

1

# Two Superpowers Face Off

## TERMS & NAMES

- United Nations
- iron curtain
- containment
- Truman Doctrine
- Marshall Plan
- Cold War
- NATO
- Warsaw Pact
- brinkmanship
- U-2 incident

### MAIN IDEA

The conflicting aims between the United States and the Soviet Union led to global competition.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The conflicts between these two superpowers played a major role in reshaping the modern world.

**SETTING THE STAGE** During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union joined forces to fight against the Germans. The Soviet army marched west. The Americans marched east to meet them in a defeated Germany. When the Allied soldiers met at the Elbe River, they embraced each other warmly. Their leaders, however, regarded each other much more coolly.

## Former Allies Diverge

Even before World War II ended, the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union had begun to unravel. The United States was upset that Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union's leader, had signed a nonaggression pact with Adolf Hitler, Germany's leader, in 1939. Later, Stalin blamed the Allies for delaying their invasion of German-occupied Europe until 1944. Driven by these and other conflicts, the two allies began to pursue opposing goals.

**A Joint Postwar Plan** In February 1945, the war was not yet over. But the leaders of the three Allied nations—the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union—met in the Soviet Black Sea resort city of Yalta. There, they agreed to divide Germany into zones of occupation controlled by the Allied military forces. Germany also would have to pay the Soviet Union to compensate for its loss of life and property. Stalin promised that Eastern Europeans would have free elections. Skeptical Winston Churchill recognized this as an empty promise. And he predicted that Stalin would keep his pledge only if the Eastern Europeans followed “a policy friendly to Russia.” In return, Stalin agreed to join the war against Japan, an ally of Germany.

**Creation of the United Nations** In June 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union temporarily set aside their differences. They joined 48 other countries in forming the **United Nations**. This international organization was intended to protect the members against aggression. It was to be based in New York. The 50 nations that signed the UN charter pledged “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

The charter for the new peacekeeping organization established a large body called the General Assembly. This was like an international town meeting. Each UN member nation could cast its vote on a broad range of issues, including membership. An 11-member body called the Security Council had the real power to investigate and settle disputes, though. The five permanent members of the Security Council were Britain, China,

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Yalta Conference

When the leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain met at Yalta, their goals were noble ones:

- to promote world peace
- to provide emergency relief
- to help form interim governments based on the will of the people.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill (left) was optimistic about “the broad sunlight of victorious peace.”

But “victorious peace” meant very different things to Stalin (right) and Roosevelt (center). The Soviet leader wanted a strong Communist state and protection against renewed invasion from the West. The ailing U.S. president wanted a democratic world led by his country. And those conflicting views made continuing peace impossible.





France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Each could veto any Security Council action. This provision was intended to prevent any members of the Council from voting as a bloc to override the others.

**Differing U.S. and Soviet Goals** Despite their agreement at Yalta and their mutual presence on the UN Security Council, the United States and the Soviet Union split sharply after the war ended. The war had affected these two superpowers very differently. The United States, the world's richest and most powerful country at that time, suffered 400,000 deaths. Its cities and factories remained intact, however. The Soviet Union experienced at least 50 times as many fatalities. One in four Soviets was wounded or killed. In addition, many Soviet cities were demolished. These contrasting situations, as well as striking political and economic differences, affected the two countries' postwar goals. As the following chart shows, their aims in postwar Europe were contradictory.

Superpower Aims in Europe	
United States	Soviet Union
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage democracy in other countries to help prevent the rise of Communist governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage communism in other countries as part of a worldwide workers' revolution</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain access to raw materials and markets to fuel booming industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuild its war-ravaged economy using Eastern Europe's industrial equipment and raw materials</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuild European governments to promote stability and create new markets for American goods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control Eastern Europe to protect Soviet borders and balance the U.S. influence in Western Europe</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reunite Germany to stabilize it and increase the security of Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Germany divided to prevent its waging war again</li> </ul>

**SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts**

1. Which Soviet aims involved self-protection?
2. Which U.S. and Soviet aims in Europe conflicted?

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**

**A. Summarizing**

Why did the United States and the Soviet Union split after the war?

## The Soviet Union Corrals Eastern Europe

With the end of World War II, a major goal of the Soviet Union was to shield itself from another invasion from the west. Even before the devastation of World War II, centuries of history had taught the Soviets to fear invasion. Because it lacked natural western borders, Russia fell victim to each of its neighbors in turn. In the 17th century, the Poles captured the Kremlin. During the next century, the Swedes attacked. Napoleon overran Moscow in 1812. The Germans invaded Russia during World War I.

