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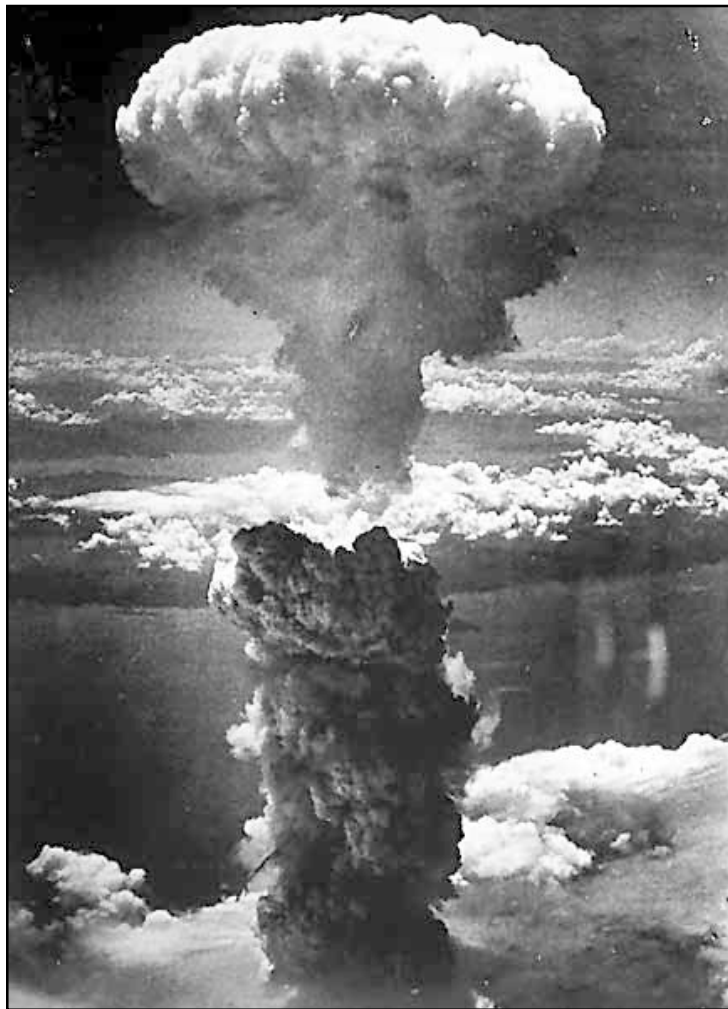
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THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

A Unit of Study for Grades 9–12

LISA KING



NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: The atomic bomb dropped on the industrial center of Nagasaki August 8, 1945,
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Acknowledgments

Lisa King authored this unit while she served as a Teacher Associate for the National Center for History in the Schools' (NCHS) 1988–89 U.S. History Institutes. At that time she was also a teacher at Hoover Senior High School in the San Diego Unified School District. Gary B. Nash (now Director of NCHS) served as the Supervising Historian while Tom Ingersoll was the Unit Editor.

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INTRODUCTION

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The Origins of the Cold War is one of over sixty teaching units published by the National Center for History in the Schools that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. The units represent specific issues and dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying crucial turningpoints in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected issues and dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers, magazines, literature, contemporary photographs, paintings, and other art from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: Teaching Background Materials, including Unit Overview, Unit Context, Correlation to the National Standards for History Unit Objectives, and Introduction to *The Origins of the Cold War*; A Dramatic Moment; and Lesson Plans with Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for use by grades 9–12, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

Introduction

The Teacher Background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The Lesson Plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

Teacher Background

I. Unit Overview

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped one atomic bomb on Hiroshima that destroyed the city and half of its population. Two days later the Russians declared war on Japan. At the Teheran Conference in 1943, the Soviet Union reaffirmed its pledge to enter the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany. Russian entry into the war in Asia was again confirmed at both the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. The following day, August 9, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japanese capitulation on August 15 made the Russian invasion unnecessary. Stalin was convinced that the United States and Britain had contrived a plan to use the atomic bomb to force Japan out of the war before the Russians were able to comply with their promise to join the war against Japan and avoid agreements turning over territory held by the Japanese since their victory over Imperial Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. The Soviets likewise believed that the bombs were also meant to intimidate the Russians, who had, like the Germans, experimented with atomic energy but were well behind perfecting an atomic weapon. When the Americans offered a plan for sharing nuclear capability among the great powers after the war, the Russians rejected what they regarded as unfair or suspicious conditions. Thus, the bomb that ended one war marked the beginning of another—The Cold War.

The events of 1945 are widely regarded as a turning-point in twentieth-century history, a point when the United States unequivocally took its place as a world power, at a time when Americans had a strong but war-oriented economy and a long-standing suspicion of Europeans in general. This unit explores the decisions of key policy-makers at this crucial moment in modern history.

II. Unit Context

These lessons deal with American foreign policy from 1945 to 1950, on the eve of the outbreak of the Korean War. The material should be introduced after a study of World War II. This unit would also serve as part of a thematic approach to United States foreign policy. After studying the ideological differences between Americans and Russians and the use of “atomic diplomacy,” students should have some basic background for the study of the Korean War, the “brinkmanship” policy of President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the Cuban Missile Crisis during the Kennedy administration, and other events that brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of war.

III. Correlation to National History Standards

The Origins of the Cold War provides teaching materials to support the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). Lessons within this unit assist students in attaining **Standard 3B** of **Era 8** through an investigation of wartime aims and strategies hammered out at conferences among the Allied powers and by evaluating the controversies over surrounding the use of nuclear weapons. Analyze the different motives of the United States and the Soviet Union at the close of World War II. The central focus of the lesson supports **Standard 2A** of **Era 9**, “How the Cold War influenced international politics.”

The unit likewise integrates a number of **Historical Thinking Standards** by challenging students to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations; analyze cause-and-effect relationships; and, consider multiple perspectives.

IV. Unit Objectives

1. To analyze the different motives of the United States and the Soviet Union at the close of World War II.
2. To analyze the cultural, historical, economic and political factors that propelled the United States and the Soviet Union into the Cold War.
3. To examine “atomic diplomacy” in the early Cold War years and to determine the extent to which acquisition of atomic weaponry caused or affected the Cold War.
4. To examine a variety of primary sources and distinguish between unsupported expression of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.

V. Introduction to the Origins of the Cold War

On September 1, 1939, Nazi troops invaded Poland beginning World War II. On August 23 the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a non-aggression pact. The public text simply indicated that Germany and the Soviet Union would abide by the neutrality pact they had signed in 1926. The secret protocol however divided Eastern Europe into Nazi and Soviet spheres.

Britain and France declared war on Germany shortly after the invasion of Poland. By mid-September Soviet armies had crossed into eastern Poland. After capitulation, Poland was divided between the Nazis and Soviets. In June, 1940, Nazi troops swept into France and within six weeks France petitioned for an armistice. The battle for Britain began in earnest after the fall of France. On June 22, 1941, German troops invaded the Soviet Union and were at the outskirts of Leningrad by early September. The United States, professing neutrality, sent massive quantities of supplies to Britain and later to Russia through a Lend-Lease program pushed through by the Roosevelt administration. The United States entered the war against Germany and Italy a few days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The Big Three powers, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union formed an alliance against the Axis Powers in Europe while Britain and the U.S. joined forces against the Japanese in the Pacific theater of the war.

The anti-fascist alliance in Europe was strained throughout the war because the United States and Britain delayed attacking the Germans in an all-out assault in Europe while the Russians carried the brunt of the fighting in Eastern Europe. Stalin urged an invasion of “Fortress Europe” to force German armies to shift their strength from the Eastern front to the west. Although the invasion was promised for some time it finally occurred in June 1944 at Normandy.

Matters of postwar policy were discussed at diplomatic meetings during the course of the war, specific policies were not thoroughly discussed in order to avoid a rupture in the alliance. Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Josef Stalin had made an informal agreement at the Second Moscow Conference, October 1944, that would divide the Balkans into British and Russian spheres of influence after the war. Roosevelt was not a party to this agreement and soon let it be known that he would not be bound by the decision reached at the Moscow Conference. The issue of Poland appeared to be the breaking point of the grand alliance. Roosevelt and Churchill acquiesced to most of Stalin’s demands at Yalta in exchange for a Russian pledge to enter the war against Japan shortly after the war in Europe was brought to a close. Churchill and Roosevelt did get Stalin to agree to “free and unfettered elections” in Poland and Eastern Europe based on universal suffrage and secret ballot. A few months later at Potsdam, the Polish issue and Soviet interest in Eastern Europe were to again be the focal points of discussion. Truman had become President in April

following Roosevelt's death and Churchill, who attended the first sessions of the conference, was defeated in the British election and was succeeded by Clement Attlee.

Roosevelt's death in April 1945 was cause for alarm in the Soviet Union. Roosevelt's vice president was virtually unknown to the Russians; however, they were aware that when German armies invaded Russia in June 1941, then Senator Truman was quoted in the press as having said, "If we see Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible. . . ." In April, Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov met with Truman at the White House before traveling to San Francisco for the United Nations Conference. Truman was reported to have given Molotov a tongue-lashing and Molotov stormed out of the meeting. Hostility between the U.S. and Soviet Union intensified during the San Francisco conference. It appeared to the Russians that the U.S. was determined to form a bloc of anti-Soviet nations. U.S. insistence of the admission of Argentina, a nation that had strong German ties during the war, confirmed Soviet suspicions. In May, Truman and his cabinet adopted a policy of abruptly ending the lend-lease program to Russia, criticized the Soviets for taking over the Eastern European countries, and condemned them for removing German factories to Russia to replace some destroyed in the war.

The Soviets were suspicious of Truman's request to postpone the Potsdam meeting that had been originally scheduled for June. Stalin and Molotov were convinced that Truman wanted a delay in order to test the atomic bomb before attending the Big Three conference. Soviet spies operating in the United States had passed on information regarding the Manhattan Project and were aware of work on the atom bomb. It therefore, came as no big surprise, when Truman informed Stalin that the U.S. had a secret weapon of great destructive power. Molotov expressed the Soviet view after the war when he remarked that, "The bombs dropped on Japan were not aimed at Japan but rather at the Soviet Union."

Secretary of State Byrnes was among Truman's advisors who wanted Truman to adopt a "get tough" policy. Two members of the American delegation at Potsdam, Secretary of War Henry Stimson and former ambassador to Moscow Joe Davies, expressed concern that Byrnes was brandishing the bomb in order to get the Soviets to fall in line. Truman's altercation with Molotov, the San Francisco Conference, and confrontations at Potsdam over Poland, peace treaties with Axis powers, and German reparations all seemed to confirm that the U.S. had embarked on a new policy in dealing with the Russians.

Given the evident enthusiasm of Americans for a war of ideology, Stalin enthusiastically declared one openly on February 9, 1946, by asserting in a speech that the contradictions of capitalism would tear the capitalists countries apart and communism would become the reigning system in the world. In the speech Stalin

implied that future wars were inevitable until communism was triumphant over capitalism.

