

What led to the Policy of Containment?

Two World Powers compete for spheres of influence (Cold War's New World Order):

United States power - Democracy

- Manufacturing -
1/2 of world's manufacturing capacity
- Atomic bomb (only nation)
- Goal: National Security dependent on
Economic Security of Europe / Asia

Soviet Union power - Communism

- Occupation of most of Eastern Europe and East Germany
- Communism proven to work; Soviets defeated Hitler in Battle of Berlin
- Communism becomes a viable option for nations struggling for independence

Policy of Containment: Steps to the Cold War . . .

▪ Soviet Action -

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin refused free elections in Eastern Europe and set up satellite nations.

1. Middle East - Soviet Union occupied northern Iran for oil --> withdrew due to US and British pressure
2. Procommunist governments installed in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania
(Soviets: no different than American actions in Latin America)

• U.S. Action -

Truman's Policy of Containment intended to block further expansion of communism

1. Kennan's Long Telegram - (1946) (document analysis)
George Kennan (US diplomat in Moscow) advised Truman to not trust the Soviets.
Communist ideology drove them to expand their power globally.
Encouraged a policy of "containment" to limit Soviet's aggressive expansion and influence.
2. Iron Curtain speech - (1946) (Video / document analysis)
Winston Churchill (former prime minister) spoke at Fulton, Missouri.
"Iron curtain" descended across Europe, partitioning the free West from communist East.
3. Truman Doctrine - (March 1947) (HAPPY analysis)
US foreign policy established - worldwide struggle over the future of freedom.
 - FDR died April 1945 - Truman defines a foreign policy based on black and white terms
 - 1947 Britain unable to provide military & financial aid to Greece and Turkey due to WWII
 - Greece, a monarchy, threatened by communist led rebellion
 - Turkey pressured to share control of straits linking Black Sea and Mediterranean with Soviets
 - Greece and Turkey had internal problems unrelated to Soviets BUT
 - Greece and Turkey = gateway to southeastern Europe & oil rich Middle East
 - Truman advised by Senate leader to "scare hell" out of American public to win support for assuming aid to Greece and Turkey governments
 - 18 minute speech said freedom or free 24 X
 - US responsible for supporting "freedom-loving people" as the leader of the "Free World"
 - Policy of Containment funded (\$400 million for Greece & Turkey) & establishes continued US foreign policy (global responsibility)
 - National Security bodies established: Atomic Energy Commission, National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency (1947, collect intelligence and conduct secret military operations abroad)

The Strategy of Containment

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #1: Understanding Containment

Directions: Read the following documents. As you read, answer the questions below.

The following definitions may be helpful as you read:

Capitalism: a social and economic system, such as that which exists in the United States and in most of the rest of the western world today, in which the means of production (land and factories, primarily) are owned by private individuals or corporations that are motivated by profit and in competition with one another.

Socialism: a social and economic system in which the means of production (land and factories, primarily) are owned by the people as a whole, usually administered by the government. While some socialists (such as Karl Marx—see below) believed that socialism could only come through violent revolution, others argued (and still do) that it can be accomplished through peaceful, democratic means.

Communism: a particular form of socialism championed by Karl Marx (1818-1883), who argued that all of human history was the product of struggle between social classes. According to Marx, under capitalism the working class was oppressed by the bourgeoisie (his word for those who owned the means of production). Ultimately, he predicted that the workers would rise up and overthrow the capitalist system, ending the class struggle once and for all and creating a socialist system. Communism was the dominant social and economic system of the Soviet Union.

Question	Answer
Why, according to Clifford, was there little chance of reaching any sort of understanding with the Soviets anytime soon?	
How, according to Clifford, could the United States expect the Soviet Union to behave in international affairs?	

How, in Clifford's view, should the United States respond to this anticipated Soviet behavior?	
According to Clifford, what advantage did the Soviet system of government have over that of American democracy? What did this imply for U.S. foreign policy?	
What did Kennan mean by "containment"? Why did he think it would work?	
Why did Kennan believe that "threats or blustering" would be ineffective in stopping Soviet aggression?	
What did Kennan predict might happen in the Soviet Union if containment were practiced consistently?	

