize.

A catchy jingle accompanied this lesson in civil defense: "There was a turtle by the name of Bert, and Bert the Turtle was very alert / When danger threatened him he never got hurt / He knew just what to do / He'd Duck and Cover / Duck and Cover."

The intact shell implies that one could safely survive a nuclear attack by hiding under something.

Authorities advised children—who did not carry their shelters on their backs like Bert—to seek protection behind walls and trees or under tables if an atomic bomb hit.



The "before" blast images portrayed a normal middle-class suburban home and yard.

The "after" blast photographs showed these suburban houses engulfed in flames and blown to bits within two seconds of being hit with a nuclear bomb.

This image directly contradicted the vision that one could survive a nuclear attack by seeking shelter under a bed as "Bert the Turtle" advised.

Did these images offer competing or complimentary visions of the nuclear threat?

Fallout Shelters

With the successful test explosion of the hydrogen bomb in 1954, the Eisenhower administration embraced mass evacuation from city centers as the best civil defense against nuclear attack. The president's decision to construct an interstate highway system changed official policy "from 'Duck and Cover' to 'Run Like Hell,'" the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* concluded. Multilane highways served peacetime needs by linking cities to suburbs and military needs by making the evacuation of civilians and the mobilization of the military easier if the United States was attacked. Practice evacuation runs were not encouraging, however. "Operation Kids," for example, an effort to move 37,300 schoolchildren in Mobile, Alabama, out of the city without warning resulted in heavy traffic jams.

Eisenhower also urged Americans to build private family shelters at their own expense. The government distributed pamphlets with suggested floor plans, and advised women to store enough food and medical supplies to sustain their families if a nuclear attack contaminated water supplies or destroyed grocery stores. "Grandma's pantry was ready" whenever guests unexpectedly arrived; "is your 'pantry' ready in event of emergency?" one government pamphlet asked.

Given their high cost (even a barebones shelter cost $1,000, about one-fifth an average family's annual income) only a small number of Americans could afford to construct their own fallout shelters. At a moment of crisis in 1961 when the United States and the Soviet Union clashed once again over the fate of Berlin, Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy, dedicated some public funds to preparing mass underground shelters in schools and public buildings. Signs with three yellow triangles superimposed on a black circle (**24.12**) that pointed toward underground public fallout shelters now became ubiquitous in schools and government buildings throughout the country.

In 1956 the government began constructing secret centers scattered throughout the nation to house officials in the event of a nuclear attack. The government did not make these preparations public, avoiding uncomfortable questions about what would happen to the rest of the country. These secret plans sought to ensure the continued functioning of Congress by transporting legislators and some staff members (without their families) to an underground shelter in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. As part of its preparations, the Treasury Department put an eight-month supply of one-dollar bills and a two-year supply of five-, ten-, and twenty-dollar bills in bombproof shelters. The military scattered mini-Pentagons throughout the country, including underground facilities for the president and his cabinet near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Plans to whisk the government to safety during a nuclear attack remained in place until 1995.

FALLOUT SHELTER

24.12 Fallout Shelter Sign
In the early 1960s, fallout shelter signs posted in neighborhoods, schools, and public buildings were daily reminders of the nuclear threat that hung over the nation.

What defensive measures did the public and government take against a possible nuclear attack?

Spies in Our Midst

BURN ALL REDS

Recently released documents from the Soviet Union suggest that as many as three hundred Americans spied for the USSR during the 1930s and 1940s. Does this reality justify the attack on civil liberties that occurred during the anti-communist crusade that swept across the country during the 1940s and 1950s? During the Cold War many Americans believed that this anti-communist campaign made the country safer and freer; a minority voiced the competing vision that the government was using spy investigations to limit the scope of legitimate political discourse by eliminating the radical left. The government's crusade against communism in the First Red Scare (1919) after World War I lasted only a few short months. The widespread effort to root out Communist spies after World War II lasted for nearly a decade.

The Second Red Scare

To a country reeling from the loss of China to communism and the detonation of a Soviet bomb, the suggestion that the government was rife with Communist spies offered a simple explanation for these complex events. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had investigated fascist activities in the United States during World War II, now probed the communist threat. Other World War II–era measures also took on new life during the **Second Red Scare**, including the Smith Act (1940), which outlawed advocating the forceful destruction of the government. Acting on a precedent set by Franklin D. Roosevelt in World War II, Truman created a federal employee loyalty program in 1947 that gave the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the police arm of the Justice Department, the right to investigate the backgrounds of federal workers. In 1950 Congress tightened restrictions on radical political activity even further with the McCarran Acts in 1950 and 1952 which stopped Communists from entering the country and required Communist or Communist-front organizations to register with the attorney general.

Most of the individuals investigated by HUAC and the FBI had once belonged to the Communist Party, which had attracted many new members during the labor unrest of the 1930s (see Chapter 22). Whether past or even present membership in the Communist Party made one a traitor was another question. When David Wellman was a young boy, his family was under constant police surveillance. Two unmarked cars sat outside their Detroit home and followed him and his sister to school, ball games, and the store. "Trying to turn fear into fun, we made shaking them a game," he later recalled. Wellman maintained that his father, a wounded World War II veteran and leader in the Michigan Communist Party, and his mother, a communist active in trade unions, were not traitors but people who believed that revolution was an American ideal.

