World history since 1945
(Formerly known as World history since 1917)

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Undergraduate study in
Economics, Management,
Finance and the Social Sciences

This subject guide is for a 100 course offered as part of the University of London International Programmes in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences. This is equivalent to Level 4 within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).

For more information about the University of London International Programmes undergraduate study in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences, see: www.londoninternational.ac.uk
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Studying world history since 1945

The study of history is essentially about the study of human beings in time. It therefore encompasses all aspects of human society, institutions and organisations and the conflicts and disputes within and between them. As such, it is an open-ended study and students and teachers of history will always be able to add to their knowledge and interpretations of human existence in all its aspects. This course aims to explore world history from the perspective and predominance of international history and is firmly linked to international relations. At many UK universities, international history, international relations and international politics are part of the same discipline within a single department that seeks to analyse and explain world events within a global framework.

The focus will be on the period after the enormous destruction, and re-ordering of the political and economic map of the world, brought about by the Second World War and the rise of a Communist challenge to capitalist society and to the democratic political system in the West. This challenge took place when the rise in the economic and military power of the USA made it the dominant global power after 1945. The aim of this subject is to focus on the global impact of these key twentieth-century developments and the impact of the international system becoming a Cold War system, from the late 1940s until 1991, when the Cold War's end was followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Looking at the impact of the Cold War on the different regions of the world provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between internal and regional conflicts (such as the Cuban revolution and the Arab–Israeli wars) on the ideological global competition between the two rival blocs or systems. All the main regions of the world will be examined, where internal conflicts that were always connected to the Cold War occurred.

You should be prepared to develop a basic knowledge of the Cold War history of one or more of the different areas and their contrasting geographies, cultures and societies. This will be necessary for a better understanding of the dynamics of Cold War conflict and its components in different regions of the world.

Aims of the course

The purpose of this course is to develop:

- your ability to think logically and critically
- your knowledge of political and social systems and of the various cultural influences on policy makers in different parts of the Cold War world.

A key element is to approach the study of world history in a manageable way to enable some in-depth knowledge to be developed. At the same time, it will be necessary for you to understand some major global features, in this case the Cold War, which influenced all areas of the world for most of the period. This course is not aiming simply to provide parcels of self-contained knowledge in a small number of key works or textbooks but rather to enable connections to be made between places and events across the world and to encourage understanding and analysis of their implications. This is always a feature of the study of world history, given
the size of the geographical area involved. To alleviate this difficulty, world history courses are usually constructed around a number of themes and topics which limit the extent of the courses’ coverage and make them more manageable for students even if acquiring more in-depth knowledge is an important aspect of historical learning.

### Learning outcomes

Having completed this course, and the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

- analyse the nature and significance of the Cold War international system
- explain how the Cold War originated and how and why it ended
- describe how Cold War international crises were perceived and responded to, particularly by the USA, in various parts of the world
- relate local and regional aspects of particular conflicts to the broader international aspects of the Cold War which influenced them
- analyse what influenced states and their rulers as they sought to expand their power and influence and deal with threats to their interests
- become aware of the elements of the Cold War international system that were connected to the post-Cold War era.

### Using this subject guide

A vast subject like world history requires building up knowledge stage by stage to enable students to make progress in terms of how they approach their study, and to realise the different levels of understanding inherent in a process of learning. In some chapters, the subject guide is designed to provide an introductory framework to enable you to find a way to deal with the general issues surrounding the topic and to go on to explore regions and themes in more detail. On smaller topics it will essentially provide you with information and the main details you need, in a form which may not be so readily obtainable in a single text elsewhere. Most topics will initially require the learning of basic knowledge before building on it with more in-depth reading, so that you can eventually differentiate, but link, in analytical terms, general analysis and specific interpretation.

The World history since 1945 syllabus outlined below covers a number of different topics which vary according to region and in regards to their importance to great power relations and international affairs. Some topics, such as the origins and early development of the Cold War, are much larger in terms of their chronological coverage and the amount of historical writing that they have engendered, than, for example, the Congo crisis or the Cuban revolution. The selected recommended reading is therefore of particular value for each topic. With regard to the bigger topics, you will need to do more reading in order to grasp all aspects of the subject which are introduced in the guide. The history of the world since 1945 cannot be covered in one or two essential books. Knowledge of one or two continents is not essential for an understanding of the world, however significant the power and influence of particular states might be. This subject guide is designed only to provide an introduction and framework for you in order that you can eventually, if you wish, focus your reading more effectively. The principles that are important for historical learning remain the foundations for students to build on by adding to previous study and not just seeing the world as collection of self-contained, separate packages. This is the process to which this subject guide contributes by laying an important basis upon which to build.
Be aware that the bigger topics may not be the most complex or the most difficult to come to terms with, and you should bear in mind that the examination is not guaranteed to contain a question on every chapter. In addition, the smaller topics may well provide more demanding questions which will require you to have developed a more detailed knowledge from your reading. You will not, however, be required to write answers to very broad chronological questions such as 'Examine the changes in US foreign policy between 1945 and 1979'.

Reading is always the key to the study of history and you will not do well if you are not prepared to read widely. The subject guide is, however, intended to make you think about important historical issues and, as with many of the books on the reading list, is designed to encourage you to think critically and to ask yourself questions rather than to provide you with information or ready-made answers. For more details on reading and taking notes, see below.

**Syllabus**

The syllabus focuses on four main themes:
- the breakdown of the Grand Alliance and the origins of the Cold War
- the nature of the Cold War conflict and its covert operations and propaganda
- the impact of the Cold War in different regions of the world
- the end of the Cold War world and the emergence of new forces in the post-Cold War world.

Students should concentrate on the nature, origins or end of the Cold War and at least one region to understand the nature of the Cold War system.

**Origins**
- The breakdown of the Grand Alliance
- The German Question and the Marshall Plan
- Rollback and ‘containment’.

**Nature**
- Covert operations and propaganda
- Nuclear weapons
- Sino-Soviet split
- Détente.

**Regions**
- Europe
- Latin America
- Asia
- Africa
- The Middle East.

**End**
- The end of Communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union
- The post-Cold War world.
Essential reading


Chapters also contain more detailed Essential reading lists as it is categorised by time period and topic. Detailed reading references in this subject guide refer to the editions of the set textbooks listed above. New editions of one or more of these textbooks may have been published by the time you study this course. You can use a more recent edition of any of the books; use the detailed chapter and section headings and the index to identify relevant readings. Also check the virtual learning environment (VLE) regularly for updated guidance on readings.

Further reading

Please note that as long as you read the Essential reading you are then free to read around the subject area in any text, paper or online resource. You will need to support your learning by reading as widely as possible. To help you read extensively, you have free access to the VLE and University of London Online Library (see below).

Other useful texts for this course include:

Leffler, M.P For the soul of mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union and the Cold War. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007) [ISBN 9780374531423].


Again, chapters also contain more detailed Further reading lists.