**Soviets Build a Wall of Satellite Nations** As the war drew to a close, the Soviet Union pushed the Nazis back across Eastern Europe. By the end of the war, Soviet troops occupied a strip of countries along the Soviet Union's own western border. The Soviet Union regarded these countries as a necessary buffer, or wall of protection. Stalin ignored the agreement made in Yalta to allow free elections in Eastern Europe. He installed or secured Communist governments in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland, and Yugoslavia.

The Soviet leader's American partner at Yalta, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had died on April 12, 1945. Roosevelt's successor, President Harry S. Truman, was a tougher adversary for Stalin. To the new president, Stalin's reluctance to allow free elections in Poland and other Eastern European nations represented a clear violation of those countries' rights. Truman, Stalin, and Churchill met at Potsdam, Germany, in July 1945. There, President Truman pressed Stalin to permit free elections in Eastern Europe. The Soviet leader refused. In a speech in early 1946, Stalin declared that



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Location** In which part of Germany was Berlin located?
- 2. Place** Which countries separated the Soviet Union from Western Europe?

communism and capitalism could not exist in the same world. He said that war between the United States and the Soviet Union was certain.

**The Iron Curtain Divides East and West** Europe now lay divided between East and West. Germany's postwar fate, which had been decided at Yalta, left the country split into two sections. The Soviets controlled the eastern part, including half of Germany's capital, Berlin. Under a Communist government, East Germany was named the German Democratic Republic. The western zones became the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Winston Churchill described the division of Europe:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

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 the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.

WINSTON CHURCHILL, "Iron Curtain" speech, March 5, 1946

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

##### B. Recognizing

**Effects** How did Winston Churchill influence political events after World War II?

Churchill's phrase "**iron curtain**" came to represent Europe's division between a mostly democratic Western Europe and a Communist Eastern Europe. From behind the iron curtain, Stalin termed Churchill's words a "call to war."

## United States Counters Soviet Expansion

Soviet-American relations continued to worsen in 1946 and 1947. An increasingly worried United States sought to offset the growing Soviet threat in Eastern Europe. President Truman declared that it was time to stop "babying the Soviets." He adopted a foreign policy called **containment**. Containment was a policy directed at blocking Soviet influence and preventing the expansion of communism. Containment policies included creating alliances and helping weak countries resist Soviet advances.





**The Truman Doctrine** In a speech asking Congress for foreign aid for Turkey and Greece, President Truman contrasted democracy with communism:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions . . . free elections . . . 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 . . . fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

HARRY S. TRUMAN, speech to Congress, March 12, 1947

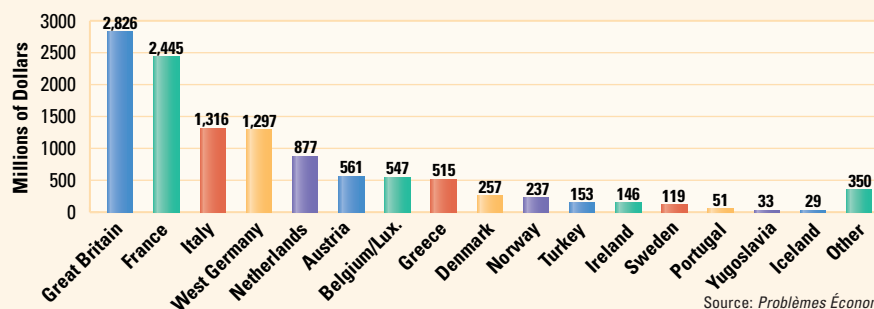
Truman's support for countries that rejected communism was called the **Truman Doctrine**. It caused great controversy. Some opponents objected to American interference in other nations' affairs. Others argued that the United States lacked the resources to carry on a global crusade against communism. Still others pointed out that some U.S. support would go to dictators. Congress, however, immediately authorized over \$400 million in aid to Turkey and Greece.

**The Marshall Plan** Much of Western Europe lay in ruins after the war. Europe's problems included record-breaking cold and snow, postwar unemployment, lack of food, and economic turmoil. In June 1947, U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall proposed that America give aid to any European country that needed it. This assistance program, called the **Marshall Plan**, would provide food, machines, and other materials. As Congress debated the \$12.5 billion program in February 1948, the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia. Congress immediately approved the Marshall Plan. The plan achieved spectacular success in Western Europe and in Yugoslavia.

