



## THE COLD WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD 1946-1952



WHAT WAS the catalyst for the economic boom that began in 1947?

HOW WAS Harry Truman able to win the 1948 presidential election?



WHAT WERE the origins of the Cold War?

WHAT WERE the major conflicts of the early Cold War?



WHAT WAS the "Second Red Scare?"





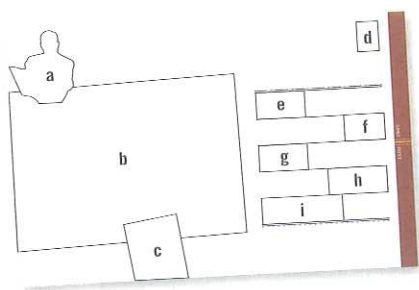
*My eyes popped when I got to town hall because the lobby and the stairs leading up to the hearing room were loaded with people. The upstairs hallway was jammed and the room was packed. People were standing along the walls. I remember there were a lot of children, toddlers—some in strollers—and many babies held by men and women. We expected there would be quite a turnout. But the extent of the crowd was a big surprise to me. . . . The meeting itself was rather brief. There were some speeches. No screaming and yelling the way people do at town meetings today. Everyone was quiet, anxious. I remember one guy in uniform, holding a baby, made a strong statement. These people were desperate. It was very moving. When the decision was announced, the crowd broke into applause.*

*Levittown was the last place on the planet I thought I would be living. But, as it turned out, we moved there because the house was such a good buy. . . . We loved living there. I came into work and told [Newsday managing editor Alan] Hathway that I would be eating crow for the rest of my days.*

Bernadette Rischer Wheeler, in “Levittown at Fifty: Long Island Voices,” at [www.lihistory.com/specsec/hsvoices.htm](http://www.lihistory.com/specsec/hsvoices.htm); originally published in *Newsday*.

## IMAGE KEY

for pages 712–713



- a. A man sitting reading “The Mirror” with a headline about Lucille Ball.
- b. “The Cold War At Home and Abroad 1946-52.” Photo of mother and father with 3 children in fallout shelter.
- c. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization treaty with signature and seal.
- d. “Fallout shelter” sign.
- e. Unidentified model displaying a kitchen interior, photo 1950’s.
- f. American President Harry Truman shakes hands with supporters from a train car during a rally in the 1948 presidential campaign.
- g. Civilians atop bombed out ruins of buildings watching American C-54 cargo plane fly overhead during Allied airlift to bring food & supplies to besieged citizens of Soviet controlled Berlin.
- h. Soldiers in Korea.
- i. Senator Joseph McCarthy points to Oregon on an organizational map implying Communist Party organization in the United States.

**Cold War** The political and economic confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States that dominated world affairs from 1946 to 1989.

**BERNADETTE WHEELER** was a reporter for *Newsday*, the daily newspaper for the Long Island suburbs of New York, who covered the birth of the new community of Levittown. She remembers the meeting on May 21, 1947, when the local governing board approved construction of the new subdivision. The size of the crowd indicates the severity of the housing shortage after World War II and the intense desire of Americans to return to normal life. After years of hardship, they defined American ideals in terms of economic opportunity and the chance to enjoy national prosperity. Over the next decade, the residents who moved to Levittown and thousands of other new subdivisions would start the baby boom and rekindle the economy with their purchases of automobiles, appliances, and televisions.

This yearning to enjoy the promise of American life after years of sacrifice helps to explain why Americans reacted so fiercely to new challenges and threats. They watched as congressional conservatives and President Truman fought over the fate of New Deal programs. More worrisome was the confrontation with the Soviet Union that was soon being called the **Cold War**. Triggered by the Soviet Union’s imposition of communist regimes throughout eastern Europe, the Cold War grew into a global contest between the United States and the Soviets. By the time real war broke out in Korea in 1950, many Americans were venting their frustration by blaming international setbacks on internal subversion and by trying to root out suspected “reds.”

The Cold War would shape the United States and the world for a generation. Massive rearmament allowed U.S. presidents to act as international policemen in the name of democratic values—a vast change from earlier American goals to remain disengaged from the problems of other nations. Defense spending also reshaped American industry and helped stimulate twenty-five years of economic growth. The Cold War narrowed the range of political discussion, making many of the left-wing ideas of the 1930s taboo by the 1950s. It also made racial segregation and limits on immigration into international embarrassments and thus nudged the nation to live up to its ideals.



## LAUNCHING THE GREAT BOOM

When World War II ended, Americans feared that demobilization would bring a rerun of the inflation and unemployment that had followed World War I. In the first eighteen months of peace, rising prices, labor-management strife, and shortages of everything from meat to automobiles confirmed their anxiety. In 1947 and 1948, however, an economic expansion began that lasted for a quarter century. That prosperity would finance a military buildup and an activist foreign policy.

### RECONVERSION CHAOS

Japan's sudden surrender took U.S. officials by surprise. They had planned on taking two years to phase out military spending and reintroduce veterans to the domestic economy. Now their plans were obsolete. The Pentagon, already scaling back defense spending, canceled \$15 billion in war contracts in the first forty-eight hours after the victory over Japan. Public pressure demanded that the military release the nation's 12 million servicemen and servicewomen as rapidly as possible. GIs in Europe and the South Pacific waited impatiently for their discharge determined by length of time in uniform, service overseas, combat decorations, and number of children.

Veterans came home to shortages of both food in the grocery stores and consumer goods in the department stores. Automobiles were especially scarce; the number of vehicles registered in the United States had declined by 4 million during the war. For the privilege of spending a few hundred dollars on a junker, consumers sometimes had to pay used-car dealers for so-called accessories like \$150 batteries and \$100 lap robes.

Inflation squeezed factory workers, who had accepted wage controls during the war effort. Since 1941, prices had risen twice as fast as base wages. In the fall of 1945, more and more workers went on strike to redress the balance. By January 1946, some 1.3 million auto, steel, electrical, and packinghouse workers were off the job. Strikes in these basic industries shut other factories down for lack of supplies. Presidential committees finally crafted settlements that allowed steel and auto workers to make up ground lost during the war, but they also allowed corporations to pass on higher costs to consumers. One Republican senator complained of "unionists who fatten themselves at the expense of the rest of us." Bill Nation, who inspected window moldings at a GM plant in Detroit, wondered who the senator was talking about. The strike gave him an hourly raise of 18 cents, pushing his weekly income to \$59. After paying for food, housing, and utilities, that left \$13.44 for Bill, his wife, and their five children to spend on clothes, comic books, and doctor bills.

### ECONOMIC POLICY

The **Employment Act of 1946** and the **Taft-Hartley Act** of 1947 represented contradictory liberal and conservative approaches to the peacetime economy.

The Employment Act was an effort by congressional liberals to ward off economic crisis by fine-tuning government taxation and spending. It started as a proposal to ensure everyone's "right to a useful and remunerative job." Watered down in the face of business opposition, it still defined economic growth and high employment as national goals. It also established the **Council of Economic Advisers** to assist the president.

In fact, more than 2 million women provided some slack by leaving the labor force outright, so that unemployment rates were far lower than economists had predicted. Federal agencies hastened their departure by publishing pamphlets

**WHAT WAS** the catalyst for the economic boom that began in 1947?

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Post-war Economic Problems

- ◆ Military spending and military service came to an abrupt halt.
- ◆ Veterans came home to shortages in food and consumer goods.
- ◆ Inflation contributed to labor unrest.

**Taft-Hartley Act** Federal legislation of 1947 that substantially limited the tools available to labor unions in labor-management disputes.

**Council of Economic Advisers** Board of three professional economists established in 1946 to advise the president on economic policy.



American actors Dana Andrews and Virginia Mayo portray Fred and Marie Derry in the 1946 movie *The Best Years of Our Life*, a film about WWII soldiers returning from war and adjusting to their post-war lives.

RKO Radio Pictures/Hulton Archive

### QUICK REVIEW

#### The Taft-Hartly Act (1947)

- ◆ Effort to reverse gains made by labor in the 1930s.
- ◆ Public anger over strikes made passage of the act possible.
- ◆ Many middle-class Americans believed labor had gone too far.

asking *men* the pointed question, “Do you want your wife to work after the war?” In addition, consumer spending from a savings pool of \$140 billion in bank accounts and war bonds created a huge demand for workers to fill. Total employment rose rather than fell with the end of the war.

From the other end of the political spectrum, the Taft-Hartley Act climaxed a ten-year effort by conservatives to reverse the gains made by organized labor in the 1930s. The act passed in 1947 because of anger about continuing strikes. For many Americans, the chief culprit was John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers. The burly, bushy-browed, and combative Lewis was instantly recognizable—loved by his workers and hated by nearly everyone else. In April 1946, a forty-day coal strike cut into industrial production. The coal settlement was only days old when the nation faced an even more crippling walkout by railroad workers. Many middle-class Americans were convinced that organized labor needed to be curbed.

In November 1946, Republicans capitalized on the problems of reconversion chaos, labor unrest, and dissatisfaction with Truman. Their election slogan was simple: “Had enough?” The GOP won control of Congress for the first time since the election of 1928.

Adopted by the now firmly conservative Congress, the Taft-Hartley Act was a serious counterattack by big business on the power of large unions. It barred the closed shop (the requirement that all workers hired in a particular company or plant be union members) and blocked secondary boycotts (strikes against suppliers or customers of a targeted business). The federal government could postpone a strike by imposing a “cooling-off period,” which gave companies time to stockpile their output. Officers of national unions had to swear they were not Communists or Communist sympathizers, even though corporate executives had no similar obligation. The bill passed over Truman’s veto.

## THE GI BILL

Another landmark law for the postwar era passed Congress without controversy. Popularly known as the **GI Bill of Rights**, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 was designed to ease veterans back into the civilian mainstream. Rather than pay cash bonuses to veterans, as after previous wars, Congress tied benefits to specific public goals. The GI Bill guaranteed loans for buying a house or farm or starting a business. The program encouraged veterans to attend college with money for tuition and books plus monthly stipends.