General advice on reading for this course

A vast numbers of books are required for an in-depth understanding of the world’s history, and we can’t pretend that a single textbook to explain the world is possible or desirable. The aim is to advise you as to which books are most useful in providing some important, but more limited, ideas and knowledge in terms of what is covered. It will be useful for you to try and achieve a general knowledge and some ideas and debates on many of the topics can be found in Young and Kent on the Cold War world. For more detailed reading you need to be selective in terms of the number of books you read, and what you note about them. An important part of your historical education means developing an ability to make judgements about what you should and should not read on the basis of what is important or relevant to your particular task, or in response to assessing what particular questions require. An alternative approach is to try and concentrate on detailed studies, and read until you feel that you have a sound understanding of the major problems on any of the themes or geographical areas, and are able to write a fair answer to any essay question you have been asked. When reading the more detailed books, do not simply read everything from cover-to-cover: some books are worth reading as a whole but generally you should use books selectively, looking only at sections that are relevant to your needs. You need to distil
from them their main arguments, to note down some factual illustrations that enforce these arguments (dates, events, actions of key characters, statistics, etc.) and sometimes to write out key quotes (but keep these to a minimum, since they are difficult to remember in examinations).

It can be difficult to understand the main arguments of a large book at first and the problem is always **what** exactly to note down (see also 'Writing notes' below). To some extent this requires practice, but it is possible to distil the main arguments from a book by reading **either** the introduction, **or** the conclusion, **or** the introductions and conclusions to individual chapters. At these points almost every book contains a summary of its main ideas. The Young and Kent text has summaries/introductions to all of its chronological sections. Once you are aware of the main arguments, then any subsidiary arguments and any illustrations or good quotes should also begin to stand out.

Some students believe in 'skim-reading': they simply read the first sentence of each paragraph. In some books this may not be a bad idea but in general it is a rather crude way of going about things. However, it can be useful to skim-read a book at first in order to get the gist of what it is saying – then go back and read it in greater detail.

Again, practice should enable you to keep notes on books to a minimum (perhaps four to six sides on major works; but others should be shorter or you’ll simply end up with too much). But initially you may find yourself writing down more than the essential arguments and illustrations. You must work at preventing this because otherwise you will not be making the best use of your time.

There is no clearly defined daily or weekly time which you should designate as reading time. In part this is because people read with different degrees of speed and effectiveness. Also you should remember that there are always new things to learn and discover, and the more you read, the better your chances of doing well in the examination, provided you can organise the ideas you have developed from your reading. Reading without thinking about, and organising, the material will not form an adequate basis for your learning experience. Remember that full-time internal students have four history courses each year, with at least two hours per week of lectures or tutorials for each course.

After reading several books you may be able to distinguish several approaches to a question. It is then important to note down these differences: it can be useful in essays to show that you understand different schools of thought on an issue, the various arguments used to back them up and any differing interpretations of evidence.

Once you have taken notes from all the above sources, we would advise you to boil them down into a **single**, coherent, comprehensive set of notes, suitable for quick revision. Some students prefer not to do this, but others can become confused in examinations as they try to fuse together ideas drawn from several sets of notes. A single set of notes will iron out any discrepancies, knock out repetitions and expose any remaining gaps in your knowledge. It will also force you to make final decisions on what you think about a historical problem: what elements are most important, where do you stand in any debate and why do you take this viewpoint? Again, a single, well-structured set of notes will allow you to adapt quickly in examinations to whatever question appears.
Online study resources

In addition to the subject guide and the Essential reading, it is crucial that you take advantage of the study resources that are available online for this course, including the VLE and the Online Library.

You can access the VLE, the Online Library and your University of London email account via the Student Portal at: http://my.londoninternational.ac.uk

You should have received your login details for the Student Portal with your official offer, which was emailed to the address that you gave on your application form. You have probably already logged in to the Student Portal in order to register! As soon as you registered, you will automatically have been granted access to the VLE, Online Library and your fully functional University of London email account.

If you forget your login details at any point, please email uolia.support@london.ac.uk quoting your student number.

The VLE

The VLE, which complements this subject guide, has been designed to enhance your learning experience, providing additional support and a sense of community. It forms an important part of your study experience with the University of London and you should access it regularly.

The VLE provides a range of resources for EMFSS courses:

• Self-testing activities: Doing these allows you to test your own understanding of subject material.

• Electronic study materials: The printed materials that you receive from the University of London are available to download, including updated reading lists and references.

• Past examination papers and Examiners’ commentaries: These provide advice on how each examination question might best be answered.

• A student discussion forum: This is an open space for you to discuss interests and experiences, seek support from your peers, work collaboratively to solve problems and discuss subject material.

• Videos: There are recorded academic introductions to the subject, interviews and debates and, for some courses, audio-visual tutorials and conclusions.

• Recorded lectures: For some courses, where appropriate, the sessions from previous years’ Study Weekends have been recorded and made available.

• Study skills: Expert advice on preparing for examinations and developing your digital literacy skills.

• Feedback forms.

Some of these resources are available for certain courses only, but we are expanding our provision all the time and you should check the VLE regularly for updates.

Making use of the Online Library

The Online Library contains a huge array of journal articles and other resources to help you read widely and extensively.

To access the majority of resources via the Online Library you will either need to use your University of London Student Portal login details, or you
will be required to register and use an Athens login: http://tinyurl.com/ollathens

The easiest way to locate relevant content and journal articles in the Online Library is to use the Summon search engine.

If you are having trouble finding an article listed in a reading list, try removing any punctuation from the title, such as single quotation marks, question marks and colons.

For further advice, please see the online help pages: www.external.shl.lon.ac.uk/summon/about.php

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**Essay writing**

History does not lend itself to ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers to questions, and there is no single ‘correct’ approach to any important historical problem. It is possible to write essays on the same question using different material and reaching different conclusions which both gain the same good mark. Students should be aware that it is not acquiring information that is central to the higher education learning experience. It is the ability to adapt that information and express it linguistically through arguments that provide relevant answers to questions and to select the appropriate evidence that supports particular arguments. Learning how to think is a more important part of the learning experience than acquiring information that simply describes how a particular author portrays historical events. The following provides advice to those answering historical questions in essay work and examinations, points out some pitfalls and suggests possible approaches to major problems.

**Notes for essay writing**

After choosing the questions which you wish to answer, you will need to amass a body of information and organise it into a coherent set of notes (more on this below). As you read, note down not just information but points to emphasise, investigate or question. Do not simply copy out relevant passages (unless they merit direct quotation). Instead, try to summarise or analyse them in your own words. Make sure you take notes on the analysis of the facts rather than simply acquiring the factual information (for more details on note taking, see below).

It is best to structure your notes in such a way that they can be used to answer a wide range of essay questions on any given topic. This can be achieved by subdividing notes thematically. For example, on the origins of the Cold War, you might have subdivisions covering the origins between 1944 and 1946 and between 1946 and 1948, the ideological differences, the economic aspects, the particular points of dispute, then on the 1948 to 1950 period with the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency and the growing importance of the Cold War and military rearmament. From these notes, you will be able to answer a broad range of questions on the early Cold War.

**Answering the question**

The greatest problem in writing a history essay is deciding exactly what is required from a given question. Frequently students lose most marks by failing to answer the question and only providing information on the topic in general, so this weakness deserves close attention. It means that selecting and interpreting the information most relevant to the question is important and doing the reading that this requires is the first stage.
Having read some of the material and become aware of the issues it addresses and what might be important and gathered a comprehensive set of notes you must be able to select the most relevant material and be able to use it to ask as well as to answer questions.