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**C. Making Inferences** What was President Truman's major reason for offering aid to other countries?

### The Marshall Plan



Source: *Problèmes Économiques* No. 306

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

- Which country received the most aid from the United States?
- Why do you think Great Britain and France received so much aid?

**The Berlin Airlift** While Europe began rebuilding, the United States and its allies clashed with the Soviet Union over Germany. The Soviets meant to keep their former enemy weak and divided. In 1948, France, Britain, and the United States decided to withdraw their forces from Germany. They would allow their three occupation zones to form one nation. The Soviet Union responded by holding West Berlin hostage.

Although Berlin lay well within the Soviet occupation zone of Germany, it too had been divided into four zones. The Soviet Union cut off highway, water, and rail traffic into Berlin's western zones. Since no supplies could get in, the city faced starvation. Stalin gambled that the threat would frighten Western countries. He hoped it would force them to surrender West Berlin or give up their idea of reunifying Germany.

The Soviet leader lost his gamble. To break the blockade, American and British officials flew food and supplies into West Berlin. For nearly 11 months, planes took



### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### D. Analyzing Issues

What Soviet actions were the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin airlift responses to?

off and landed every three minutes. In 277,000 flights, pilots brought in 2.3 million tons of supplies—food, fuel, medicine, and even Christmas presents. The Soviet Union, admitting defeat, lifted the Berlin blockade in May 1949.

## The Cold War and a Divided World

These increasing conflicts were the beginnings of the **Cold War**. This was a state of diplomatic hostility that developed between the two superpowers. Beginning in 1949, the superpowers used spying, propaganda, diplomacy, and secret operations in their dealings with each other. Much of the world allied with one side or the other. In fact, until the Soviet Union finally broke up in 1991, the Cold War dictated not only U.S. and Soviet foreign policy. It influenced world alliances as well.

**Rival Alliances** The Berlin blockade heightened Western Europe's fears of Soviet aggression. As a result, in 1949, ten Western European nations joined with the United States and Canada to form a defensive military alliance. This alliance was called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**). These nations promised to meet an attack on any NATO member with armed force. For the United States, NATO membership marked the country's first peacetime military commitment.

The Soviet Union viewed NATO as a threat. In response, the Soviets developed an alliance system in 1955 as part of their own containment policy. It was known as the **Warsaw Pact**. This alliance included the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania.

Not every country joined the new alliances, however. India, for example, chose to remain unallied with either side. And China, the world's largest communist country, came to distrust the Soviet Union. Like India, it remained unallied.

**Nuclear Threat** As these alliances were forming, the Cold War threatened to heat up enough to destroy the world. The United States already had atomic bombs. As early as 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its own atomic weapon. The superpowers had both become nuclear powers.

President Truman was determined to develop an even more deadly weapon before the Soviets did. He authorized work on a thermonuclear weapon in January 1950. This hydrogen or H-bomb would be thousands of times more powerful than the A -bomb.

Children in West Berlin in 1948 welcome planes that landed every few minutes with supplies to break the Soviet blockade of the city.

### Background

The East Germans built a wall in 1961 to separate East and West Berlin. This Berlin Wall symbolized the division of the world into rival camps.



Its power came from the fusion, or joining together, of atoms, rather than from the splitting of atoms, as in the A-bomb. In November 1952, the United States successfully tested the first H-bomb. By August of the following year, the Soviets had exploded their own thermonuclear weapon.

Dwight D. Eisenhower became the U.S. president in 1953. He appointed the firmly anti-Communist John Foster Dulles as his secretary of state. If the Soviet Union or its supporters attacked U.S. interests, Dulles threatened, the United States would “retaliate instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing.” This willingness to go to the brink, or edge, of war became known as **brinkmanship**.

Brinkmanship required a reliable source of nuclear weapons and airplanes to deliver them. So the United States strengthened its air force and began producing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. In response, the Soviet Union made its own collection of nuclear bombs. This arms race would go on for four decades.

**The Cold War in the Skies** The Cold War also affected the science and education programs of the two countries. In August 1957, the Soviets announced the development of a rocket that could travel great distances. This was a true intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM. On October 4, the Soviets used an ICBM to push the first unmanned satellite above the earth’s atmosphere.