The GI Bill made college degrees accessible to men with working-class backgrounds. In the peak year of 1947, veterans made up half of all college students. “We’re all trying to get where we would have been if there hadn’t been a war,” one vet attending Indiana University told *Time* magazine. Veterans helped convert the college degree—once available primarily to the socially privileged—into a basic business and professional credential.

An unfortunate side effect of the GI tide was to crowd women out of classrooms, although sixty thousand servicewomen did take advantage of educational benefits. Women’s share of bachelor’s degrees dropped from 40 percent in 1940 to 25 percent in 1950. The most common female presence on many campuses was working wives trying to make up the gap between Veterans Administration (VA) checks and the expenses of new families.

## ASSEMBLY-LINE NEIGHBORHOODS

Americans faced a housing shortage after the war. In 1947, fully 3 million married couples were unable to set up their own household. Most doubled up with relatives while they waited for the construction industry to respond. Hunger for housing

**GI Bill of Rights** Legislation in June 1944 that eased the return of veterans into American society by providing educational and employment benefits.



was fierce. Eager buyers lined up for hours and paid admission fees to tour model homes or to put their names in drawings for the opportunity to buy.

The solution started with the federal government and its VA mortgage program. By guaranteeing repayment, the VA allowed veterans to get home purchase loans from private lenders without a down payment. Eyeing the mass market created by the federal programs, William Levitt, a New York builder who had developed defense housing projects, built two thousand rental houses for veterans on suburban Long Island in 1947. His basic house had 800 square feet of living space in two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bath, and unfinished attic waiting for the weekend handyman. It gave new families a place to start. There were six thousand **Levittown** houses by the end of 1948 and more than seventeen thousand by 1951.

Other successful builders bought hundreds of acres of land, put in utilities for the entire tract, purchased materials by the carload, and kept specialized workers busy on scores of identical houses. Floor plans were square, simple, and easy for semiskilled workers to construct. For the first time, kitchens across America were designed for preassembled cabinets and appliances in standard sizes. “On-site fabrication” was mass production without an assembly line. Work crews at the Los Angeles suburb of Lakewood started a hundred houses a day as they moved down one side of the street and back up the other.

From 1946 through 1950, the federal government backed \$20 billion in VA and New Deal era Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans, approximately 40 percent of all home mortgage debt. Housing starts neared 2 million in the peak year of 1950. By the end of the 1940s, 55 percent of American households owned their homes. The suburban population grew much faster than the population of central cities, and the population outside the growing reach of metropolitan areas actually declined.

Unfortunately, the suburban solution to housing shortages also had costs. Vast new housing tracts tended to isolate women and children and did little to help African Americans. Discrimination excluded black workers and their families from new housing. Federal housing agencies and private industry worsened the problem by **redlining** older neighborhoods, which involved withholding home purchase loans and insurance coverage from innercity areas.

Public and private actions kept black people in deteriorating inner-city ghettos. When severe flooding in 1948 drove thousands of African Americans from wartime temporary housing in Portland, Oregon, for example, their only choice was to crowd into the city’s small black neighborhood. Chicago landlords squeezed an estimated 27,000 black migrants per year into run-down buildings, subdividing larger apartments into one-room “kitchenette” units with sinks and hot plates but no private bathrooms. Families that tried to find new homes in white neighborhoods on the edge of black ghettos often met violence—rocks through windows, fire bombs, milling mobs of angry white people.

## STEPS TOWARD CIVIL RIGHTS

A new generation of black leaders began working to reduce the gap between America’s ideal of equality and its performance. At the same time, a wave of lynchings and racist violence surged across the South after the war; special targets were black veterans who tried to register to vote. However, many white people felt uneasy about the contradiction between a crusade for freedom abroad and racial discrimination at home.

Caught between pressure from black leaders and the fear of alienating Southern Democrats, President Truman in 1946 appointed the Committee on Civil Rights, whose report developed an agenda for racial justice that would take two

## QUICK REVIEW

### Housing Shortages

- ◆ Americans faced housing shortages after the war.
- ◆ The VA mortgage program allowed veterans to purchase homes without a down payment.
- ◆ Builders responded with mass-produced housing.

**Levittown** Suburban Long Island community of postwar rental houses built by William Levitt for veterans of World War II.

**Redlining** The withholding of home purchase loans and insurance coverage from inner-city older neighborhoods by federal housing agencies and private industry.



## CHRONOLOGY

1944	Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) is passed.		Truman orders desegregation of the armed forces.
1945	United Nations is established.		Selective Service is reestablished. Truman wins reelection.
1946	Employment Act creates Council of Economic Advisers. George Kennan sends his "long telegram." Winston Churchill delivers his "iron curtain" speech.	1949	North Atlantic Treaty Organization is formed. Communist Chinese defeat Nationalists. Soviet Union tests an atomic bomb. Department of Defense is established.
1947	Truman Doctrine is announced. Truman establishes a federal employee loyalty program. Kennan explains containment policy in an anonymous article in <i>Foreign Affairs</i> . Marshall Plan begins providing economic aid to Europe. HUAC holds hearings in Hollywood. Taft-Hartley Act rolls back gains of organized labor. National Security Act creates the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency.	1950	Senator McCarthy begins his Red hunt. Alger Hiss is convicted of perjury. NSC-68 is drafted and accepted as U.S. policy. Korean War begins.
1948	Communists stage coup in Czechoslovakia. Berlin airlift overcomes Soviet blockade.	1951	Senate Internal Security Subcommittee begins hearings. Truman relieves MacArthur of his command. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are convicted of conspiring to commit espionage. Truce talks begin in Korea.
		1952	United States tests the hydrogen bomb. Eisenhower is elected president.

decades to put into effect. The Justice Department began to support antisegregation lawsuits filed by the NAACP.

The president also ordered "equality of treatment and opportunity" in the armed services in July 1948. The army in particular dragged its feet, hoping to limit black soldiers to 10 percent of enlistees. Manpower needs and the fighting record of integrated units in Korea from 1950 to 1953 persuaded the reluctant generals. Over the next generation, African Americans would find the military an important avenue for career opportunities.

More Americans were interested in the lowering of racial barriers in professional team sports. Individual black champions already included heavy-weight boxer Joe Louis and sprinter Jesse Owens. Jack Roosevelt (Jackie) Robinson, a proud and gifted African-American athlete, opened the 1947 baseball season as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson was the first African American to play for the modern major leagues. In the segregated society of the 1940s, Robinson also found himself a powerful symbol of racial change.

### CONSUMER BOOM AND BABY BOOM

Americans celebrated the end of the war with weddings; the marriage rate in 1946 surpassed even its wartime high. By 1950, the median age at which women married would be just over 20 years—lower than at any previous time in the twentieth century. The United States ended the 1940s with 7 million more married couples than at the decade's start.

New marriages jump-started the "baby boom," as did already married couples who decided to catch up after postponing childbearing during the war. In the early 1940s, an average of 2.9 million children per year were born in the United States; in 1946–1950, the average was 3.6 million. Those 3.5 million "extra" ba-



bies needed diapers, swing sets, lunch boxes, bicycles, and school rooms. Fast-growing families also needed to stock up on household goods. Out of an average household income of roughly \$4,000 in 1946 and 1947, a family of four had \$300 to \$400 a year for the furnishings and appliances that manufacturers were beginning to produce in growing volume. William Levitt tried to humorously capture the American satisfaction with the fruits of free enterprise when he said in 1948 that “no man who owns his house and lot can be a Communist; he has too much to do.”

## TRUMAN, REPUBLICANS, AND THE FAIR DEAL

From new radios to new homes to new jobs, the economic gains of the postwar years propelled Americans toward the political center. After fifteen years of economic crisis and world war, they wanted to enjoy prosperity. They wanted to keep the gains of the New Deal—but without risking new experiments.

Recognizing this attitude, Harry Truman and his political advisers tried to define policies acceptable to moderate Republicans as well as Democrats. This meant creating a bipartisan coalition to block Soviet influence in western Europe and defending the core of the New Deal’s social and economic agenda at home.

This political package is known as the strategy of the “vital center,” after the title of a 1949 book by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. The book linked anti-Communism in foreign policy with efforts to enact inclusive social and economic policies—to extend freedom abroad and at home at the same time. The vital center reflected the political reality of the Cold War years, when Democrats had to prove that they were tough on Communism before they could enact domestic reforms.

### TRUMAN’S OPPOSITION

In his campaign for a full term as president in 1948, Truman faced not only the Republicans but also new fringe parties on the far right and far left that allowed him to position himself in the moderate center. The blunt, no-nonsense Missourian entered the campaign an underdog; he soon looked like the country’s best option for steering a steady course.

Truman’s formal opponents represented the American Progressive party (an amalgam of left-leaning political groups), the **Dixiecrats** (officially the States’ Rights Democrats), and the Republicans. The president also ran against the Republican-controlled “donothing 80th Congress,” which he used as a punching bag at every opportunity.

Progressive candidate Henry Wallace cast himself as the prophet for “the century of the common man.” His background as a plant geneticist and farm journalist prepared him to deal with domestic policy but not world affairs. After Truman fired him from the cabinet in 1946 for advocating a conciliatory stance toward the Soviets, Wallace went to Europe to praise the USSR and denounced U.S. foreign policy. On his return, most liberal Democrats ran the other way when Wallace organized the Progressive party, leaving the Communist party to supply many of his campaign workers.

Wallace argued that the United States was forcing the Cold War on the Soviet Union and undermining American ideals by diverting attention from poverty and racism at home. He wanted to repeal the draft and destroy atomic weapons. His arguments had merit, for the United States was becoming a militarized society, but Wallace was the wrong person to change American minds. With his shy

---

HOW WAS Harry Truman able to win the 1948 presidential election?

