

1.2 The development of the Cold War

SOURCE 1



An American cartoon from 1948 showing Truman and Stalin playing chess.

FOCUS

The USA and USSR never actually declared an official Cold War. Each side took actions or reacted to the actions of the other side, which increased tensions between them. In this chapter, you are going to look at these actions and reactions and assess how they affected superpower relations in the period 1947–49.

Source 1 is commenting on one important development that took place in June 1948, the Berlin Blockade and airlift. You will find out more about this on pages 20–21. But although this cartoon is about the airlift, it is actually a good way of picturing the developments in the Cold War from 1947 to 1949. When one side made a move, the other side reacted. In other words, each event or action had important consequences.

FOCUS TASK

What were the consequences of the developments of 1947–49?

Draw up your own blank version of this table. As you work through this chapter, list the consequences of each 'move' made by Truman or Stalin.

- Consequences for USA, e.g. Did USA change its policies? Did it harden attitudes in the USA towards USSR?
- Consequences for USSR and satellite states, e.g. Did USSR change policies or bring in new policies? Did it increase Soviet control?
- Consequences for relations between USA and USSR, e.g. Did relations get better or worse? Or both?

We have started the Truman Doctrine for you, but you can add other points we may have missed.

Key events	Consequences for relations between USA and its allies	Consequences for relations between USSR and satellite states	Consequences for relations between USA and USSR
Truman Doctrine March 1947	This was a big change for USA. USA was now committed to international involvement – containment of communism.	Stalin was alarmed by aggressive US policy and this led to tighter Soviet control of satellite states.	Made relations with USSR worse. Each side felt threatened by the other. Each side accused the other of trying to expand their power and influence over other countries.
Marshall Plan June 1947 onwards			
Cominform October 1947			
Comecon January 1949			
Berlin Crisis 1948–49			
NATO 1949			



Truman's move: The Truman Doctrine

You have already seen how Stalin turned Eastern Europe into a collection of 'satellite states' in the period 1945–48. They all had communist governments who took orders from Stalin (see pages 12–13). US President Truman was determined that the same thing would not happen to countries in Western Europe as well. This policy of holding back the spread of communism became known as 'containment'.

Truman's first attempt at containment came in March 1947. He made a speech that became known as the Truman Doctrine. He announced that the USA was going to send \$400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey. In Greece, a civil war was taking place between supporters of the Greek monarchy and communist forces who wanted to make Greece a communist state.

Truman then went on to promise that the USA would aid any other country that was threatened by a communist takeover. He then went on to praise Western democracy in which governments were elected by their people and claimed that, in contrast, communism relied on terror and force (see Source 2).

SOURCE 2

Communism is a way of life based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

An extract from the Truman Doctrine, March 1947.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 1 What was containment?
- 2 When did Truman announce 'The Truman Doctrine'?
- 3 What was the Truman Doctrine?
- 4 Why was the Truman Doctrine controversial?

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Would you say that the cartoonist is:

- fully behind the new policy
- unsure about the policy
- concerned about the policy
- totally opposed to the new policy?

SOURCE 3



An American cartoon commenting on the Truman Doctrine.

There were some concerns in the USA (see Source 3, for example), but most Americans supported Truman. The headline in *The New York Times* read 'Truman Acts to Save Nations from Red Rule'.

The significance of the Truman Doctrine

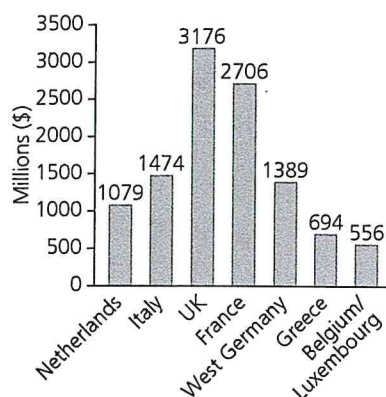
The Truman Doctrine was a key event of the Cold War.

