

THE EARLY COLD WAR 1945-1961

One of the biggest achievements of the Big Three during their wartime meetings was the creation of the United Nations. Often seen as being unable to achieve any real goals, the UN was probably the reason the conflict that erupted between the United States and the Soviet Union never evolved into a wide scale war. The UN outlines were agreed upon at the Cairo Conference in November 1943 and the final arrangements were made at the Yalta conference in January 1945.

THE UNITED NATIONS

In April 1945, the delegates of nations that had declared war on the Axis nations met at San Francisco to draw up the charter of the United Nations.

Organization. It was agreed that 1) the Security Council would consist of five permanent members – the United States, Russia (Soviet Union), Britain, France and China. Six other members are chosen for two-year terms by the General Assembly. The permanent members each have the right of veto. The security council was given the power to enforce international peace and security. 2) The General Assembly was composed of representatives of every member nation, each nation having one vote. This Assembly could debate make recommendations, and supervise the special agencies. When the veto in the Security Council brought deadlock the Assembly could act. 3) The Secretariat was to be headed by the Secretary-General, the leading official of the UN, with the responsibility of executing decisions of the organization and carrying on the routine work. 4) The International Court of Justice of fifteen justices meeting at the Hague to settle disputes between nations became part of the UN. Other special agencies include: the Economic and Social Council; the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the Food and Agricultural Organization; the International Labor Organization; the World Health Organization (WHO); and the International Monetary Fund (created to help nations stabilize their currencies and increase international trade).

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COLD WAR

Before the WWII, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin created a propaganda unit called Comintern. The agency was charged with promoting a workers revolution throughout the world and the spread of socialism and communism. During the war, in order to work with the West against Germany, Stalin dissolved the agency. However, in 1947 he revived the agency under the new name Cominform. While the West never paid much attention to the first agency, this time they (especially the United States) saw the occupation of Eastern Europe and this new agency as a threat to western democracy and capitalism.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE (1947) - In 1947, the British announced (and it had been suspected since the end of the war) that they did not have the financial resources to maintain the conservative government they had established in Greece. Communist guerrillas in Greece were receiving aid from their communist neighbors to the north. If the Soviet Union could control Greece, the fear was she could outflank the entrance to the Black Sea and the Suez Canal, both of which were of great importance in Mediterranean trade routes. At the same time the Soviet Union began a campaign of intimidation against Turkey; the USSR demanded territory and military bases and a subordination of Turkish foreign policy to Russia.

President Truman at this point took a stand against the Soviet threat. He asked Congress to vote \$400,000,000 economic aid to Greece and Turkey. He declared it to be the policy of the United States to support “free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities” within or from outside pressure. This policy became known as the Truman doctrine. The funds given were used so effectively to strengthen the military forces (a-bombs in place by 1960) that the Communist danger soon became negligible in these two countries.

THE MARSHALL PLAN (1947) - Soon after aid had been voted for Greece and Turkey, Secretary of State George C. Marshall recognized the need to support economic recovery in Europe to preserve democratic governments and announced the US would give aid to countries holding free elections.

Congress soon voted \$5,000,000,000 and established the European Cooperation Administration to administer the European Recovery Plan. European nations drew up plans, as suggested, that provided cooperation with each other as well as the United States to promote the recovery of all of Europe. After the promised aid helped defeat the communists in Italy, Stalin feared the Marshall Plan was a planned attack on the economy of the Soviet Union and refused to allow any of the countries occupied by the Red Army to participate in the program.

For those countries that participated, the plan was a huge success. By 1949 economic recovery in Italy and France had restored almost normal living conditions. The Marshall Plan funds were kept under American control rather than being administered by an international agency (superseding the UN). After a few years, western Europe had more than recovered the industrial production of the pre-WWI days.