The major response by Americans to Stalin's posture was to "contain" what was regarded as a worldwide conspiracy to spread communism. On February 22, 1946, George Kennan, the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow, sent a confidential cable to the State Department. In this so-called "Long Telegram" Kennan outlined Soviet policy and concluded that the USSR was on a fanatical crusade to obliterate the West. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal had the Long Telegram reproduced and made it required reading for higher officers in the armed services. In his *Memoirs* published in 1967, Kennan remarked that the telegram read "like one of those primers put out by alarmed congressional committees or by the Daughters of the American Revolution, designed to arouse the citizenry to the dangers of the Communist conspiracy."¹ In March, Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech solidified opposition to Soviet encroachments in Europe. In 1947, Greece was convulsed by a civil war supported by neighboring Communist states. At the same time the Soviet Union, to secure its position in the Eastern Mediterranean, was putting pressure on Turkey. Faced with what was perceived as a Soviet takeover of both Greece and Turkey, President Truman announced his "Truman Doctrine" that the United States was pledged to preventing such takeovers, and the first of several similar interventions was launched there at a cost of several hundred million dollars. In April 1948, the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe was also conceived as primarily an "anti-communist" measure to insure the rapid recovery of European economies devastated by the war.

By 1949, the Russians had tested a nuclear bomb. The arms race was on and would continue for nearly half a century.

¹ George Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), pp. 294–95

VI. Lesson Plans

1. The Atomic Bomb and the Effect on International Relations
2. The Policy of Containment
3. The Practice of Containment

Dramatic Moment

The war in Europe officially ended on May 8, 1945. On July 17 the heads of state of the “Big Three” powers met in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, to discuss a number of pressing issues in post-war Europe and the war in the Pacific. After the close of the July 24 session of the conference, Truman casually walked over to Stalin and informed him that the United States had just tested a new and extremely powerful weapon. Truman recorded the account in his memoirs.

At Potsdam, as elsewhere, the secret of the atomic bomb was kept closely guarded. We did not extend the very small circle of Americans who knew about it. Churchill naturally knew about the atomic bomb project from its very beginning, because it had involved the pooling of British and American technical skill.

On July 24 I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force. The Russian Premier showed no special interest. All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make “good use of it against the Japanese.”

Source: *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman: Volume I, Year of Decisions* (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 416.



President Truman and Soviet Union Prime Minister Josef Stalin on the lawn in front of Prime Minister Stalin's residence during the Potsdam Conference, Potsdam, Germany.

National Archives, NLT-AVC-PHT-63(1453)2

Russian ambassador to the United States Andrei Andreyevich Gromyko in his memories, written years after the Potsdam conference, gives his version and describes the discussion of Soviet officials shortly after Truman's announcement.

... On 24 July, as Stalin was making his exit after the session, the President held him back and said: "I have something to tell you in confidence."

Stalin stopped and waited. Truman said, "The United States has built a new weapon of great destructive power which we intend to use against Japan."

Stalin took the news calmly, showing no emotion—a reaction which apparently disappointed Truman.

Very soon afterwards, however, a meeting took place in Stalin's residence at Potsdam which has etched itself in my mind. Only Stalin, Molotov, [F. T.] Gusev (the Soviet ambassador to Britain) and I were present. When we entered, Stalin and Molotov were waiting, and it was evident that they had already been discussing the questions to be raised with us two ambassadors. . . .

Stalin . . . raised the matter which turned out to be the main point of our meeting.

"Our allies have told us that the USA has a new weapon, the atom bomb. . . . We will no doubt have our own bomb before long. But its possession places a huge responsibility on any state. The real question is, should the countries which have the bomb simply compete with each other in its production, or should they, and any other countries that acquire it later, seek a solution that would mean the prohibition of its production and use? It's hard at this moment to see what sort of agreement there could be, but one thing is clear: nuclear energy should only be allowed to be used for peaceful purposes."

Molotov agreed and added: "And the Americans have been doing all this work on the atom bomb without telling us."

Stalin said tersely: "Roosevelt clearly felt no need to put us in the picture. He could have done it at Yalta. He could simply have told me the atom bomb was going through its experimental states. We were supposed to be allies."

It was noticeable that, even though Stalin was annoyed, he spoke calmly. He continued: "No doubt Washington and London are hoping we won't be able to develop the bomb ourselves for some time. And meanwhile, using America's monopoly, in fact America's and Britain's, they want to force us to accept their plans on questions affecting Europe and the world. Well, that's not going to happen!" and now, for once, he cursed in ripe language. A broad grin appeared on the face of my good friend Gusev.

Source: Andrei Gromyko, *Memories*, Translated by Harold Shukman (London: Century Hutchinson, Ltd., 1989), pp. 108–109.

Lesson One

THE ATOMIC BOMB AND ITS EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A. Objectives

- ◆ To explain reasons for the growing hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union at the close of World War II.
- ◆ To analyze the arguments on possible use of the atomic bomb.
- ◆ To define and discuss the idea of “atomic diplomacy” on post-World War II relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Have students review textbook readings on World War II. Remind students that Hitler and Stalin had, in 1939, signed a non-aggression pact and that a little over two weeks after Nazi troops began their blitzkrieg in Poland, Soviet troops invaded Poland. On June 22, 1941, Germany violated the non-aggression treaty and invaded the Soviet Union. Have students read **Document A**, a report in the *New York Times* regarding the response of some Congressional leaders on the Nazi invasion of Russia. Discuss how the Soviets would respond to these comments. Would Senator Harry Truman’s statement haunt Soviet American relations at the close of the war?
2. Review text readings of the major wartime conferences and their objectives. Have students compile a list of the points of agreement among the Big Three powers at Yalta. Discuss the outcome of the Yalta Conference, February 4–11, 1945, in context of the war and basic goals of the allied powers. Likewise prepare a list of the topics discussed at the Potsdam Conference, July 17–August 2, 1945. Discuss the basic issues that divided the United States and Britain on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. What was the issue over Poland and Eastern Europe at Potsdam? Had Stalin violated the Yalta agreement regarding Eastern Europe as Britain and the United States claimed? Had the new American administration of Harry Truman reneged on the Yalta agreement as the Soviets claimed? To what extent had the spirit of allied cooperation eroded by the Potsdam conference?
3. Have students read **Document B**, Truman’s diary entries during the Potsdam conference. What did Truman mean by “I have some dynamite

too which I'm not exploding now" in his July 17 diary entry? To what extent do the entries for July 18 and 25 show a different attitude towards the Russians? How important was it for the United States to get the Soviets to declare war on Japan? Would the use of atomic weapons make it unnecessary for Russian entry into the war? Once the power of the bomb was confirmed, what would you have advised President Truman to do at Potsdam?

4. Read aloud, or have a student read the **Dramatic Moment**. Discuss how the withholding of information on the development of the atomic bomb may have added to a growing conflict between East and West at the end of the war in Europe. Extend the lesson by having students investigate charges that the Soviets were aware of the development of the bomb because of a network of spies operating in the United States.
5. Assign the following documents for homework and have students write a brief summation of the major arguments presented in each document.

Document C, Report of the Interim Committee on Military Use of the Atomic Bomb

Document D, Report of the Franck Committee on a Noncombat Atomic Demonstration

Document E, Henry L. Stimson's Appeal for Atomic Talks with Russia

6. Divide the class into six groups and assign each group one of the three documents (**C**, **D**, or **E**) so that there are two separate groups for each document. Have students share their arguments from the previous night's homework pertaining to their assigned document and make a composite list of common points. They should then collaborate and come up with a paragraph summing up the arguments of their document.
7. Assign one student to act as a class recorder and list the major arguments on the board for each document as a spokesperson from each group read the collective paragraph. Ask students if there are any additions to the lists. This may be done on an individual rather than group basis since all students should have come prepared to discuss each document. Discuss the documents considering the following points:
 - a. Which alternative did the United States government pursue?
 - b. Evaluate the impact of this decision on superpower relations in the immediate post-war years. What might have been the outcome if other options had been chosen? Explain your reasoning.

Lesson One

- c. Define “atomic diplomacy.” What was the effect of this policy in the late 1940s?

C. Evaluating the Lesson

1. Check for understanding during discussion or assign a writing assignment based on the three documents. Students could be asked to write an essay according to the following directions:
 - a. Modeling your writing on the documents discussed, create your own “document” as if you were an analyst for the State Department.
 - b. Advise the President on the use of the atomic bomb. Consider, foremost, the idea of “atomic diplomacy.”

Nazi Invasion of the Soviet Union June 1941

(Primary Source)

Congressional reaction to the German invasion of Russia on June 22 was generally reserved. The Roosevelt administration's official policy was that Nazi aggression was a threat to the security of the United States and must be stopped. Some members of Congress, however, broke with the administration's argument that any rallying of force against Hitler, from whatever source, was welcomed. On June 24, two days after the Nazi invasion began Representative Martin Dies (D-Texas) and Senator Harry Truman (D-Missouri) were quoted in two articles in the *New York Times*.

Congressman Martin Dies

The severance of the Soviet-Nazi alliance will mean that many people who quit the Communists after the alliance of Germany and Russia was formed will return to their first affection.

The influence of the Communist party in America will increase tremendously as a result of the break between Hitler and Stalin. All of those gullibles and fellow travelers in America who aided the

Communist cause prior to the alliance may be expected to resume their activities in behalf of Moscow. . . .

All strikes and sit-downs must cease. Several hundreds of thousands of fifth columnists now working in defense industries must be fired without delay. At least 1,000 government employees sympathetic with totalitarian ideology must be discharged.

Source: *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, p. 3.

* * * * *

Senator Harry S Truman

If we see Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible,

although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances. Neither of them think anything of their pledged word.

Source: *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, p. 8.

Truman's Potsdam Diary

(Primary Source)

Truman kept a diary during in which he recorded notes on his meetings with Churchill and Stalin at the Potsdam conference. The following are notes he wrote in his diary for July 17, 18, and 25.

*Potsdam**July 17, 1945*

Just spent a couple of hours with Stalin. Joe Davies [former U. S. ambassador to Moscow] called on [Ivan] Maisky [Former Soviet ambassador to London] and made the date last night for noon today. Promptly a few minutes before twelve I looked up from the desk and there stood Stalin in the doorway. I got to my feet and advanced to meet him. He put out his hand and smiled. I did the same, we shook, I greeted Molotov and the interpreter, and we sat down. After the usual polite remarks we got down to business. I told Stalin that I am no diplomat but usually said yes & no to questions after hearing all the argument. It pleased him. I asked him if he had the agenda for the meeting. He said he had and that he had some more questions to present. I told him to fire away. He did and it is dynamite—but I have some dynamite too which I'm not exploding now. He wants to fire Franco, to which I wouldn't object, and divide up the Italian colonies and other mandates, some no doubt that the British have. Then he got on the Chinese situation, told us what agreements had been reached and what was in abeyance. Most of the big points are settled. He'll be in the Jap War on August 15th. Fini Japs when that comes about. We had lunch, talked socially, put on a real show drinking toasts to everyone, then had pictures made in the back yard. I can deal with Stalin. He is honest—but smart as hell.

Source: Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 53.

* * * * *

*Potsdam**July 18, 1945*

... Went to lunch with P.M. [Churchill] at 1:30. Walked around to British Hqtrs. Met at the gate by Mr. Churchill. Guard of honor drawn up. Fine body of men, Scottish Guards. Band played Star Spangled Banner. Inspected Guard and went in for lunch. P.M. & I ate alone. Discussed Manhattan (it is a success). Decided to tell Stalin about it. Stalin had told P.M. of telegram from Jap Emperor asking for peace. Stalin also read his answer to me. It was satisfactory. Believe Japs will fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland. I shall inform Stalin about it at an opportune time.

Stalin's luncheon was a most satisfactory meeting. I invited him to come to the U.S. Told him I'd send the Battleship *Missouri* for him if he'd come. He said he wanted to cooperate with U.S. in peace as we had cooperated in War but it would be harder. Said he was grossly misunderstood in U.S. and I was misunderstood in Russia. I told him that we each could help to remedy that situation in our home countries and that I intended to try with all I had to do my part at home. He gave me a most cordial smile and said he would do as much in Russia. . . .

