

## **Power Notes: The Cold War**

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the development of hostilities between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies after World War II.***

- 1) Many of conflicts between the Soviet Union and the West began at the summit meetings in Tehran (Nov. 1943), Yalta (Feb.1945) and Potsdam (July-Aug. 1945).
- 2) The United Nations, by using collective security, would ensure the peace. The "Big 5" (USA, Britain, France, USSR, & China) had veto power.
- 3) At Yalta the Allies split over how to deal with post-war Germany. Germany was partitioned into zones of occupation (Germany was reunified in 1990). Poland and the future of Eastern Europe were the issues that split the Allies. During the war the Soviets were excluded from the Italian surrender, Stalin used this action as a precedent for Eastern Europe. After the war the Soviet Union was determined to gain hegemony over Eastern Europe--the U.S. protested.

**Importance:** The Cold War defined America's foreign policy for fifty years. It also greatly affected domestic politics, and how Americans viewed the world and themselves.

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.***

- 1) Between 1940 and 1949 a civil war raged in Greece between Greek Communists and the right-wing government. The West interpreted the war as the first step toward world conquest by the Communists.
- 2) In March 1947 President Truman asked Congress for aid to "support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation." In May 1947 Congress appropriated \$400 million in aid for Greece and Turkey; thus was born the Truman Doctrine. U.S. policy became known as "Containment"—Communism would be met by U.S. action wherever and whenever it occurred.
- 3) Under the 1948 Marshall Plan the U.S. gave Western Europe \$14 billion in economic assistance to booster it against the inroads of Communism.

**Importance:** With these two plans the United States committed itself to being the "world's policeman" when it came to containing Communism.

### ***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Berlin Blockade and the formation of NATO.***

- 1) By the summer of 1948 the Soviet Union believed that its postwar foreign policy was threatened--when the West indicated that it would reintegrate Germany into the Western community, Stalin blockaded the land and sea routes into Berlin (which was divided between East & West). The U.S. responded with an airlift. The blockade was lifted in May, 1949.
- 2) In April, 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created as an anti-Soviet alliance. Members: USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Britain, France and the Benelux countries. Greece & Turkey entered soon thereafter. West Germany joined in 1955 and Spain became a member in 1983. The Soviet Union responded by creating the Warsaw Pact with its Eastern European bloc nations (existed until February, 1991).

**Importance:** With the Berlin Blockade and the formation of NATO Europe was formally divided into Communist and noncommunist blocs until the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the unification of Germany in 1990.

***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Communist success in China.***

- 1) The Communists, under Mao Zedong, used the war against Japan to form a broad anti-Japanese coalition and get support from the masses.
- 2) The Nationalist government, under Chiang Kai-shek, was weakened by the war. In April, 1946 civil war broke out.
- 3) The U.S. supported the Nationalist government but Chiang's government was corrupt, it lacked the support of the peasants, and it was not united. The Communists won in December 1949. The Nationalists fled to the island of Taiwan (Formosa). Taiwan represented China in the UN, with a seat on the Security Council, until 1972.
- 4) After their victory, the Communists redistributed the land, dealt harshly with their foes, and centralized their power.

**Importance:** The "fall" of China to the Communists helped create the Second Red Scare in the United States, and led directly to American involvement in the Korean War, and indirectly, to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

***LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Korean War, 1950-53.***

- 1) After World War II Korea was divided at the 38th parallel.
- 2) In June, 1950 the North Korean Communists invaded the South in an attempt to unify the country. Thinking that the invasion was directed by the Soviet Union, President Truman sent U.S. forces into battle under the command of General Douglas MacArthur.
- 3) In theory the forces fighting against the Communists in Korea were under the UN. In reality, the U.S. controlled them.
- 4) The U.S. responded to the North Korean attack because: a) it wanted to keep its influence in Asia; b) the Democrats had to prove they were "tough on Communists"; c) the Truman administration used the war as a justification for a military rearmament program; and, d) involvement was intended to show the Soviets that the U.S. would stand by its Containment policy.
- 5) In the autumn of 1950, UN forces crossed the 38th parallel in an attempt to "liberate" North Korea. China came into the war and pushed the UN forces south of the 38th parallel. President Truman removed MacArthur when he disagreed with him over stopping at the 38th parallel in 1951.
- 6) The war ended in July 1953. The armistice restored the status quo ante-bellum. Over 54,000 Americans died in Korea.

**Importance:** The Korean War was the first time that the Cold War turned "hot." The American "victory" (Communism was contained) encouraged future American leaders to get involved in Vietnam.