It put down a marker about America's intentions. Truman was making clear that the USA would not withdraw from world affairs as it had done after the First World War. Truman's policy of containment meant that the USA would actively resist the spread of communism. People were aware at the time that this would almost certainly lead to clashes between the USA and USSR.

It alarmed Stalin. Stalin was worried by the speech and soon responded by creating an organisation called Cominform (see page 19).

Truman's move: The Marshall Plan and Marshall Aid

FIGURE 1



The amount of Marshall Aid received by some Western European states.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 1 When did the Marshall Plan begin?
- 2 What was the Plan?
- 3 Which types of countries received Marshall Aid?
- 4 List some effects of Marshall Aid.
- 5 How did Marshall Aid affect relations between the USA and its allies?
- 6 Was Marshall Aid a generous action?
- 7 List some effects of Marshall Aid.
- 8 How did Marshall Aid affect relations with the USSR?

FOCUS TASK

Add your summary of the consequences of the Marshall Plan and Marshall Aid to your Focus Task table on page 16.

Truman decided to use the USA's mighty economic power. He ordered a US general, George Marshall, to come up with a plan for giving economic aid to rebuild Europe. In June 1947, Marshall announced his Marshall Plan to the world. The USA would put \$17 billion into helping Europe's shattered economies recover from the damage of six years of war. This became known as 'Marshall Aid'.

Starting in April 1948, the USA provided a combination of loans and grants to democratic (i.e. non-communist) countries in Europe. These countries then used the money to buy food, raw materials, like timber or steel, machinery, animals, and countless other items, from US companies. Truman wanted people to rebuild industries and businesses in Europe, get back to work and make money. He wanted them to feel good about democracy and not be attracted to communism. He also wanted to help US companies and avoid an economic recession now that the US no longer needed massive levels of production for the war effort.

Generosity or self-interest?

The USA's allies mostly saw the Marshall Plan as an incredibly generous gesture by the Americans. They were extremely grateful. However, we should remember that the Americans were also looking after their own interests.

- They needed Europe to recover so that US industries had a market for their goods.
- The largest amount of aid went to the USA's closest political allies, Britain and France.
- Countries that did not have democratic, capitalist systems like the USA did not get Marshall Aid. For example, Italy did not receive any aid until a non-communist government took power in 1948.

Consequences

Marshall Aid was another key event in the development of the Cold War. It brought speedy recovery in Europe. It helped to bind the USA and its allies closer together against communism.

At the same time, it created mistrust and anger in the USSR. Stalin ordered the satellite states to have nothing to do with Marshall Aid. It tightened his hold on these states even more firmly by forming Comecon to give out its own version of Marshall Aid to its allies (see page 19).

Stalin's move: Cominform and Comecon

There was no doubt in Stalin's mind that Truman was trying to dominate the states of Western Europe. In response, Stalin tightened his grip on his Eastern European satellite states. He created two new organisations, Cominform and Comecon, to make sure the satellite states were free from any kind of control or influence from the USA.

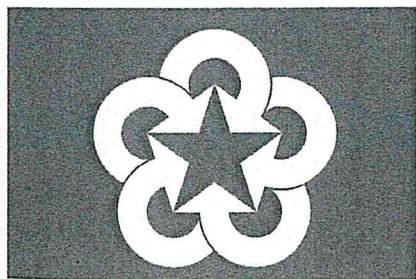


RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 9 What did Stalin think Truman was trying to do?
- 10 What was the main purpose of Cominform?
- 11 What did Stalin gain from Cominform?
- 12 What was the purpose of Comecon?
- 13 What did the USSR gain from Comecon?

Cominform (October 1947)	Comecon (January 1949)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cominform stands for the Communist Information Bureau. • Stalin knew that there was still some opposition to communist rule in some of his satellite states. Stalin set up Cominform to make sure the USA could not gain any political influence in these satellite states. • All the leaders of the communist parties in Eastern Europe had to attend. Stalin used Cominform meetings to tell the satellite states the policies they should follow. • This included cutting off trade or any other kind of contact with countries that did not belong to Cominform. They also had to refuse Marshall Aid. • There was no debate with Stalin's instructions. The only state that argued with Stalin, Yugoslavia, was expelled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comecon stands for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. It was set up as a response to the Marshall Plan. • The idea was that members of Comecon traded mostly with one another rather than trading with the West. The satellite states were promised similar benefits to Marshall Aid. • In reality, Comecon favoured the USSR far more than any of its other members. For example, Poland was forced to sell its coal to the USSR at one-tenth of the price that it could have got by selling it on the open market.

SOURCE 4



The official flag of Comecon.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Can you work out the symbolism of the Comecon flag?

FOCUS TASK

Add your summary of the consequences of the creation of Cominform and Comecon to your Focus Task table on page 16.

SOURCE 5

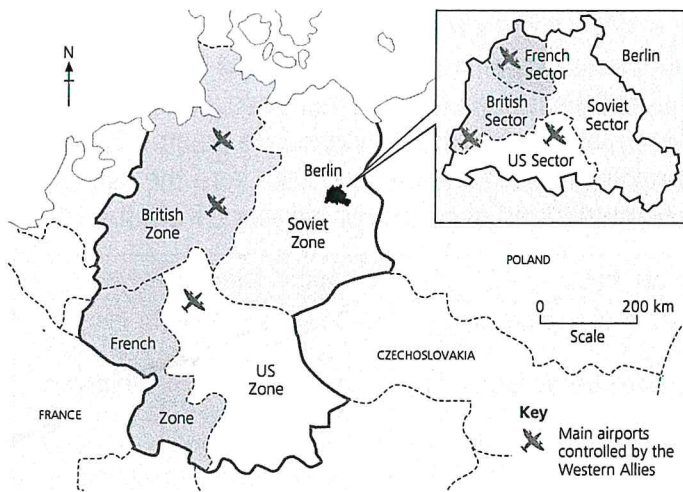


A Soviet picture showing the leaders of the communist parties around the world celebrating Stalin's 70th birthday in 1949.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

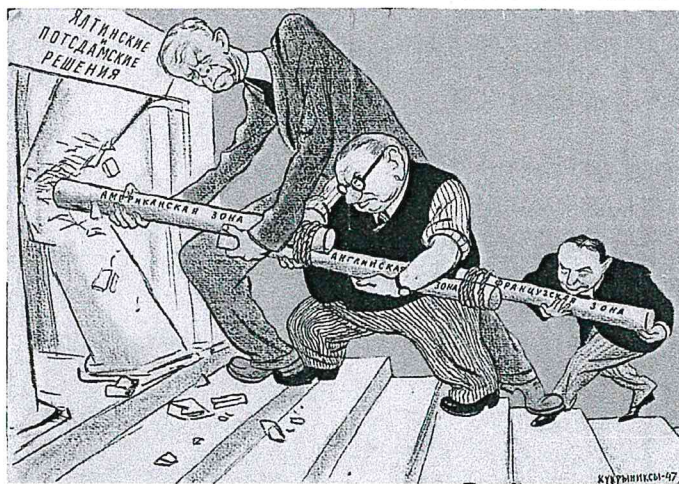
- 1 The picture is trying to show how the communist parties of the world are united and their loyalty and love for Stalin. How does it try to achieve this?
- 2 How could you use this source to help you explain Cominform and Comecon to someone who has never heard of them?
- 3 How would observers in the USA view this picture?

FIGURE 2



The division of Germany after the war.

SOURCE 6



Soviet cartoon from 1947. It shows (from left to right) the USA, Britain and France. The three sticks tied together are labelled 'American zone', 'British zone' and 'French zone'. The building is labelled 'Yalta and Potsdam Agreements'.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 1 How was Germany/Berlin divided?
- 2 What did the USA, Britain and France do?
- 3 Give two reasons for this action.
- 4 Why was Stalin outraged by Trizonia?
- 5 How did he respond?
- 6 What was Stalin hoping would happen?

in the Soviet controlled zone of Germany. It was linked to the western zones by roads, railways and canals.

In June 1948, Soviet troops set up roadblocks, closed railway lines and even blocked the canals connecting Berlin to West Germany. If the USA tried to ram the roadblocks or railway blocks, it could be seen as an act of war. Stalin expected Truman to announce a humiliating withdrawal from Berlin, which would give the Soviets control of Berlin and a propaganda victory.

Truman's move: Germany, Trizonia and Berlin

After the war, Germany was divided into four zones (see Figure 2).

At first the US plan, known as the Morgenthau Plan, was to remove all German industry and make it an agricultural country so it could never again wage a modern war. However, as Truman grew more concerned about the USSR, he decided that a strong Germany might be a useful ally. It was also clear that if German industries were not allowed to recover, then millions of Germans would simply starve. In 1946, Britain, France and the USA combined their zones, calling the new area Trizonia.

Stalin's move: The Berlin Blockade 1948

Stalin was outraged by the creation of Trizonia. He argued (and he had a point) that this had never been agreed at the Yalta or Potsdam Conferences (see Source 6). Stalin felt he had to show western leaders that he would fight back if he felt there was a threat to the Soviet 'sphere of influence'. His response was the Berlin Blockade.

Although Berlin was also divided into four sectors – three of which were controlled by Britain, France and the USA, you can see from Figure 2 that the city itself lay deep

Truman's response: The Berlin airlift 1948–49

The Americans believed that if they gave in and withdrew from Berlin, the western zones of Germany might be next.

Truman ordered that aircraft should fly supplies into Berlin. This was known as the Berlin airlift. As the first planes took off from their bases in West Germany, many people feared that the Soviets might shoot them down. This would be an undeniable act of war. People waited anxiously as the planes flew over Soviet territory. However, no shots were fired. Stalin let the planes pass. It seemed as if Stalin was not ready to fight them.

For the next ten months, West Berlin received all the supplies it needed in this way. Everything from food and clothing to building materials and oil. Stalin eventually lifted the blockade in May 1949.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 7 How did the West respond to the blockade?
- 8 Why did they take this action?
- 9 Is it possible to say whether this was a victory for one side or the other?

SOURCE 7



An official US army photograph showing US aircraft bringing supplies to Berlin in 1948. The photograph was made freely available to newspapers and appeared in many articles.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 10 What was the Cold War mindset?
- 11 Why did Berlin remain such an important place in the Cold War?

The consequences of the Berlin Blockade

The blockade was another hugely important event in the Cold War.

- The blockade confirmed that the Cold War was going to be deep and long lasting.
- Berlin became a symbol. For the West, it was a symbol of democracy and freedom which had been saved from Soviet aggression. For the Soviets, it was a symbol of Western aggression and unreasonable behaviour. Berlin would become a symbol of the Cold War as a whole.
- It also made it clear that Europe was now clearly divided into two camps, Western Europe and the USA versus Eastern Europe and the USSR. A **Cold War mindset** developed in which neither side would ever trust the other or accept that the other side might have a valid point of view on any issue. In this mindset, the USA's allies, particularly in Western Europe, would rally round and support US policy. They would criticise Soviet policy. At the same time, the communist states of Eastern Europe would rally round the USSR and condemn the actions of the USA. The Berlin Crisis set out a template that would be followed in future disputes.
- Berlin also became a crucial part of the Cold War chess match. Because of its position inside the Soviet zone, it was always likely to be a potential flashpoint (see page 36). It was also a good place for each side to try to infiltrate spies into the other side.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 1 What was announced in May 1949?
- 2 How did Stalin respond?

FOCUS TASK

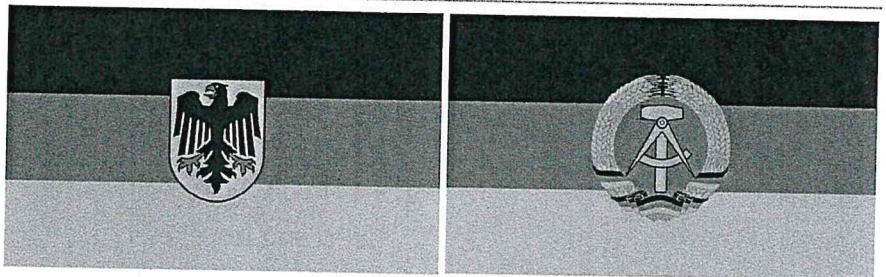
Add your summary of the consequences of the Berlin Crisis to your Focus Task table on page 16.

Move and countermove: Germany divided

In addition to these consequences, the Berlin Blockade had major consequences for Germany.

- In May 1949, soon after the blockade, Truman announced that the British, French and American zones would be united to create the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), usually known as West Germany. Truman was keen that the new Germany would in time become another strong ally of the USA against communism.
- Soon afterwards, Stalin announced that the Soviet zone would become the Democratic Republic of Germany (GDR or DRG or DDR), usually known as East Germany.
- Berlin was also divided into East and West Berlin. It became a symbol that summed up the Cold War.

FIGURE 3



The flag of the Federal Republic of Germany (left) and the Democratic Republic of Germany (right). The GDR flag was originally plain, but had the hammer and compass symbol added in 1959.

Truman's move: NATO

There was one final move in the chess match of 1947–49. During the Berlin blockade, war between the USSR and the USA seemed a real possibility.

At the height of the crisis, the USA, Britain, France, Canada and five other western powers met in Washington DC (the capital city of the USA) and signed an agreement to work together. The new organisation, formed in April 1949, was known as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Source 8 shows the main terms of the NATO charter. It was a military alliance – which anticipated war. It meant that NATO members agreed they would support any other member who was attacked.

Stalin was extremely critical of NATO. He did not believe it was a defensive alliance. He saw it as a US-led alliance designed to threaten the USSR. The Soviet media were critical of NATO and relations between the superpowers became worse than ever.

SOURCE 8

Article 3: To achieve the aims of this Treaty, the Parties will keep up their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article 5: The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.

Extracts from the NATO charter.

SOURCE 9



An official US Government photograph showing Truman signing the NATO charter in 1949.

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

- 3 What was NATO?
- 4 When was it set up?
- 5 Who was in NATO?
- 6 How did Stalin react to NATO?

FOCUS TASK

Add your summary of the consequences of the creation of NATO to your Focus Task table on page 16.

Soviet response: The Warsaw Pact

Although the USSR was critical of NATO, Stalin took no further action until 1955. When NATO allowed West Germany to join its organisation, the USSR and the main communist states in Eastern Europe formed their own military alliance known as the Warsaw Pact (see pages 27–28). Its members promised to defend each other if any one of them were attacked.

REVISION

You don't need to do these tasks now, use them when you are revising for a test, or a mock exam, or the real thing.

Task 1

Go back over this chapter. Cover up the text so that you can only see the Retrieval Practice tasks. See if you can answer them without looking at the text.

Task 2

Ask your teacher to provide you with copies of all the visual sources and figures in this chapter. Turn these slides into a presentation and see if you can tell the story of superpower relations in this period using only these sources.

Task 3

Which event of the period 1949–56 had the most important consequences? Use a table like this to compare them. Here are some guidelines for judging importance/consequences:

- Who/what was affected?
- Did it cause anything else to happen?
- How big was the impact, e.g. did it affect many people or last a long time?
- Did it improve superpower relations or make them worse?

Events	Type of consequence(s): political, economic, ideological, international, domestic, etc.	Actual impact(s) on people, countries, international relations, etc.
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