Source: Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 53–54.

* * * * *

Potsdam
July 25, 1945

We met at 11 A.M. today. That is Stalin, Churchill and the U.S. President. But I had a most important session with Lord Mountbatten & General Marshall before that. We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous Ark.

Anyway we "think" we have found the way to cause a disintegration of the atom. An experiment in the New Mexican desert was startling—to put it mildly. Thirteen pounds of the explosive caused the complete disintegration of a steel tower 60 feet high, created a crater 6 feet deep and 1,200 feet in diameter, knocked over a steel tower 1/2 mile away and knocked men down 10,000 yards away. The explosion was visible for more than 200 miles and audible for 40 miles and more.

This weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10th. I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop this terrible bomb on the old capital [Kyoto] or the new [Tokyo].

He & I are in accord. The target will be a purely military one and we will issue a warning statement asking the Japs to surrender and save lives. I'm sure they will not do that, but we will have given them the chance. It is certainly a good thing for the world that Hitler's crowd or Stalin's did not discover this atomic bomb. It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most useful.

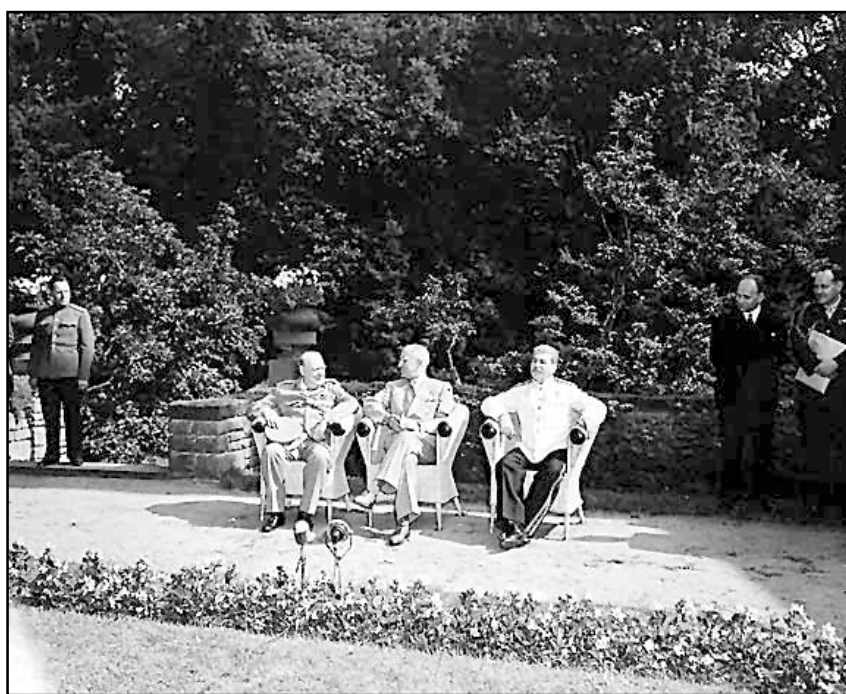
At 10:15 I had Gen. Marshall come in and discuss with me the tactical and political situation. He is a levelheaded man—so is Mountbatten.

At the Conference Poland and the Bolsheviks land grab came up. Russia helped herself to a slice of Poland and gave Poland a nice slice of Germany, taking also a good slice of East Prussia for herself. Poland has moved in up to the Oder and the west

Neisse, taking Stettin and Silesia as a fact accomplished. My position is that, according to commitments made at Yalta by my predecessor, Germany was to be divided into four occupation zones, one each for Britain, Russia and France and the U.S. If Russia chooses to allow Poland to occupy a part of her zone I am agreeable but title to territory cannot and will not be settled here. For the fourth time I restated my position and explained that territorial cessions had to be made by treaty and ratified by the Senate.

We discussed reparations and movement of populations from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy and elsewhere. Churchill said Maisky had so defined war booty as to include the German fleet and Merchant Marine. It was a bombshell and sort of paralyzed the Russkies, but it has a lot of merit. [Most of the German fleet and merchant marine had fallen to the Western powers and thus was, under the Russian definition, was war booty and not considered as part of any reparations agreement.]

Source: Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 55–56.



From left to right, seated: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U. S. President Harry S. Truman, and Soviet Union Prime Minister Josef Stalin in garden of the Cecilienhof Palace during the Potsdam Conference, Potsdam, Germany.

National Archives, NLT-AVC-PHT-63(1453)6

Report of the Interim Committee on Military Use of the Atomic Bomb
May 31, 1945
(Primary Source)

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson chaired a committee formed to advise the President on atomic energy. On May 31, The Interim Committee on Military Use of the Atomic Bomb issued its report.

Secretary Stimson explained that the Interim Committee had been appointed by him, with the approval of the President, to make recommendations on temporary war-time controls, public announcement, legislation and post-war organization. . . . He expressed the hope that the [four] scientists would feel completely free to express their views on any phase of the subject. . . .

The Secretary expressed the view, a view shared by General Marshall, that this project not be considered simply in terms of military weapons, but as a new relationship of man to the universe. . . . While the advances in the field to date had been fostered by the needs of war, it was important to realize that the implications of the project went far beyond the needs of the present war. It must be controlled if possible to make it an assurance of future peace rather than a menace to civilization. . . .

At this point General Marshall discussed at some length the story of charges and counter charges that have been typical of our relations with the Russians, pointing out that most of these allegations have proven unfounded. The seemingly uncooperative attitude of Russia in military matters stemmed from the necessity of maintaining security. He said that he had accepted this reason for their attitude in his dealings with the Russians and had acted accordingly. As to the post-war situation and in matters other than purely military, he felt that he was in no position to express a view. With regard to this field he was inclined to favor the building up of a combination among like-minded powers, there by forcing Russia to fall in line by the very force of this coalition. General Marshall was certain that we need have no fear that the Russians, if they had knowledge of our project, would disclose this information to the Japanese. He raised the question whether it might be desirable to invite two prominent Russian scientists to witness the test.

Mr. Byrnes expressed a fear that if information were given to the Russians, even in general terms, Stalin would ask to be brought into the partnership. He felt this to be particularly likely in view of our commitments and pledges of cooperation with the British. In this connection Dr. Bush pointed out that even the British do not have any of our blue prints on plants. Mr. Byrnes expressed the view, which was generally agreed to by all present, that the most desirable program would be to push ahead as fast as possible in production and research to make certain that we stay ahead and at the same time make every effort to better our political relations with Russia.

It was pointed out that one atomic bomb on an arsenal would not be much different from the effect caused by an Air Corps strike of present dimension. However, Dr. Oppenheimer stated that the visual effect of an atomic bombing would be tremendous. It would be accompanied by a brilliant luminescence which would rise to a height of 10,000 to 20,000 feet. The neutron effect of the explosion would be dangerous to life for a radius of at least two-thirds of a mile.

After much discussion concerning various types of targets and the effects to be produced, the Secretary expressed the conclusion, on which there was general agreement, that we could not give the Japanese any warning; that we could not concentrate on a civilian area; but that we should seek to make a profound psychological impression on as many of the inhabitants as possible. At the suggestion of Dr. Conant the Secretary agreed that the most desirable target would be a vital war plant employing a large number of workers and closely surrounded by workers houses.

Source: Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays*, Vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1978), pp. 273–75. Reprinted with the kind permission of the copyright owner, D. C. Heath & Company.

NOTES OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, 31 MAY 1945
10:00 A.M. to 1:15 P.M. - 2:15 P.M. to 4:15 P.M.

PARTICIPANTS:

Members of the Committee
 Secretary Henry L. Stimson, Chairman
 Hon. Ralph A. Bard
 Dr. Vannevar Bush
 Hon. James F. Byrnes
 Hon. William E. Clayton
 Dr. Karl T. Compton
 Dr. James B. Conant
 Mr. George L. Harrison

Invited Scientists
 Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer
 Dr. Enrico Fermi
 Dr. Arthur H. Compton
 Dr. E. O. Lawrence

By Invitation
 General George C. Marshall
 Major Gen. Leslie E. Groves
 Mr. Harvey E. Bundy
 Mr. Arthur Page

1. OPENING STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN:
 Secretary Stimson explained that the Interim Committee had been appointed by him, with the approval of the President, to make recommendations on temporary war-time controls, public announcement, legislation and post-war organization. The Secretary gave high praise to the brilliant and effective assistance rendered to the project by the scientists of the country and expressed great

SECRET
 GPO No. 550115, Nov 28, 1940
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 REPRODUCED AT THE INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETING
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 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

Notes of the Interim Committee Meeting, Thursday, 31 May 1945

Whistle Stop Project, U. S. Department of Education.

http://www.whistlestop.org/study_collections/bomb/large/interim_committee/bmi4-1.htm [August 15, 2000]

Report of the Franck Committee on a Noncombat Atomic Demonstration

June 11, 1945

(Primary Source)

Atomic scientist Jerome Franck chaired a committee of Chicago scientists working on the Manhattan project. On June 11, Franck, on behalf of the committee of scientists, petitioned Secretary of War Stimson urging a noncombative demonstration of the power of the atomic bomb in order to improve chances for a postwar agreement on international control of nuclear weapons.



Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer
Atomic physicist and head of the Manhattan Project
National Archives, NWDNS-434-OR-7(44)

The way in which the nuclear weapons, now secretly developed in this country, will first be revealed to the world appears of great, perhaps fateful importance.

One possible way—which may particularly appeal to those who consider the nuclear bombs primarily as a secret weapon developed to help win the present war—is to use it without warning on an appropriately selected object in Japan. It is doubtful whether the first available bombs, of comparatively low efficiency and small size, will be sufficient to break the will or ability of Japan to resist, especially given the fact that the major cities like Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe already will largely be reduced to ashes by the slower process of ordinary aerial bombing. Certain and perhaps important tactical results undoubtedly can be achieved, but we nevertheless think that the question of the use of the very first available atomic bombs in the Japanese war should be

weighed very carefully, not only by military authority, but by the highest political leadership of this country. If we consider international agreement on total prevention of nuclear warfare as the paramount objective, and believe that it can be achieved, this kind of introduction of atomic weapons to the world may easily destroy all our chances of success. Russia, and even allied countries which bear less mistrust of our ways and intentions, as well as neutral countries, will be deeply shocked. It will be very difficult to persuade the world that a nation which was capable of secretly preparing and suddenly releasing a weapon, as indiscriminate as the rocket bomb and a thousand times more destructive, is to be trusted in its proclaimed desire of having such weapons

abolished by international agreement. We have large accumulations of poison gas, but do not use them, and recent polls have shown that public opinion in this country would disapprove of such a use even if it would accelerate the winning of the Far Eastern war. It is true, that some irrational element in mass psychology makes gas poisoning more revolting than blasting by explosives, even though gas warfare is in no way more “inhuman” than the war of bombs and bullets. Nevertheless, it is not at all certain that the American public opinion, if it could be enlightened as to the effect of atomic explosives, would support the first introduction by our own country of such an indiscriminate method of wholesale destruction of civilian life.

Thus, from the “optimistic” point of view—looking forward to an international agreement on prevention of nuclear warfare—the military advantages and the saving of American lives, achieved by the sudden use of atomic bombs against Japan, may be outweighed by the ensuing loss of confidence and wave of horror and repulsion, sweeping over the rest of the world, and perhaps dividing even the public opinion at home.