Memorandum from Clark Clifford to President Truman, "American Relations with the Soviet Union," September 24, 1946:

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-09-24&documentid=4-1&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1

[A successful lawyer in St. Louis, **Clark Clifford** (1906-1998) was an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II. In this capacity he frequently advised President Truman, who came to rely on him to the extent that he asked Clifford to accompany him to the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. One of his first assignments in this job was to prepare a report analyzing the postwar behavior of the Soviet Union, and making recommendations as to how the United States should respond. The resulting document—an 81-page report entitled "American Relations with the Soviet Union"—would strongly influence U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War.]

The primary objective of United States policy toward the Soviet Union is to convince Soviet leaders that it is in their interest to participate in a system of world cooperation, that there are no fundamental causes for war between our two nations, and that the security and prosperity of the Soviet Union, and that of the rest of the world as well, is being jeopardized by aggressive militaristic imperialism such as that in which the Soviet Union is now engaged.

However, these same leaders with whom we hope to achieve an understanding on the principles of international peace appear to believe that a war with the United States and the other leading capitalistic nations is inevitable. They are increasing their military power and the sphere of Soviet influence in preparation for the 'inevitable' conflict, and they are trying to weaken and subvert their potential opponents by every means at their disposal. So long as these men adhere to these beliefs, it is highly dangerous to conclude that hope of international peace lies only in 'accord,' 'mutual understanding,' or 'solidarity' with the Soviet Union.

Adoption of such a policy would impel the United States to make sacrifices for the sake of Soviet-U.S. relations, which would only have the effect of raising Soviet hopes and increasing Soviet demands, and to ignore alternative lines of policy, which might be much more compatible with our own national and international interests.

The Soviet Government will never be easy to 'get along with.' The American people must accustom themselves to this thought, not as a cause for despair, but as a fact to be faced objectively and courageously. If we find it impossible to enlist Soviet cooperation in the solution of world problems, we should be prepared to join with the British and other Western countries in an attempt to build up a world of our own which will pursue its own objectives and will recognize the Soviet orbit as a distinct entity with which conflict is not predestined but with which we cannot pursue common aims.

As long as the Soviet Government maintains its present foreign policy, based upon the theory of an ultimate struggle between Communism and Capitalism, the United States must assume that the U.S.S.R. might fight at any time for the twofold purpose of expanding the territory under communist control and weakening its potential capitalist opponents. The Soviet Union was able to flow into the political vacuum of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Near East, Manchuria and Korea because no other nation was both willing and able to prevent it. Soviet leaders were encouraged by easy success and they are now preparing to take over new areas in the same way. The Soviet Union, as Stalin euphemistically phrased it, is preparing 'for any eventuality.'

Unless the United States is willing to sacrifice its future security for the sake of 'accord' with the U.S.S.R. now, this government must, as a first step toward world stabilization, seek to prevent additional Soviet aggression. The greater the area controlled by the Soviet Union, the greater the military requirements of this country will be. Our present military plans are based on the assumption that, for the next few years at least, Western Europe, the Middle East, China and Japan will remain outside the Soviet sphere. If the Soviet Union acquires control of one or more of these areas, the military forces required to hold in check those of the U.S.S.R. and prevent still further acquisitions will be substantially enlarged. That will also be true if any of the naval and air bases in the Atlantic and Pacific, upon which our present plans rest, are given up. This government should be prepared, while scrupulously avoiding any act which would be an excuse for the Soviets to begin a war, to resist vigorously and successfully any efforts of the U.S.S.R. to expand into areas vital to American security.

The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics [that is, the belief that only considerations of power—and not of morality—matter in foreign affairs] understand. The United States must use that language in order that Soviet leaders will realize that our government is determined to uphold the interests of its citizens and the rights of small nations. Compromise and concessions are considered, by the Soviets, to be evidences of weakness and they are encouraged by our 'retreats' to make new and greater demands.