---

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Harry S Truman National  
Historical Site, Library,  
and Museum,  
Independence, Missouri  
[www.nps.gov/hstr/](http://www.nps.gov/hstr/)

Dixiecrats States’ Rights  
Democrats.



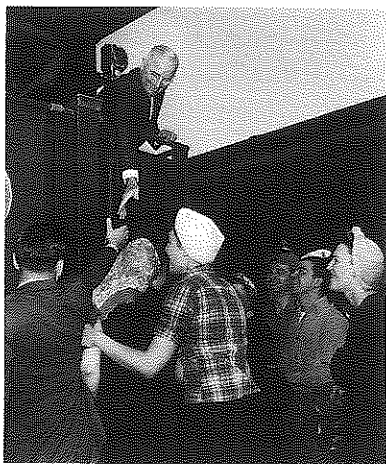
personality, disheveled appearance, and fanaticism about health food, he struck most voters as a kook rather than a statesman.

At the other political extreme were the Southerners who walked out when the 1948 Democratic National Convention called for full civil rights for African Americans. Mayor Hubert Humphrey of Minneapolis challenged the Democratic party “to get out of the shadow of states’ rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.”

When the angry Southerners met to nominate their own candidate, however, the South’s important politicians stayed away. Major Southern newspapers called the revolt futile and narrow-minded.

Tom Dewey, Truman’s strongest opponent, had been an effective governor of New York and represented the moderate Eastern establishment within the Republican party. Fortunately for Truman, Dewey lacked the common touch. Smooth on the outside, he alienated people who should have been his closest supporters. He was an arrogant campaigner, refusing to interrupt his morning schedule to talk to voters. He acted like a snob and dressed like the groom on a wedding cake.

Dewey was also saddled with the results of the 80th Congress (1947–1948). Truman used confrontation with Congress to rally voters who had supported the New Deal. Vote for me, Truman argued, to protect the New Deal, or vote Republican to bring back the days of Herbert Hoover. After his nomination in July 1948, Truman called Congress back into session and dared Republicans to enact all the measures for which *their* party claimed to stand. Congress did nothing, and Truman had more proof that the Republicans were all talk and no show.



**American President Harry Truman** shakes hands with supporters from a train car during a rally in the 1948 presidential campaign.

AP/Wide World Photos

### WHISTLE-STOPPING ACROSS AMERICA

In the 1948 presidential campaign, a major candidate crisscrossed the nation by rail for the last time and made hundreds of speeches from the rear platforms of trains. For the first time, national television broadcast the two party conventions. The Republican campaign issued a printed T-shirt that read “Dew-It With Dewey”—the earliest advertising T-shirt in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution.

Truman was a widely read and intelligent man who cultivated the image of a backslapper. “I’ll mow ’em down . . . and I’ll give ’em hell,” he told his vice presidential running mate, Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky. Crowds across the country greeted him with “Give ’em hell, Harry!” He covered 31,700 miles in his campaign train and gave ten speeches a day.

On the advice of political strategist Clark Clifford, Truman tied Dewey to inflation, housing shortages, and fears about the future of Social Security. In industrial cities, he hammered at the Taft-Hartley Act. In the West, he pointed out that Democratic administrations had built dams and helped turn natural resources into jobs. He called the Republicans the party of privilege and arrogance. The Democrats, he said, offered opportunity for farmers, factory workers, and small business owners.

Truman got a huge boost from Dewey’s unwillingness to fight. Going into the fall with a huge lead in the public opinion polls, Dewey sought to avoid mistakes. He failed to counter Truman’s attacks and packed his speeches with platitudes: “Our streams abound with fish.” “You know that your future is still ahead of you.” “Peace is a blessing that we all share.” The results astounded the pollsters, who had stopped sampling opinion in mid-October—just as a swing to Truman gathered strength. Wallace and Thurmond each took just under 1.2 million votes. Dewey received nearly 22 million popular votes and 189 electoral votes, but Truman won more than 24 million popular votes and 303 electoral votes (see Map 27–1).

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Truman’s 1948 Presidential Campaign

- ◆ Truman campaigned from the back of a train.
- ◆ Truman tied Dewey to inflation, housing shortages, and fears about Social Security.
- ◆ Dewey’s failure to campaign aggressively may have cost him the election.





## TRUMAN'S FAIR DEAL

Truman hoped to build on the gains of the New Deal. In his State of the Union address in January 1949, he called for a **Fair Deal** for all Americans. He promised to extend the New Deal and ensure “greater economic opportunity for the mass of the people.”

In the Housing Act of 1949, the federal government reaffirmed its concern about families who had been priced out of the private market. Passed with the backing of conservative Senator Robert Taft—“Mr. Republican” to his admirers—the act provided money for local housing agencies to buy, level, and resell land for housing. The intent was to level slums and replace them with affordable modern apartments. The program never worked as intended because of scanty appropriations and poor design of the replacement housing, but it established the goal of decent housing for all Americans.

In 1950, Congress revitalized the weak Social Security program. Benefits went up by an average of 80 percent, and 10.5 million additional people received old-age and survivors’ insurance. Most of the new coverage went to rural and small-town people.

Congress rejected other Fair Deal proposals that would remain on the national agenda for decades. A plan to alter the farm subsidy system to favor small farmers rather than agribusiness went nowhere. A Senate filibuster killed a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission to fight racial discrimination in hiring. The medical establishment blocked a proposal for national health insurance as “socialistic.” The overall message from Truman’s second term was clear: Americans liked what the New Deal had given them but were hesitant about new initiatives.

## CONFRONTING THE SOVIET UNION

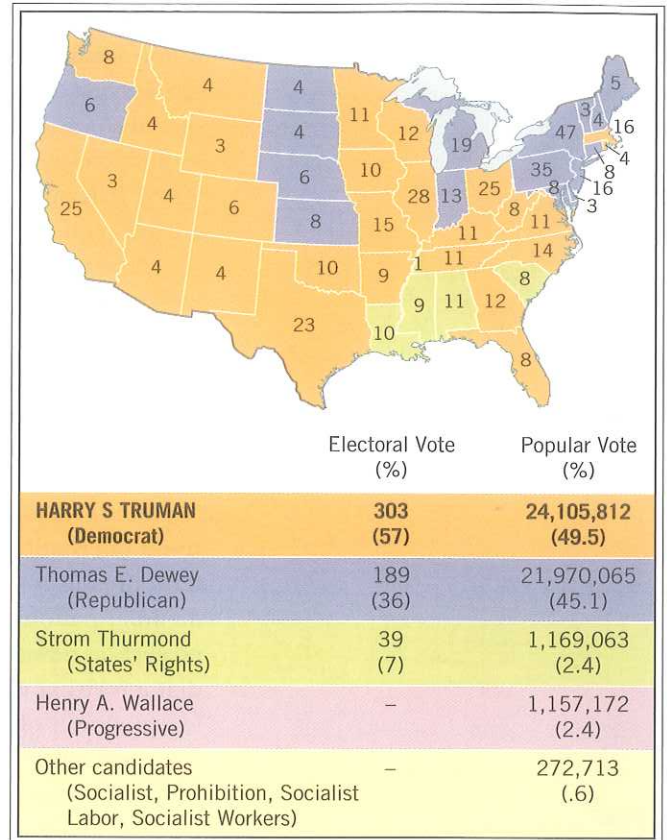
In 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union were allies, victorious against Germany and planning the defeat of Japan. By 1947, they were engaged in a diplomatic and economic confrontation and soon came close to war over the city of Berlin.

Over the next forty years, the United States and the USSR contested for economic, political, and military influence around the globe in a Cold War. The heart of Soviet policy was control of eastern Europe as a buffer zone against Germany. The centerpiece of American policy was to link the United States, western Europe, and Japan into an alliance of overwhelming economic power. Both sides spent vast sums on conventional military forces and atomic weapons that held the world in a balance of terror. They also competed for political advantage in Asia and Africa as newly independent nations replaced European colonial empires.

Americans and Soviets frequently interpreted each other’s actions in the most threatening terms, turning miscalculations and misunderstandings into crises. At home, a U.S. public that had suffered through nearly two decades of economic depression and war reacted to international problems with frustration and anger.

## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map27.1>



MAP 27–1

**The Election of 1948** Harry Truman won a narrow victory in the presidential election of 1948 by holding many of the traditionally Democratic states of the South and West and winning key industrial states in the Midwest. His success depended on the coalition of rural and urban interests that Franklin Roosevelt had pulled together in the 1930s.

WHY DO you think industrial states in the Midwest supported Harry S. Truman in the 1948 presidential election?

WHAT WERE the origins of the Cold War?



## THE END OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE

The Yalta Conference of February 1945 had recognized military realities by marking out rough spheres of influence. The Soviet defeat of Germany on the Eastern Front had made the USSR the only military power in eastern Europe. The American and British attacks through Italy and France had made the Western allies dominant in western Europe and the Mediterranean. The Soviets, Americans, British, and French shared control of defeated Germany, each with its own occupation zone of the country and its own sector of Berlin. The Western allies had the better of the bargain. Defeated Italy and Japan, whose reconstruction was firmly in Western hands, had far greater economic potential than Soviet-controlled Bulgaria, Romania, or Hungary.

The victorious powers argued bitterly about Germany and eastern Europe. For Poland, Truman and his advisers claimed that Yalta had assumed open elections on the American model. The Soviet Union saw Poland as the historic invasion route from the west; it claimed that Yalta had ensured that any Polish government would be friendly to Soviet interests and acted to guarantee that this would be so.

The United States tried to involve the USSR and eastern Europe in new international organizations, such as the United Nations (U.N.). The Washington-based **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank** were designed to revive international trade. The IMF stabilized national currencies against the short-term pressures of international trade. The World Bank drew on the resources of member nations to make economic development loans to governments for such projects as new dams or agricultural modernization. These organizations ensured that a reviving world economy would revolve around the industrial and technological power of the United States.