- In its simplest form, failing to answer the question may simply mean getting the subject wrong: asked to write an essay on the Truman Doctrine you write one on the Eisenhower Doctrine. The only way to avoid this is to read the question thoroughly and think carefully. But such basic errors are very rare.

- Another problem is when only half of a question is answered. ‘Why, and with what consequences, did the USA intervene in Guatemala?’ requires you to answer both parts. Too often this kind of question is simply answered from the viewpoint of ‘Why?’; you also need to say something about the results of US intervention. Far more common is a failure to direct your answer specifically at the question. It is very easy to slip into writing ‘all I know about’ a particular issue. For example, when faced with the question: ‘How far was the USA responsible for the onset of the Cold War?’ you might mistakenly either write a general history of US foreign policy in the years after 1945 or a general account of the early years of the Cold War. Obviously some points about US foreign policy are needed here; details of the early Cold War years are certainly needed. But you must direct yourself at the question, looking at the USA’s role in the early Cold War years in some detail, and then assessing (e.g. by looking at the role of the Soviet Union) the significance of this in leading to conflict.

- Always think about exactly what the question requires in order to answer it effectively and plan your essay accordingly. This crucial operation should not be left until the end of your reading but should go on continuously throughout. As your reading progresses, decide on which books or articles are most relevant. Then plan the stages of your argument in more detail. What specific points need to be made? In what order and with what relative emphasis? Can they be clarified by well-chosen examples or quotations? Planning your essay will help you to avoid the pitfalls mentioned below.

- Answers can be unbalanced if too much time is spent on background and not enough on the essence of the problem; too much can be written on one theme when numerous issues need to be discussed.

- A particular problem with history questions is slipping into a purely chronological narrative. It is very easy to produce a list of facts and dates without argument or analysis. But factual material should be used as a ‘skeleton’ around which an analysis is based. (The opposite problem is a diatribe: all opinion and no evidence). An answer needs analysis.

- You cannot get away with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ even if the question could be answered in this way.

Structure

An essay needs to have a paragraph structure through which the argument that is appropriate to answer the question is developed. Ideally, this should include an introduction to ‘set the scene’ or to indicate how the argument is going to develop; a number of paragraphs, each dedicated to a particular element in an answer; and a conclusion, which draws elements together, looks back to the original question and reaches sensible and coherent conclusions about it.
When questions ask you to produce a 'list' of factors, e.g. ‘Why did the Israelis win the 1967 war against the Arab states?’, the structure is fairly easy: each paragraph can look at a particular factor. But questions which ask you to ‘discuss’ an issue will need more thought. In such circumstances your answer should show that you understand the question, and for some questions it will be useful to be aware of different schools of thought on a particular problem (the various ideas put by historians), but that you have a case of your own, which you favour, and which you develop in the essay from the analysis and information provided by the readings. You are not required to be completely original and will need to rely on the ideas of others. But, by being aware of the implications of others’ ideas and being able to adapt them to what is required by the question, you are constructing something linguistically that will form the best answers but also constitute an element of originality.

Style

In general, your style should be crisp, precise and lucid: use clear, understandable English to make your points. Don’t waffle (i.e. write for the sake of writing). Don’t be repetitive. Don’t overwrite (i.e. with long, overly-descriptive sentences).

There are various other things to avoid: bad spelling; colloquialisms (everyday English doesn’t always sound good on paper); long or convoluted sentences. The use of the first person (I think...’ and ‘In my view...’) should also be avoided.

Once you’ve finished an essay a good idea is to leave it overnight or even longer before reading it over. It is easier to pick up on errors in this way.

Examination advice

Important: the information and advice given here are based on the examination structure used at the time this guide was written. Please note that subject guides may be used for several years. Because of this we strongly advise you to always check both the current Regulations for relevant information about the examination, and the VLE where you should be advised of any forthcoming changes. You should also carefully check the rubric/instructions on the paper you actually sit and follow those instructions.

Some additional advice for examinations:

• Read all the questions. Make sure that there are no supplementary pages, or questions printed overleaf. You must give yourself the maximum choice.

• Follow the rubric, at the top of the page, on how many questions to answer: there’s no point answering four questions if only three are required. Also avoid answering three questions from Section A when you should have answered one each from Sections A, B and C. In order to maximise your mark it is vital to answer the required number of questions. If you are only left with 20 minutes and are running out of ideas you can at least hope to pick up some marks – whereas writing nothing will get no marks at all.

• Choose the questions you answer carefully, making sure that you have the necessary material facts and argument to provide an adequate answer. It is at this point that having taken a full and well-structured set of notes proves valuable.

• Once again, always answer the question. It is particularly easy to stray from the point in exams.
• In exam conditions you should still seek to **structure what you write** – ‘setting the scene’ in an introduction, tackling the problem in separate paragraphs, and reaching a conclusion, with a good mix of fact and analysis. It is important to be able to plan roughly the areas that the answer needs to develop to construct the argument. In exams you should never write ‘this essay will first state… and ‘secondly will argue’… ‘Finally the essay will...’ You are simply wasting time by writing this. The Examiners will know what the essay has done when they have read it.

• Even though you will be rushed, write as **neatly and legibly** as possible. Otherwise you may lose marks.

Remember, it is important to check the VLE for:

• up-to-date information on examination and assessment arrangements for this course

• where available, past examination papers and **Examiners’ commentaries** for the course which give advice on how each question might best be answered.

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### Writing notes

In order to complete any course in Arts and Social Sciences it is vital to produce a set of notes, taken from books and articles. These notes must eventually provide you with the necessary arguments, ideas and facts with which to answer essay questions, during the year and in examinations. The purpose of this section is to give some general hints on how to go about writing notes. As with essay-writing, it is impossible to make any hard-and-fast rules about note making. Everyone will write different notes on the same book or on the same article. Nevertheless, it is possible to lay down certain guidelines and to emphasise what you should **not** be doing.

The first step is, of course, to decide which topics you wish to write notes on. To an extent this should suit your own interests, but it will also be dictated by the exercises you are intending to do during the year and by the questions which appear on examination papers. Past examination questions may help provide you with a focus for the various ideas which appear in books as well as giving hints as to future questions.

Ultimately a set of notes, on each of the topics you have chosen to cover, should be:

• short enough so that you can revise from them quickly, but comprehensive enough to answer a range of questions on a given topic or area

• easy to understand – usually by being divided into several major headings, each of which may have a number of sub-headings, and with a wide range of short, clear analytical points, if necessary, backed up by some selected factual illustrations (dates and events, or statistics, etc.). In any set of notes you should use a form of shorthand as far as possible (e.g. B for Britain; Gov for government; WW2 for Second World War; 20thc for twentieth century; cld for could, etc.). The more abbreviations you can make without making the notes difficult to decipher the better
• able to provide a clear introduction to the main elements under every topic, or in an article or chapter of a book. Again, a balanced subdivision of notes into major headings will enable you to use one set of notes, with some quick re-structuring, to answer several questions

• a mixture of arguments and facts, but with the emphasis on argument and analysis. This will ensure that the essays you write are based on analysis first and foremost. Notes must avoid mere chronology and the simple repetition of facts. Dates and events should illustrate an argument, not become a substitute for it.