The main deterrent to Soviet attack on the United States, or to attack on areas of the world which are vital to our security, will be the military power of this country. It must be made apparent to the Soviet Government that our strength will be sufficient to repel any attack and sufficient to defeat the U.S.S.R. decisively if a war should start. The prospect of defeat is the only sure means of deterring the Soviet Union....

In addition to maintaining our own strength, the United States should support and assist all democratic countries which are in any way menaced or endangered by the U.S.S.R. Providing military support in case of attack is a last resort; a more effective barrier to communism is strong economic support. Trade agreements, loans and technical missions strengthen our ties with friendly nations and are effective demonstrations that capitalism is at least the equal of communism....

There are some trouble-spots which will require diligent and considered effort on the part of the United States if Soviet penetration and eventual domination is to be prevented. In the Far East, for example, this country should continue to strive for a unified and economically stable China, a reconstructed and democratic Japan, and a unified and independent Korea....

Our best chances of influencing Soviet leaders consist in making it unmistakably clear that action contrary to our conception of a decent world order will rebound to the disadvantage of the Soviet regime whereas friendly and cooperative action will pay dividends. If this position can be maintained firmly enough and long enough, the logic of it must permeate eventually into the Soviet system....

Because the Soviet Union is a highly-centralized state, whose leaders exercise rigid discipline and control of all governmental functions, its government acts with speed, consistency, and boldness. Democratic governments are usually loosely organized, with a high degree of autonomy in government departments and agencies. Government policies at times are confused, misunderstood or disregarded by subordinate officials. The United States cannot afford to be uncertain of its policies toward the Soviet Union. There must be such effective coordination within the government that our military and civil policies concerning the U.S.S.R., her satellites, and our Allies are consistent and forceful. Any uncertainty or discrepancy will be seized immediately by the Soviets and exploited at our cost....

In conclusion, as long as the Soviet Government adheres to its present policy, the United States should maintain military forces powerful enough to restrain the Soviet Union and to confine Soviet influence to its present area. All nations not now within the Soviet sphere should be given generous economic assistance and political support in their opposition to Soviet penetration.... In order to carry out an effective policy toward the Soviet Union, the United States Government should coordinate its own activities, inform and instruct the American people about the Soviet Union, and enlist their support based upon knowledge and confidence. These actions by the United States are necessary before we shall ever be able to achieve understanding and accord with the Soviet Union on any terms other than its own.

Even though Soviet leaders profess to believe that the conflict between Capitalism and Communism is irreconcilable and must eventually be resolved by the triumph of the latter, it is our hope that they will change their minds and work out with us a fair and equitable settlement when they realize that we are too strong to be beaten and too determined to be frightened.

Excerpts from X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947:
<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html>

[A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **George F. Kennan** (1904-2005) graduated from Princeton University in 1925 and soon thereafter went to work for the U.S. State Department as an expert on Russia. He spent much of the 1930s attached to the U.S. embassy in Moscow, where he witnessed firsthand the internal workings of the Soviet Union, including the show trials in which Stalin condemned thousands of suspected political opponents to death. This experience convinced Kennan that there was little hope for lasting cooperation between the Soviet Union and the West. In May 1944 he was appointed deputy chief of the U.S. mission in Moscow, where in 1946 he drafted a telegram [see previous lesson] that laid out his views on why the Soviets were behaving as they were. This telegram proved to be highly influential among many of Truman's foreign policy advisers, who encouraged him to publish an article clarifying some of his ideas. What follows is a much shortened version of that article, which appeared in the July 1947 issue of the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs*. Because the author was a prominent official in the State Department, he used a false name ("X") rather than his own.]

....[I]t is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with...threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward "toughness." While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable [unresponsive] to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness....

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and, weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.

It would be an exaggeration to say that American behavior unassisted and alone could exercise a power of life and death over the Communist movement and bring about the early fall of Soviet power in Russia. But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.