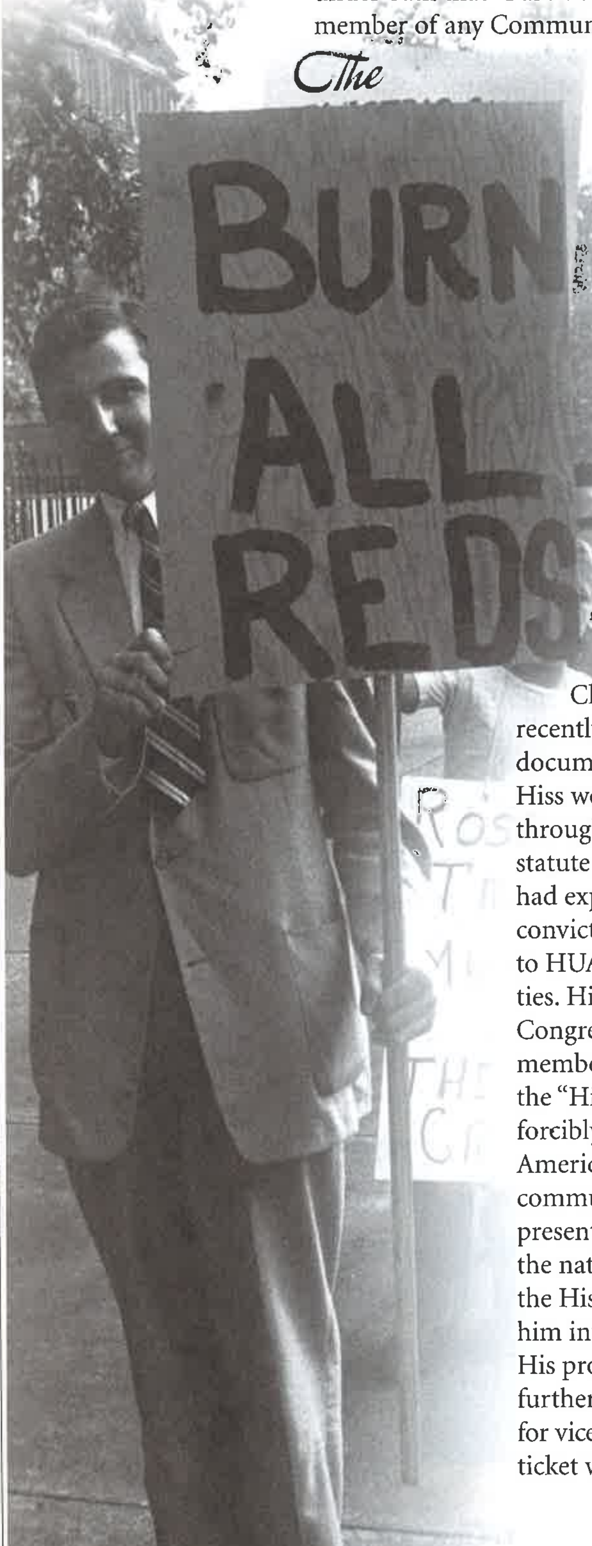
The constant surveillance took a toll on the family. "It felt as if the government penetrated the deepest recesses of our lives every minute of the day," Wellman recalled. Paranoia caused the family to censor speech within the home and on the telephone, certain that the police were always listening. As an adult Wellman got access to his family's police file and was stunned to learn that the actual reports contained almost no information about his parents' political activism. The police had discovered very little through this constant surveillance, succeeding mostly in terrorizing the family, which, Wellman suspected, was their true intent all along.

> "They were trying to put the fear of police power in the minds of the people they spied on. To a large degree, it worked."
>
> DAVID WELLMAN, whose family was under police surveillance during the Second Red Scare

The two biggest spy cases of the era involved Alger Hiss and Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. In 1948 Whittaker Chambers, a *Time* magazine editor and former member of the Communist Party, accused Alger Hiss, a high-ranking official during the

What insights does Wellman's story offer into the Second Red Scare?

Roosevelt administration, of being a communist. Hiss denied the charge before HUAC, announcing under oath that "I am not and never have been a member of any Communist-front organization." Chambers responded by charging that Hiss spied for the Soviet Union in the 1930s and as proof produced several rolls of microfilm that Chambers had hidden in a hollow pumpkin in his garden. The "pumpkin patch" microfilm contained copies of secret State Department papers from 1938 regarding the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and the Spanish Civil War that had been typed on Hiss's typewriter. The "pumpkin patch" papers corroborated Chambers's account, and recently declassified intelligence documents have confirmed that Hiss worked as a Soviet spy through at least 1945. Because the statute of limitations on espionage had expired, a federal court convicted Hiss of perjury for lying to HUAC about his communist ties. Hiss served four years in jail. Congressman Richard Nixon, a member of HUAC, believed that the "Hiss case, for the first time, forcibly demonstrated to the American people that domestic communism was a real and present danger to the security of the nation." Nixon's leading role in the Hiss investigation catapulted him into the national spotlight. His prominence increased even further when he ran successfully for vice president on the Republican ticket with Eisenhower in 1952.



24.13 The Rosenbergs Spy Case, 1953
Protesters urge the government to execute convicted spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, reflecting the fury many Americans felt toward anyone believed to have betrayed the United States.

In 1953 another spy case involving Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, the Jewish parents of two young boys, captivated the nation. The federal government charged Julius with passing atomic bomb secrets to the Soviet Union during World War II, information he had supposedly gathered from his brother-in-law, a Soviet spy working for the Manhattan Project who later testified against the couple. Although Julius's wife Ethel was never personally implicated in the spy ring, the government charged her with knowing of her husband's involvement. Arrested to spur her husband into confessing, both went on trial for espionage. They each maintained their innocence even when convicted and sentenced to death by electric chair.

As the execution date neared, demonstrators from the right and the left took to the streets, offering the public two competing visions of the Rosenbergs and the government's anti-communist investigations. Men carrying signs that read "Burn All Reds" and "No Mercy for Spies" picketed before the White House (**24.13**). Supporters who believed that the Rosenbergs were being persecuted for their radical beliefs organized marches for clemency. Radio and television reporters witnessing the execution shared intimate details with a nation riveted on the couple's final moments, including Ethel's botched electrocution on June 19, 1953, when it took three tries to kill her. Their two young sons, aged ten and six, endured intense media scrutiny as well. Relatives put them in an orphanage, and New Jersey revoked their right to attend public school. Two of their parents' supporters eventually adopted the boys and changed their names. As adults they were active in leftist causes and until recently steadfastly maintained their parents' innocence. For decades the right and the left embraced two competing visions of the Rosenbergs case. The right viewed the couple as traitors whose cooperation with the Soviet Union demonstrated the clear internal threat that the nation faced from Soviet spies. The left, believing the Rosenbergs innocent, felt that mainstream politicians exaggerated the Communist menace to gain public support for eradicating all left-leaning political groups from American society. In some respects both portraits were accurate. Newly released Soviet documents reveal that Julius did indeed pass valuable atomic data to the Soviet Union, but it appears that Ethel knew nothing of her husband's espionage activities, making her, along with countless others in the 1950s, a victim of overzealous investigators who equated leftist politics with treason.

