

Origins of the Cold War

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous chapter, you learned how the Allies defeated Germany and Japan in World War II. In this section, you will examine the beginnings of the Cold War.

Main Idea

- While the Soviets were concerned with protecting their territory, Americans were focusing on the economic causes of war. (p. 627)
- At the Yalta Conference, the Allies determined the postwar plan for the world. (p. 628)

- Differences between American and Soviet goals flared at the Potsdam Conference, where President Truman decided to take a hard line against the Soviets. (p. 629)

Content Vocabulary

Cold War, iron curtain

Academic Vocabulary

route, temporary, element

People and Terms to Identify

Potsdam, satellite nation

Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of World War II.

- **Identify** the goals of Stalin's foreign policy immediately after the war.

Reading Strategy

Categorizing As you read about the origins of the Cold War, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by filling in the names of the conferences held among the "Big Three" Allies and the outcomes of each.

Conferences	Outcomes

Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.4.6 Trace the declining role of Great Britain and the expanding role of the United States in world affairs after World War II.

11.7.4 Analyze Roosevelt's foreign policy during World War II (e.g., Four Freedoms speech).

11.9.1 Discuss the establishment of the United Nations and International Declaration of Human Rights, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and their importance in shaping modern Europe and maintaining peace and international order.

11.9.2 Understand the role of military alliances, including NATO and SEATO, in deterring communist aggression and maintaining security during the Cold War.

11.9.3 Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: the era of McCarthyism, instances of domestic

The Big Idea

International competition can lead to conflict and cooperation. Even before the end of World War II, the alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States had become strained. The Soviets voiced concerns about security issues, and the Americans focused on economic concerns and democracy. At two conferences, the two nations, along with Great Britain, decided the fates of Germany and Poland. Tensions increased when the Soviet Union refused to uphold an agreement to grant European nations the right to establish democratic governments. With the Soviet army in control of Eastern Europe, communism spread, and the countries had to follow Soviet-approved policies.

Communism (e.g., Alger Hiss) and blacklisting; the Truman Doctrine; the Berlin Blockade; the Korean War; the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis; atomic testing in the American West, the "mutual assured destruction" doctrine, and disarmament policies; the Vietnam War; Latin American policy.

11.9.4 List the effects of foreign policy on domestic policies and vice versa (e.g., protests during the war in Vietnam, the "nuclear freeze" movement).

A Clash of Interests

Main Idea While the Soviets were concerned with protecting their territory, Americans were focusing on the economic causes of war.

Reading Connection Have you ever had a different perspective on an issue than a friend or family member? Read on to learn about the different perspectives of the Soviets and Americans after World War II.

Even before World War II ended, the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union had begun to show signs of strain. President Roosevelt had hoped that a victory over the Axis and the creation of the United Nations would lead to a more peaceful world. Instead, the United States and the Soviet Union became increasingly hostile toward each other after the war.

★ An American Story ★

On April 23, 1945, President Harry S. Truman welcomed Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov into the Oval Office of the White House. Truman had been president for less than two weeks, but he was determined to get tough with Molotov.

Truman told the Soviet diplomat how disgusted he was with Moscow's refusal to permit free elections in Poland, expressing his "deep disappointment" that the Soviet Union was not carrying out its agreements. Bluntly, he warned Molotov that Soviet defiance would seriously shake the confidence of the United States and Great Britain in their wartime ally.

Molotov began to explain the Soviet position, but Truman interrupted again and again, repeating his demand that Stalin "carry out that agreement in accordance with his word." Astonished, Molotov blurted out, "I have never been talked to like that in my life!" "Carry out your agreements," the president snapped back, "and you won't get talked to like that!"

—adapted from *The Cold War: A History*

The hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union led to an era of confrontation and competition between the two countries that lasted from about 1946 to 1990. This era became known as the **Cold War**.

Soviet Security Concerns Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union began to increase

because the two sides had different goals. As the war ended, Soviet leaders became concerned about security. Germany had invaded Russia twice in less than 30 years. The Soviets wanted to keep Germany weak and make sure that the countries between Germany and the Soviet Union were under Soviet control.

Although security concerns influenced their thinking, Soviet leaders were also Communists. They believed that communism was a superior economic system that would eventually replace capitalism and that the Soviet Union should encourage communism in other nations. Soviet leaders also accepted Lenin's theory that capitalist countries eventually would try to destroy communism. This made Soviet leaders suspicious of capitalist nations.

American Economic Concerns While Soviet leaders focused on securing their borders, American leaders focused on economic problems. Many American officials believed that the Depression had caused World War II. Without it, Hitler would never have come to power, and Japan would not have wanted to expand its empire.