In 1946, the United States also presented a plan in the United Nations to control atomic energy. Bernard Baruch suggested that an international agency should oversee all uranium production and research on atomic explosives, but this plan was unacceptable to the Soviets, who did not want to open their atomic energy program to outside control or inspection. On-site inspection would remain a problem in arms control negotiations for the next half-century.

American leaders were also becoming convinced of Soviet aggressiveness. In February 1946, George Kennan, a senior American diplomat in Moscow, sent a “long telegram” to the State Department. He depicted a USSR driven by expansionist Communist ideology. The Soviets, he argued, would constantly probe for weaknesses in the capitalist world. The best response was firm resistance to protect the western heartlands.

Lacking the strength to shape Europe on its own, Great Britain repeatedly nudged the United States into blocking Soviet influence. Speaking at Westminster College in Missouri in March 1946, Winston Churchill warned that the USSR had dropped an “iron curtain” across the middle of Europe and urged a firm Western response.

Truman’s foreign policy advisers shared the belief in an aggressive Soviet Union. Administration leaders did not fear an immediate Soviet military threat to the United States itself, for they knew that World War II had exhausted the USSR, but they also knew that the Soviets were strong enough to brush aside the U.S. occupation forces in Germany. Added to military apprehension were worries about political and economic competition. Communist parties in war-ravaged Europe and Japan were exploiting discontent. In Asia and Africa, the allegiance of nationalists who were fighting for independence from France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands remained in doubt. America’s leaders worried that much of the Eastern Hemisphere might fall under Soviet control and turn its back on North America.



WHERE TO LEARN MORE



United Nations Headquarters,  
New York, New York

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



27-1

George F. Kennan,  
“Long Telegram” (1946)

### International Monetary Fund

International organization established in 1945 to assist nations in maintaining stable currencies.

**World Bank** Designed to revive postwar international trade, it drew on the resources of member nations to make economic development loans to governments for such projects as new dams or agricultural modernization.



Truman and the “wise men” who made up his foreign policy circle ignored examples of Soviet caution and conciliation. The Soviets withdrew troops from Manchuria in northern China and acquiesced in America’s control of defeated Japan. They allowed a neutral but democratic government in Finland and technically free elections in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (although it was clear that Communists would do well there). They demobilized much of their huge army and reduced their forces in eastern Europe while expecting a falling out between capitalist Britain and the United States.

However, the Soviet regime also did more than enough to justify American fears. The USSR pressured Turkey to give it partial control of the exit from the Black Sea. It retained troops in northern Iran until warned out by the United States. The Soviets were ruthless in support of Communist control in Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland. U.S. policymakers read these Soviet actions as a rerun of Nazi aggression and determined not to let a new totalitarian threat undermine Western power.

### THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE AND THE MARSHALL PLAN

Early in 1947, Truman and his advisers decided on decisive action. The British could no longer afford to back the Greek government that was fighting Communist rebels, and U.S. officials feared that a Communist takeover in Greece would threaten the stability of Italy, France, and the Middle East. On March 12, he told Congress that the United States faced a “fateful hour.” Taking the advice of Senator Arthur Vandenberg to “scare the hell out of the country,” he said that only the appropriation of \$400 million to fight Communism in Greece and Turkey could secure the free world. Congress agreed, and the United States became the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean.

In a sweeping declaration that became known as the **Truman Doctrine**, the president pledged that “It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. . . . I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.”

Meanwhile, Europe was sliding toward chaos. Germany was close to famine after the bitter winter of 1946–1947. Western European nations were bankrupt and unable to import raw materials for their factories. Overstressed medical systems could no longer control diseases such as tuberculosis. Communist parties had gained in Italy, France, and Germany.

Secretary of State George C. Marshall announced the European Recovery Plan on June 5, 1947. What the press quickly dubbed the **Marshall Plan** committed the United States to help rebuild Europe. The United States invited Soviet and eastern European participation, but the Soviets refused, instead organizing their eastern European satellites in their own association for Mutual Economic Assistance, or Comecon, in 1949. In western Europe, the aid from the Marshall Plan totaled \$13.5 billion over four years. It met many of Europe’s economic needs and quieted class conflict. Because Europeans spent much of the aid on U.S. goods and machinery and because economic recovery promised markets for U.S. products, business and labor both supported it. In effect, the Marshall Plan created an “empire by invitation” in which Americans and Europeans jointly planned European recovery.

U.S. policy in Japan followed the pattern set in Europe. As supreme commander of the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur acted as Japan’s post-war dictator. He tried to change the values of the old war-prone Japan through social reform, democratization, and demilitarization. At the end of 1947, however,

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### Post-war Foreign Policy

- ◆ Truman launched the nation into a global battle against communism
- ◆ The U.S. pledged to help countries that faced external pressure or internal revolution.
- ◆ The U.S. played a decisive role in the rebuilding of Europe.

**Truman Doctrine** President Harry Truman’s statement in 1947 that the United States should assist other nations that were facing external pressure or internal revolution.

**Marshall Plan** Secretary of State George C. Marshall’s European Recovery Plan of June 5, 1947, committing the United States to help in the rebuilding of post-World War II Europe.



**Berlin in 1948** was still a devastated city of gutted buildings and heaps of rubble. When the Soviet Union shut off ground access to Berlin's British, French, and American occupation zones, the city also became a symbol of the West's Cold War resolve. Allied aircraft lifted in food, fuel, and other essentials for West Berliners for nearly a year until the Soviets ended the blockade.

Getty Images/Time Life Pictures

**Berlin blockade** Three-hundred-day Soviet blockade of land access to United States, British, and French occupation zones in Berlin, 1948–1949.

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** Agency established in 1947 that coordinates the gathering and evaluation of military and economic information on other nations.

**National Security Council** The formal policymaking body for national defense and foreign relations, created in 1947 and consisting of the president, the secretary of defense, the secretary of state, and others appointed by the president.

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** Organization of ten European countries, Canada, and the United States whom together formed a mutual defense pact in April, 1949.

policymakers were fearful of economic collapse and political chaos, just as in Europe. The “reverse course” in occupation policy aimed to make Japan an economic magnet for other nations in East Asia, pulling them toward the American orbit and away from the Soviet Union. MacArthur reluctantly accepted the new policy of “economic crank-up” by preserving Japan’s corporate giants and encouraging American investment. At American insistence, the new Japan accepted American bases and created its own “self-defense force” (with no capacity for overseas aggression).

George Kennan summed up the new American policies in the magazine *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947. Writing anonymously as “X,” Kennan warned that the emerging Cold War would be a long conflict with no quick fixes.

### SOVIET REACTIONS

The bold American moves in the first half of 1947 put the USSR on the defensive. East of the iron curtain, Hungarian Communists expelled non-Communists from a coalition government. Bulgarian Communists shot opposition leaders. Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary signed defense pacts with the Soviet Union.

In early 1948, the Soviets targeted Czechoslovakia. For three years, a neutral coalition government there based on the model of Finland had balanced trade with the West with a foreign policy friendly to the USSR. In February 1948, while Russian forces assembled on the Czech borders, local communists pushed aside Czechoslovakia’s democratic leadership and turned the nation into a dictatorship and Soviet satellite within a week.

The climax of the Soviet reaction came on June 24, 1948, when Soviet troops blockaded surface traffic into Berlin, cutting off the U.S., British, and French sectors. The immediate Soviet aim was to block Western plans to merge their three occupation zones into an independent federal republic (West Germany). Rather than abandon 2.5 million Berliners or shoot their way through, the Western nations responded to the **Berlin blockade** by airlifting supplies to the city. Planes landed every two minutes at Berlin’s Tempelhof Airport. Stalin decided not to intercept the flights. After eleven months, the Soviets abandoned the blockade, making the Berlin airlift a triumph of American resolve.

### AMERICAN REARMAMENT

The coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin blockade shocked American leaders and backfired on the Soviets. Congress responded in 1948 by reinstating the military draft and increasing defense spending by 30 percent.

The United States had already begun to modernize and centralize its national security apparatus. The National Security Act of July 1947 created the **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** and the **National Security Council (NSC)**. The CIA handled intelligence gathering and covert operations. The NSC assembled top diplomatic and military advisers in one committee. In 1949, legislation also created the Department of Defense to oversee the army, navy, and air force (independent from the army since 1947).

In April 1949, ten European nations, the United States, and Canada signed the North Atlantic Treaty as a mutual defense pact. American commitments to the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** included military aid and the deployment of U.S. troops in western Europe. As Republican Senator Robert Taft warned in the ratification debate, NATO was the sort of “entangling alliance” that



the United States had avoided for 160 years. It was also the insurance policy that western Europeans required if they were to accept the dangers as well as the benefits of a revived Germany, which was economically and militarily necessary for a strong Europe.

Two years later, the United States signed similar but less comprehensive agreements in the western Pacific: the ANZUS Pact with Australia and New Zealand and a new treaty with the Philippines. The alliances reassured Pacific allies who were nervously watching the United States negotiate a unilateral peace treaty with Japan (ignoring the Soviet Union). Taken together, peacetime rearmament and mutual defense pacts amounted to a revolution in American foreign policy.

## COLD WAR AND HOT WAR

The first phase of the Cold War reached a crisis in the autumn of 1949. The two previous years had seen an uneasy equilibrium in which American success in southern and western Europe and the standoff over Berlin (the blockade ended in May 1949) balanced the consolidation of Soviet power in eastern Europe. Now, suddenly, two key events seemed to tilt the world balance against the United States and its allies. In September, Truman announced that the Soviet Union had tested its own atomic bomb. A month later, the Chinese Communists under Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) took power in China. The following summer, civil war in Korea sucked the United States into a fierce war with communist North Korea and China. The United States government accelerated a forty-year arms race with the Soviet Union.