HUAC against Hollywood

The effort to expose the evildoings of communists went far beyond punishing government officials who spied for the Soviet Union. In 1947 HUAC began an investigation into alleged communist activities in Hollywood. Over the next few years, hundreds of screenwriters, producers, directors, and actors were called to testify in Washington, D.C. Initial hearings focused on the supposedly subversive plotlines and imagery of selected motion pictures, such as *Mission to Moscow*, a World War II–era film that presented the Soviet Union as paradise on earth. Jack Warner, the head of Warner Studies, had produced *Mission to Moscow* after the Roosevelt administration requested a film that would improve the public's impression of the nation's wartime ally. This episode in producing left-wing political propaganda was the exception rather than the rule in Hollywood. Most studio heads subscribed to Sam Goldwyn's view that "if you want to send a message, use Western Union." The iron grip of the Hollywood studio system allowed directors little independence to include political content in their films that was not approved by the studio bosses. As a result HUAC could find little evidence of "subversive" content in Hollywood films. Rather than abandoning its investigation of Hollywood, however, HUAC shifted focus to the political affiliations and beliefs of the individuals involved in making movies.

After ten screenwriters, dubbed the "Hollywood Ten," were convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate and sentenced to a year in prison, studio executives announced the creation of a **Hollywood blacklist**, a list of individuals with suspected past or present communist ties whom film studios refused to hire. The FBI had already infiltrated the Communist Party and provided HUAC with the names of all those in Hollywood with present or past communist affiliations. HUAC nonetheless pressured subpoenaed witnesses to publicly name names, not to gain information, but to test witnesses' loyalty. Many cooperated with HUAC to salvage their film careers. The vast majority who refused to testify or to name names never worked in films again. Others, like future president Ronald Reagan, then the president of the Screen Actors Guild, joined the anti-communist crusade by privately providing the FBI with the names of individuals in Hollywood with potential communist connections. Reagan testified before HUAC as a liberal Democrat (his shift to the right came a few years later), where he denied that communists "have ever at any time been able to use the motion-picture screen as a sounding board for their philosophy."

Director Elia Kazan and playwright Arthur Miller used their artistic work to explain the different choices they made when asked to testify by HUAC. Kazan's film *On the Waterfront* (1954) starred Marlon Brando as an ex-prizefighter turned longshoreman who overcomes his aversion to "ratting on your friends" and testifies against his corrupt union bosses. Kazan, who had been a member of the Communist Party in the 1930s, intended for the film to justify his own decision in 1952 to provide HUAC with the names of eight former Communist Party colleagues (see *Competing Visions: Naming Names in Hollywood*, page 740). *On the Waterfront* won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actor. Conversely Miller refused to testify when called before HUAC in 1956 and criticized the hysteria created by the Second Red Scare in his play *The Crucible*, which likened the HUAC investigations to the 1692 Salem witch trials in colonial Massachusetts.

> "We will not knowingly employ a Communist nor a member of any party or groups which advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force or by illegal or unconstitutional methods."
>
> Studio executives' statement announcing the creation of a Hollywood blacklist, 1947

McCarthyism

The government's anti-communist crusade during the Second Red Scare also became known as **McCarthyism**, named for the media-savvy Republican senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin, who, along with HUAC, spearheaded numerous governmental investigations into communist activities, many of them spurious. Anti-communist spy investigations predated McCarthy, but his flair for the dramatic made the senator an instant media sensation. McCarthy burst onto the scene after waving around a piece of paper during a speech before the Women's Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, on

What was the purpose and impact of HUAC's Hollywood investigations?

Competing Visions

NAMING NAMES IN HOLLYWOOD

The following opinions, one from former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt who wrote a syndicated magazine column, "My Day," and the other from film director Elia Kazan, offer opposing views on aiding the HUAC investigations. Consider how Roosevelt and Kazan defined the threat to American democracy in this period. What risks were involved in following the different suggestions each made? Could their two views be reconciled in any way?

In a 1947 "My Day" column, Eleanor Roosevelt expressed concerns that HUAC was creating a police state atmosphere that would squash artistic creativity and freedom of expression.

I have waited a while before saying anything about the Un-American Activities Committee's current investigation of the Hollywood film industry. I would not be very much surprised if some writers or actors or stagehands, or what not, were found to have Communist leanings, but I was surprised to find that, at the start of the inquiry, some of the big producers were so chicken-hearted about speaking up for the freedom of their industry.

One thing is sure—none of the arts flourishes on censorship and repression. And by this time it should be evident that the American public is capable of doing its own censoring.... The film industry is a great industry with infinite possibilities for good and bad. Its primary purpose is to entertain people. On the side, it can do many other things. It can popularize certain ideals, it can make education palatable. However, in the long run, the judge who decides whether what it does is good or bad is the man or woman who attends the movies. In a democratic country I do not think the public will tolerate a removal of its right to decide what it thinks of the ideas and performances of those who make the movie industry work.... What is going on in the Un-American Activities Committee worries me primarily because little people have become frightened and we find ourselves living in the atmosphere of a police state, where people close doors before they state what they think or look over their shoulders apprehensively before they express an opinion.... If you curtail what the other fellow says and does, you curtail what you yourself may say and do. In our country we must trust the people to hear and see both the good and the bad and to choose the good. The Un-American Activities Committee seems to me to be better for a police state than for the USA.

Many people in Hollywood never forgave Elia Kazan for cooperating with HUAC. In his 1988 autobiography Kazan refused to apologize for his actions. Instead he asserted his right to protect his career and the need to defend the country.

I believed it was the duty of the government to investigate the Communist movement in our country. I couldn't behave as if my old "comrades" didn't exist and didn't have an active political program. There was no way I could go along with their crap that the CP [Communist Party] was nothing but another political party, like the Republicans and the Democrats. I knew very well what it was, a thoroughly organized, worldwide conspiracy. This conviction separated me from many of my old friends ...

Did I really want to change the social system I was living under? Apparently that was what I'd stood for at one time. But what s**t. Everything I had of value I'd gained under that system ...

Why had I taken so long to even consider telling the country—that's what it amounted to—everything I knew? Was it because of the moral injunction against "informing," which was respected only depending on which side you were on? ... If the situation were reversed, wouldn't the "comrades" protect themselves without hesitation and by any means? Including naming me.... I began to measure the weight and the worth of what I was giving up, my career in films, which I was surrendering for a cause I didn't believe in. It seemed insane. What was I if not a filmmaker? ... If you expect an apology now because I would later name names to the House Committee, you've misjudged my character.... The people who owe you an explanation (no apology expected) are those who, year after year, held the Soviets blameless for all their crimes.

Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities during the Second Red Scare

What different perspectives do Roosevelt and Kazan offer on protecting the right to freedom of expression?

February 9, 1950, thundering that he had a list of 205 known communists who worked in the State Department. (The paper turned out to be just a prop.) When pressed for the names of the individuals on his list, McCarthy stalled and announced that he would only show their names to Truman, which he never did. In each subsequent speech the number cited by McCarthy dropped until he finally settled on fifty-seven.

> "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within."
>
> Senator JOSEPH R. MCCARTHY, Wheeling, West Virginia, 1950.

As a Republican attacking a Democratic administration, McCarthy's accusations had a distinctly partisan ring. Taking advantage of the media spotlight, McCarthy issued new charges against an assortment of State Department officials, ruining the careers of numerous individuals who could not mount an effective defense against his bullying. Reveling in the press attention that every new allegation brought, McCarthy sought increasingly bigger targets, even attacking Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall, who had authored the Marshall Plan while secretary of state, for having joined "a conspiracy so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man."

A year after the Rosenbergs were executed, the personal career of Joseph McCarthy as an anti-communist crusader ended when the senator began investigating the army for subversion. National television broadcast the hearings, and Americans watched aghast for thirty-six days as McCarthy intimidated witnesses, ignored facts, and made ludicrous charges. The climactic moment in the hearing came when the army's attorney Joseph Welch rebuked McCarthy, telling him, "You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?" Public approval ratings for McCarthy plummeted from 50 percent to 35 percent in Gallup polls.

The public unraveling of support for McCarthy mirrored growing concerns among his fellow Republicans in Congress. By 1954 Eisenhower and former HUAC member Richard Nixon were in the White House. Attacking a Republican-controlled administration yielded fewer political benefits, and some Republicans privately urged Eisenhower to rein in McCarthy. Leary of having his own anti-communist credentials challenged, Eisenhower refused to confront McCarthy directly. Instead the president tried to take the high road. "I will not get down in the gutter with that guy," Eisenhower vowed, reasoning that if he gave McCarthy enough rope, he would eventually hang himself. This hands-off approach allowed McCarthy to run wild until 1954, when, as Eisenhower predicted, he went too far. Eventually it was the mainstream press, not the president, who denounced McCarthy. In the wake of the Army-McCarthy hearings, the esteemed television journalist Edward R. Murrow exposed McCarthy's slander and lies in a television documentary. McCarthy, Murrow pointedly told his audience, "didn't create this situation of fear; he merely exploited it." However when the Senate censured McCarthy on December 2, 1954, for violating Senate rules, the legislators chose to depict McCarthy as solely responsible for the excesses of anticommunism. A disgraced McCarthy died from liver failure caused by alcoholism three years later.

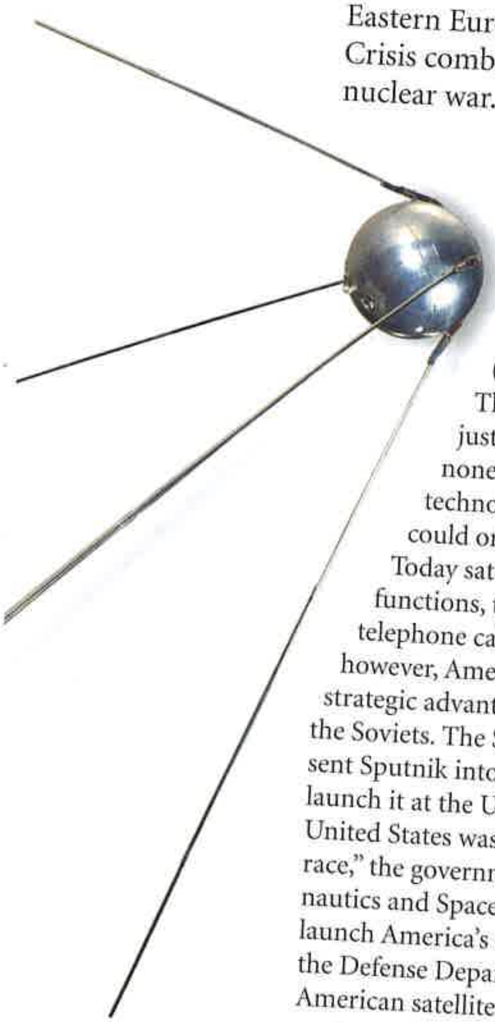
> "No one man can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices."
>
> Journalist EDWARD R. MURROW during a 1954 television exposé on McCarthy

As Murrow suggested the end of McCarthy's career as a red-baiter did not stop the government's anti-communist crusade. Republicans and Democrats alike took their cue from McCarthy and freely attacked any suspected radical working in local or state governments, public schools, or universities. The Smith Act remained in place, as did loyalty oaths, Hollywood blacklists, and police surveillance of suspected radicals. By the 1950s using the charge of communism to discredit political opponents or liberal activists (such as Martin Luther King Jr.) was commonplace in American politics.

Is the term McCarthyism a useful or misleading way to characterize the Second Red Scare?

Averting Nuclear War

The worldwide ideological, political, and military struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union fueled Americans' abiding fear of communism, both at home and throughout the world. The vision of fig a nuclear war continued to haunt Americans even after the ceasefire in Korea. Technological advances in long-range ballistic missiles and satellit provoked a new moment of crisis in the Cold War standoff between the United States and Soviet Union. A missile fitted with a nuclear warhead could now travel through space to re the United States within half an hour from the Soviet Union. A series of armed uprisings ir Eastern Europe, renewed Soviet demands that the West abandon Berlin, and the Cuban Mi Crisis combined to create a climactic moment when the world teetered on the edge of all-o nuclear war.



24.14 Sputnik, 1957

For Americans this small satellite symbolized Soviet technological superiority over the United States, fueling the ongoing arms race between the two nations.

Sputnik

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union successfully sent the world's first satellite, nicknamed Sputnik ("fellow traveler"), into outer space. The size of a basketball and weighing just 183 pounds, Sputnik (**24.14**) nonetheless became a symbol of Soviet technological superiority, a satellite that could orbit the earth in ninety-eight minutes. Today satellites serve a host of peaceful functions, transmitting television images and telephone calls throughout the globe. In 1957, however, Americans focused primarily on the new strategic advantage that satellite technology gave the Soviets. The Soviets could easily fit a missile that sent Sputnik into orbit with a nuclear warhead and launch it at the United States. Fearing that the United States was in danger of losing the "space race," the government created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to launch America's own investigation of space, and the Defense Department scrambled to develop American satellite technology.

