Chapter 21

Section 2  The Early Cold War Years
Chapter Objectives

Section 2: The Early Cold War Years

• Describe the American view of the Soviet Union and the policy of containment.
• Explain the causes of the Korean War.
Guide to Reading

Main Idea

As the Cold War began, the United States struggled to oppose Communist aggression in Europe and Asia through political, economic, and military measures.

Key Terms and Names

- George Kennan
- containment
- Marshall Plan
- NATO
- limited war
Containing Communism

• As Americans became increasingly impatient with the Soviets, the State Department asked the American Embassy in Moscow to explain Soviet behavior.

• On February 22, 1946, diplomat George Kennan responded with the Long Telegram, a 5,540-word cable message explaining his views of Soviet goals.

• In the telegram, Kennan discussed Soviet insecurity and fear of the West and why it was impossible to reach an agreement.
• He proposed a long-term containment of Soviet expansion.

• This led to Truman’s policy of containment—keeping communism within its present territory through diplomatic, economic, and military actions.
• After World War II, Soviet troops remained in northern Iran, demanding access to Iran’s oil supplies.

• Soviet troops helped Communists in northern Iran set up a separate government.

• The United States demanded their withdrawal and sent a U.S. battleship into the eastern Mediterranean.

• The Soviets withdrew from Iran.
On March 12, 1947, Truman went before Congress to request $400 million to fight Soviet aggression in Greece and Turkey.

The policy became known as the Truman Doctrine.

Its purpose was to stabilize the Greek government and ease Soviet demands in Turkey.

It became the United States’s pledge to stop communism in the world.
Containing Communism (cont.)

- Postwar Western Europe faced economic ruin and starving people. ↓

- In June 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed the European Recovery Program called the Marshall Plan. ↓

- The plan would give European nations American aid to rebuild. ↓

- The plan was an effort to fight hunger, poverty, and chaos.
The Soviet Union and its satellite nations in Eastern Europe rejected the offer and developed their own economic program.

- The Marshall Plan gave billions of dollars worth of supplies, machinery, and food to Western Europe, lessening the appeal of communism and opening new trade markets.
Why did George Kennan think containment would beat communism?

Kennan felt the Soviet system had major economic and political weaknesses. If the United States could stop the Soviets from expanding, Kennan felt the Soviet system would crumble without going to war.
The Berlin Crisis

• By early 1948, in response to the Soviet attempt to harm Germany’s economy, the United States, Great Britain, and France merged their zones in Germany and in Berlin, which became West Berlin, allowing Germans to have their own government.

• The new nation became West Germany with a separate economy from the Soviet zone, which eventually became known as East Germany.

(pages 661–662)
The Berlin Crisis (cont.)

- In June 1948, Soviet troops stopped all road and rail traffic to West Berlin, hoping to force Americans to renegotiate Germany’s status or give up Berlin.

- In response, Truman sent long-range bombers with atomic weapons to bases in Britain.

- Truman then ordered the Berlin airlift.

- For eleven months, cargo planes supplied Berliners with food, medicine, and coal.

- Stalin finally lifted the blockade on May 12.
The Berlin Crisis (cont.)

• With the threat of war still present, the American public and Congress supported American participation in a military alliance with Western Europe. 

• By April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a mutual defense alliance, was created with initially twelve countries joining. 

• The members agreed to come to the aid of any member who was attacked.
The Berlin Crisis (cont.)

- The U.S. and its allies allowed West Germany to join NATO. ↓
- Soviet leaders responded with the organization of a military alliance in Eastern Europe known as the **Warsaw Pact.**
Why was NATO created?

It was created by 12 countries, including the United States, Canada, and several Western European countries, as a mutual defense alliance in order to help maintain peace in Europe.
The Cold War Spreads to East Asia

• The Cold War spread to Asia.

• In China, Communist forces and Nationalist forces had been battling since the late 1920s.

• The two had stopped their war during World War II in an effort to resist Japanese occupation.

• With the end of World War II, civil war broke out again.

• The Nationalists were defeated after poor leadership caused the United States to stop sending aid.

(pages 662–663)
In October 1949, Communists set up the People’s Republic of China.

In early 1950, the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of friendship and alliance.

The United States was able to keep Communist China out of the United Nations while allowing Nationalists from Taiwan to retain their seats.
The Cold War Spreads to East Asia (cont.)

- When the United States lost China as its main ally in Asia, it adopted policies to encourage the quick recovery of Japan’s industrial economy.
- The U.S. saw Japan as its key in defending Asia.
Why did the United States change its policies toward Japan?

With the establishment of Communist China, the United States lost China as its ally in Asia. So the U.S. changed its policies toward Japan and encouraged the rapid recovery of Japan’s industrial economy because it saw Japan as the key to defending Asia.
The Korean War

- At the end of World War II, American and Soviet forces entered Korea to disarm Japanese troops stationed there.
- The Allies divided Korea at the 38th parallel of latitude.
- Soviet troops controlled the north and set up a Communist government.
- American troops controlled the south with an American-backed government.
- The Soviets gave military aid to the north, resulting in an expansive military.

(pages 663–665)
The Korean War (cont.)

- On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea.
- Truman asked the UN to act against the Communist invasion of South Korea.
- American, UN, and South Korean troops pushed back advancing North Korean troops.
The Communist Chinese government saw the UN troops as a threat and demanded that they stop advancing. ↓

After being ignored, China began a massive attack with hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops heading across the border, driving UN forces back.
The Korean War (cont.)

- General MacArthur demanded approval to expand the war against China.
- Truman refused MacArthur’s demands.
- MacArthur was fired after publicly criticizing the president.
- Truman was committed to limited war, a war fought to achieve a limited objective such as containing communism.
The Korean War (cont.)

- By 1951 UN forces had pushed Chinese and North Korean troops back across the 38th parallel.
- An armistice was signed July 1953.
The Korean War (cont.)

- The Korean War was an important turning point in the Cold War.

- Instead of just using political pressure and economic aid to contain communism, the United States began a major military buildup.

- The Korean War expanded the Cold War beyond Europe and into Asia.
Why did Truman refuse MacArthur’s demands to expand the war into China?

Truman did not want to expand the war into China or use the atomic bomb. Truman remained committed to a limited war to contain communism.
Checking for Understanding

Define Match the terms on the right with their definitions on the left.

A 1. the policy or process of preventing the expansion of a hostile power
   A. containment
   B. limited war

B 2. a war fought with limited commitment of resources to achieve a limited objective, such as containing communism
Review Facts  How did the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan address the spread of communism?

Under these, the United States would help any country fight against communism and would help rebuild economies to strengthen the resistance to communism.
Reviewing Themes

**Global Connections** What long-term Cold War strategy did the United States follow?

The United States followed the policy of containing communism through international aid, diplomacy, and a strong military.
Critical Thinking

**Evaluating** How did the Long Telegram influence American policy?

It recommended patient but firm and vigilant containment of Soviet expansion.
Interpreting Information on Time Lines

CIVIL WAR AND REVOLUTION IN CHINA

Late 1920s
Chinese Communists and Nationalists begin the struggle for control of the government.

1949
The Communists capture and control the capital, and popular support for the Nationalists declines.

August 1949
The United States discontinues aid to the Nationalists. The Nationalists flee to the small island of Taiwan.

October 1949
The victorious Communists establish the People's Republic of China.

Mid-1940s
The United States sends the Nationalist leader $2 billion to prevent a Communist takeover.

Directions: Answer the following question based on the time line.

Approximately how long did the United States financially support the Nationalist government of China?

F four months
G one year
H five years
J twenty years

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answer.