From this point of view a demonstration of the new weapon may best be made before the eyes of representatives of all United Nations, on the desert or a barren island? The best possible atmosphere for the achievement of an international agreement could be achieved if America would be able to say to the world, “You see what weapon we had but did not use. We are ready to renounce its use in the future and to join other nations in working out adequate supervision of the use of this nuclear weapon.”

This may sound fantastic, but then in nuclear weapons we have something entirely new in the order of magnitude of destructive power, and if we want to capitalize fully on the advantage which its possession gives us, we must use new and imaginative methods. After such a demonstration the weapon could be used against Japan if a sanction of the United Nations (and of the public opinion at home) could be obtained, perhaps after a preliminary ultimatum to Japan to surrender or at least to evacuate a certain region as an alternative to the total destruction of this target.

It must be stressed that if one takes a pessimistic point of view and discounts the possibilities of an effective international control of nuclear weapons, then the advisability of an early use of nuclear bombs against Japan becomes even more doubtful--quite independently of any humanitarian considerations. If no international agreement is concluded immediately after the first demonstration, this will mean a flying start of an unlimited armaments race. If this race is inevitable, we have all reason to delay its beginning as long as possible in order to increase our headstart still further The benefit to the nation, and saving of American lives in the future, achieved by renouncing an early demonstration of nuclear bombs and letting the other nations come into the race only reluctantly, on the basis of guesswork and without definite knowledge that the “thing does work,” may far outweigh the advantages to be gained by the immediate use of the first and comparatively inefficient bombs in the war against Japan. At the least, pros and cons of this use must be carefully weighed by the supreme

political and military leadership of the country, and the decision should not be left to considerations, merely, of military tactics.

One may point out that scientists themselves have initiated the development of this “secret weapon” and it is therefore strange that they should be reluctant to try it out on the enemy as soon as it is available. The answer to this question was given above—the compelling reason for creating this weapon with such speed was our fear that Germany had the technical skill necessary to develop such a weapon without any moral restraints regarding its use.

Another argument which could be quoted in favor of using atomic bombs as soon as they are available is that so much taxpayers’ money has been invested in those projects that the Congress and the American public will require a return for their money. The above-mentioned attitude of the American public opinion in the question of the use of poison gas against Japan shows that one can expect it to understand that a weapon can sometimes be made ready only for use in extreme emergency; and as soon as the potentialities of nuclear weapons will be revealed to the American people, one can be certain that it will support all attempts to make the use of such weapons impossible.

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Henry L. Stimson's Appeal for Atomic Talks with Russia
September 11, 1945
(Primary Source)

Secretary of War Henry Stimson sent the following memorandum to the President approximately six weeks after Truman had told Stalin at Potsdam about a secret weapon the United States had developed. Stimson, who had been one of the persons who had originally cautioned against advising the Russians of U.S. nuclear research, now urged Truman approach the Soviets to discuss controls on nuclear weapons.

The advent of the atomic bomb has stimulated great military and probably even greater political interest throughout the civilized world. In a world atmosphere already extremely sensitive to power, the introduction of this weapon has profoundly affected political considerations in all sections of the globe.

In many quarters it has been interpreted as a substantial offset of the growth of Russian influence on the continent. We can be certain that the Soviet Government has sensed this tendency and the temptation will be strong for the Soviet political and military leaders to acquire this weapon in the shortest possible time. Britain in effect already has the status of a partner with us in the development of this weapon. Accordingly, unless the Soviets are voluntarily invited into the partnership upon a basis of cooperation and trust, we are going to maintain the Anglo-Saxon bloc over against the Soviet in the possession of this weapon. Such a condition will almost certainly stimulate feverish activity on the part of the Soviet toward the development of this bomb in what will in effect be a secret armament race of a rather desperate character. There is evidence to indicate that such activity may have already commenced.

If we feel, as I assume we must, that civilization demands that some day we shall arrive at a satisfactory international arrangement respecting the control of this new force, the question then is how long we can afford to enjoy our momentary superiority in the hope of achieving our immediate peace council objectives.

Whether Russia get control of the necessary secrets of production in a minimum of say four years or a maximum of twenty years is not nearly as important to the world and civilization as to make sure that when they do get it they are willing and co-operative partners among the peace-loving nations of the world. It is true if we approach them now, as I would propose, we may be gambling on their good faith and risk their getting into production of bombs a little sooner than they would otherwise.

To put the matter concisely, I consider the problem of our satisfactory relations with Russia as not merely connected with but as virtually dominated by the problem of the atomic bomb. Except for the problem of the control of that bomb, those relations, while

vitaly important, might not be immediately pressing. The establishment of relations of mutual confidence between her and us could afford to await the slow progress of time. But with the discovery of the bomb, they became immediately emergent. Those relations may be perhaps irretrievably embittered by the way in which we approach the solution of the bomb with Russia. For if we fail to approach them now and merely continue to negotiate with them, having this weapon rather ostentatiously on our hip, their suspicions and their distrust of our purposes and motives will increase. It will inspire them to greater efforts in an all-out effort to solve the problem. If the solution is achieved in that spirit, it is much less likely that we will ever get the kind of covenant we may desperately need in the future. This risk is, I believe, greater than the other, inasmuch as our objective must be to get the best kind of international bargain we can—one that has some chance of being kept and saving civilization not for five or for twenty years, but forever.

The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way you can make a man trustworthy is to trust him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust.

If the atomic bomb were merely another though more devastating military weapon to be assimilated into our pattern of international relations, I would be one thing. We could then follow the old custom of secrecy and nationalistic military superiority relying on international caution to prescribe the future use of the weapon as we did with gas. But I think the bomb instead constitutes merely a first step in a new control by man over the forces of nature too revolutionary and dangerous to fit into the old concepts. I think it really caps the climax of the race between man's growing technical power for destructiveness and his psychological power of self-control and group control—his moral power. If so, our method of approach to the Russians is a question of the most vital importance in the evolution of human progress.

Since the crux of the problem is Russia, any contemplated action leading to the control of this weapon should be more apt to respond sincerely to a direct and forthright approach made by the United States on this subject than would be the case if the approach were made as a part of a general international scheme, or if the approach were made after a succession of express or implied threats or near threats in our peace negotiations.

My idea of an approach to the Soviets would be a direct proposal after discussion with the British that we would be prepared in effect to enter an arrangement with the Russians, the general purpose of which would be to control and limit the use of the atomic bomb as an instrument of war and so far as possible to direct and encourage the development of atomic power for peaceful and humanitarian purposes. Such an approach might more specifically lead to the proposal that we would stop work on the further improvement in, or manufacture of, the bomb as a military weapon, provided the Russians and the British would agree to do likewise. It might also provide that we would be willing to impound what bombs we now have in the

United States provided the Russians and the British would agree with us that in no event will they or we use a bomb as an instrument of war unless all three Governments agree to that use. We might also consider including in the arrangement a covenant with the U.K. and the Soviets providing for the exchange of benefits of future developments whereby atomic energy may be applied on a mutually satisfactory basis for commercial or humanitarian purposes.

I would make such an approach just as soon as our immediate political considerations make it appropriate.

I emphasize perhaps beyond all other considerations the importance of taking this action with Russia as a proposal of the United States—backed by Great Britain but peculiarly the proposal of the United States. Action of any international group of nations, including many small nations who have not demonstrated their potential power or responsibility in this war would not, in my opinion, be taken seriously by the Soviets. The loose debates which would surround such proposal, if put before a conference of nations, would provoke but scant favor from the Soviets. As I say, I think this is the most important point in the program.

After the nations which have won this war have agreed to it, there will be ample time to introduce France and China into the covenants and finally to incorporate the agreement into the scheme of the United Nations. The use of this bomb has been accepted by the world as the result of the initiative and productive capacity of the United States, and I think this factor is a most potent lever toward having our proposals accepted by the Soviets, whereas I am most skeptical of obtaining any tangible results

by way of any international debate. I urge this method as the most realistic means of accomplishing this vitally important step in the history of the world.



Source: Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays*, Vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1978), pp. 277–79. Reprinted with the kind permission of the copyright owner, D. C. Heath & Company.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson with Col. W. H. Kyle
National Archives, NLT-AVC-PHT-63(1455)22, 1945

Lesson Two

THE POLICY OF CONTAINMENT

A. Objectives

- ◆ To examine reasons for a policy change towards the Soviet Union.
- ◆ To define the policy of containment and present arguments both for and against its adoption.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Inform students that at the Potsdam Conference established a Council of Foreign Ministers made up of the U.S. Secretary of State, the Foreign Secretaries of Britain and the Soviet Union, joined by the French and Chinese ministers. These “Big Five” delegates representing the major victorious nations held their first meeting in London, September 11–October 2, 1945, to draft peace treaties and generally carry out the decisions of the wartime conferences. The conference ended without an agreement on treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania and marked a clear division of interests between the Soviet Union and the West. Six weeks after the conference ended the Iranian Communist Party organized a revolt in Azerbaijan. Soviet troops stationed in Iran during the war refused to withdraw and prevented the Iranian government from putting down the revolt.
2. Have students read **Document F**, Truman’s January 1946 appraisal of Russian interests, and **Document G**, Kennan’s Report on Politburo Speeches. What are the causes for the deteriorating relations between the United States and the Soviet Union? How does Truman propose to deal with the Soviets? What is the Soviet attitude towards the West? What effect will policy decisions growing from these different views have on international relations?
3. For homework, have students read **Document H**, George Kennan’s “Long Telegram,” **Document I**, Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech, and **Document J**, Henry Wallace’s Questions the “Get Tough Policy.”
4. Assign three students to prepare a dramatic reading from each of the three documents that gives the essence of the message contained in each. After listening to the readings, have each student complete a quick write on which argument she/he most agrees with.

Lesson Two

5. Divide students into three groups to analyze **Documents H, I, or J**. Have each group develop an argument supported by documentary evidence. Choose a spokesperson from each group and have them read the collaborative statements to the class. After each group has presented its argument, the two other groups should formulate a rebuttal to the argument and present their critique to the class. Conclude with a general class discussion. Some points to consider would be:
 - a. How precisely can we define the policy of containment?
 - b. Why did the United States decide to pursue this policy?
 - c. What were the international ramifications of this policy?
 - d. Analyze the rhetoric of the “Iron Curtain” speech. What effect did Churchill’s personality have on the adoption of this policy?
 - e. What arguments does Wallace present in opposition to the policy of containment?

C. Evaluating the Lesson

1. Monitor student contributions during discussion and have students write a self-evaluation of their participation. Compare the two evaluations and discuss discrepancies with students.
2. Have students create political cartoons illustrating the policy of containment.
3. Write a position paper on the development of the containment policy. Considering the context of the late 1940s and the international confrontations of the era, what alternative ways of dealing with the Soviet Union were open to the United States?

Truman's Appraisal of Russian Interests**January 1946**

(Primary Source)

On January 5, 1946, Truman wrote a letter to Secretary of States James Byrnes regarding Soviet interests in Eastern Europe, Iran, and Turkey. In this unsent letter, Truman remarks that at the Potsdam Conference, July 1945, the U.S. was in a different position making good on agreements that had been reached earlier at Yalta. Now, according to Truman's letter, things have changed.



Harry S. Truman, 1945

Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-70080 DLC

January 5, 1946

My dear Jim:

. . . I think we ought to protest with all the vigor of which we are capable [against] the Russian program in Iran. There is no justification for it. It is a parallel to the program of Russia in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. It is also in line with the high handed and arbitrary manner in which Russia acted in Poland.