Predicting how the Soviet Union's volatile new leader might use this technological breakthrough kept Americans on edge. In the power struggle that followed Stalin's death from a brain hemorrhage in March 1953, Nikita Khrushchev emerged as the new Soviet premier. A poorly educated peasant who rose through the ranks to become a Stalin protégé, Khrushchev reveled in rhetorical excess. He proclaimed that the USSR was producing missiles "like sausages," and enjoyed keeping his American visitors off-balance. During a visit by Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey to Moscow, Khrushchev stop his threatening tirade long enough to ask Hump where he was from. "That's so I don't forget to or them to spare the city when the rockets fly," he sa good naturedly.

Eager to catch up with the Soviet Union in missile technology and cut the defense budget (conventional military forces cost more than building nuclear weapons), Eisenhower oversaw a tremendous increase in American nuclear weapon which grew from eight hundred to nearly eight thousand warheads between 1953 and 1960. This nuclear arms build-up was part of a strategic visio called the "New Look." In 1954 Eisenhower's tough talking secretary of state John Foster Dulles announced that the United States would focus on developing "massive retaliatory power" to deter Soviet aggression. The National Security Council agreed with Dulles that the country would go bankrupt trying to develop adequate defenses against Soviet nuclear weapons and policing the world with ground troops. Dulles maintained that building a strong arsenal of intercontinental missiles armed with nuclear warheads would allow the United States to "retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing" when the Soviets stepped out of line. Eisenhower particularly liked the New Look because it offered a way to counter the Soviet manpower advantage while maintaining a small peacetime army at home. The appeal of "massive retaliation" was simple—it provided "more bang for the buck," some commentators noted.

Getting accurate data on the Soviet arsenal became critical once the United States embraced the doctrine of massive retaliation. The year before the Soviets launched Sputnik, the Americans began

What caused the nuclear arms race to escalate in the late 1950s?

using a new spy plane, the U-2, to take photographs of Soviet military installations. Soviet radar could detect the U-2, but the plane flew at altitudes out of range for Soviet fighter pilots or antiaircraft missiles. For four years the United States used U-2 missions to collect intelligence about the number of Soviet long-range missiles before turning to spy satellites. The photographs were reassuring. At the end of 1959, the United States learned, the Soviet Union had only six intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) sites, which were places to launch a missile carrying a nuclear warhead. Because it took twenty hours to fuel each missile, which could travel through space to reach targets 5,000 to 6,000 miles away in half an hour, the United States would have ample time to respond if the Soviet Union launched a first strike with six missiles. Despite Khrushchev's claims that the Soviets possessed a huge nuclear arsenal, in fact American stockpiles of nuclear warheads and ICBMs far exceeded those of the Soviet Union.

Having made much of the claim that the Soviet Union possessed more ICBMs than the United States in his successful 1960 presidential campaign against Richard Nixon, newly elected Democratic president John F. Kennedy waited a few months before revealing the truth. Calling Khrushchev's bluff Kennedy announced to the world that the United States had a "second strike capability which is at least as extensive as what the Soviets can deliver by striking first. Therefore, we are confident that the Soviets will not provoke a major nuclear conflict." The gap only kept growing in America's favor. Continuing the policy of massive retaliation, Kennedy oversaw an increase in the American ICBM stockpile from 63 to 424 from 1961 to 1963.

The attention given to the missile gap during the 1960 presidential campaign revealed the constant pressure that Americans felt to retain the upper hand in the ever-evolving nuclear arms race. The chart (**24.15**) lists the key developments in early Cold War nuclear weaponry, illustrating the intense competition between the United States and Soviet Union to develop nuclear weapons, including nuclear-powered submarines that could stay submerged for two months and fire nuclear-fitted missiles.

INNOVATION	USA	USSR
Nuclear-powered submarine	1954	1958
First Trial of ICBM	1958	1957
ICBM operational	1960	1959
Submarine-launched ICBM operational	1960	1957

24.15 Nuclear Arms Race, 1950s The United States and Soviet Union tried to best each other by developing more sophisticated nuclear weapons.