CONFLICT OVER GERMANY - During the war the Allies agreed at Yalta to divide Germany into four zones of military occupation under the leading allies - the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France. The German capital of Berlin was similarly divided into separate occupation zones. Worried about the Marshall Plan's possible attempt to buy Germany for the West against the Soviet Union, Stalin attempted to gain control of all of Germany. In response to these actions, in late 1947 the US, Britain and France agreed to unite their zones. Stalin refused to acknowledge the new zone and decided to seize control of the main city of Berlin. Since the entire city was in the Soviet controlled part of Germany, Stalin ordered a land blockade of the unified part of the city. The western countries (under the leadership of Truman) refused to be bullied by Stalin and began an airlift that transported all necessary supplies to Berlin by cargo planes. In May 1949, Stalin called off the blockade and roads to Berlin were reopened. In 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was formed out of the three zones with Bonn as its capital. The US military remained there, but with the help of the Marshall Plan an independent government was soon created. In response, Stalin formed the Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany) and created a puppet government to rule the country.

CHINA AFTER THE WAR - The turn of events in China after the war brought further problems between the US and USSR. Of course, the war with Japan began in support of China in order to continue American interests there. However, the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek was characterized by incompetency, inflation, corruption and a failure to bring much needed help to the impoverished Chinese masses. The Chinese Communists in North China, with Soviet aid (we now know this aid was extremely limited), exploited the situation and rapidly gained Nationalist territory. The American people were tired of war and were already spread thin by the situations in Europe, and the Truman administration did not wish to become involved in a large-scale civil war in support of the corrupt and harsh National Government. Marshall, sent to China in 1946, failed to secure the necessary cooperation of Chiang Kai-shek in plans to limit Communist advances by introducing reforms.

As time passed and conditions grew worse in Nationalist China, the Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-tung gained power and influence with the masses. Communist armies made steady gains until they had brought all of China under Communist rule in 1950. The Chinese Nationalists were forced onto the island of Formosa (Taiwan).

THE NORTH ATLANTIC PACT - Since the UN was unable to deal with the problems between the US and USSR, the US decided it needed to more secure its position in Europe in order to avoid a repeat of China in Europe. In 1949, the United States joined the friendly countries of Western Europe in military alliance - the first membership by the United States in a peacetime military alliance since the alliance with France after the American War for Independence.

Twelve nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty (1949). In it they agreed that all would defend an attack against any signatory power. To implement the alliance the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

was formed to integrate the military forces of the allied nations. The US Congress voted large sums for rearmament of our allies.

THE KOREAN WAR - Independent Korea, which had been absorbed by Japan after the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, regained its independence in 1945. For immediate military purposes, the Soviets and the US divided Korea along the 38th parallel until a united Korean Republic could be established. In 1948, the USSR set up a communist government to help create a buffer zone for communist China. In response to the violation of the USSR's promise to hold free elections for the creation of a united Korea, Syngman Rhee, a Korean patriot, headed a government in the South that was immediately recognized by a Soviet boycotted UN. Putting its trust in the UN, the US withdrew its troops from South Korea in 1949.

In late June 1950, North Korean troops with Soviet and Chinese training and equipment invaded South Korea to unify the country. The still Soviet boycotted UN Security Council met and declared North Korea as an aggressor and urged the restoration of peace. President Truman made a quick decision to support the resolution and ordered sea and air forces to defend South Korea; from Japan American ground troops were sent in. Truman believed that the US had to stand up to Communist advances and that the government of South Korea had to be supported. Truman assured the American people that the conflict would be limited and only to aid the South Korean government.

In the course of the invasion the North Koreans, at first highly successful, occupied most of South Korea except for the Pusan perimeter in the extreme southeast of the peninsula. From Pusan the UN forces under the General Douglas MacArthur rallied with the help of the daring landing at Inchon and steadily drove the enemy back into North Korea until three-fourths of North Korea was occupied by the UN in November 1950. MacArthur urged Truman to allow him to drive the Korea-China border. However, Truman was worried about Chinese intervention. When the Chinese in late November attacked crossed the Yalu River it pushed the UN forces back across the 38th parallel. MacArthur blasted Truman in the press for hesitating when the UN had a chance to destroy communism for good on the Korean peninsula. In response, Truman fired MacArthur for insubordination. The war soon stabilized along the 38th parallel. In June, 1951 peace negotiations began. The talks stalled over every question imaginable (shape of the table, etc) with the main issue being over the repatriation of prisoners of war.