The launching of this Soviet satellite, *Sputnik I*, made Americans feel as if they had fallen behind in science and technology. In response, the U.S. government poured huge amounts of money into education, especially in science, mathematics, and foreign languages. Within months, by January 1958, the United States had successfully launched its own satellite.

In 1960, the skies provided the arena for an even more serious showdown between the superpowers. Five years earlier, President Eisenhower proposed an “open skies” policy. This policy stated that the United States and the Soviet Union could fly freely over each other’s territory to guard against surprise nuclear attacks. The Soviet Union rejected Eisenhower’s proposal. In response, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) authorized secret high-altitude spy flights over Soviet territory in planes called U-2s. In May 1960, the Soviets shot down a U-2 plane, and its pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was captured. The Soviets sentenced him to ten years in prison but released him after 19 months. This **U-2 incident** brought mistrust and tensions between the superpowers to a new height.

While Soviet Communists were squaring off against the United States, Communists in China were fighting an internal battle for control of that country.

**The Cold War took to the skies as the United States and the Soviet Union raced to produce ICBMs. Missiles like this one were capable of inflicting destruction from great distances.**



#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**E. Recognizing Effects** How did the U.S. policy of brinkmanship contribute to the arms race?

## Section 1 Assessment

### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- United Nations
- iron curtain
- containment
- Truman Doctrine
- Marshall Plan
- Cold War
- NATO
- Warsaw Pact
- brinkmanship
- U-2 incident

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Using a web diagram like the one below, list the causes of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.



Which cause was a direct result of World War II? Explain.

### 3. ANALYZING MOTIVES

What were Stalin’s objectives in supporting Communist governments in Eastern Europe?

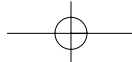
#### THINK ABOUT

- the effects of World War II
- the location of the Soviet Union
- U.S. aims in Europe

### 4. THEME ACTIVITY

**Economics** Draw a cartoon that shows either capitalism from the Soviet point of view or communism from the U.S. point of view.





# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



The Soviet Union launched *Sputnik*, the first successful artificial space satellite, on October 4, 1957. As it circled the earth every 96 minutes, Premier Nikita Khrushchev boasted that his country would soon be “turning out long-range missiles like sausages.” Unable to let this challenge go unanswered, the United States began beefing up its own space program. Its first attempts failed, however, and became known as “Stayputnik” or “Flopnik.”

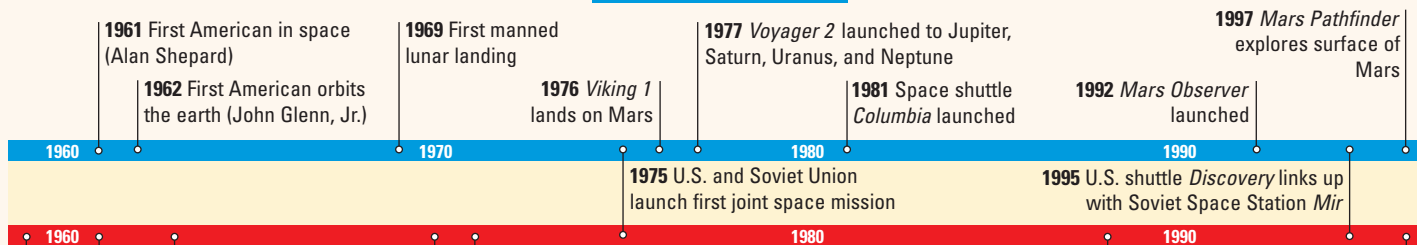
## The Space Race

Beginning in the late 1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union competed for influence not only among the nations of the world, but in the skies as well. Once the superpowers had ICBMs to deliver nuclear warheads and aircraft for spying missions, they both began to develop technology that could be used to explore—and ultimately control—space.

In a major technological triumph, the United States put human beings on the moon on July 20, 1969. In this historic “giant leap for mankind,” astronaut Buzz Aldrin plants the U.S. flag and leaves his footprints on the lunar surface.



### United States



### Soviet Union



This view of the Soviet spacecraft *Soyuz* taken from the window of the U.S. *Apollo* in 1975 shows the curve of the earth beneath them. It symbolizes the superpowers’ realization that they would have to coexist in space as well as on earth.



### Connect to History

**Comparing** Which destinations in space did both the United States and the Soviet Union explore?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R7

### Connect to Today

**Making Inferences** What role might space continue to play in achieving world peace?