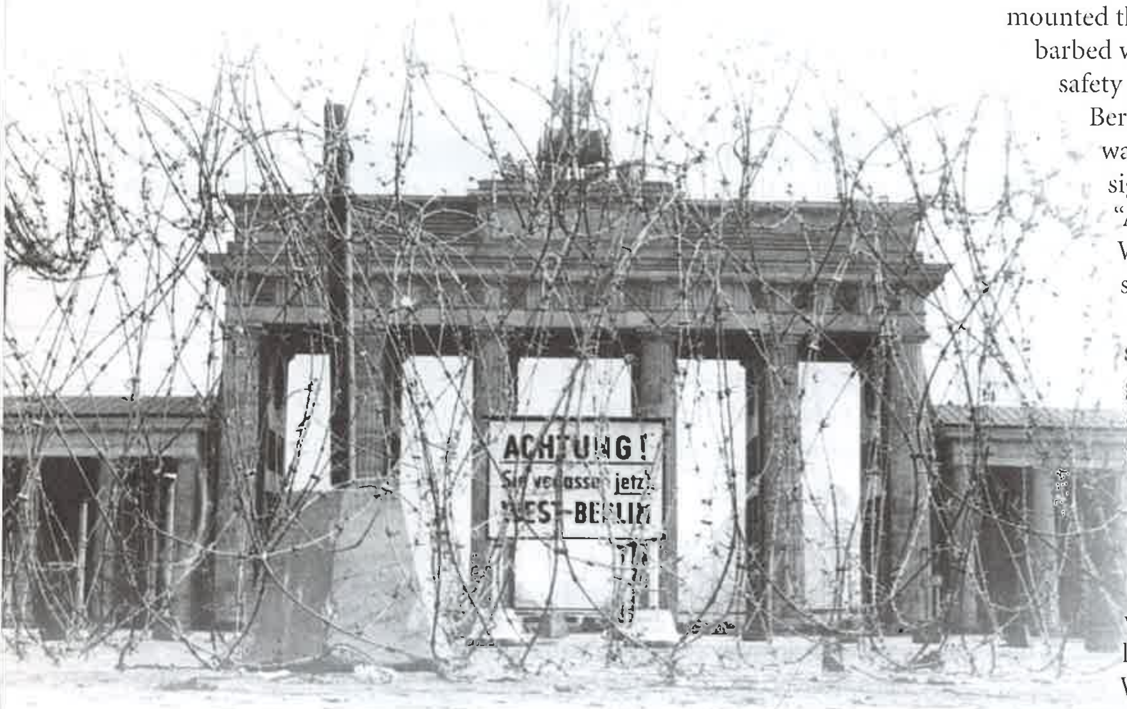
The Berlin Wall

Americans weighed Kennedy's reassuring words about the missile gap against recent events that once again demonstrated the heavy hand of Soviet authority in Eastern Europe. In 1956 Khrushchev publicly denounced Stalin's crimes against the Soviet people. Khrushchev's speech, taken as a cue that the new Soviet regime would be more open and tolerant, set off rebellions in Poland and Hungary. Soviet troops immediately rolled into Hungary to crush the rebellion, revealing that Khrushchev intended to retain Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

Khrushchev also moved to consolidate Soviet power over Berlin, twice issuing ultimatums to the West to vacate its territory in the divided city. The stark differences between life in East and West Berlin had become a public embarrassment to the Soviet Union. Lavishly rebuilt by West Germany and the Marshall Plan, West Berlin teemed with new housing, industry, and commerce. Moving freely between the more prosperous western half and the areas under Communist control, many Berliners voted with their feet. Nearly a million East Germans defected in 1956, traveling easily from West Berlin into West Germany to start new lives.

Khrushchev viewed the forty-four-year-old Kennedy as an inept, inexperienced leader whom he could easily intimidate. A botched U.S. invasion of Cuba in 1961 (discussed more fully later) only reaffirmed Khrushchev's low opinion of Kennedy. Believing that Kennedy would crumble under pressure, Khrushchev demanded that the West leave Berlin when the two met for the first time in Vienna. To Khrushchev's surprise the president stood firm. Kennedy left the summit "shaken and angry," one reporter claimed. He never met with Khrushchev again. Instead he returned home and requested funds for additional nuclear and conventional forces. The public fully supported their president. More

How did the new Soviet premier Khrushchev compare to Stalin?



24.16 Brandenburg Gate, 1961

For Americans the desolate scene before the Brandenburg Gate, the traditional entry point into the city of Berlin, symbolized the heavy hand of Soviet oppression as the Berlin Wall went up.

than 82 percent favored maintaining American, French, and British forces in Berlin, even if it meant war with the Soviet Union.

With Kennedy unwilling to abandon the city, Khrushchev resisted the temptation to erect another blockade. Instead of revoking permission for the West to use roads through East Germany to supply the city, as Stalin had in 1948, he made the controversial decision to build a wall between East and West Berlin. In the twilight hours of August 13, 1961, construction of a barbed wire fence began. East German tanks and troops rolled up to the monumental Brandenburg Gate, the traditional entry point into the city of Berlin, to prevent a popular protest from breaking out in front of this symbol of German nationhood. East German workers quickly laid a thin line of barbed wire in front of the Brandenburg Gate, turning the popular square into a desolate no-man's land (**24.16**). As tensions mounted the British strung a second line of barbed wire on the western side as a safety measure to prevent irate West Berliners from instigating a shooting war between the two sides. The sign initially placed at the site, "Attention—You Are Now Leaving West Berlin," was hardly necessary now.

> "Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us."
>
> President JOHN F. KENNEDY, in a speech before the Berlin Wall, 1963

Photos put a human face on the suffering. In one (**24.17**) two young girls, standing on the western side, chat with their grandparents over the makeshift fence that now divided them. East Germany eventually replaced the barbed wire with 12-foot-high concrete walls that ran for nearly 30 miles, and was dotted with guard towers, spotlights, guard dogs, and minefields. West Germans flocked to the construction site, curious and in shock. Some East Germans made desperate last-minute escapes, jumping from the windows of buildings that straddled the boundary into nets held by West German firefighters. East German soldiers first bricked up the windows, then demolished the buildings to create 100 yards of empty space between the wall and any other structure. The "dead zone" on the eastern side made it impossible for people to approach the wall. Guards along the wall had strict orders to shoot anyone who tried to cross it. Nearly a thousand people died trying to escape to West Berlin during the wall's twenty-eight-year existence.

The wall succeeded in stopping the flow of people from East to West Berlin without provoking a major confrontation with the United States. As the wall went up in 1961, Kennedy remarked to his aides that "a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war." The Soviet success came at a cost, however. For over two decades the Berlin Wall served as the most visible symbol to the world of Soviet oppression. When Kennedy finally visited the wall in June 1963, he expressed

24.17 Berlin Wall

Two sisters living in West Berlin chat with their grandparents across the barbed wire that divided East and West Berlin. Before East Germany replaced the barbed wire with a concrete wall, many East Germans escaped to the West by jumping over the flimsy barricade.

What meaning did photographs of the Berlin Wall have for Americans?

solidarity with the people on both sides of the divided city by announcing, "Ich bin ein Berliner" (which Kennedy thought meant "I am a Berliner," not realizing that *ein Berliner* was the name for a popular German doughnut). Over the years the wall on the western side became covered in graffiti and required continual repair from saboteurs' efforts to destroy parts of it.

Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Americans viewed Communist activities in Germany with dismay, but the prospect of a Communist Cuba alarmed the government more: Cuba lay just 90 miles south of Florida. In 1959 Fidel Castro had emerged as the victor in the Cuban Revolution, overthrowing the dictator Fulgencio Bastista y Zaldívar. Castro moved quickly to consolidate his power. He declared himself a communist, confiscated a billion dollars in American property, and accepted aid from the Soviet Union. In response an alarmed Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations and imposed economic sanctions, including an embargo that banned the export of American goods to the island. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) urged more forceful action and began planning the covert **Bay of Pigs operation**, a failed amphibious invasion by Cuban exiles in 1961 to overthrow the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

Eisenhower left office before the scheduled invasion, but Kennedy quickly gave his blessing to the plan. Problems arose immediately. Two days before the ground attack, American planes (painted to look like stolen Cuban aircraft) bombed Cuban air defenses. On April 17, 1961, fourteen hundred exiles landed and were all immediately killed or captured. Kennedy's unconvincing public statement that the United States was not involved in this "struggle of Cuban patriots against a Cuban dictator" hurt his credibility at home and overseas.