Truman's popularity began to plummet with the firing of the popular war hero MacArthur and his inability to bring the Korean conflict to an end. Unable to rally the people like he did in the election of 1948 to fight against Communism, Truman chose not to run (he was the last President with this option to serve more than two terms). MacArthur made an unsuccessful run to win the Republican nomination, however, the Republicans used the unpopularity of Truman to nominate another war hero, Dwight D. Eisenhower. With Eisenhower's landslide election, he was able to pressure the peace talks in Korea to an end with the 38th parallel the boundary between communist North Korea and west allied South Korea.

McCarthyism - Despite the election of Eisenhower, the ongoing Cold War, the loss of China, Alger Hiss being convicted for selling secrets to the Soviets and other events a national anxiety developed regarding the threat of communism. Senator Joseph McCarthy rose to prominence along the campaign trail in 1952 by making unsubstantiated, loose accusations of Communism against prominent persons. Loyalty oaths were required by state legislatures over the country and investigations conducted by Congress and by the state legislatures. Many people lost jobs and reputations. When McCarthy's crude and unfair tactics were observed on television by the nation, the public turned against him. However, this sad chapter in Constitutional Law shows how much the American people feared the threat from the Soviet Union.

IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

Eisenhower brought many of the hot problems with the Soviet Union to peaceful solutions in his first term and secured American positions against the USSR throughout Asia and Europe. Also the death of Stalin in 1953 brought new leadership to the Soviet Union under Nikita Krushchev. Krushchev toured the United States and the two countries met at the Geneva convention in 1955. While there was no real agreements between the two countries, both sides left with a positive outlook for future negotiations. This ease of

tensions and the booming economy (next unit) brought a second term for Eisenhower. Soon the two rivals would work together to solve a world crisis.

THE SUEZ CRISIS - In the rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union, the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, promised Egypt financial aid in building the Aswan Dam on the upper Nile. In 1956, Congress refused to appropriate the money to Egypt because it was learned that Egypt had been importing arms from Russian dominated satellite nations. Egyptian President Nasser was outraged by the Americans actions and struck back by seizing the Suez Canal (September 14, 1956) in order to obtain its revenues for financing the dam.

Newly created Israel took advantage of the British and French anger at Egypt by invading Egyptian territory (October 29, 1956). Britain and France demanded that both nations withdraw from the canal. When Egypt refused, Britain and France invaded Egypt in cooperation with Israel. Acting through the UN, the United States and Soviet Union strongly demanded a withdrawal and cease fire in the war zone. On November 30, UN forces entered the canal as the warring countries withdrew.

THE COLD WAR FREEZES

The Weapons race. When the United States successfully exploded the world's first atomic bomb in 1945 it enjoyed an enormous lead in weapons development over any other power. But in 1949 the Soviet Union successfully exploded its first atomic bomb. However, the US still enjoyed a huge advantage in the ICBMs (missiles that could be launched in one continent and land in another). In the mid-1950s the Soviet Union announced it had developed an ICBM. The two countries began greatly increasing the power of their weapons and the capabilities of their missiles. Citizens of both countries and people throughout the world lived in fear of a possible third world war between the US and USSR that would destroy the world with atomic bombs. The final freeze of the late 1950s happened when a US spy plan was shot down over the Soviet Union.

CASTRO IN CUBA - American foreign relations since victory in 1945 neglected Latin America, an area the US had always maintained a strong presence, but billions of dollars were lavished upon European countries considered more vulnerable to Communist inroads. Policies that approved dictators in Latin America offended the people there. In Cuba, Fidel Castro, a Cuban nationalist, came to power on January 1, 1959 by overthrowing dictator Fulgencio Batista. Upset with American policies towards Cuba, Castro turned to the Soviet Union for assistance with his new government. The United States broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961. Eisenhower got Congress to appropriate \$500,000,000 for a "Marshall Plan" for economic assistance to other Latin America countries to stop the spread of Communism in Latin America. However, the Communist foothold 90 miles off the southern coast of Florida was a serious blow to American prestige in the Cold War and was a major reason for the Democratic victory of John Kennedy in the Presidential Election of 1960.