### THE NUCLEAR SHADOW

Experts in Washington had known that the Soviets were working on an A-bomb, but the news shocked the average citizen. In 1946, advocates of civilian control had won a small victory when Congress gave control of atomic energy to the new Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The AEC tried to balance research on atomic power with continued testing of new weapons. Now Truman told the AEC to double the output of fissionable uranium and plutonium for “conventional” nuclear weapons.

A more momentous decision soon followed. Truman decided in January 1950 to authorize work on the “super” bomb—the thermonuclear fusion weapon that would become the hydrogen bomb (H-bomb). As would be true in future nuclear defense debates, the underlying question was how much capacity for nuclear destruction was enough. (See American Views, “Deciding on a Nuclear Arms Race.”)

Nuclear weapons proliferated in the early 1950s. The United States exploded the first hydrogen bomb in the South Pacific in November 1952. Releasing one hundred times the energy of the Hiroshima bomb, the detonation tore a mile-long chasm in the ocean floor. Great Britain became the third nuclear power in the same year. The Soviet Union tested its own hydrogen bomb only nine months after the U.S. test.

Under the guidance of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, Americans learned that they should always keep a battery-powered radio and tune to 640 or 1240 on the AM dial for emergency information when they heard air raid sirens. Schoolchildren learned to hide under their desks if they saw the blinding flash of a nuclear detonation.

Soldiers were exposed to posttest radiation with minimal protection. Nuclear tests in the South Pacific dusted fishing boats with radioactivity and forced islanders to abandon contaminated homes. Radioactive fallout from Nevada testing

WHAT WERE the major conflicts of the early Cold War?

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Nuclear Weapons

- ◆ Truman ordered in the Atomic Energy Commission to double the production of materials for nuclear weapons.
- ◆ The U.S. began work on the hydrogen bomb.
- ◆ The U.S. tested the first hydrogen bomb in 1952.



## ◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

### DECIDING ON A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE



*In 1950, the United States began work on a hydrogen (thermonuclear) bomb. The decision locked the United States and the Soviet Union into a nuclear arms race that lasted another forty years.*

*In the first document reprinted here, an excerpt from a letter to President Truman written on November 25, 1949, Lewis Strauss, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, urged work on the H-bomb. In the second, scientist Edward Teller agreed. A refugee from Nazi-dominated Europe who had worked at Los Alamos, Teller remained an advocate of massive defense spending through the 1980s.*

HOW DID memories of World War II affect this Cold War decision? How did U.S. policymakers evaluate the intentions of the Soviet Union?

Lewis Strauss,  
November 1949:

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the thermonuclear (super) bomb was suggested by scientists working at Los Alamos during the war. . . . I believe that the United States must be as completely armed as any possible enemy. From this, it follows that I believe it unwise to renounce, unilaterally, any weapon which an enemy can reasonably be expected to possess. I recommend that the President direct the Atomic Energy Commission to proceed with the development of the thermonuclear bomb, at highest priority. . . . Obviously the current atomic bomb as

well as the proposed thermonuclear weapon are horrible to contemplate. All war is horrible. Until, however, some means is found of eliminating war, I cannot agree with those of my colleagues who feel that an announcement should be made by the President to the effect that the development of the thermonuclear weapon will not be undertaken by the United States at this time. This is because I do not think the statement will be credited in the Kremlin . . . and because primarily until disarmament is universal, our arsenal must be not less well equipped than with the most potent weapons that our technology can devise.

Edward Teller,  
March 1950:

President Truman has announced that we are going to make a hydrogen bomb. . . . The scientist is not responsible for the law of nature. It is his job to find out how these laws operate. . . . However, it is not the scientist's job to determine whether a hydrogen bomb should be constructed, whether it should be used, or how it should be used. This responsibility rests with the American people and their chosen representatives. Personally, as a citizen, I do not know in what other way President Truman could have acted. . . . To my mind we are in a situation no less dangerous than the one we were facing in 1939, and it is of the greatest importance that we realize it. We must realize. . . . that democracy will not be saved by ideals alone.

Source: Lewis L. Strauss, *Men and Decisions* (1962).

contaminated large sections of the West and increased cancer rates among “downwinders” in Utah. Weapons production and atomic experiments contaminated vast tracts in Nevada, Washington, and Colorado and left huge environmental costs for later generations.

### THE COLD WAR IN ASIA

Communist victory in China's civil war was as predictable as the Soviet nuclear bomb but no less controversial. American military and diplomatic missions in the late 1940s pointed out that the collapse of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist regime was nearly inevitable, given its corruption and narrow support. But advocates for Jiang, mostly conservative Republicans from the Midwest and West, were certain that



Truman's administration had done too little. "China asked for a sword," complained one senator, "and we gave her a dull paring knife." Critics looked for scapegoats. Foreign service officers who had honestly analyzed the weakness of the Nationalists were accused of Communist sympathies and hounded from their jobs. The results were damage to the State Department and tragedy for those unfairly branded as traitors.

### NSC-68 AND AGGRESSIVE CONTAINMENT

The turmoil of 1949 led to a comprehensive statement of American strategic goals. In April 1950, the State Department prepared a sweeping report known as **National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68)**. The document described a world divided between the forces of "slavery" and "freedom" and assumed that the Soviet Union was actively and broadly aggressive, motivated by greed for territory and a "fanatic faith" in Communism. To defend civilization itself, said the experts, the United States should use as much force as needed to resist Communist expansion anywhere and everywhere.

Truman and his advisors in 1947 and 1948 had hoped to contain the Soviets by diplomacy and by integrating the economies of Europe and Japan with that of the United States. Now that the Soviets had the atomic bomb, NSC-68 argued that the United States needed to press friendly nations to rearm and to make its former enemies into military allies. It also argued the need for the nation to acquire expensive conventional forces to defend Europe. NSC-68 thus advocated nearly open-ended increases in the defense budget (which in fact tripled between 1950 and 1954).

Although it was not a public document, NSC-68's portrait of implacable Communist expansion would have made sense to most Americans; it certainly did to Harry Truman. The outbreak of war in Korea at the end of June 1950 seemed to confirm that Communism was a military threat. The thinking behind the report led the United States to approach the Cold War as a military competition and to view political changes in Africa and Asia as parts of a Soviet plan.

### WAR IN KOREA, 1950–1953

The success of Mao and the Chinese Communists forced the Truman administration to define national interests in East Asia and the western Pacific. The most important U.S. interest was Japan, still an industrial power despite its devastating defeat. The United States had shaped a more democratic Japan that would be a strong and friendly trading partner. Protected by American armed forces, Japan would be part of a crescent of offshore strong points that included Alaska, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand.

Two questions remained unresolved at the start of 1950 (and were still troublesome at the turn of the century). One was the future of Taiwan and the remnants of Jiang's regime. The other question was Korea, whose own civil war would soon bring the world to the brink of World War III.

The Korean peninsula is the closest point on the Asian mainland to Japan. With three powerful neighbors—China, Russia, and Japan—Korea had always had to fight for its independence. As World War II ended, Soviet troops had moved down the peninsula from the north and American forces had landed in the south, creating a situation similar to that in Germany. The 38th parallel, which Russians and Americans set as the dividing line between their zones of occupation, became a de facto border. The United States in 1948 recognized an independent South Korea, with its capital at Seoul, under a conservative government led by Syngman Rhee. Rhee's support came from large landowners and a police force trained by

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### American Strategy

- ◆ U.S. experts believed that America needed to use force to oppose communism around the world.
- ◆ They argued that the U.S. should pressure allies to rearm.
- ◆ They argued for the introduction of conventional forces in Europe.



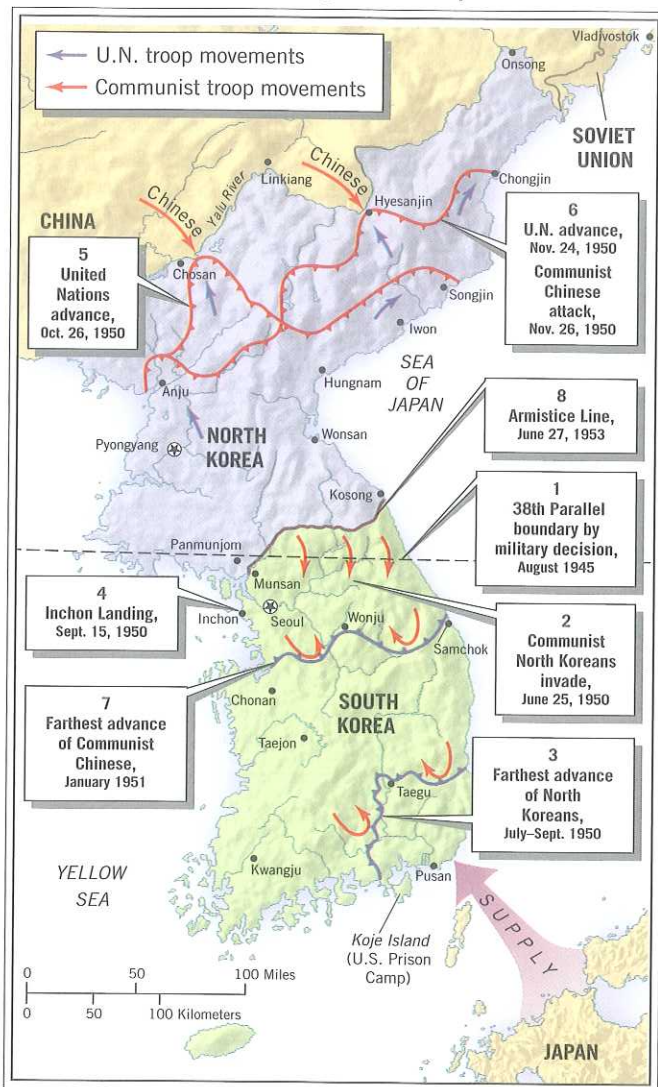
27-3  
National Security Council  
Memorandum Number 68  
(1950)

**National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68)** Policy statement that committed the United States to a military approach to the Cold War.



## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map27.2>



**MAP 27-2**

**The Korean War** After rapid reversals of fortune in 1950 and early 1951, the war in Korea settled into stalemate. Most Americans agreed with the need to contain Communist expansion but found it deeply frustrating to fight for limited objectives rather than total victory.

**WAS A** stalemate the inevitable end to the Korean War? Why or why not?

the Japanese between 1910 and 1945. The Soviets recognized a separate North Korea, whose leader, Kim Il Sung, advocated radical social and political change. Both leaders hoped to unify all Koreans under their own rule, and each crushed political dissent and tried to undermine the other with economic pressure and commando raids.

United States military planners assumed that U.S. air power in Japan could neutralize unfriendly forces on the Korean peninsula. But Korea remained politically important as the only point of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union in Asia.

On June 25, 1950, North Korea, helped by Soviet equipment and Chinese training, attacked South Korea, starting the **Korean War**, which lasted until 1953 (see Map 27–2). Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson believed that Moscow lay behind the invasion. They worried that the attack was a ploy to suck America's limited military resources into Asia before a bigger war came in Europe or the Middle East. The war was really an intensification of an ongoing civil war that Stalin was willing to exploit. Kim originated the invasion plan and spent a year persuading Stalin to agree to it. Stalin hoped that the conquest of South Korea would force Japan to sign a favorable treaty with the USSR.

As the South Korean army collapsed, Truman committed American ground troops from Japan on June 30. The United States also had the diplomatic good fortune of securing an endorsement from the United Nations. Because the USSR was boycotting the UN, the Korean conflict remained officially a United Nations action, although U.S. Generals Douglas MacArthur, Matthew Ridgway, and Mark Clark ran the show as the successive heads of the U.N. command.

### THE POLITICS OF WAR

The first U.S. combat troops were outnumbered, outgunned, and poorly trained. They could not stop the North Koreans. By early August, the Americans clung to a narrow toehold around the port of Pusan on the tip of the Korean peninsula. As reinforcements arrived from the United States, however, MacArthur transformed the war with a daring amphibious counterattack at Inchon, 150 miles behind North Korean lines. The North Korean army was already overextended and exhausted. It collapsed and fled north.

MacArthur and Washington officials disregarded warnings by China that it would enter the war if the United States tried to reunite Korea by force. U.S. and South Korean troops rolled north, drawing closer and closer to the boundary between North Korea and China.

Chinese forces attacked MacArthur's command in late October but then disappeared. MacArthur dismissed the attacks as a token gesture. But on November 26, the Chinese struck the overextended American columns. They had massed 300,000 troops without detection by American aviation. Their assault drove the U.N. forces into a two-month retreat that again abandoned Seoul.

**Korean War** Pacific war started on June 25, 1950, when North Korea, helped by Soviet equipment and Chinese training, attacked South Korea.





In March 1951, with the U.N. forces again pushing north, Truman prepared to offer a cease-fire that would have preserved the separate nations of South and North Korea. MacArthur tried to preempt the president by demanding that China admit defeat or suffer the consequences. He then published a direct attack on the administration's policy of limiting the Asian war to ensure the security of Europe.

To protect civilian control of the armed forces, he was forced to relieve MacArthur of his commands on April 11, 1951. The general returned to parades and a hero's welcome when he addressed a joint session of Congress. He quoted a line from an old barracks song: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away." But Truman remained in charge of the war.

In Korea itself, U.S. and South Korean forces stabilized a strong defensive line that cut diagonally across the 38th parallel. For two years, U.N. and Communist armies faced boredom that alternated with fierce inch-by-inch battles for territory with names like Heartbreak Ridge and Pork Chop Hill. In the air, the arrival of new F-86 Sabers in 1952 allowed American pilots to clear the skies of Chinese aviators in Russian-made MIG 15s.

After 1950, the Chinese were careful to keep their war planes north of the ground combat zone, the Russians had stayed out of the war, and the United States was willing to accept a divided Korea.

Truce negotiations stalled over the political decision to turn free choice for Chinese POWs into a symbol of resistance to Communism. Nearly half of the 140,000 U.S. casualties came after the truce talks started. The war was a decisive factor behind the Republican victory in the November 1952 elections and dragged on until June 1953, when an armistice returned the peninsula roughly to its pre-war political division.

The blindly ambitious attack into North Korea was one of the great failures of intelligence and strategic leadership in American military history. Nearly everyone in Washington shared the blame for letting the excitement of battlefield victories obscure limited war aims. Civilian leaders couldn't resist the desire to roll back Communism. Truman hoped for a striking victory before the 1950 congressional elections. The Joint Chiefs of Staff failed to question a general with MacArthur's heroic reputation. MacArthur himself allowed ambition and wishful thinking to jeopardize his army.

The war in Korea was a preview of Vietnam fifteen years later. American leaders found themselves propping up an undemocratic regime to defend democracy. Both North Koreans and South Koreans engaged in savage political reprisals as the battlefield shifted back and forth. American emphasis on the massive application of firepower led U.S. forces to demolish entire villages to kill single snipers. General Curtis Le May estimated that Air Force bombings killed a million Koreans.

The Korean War helped to legitimize the United Nations. In Washington, it confirmed the ideas behind NSC-68, with its call for the United States to lead an anti-Communist alliance. Two days after the North Korean invasion, President Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to protect the Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan, a decision that guaranteed twenty years of hostility between the United States and the People's Republic of China. In the same month, the United States began to aid France's struggle to retain control over its colony of Indochina, which included Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

In Europe, the United States pushed to rearm West Germany as part of a militarized NATO and sent troops to Europe as a permanent defense force. It increased military aid to European governments and secured a unified command for the national forces allocated for NATO. The unified command made West German rearmament acceptable to France and the smaller nations of western Europe.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



General Douglas MacArthur  
Memorial, Norfolk, Virginia





WHAT WAS the “Second Red Scare”?

## THE SECOND RED SCARE

The Korean War reinforced the second Red Scare, an assault on civil liberties that stretched from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s and dwarfed the Red Scare of 1919–1920. Legitimate concerns about espionage mixed with suspicions that Communist sympathizers in high places were helping Stalin and Mao (see the overview table “The Second Red Scare”).

Efforts to root out suspected subversives operated on three tracks. National and state governments established loyalty programs to identify and fire suspect employees. The courts punished members of suspect organizations. Congressional and state legislative investigations followed the whims of committee chairs. Anti-Communist crusaders often relied on dubious evidence and eagerly believed the worst. They also threatened basic civil liberties.

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE LOYALTY PROGRAM

The Communist party in the United States was actually in rapid decline after World War II. Many intellectuals had left the party over the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939. And the postwar years brought a series of failures. In 1946, Walter Reuther defeated a Communist for the presidency of the huge United Auto Workers union, and other large CIO unions froze Communists out of leadership positions.

Nevertheless, Republicans used red-baiting as a campaign technique in 1944 and 1946, setting the stage for a national loyalty program. Republicans in 1944 tried to frighten voters about “commydemocrats” by linking FDR, CIO labor unions, and Communism. Democrats slung their own mud by trying to convince voters that Hitler preferred the Republicans. Two years later, Republican campaigners told the public that the basic choice was “between Communism and Republicanism.” The argument helped dozens of Republicans, including a young navy veteran named Richard Nixon, win congressional seats.

President Truman responded to the Republican landslide with a loyalty program for federal employees, initiated in March 1947 with Executive Order 9835. Order 9835 authorized the attorney general to prepare a list of “totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, or subversive” organizations and made membership or even “sympathetic association” with such groups grounds for dismissal. The loyalty program applied to approximately 8 million Americans working for the federal government or defense contractors; similar state laws affected another 5 million.

Many accusations were just malicious gossip, but allegations stayed in a worker’s file even if refuted. Many New Dealers and people associated with presumably liberal East Coast institutions were targets. An Interior Department official boasted that he had been especially effective in squeezing out graduates of Harvard and Columbia.

Federal employees worked under a cloud of fear. Loyalty boards asked about religion, racial equality, and a taste for foreign films; they also tried to identify homosexuals, who were thought to be targets for blackmail by foreign agents. The loyalty program resulted in 1,210 firings and 6,000 resignations under Truman and comparable numbers during Dwight Eisenhower’s first term from 1953 to 1956.

### NAMING NAMES TO CONGRESS

The congressional hunt for subversives had its roots in 1938 when Congressman Martin Dies, a Texas Democrat, created the Special Committee on Un-American Activities. Originally intended to ferret out pro-Fascists, the Dies Committee evolved into the permanent **House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)** in 1945. It investigated “un-American propaganda” that attacked constitutional government.

**House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)** Originally intended to ferret out pro-Fascists, it later investigated “un-American propaganda” that attacked constitutional government.



# OVERVIEW

## THE SECOND RED SCARE

Type of Anti-Communist Effort	Key Tools	Results
Employee loyalty programs	U.S. attorney general's list of subversive organizations	Thousands of federal and state workers fired, careers damaged
Congressional investigations	HUAC McCarren Committee Army-McCarthy hearings	Employee blacklists, harassment of writers and intellectuals
Criminal prosecutions	Trials for espionage and conspiracy to advocate violent overthrow of the U.S. government	Convictions of Communist party leaders (1949), Rosenbergs (1951)

One of HUAC's juiciest targets was Hollywood. In 1946, Americans bought an average of 90 million tickets every *week*. But Hollywood's reputation for loose morals, high living, foreign-born directors, Jewish producers, and left-leaning writers aroused the suspicions of many congressmen. HUAC sought to make sure that no un-American messages were being peddled through America's most popular entertainment.

