

The Cold War

Part One



Part One

Part Two

Part Three

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.



Timeline



The “Big Three”

Throughout the course of World War II, the “**Big Three**” – **Franklin Roosevelt**, **Winston Churchill** and **Joseph Stalin** – met regularly. This was to determine both military strategy and to implement a political vision of the postwar world.

The combination of mutual mistrust and the conflicting ideas of what the postwar world would be like made cooperation between the Allies difficult.



The need to defeat Nazi Germany and Japan required cooperation, but after their defeat the relationship between the allied countries became a game of power politics.





As the “Big Three” met to plan for peace, two conflicting visions of the postwar world emerged.

Roosevelt supported an **internationalist** vision, which called for an international organization that would universally adopt the basic principles of democracy.



Churchill and Stalin favored maintaining spheres of influence. Stalin insisted on a buffer zone in Eastern Europe to protect the Soviet Union, while Churchill believed that by defining areas of influence, the West could keep Stalin in check.

How does Roosevelt’s vision compare with Wilson’s after World War I?





The Yalta conference

The “Big Three” met in Yalta in February 1945 and, after some compromising, reached the following agreements:



Was the conference a success? Why? Who for?



American foreign policy



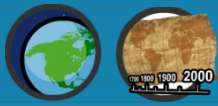


After World War II, the Soviet Union had annexed several countries. It added to this further with the creation of Soviet **satellite states** in Eastern Europe, forming the **Eastern Bloc**.



“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an **iron curtain** has descended across the continent.”

What did Churchill mean by an Iron Curtain?



Germany divided



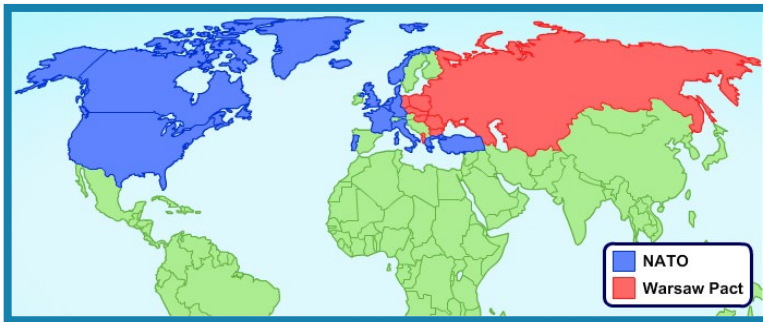


The Berlin Blockade





The crisis in Berlin accelerated the U.S. commitment to the policy of containment. It joined an alliance of the Western European nations in April 1949. This was the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**.



In response to this action, the Soviet Union and its satellite states created the mutual defense treaty of the **Warsaw Pact** in 1955.

This was clearly directed against the Soviet threat to Federal Republic of (West) Germany. Therefore West Germany became a member in 1955.





The Warsaw Pact



The **arms race** was a competition between the Soviet Union and the U.S. to build more and increasingly powerful weapons.

In September 1949, the Soviet Union announced that it had successfully tested its own nuclear device, years ahead of when American intelligence believed it to be possible.

The U.S. responded with a National Security Council Report, **NSC-68**, in April 1950. It stated that the U.S. must take the world initiative in resisting the spread of communism. It set the stage for future U.S. interventions and the buildup of its nuclear arsenal.



Nuclear weapon stockpiles



Two superpowers





The Asian theater

As the U.S. struggled with containing the spread of Soviet communism in Europe, they were faced with problematic developments in several Asian countries.

In the last months of the World War II, troops from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union occupied parts of Korea. As tension between them grew, they both refused to leave and Korea was divided, supposedly temporarily, along the **38th parallel**.



Meanwhile, postwar China descended into a brutal civil war between the nationalist government of **Chiang Kai-shek** and the Chinese communist forces headed by **Mao Zedong**.





China becomes communist



Chiang's nationalist government was corrupt, incompetent and lacked widespread popular support. He was an American ally but, despite heavy pressure to do so, Truman refused to do more than send money and weapons as aid.



Mao and the communists won over most of the peasants and ultimately won the war in 1949. They established the People's Republic of China.



Chiang fled the mainland to Taiwan and established a government in exile, protected by America. Containment had failed, which shocked and panicked the American public.





Was the Korean War a victory for the U.S.?



In the U.S., a variety of factors combined to create an intense fear that communism had infiltrated American society and was on the verge of taking control. These factors included:

- the Soviets having nuclear weapons
- China becoming communist
- the Korean War
- the **Alger Hiss** case
- the Rosenberg spy trial.

A virtual hysteria gripped the country, resulting in widespread fear and extreme constitutional abuses.





HUAC and anti-communist hysteria



Under Eisenhower, the U.S. adopted the tactic of **brinksmanship**. This meant deliberately provoking the Soviet Union and pushing it to the brink of war in order to obtain concessions.



Massive retaliation provided the basis for the **mutually assured destruction (MAD)** principle. If one nation attacked the other, then both would be destroyed. Both nations recognized this, so it helped to maintain the peace.

Why do you think brinksmanship worked?

The U-2 spy plane incident



Do you think the two leaders really wanted peace?