American advisers also thought the Depression had been overly severe because countries cut back on trade. They believed that when nations seal themselves off economically, it forces them to go to war to get the resources they need. By 1945 President Roosevelt and his advisers were convinced that economic growth was the key to world peace. They wanted to promote economic growth by increasing world trade.

▼ *Harry S. Truman*



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/Art Resource, N.Y. Gift of Frances O. Tamm

American leaders believed that democratic government with protections for people's rights made countries more stable and peaceful. They also thought that the free enterprise system was the best route to prosperity.

Reading Check **Describing** Why did U.S. leaders promote both international trade and free enterprise?

The Yalta Conference

Main Idea At the Yalta Conference, the Allies determined the postwar plan for the world.

Reading Connection Have you ever had to work with a team or group to make an important decision? Read on to find out how the Allies determined to deal with Germany after the war.

In February 1945 the Allied leaders, President Roosevelt, Britain's Winston Churchill, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, met at the Soviet resort of Yalta

to plan the postwar world. There, Stalin reaffirmed the Soviet pledge to enter the war against Japan after Germany was defeated. Several agreements reached at Yalta, however, later played an important role in causing the Cold War.

Poland The first issue the leaders discussed at Yalta was what to do about Poland. Shortly after the Germans invaded Poland, the Polish government leaders had fled to Britain. In 1944, however, Soviet troops drove back the Germans and entered Poland. As the Soviets liberated Poland from German control, the Soviets encouraged Polish Communists to set up a new government. This meant there were now two governments claiming the right to govern Poland, one Communist and one non-Communist. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill both argued that the Poles should be free to choose their own government and not have one forced on them. "This is what we went to war against Germany for," Churchill explained, "that Poland should be free and sovereign."

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

MOMENT in HISTORY

AID FOR WAR'S YOUNGEST VICTIMS

The gift of a new pair of shoes from the American Red Cross lights up the face of a young Austrian refugee. Millions of people across Europe were uprooted by almost six years of fighting that seldom distinguished between combatants and civilians. Millions more fled as victorious Soviet troops advanced through Eastern Europe into Germany at the end of World War II. The fate of the refugees became enmeshed in the growing power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, which turned the former allies into Cold War enemies.



Stalin quickly responded to Churchill's comments. According to Stalin, the Polish government had to be friendly to the Soviet Union. It was a matter of "life and death." Eventually, the three leaders compromised. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to recognize the Polish government set up by the Soviets. Stalin agreed that the government would include members of the prewar Polish government and that free elections would be held as soon as possible.

Declaration of Liberated Europe After reaching a compromise on Poland, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed to issue the Declaration of Liberated Europe. The declaration asserted "the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live."

The Allies promised that the people of Europe would be allowed "to create democratic institutions of their own choice." They also promised to create **temporary** governments that represented "all democratic **elements**" and pledged "the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people."

Dividing Germany After agreeing to a set of principles for liberating Europe, the conference focused on Germany. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed to divide Germany into four zones. Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and France would each control one zone. The same four countries would also divide the city of Berlin, even though it was in the Soviet zone.

Although pleased with the decision to divide Germany, Stalin also wanted to weaken the country economically. He demanded that Germany pay heavy reparations for the war damage it caused. Roosevelt agreed, but he insisted reparations be based on Germany's ability to pay. He also suggested, and Stalin agreed, that Germany pay reparations with trade goods and products instead of cash. The Allies would also be allowed to remove industrial machinery, railroad cars, and other equipment from Germany as reparations.

This decision did not resolve the issue. Over the next few years, arguments about reparations and economic policy in Germany increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. These arguments became one of the major causes of the Cold War.

Tensions Begin to Rise The Yalta decisions shaped the expectations of the United States. Two weeks after Yalta, the Soviets pressured the King of Romania into appointing a Communist government.



Germany in Ruins World War II devastated many German cities. Here a woman sits among the ruins of Cologne, a northern city on the Rhine River.

The United States accused the Soviets of violating the Declaration of Liberated Europe.

Soon afterward, the Soviets refused to allow more than three non-Communist Poles to serve in the 18-member Polish government. There was also no indication that they intended to hold free elections in Poland as promised. On April 1, President Roosevelt informed the Soviets that their actions in Poland were not acceptable. Eleven days later, with Soviet-American relations deteriorating, President Roosevelt died, and Vice President Harry Truman took office.

Reading Check **Identifying** What did the Allies decide at Yalta?

Truman Takes Control

Now Idea **Differences between American and Soviet goals flared at the Potsdam Conference, where President Truman decided to take a hard line against the Soviets.**

Reading Connection Describe a time when you had to work with someone who had different ideas than you. Read on to discover the different opinions that Stalin and Truman held about postwar Germany.

