

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: A DIVIDED WORLD: THE EARLY COLD WAR, 1945–1963

READING AND STUDY GUIDE

- I. Origins of the Cold War
 - A. Differing Goals in the Postwar World
 - B. The American Vision Takes Shape: Kennan’s Long Telegram
 - C. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan
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- II. Fighting Communism: Cold and Hot War
 - A. Communism Rising: 1949
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As World War II ended, Soviet and American troops, converging from different directions, met and shook hands on a bridge spanning the Elbe River in Germany. Each side was pleasantly surprised by this first encounter with their wartime ally. “They looked like ordinary people. We had imagined something different,” recalled one Soviet soldier of American troops. “I guess we didn’t know what to expect from the Russians,” an American soldier said after the meeting. “If you put an American uniform on them, they could have been American!” Within two years, the lost promise of this friendly encounter was obvious to all. A 1947 U.S. propaganda film replayed footage of this historic meeting and struck a lightning bolt across the frozen image of Soviet and American soldiers shaking hands. “Here two worlds actually met,” the narrator thundered, “but this coalition was to be torn asunder” by Soviet postwar incursions in Eastern Europe that the United States viewed as part of a Soviet plan for global conquest.

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

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

Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 24, students should be able to do the following:

1. Briefly describe the economic conditions that greeted American GIs on their return home from war.
2. Explain how postwar labor strikes affected American sentiment regarding the power of organized labor.
3. Outline the provisions of the Employment Act of 1946 and the Taft-Hartley Act and comment on their impact on the postwar American economy.
4. Identify the provisions of the G.I. Bill of Rights and discuss its impact on American higher education.
5. Comment on how the war's end altered the roles of women in the workplace and in higher education.
6. Explain how men such as William Levitt addressed the housing shortage facing Americans after World War II.
7. Comment on the connection between racism and suburbanization in postwar America.
8. Briefly outline the steps taken by the Truman administration to address civil rights issues during the late 1940s.
9. Identify Jackie Robinson and explain the significance of his role in desegregating professional sports in the United States.
10. Comment on the increase in marriage and birth rates in postwar America and how the increases impacted national consumerism.
11. Discuss how the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan reflected the early stages of American Cold War policy.

12. Contrast the role of the Central Intelligence Agency versus that of the National Security Council.
13. Discuss the mutual defense pacts organized by the United States during the late 1940s as a means of increasing national security.
14. Identify the major candidates and issues and discuss the outcome of the presidential election of 1948.
15. List the major components of Truman's Fair Deal. Indicate Truman's proposals for domestic reform that were rejected by Congress.
16. Briefly discuss the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world during the 1950s. Analyze the role of the federal government and the media in intensifying public fear of nuclear war.
17. Discuss the meaning of the "Europe First" or "Asia First" dilemma facing the United States during the Cold War.
18. Outline the provisions of NSC-68 and explain its impact on the development of American foreign policy during the 1950s.
19. Identify General Douglas MacArthur and describe his role in Japanese postwar recovery and in the Korean War.
20. Discuss the significance of the Korean War in terms of American military effectiveness, its prediction of future United States involvement in Asia, and its impact on American commitment to fighting the Cold War.
21. Discuss the significance of "loyalty" to domestic political policy in the United States during the 1950s.
22. Define the term *red-baiting* and explain its use by the Republican Party during the 1950s.
23. Outline the provisions of Executive Order 9835 and describe its impact on the emergence of the Red Scare.
24. Identify the House Committee on Un-American Activities and discuss its role in the Red Scare. Explain what is meant by the "Hollywood Ten."
25. Identify the three major trials of the 1950s that targeted Americans accused of being Soviet spies.
26. Discuss Senator Joseph McCarthy's role in the Red Scare.

27. Identify four factors that explain American fear of subversion during the 1950s. Identify the goals of the propagators of the Red Scare.

Key Terms & Definitions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Questions:

What was the significance of this brief 1945 encounter between U.S. and Soviet soldiers? (718)

What important symbolism does this photograph contain regarding the Soviet victory over Germany? (720)

How did differing memories of the recent past shape U.S. and Soviet goals in postwar Europe? (721)

What analysis did Kennan's Long Telegram offer of Stalin's beliefs and behavior? (722)

What new role did the United States play in Western Europe after World War II? (723)

How did the Truman Administration convince the public to accept a new direction in U.S. foreign policy? (724)

What conflicting views of the Marshall Plan are presented in these two cartoons? (725)

Which international disputes led to the 1948-1949 Soviet blockade of Berlin? (726)

What political impact did this photo have? (727)

Why was NATO an important development in the Cold War? (728)

How did the USSR acquiring nuclear weapons and the rise of communist China change the contours of the Cold War? (729)

Why did the United States decide to fight in Korea? (730)

What accounted for America's initial successes on the battlefield? (731)

How did the entry of the Chinese into the Korean War affect political and military debates within the United States? (732)

How did the Korean War compare to World War II? (733)

What insights does popular culture offer into Americans' concerns about nuclear weapons? (734)

Did these images offer competing or complimentary visions of the nuclear threat? (735)

What defensive measures did the public and government take against a possible nuclear attack? (736)

What insights does Wellman's story offer into the Second Red Scare? (737)

What competing visions arose over the Hiss and Rosenbergs spy cases? (738)

What was the purpose and impact of HUAC's Hollywood investigations? (739)

What different perspectives do Roosevelt and Kazan offer on protecting the right to freedom of expression? (740)

Is the term McCarthyism a useful or misleading way to characterize the Second Red Scare? (741)

What caused the nuclear arms race to escalate in the late 1950s? (742)

How did the new Soviet premier Khrushchev compare to Stalin? (743)

What meaning did photographs of the Berlin Wall have for Americans? (744)

How did the United States respond when communism took hold in Cuba? (745)

What political and military considerations influenced Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis? (746)

What was the ultimate significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis? (747)