At Potsdam we were faced with an accomplished fact and were, by circumstances, almost forced to agree to Russian occupation of Eastern Poland and the occupation of that part of Germany east of the Oder River by Poland. It was a high-handed outrage.

At the time we were anxious for Russian entry into the Japanese War. Of course we found later that we didn't need Russia there and the Russians have been a headache to us ever since.

When you went to Moscow you were faced with another accomplished fact in Iran. Another outrage if ever I saw one.

Iran was our ally in the war. Iran was Russia's ally in the war. Iran agreed to the free passage of arms, ammunition and other supplies running into millions of tons across her territory from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. Without these supplies, furnished by the United States, Russia would have been ignominiously defeated. Yet now Russia stirs up rebellion and keeps troops on the soil of her friend and ally, Iran.

There isn't a doubt in my mind that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand—"How many divisions have you?"

I do not think we should play compromise any longer. We should refuse to recognize Rumania and Bulgaria until they comply with our requirements; we should let our position on Iran be known in no uncertain terms and we should continue to insist on the internationalization of the Kiel Canal, the Rhine-Danube waterway and the Black Sea Straits and we should maintain complete control of Japan and the Pacific. We should rehabilitate China and create a strong central government there. We should do the same for Korea.

Then we should insist on the return of our ships from Russia and force a settlement of the Lend-Lease Debt of Russia.

I'm tired babying the Soviets.

Source: Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 79-80.

Kennan's Report on Politburo Speeches**February 12, 1946**

(Primary Source)

George Kennan reported in a confidential telegram to Washington on several speeches in the Soviet Politburo in mid-February, 1946. The report confirmed U.S. belief that cooperation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was futile. The telegram was declassified on August 10, 1972.

*Moscow via War
Dated February 12, 1946
Rec'd 4:58 p.m.*

*Secretary of State
Washington
February 12, 3 p.m.*

Pre-election speeches of Stalin and his politburo associates have re-affirmed correctness and historical necessity of earlier policies implemented by Communist Party in USSR and have set forth party line on internal programs of Soviet State in years to come.

In Stalin's speech, which was of course most authoritative of all, following main points stand out.

Straight Marxist interpretation of World Wars one and two as products of crises inherent in monopoly capitalism. This was coupled, however, with statement that World War two bore anti-Fascist liberating character from very outset—an interesting deviation from recently viewed 1939–41 line that war was purely “imperialist” in pre-Soviet phase.

Contention that war proved Soviet system to be “better form of organization of society than any non-Soviet social system. . . .”

Although more militant and oratorical in tone, speeches of other politburo members follow along lines of Stalin's speech in substance. All argue that war proved far-seeking wisdom of party's pre-war policies, expatiate on superior democracy of Soviet system and its freedom from capitalist crises and unemployment, and advance present party program of “consolidating victory” through restoration and increase of economic might of USSR. Necessity of maintaining and improving armed forces unanimously emphasized on ground that forces of “Fascism and reaction” are still alive in world, in “bourgeois democracies” and elsewhere.

Most of the speeches refer to enormous “international authority” currently enjoyed by USSR but at same time give little or no indication that Soviet leaders place any serious reliance on future of international collaboration. UNO [United Nations

Organization] was discussed only by Molotov and Big Three coalition was referred to, in retrospective light at that, only by Stalin, Kalinin and Zhdanov. Kaganovich struck openly isolationist note in his statement that “two of our most dangerous and base foes from this capitalist encirclement—Hitlerite Germany and imperialist Japan—have been smashed” but “we must remember that our country continues to be in capitalist encirclement”.

Malenkov’s speech deserves special note as manifestation of an attitude of total suspicion towards motives of outside world. After urging that armed forces should be strengthened so that “friends will respect us and forbear to interrupt our great constructive work”, he declares that USSR has no intention of permitting others to harvest fruits of its dear-bought victory, that all those who may think of organizing new war against Soviet Union should remember that it is already a mighty power, and that USSR does not intend “to draw other peoples chestnuts out of fire” except for its own good.

Source: Dennis Merrill, ed., *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, Vol. 7. (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1996), pp. 65–66.

George Kennan's "Long Telegram"**February 22, 1946**

(Primary Source)

While George F. Kennan was an attaché in the Moscow Embassy, he sent the following famous and influential "long telegram" to the State Department. Because this foreign policy document was written as a telegram articles (a, an, and the) were omitted to save money, as telegram charges were determined by the number of words written.

At bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. Originally, this was insecurity of a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on vast exposed plain in neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples. To this was added, as Russia came into contact with economically advanced West, fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies in that area. But this latter type of insecurity was one which afflicted rather Russian rulers than Russian people; for Russian rulers have invariably sensed that their rule was relatively archaic in form, fragile and artificial in its psychological foundation, unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of Western countries. For this reason they have always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between Western world and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within. And they had learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it.

It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smouldered [sic.] ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for first time in Russia. Only in this land which had never known a friendly neighbor or indeed any tolerant equilibrium of separate powers, either internal or international, could a doctrine thrive which viewed economic conflicts of society as insoluble by peaceful means. After establishment of Bolshevik regime, Marxist dogma, rendered even more truculent and intolerant by Lenin's interpretation, became a perfect vehicle for sense of insecurity with which Bolsheviks, even more than previous Russian rulers, were afflicted. In this dogma, with its basic altruism of purpose, they found justification for their instinctive fear of outside world, for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifices they felt bound to demand. In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every single ethical value in their methods and tactics. Today they cannot dispense with it. It is fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security of their internally weak regimes. This is why Soviet purposes must always be solemnly clothed in trappings of Marxism, and why no one

should underrate importance of dogma in Soviet affairs. Thus Soviet leaders are driven [by?] necessities of their own past and present position to put forward a dogma which [apparent omission] outside world as evil, hostile and menacing, but as bearing within itself germs of creeping disease and destined to be wracked with growing internal convulsions until it is given final *coup de grace* by rising power of socialism and yields to new and better world. This thesis provides justification for that increase of military and police power of Russian state, for that isolation of Russian population from outside world, and for that fluid and constant pressure to extend limits of Russian police power which are together the natural and instinctive urges of Russian rulers. Basically this is only the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism, a centuries old movement in which conceptions of offense and defense are inextricably confused. But in new guise of international Marxism, with its honeyed promises to a desperate and war torn outside world, it is more dangerous and insidious than ever before.

It should not be thought from above that Soviet party line is necessarily disingenuous and insincere on part of all those who put it forward. Many of them are too ignorant of outside world and mentally too dependent to question [apparent omission] self-hypnotism, and who have no difficulty making themselves believe what they find it comforting and convenient to believe. Finally we have the unsolved mystery as to who, if anyone, in this great land actually receives accurate and unbiased information about the outside world. In atmosphere of oriental secretiveness and conspiracy which pervades this Government, possibilities for distorting or poisoning sources and currents of information are infinite. The very disrespect of Russians for objective truth—indeed, their disbelief in its existence—leads them to view all stated facts as instruments of furtherance of one ulterior purpose or another. There is good reason to suspect that this Government is actually a conspiracy within a conspiracy; and If or one am reluctant to believe that Stalin himself receives anything like an objective picture of outside world. Here there is ample scope for the type of subtle intrigue at which Russians are past masters. Inability of foreign governments to place their case squarely before Russian policy makers—extent to which they are delivered up in their relations with Russia to good graces of obscure and unknown advisers whom they never see and cannot influence—this to my mind is most disquieting feature of diplomacy in Moscow, and one which Western statesmen would do well to keep in mind if they would understand nature of difficulties encountered here. . . .

In summary, we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure. This political force has complete power of disposition over energies of one of world's greatest peoples and resources of world's richest national territory, and is borne along by deep and powerful currents of Russian nationalism. In addition, it has an elaborate and far flung apparatus for exertion of its influence in other countries, an apparatus of amazing flexibility and versatility, managed by people whose experience

and skill in underground methods are presumably without parallel in history. Finally, it is seemingly inaccessible to considerations of reality in its basic reactions. For it, the vast fund of objective fact about human society is not, as with us, the measure against which outlook is constantly being tested and re-formed, but a grab bag from which individual items are selected arbitrarily and tendenciously [sic.] to bolster an outlook already preconceived. This is admittedly not a pleasant picture. Problem of how to cope with this force [is] undoubtedly greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably greatest it will ever have to face. It should be point of departure from which our political general staff work at present juncture should proceed. It should be approached with same thoroughness and care as solution of major strategic problem in war, and if necessary, with no smaller outlay in planning effort. I cannot attempt to suggest all answers here. But I would like to record my conviction that problem is within our power to solve—and that without recourse to any general military conflict. And in support of this conviction there are certain observations of a more encouraging nature I should like to make:

1. Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic nor adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw—and usually does—when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns.
2. Gauged against Western World as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force. Thus, their success will really depend on degree of cohesion, firmness and vigor which Western World can muster. And this is factor which it is within our power to influence.
3. Success of Soviet system, as form of internal power, is not yet finally proven. It has yet to be demonstrated that it can survive supreme test of successive transfer of power from one individual or group to another. Lenin's death was first such transfer, and its effects wracked Soviet state for 15 years. After Stalin's death or retirement will be second. But even this will not be final test. Soviet internal system will now be subjected, by virtue of recent territorial expansions, to series of additional strains which once proved severe tax on Tsardom. We here are convinced that never since termination of civil war have mass of Russian people been emotionally farther removed from doctrines of Communist Party than they are today. In Russia, party has now become a great and—for the moment—highly successful apparatus of dictatorial administration, but it has ceased to be a source of emotional inspiration. Thus, internal soundness and permanence of movement need not yet be regarded as assured.

4. All Soviet propaganda beyond Soviet security sphere is basically negative and destructive. It should therefore be relatively easy to combat it by any intelligent and really constructive program.

For these reasons I think we may approach calmly and with good heart problem of how to deal with Russia. As to how this approach should be made, I only wish to advance, by way of conclusion, following comments:

1. Our first step must be to apprehend, and recognize for what it is, the nature of the movement with which we are dealing. We must study it with same courage, detachment, objectivity, and same determination not to be emotionally provoked or unseated by it, with which doctor studies unruly and unreasonable individual.
2. We must see that our public is educated to realities of Russian situation. I cannot over-emphasize importance of this. Press cannot do this alone. It must be done mainly by Government, which is necessarily more experienced and better informed on practical problems involved. In this we need not be deterred by [ugliness?] of picture. I am convinced that there would be far less hysterical anti-Sovietism in our country today if realities of this situation were better understood by our people. There is nothing as dangerous or as terrifying as the unknown. It may also be argued that to reveal more information on our difficulties with Russia would reflect unfavorably on Russian-American relations. I feel that if there is any real risk here involved, it is one which we should have courage to face, and sooner the better. But I cannot see what we would be risking. Our stake in this country, even coming on heels of tremendous demonstrations of our friendship for Russian people, is remarkably small. We have here no investments to guard, no actual trade to lose, virtually no citizens to protect, few cultural contacts to preserve. Our only stake lies in what we hope rather than what we have; and I am convinced we have better chance of realizing those hopes if our public is enlightened and if our dealings with Russians are placed entirely on realistic and matter-of-fact basis.
3. Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue. This is point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiqués. If we cannot abandon fatalism and indifference in face of deficiencies of our own society, Moscow will profit—Moscow cannot help profiting by them in its foreign policies.

4. We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see than we have put foreword in past. It is not enough to urge people to develop political processes similar to our own. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at least, are tired and frightened by experiences of past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will.
5. Finally we must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism, is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.