Although inexperienced in diplomacy, Truman already had his own views about how to deal with the Soviets. Truman was strongly anticommunist and suspicious of Stalin. He believed World War II had begun

because Britain had tried to appease Hitler. He was determined not to make the same mistake with Stalin. "We must stand up to the Russians," he told Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, the day after taking office.

Ten days later, Truman did exactly that during his meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov. Truman immediately brought up the issue of Poland and demanded that Stalin hold free elections as he promised at Yalta. Molotov took the unexpectedly strong message back to Stalin. The meeting marked an important shift in Soviet-American relations and set the stage for further confrontations.

The Potsdam Conference In July 1945, with the war against Japan still raging, Truman finally met Stalin at **Potsdam**, near Berlin. Both men had come to Potsdam primarily to work out a deal on Germany.

Truman was now convinced that German industry was critical. Unless Germany's economy was allowed to revive, the rest of Europe would never recover, and the German people might turn to communism out of desperation.

Stalin and his advisers were equally convinced that they needed reparations from Germany. The war had devastated their economy. Soviet troops had begun stripping their zone in Germany of its machinery and industrial equipment for use back home, but Stalin wanted Germany to pay much more.

At the conference, Truman took a firm stand against heavy reparations. He insisted that Germany's industry had to be allowed to recover. Truman suggested that the Soviets take reparations from their zone, while the Allies allowed industry to revive in the other zones. Stalin opposed this idea since the Soviet zone was mostly agricultural. It could not provide all of the reparations the Soviets wanted.

In order to get the Soviets to accept the deal, Truman offered Stalin a small amount of German industrial equipment from the other zones but required the Soviets to pay for part of the equipment with food shipments from their zone. He also offered to accept the new German-Polish border the Soviets had established.

Stalin did not like Truman's proposal. At Potsdam, Truman learned that the atomic bomb had been successfully tested, and he told Stalin about the test. Stalin suspected Truman was trying to bully him into a deal and that the Americans were trying to limit reparations to keep the Soviets weak. Despite his suspicions, Stalin had to accept the deal. American and British troops controlled Germany's industrial heartland, and there was no way for the Soviets to get any reparations except by cooperating. Nevertheless, the Potsdam conference marked yet another increase in tensions between the Soviets and the Americans, further paving the way for the Cold War.

Picturing History

Potsdam Trio Issues about Germany dominated the Potsdam meeting, which was attended by (from left to right) Britain's Clement Attlee, President Truman, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. [What agreement did they reach regarding reparations?](#)





Geography Skills

- 1. Interpreting Maps** What nation was divided into Communist and non-Communist zones?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Why did so many Eastern European nations have Communist governments?

The Iron Curtain Descends Although Truman had won the argument over reparations, he had less success on other issues at Potsdam. The Soviets refused to make any stronger commitments to uphold the Declaration of Liberated Europe. The presence of the Soviet army in Eastern Europe ensured that eventually, pro-Soviet Communist governments would be established in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. “This war is not as in the past,” Stalin commented. “Whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own social system. . . . It cannot be otherwise.”

The Communist countries of Eastern Europe came to be called **satellite nations**. Although not under direct Soviet control, they had to remain Communist and friendly to the Soviet Union. They also had to follow policies that the Soviets approved.

As he watched the Communist takeover in Eastern Europe, Winston Churchill coined a phrase to describe what had happened. On March 5, 1946, in a speech delivered in Fulton, Missouri, Churchill said:

“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. . . . All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

—quoted in *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947*

With the **iron curtain** separating the Communist nations of Eastern Europe from the West, the World War II era had come to an end. The Cold War was about to begin.

Reading Check Explaining How did the Potsdam conference hurt Soviet-American relations?

HISTORY Online Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

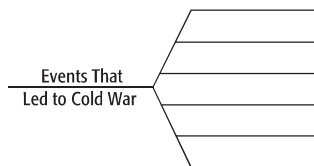
- 1. Vocabulary** Define: Cold War, route, temporary, element, iron curtain.
- 2. People and Terms** Identify: Potsdam, satellite nation.
- 3. Describe** Why did tensions grow between the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II?

Reviewing Big Ideas

- 4. Explaining** At Yalta, what agreement did the “Big Three” come to about Germany’s future after World War II?

Critical Thinking

- 5. Historical Analysis Synthesizing** Do you think Roosevelt could have prevented the Cold War? Why or why not?
CA HI.4
- 6. Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list events that led to the Cold War.



Analyzing Visuals

- 7. Analyzing Maps** Study the map on this page. Why did the Soviet Union want the countries on its western border to have strong Communist governments?
CA CS.3

Writing About History

- 8. Expository Writing** Imagine you are an adviser to President Truman. Write a report explaining your interpretation of Churchill’s iron curtain speech.
CA I1RC2.4; I1RL3.8