The Bay of Pigs fiasco hardened the resolve of Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro to gain the upper hand in this new Cold War hotspot. The CIA devised various schemes for overthrowing Castro that involved sabotage and terrorism. In November 1961 CIA agents and Cuban exiles formed attack squads that covertly traveled in speedboats from Florida to Cuba, where they burned sugar plantations and blew up factories and oil depots. The CIA also plotted to assassinate Castro by trying to poison his ice cream and cigars and enlisting Mafia crime bosses to kill him. Castro complained to Khrushchev about America's murderous intentions, and in return received an influx of Soviet economic and military aid. Protecting communism in Cuba now became a major goal for the Soviet Union.

On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy appeared on national television to deliver the stunning news that the Soviet Union was building missile launching pads in Cuba for short- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The United States maintained bases in Italy, Britain, and Turkey that housed nuclear missiles aimed at the Soviet Union. Putting Soviet missiles in Cuba, a mere 90 miles from the American coast, would teach Americans "just what it feels like to have enemy missiles pointing at you," Khrushchev told his advisors. The **Cuban Missile Crisis**, a showdown in 1962 between the United States and the Soviet Union over Khrushchev's decision to place Soviet missiles in Communist Cuba aimed at America, was underway.

Instead of accepting the Soviet view that missiles in Cuba simply leveled the playing field, Kennedy responded with a competing vision that the Soviet actions represented "a provocative change in the delicate status quo both countries have maintained." Short- and intermediate-range Soviet missiles in Cuba threatened to reduce the strategic advantage that America held with its larger long-range nuclear arsenal. This was unacceptable to Kennedy. Intelligence officials estimated that the missile sites would become operational in two weeks, giving Kennedy only a small window of time before the Soviets would double their ability to launch a devastating nuclear strike against the United States.

Kennedy ultimately decided to use a naval blockade to prevent Soviet ships from arming the launching sites with nuclear missiles. (Only later would Kennedy discover that missiles were already in Cuba. The president never learned that the estimate of 10,000 Soviet troops in Cuba was wrong—there were actually 42,000).

How did the United States respond when communism took hold in Cuba?

Choices and Consequences

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Long-range Soviet missiles (4,000–5,000 miles) launched from the USSR could already reach America, but short-range (1,100 miles) and intermediate-range (2,200 miles) nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba helped close the missile gap by giving the Soviets more weapons to use against the United States. Determined to get Soviet missiles out of Cuba, Kennedy and his advisors debated how to respond on October 16, 1962.

Choices

1 Use air and ground forces to attack Cuba and destroy the missile sites.

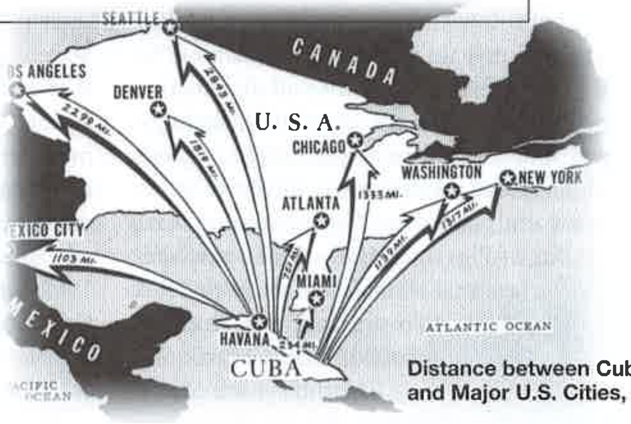
2 Follow up an attack on Cuba with a full-scale invasion to depose Castro.

3 Negotiate with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

4 Enact a naval quarantine to prevent Soviet-supplied missiles from reaching Cuba.

Decision

Kennedy opted for the quarantine. He sent the American navy 500 miles offshore of Cuba to intercept Soviet vessels carrying missiles, and threatened a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union if missiles were launched from Cuba.



Distance between Cuba and Major U.S. Cities, 1962

Consequences

For two tense days Soviet ships steamed toward American naval vessels. At the last minute Khrushchev called the ships back and offered to negotiate by removing the missiles if Kennedy pledged not to attack Cuba and the United States dismantled its missiles in Turkey. Kennedy privately agreed to these terms. By deciding against an air strike, Kennedy may have unknowingly averted a nuclear war. Unbeknownst to the president nuclear warheads were already in Cuba. Soviet commanders on the ground had permission to use them if the United States attacked and considered using them against the blockade.

Continuing Controversies

Did Kennedy react correctly during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Supporters argue that Kennedy effectively used the threat of an American nuclear attack, traditional naval tactics, and old-fashioned diplomacy to end the crisis without resorting to war. By doing so he maintained America's strategic advantage against the Soviet Union and improved the nation's image worldwide after the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Detractors claim that Kennedy provoked a crisis where there was none. Short- and medium-range missiles in Cuba did not alter the ability of the Soviets to attack with long-range missiles or of the United States to respond. Supporters counter that the improved accuracy of shorter-range missiles fired from Cuba posed a real threat. Critics also point out that because Kennedy made concessions privately to Khrushchev, the crisis gave rise to the myth that "brinkmanship," or threatening nuclear war, rather than diplomatic negotiations, caused the Soviets to back down. American overconfidence in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis would lead to missteps in America's growing military involvement in the Vietnam War and elsewhere in the next few years.

What political and military considerations influenced Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Choices and Consequences: The Cuban Missile Crisis, outlines the options facing Kennedy during this tense fortnight, the closest that the world ever came to fighting an all-out nuclear war. The world waited for thirteen days as Soviet ships steamed toward the American fleet guarding Cuban ports. American pilots sat in planes loaded with nuclear weapons, waiting to take off for Cuba at a moment's notice. Finally Khrushchev called Soviet ships back and offered to negotiate. The public breathed a collective sigh of relief that nuclear war had been averted, but the crisis lingered on behind closed doors for another month. As Soviet engineers continued to work on the missile sites, Kennedy and Khrushchev debated the exact terms of an agreement. In the end the American navy won the right to inspect ships carrying dismantled missiles out of Cuba. In return the United States agreed to dismantle its missiles in Turkey and pledged to respect Cuban independence by not launching another Bay of Pigs–type invasion. Over the next few years land-based missile sites lost significance as more American and Soviet submarines equipped with nuclear missiles began patrolling the world.

