

Timeline of the Early Cold War

- 1945: February 4-11 - Yalta Conference
- 1945: August 6 - United States first used atomic bomb in war
- 1945: August 8 - Russia enters war against Japan
- 1945: August 14 - Japanese surrender End of World War II
- 1946: March - Winston Churchill delivers "Iron Curtain" Speech
- 1947: March - Truman announces Truman Doctrine
- 1947: June - Marshall Plan is announced
- 1948: February - Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia
- 1948: June 24 - Berlin Blockade begins
- 1949: July - NATO treaty ratified
- 1949: May 12 - Berlin Blockade ends
- 1949: September - Mao Zedong, a Communist, takes control of China
- 1949: September - Soviets explode first atomic bomb
- 1955: May – Warsaw Pact

Cold War Gallery 2

Containment



George Kennan

It is clear that the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure towards the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

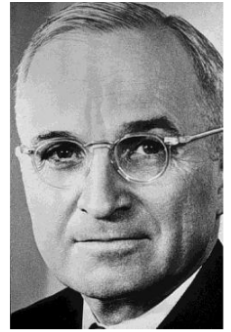
—George Kennan, State Department Official

Article published in Foreign Affairs Magazine, July 1947

- President Truman saw communism as an evil force threatening countries around the world. To deal with the threat of communism, the U.S abandoned its policy of isolationism. Unlike WWI where the U.S withdrew from global affairs, the Cold War put the U.S in the leading role on the world stage. On March 12, 1947, Truman outlined the Truman Doctrine
- “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures...The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedom.”
- This document made it clear that the United States would resist Soviet expansion in Europe or elsewhere in the world. Truman sent military and economic aid to the countries that the Soviet Union was pressuring into joining them. Truman also came up with the idea of containment, which limited communism to the areas already under Soviet control.

"I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation [domination] by armed minorities or by outside pressure. Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far-reaching to the West. The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. Therefore, I propose giving Greece and Turkey \$400 million in aid."

-President Harry S. Truman, March 12, 1947



President Truman

Step on it, Doc!



Source: Justus, Minn

I need to say that the world situation is very serious... Europe must have a great deal of additional help, or they face heavy economic, social, and political damage. This would have a harmful effect on the world at large. There are also possibilities of disturbances because of the desperation of the people concerned. The effect on the economy of the United States should be clear to all. So the United States should do whatever it can to help restore normal economic health to the world. Without this there can be no political stability or peace. Our policy is directed... against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos... Its purpose is to revive a working economy in the world.

-Secretary of State Marshall
Excerpt from a Speech, June 5, 1947



George C. Marshall