When the hearings opened in October 1947, studio executives assured HUAC of their anti-Communism. So did popular actors Gary Cooper and Ronald Reagan. In contrast, eight screenwriters and two directors—the Hollywood Ten—refused to discuss their past political associations, citing the free speech protections of the First Amendment to the Constitution. HUAC countered with citations for contempt of Congress. The First Amendment defense failed when it reached the Supreme Court, and the ten went to jail in 1950.

HUAC changed the politics of Hollywood. Before 1947, it had been fashionable to lean toward the left. After the hearings, it was imperative to tilt the other way. The government refused to let British-born Charlie Chaplin reenter the United States in 1952 because of his left-wing views. Other actors, writers, and directors found themselves on the Hollywood blacklist, banned from jobs where they might insert Communist propaganda into American movies.

At the start of 1951, the new Senate Internal Security Subcommittee joined the sometimes bumbling HUAC. The McCarran Committee, named for the Nevada senator who chaired it, targeted diplomats, labor union leaders, professors, and schoolteachers. The real point of the investigations was not to force personal confessions from witnesses but to badger them into identifying friends and associates who might have been involved in suspect activities.

The only sure way to avoid “naming names” was to respond to every question by citing the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which protects Americans from testifying against themselves. Many Americans wrongly assumed that citing the amendment was a sure sign of guilt, not a matter of principle, and talked about “Fifth Amendment Communists.”

State legislatures imitated Congress by searching for “Reducators” among college faculty in such states as Oklahoma, Washington, and California. College presidents frequently fired faculty who took the Fifth Amendment. The experience of an economics professor fired from the University of Kansas City after testimony before the McCarran Committee was typical. He found it hard to keep any job once his name had been in the papers. A local dairy fired him because it thought its customers might be uneasy having a radical handle their milk bottles.



27-2

Ronald Reagan, Testimony  
Before the House Un-American  
Activities Committee (1947)



## SUBVERSION TRIALS

In 1948, the Justice Department indicted the leaders of the American Communist party under the Alien Registration Act of 1940. Eleven men and women were convicted in 1949 of conspiring to advocate the violent overthrow of the United States government through their speech and publications. Some of the testimony came from Herbert Philbrick, an advertising manager and FBI informer who had posed as a party member. Philbrick parlayed his appearance into a bestseller titled *I Led Three Lives* and then into a popular television series on which the FBI foiled Communist spies every Friday night.

Then, in 1948, former Communist Whittaker Chambers named Alger Hiss as a Communist with whom he had associated in the 1930s. Hiss, who had held important posts in the State Department, sued Chambers for slander. As proof, Chambers gave Congressman Richard Nixon microfilms that he had hidden inside a pumpkin on his Maryland farm. Tests seemed to show that the “pumpkin papers” were State Department documents that had been copied on a typewriter that Hiss had once owned. The Justice Department indicted Hiss for perjury—lying under oath. A first perjury trial ended in deadlock, but a second jury convicted Hiss in January 1950.

The essence of the Hiss case has been a matter of faith, not facts. Even his enemies agreed that any documents he might have stolen were of limited importance. His smugness as a member of the East Coast establishment enraged them. To his opponents, Hiss stood for every wrong turn that the nation had taken since 1932. Many supporters believed that he had been framed. Both sides claimed support from Soviet records that became public in the 1990s.

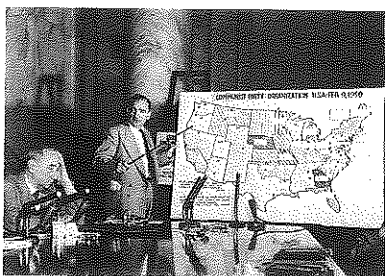
In 1950, the British arrested nuclear physicist Klaus Fuchs, who confessed to passing atomic secrets to the Soviets when he worked at Los Alamos in 1944 and 1945. The “Fuchs spy ring” soon implicated Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, New York radicals of strong beliefs but limited sophistication. Convicted in 1951 of the vague charge of conspiring to commit espionage, they were sent to the electric chair in 1953 after refusing to buy a reprieve by naming other spies.

As in the case of Alger Hiss, the government had a plausible but not airtight case against the Rosenbergs. There is no doubt that Julius Rosenberg was a convinced Communist, and he was likely a minor figure in an atomic spy net, but it is likely that Ethel Rosenberg was charged with crimes to pressure her husband into confessing.

## SENATOR MCCARTHY ON STAGE

The best-remembered participant in the second Red Scare was Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. He burst into national prominence on February 9, 1950. In a rambling speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, he supposedly stated: “I have here in my hand a list of 205 that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party and who, nevertheless, are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department.” McCarthy’s rise to fame climaxed with an incoherent six-hour speech to the Senate. He tried to document the charges by mixing previously exposed spies with people who no longer worked for the government or who never had worked for it. Over the next several years, his speeches were full of multiple untruths. He threw out so many accusations that the facts could never catch up.

Senators treated McCarthy as a crude outsider in their exclusive club, but voters in 1950 turned against his most prominent opponents. In 1951, McCarthy even called George Marshall, now serving as secretary of defense, an agent of Communism. The idea was ludicrous. Marshall was one of the most upright Americans of his generation, the architect of victory in World War II and a key contributor to the stabilization of Europe. Nevertheless, McCarthy was so popular that the Republicans featured him at their 1952 convention. That fall, the Re-



Senator Joseph McCarthy points to Oregon on an organizational map implying Communist Party organization in the United States.

UPI/Corbis/Bettmann



publicans' presidential candidate, Dwight Eisenhower, appeared on the same campaign platform with McCarthy and conspicuously failed to defend George Marshall—who was chiefly responsible for Eisenhower's fast-track career.

McCarthy's personal crudeness made him a media star but eventually undermined him. Given control of the Senate Committee on Government Operations in 1953, one of his investigations targeted the U.S. Army's promotion of an army dentist with a supposedly subversive background. Two months of televised hearings revealed the emptiness of the charges. The cameras also put McCarthy's style on trial. "Have you no decency?" asked the army's lawyer Joseph Welch at one point.

The end came quickly. McCarthy's "favorable" rating in the polls plummeted. The comic strip *Pogo* began to feature a foolishly menacing figure with McCarthy's face named Simple J. Malarkey. The U.S. Senate finally voted 67 to 22 in December 1954 to condemn McCarthy for conduct "unbecoming a Member of the Senate." When he died from alcoholism in 1957, he was repudiated by the Senate and ignored by the media.

## UNDERSTANDING MCCARTHYISM

The antisubversive campaign now called **McCarthyism**, however, died a slower death. Legislation, such as the Internal Security Act (1950) and the Immigration and Nationality Act (1952), remained as tools of political repression. HUAC continued to mount investigations as late as the 1960s.

Fear of Communist subversion reached deep into American society. In the early 1950s, Cincinnati's National League baseball team tried out a new name. Harking back to its origins as the Red Stockings, the team was now the "Redlegs," not the "Reds," to avoid associations with Communism. Cities and states required loyalty oaths from their employees; Ohio even required oaths from recipients of unemployment compensation.

In retrospect, at least four factors made Americans afraid of Communist subversion. One was a legitimate but exaggerated concern about atomic spies. A second was an undercurrent of anti-Semitism and nativism, for many labor organizers and Communist party members (like the Rosenbergs) had Jewish and eastern European backgrounds. Third was Southern and Western resentment of the nation's Ivy League elite. Most general, finally, was that it was basically reassuring if Soviet and Chinese Communist successes were the result of American traitors rather than Communist strengths.

Partisan politics mobilized the fears and resentments into a political force. From 1946 through 1952, the conservative wing of the Republican party used the Red Scare to attack New Dealers and liberal Democrats. The Republican elite used McCarthy until they won control of the presidency and Congress in 1952 and then abandoned him.

**McCarthyism** Anti-Communist attitudes and actions associated with Senator Joe McCarthy in the early 1950s, including smear tactics and innuendo.

## CONCLUSION

**T**he Cold War stayed cool because each side achieved its essential goals. The Soviet Union controlled eastern Europe, while the United States built increasingly strong ties with the NATO nations and Japan. Though the result was a stalemate that would last through the 1980s, it nevertheless absorbed huge shares of Soviet and American resources and conditioned the thinking of an entire generation.

The shift from prewar isolationism to postwar internationalism was one of the most important changes in the nation's history. To many of its advocates, internationalism represented a commitment to spread political democracy to other



nations. As the 1950s and 1960s would show, the results often contradicted the ideal when the United States forcibly imposed its will on other peoples. However, the new internationalism highlighted and helped change domestic racial attitudes.

The Truman years brought increasing stability. The economic chaos of 1946 faded quickly. By identifying liberalism at home with anti-Communism abroad, Truman's efforts to define a vital center helped protect the New Deal. If the Republicans had won in 1948, they might have dismantled the New Deal. By 1952, both presidential candidates affirmed the consensus that placed economic opportunity at the center of the national agenda. The suburban housing boom seemed to turn the dream of prosperity into reality for millions of families.

The United States emerged from the Truman years remarkably prosperous. It was also more secure from international threats than many nervous Americans appreciated. The years from 1946 to 1952 set the themes for a generation that believed that the United States could do whatever it set its mind to. As the world moved slowly toward greater stability in the 1950s, Americans were ready for a decade of confidence.

## SUMMARY



**Launching the Great Boom** Americans feared demobilization would bring inflation and unemployment, but the immediate postwar years ushered in an economic expansion that would last a quarter century; the resulting prosperity would finance a military buildup and activist foreign policy. Veterans benefited from VA mortgages and the GI Bill of Rights; the need for family housing fueled a boom and suburbs expanded; the housing boom was a product of the consumer and baby booms. The first steps toward civil rights for African Americans were taken; the crusade for freedom abroad had contrasted with the racial discrimination faced at home.