> “We're eyeball to eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked.”
>
> Secretary of State DEAN RUSK, upon receiving word that Soviet ships had turned back during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

Having teetered on the brink of nuclear war, both the United States and the Soviet Union opted to deescalate tensions. Kennedy and Khrushchev agreed to establish a hotline connection between Washington and Moscow so the two leaders could speak directly in the event of another crisis. In June 1963 Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States also signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which banned atmospheric and underwater testing of nuclear weapons.

Conclusion

By 1950 conflicting visions within the U.S. government over how to respond to Soviet aggression gave way to an American strategy focused on containing communism. The United States sent financial aid to Western Europe, offered assistance to nations resisting Communist aggression, and stationed American soldiers permanently overseas. When the Soviet Union acquired the atomic bomb and China fell to communism, the United States responded by building a hydrogen bomb and stockpiling an enormous arsenal of nuclear weapons. The Cold War turned hot when North Korea invaded South Korea and the United States decided to intervene. After three years of fighting, a ceasefire ensured South Korean independence.

At home some Americans built bomb shelters to protect themselves from radioactive fallout, and civil defense drills taught schoolchildren to “duck and cover” during a nuclear bomb attack. Fears that Soviet spies were infiltrating the military, government, and film industry led to the Second Red Scare. After a brief lull Cold War tensions reignited when East Germany built the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the Soviets attempted to place missiles in Cuba in 1962. The Cuban Missile Crisis passed without either side launching a nuclear strike, but this was the closest the world came to nuclear annihilation during the Cold War.

Throughout the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations, America made critical choices about how to handle the new threat that the Soviet Union posed to the nation's economy, global influence, and national security. Eschewing diplomacy three presidents chose instead to contain communism with a mix of international aid, military alliances, and direct fighting with Communist nations presumably financed and controlled by Moscow. In the early 1960s American policymakers decided that defeating the North Vietnamese Communist regime was essential for America to win the Cold War, a strategic vision that the peace movement soon challenged.

What was the ultimate significance of the Cuban Missile crisis?

CHAPTER REVIEW

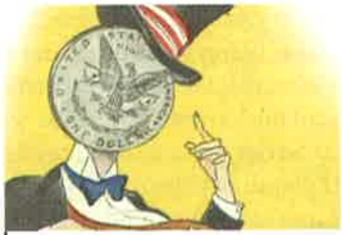
1946

Kennan's Long Telegram
Makes containing communism a key American goal

1947

Truman Doctrine
Gives United States a role in helping other nations resist communism

HUAC begins investigating Hollywood
Leads to establishment of blacklist



1948

Marshall Plan
Grants U.S. aid to rebuild war-torn Europe and prevent spread of communism

Berlin airlift
Highly visible Cold War victory for the United States

Review Questions

1. In the postwar period, the United States assumed the role of global protector against Communist aggression. What competing visions did policymakers offer on the role that the United States should play in world affairs? How did the Truman Administration justify its foreign policy decisions from 1945–1950?
2. Evaluate the impact that international crises had on domestic politics from 1945 to 1963. Consider the reverse as well: How did domestic politics affect foreign policy during the early Cold War?
3. How did images and popular culture shape Americans' ideas about the Soviet Union and the atomic bomb?
4. What factors contributed to the Second Red Scare? What differing views did Americans have about its impact on American society?
5. Compare how Truman and Kennedy each handled a Soviet-instigated crisis over Berlin. Why did Americans consider West Berlin so important? What key decisions and risks did each leader take in resolving the crisis?
6. What key contributions did Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy make to the strategy of containment?

1949

NATO formed
First formal American military alliance since the Revolutionary War

Soviet Union acquires atomic bomb
United States loses atomic monopoly

China falls to communism
Provokes fears that communists are winning the Cold War

1950

Joseph McCarthy gives Wheeling, West Virginia, Speech
Begins career as major figure in Second Red Scare

Korean War begins
United States enters fighting; Cold War extends into East Asia

BURN ALL REDS

1953

Stalin dies; Khrushchev assumes power
Ruthless dictator replaced by brash and unpredictable one

Armistice announced in Korea
Limited victory that restores initial boundary between North and South Korea

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg executed
Spy case fuels Second Red Scare

1961–1962

Bay of Pigs invasion
Failed attempt to oust Castro in Cuba embarrasses the United States

Berlin Wall built
Becomes symbol of communist oppression

Cuban Missile Crisis
Nuclear showdown between the United States and the USSR prompts fears of nuclear war

Key Terms

Cold War A full-scale ideological and military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies that led to several hot wars around the globe, although the Americans and Soviets, fearful of a nuclear showdown, never fought each other directly 721

"long telegram" An influential five-thousand-word missive by diplomat George F. Kennan that outlined why America needed to develop an aggressive foreign policy aimed at containing Soviet expansionist impulses. 722

containment The label affixed to multiple American foreign policy initiatives meant to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence around the globe. 722

iron curtain Churchill's characterization of the military and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union that separated Western and Eastern Europe into free and unfree halves. 722

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) A post-World War II military alliance between the United States and Western European powers. 722

Truman Doctrine A foreign policy initiative that gave the United States an active role in stopping the global spread of communism by supporting "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." 724

Marshall Plan (1948–1952) Aimed to restore Europeans' faith in capitalism by sending $13 billion ($119 billion in today's dollars) overseas to rebuild Europe's ruined roads, bridges, factories, and farms. 724

Berlin airlift (1948–1949) Americans and British used planes to resupply West Berlin to stymie the Soviet blockade of the city. 726

Korean War (1950–1953) The United States fought Communist North Koreans and Chinese to a stalemate, frustrating Americans who had to learn to accept only a partial victory. 729

nuclear fallout The deadly pollution that descends through the air after a nuclear bomb explosion. 734

Second Red Scare Widespread effort to root out Communist spies after World War II that lasted for nearly a decade. 737

Hollywood blacklist A list of individuals with suspected past or present communist ties whom film studios refused to hire. 739

McCarthyism The government's anti-communist crusade named for Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin, who, along with the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), spearheaded numerous governmental investigations into communist activities, many of them spurious. 739

Bay of Pigs operation (1961) Failed attempt to use an amphibious invasion by Cuban exiles to overthrow the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. 745

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) A showdown between the United States and the Soviet Union over Khrushchev's decision to place Soviet missiles in Communist Cuba aimed at America. 745