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Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech

March 5, 1946

(Primary Source)

Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill introduced the phrase "iron curtain" in a harshly worded speech critical of the Soviet Union at Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946. Churchill had submitted a copy of this speech to Secretary of State James Byrnes and President Truman in advance of the address. Truman was on the platform with Churchill and introduced him to the audience giving the impression that he was in full agreement with the former prime minister's remarks. *Time* magazine remarked that the Churchill speech was actually a trial balloon designed to determine how the American public would respond to a "get tough" policy toward the Soviets.



President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill standing on the rear platform of a special Baltimore & Ohio train en route to Fulton, Missouri for Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech.

National Archives, NLT-AVC-PHT-73(2194)

The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American democracy. With primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future. As you look around you, you feel not only the sense of duty done but also feel anxiety lest you fall below the level of achievement. Opportunity is here now, clear and shining, for both our countries. To reject it or ignore it or fritter it away will bring upon us all the long reproaches of the after-time. It is necessary that constancy of mind, persistency of purpose, and the grand simplicity of decision shall guide and rule the conduct of the English-speaking peoples in peace as they did in war. We must and I believe we shall prove ourselves equal to this severe requirement. . . .

Before we cast away the solid assurances of national armaments for self-preservation, we must be certain that our temple is built, not upon shifting sands or quagmires, but upon the rock. Anyone with his eyes open can see that our path will be difficult and also long, but if we persevere together as we did in the two World Wars—though not, alas, in the interval between them—I cannot doubt that we shall achieve our common purpose in the end.

I have, however, a definite and practical proposal to make for action. Courts and magistrates cannot function without sheriffs and constables. The United Nations Organization must immediately begin to be equipped with an international armed force.

It would nevertheless be wrong and imprudent to entrust the secret knowledge or experience of the atomic bomb, which the United States, Great Britain, and Canada

now share, to the world organization, while it is still in its infancy. It would be criminal madness to cast it adrift in this still agitated and un-united world. No one in any country has slept less well in their beds because this knowledge and the method and the raw materials to apply it are at present largely retained in American hands. I do not believe we should all have slept so soundly had the positions been reversed and some Communist or neo-Fascist state monopolized, for the time being, these dread agencies. The fear of them alone might easily have been used to enforce totalitarian systems upon the free democratic world, with consequences appalling to human imagination. . . .

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is sympathy and good will in Britain—and I doubt not here also—toward the peoples of all the Russians and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships.

We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers from all renewal of German aggression. We welcome her to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world. Above all, we welcome constant, frequent, and growing contacts between Russian people and our own people on both sides of the Atlantic. It is my duty, however, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone, with its immortal glories, is free to decide its future at an election under British, American, and French observation.

The Russian-dominated Polish government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these eastern states of Europe, have been raised to preeminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy. . . .

However, in a great number of countries, far from the Russian frontiers and throughout the world, Communist fifth columns are established and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to the directions they receive from the Communist center. Except in the British Commonwealth, and in the United States, where communism is in its infancy, the Communist parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization. These are somber facts for anyone

to have to recite on the morrow of a victory gained by so much splendid comradeship in arms and in the cause of freedom and democracy, and we should be most unwise not to face them squarely while time remains.

The outlook is also anxious in the Far East and especially in Manchuria. The agreement which was made at Yalta, to which I was a party, was extremely favorable to Soviet Russia, but it was made at a time when no one could say that the German war might not extend all through the summer and autumn of 1945 and when the Japanese war was expected to last for a further eighteen months from the end of the German war. In this country you are all so well informed about the Far East and such devoted friends of China that I do not need to expatiate on the situation there. . . .

Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them; they will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be relieved by a policy of appeasement. What is needed is a settlement, and the longer this is delayed, the more difficult it will be and the greater our dangers will become. From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. We cannot afford, if we can help it, to work on narrow margins, offering temptations to a trial of strength. If the Western democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering these principles will be immense and no one is likely to molest them. If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty, and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away, then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all.

Last time I saw it all coming, and cried aloud to my own fellow countrymen and to the world, but no one paid any attention. Up till the year 1933 or even 1935, Germany might have been saved from the awful fate which has overtaken her and we might all have been spared the miseries Hitler let loose upon mankind.

There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe. It could have been prevented without the firing of a single shot, and Germany might be powerful, prosperous, and honored today, but no one would listen and one by one we were all sucked into the awful whirlpool.

We surely must not let that happen again. This can only be achieved by reaching now, in 1946, a good understanding on all points with Russia under the general authority of the United Nations and by the maintenance of that good understanding through many peaceful years, by the world instrument, supported by the whole strength of the English-speaking world and all its connections.

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Henry A. Wallace Questions the “Get Tough” Policy July 1946

(Primary Source)

Henry A. Wallace had served as Roosevelt’s Secretary of Agriculture from 1933-1940, Vice President during Roosevelt’s third term, and rejoined the Cabinet in 1945 as Secretary of Commerce. He continued as Secretary of Commerce until fired by Truman on September 20, 1946. Wallace was vocal in support of securing peaceful cooperation with the Soviet Union, a point that placed him at odds with most of the members of the administration and began to jeopardize Truman’s ability to work with the Congress that had sought to maintain a hard line in dealings with the Soviets.

How do American actions since V-J Day appear to other nations? I mean by actions the concrete things like \$13 billion for the War and Navy Departments, the Bikini tests of the atomic bomb and continued production of bombs, the plan to arm Latin America with our weapons, production of B-29s and planned production of B-36s, and the effort to secure air bases spread over half the globe from which the other half of the globe can be bombed. I cannot but feel that these actions must make it look to the rest of the world as if we were only paying lip service to peace at the conference table. These facts rather make it appear either 1) that we are preparing ourselves to win the war which we regard as inevitable or 2) that we are trying to build up a predominance of force to intimidate the rest of mankind. How would it look to us if Russia had the atomic bomb and we did not, if Russia had ten thousand-mile bombers and air bases within a thousand miles of our coast lines and we did not?

Some of the military men and self-styled “realists” are saying: “What’s wrong with trying to build up predominance of force? The only way to preserve peace is for this country to be so well armed that no one will dare attack us. We know that America will never start a war.

The flaw in this policy is simply that it will not work. In a world of atomic bombs and other revolutionary new weapons, such as radioactive poison gases and biological warfare, a peace maintained by a predominance of force is no longer possible.

Why is this so? The reasons are clear:

First. Atomic warfare is cheap and easy compared with old-fashioned war. Within a very few years several countries can have atomic bombs and other atomic weapons. Compared with the cost of large armies and the manufacture of old-fashioned weapons, atomic bombs cost very little and require only a relatively small part of a nation’s production plant and labor force.

Second. So far as winning a war is concerned, having more bombs—even many more bombs—than the other fellow is no longer a decisive advantage. If another nation had enough bombs to eliminate all of our principal cities and our heavy industry, it wouldn't help us very much if we had ten times as many bombs as we needed to do the same to them.

Third. The most important, the very fact that several nations have atomic bombs will inevitably result in a neurotic, fear-ridden, itching-trigger psychology in all the peoples of the world, and because of our wealth and vulnerability we would be among the most seriously affected. Atomic war will not require vast and time consuming preparations, the mobilization of large armies, the conversion of a large proportion of a country's industrial plants to the manufacture of weapons. In a world armed with atomic weapons, some incident will lead to the use of those weapons.

There is a school of military thinking which recognizes these facts, recognizes that when several nations have atomic bombs, a war which will destroy modern civilization will result and that no nation or combination of nations can win such a war. This school of thought therefore advocates a "preventative war," an attack on Russia now, before Russia has atomic bombs. This scheme is not only immoral but stupid. If we should attempt to destroy all the principal Russian cities and her heavy industry, we might well succeed. But the immediate countermeasure which such an attack would call forth is the prompt occupation of all continental Europe by the Red Army. Would we be prepared to destroy the cities of all Europe in trying to finish what we had started? This idea is so contrary to all the basic instincts and principles of the American people that any such action would be possible only under a dictatorship at home.

Thus the "predominance of force" idea and the notion of a "defensive attack" are both unworkable. The only solution is the one which you have so wisely advanced and which forms the basis of the Moscow statement on atomic energy. That solution consists of mutual trust and confidence among nations, atomic disarmament and an effective system of enforcing that disarmament.

There is, however, a fatal defect in the Moscow statement, in the Acheson report, and in the American plan recently presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. That defect is the scheme, as it is generally understood, of arriving at international agreements by "easy stages," of requiring other nations to enter into binding commitments not to conduct research into the military uses of atomic energy and to disclose their uranium and thorium resources while the United States retains the right to withhold its technical knowledge of atomic energy until the international control and inspection system is working to our satisfaction. In other words, we are telling the Russians that if they are "good boys" we may eventually turn over our knowledge of atomic energy to them and to the other nations. But there is no objective standard of what will qualify them as being "good" nor any specified time for sharing our knowledge.

Is it any wonder that the Russians did not show any great enthusiasm for our plan? Would we have been enthusiastic if the Russians had a monopoly of atomic energy, and offered to share the information with us at some indefinite time in the future at their discretion if we agreed now not to try to make a bomb and give them information on our secret resources of uranium and thorium? I think we should react as the Russians appear to have done. We would have put up counter proposal for the record, but our real effort would go into trying to make a bomb so that our bargaining position would be equalized. . . .

Insistence on our part that the game must be played our way will only lead to a deadlock. The Russians will redouble their effort to manufacture bombs, and they may also decide to expand their "security zone" in a serious way. Up to now, despite all our outcries against it, their efforts to develop a security zone in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East are small change from the point of view of military power as compared with our air bases in Greenland, Okinawa and many other places thousands of miles from our shores. We may feel very self-righteous if we refuse to budge on our plan and the Russians refuse to accept it, but that means only one thing—the atomic armament race is on in deadly earnest.

I am convinced therefore that if we are to achieve our hopes of negotiating a treaty which will result in effective international atomic disarmament we must abandon the impractical form of the "step-by-step" idea which was presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. We must be prepared to reach an agreement which will commit us to disclosing information and destroying our bombs at a specific time or on terms of specified actions by other countries, rather than at our unfettered discretion. If we are willing to negotiate on this basis, I believe the Russians will also negotiate seriously with a view to reaching an agreement. . . .

Our basic distrust of the Russians, which has been greatly intensified in recent months by the playing up of conflict in the press, stems from differences in political and economic organizations. . . .

. . . Today, under the pressure of seemingly insoluble international problems and continuing deadlocks, the tide of American public opinion is again turning against Russia. In this reaction lies one of the dangers to which this letter is addressed.

I should list the factors which make for Russian distrust of the United States and of the Western world as follows: The first is Russian history, which we must take into account because it is the setting in which Russians see all actions and policies of the rest of the world. Russian history for over a thousand years has been a succession of attempts, often unsuccessful, to resist invasion and conquest—by the Mongols, the Turks, the Swedes, the Germans and the Poles. The scant thirty years of the existence of the Soviet government has in Russian eyes been a continuation of their historical struggle for national existence. The first four years of the new regime, from 1917 through 1921, were spent in resisting attempts at destruction by the Japanese, British

and French, with some American assistance, and by the several White Russian armies encouraged and financed by the Western powers. Then, in 1941, the Soviet state was almost conquered by the Germans after a period during which the Western European powers had apparently acquiesced in the rearming of Germany in the belief that the Nazis would seek to expand eastward rather than westward. The Russians, therefore, obviously see themselves as fighting for their existence in a hostile world.

Second, it follows that to the Russians all of the defense and security measures of the Western powers seem to have an aggressive intent. Our actions to expand our military security system—such steps as extending the Monroe Doctrine to include the arming of the Western Hemisphere nations, our present monopoly of the atomic bomb, our interest in outlying bases and our general support of the British Empire—appear to them as going far beyond the requirements of defense. I think we might feel the same if the United States were the only capitalistic country in the world and the principal socialistic countries were creating a level of armed strength far exceeding anything in their previous history. From the Russian point of view, also, the granting of a loan to Britain and the lack of tangible results on their request to borrow for rehabilitation purposes may be regarded as another evidence of strengthening of an anti-Soviet bloc.

Finally, our resistance to her attempts to obtain warm water ports and her own security system in the form of “friendly” neighboring states seems, from the Russian point of view, to clinch the case. After twenty-five years of isolation and after having achieved the status of a major power, Russia believes that she is entitled to recognition of her new status. Our interest in establishing democracy in Eastern Europe, where democracy by and large has never existed, seems to her an attempt to reestablish the encirclement of unfriendly neighbors which was created after the last war and which might serve as a springboard of still another effort to destroy her.

It is of the greatest importance that we should discuss with the Russians in a friendly way their long-range economic problems and the future of our cooperation in matters of trade. The reconstruction program of the USSR and the plans for the full development of the Soviet Union offers tremendous opportunities for American goods and American technicians.

American products, especially machines of all kinds, are well established in the Soviet Union. For example, American equipment, practices and methods are standard in coal mining, iron and steel, oil and nonferrous metals.

Nor would this trade be one-sided. Although the Soviet Union has been an excellent credit risk in the past, eventually the goods and services exported from this country must be paid for by the Russians by exports to us and to other countries. Russian products which are definitely needed or which are noncompetitive in this country are various nonferrous metal ores, furs, linen products, lumber products, vegetable drugs, paper and pulp and native handicrafts. . . .

Many of the problems relating to the countries bordering on Russia could more readily be solved once an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence is established and some form of economic arrangements is worked out with Russia. These problems also might be helped by discussions of an economic nature. Russian economic penetration of the Danube area, for example, might be countered by concrete proposals for economic collaboration in the development of the resources of this area, rather than by insisting that the Russians should cease their unilateral penetration and offering no solution to the present economic chaos there.

This proposal admittedly calls for a shift in some of our thinking about international matters. It is imperative that we make this shift. We have little time to lose. Our postwar actions have not yet been adjusted to the lessons to be gained from experience of Allied cooperation during the war and facts of the atomic age.

It is certainly desirable that, as far as possible, we achieve unity on the home front with respect to our international relations; but unity on the basis of building up conflict abroad would prove to be not only unsound but disastrous. I think there is some reason to fear that in our earnest efforts to achieve bipartisan unity in this country we may have given away too much to isolationism masquerading as tough realism in international affairs.

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Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace, evidently arriving at the White House for a Cabinet meeting.
National Park Service, National Archives, NLT-AVC-PHT-73(1991)

LESSON THREE

THE PRACTICE OF CONTAINMENT

A. Objectives

- ♦ To analyze how the policy of containment was put into practice by the United States.
- ♦ To identify and define actions that exemplify the containment policy.
- ♦ To define and analyze the Russian perspective on the American policy of containment.
- ♦ To evaluate the effectiveness of the containment policy.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Have students read **Document K**, Andrei Vishinsky's United Nations speech attacking U.S. policy. In small discussion groups, have students define the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.
2. Have students examine a map of Eastern Europe c. 1947 and locate those nations that are within the Soviet sphere. Ask students to speculate how the Western democracies would respond if the Soviet Union gained control of both Turkey and Greece. Assign **Document L**, Truman Doctrine. Discuss how the Truman Doctrine relates to Truman's letter to Secretary of State Byrnes, Kennan's "Long Telegram," and Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech (**Lesson 2, Documents F, H, and I**). How important were Turkey and Greece to the West? How did the Truman doctrine exemplify the containment policy?
3. Review with students the devastation of the war on Europe. You may wish to have students examine pictures showing the destruction throughout Eastern and Western Europe. Considering the devastation, how could European countries repair physical damages from the war and their economic systems that were in shambles? Read **Document M**, Secretary of State George C. Marshall's commencement address at Harvard University on June 5, 1947. What measures does Marshall propose to address the problem of European recovery. Realizing political divisions in the United States, how difficult would it be to secure passage of this expensive recovery program? Assume the role of an advisor to the

President and prepare a short paper indicating a strategy for securing passage of the Marshall Plan. How did Soviet reaction to the Plan help to promote Congressional approval? To what extent was the Marshall Plan an aspect of the containment policy?

4. Assign students textbook readings on the Berlin blockade. Review the Yalta and Potsdam agreements regarding the partition of Germany and allied control of Berlin. What alternatives did the western powers have when access to West Berlin was blocked on June 24, 1948? Was the decision to airlift supplies to West Berlin a reasonable course of action? Was the Western response to the blockade an application of the containment policy or a retreat from the policy? Explain.
5. Read and discuss **Document N**, an excerpt from National Security Paper No. 68 (NSC-68). How did the report of the State and Defense departments in NSP-68 appraise U.S.-Soviet relations? What are the recommendations contained in the paper? How would the execution of NSP-68 make the United States the “world’s policemen?” To what extent were the policy recommendations contained in the report implemented by the Truman administration after the outbreak of the Korean War?
6. Assign students to interview at least three adults to determine their perceptions of the origins of the Cold War. Students should have their interviews recorded or summarized in a written report. A variety of questions could be asked, such as:
 - a. Do you think that the atomic bomb was used a leverage to obtain U.S. interests against the Soviet Union immediately after the end of World War II?
 - b. Could the nuclear arms race after World War II have been avoided?
 - c. How effective were the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan in containing Communism in Europe?
 - d. How did the blockade of access routes to West Berlin in 1948 intensify the Cold War? Was the policy decision to airlift supplies to West Berlin a reasonable course of action?
 - e. Do you think the foreign policy of the United States between the close of World War II and the outbreak of the Korean War was correct?

Lesson Three

Conclude the lesson by having students share the results of their interviews. Discuss findings. How knowledgeable is the public about the causes of the Cold War? To what extent did those interviewed show a support for U.S. foreign policy during the early years of the Cold War? Was containment a realistic response to Soviet policy in the post-war era? How important was the atomic bomb in Cold War diplomacy? How has the threat of nuclear annihilation affected the contemporary world? What steps have been taken since the fall of the Soviet Union to limit nuclear proliferation?

C. Evaluating the Lesson

1. Assign students textbook readings on the outbreak of the Korean War. Debate the proposition, Resolved: The Korean War could have been prevented had the United States taken a stronger stand against the Soviet Union immediately after the close of World War II.
2. A unit test can be given that assesses the major points developed throughout the unit. You may wish to have students respond to the following topic:

What factors best explain the beginning of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union? What actions on either side might have averted the Cold War?

Andrei Vishinsky's United Nations Speech**September 18, 1947**

(Primary Source)

On September 18, 1947, Andrei Vishinsky, chairman of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, lashed out at American policy.

A number of newspapers and magazines, mostly American, cry every day and in every way about a new war, systematically promoting this baneful psychological coaxing of public opinion of their countries. The warmongers indulge in propaganda under a smoke screen of cries about strengthening of national defense and the necessity to fight against a war danger which allegedly comes from other countries.

The war-mongering propagandists try by hook and crook to frighten people poorly versed in politics by the fables and vicious fabrications about alleged preparations on the part of the Soviet Union to attack America. They certainly know only too well that they are telling lies, that the Soviet Union is not threatening in any way an attack on any country, that the Soviet Union devotes all its forces to the cause of rehabilitation of the areas that either were destroyed by the war or suffered general damage in the course of war, that the Soviet Union devotes all its efforts to the cause of rehabilitation and further development of its national economy. . . .

As one can judge by a number of signs, the preparation for a new war has already passed the stage of a sheer propaganda, psychological coaxing and war of nerves. Numerous facts prove that in some countries—and this particularly the case of the United States the war psychosis is being warmed up by putting into effect practical measures of military and strategical characters together with such organizational and technical measures as the construction of new military bases, relocation of armed forces in accordance with plans of future military operations, expansion of manufacture of new armaments and feverish work for the purpose of improving weapons. . . .

It should be noted that the capitalist monopolies, having secured a decisive influence during the war, retained this influence on the termination of the war, skillfully utilizing for this purpose governmental subsidies and grants of billion of dollars as well as the protection they enjoyed and still are enjoying from the various governmental agencies and organizations. This is facilitated by the close connections of the monopolies with Senators, members of the government, many of whom very often are either officials or partners in the monopolistic corporations.

Such as state of affairs affects also industrial scientific activity concentrated in the laboratories of various large corporations.

The same can be said with regard to the research in the field of the use of atomic energy. Such capitalistic monopolies like Du Pont chemical trust, Monsanto Chemical

Company, Westinghouse Company, General Electric, Standard Oil and others are most closely connected with this research work, being complete masters in this field.

Before the war they maintained the closest cartel connections with German trusts, and many cartel agreements contained a clause on the renewal of the exchange of information after the war.

. . . It is by no means accidental that the particularly violent warmongers among them are those who are closely connected with commercial, industrial and financial trusts, concerns and monopolies. . . .

John Foster Dulles, in a speech delivered on Feb. 10, 1947, in Chicago, urged “a tough foreign policy towards the Soviet Union,” declaring that if the U.S.A. does not take up such a course counting on possibility of reaching a compromise with the Soviet Union, then the war is inevitable. In the same speech Dulles boasted that since the collapse of the Roman Empire no nation ever possessed such great superiority of material power as the United States, and urged the United States to utilize this power to promote its ideals. . . .



Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, and John Foster Dulles
at United Nations in New York City, 1946
National Archives, NLR-PHOCO-A-67314

The meaning of these statements is clear. They are poorly camouflaged instigations for war against the U.S.S.R. This is a provocative attempt to divert attention from the true war-mongers to camouflage their war-mongering activity with a slanderous demagoguery about a “social revolution in the whole world” and other rot, expecting the simpletons easily to believe it.

Source: *New York Times*, Sept. 19, 1947.

The Truman Doctrine**March 12, 1947**

(Primary Source)

Greek Communists backed by the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania carried on a guerrilla war in northern Greece. Britain had a military presence in Greece since the close of the war. In the midst of the civil war Britain announced that it could no longer provide aid to the Greek government and would withdraw its troops. At the same time the Soviet Union was making demands against Turkey. President Truman, convinced by military advisers that both Greece and Turkey would fall to the Communists without U.S. support, announced at a joint session of Congress that the United States must defend Greece and Turkey.

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress.

The foreign policy and the national security of the country are involved.

One aspect of the present situation, which I present to you at this time for your consideration and decision, concerns Greece and Turkey.

The United States has received from the Greek government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance. Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation. . . .

The British Government has informed us that, owing to its own difficulties, it can no longer extend financial or economic aid to Turkey.

As in the case of Greece, if Turkey is to have the assistance it needs, the United States must supply it. We are the only country able to provide that help.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We

shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

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.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent state would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against

great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war.

It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948. In requesting these funds, I have taken into consideration the maximum amount of relief assistance which would be furnished to Greece out of the \$350,000,000 which I recently requested that the Congress authorize for the prevention of starvation and suffering in countries devastated by the war.

In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detail of American civilian and military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance as may be furnished. I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel.

Finally, I ask that the Congress provide authority which will permit the speediest and most effective use, in tens of needed commodities, supplies, and equipment, of such funds as may be authorized.