By the time of the examinations, you should aim to write a single set of notes on each topic you have selected.
Chapter 2: Post-war planning and the breakdown of the Grand Alliance, 1943–46

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, and having completed the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

• explain what each of the Big Three allies sought to achieve from the post-war settlement
• describe the different areas of disagreement that developed after Yalta and before the London Council of Foreign Ministers
• discuss which agreements at Yalta were broken
• show an understanding of the different reasons for the increased tensions that developed in the Grand Alliance by 1946.

Essential reading


Further reading


Introduction

The planning by the Western allies for the post-war world began very early on in the conflict. For the USA, official consideration of the type of world order that was generally desirable and which would serve particular US interests started before the attack on Pearl Harbour brought the USA into the war. On both sides of the Atlantic the initial assumption was that the European settlement and the problem of Germany would primarily be the responsibility of Britain and the Soviet Union. For the Soviets, the overriding concern was future German aggression and the means to ensure that they would not have to deal with it alone. At the same time, early on in the war, the British government was eager to deal with Stalin, culminating in the 1942 Anglo–Soviet treaty.
The Roosevelt administration was pledged to postpone firm post-war arrangements until after the defeat of Germany, but the principles on which the new post-war order would be based were open for discussion. These were represented early on in the Atlantic Charter drawn up on an Anglo–American basis, with its commitment to ensure that all peoples had the right to choose the form of government under which they should live. These principles were always at the forefront of US officials’ minds, as the Atlantic Charter was geared to a political and economic order that would enable US ideals and economic influence to predominate. Significantly, by 1943 the Allies knew that they would eventually win the war – the only issue was when. However, all outcomes would be threatened if a separate peace was made with Germany and its enemies, of which Stalin in particular was highly suspicious. Churchill was unequivocally committed to the alliance with communism as a means to defeat Hitler in the west, but there was a minority on the right, in and around the Conservative party, who saw the real enemy as Soviet communism which inevitably had an impact on post-war planning.

**British and Soviet post-war planning**

By 1944 the British were becoming more concerned with the occupation forces in Europe as the Soviet armies advanced westwards. They worried that their Polish allies would be unwilling to accept the necessary reality of cooperation with the victorious Soviets and that the latter would not allow the Poles sufficient involvement in the political process after the war. Western concern was intensified after Stalin’s refusal to permit the Red Army to advance and thus prevent the Germans massacring those Poles participating in the August 1944 Warsaw uprising. Overall, British concerns for the European situation were a strange mix of conflicting hopes and fears. On the one hand, Churchill was concerned that the Soviets might not advance far enough westwards to ensure the defeat of Germany, which would then be left to the British and the Americans. On the other, he was worried that such an advance, particularly in the south, would have adverse implications for Britain’s dominant position in the eastern Mediterranean arena where Greece and Bulgaria were particularly significant. The armistice and post-war planning committee, until the intervention of the deputy prime minister Clement Attlee, was considering the dispatch of British troops to Bulgaria.

The Soviets were looking for the kind of cooperation with Britain that would increase the ability of the Soviet Union to exercise control over eastern and central Europe in order to eliminate any revival of a German threat and ensure control over those areas that had been traditional Soviet enemies. European peace after the war would be based on this, as it was assumed that the USA would not play an important role in any detailed arrangements for Europe which would essentially depend on Britain and the Soviet Union. The degree to which Stalin was prepared to concede a role to Britain depended very much after 1942 on the successes which the Red Army were having against the German Wehrmacht.

The main Soviet aims were to reinforce the gains made as a result of the Nazi–Soviet Pact and to ensure that they had more control of the non-ethnic Polish border areas which were at the centre of longstanding Russo–Polish rivalry. The British were aware of obligations to the Poles because of the contributions many of them were making to the war in the west by fighting as members of the British armed services. However, security for the Soviets implied control of those areas, particularly Poland and
Romania, which had produced conflict in the past, and an increased Soviet influence in eastern Europe, which the inter-war incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union, had represented. Containing Germany was central to Soviet concerns about the future of Europe even if there was a fine line between security and imperialism. The need to control regions of eastern and central Europe was behind the agreement made by Stalin with Churchill in October 1944 when 90 per cent of Romania was deemed to come under Soviet influence and 10 per cent under British. In return Greece would be 90 per cent under British influence and Bulgaria and Hungary would be 75 per cent Soviet and 25 per cent British, all of which indicated a joint Anglo–Soviet acceptance of the spheres of influence principle for the post-war European order.

The British empire was the main reason why that principle of exclusive influence embodied in spheres of influence for each of the great powers was acceptable. Churchill, in particular, was adamant that he would not be the prime minister to preside over the dissolution of the British empire, however much the USA wanted to break the economic barrier that imperial preference and the sterling area presented to US trade and a more liberal multilateral economic order. The key imperial area in 1945 was no longer India but centred on the British position in the Middle East in the form of colonies in the Gulf and the Mediterranean and those territories which were nominally independent but in reality under effective British domination. The most important was Egypt, as it contained the largest military base in the world on the Suez Canal, although Iraq and the mandate of Palestine were also noteworthy. This significant area of vital interest bordered on the eastern Mediterranean and important European countries to the north, such as Greece and Bulgaria, and thus there was a potential clash between Soviet and British areas of influence. This was made much worse by the long-expressed Soviet desire to have unfettered access for their warships through the Straits of the Dardanelles – therefore there would be a need to reconcile these vital British and Soviet concerns.

**US post-war planning**

The USA was primarily interested in defining the regulatory principles and institutions which would govern the post-war international economic order. Despite Sumner Welles (who along with Harry Hopkins was a key policy-making confidante of Franklin Roosevelt) being forced to resign from the government in late 1943, the US president continued to move away from the idea of a purely great power peace after the war. The position of the USA was enhanced more and more by its remarkable economic growth and as it became the key supplier of armaments and military equipment plus food stuffs and consumer goods for the domestic market, more attention had to be given to ensuring that the post-war world order could maintain that growth and there would be no threat of a return to the Depression days. It thus made the idea of a world of spheres of influence, originally favoured by Roosevelt on the basis of the four major Allied powers acting as policeman each with a sphere of influence, less significant. Despite the signing of the Atlantic Charter, with its emphasis on lesser and newly emerging states, before 1944 the idea was still that the initial post-war period should be dominated by the great powers acting as four policemen.

It was also believed before the beginning of the war that an economic order emphasising open access to primary produce and raw materials would prevent the economic competition and conflict over future attempts
to control these markets and their produce. During the war institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were set up at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference. A number of political principles were now deemed necessary to be put in place and these were embodied in a new international organisation of allied nations, which came to be particularly favoured by the Roosevelt administration. All nations would be represented, even if the great powers on the security council had a veto over any actions that might be taken by the new United Nations organisation. They reflected the principles of the Atlantic Charter of democracy for all people, not just those who had escaped from Nazi tyranny. On the other hand the commitment to a certain type of domestic political systems as an international principle did not rule out spheres of influence for the USA who had the regions of east Asia and the Pacific, and Central and South America very much in mind as areas of predominant US influence.

