Module 9: The Cold War – The 1950s
Topic 3 Content: The Spread of Communism

Introduction

In this interactivity, click the vertical tabs to view how communism spread and was contained.

Communist China

The Spread of Communism

Communist China

By 1950, communist forces had taken over China. Consequently, Americans began to fear communism would spread throughout the world, particularly if communist countries started to ally with each other.

Image: Chinese flag

Sidebar labels: Communist China | China and the Soviet Union | Truman Doctrine | NATO | Warsaw Pact

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China and the Soviet Union

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Image: Symbol for the Communist Party of China

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Truman Doctrine

In 1947, President Harry Truman developed the **Truman Doctrine**, a foreign policy principle focused on the **containment of communism**. It stated that the U.S. would not try to roll back or uproot communism where it already existed, but would work to keep it from spreading. It also stated that the U.S. would resist communist aggression into other countries. The Truman Doctrine became a guiding principle for American foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

NATO

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NATO

In 1949, Western European nations and the U.S. formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), because they feared the Soviet Union might invade Western Europe. Member countries of NATO pledged to defend each other if an attack from an external force occurred. It enabled countries to better coordinate military activities. NATO helped block communist expansion in Europe.

Image: NATO flag

The city of Berlin was located inside of Eastern Germany, which was controlled by the Soviet Union. West Berlin was under the control of the United States, Great Britain, and France also known as the Allies. In June 1948, the Soviet Union prevented supplies from traveling by rail, road, or water to get to West Berlin. They were hoping that the Allied countries would give up Western Berlin to the Soviets. Instead, the allied countries banded together and began flying in supplies. