

TWENTY-SEVEN THE COLD WAR

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter Twenty-Nine should enable the student to understand:

1. The background of United States relations with the Soviet Union before World War II.
2. The extent of collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union during World War II and the differences of view that developed between the two nations concerning the nature of the postwar world.
3. The meaning of the doctrine of containment and the specific programs that implemented containment.
4. The problems of postwar readjustment in the United States, especially controlling inflation.
5. The nature of the Fair Deal—its successes and failures.
6. The significance of China's becoming communist to American foreign policy in Asia.
7. The circumstances that led to United States participation in a "limited" war in Korea.
8. The reaction of American public opinion to President Harry Truman's handling of the "police action" in Korea, including his firing of General Douglas MacArthur.
9. The nature and extent of American fears of internal communist subversion during the early Cold War years.

Main Themes

1. How a legacy of mistrust between the United States and the Soviet Union combined with the events of World War II to cause the Cold War.
2. How the policy of containment led to an increasing United States involvement in crises around the world.
3. How World War II ended the Depression and ushered in an era of nervous prosperity.
4. That the turbulent postwar era climaxed in a period of hysterical anticommunism.

Glossary

1. "right-to-work": Nickname given by antiunion forces to section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which allows states to prohibit union shops. In right-to-work states, a person cannot be required to join a union even if the majority of workers at the site are union members and have a collective bargaining agreement with management.
2. filibuster: A parliamentary practice that, in effect, allows a minority of United States senators to kill a bill that the majority favors by tying up the business of the chamber with continuous speech making. In the 1950s, a vote of two-thirds (now three-fifths) of the senators was needed to end a filibuster by cloture. Opponents of civil rights legislation were the main users of the filibuster in the decade and a half after World War II.

THE CRUSADE AGAINST SUBVERSION (792-796)

25. What factors combined to create the anticommunist paranoia that led to the national mood that allowed the rise to prominence of Sen. Joseph McCarthy?
26. How did McCarthy exploit the existing mood of hysteria? What sorts of tactics did he use in his attacks on alleged subversion?
27. What personalities and policies led to the Republican victory in the presidential election of 1952?

WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE: ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR (780-781)

28. What is the "post-revisionist" view of the origins and nature of the Cold War?

WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE: MCCARTHYISM (794-795)

29. Most historians agree that the anti-communist mood of the late 1940s and early 1950s led to excessive governmental actions, but was it an episode of paranoid and politically motivated response to an insignificant radical few or an overly hysterical reaction to a legitimate threat to American security?

Identification

Identify each of the following, and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Mao Zedong
2. George F. Kennan
3. Czechoslovakian coup
4. Selective Service System
5. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)
6. Warsaw Pact
7. Formosa (Taiwan)
8. NSC-68
9. GI Bill of Rights
10. Taft-Hartley Act
11. "right-to-work" laws
12. Strom Thurmond and the "Dixiecrats"
13. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
14. Thomas E. Dewey
15. *film noir*
16. Syngman Rhee
17. 38th parallel
18. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)
19. Hollywood blacklist
20. Alger Hiss
21. J. Edgar Hoover
22. McCarran Internal Security Act
23. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
24. Adlai E. Stevenson
25. Dwight D. Eisenhower

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 the fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action.

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 our own 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.

Document 2

Read the section of the text headed "The Crusade Against Subversion," paying close attention to the subsection "McCarthyism." The following is a brief excerpt from Joseph McCarthy's initial "red-baiting" speech, which was delivered at Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950. Press accounts indicate that McCarthy had charged that there were 205 communists in the State Department, but the version printed in the *Congressional Record* reduced the number to 57. The senator was never very precise about specifics. After reading the excerpt, consider the following questions: How did McCarthy, a Roman Catholic, incorporate religion into his appeal? Does he seem somewhat jealous and resentful of those more sophisticated and better educated than he? What specific individual(s) might he have been alluding to? How would such charges help McCarthy's own political career and the general fortunes of the Republicans?

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down. . . . The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer—the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been worst.

. . . In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.

Interpretive Questions

Based on what you have filled in, answer the following. On some of the questions you will need to consult the narrative in your text for information or explanation.

1. Why was the form of government in Poland such a difficult issue to resolve?
2. Why was Germany divided and why was Berlin divided even though it lay in the Russian zone? What caused the United States, Great Britain, and France to combine their zones into a single nation?
3. Explain the policy of the Truman Doctrine. What was to be contained? Where? What developments were the catalyst for Truman's promulgation of the policy? What was the economic manifestation of the idea?
4. Why was the Soviet Union so suspicious of the West and so insistent on control of East Germany and the nations along the Soviet border? Were the Soviet concerns justified?

Summary

The mutual hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union grew out of ideological incompatibility and concrete actions stretching back to World War I and before. The alliance of convenience and necessity against Germany temporarily muted the tensions, but disagreement over the timing of the second front and antagonistic visions of postwar Europe pushed the two nations into a "cold war" only a few months after the victory over the Axis. The Cold War was marked by confrontation and the fear of potential military conflict. The United States vowed to contain communism by any means available.

Meanwhile, the American people, exhausted from a decade and a half of depression and war, turned away from economic reform. They were worried about the alleged Soviet threat in Europe, especially after Russia exploded its own atomic bomb in 1949. They were dismayed by the communist victory in China and perplexed by the limited war in Korea. Many Americans latched onto charges of domestic communist subversion as an explanation for the nation's inability to control world events. No one exploited this mood more effectively than did Joseph McCarthy.

Review Questions

These questions are to be answered with essays. This will allow you to explore relationships between individuals, events, and attitudes of the period under review.

1. The United States holy protested Stalin's actions in Poland, East Germany, and the rest of Eastern Europe as a violation of the "one world" principle of the Atlantic Charter and a departure from the agreements reached at Yalta and Potsdam. Aside from pushing for creation of the United Nations, did American policy actually abide by its own principles, or was it just as much based on national self-interest as the Soviet Union's?
2. Explain how the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, support for Chiang Kai-shek, and the Korean War were based on the policy of containment. What did that policy concede to the Soviets? How did NSC-68 refine the doctrine? What geopolitical realities limited American options in Asia and Eastern Europe?
3. What general factors made the United States susceptible to the anticommunist paranoia of 1947 to 1953? What activities fanned the fury and paved the way for the rise of McCarthy?

6. When it became evident that Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces were losing the Chinese civil war to Mao Zedong's communists, the Truman administration devoted increased attention to the revitalization of what nation as a strong pro-Western force in Asia?

- a. India
- b. Indonesia
- c. Japan
- d. The Philippines

7. The concept of the policy of containment was most closely associated with:

- a. Douglas MacArthur.
- b. George F. Kennan.
- c. George C. Marshall.
- d. Henry A. Wallace.

8. The Truman Doctrine was initially promulgated in conjunction with U.S. assistance against Soviet pressures in:

- a. Egypt.
- b. Latin America.
- c. Western Europe.
- d. Greece and Turkey.

9. The result of the Marshall Plan aid to the countries of Western Europe was that:

- a. the recipient nations underwent a remarkable economic recovery.
- b. communist influences actually increased in the countries receiving the aid.
- c. the United States economy was nearly bankrupted by this giveaway program.
- d. the recipient nations engaged in bitter competition with one another to gain the largest share of the aid.

10. Three of the following were significant features of the National Security Act of 1947. Which is the exception?

- a. It established the CIA.
- b. It abolished the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- c. It created the National Security Council.
- d. It combined the functions of secretary of war and secretary of navy under one secretary of defense.

11. Truman's response to the Berlin blockade was to:

- a. abandon the Western-occupied portions of Berlin.
- b. airlift all necessary supplies into Berlin for almost a year.
- c. give up plans for uniting the three Western zones of Germany.
- d. use military force to break the blockade of land routes into Berlin.

12. The NATO agreement (1949) required that every member must:

- a. consider an attack on one as an attack on all.
- b. refer all cases of armed aggression to the United Nations.
- c. confer with one another in case of an attack on any member.
- d. do none of the above.

- a. occupied entirely by United States forces.
- b. occupied by the same four powers as in Germany.
- c. united under the nationalist government of Syngman Rhee.
- d. divided into United States and Soviet zones of occupation.

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements "T" and false statements "F."

1. According to "Where Historians Disagree," the new "post-revisionist" literature on the Cold War tends to stress that U. S. actions were most responsible for creating the Cold War climate.
2. Franklin D. Roosevelt was committed to a "one world" vision that downplayed spheres of influence and stressed the importance of international cooperation.
3. One reason that the Soviet Union was able to obtain such favorable treatment at the Yalta Conference was the inexperience of the new President Harry Truman.
4. The plan for the postwar United Nations was agreed to by the Allies and others before the end of World War II.
5. The United States believed that the Soviet Union complied with the Yalta accords in Poland, but Great Britain argued that the Soviets had violated the spirit of Yalta.
6. By the late 1940s, the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek was corrupt, incompetent, and lacking in broad popular support.
7. Mao Zedong and the Communists launched their eventual conquest of China from their stronghold on the island of Formosa.
8. The Truman Doctrine declared that the United States would intervene in foreign affairs only when U.S. economic or strategic interests were directly at stake.
9. The Marshall Plan was originally offered to the Soviet Union and the Eastern European nations, but they declined to participate.
10. The Atomic Energy Commission was created to promote civilian use of nuclear energy while the Department of Defense would retain authority over military nuclear research and development.
11. The major weakness of NATO was that it lacked any provisions for cooperative military command.
12. Berlin was surrounded by the Soviet occupation zone in Germany.
13. The food and supplies that reached Berlin during the blockade were brought in by air.
14. Although the United States apparently expected that it would take Soviet scientists and technicians several more years to develop an atomic weapon, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949.
15. A major problem for returning servicemen after World War II was finding industrial jobs, since a large portion of the positions were now occupied by women.
16. The "right-to-work" provision of the Taft-Hartley Act allowed individual states to pass laws banning the so-called union shop in which workers in an organized plant had to join the union after they were hired, if they were not already members.
17. The Americans for Democratic Action was politically liberal.
18. One of the most influential anticommunist crusaders of the late 1940s and early 1950s, other than Joseph McCarthy, was Alger Hiss.
19. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg led the fight against McCarthyism.

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TERMS, CONCEPTS, NAMES

Cold War	North Atlantic Treaty	Korean War
Yalta 1945	Organization	Gen. Douglas MacArthur
"Revisionist Interpretation"	Berlin Airlift	House Un-American Activities
United Nations	Warsaw Pact	"the Hollywood Ten"
Security Council	Formosa (Taiwan)	Agler Hiss
"Zone of Occupation"	NSC-68	Richard M. Nixon
Potsdam Conference	Servicemen's Readjustment Act	J. Edgar Hoover
Chiang Kai-Shek	1944	McCarran Internal Security Act
Mao Zedong	Coal Strike 1946	1950
"China Lobby"	"Fair Deal"	Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
Containment Doctrine	Traditional European Balance of Power	Joseph McCarthy
George F. Kennan	Cashbiana, Morocco	Red Scare
The Marshall Plan	States Rights Party	Adlai Stevenson
Atomic Energy Commission	Thomas E. Dewey	Dwight D. Eisenhower
National Security Act of 1947		"checkers speech"
Central Intelligence Agency		