**Activity**

To what extent had the British and Soviets agreed on the post-war arrangements for Europe by the end of 1944?

**Important dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Atlantic Charter drawn up by Churchill and Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Anglo–Soviet treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Tehran conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Tolstoy conference between Churchill and Stalin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 January</td>
<td>USSR requests a US loan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The Yalta conference, 4–11 February 1945**

Yalta has largely been dominated by mythology, including that it was the conference that divided Europe. In reality it was the conference where some key decisions on controversial issues for the future were postponed. The British were delighted with what they regarded as Stalin’s conciliatory tones. And, however self-interested these were, there can be no doubt that all three leaders were more willing to consider compromises over how to realise particular goals in early 1945. It was thus unfortunate that the spirit of compromise in much of the conference, which had implications for global principles versus the spheres of influence approaches, did not last.

At Yalta, a ‘spheres of influence’ arrangement in Asia seemed to be added to the European one made by Stalin and Churchill as Roosevelt and Stalin agreed that southern Sakhalin should be taken from Japan and restored to the Soviet Union along with the Kurile Islands, all without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants about the form of government under which they would live. At the same time the declarations on Poland and the European territories liberated from the Nazis contained important principles to be put into practice.
Yalta was a meeting that had the shadow of cooperation hovering over it, as all three leaders made clear the importance of the settlement to be produced and the enormous responsibility they had for the future peace and prosperity of the whole world. There was a reluctance to take disagreement into confrontation, helped by the fact that the areas dealt with at Yalta were predominantly those in Europe so that only the Soviets were likely to have really vital interests at stake there. Some areas that were potentially confrontational like reparations and the Straits convention were postponed or only partial agreement achieved with some remaining details to be dealt with later.

For the full agreed Yalta protocols, see www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1945YALTA.html

Activity
Identify which issues remained unsettled after Yalta.

From Yalta to Potsdam, February to July 1945

The key omission at Yalta, due to its importance for economic issues and the political treatment of Germany, was the Polish–German border that would depend on a frontier agreement that was reached on the boundary line between Poland and the Soviet Union in the east. The idea was essentially to constitute the old frontier, defined by the former British foreign secretary Lord Curzon, with substantial concessions made to compensate Poland in the north and west. Poland was, in effect, to be shifted westwards but no agreement was reached on the boundary with Germany as a result of this shift. In particular, the issue of whether the frontier would follow the eastern Neisse or the western Neisse River was not resolved, and it was left to the Soviets who were administering the eastern zone of Germany to make a de facto decision for practical purposes. The Soviets thus decided, for their own advantage, to use the western Neisse, which incorporated more land into Poland, and meant that the agricultural produce from the area would go to the Poles (or the Soviets) and not to feed Germans in the two western zones of Germany. The result was that the British had to import wheat for German industrial workers in its zone. That was the reason why Britain had to introduce bread rationing after the war and had implications for the already agreed decision to administer Germany as a single economic unit that first required agreement on the levels of German imports and exports.

The Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe, which stipulated that interim governments would be formed from all democratic elements in the population with a commitment to hold free elections at the earliest possible moment in the areas liberated from the Germans, was not complied with by the Soviets. Neither the pre-Yalta provisional Polish Lublin government nor the government imposed in Romania after Yalta met these criteria, which was a source of both US and British concern. The visit by Harry Hopkins to Moscow to reach an agreement with Stalin on the broadening of the Polish government to make it more representative was actually successful but had little or no effect on the ability of the Soviets to control the Lublin government. Concern was also developing in London over Soviet ambitions to get a UN trusteeship over the Italian colony of Tripolitania, in present day Libya, which threatened British predominance in the Mediterranean.
### Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Soviets install puppet government in Romania in breach of the agreed Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Soviet claim on Turkey for their former provinces of Kars and Ardahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Death of Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Truman confronts Molotov over the failure to stick to all of the Yalta agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Germany surrenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>May–June</td>
<td>Hopkins mission to Moscow appears to solve the Polish issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>UN Charter agreed at San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Soviets inform Turkey of their desire for bases in the Straits</td>
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**Growing conflict, September 1945 to March 1946: from the London Council of Foreign Ministers to the Iron Curtain speech**

The key role of Potsdam was to try and provide more substance to the agreements already outlined at Yalta for the treatment of Germany, and to formalise arrangements for the future Council of Foreign Ministers and the peace treaties with Germany’s allies. The agreements related essentially to the treatment of Germany, as no agreement was reached on Romania or the issues of the disposal of the Italian colonies especially in the Mediterranean. Economic arrangements for Germany and the temporary confirmation of the Polish–German frontier until a final settlement was reached with Germany were made. These agreements confirmed the treatment of Germany as a single economic unit and complicated the reaching of agreements on the levels of imports and exports from the three zones by stipulating the reparations that were to be exacted from individual zones in relation to the needs of Germany as a single economic unit. The principles of demilitarisation and deindustrialisation were confirmed as part of preventing a revival of the German threat but, as quickly became obvious, industrial production was essential if the means of purchasing grain were to be found for the industrial western zones, particularly the Ruhr area.

The London Council of Foreign Ministers marked a significant step in the journey away from an acceptance on all sides of the need to consider compromises, towards the increasing use of confrontation as a means of securing important post-war aims. The procedural technicalities which apparently produced the breakdown of the Council have to be seen against the growing confrontation, not just over eastern and central Europe and the Mediterranean, but also over the Pacific where the USA as the occupying power in Japan was initially reluctant, at the London Council, even to consider an Allied control commission as in the eastern European territories. There was also the reluctance of the USA to place the use and development of atomic power under international auspices. Byrnes, Truman’s secretary of state, particularly hoped to use the US atomic monopoly as a diplomatic weapon that would exert pressure to secure acceptance of US principles in the post-war settlement.

With the breakup of the London Council, the British Foreign Office considered whether an arrangement that recognised Soviet dominance in eastern Europe in return for British dominance in the Middle East and the Mediterranean should be attempted as a way of acknowledging the
vital interests of both parties. This was ruled out by the British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin because of its impact on the position of the UK as a great world power, but the USA remained willing to compromise over the Romanian and Bulgarian governments. When the Council of Foreign Ministers met in Moscow in December with just British, Soviet and US representatives this gesture was made and was in effect the last real attempt at concessions and compromise.

Domestically in the USA there was an increase in the public's perception that the post-war international order was not being designed in accordance with US principles and ideals which were ostensibly to serve the causes of peace and prosperity. In part, this was a result of the Yalta deal on Soviet gains in the Pacific becoming public, but was also connected to the evidence of Soviet controls in eastern Europe and the arguments on procedure which had characterised the London Council of Foreign Ministers. Whether a spheres of influence arrangement would have prevented the moves towards an acceptance of confrontation is a moot point. Yet growing confrontation was clearly beginning to characterise the Grand Alliance – in February 1946 George Kennan from the US embassy in Moscow sent a gloomy assessment of Soviet policy which was made into a milestone in the development of the Cold War.

**Activity**

Explain which areas were the most important sources of disagreement at the Potsdam conference.

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**Important dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Atomic bombs dropped on Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soviets enter the war against Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan ceases fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>US public opinion poll indicated 54 per cent of US citizens trust the Soviet Union to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Communists defeated in free Hungarian elections by the Smallholders party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>US public opinion poll indicates only 44 per cent of US citizens trust the Soviet Union to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Etheridge report concludes that to concede a Soviet sphere of influence in eastern Europe would be to invite its extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Iran complains to the UN about alleged Soviet interference in its internal affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Truman tells Byrnes he is tired of babying the Soviets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Stalin's speech calling for a five-year plan to prepare for the inevitable conflict between communism and capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Soviets fail to withdraw troops from Iran in accordance with agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Churchill's iron curtain speech at Fulton, Missouri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a report by Secretary of State James Byrnes on the meetings not an official US record of them.
A reminder of your learning outcomes

Having completed this chapter, and the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

• explain what each of the Big Three Allies sought to achieve from the post-war settlement
• describe the different areas of disagreement that developed after Yalta and before the London Council of Foreign Ministers
• discuss which agreements at Yalta were broken
• show an understanding of the different reasons for the increased tensions that developed in the Grand Alliance by 1946.

Sample examination questions

Write an essay in 45 minutes in answer to one of the following questions.

1. Why did the settlement with Germany become more significant between Yalta and January 1946?

2. To what extent was Poland a key issue in producing Allied disagreement in 1946?

3. Did the Cold War originate primarily from global or regional causes?

4. How important were disagreements between Britain and the Soviet Union in producing the breakdown of the Grand Alliance?
Chapter 3: The German question and the Marshall Plan: preventing the spread of Communism, 1946–48

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, and having completed the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

• provide an explanation of the role of economic issues in the development of the Cold War
• outline the way in which German policy was defined and implemented by the Allies between 1946 and 1948
• identify the political and military issues in 1946 and 1947 which produced NATO.

Essential reading


Further reading


Introduction

Following Kennan’s long telegram in February 1946, which is generally regarded as the key formulation of the idea of ‘containment’, Allied tensions were exacerbated in the spring of 1946 as the economic arrangements agreed at Potsdam for Germany’s future were becoming more difficult to implement. In part these had arisen out of the problems resulting from the Yalta conference and the lack of any agreement on the eastern frontier of Germany with the new Polish state that had been moved westwards to compensate the Poles for the loss of Polish territory in the east to the Soviets.

Germany was the most crucial European area, and the Soviets were particularly concerned that a German revival, which could again threaten the Soviet Union with invasion and enormous loss of life, would not be
allowed to re-occur. Consequently, contradictions developed between the various requirements of the victorious powers for the future development of Germany, particularly with regard to the use of its economic resources for European recovery, as post-war rebuilding began.

Outside Europe the Iran crisis from January to May 1946 provided public evidence of great power disagreement which was reinforced at the Paris peace conference in June and July 1946. The problems with the disposal of the Italian colonies continued to cause disagreements between the foreign ministers in 1946. In east Asia, concerns grew about the economic situation in Japan, which was similar to that in Germany and reflected fears about the political impact of the failure of capitalism to provide the means to sustain the populations in the defeated countries.

**Important dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1946</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>Soviets fail to withdraw troops from Iran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April–May</td>
<td>First Paris Council of Foreign Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Soviets agree to withdraw troops from Iran in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June–July</td>
<td>Second Paris Council of Foreign Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July–October</td>
<td>Paris Peace Conference (all Allied nations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November–December</td>
<td>New York Council of Foreign Ministers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dividing Germany in 1946**

As there was still no formal definitive agreement on Germany's future, the situation on the ground had to be dealt with, including the area completely controlled by the Soviet Union, in accordance with the wartime agreements defining the three occupation zones of Germany. The Soviets were thus able effectively to ensure that most of the agricultural resources and industrial capital equipment were used in Poland and the Soviet Union and foodstuffs from the eastern zone were not used for the western zones of Germany. The three German occupation zones had become four in 1946 with the French zone created out of the British and American zones. As 1946 ended the difficulties in reconciling specific economic demands about Germany and east Asia transformed disagreements over general interests into specific disputes. The exercise of hard power internationally became entangled with the domestic economic and political requirements of post-war recovery. Thus the Cold War began to develop essentially as an ideological battle over which socio-economic system would prevail by being seen as the most successful.

**Soviet policy**

The overriding Soviet need, and the reason for their continued desire for cooperation with the west, was for the prevention of German military recovery by denying German industry the ability to produce war material. The Potsdam agreements entitled them to receive some material from the western zones without furnishing foodstuffs in return and to remove more material in return for produce from the eastern zone under their control. What the Soviet ultimate aim was remains a matter of controversy. One priority was to acquire as many resources in capital equipment from the more industrialised parts of Germany, both to assist a devastated Soviet Union recover and to prevent the re-emergence of German industry. Reparations were therefore crucial in achieving both aims.
British policy

The British were concerned that, having agreed at Potsdam to the principles of reparations without any simultaneous agreement on the levels of German industry, they were having to import food into their zone and use precious dollars to purchase grain to feed the German population. They therefore became the first of the Allied powers to have private doubts about the desirability of a unified Germany. The disagreements over Germany’s administration as a single economic unit with a combined import/export programme therefore increased, and continued hardship was more in evidence for ordinary Germans.

US policy

The USA, in the wake of trying to implement the Potsdam agreements, also became concerned about the effect of the agreements on Germany. There was an economic need to prevent social unrest arising from the hardships and shortages experienced by the German population. Yet there was also the political requirement to implement measures to prevent a future German threat by limiting German economic growth that could be used to produce armaments. Thus German recovery, by manufacturing and exporting sufficient quantities of goods to enable their food to be imported and paid for, was in conflict with the extraction of reparations and strict limits on industrial production. Political fears accompanied the economic concerns of the western Allies that the attraction of left wing ideas would grow. Communist influence would increase with the hardship experienced by the German population. Such fears were heightened by the failures to agree on Germany and issues in the eastern and western Mediterranean, and the USA began to favour the division of Germany if disarmament measures were unsuccessful or if Germany could not be appropriately administered as a single economic unit.

Activities

Why was the Potsdam agreement on Germany not implemented?

To what extent did Germany become the main source of growing Allied tensions in 1946?

Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Level of industry plan is agreed, Soviets stall on the import–export programme, claiming it is a zonal issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>The forced merger of the Social Democratic Party with the German Communist Party takes place, indicating a Soviet attempt to extend political control of a unified Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Byrnes call for a Four Power Treaty guaranteeing the disarmament of Germany for 25 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>General Clay suspends reparations deliveries from the Western zones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Britain becomes more favourable to a permanent division of Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Soviets express a preference for uniting Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>The US favour a zonal merger of Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Byrnes makes Stuttgart speech arguing that zonal boundaries should be regarded as defining areas of occupation for security purposes only and not seen as self-contained economic or political units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>The Kolpakov programme offers an extension of the levels of German industry and favours an introduction of a balanced export-import programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>British keen to push ahead with the bi-zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Byrnes completely abandons the idea of a united Germany, fearing it would fall under Soviet control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Moscow Council begins, and for Marshall the Potsdam agreement is no longer appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Council of Foreign Ministers meets in London and the US State Department makes it clear that they will not accept the unification of Germany on any terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Western powers have a conference in London to discuss zonal policy in Germany, including the control of the Ruhr Soviets are excluded from this meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>London conference leads to the proposal to incorporate West Germany from the western zones The proposals lead to the Soviet Control Council representative walking out two weeks later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Stalin restricts the movement of Allied personal entering Berlin by road and rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Soviets walk out of the Kommandatura when it became clear a new currency would be introduced in West Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 June</td>
<td>The introduction of the new currency (in the western zones but not in Berlin) leads to the Soviets closing surface routes into the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Stalin offers to lift the ‘Berlin blockade’ if a Council of Foreign Ministers meets to discuss the future of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Stalin offers to lift the blockade if the establishment of a West German state is postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Berlin blockade is lifted Airlifts to the city prove successful for the Allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>The West German state is created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activities**

Explain whether economic or political divisions were primarily responsible for the division of Germany.

Who was responsible for the breaching of agreements on the administration of Germany?
The Marshall Plan and Europe’s economic difficulties, 1947

Europe suffered from an extremely hard winter of 1946–47 which paralysed economic life in Britain. It threatened to bring the kind of hardship that communism might exploit in circumstances where capitalism and the market were failing to provide basic necessities. A key problem was that the European countries recovering from the war required dollars for consumer goods which had largely been produced in the US during the war. Thus for the west, action to avoid serious economic dislocation had to be taken because such conditions by 1947 were deemed to be fertile breeding grounds for communism and radical left wing ideas. At the same time European recovery, which was dependent on the significant re-establishment of German trade, was clearly necessary. Otherwise the dramatic wartime expansion of the US economy could not be sustained. As long as the lack of European dollars, to provide the purchasing power for the consumer goods produced in the US, continued, there were risks to European recovery and to continued US prosperity.

This was what lay behind the idea of the Marshall Plan, with the Truman Doctrine emphasising the threat presented by Soviet communism in order to justify spending US taxpayers’ money to assist European recovery. US taxpayers would accept the need to enable western European societies, especially the defeated ones in Germany and Italy, in the hopes of gaining a prosperous capitalist and democratic future in recovering from the war. Providing the resources to assist this was an important part of containment in a non-military sense – independent of armed forces but centred on ideology and the success of centre–right political systems in European societies.

Activities

Explain the dollar gap.

To what extent was the Marshall Plan designed to save the US economy from recession?

Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1947</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>Rigged Polish elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Truman Doctrine speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March–April</td>
<td>Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers on Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Launch of the Marshall Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Rigged Hungarian elections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Creation of the Cominform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November–December</td>
<td>London Council of Foreign Ministers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Communist coup in Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Creation of the Brussels pact by Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The origins of NATO, 1948

Standard Cold War orthodoxy portrays NATO as being formed to protect Europe against the threat of Soviet expansionism. The actual situation was more complex than that. In the first place the threat to western Europe in the form of a military attack by the Red Army must be distinguished from the ideological threat presented by radical ideas – especially those of communism – which had been strengthened by the role of the left in resisting Nazi aggression during the war. The Soviets by 1948 had imposed Stalinist regimes, effectively controlled by Moscow, on all those counties in eastern Europe which were now clearly satellite states. The original idea of containment was to ensure that communist ideology and the organisation of coups and puppet governments were not allowed to spread westwards and were therefore contained in those areas now under Soviet control. The military defence of western Europe was not the issue, as the immediate, as opposed to the medium-term, Soviet threat of an attack on western Europe was not regarded as likely. When the first emergency plans (plans to fight a war in the next 12 months with existing forces) were formulated in London and Washington in 1948, in the unlikely event that another major war should occur, the aim was to abandon western Europe. This would replicate what had happened in 1940 when the war had then ultimately been won. Reconciling these contradictory aims of protection and abandonment and ensuring that stronger links were forged between the countries of western Europe were central to the creation of the political community that NATO became. Both the British and the US military believed a ‘careful weighing of the various factors points to the probability that the Soviet government is not now planning any deliberate armed action calculated to involve the United States and is still seeking to achieve its aims primarily by political means.’ NATO was primarily a political response to this and the military dimensions of NATO were there to provide a greater, if somewhat spurious, justification to gain support for the political resistance to communist ideology.

Activities

To what extent were the dangers faced by western Europe after 1948 the result of the spread of political ideology emanating from Moscow?

What role did the British play in the creation of NATO?

In what ways did the US military plan for the defence of western Europe?

Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1947</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>Treaty of Dunkirk signed by Britain and France</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>London Council of Foreign Ministers breaks up with no dates agreed for future meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Soviet Union begins jamming Voice of America broadcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Bloodless communist coup in Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Brussels Treaty signed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: The German question and the Marshall Plan: preventing the spread of Communism, 1946–48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1948</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>Military staff talks at the Pentagon with British and Canadians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>British emergency plan ‘Doublequick’ produced for the evacuation of British and US forces from Europe in the event of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Start of Berlin blockade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Washington talks on US support for Western Europe in the form of a treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Washington talks adjourned with tentative agreement on framework for a North Atlantic treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>British chiefs of staff accept the idea of defending the Rhine despite the political difficulties of losing much of West Germany and note the resources for such a defence are inadequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A reminder of your learning outcomes

Having completed this chapter, and the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

- provide an explanation of the role of economic issues in the development of the Cold War
- outline the way in which German policy was defined and implemented by the Allies between 1946 and 1948
- identify the political and military issues in 1946 and 1947 which produced NATO.

Sample examination questions

Write an essay in 45 minutes in answer to one of the following questions.

1. To what extent was the Marshall Plan designed to maintain US prosperity?
2. Who or what produced the division of Germany?
3. ‘The Cold War was produced essentially by economic differences.’ Discuss.
Notes
Chapter 4: The onset of the Cold War: from containment to rollback, 1948–53

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, and having completed the Essential reading, you should be able to:

- define the different views of those for and those against a more pro-active US Cold War policy
- decide when and why rollback became US policy.

Essential reading


Further reading


Origins of the ‘containment’ policy

The main architect of the idea of containment was George Kennan in the US embassy in Moscow. But it was not clear what exactly containment involved, and it was subsequently adapted by some US policy makers and western academics to suit Cold War interests. Containment was initially envisaged as a non-military weapon using diplomacy and economic incentives to bolster the social stability and political freedoms of the west as a counter to totalitarian communism in the Soviet Union and its satellite empire. However, when power political differences developed in 1945, with the failure to reconcile particularly important interests with general principles (e.g. freedom) arising from the Second World War, the importance of policies towards the Soviets increased and the rival ideologies became more important. Thus the two opposing socio-economic and political systems came to define the Cold War by 1948.

In a defensive mode containment was intended primarily to prevent the spread of communism from the Soviet Union and the area it had occupied in the process of defeating the Germans. The USA had not got closely involved in the wartime planning for Europe and, much to George Kennan’s disgust, had declined to spell out to the Soviets what was unacceptable for them to do. The future basis of Allied co-existence was therefore unclear at the beginning of 1945.
Developments and problems in 1948 – the end of containment?

Once the power political divisions and disagreements of 1945 had produced a growing determination on both sides to confront the other with their own vital interests, perceptions began to change. Rather than seeking the compromises that had been evident in the months leading up to the end of the Potsdam conference, the key question now was how to prevent the spread of communism or capitalism. What precisely would be required now an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion had been engendered was not entirely clear.

Would the former giants of Japanese business be needed in east Asia? And would former Nazis and their supporters be required in Europe? More importantly, could communism be contained simply by preventing its spread? If not, it would require action in the form of more offensive measures. Whether these measures would also constitute containment is a key matter of debate. At all events the policies of the USA towards the Soviet Union were increasable defined by the newly created National Security Council (NSC). Yet what the implementation of NSC policies might mean was subject to different interpretations. These continued to be evident in different parts of the Washington bureaucracy as the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency had different views stemming from the conflicting interpretations within those organisations. Hence the idea of ‘containment’ as a single unified policy is misleading – as is the use of the word for US policy after 1948 when more offensive measures began to be proposed in policy papers.

Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1948</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>NSC 7 'The position of the USA with respect to Soviet dominated world communism’ produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Israel established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Berlin blockade begins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>US Office of Policy Coordination established to assume responsibility for operations, not involving military action, to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>NSC 20/4 ‘US objectives with respect to the Soviet Union’ produced – the first comprehensive assessment of US Cold War objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1949</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>North Atlantic Treaty signed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Soviets explode their first atomic bomb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>The Chinese People’s Republic proclaimed by Mao Tse Tung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSC 68

In the wake of the Soviet explosion of an atomic bomb in 1949 and the final success of the communists in unifying China – with the exception of Taiwan (Formosa) – the international situation in military and ideological terms was becoming less favourable to the west. In one sense, the focus of what had always been a global Cold War was moving from Europe to Asia, given that NATO had been established in 1949 along with the new West German state and thus the recovery of western Europe was proceeding in line with western expectations.
Yet there was a growing belief in the USA that pro-active, more offensive measures would be needed, to undermine the Soviet satellites or, as some argued, to weaken the Soviet Union itself. Thus the CIA’s programme of covert action began, with failed attempts to drop agents into Albania to bring about the first defection from the Soviet bloc. Closely connected to growing US concerns about the continued existence of a rival bloc, or alternative way of life, was the existence in 1949 of the Soviet atomic bomb. It was no longer so credible to believe that in a hot war US nuclear power would automatically prevent a Soviet attack on the west and the use of its conventional arms in Europe. Moreover as the USA began to adopt a more pro-active and assertive Cold War strategy to resist the ideology of communism, the links of communist parties to the Soviet state also had serious implications once that state could wield nuclear weapons. It became clear to some in Washington that the USA now had to rely on more conventional forces and be prepared to confront Soviet conventional strength. There was a growing risk in using nuclear weapons if the Soviets were to react militarily to the US Cold War efforts to undermine their satellite system. Hence the need for rearmament when the USA was embarking on Cold War policies designed to weaken or destroy the Soviet state. Such aggressive policies could be interpreted as going beyond ‘containment’ and were more likely to produce a hot war response to any Cold War losses experienced by Moscow. Hence NSC 68 and its advocacy of greater conventional military strength. However, concerns about the rearmament programme’s costs if NSC 68 was implemented were troubling President Truman, with the result that rearmament was not immediate. It was only when North Korean aggression against the south occurred, and US troops were sent to the peninsula, that significant US rearmament began.

Eisenhower and Solarium – the end of rollback?

The Truman administration was attempting to coordinate the implementation of Cold War policies involving covert operations, psychological warfare and propaganda. Covert operations involved activities which needed ‘plausible deniability’ to prevent them being tied to the policies of the US government but the disagreements on what policies were justified or desirable continued. In 1951 a psychological strategy board was established to provide the elements of coordination and control of covert operations which a more aggressive pursuit of Cold War policies required. The psychological strategy board, however, failed to resolve the different interpretations of Cold War policies when they had to be implemented and operationalised, and another round of bureaucratic in-fighting ensued. The Truman administration was under attack politically in the 1951–2 presidential campaign for not fighting the Cold War vigorously enough in the wake of what was seen by many on the US right as the ‘loss’ of China. Therefore when the Eisenhower administration entered the White House it contained some members who were keen to wage Cold War more aggressively through covert actions and psychological warfare. The aim was to ensure that the Soviet Union was weakened or destroyed, as only one system or way of life was deemed able to survive. Ironically, the Republicans and those favouring more assertive Cold War policies had accused the Truman administration of weakness towards the Soviet Union when it had actively, if somewhat confusingly, been implementing more pro-active and assertive policies despite growing doubts about their impact. One key concern was linked to the first explosion of the hydrogen bomb by the USA in 1952 and the Soviet Union in 1953. A weapon which was a thousand times more powerful than the atomic bomb would have
greater consequences for the future of civilization if the Cold War became a hot war like Korea. There was a distinct connection between fighting the Cold War aggressively, to undermine the other bloc's political and economic way of life, and the risk of hot war.

This was one reason why Eisenhower established project Solarium. The project had three different teams examining possible ways forward from different perspectives on the relationship between Cold War fighting and hot war. One team examined the role of nuclear weapons in deterring hot war and the other two concentrated on fighting the Cold War and rolling back communism, rather than merely confining it to eastern Europe and China. Team A was to examine means of pushing back the frontiers of Soviet power and changing Soviet behaviour by peacefully co-existing with the Soviets and minimising the risk of hot war. Team C was to emphasise the importance of destroying the Soviet system with some risk of hot war as, in the longer term, there could be no possibility of two such opposing ways of life co-existing within a single international system and therefore the destruction or alteration of Soviet communism was the priority. Team B simply looked at the implications for the Cold War of nuclear weapons.

One question concerned the implications of perceptions in the west that the Soviets intended to take over the world. If that was deemed likely, then the logical conclusion would be that a destructive war would ultimately have to be faced. The Eisenhower administration, not keen to plan hot war in a nuclear age, thus began to move away from such an outcome towards accepting a policy of co-existence with the Soviets while still conducting some covert operations. These would be designed to enhance the US position in the Cold War alongside diplomatic moves based on co-existence. This was what lay behind Eisenhower’s initiatives in his speeches on ‘Atoms for Peace’ and ‘Open Skies’ and other disarmament proposals. Even if no concrete steps resulted from these, the Cold War advantage of showing the US public that the administration was seriously seeking peace and the avoidance of thermonuclear conflict would be considerable.

### Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>NSC 68 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Korean War begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Psychological Strategy Board established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Eisenhower wins US presidential election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Eisenhower’s ‘Chance for Peace’ speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Project Solarium established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>New Look doctrine put to NSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A reminder of your learning outcomes

Having completed this chapter, and the Essential reading, you should be able to:

- define the different views of those for and those against a more pro-active US Cold War policy
- decide when and why rollback became US policy.
Sample examination questions

Write an essay in 45 minutes in answer to one of the following questions.

1. In what ways did NSC 68 influence US Cold War strategy?

2. Analyse the relationship of military preparations to the pursuit of Cold War aims 1948–50.

3. Why did the three powers adopt more confrontational positions in 1946–48?

4. To what extent did the USA change its approach to fighting the Cold War 1948–50?