**Truman, Republicans, and the Fair Deal** The economic gains of the postwar years propelled Americans toward the political center; after depression and war they wanted prosperity. In his campaign for a full term as president in 1948, Truman faced third-party candidates in addition to Republican Thomas Dewey. Truman appealed to average Americans and his victory astounded the pollsters. The Fair Deal showed that Americans liked what the New Deal had given them but were hesitant about major new initiatives.

**Confronting the Soviet Union** By 1947 the former allies were involved in a conflict that came to be known as the Cold War. Both sides assumed the other's ill will, spent vast amounts on military forces and atomic weapons, and competed for political advantage around the globe. As the "iron curtain" divided Europe, the Marshall Plan committed the United States to aid European recovery. The announcement of the Truman Doctrine brought Soviet reactions climaxing in the Berlin blockade; the formation of the CIA, NSC, and signing mutual defense pacts such as NATO amounted to a revolution in American foreign policy.

**Cold War and Hot War** The news that the Soviet Union and China had developed nuclear bombs helped begin the "arms race" and the fear of nuclear war multiplied the apprehensions of the Cold War. America's strategic goals were outlined in NSC-68: America would use force to counter communist aggression. The first use of this policy was in Korea. North Korea, helped by Soviet equipment and Chinese training, attacked South Korea. The Korean War, which lasted until 1953, had global consequences and was a preview of another war to come.



**The Second Red Scare** The Korean War reinforced the second Red Scare, an assault on civil liberties that dwarfed the Red Scare of 1919–1920. The Cold War fanned fears of Communist subversion on American soil. Legitimate concerns about espionage mixed with suspicions that Communist sympathizers in high places were helping China and the Soviet Union. Loyalty programs and the Congressional hunt for subversives such as that by Senator Joseph McCarthy showed how deep the fear of Communists was in the country.

---

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the key differences between Harry Truman and congressional Republicans about the legacy of the New Deal?
  2. How did the postwar years expand opportunity for veterans and members of the working class? How did they limit opportunities for women?
  3. What foreign policy priorities did the United States set after 1945?
  4. How did the Cold War change character in 1949 and 1950?
- 

## KEY TERMS

<b>Berlin blockade</b> (p. 724)	<b>International Monetary Fund</b> (p. 722)	<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)</b> (p. 724)
<b>Central Intelligence Agency</b> (p. 724)	<b>Korean War</b> (p. 728)	<b>Redlining</b> (p. 717)
<b>Cold War</b> (p. 714)	<b>Levittown</b> (p. 717)	<b>Taft-Hartley Act</b> (p. 715)
<b>Council of Economic Advisers</b> (p. 715)	<b>Marshall Plan</b> (p. 723)	<b>Truman Doctrine</b> (p. 723)
<b>Dixiecrats</b> (p. 719)	<b>McCarthyism</b> (p. 733)	<b>World Bank</b> (p. 722)
<b>GI Bill of Rights</b> (p. 716)	<b>National Security Council</b> (p. 724)	
<b>House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)</b> (p. 730)	<b>National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68)</b> (p. 727)	

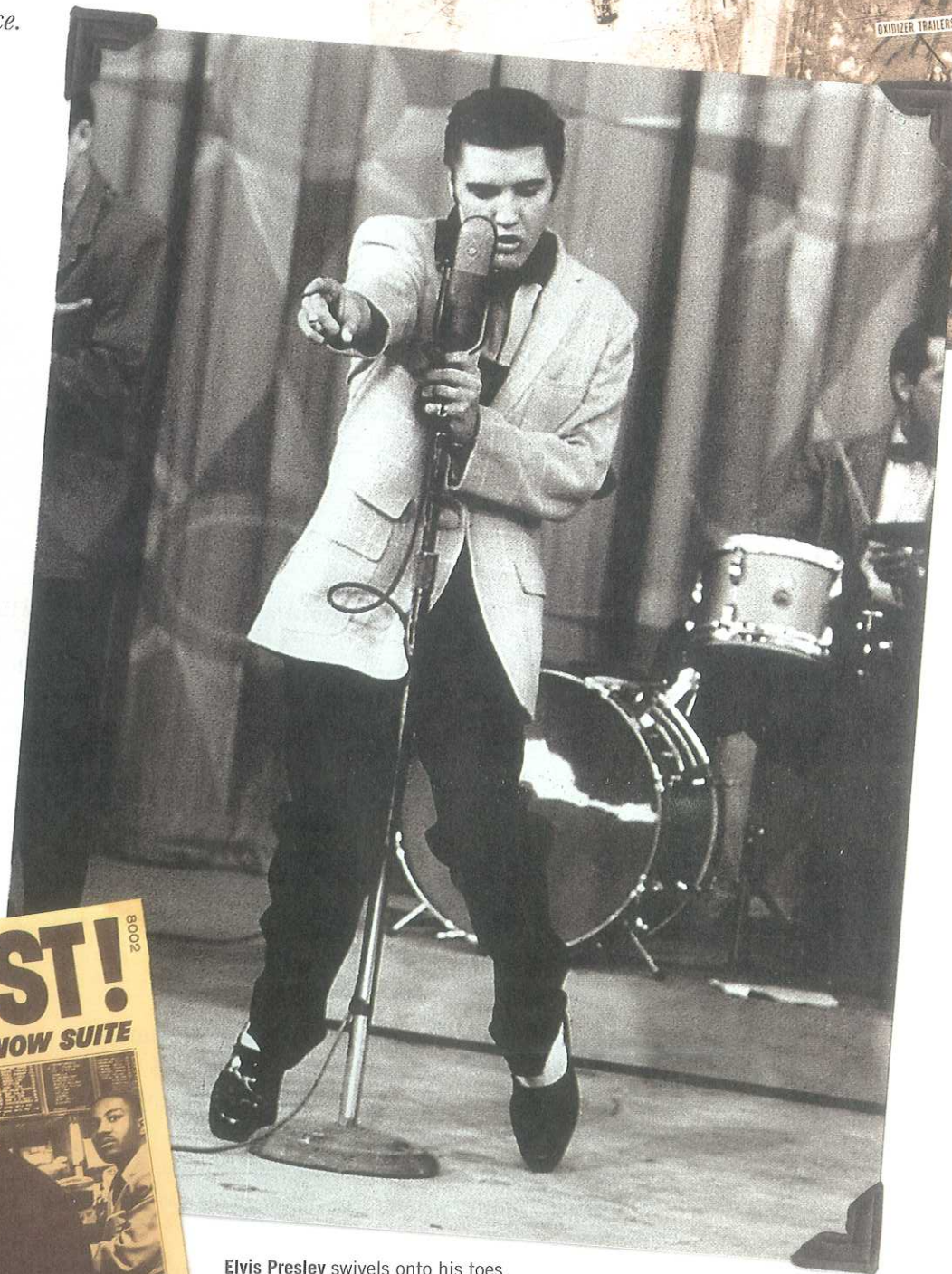
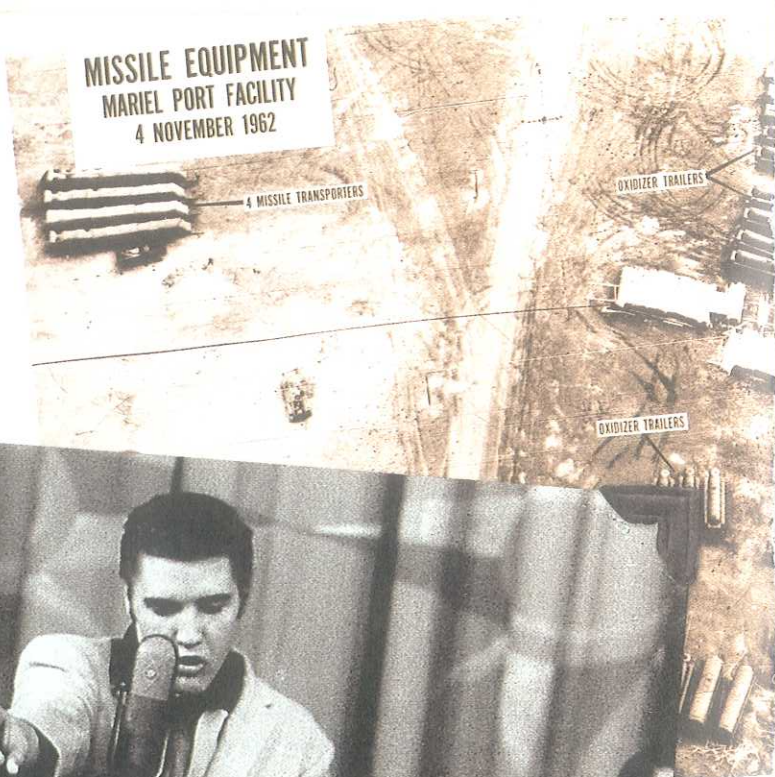
## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

- 🏛️ **Harry S Truman National Historical Site, Library, and Museum, Independence, Missouri.** The museum has exhibits on Truman's political career and U.S. history during his administration. Also in Independence is the Harry S Truman Courtroom and Office, with exhibits on his early career. [www.nps.gov/hstr/](http://www.nps.gov/hstr/)
- 🏛️ **General Douglas MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk, Virginia.** The MacArthur Memorial in downtown Norfolk commemorates the career of a key figure in shaping the postwar world.
- 🏛️ **United Nations Headquarters, New York, New York.** A tour of the United Nations complex in New York is a reminder of the new organizations for international cooperation that emerged from World War II. [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



For additional study resources for this chapter, go to:  
[www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter27](http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter27)

*We were trapped. And I thought, Okay, so I'm going to die here, in school . . . Even the adults, the school officials, were panicked, feeling like there was no protection . . . [A] gentleman, who I believed to be the police chief, said . . . "I'll get them out." And we were taken to the basement of this place.*



Elvis Presley swivels onto his toes while singing into a microphone on stage with his band.