If further funds, or further authority, should be needed for the purposes indicated in this message, I shall not hesitate to bring the situation before the Congress. On this subject the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government must work together.

This is a serious course upon which we embark.

I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious.

The United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace.

The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to little more than 1/10 of 1 percent of this investment. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure that it was not in vain.

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.

We must keep that hope alive.

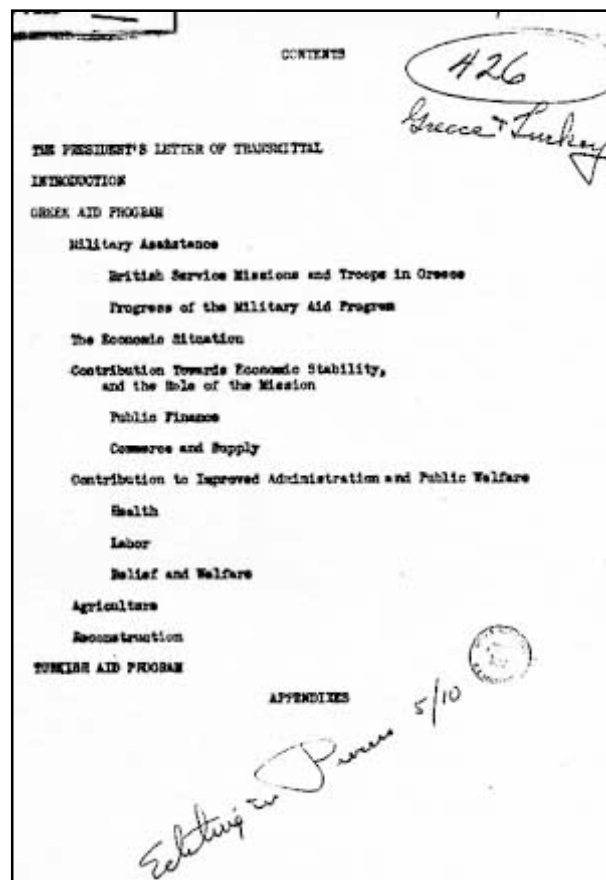
The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

Source: Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays*, Vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1978), pp. 297–300. Reprinted with the kind permission of the copyright owner, D. C. Heath & Company.



Final draft of President Truman's third quarterly report on Greek-Turkish aid

Whistle Stop Project, U. S. Department of Education

http://www.whistlestop.org/study_collections/doctrine/large/folder1/tda03-2.htm

The Marshall Plan
(Economic Cooperation Act of 1948)
(Primary Source)

Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed an American aid program for the reconstruction of war-ravished Europe during a commencement speech at Harvard University on June 5, 1947. At a Paris meeting in mid-June, the foreign ministers of France, Britain, and the Soviet Union discussed Marshall's proposal. Although the plan was open to all European nations, the Russians were suspicious and withdrew. Pravda accused Marshall of proposing a plan "for political pressure with the help of dollars" to interfere in the "domestic affairs of other countries." Soviet refusal to participate and their forbidding Eastern block countries from taking part actually helped convince Congress to pass the Marshall Plan.

Recognizing the intimate economic and other relationships between the United States and the nations of Europe, and recognizing that disruption following in the wake of war is not contained by national frontiers, the Congress finds that the existing situation in Europe endangers the establishment of a lasting peace, the general welfare and national interest of the United States, and the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations. The restoration or maintenance in European countries of principles of individual liberty, free institutions, and genuine independence rests largely upon the establishment of sound economic conditions, stable international economic relationships, and the achievement by the countries of Europe of a healthy economy independent of extraordinary outside assistance. The accomplishment of these objectives calls for a plan of European recovery, open to all such nations which cooperate in such plan, based upon a strong production effort, the expansion of foreign trade, the creation and maintenance of internal financial stability, and development of economic cooperation, including all possible steps to establish and maintain equitable rates of exchange and to bring about the progressive elimination of trade barriers. Mindful of the advantages which the United States has enjoyed through the existence of a large domestic market with no internal trade barriers, and believing that similar advantages can accrue to the countries of Europe, it is declared to be the policy of the people of the United States to encourage these countries through a joint organization to exert sustained common efforts as set forth in the report of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation signed at Paris on September 22, 1947, which will speedily achieve that economic cooperation in Europe which is essential for lasting peace and prosperity. It is further declared to be the policy of the people of the United States to sustain and strengthen principles of individual liberty, free institutions, and genuine independence in Europe through assistance to those countries of Europe which participate in a joint recovery program based upon self-help and mutual cooperation:

Provided, that no assistance to the participating countries herein contemplated shall seriously impair the economic stability of the United States. It is further declared to be the policy of the United States that continuity of assistance provided by the United States should, at all times, be dependent upon continuity of cooperation among countries participating in the program.

Source: Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays*, Vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1978), pp. 300–301. Reprinted with the kind permission of the copyright owner, D. C. Heath & Company.



“The President Signs the Economic Assistance Act,” 1948

Copyprint from “The Marshall Plan at the Mid-Mark.” Library of Congress, Averell Harriman Papers, Manuscript Division

National Security Paper 68**April 1950**

(Primary Source)

President Truman on January 30, 1950 asked the State and Defense departments to draw up a paper reviewing United States defense policy. In April the departments' report, titled National Security Council Paper 68, was presented to the President. The survey of defense policy from World War I to 1950 concluded that the world was faced with a monolithic struggle against Communism.

Within the past thirty-five years the world has experienced two global wars of tremendous violence. . . . For several centuries it had proved impossible for any one nation to gain such preponderant strength that a coalition of other nations could not in time face it with greater strength. The international scene was marked by recurring periods of violence and war, but a system of sovereign and independent states was maintained, over which no state was able to achieve hegemony.

Two complex sets of factors have now basically altered this historical distribution of power. First, the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of the British and French Empires have interacted with the development of the United States and the Soviet Union in such a way that power has increasingly gravitated to these two centers. Second, the Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged, on the part of the Soviet Union, by violent or non-violent methods in accordance with the dictates of expediency. With the development of increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction, every individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war.

On the one hand, the people of the world yearn for relief from the anxiety arising from the risk of atomic war. On the other hand, any substantial further extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin with greater strength could be assembled. It is in this context that this Republic and its citizens in the ascendancy of their strength stand in their deepest peril.

The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself. They are issues which will not await our deliberations. With conscience and resolution this Government and the people it represents must now take new and fateful decisions. . . .

Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish. It

therefore rejects the concept of isolation and affirms the necessity of our positive participation in the world community.

. . . In a world of polarized power, the policies designed to develop a healthy international community are more than ever necessary to our own strength.

As for the policy of “containment,” it is one which seeks by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin’s control and influence and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.

It was and continues to be cardinal in this policy that we possess superior overall power in ourselves or in dependable combination with other like-minded nations. One of the most important ingredients of power is military strength. In the concept of “containment,” the maintenance of a strong military posture is deemed to be essential for two reasons: (1) as an ultimate guarantee of our national security and (2) as an indispensable backdrop to the conduct of the policy of “containment.” Without superior aggregate military strength, in being and readily mobilizable, a policy of “containment”—which is in effect a policy of calculated and gradual coercion—is no more than a policy of bluff.

At the same time, it is essential to the successful conduct of a policy of “containment” that we always leave open the possibility of negotiation with the U.S.S.R. A diplomatic freeze—and we are in one now—tends to defeat the very purposes of “containment” because it raises tensions at the same time that it makes Soviet retractions and adjustments in the direction of moderated behavior more difficult. It also tends to inhibit our initiative and deprives us of opportunities for maintaining a moral ascendancy in our struggle with the Soviet system.

In “containment” it is desirable to exert pressure in a fashion which will avoid so far as possible directly challenging Soviet prestige, to keep open the possibility for the U.S.S.R. to retreat before pressure with minimum loss of face and to secure political advantage from the failure of the Kremlin to yield or take advantage of the openings we leave it.

We have failed to implement adequately these two fundamental aspects of “containment.” In the face of obviously mounting Soviet military strength ours has declined relatively. Partly as a byproduct of this, but also for other reasons, we now find ourselves at a diplomatic impasse with the Soviet Union, with the Kremlin growing bolder, with both of us holding on grimly to what we have and with ourselves facing difficult decisions. . . .

It is quite clear from Soviet theory and practice that the Kremlin seeks to bring the free world under its dominion by the methods of the cold war. The preferred technique is to subvert by infiltration and intimidation. Every institution of our society is an

instrument which it is sought to stultify and turn against our purposes. Those that touch most closely our material and moral strength are obviously the prime targets, labor unions, civic enterprises, schools, churches, and all media for influencing opinion. The effort is not so much to make them serve obvious Soviet ends as to prevent them from serving our ends, and thus to make them sources of confusion in our economy, our culture and our body politic. The doubts and diversities that in terms of our values are part of the merit of a free system, the weaknesses and the problems that are peculiar to it, the rights and privileges that free men enjoy, and the disorganization and destruction left in the wake of the last attack on our freedoms, all are but opportunities for the Kremlin to do its evil work. . . .

At the same time the Soviet Union is seeking to create overwhelming military force, in order to back up infiltration with intimidation. In the only terms in which it understands strength, it is seeking to demonstrate to the free world that force and the will to use it are on the side of the Kremlin, that those who lack it are decadent and doomed. In local incidents it threatens and encroaches both for the sake of local gains and to increase anxiety and defeatism in all the free world.

The possession of atomic weapons at each of the opposite poles of power, and the inability (for different reasons) of either side to place any trust in the other, puts a premium on a surprise attack against us. It equally puts a premium on a more violent and ruthless prosecution of its design by cold war, especially if the Kremlin is sufficiently objective to realize the improbability of our prosecuting a preventive war. It also puts a premium on piecemeal aggression against others, counting on our unwillingness to engage in atomic war unless we are directly attacked. We run all these risks and the added risk of being confused and immobilized by our inability to weigh and choose, and pursue a firm course based on a rational assessment of each.

The risk that we may thereby be prevented or too long delayed in taking all needful measures to maintain the integrity and vitality of our system is great. The risk that our allies will lose their determination is greater. And the risk that in this manner a descending spiral of too little and too late, of doubt and recrimination, may present us with ever narrower and more desperate alternatives, is the greatest risk of all. For example, it is clear that our present weakness would prevent us from offering effective resistance at any of several vital pressure points. The only deterrent we can present to the Kremlin is the evidence we give that we may make any of the critical points which we cannot hold the occasion for a global war of annihilation.

The risk of having no better choice than to capitulate or precipitate a global war at any of a number of pressure points is bad enough in itself, but it is multiplied by the weakness it imparts to our position in the cold war. Instead of appearing strong and resolute we are continually at the verge of appearing and being alternately irresolute and desperate; yet it is the cold war which we must win, because both the Kremlin design, and our fundamental purpose give it the first priority. . . .

A more rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength and thereby of confidence in the free world than is now contemplated is the only course which is consistent with progress toward achieving our fundamental purpose. . . . It is necessary to have the military power to deter, if possible, Soviet expansion, and to defeat, if necessary, aggressive Soviet or Soviet-directed actions of a limited or total character. . . .

Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination by creating a situation in the free world to which the Kremlin will be compelled to adjust. . . .

The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake. Essential prerequisites to success are consultations with Congressional leaders designed to make the program the object of nonpartisan legislative support, and a presentation to the public of a full explanation of the facts and implications of the present international situation. The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained.

Source: Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays*, Vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1978), pp. 301–305.

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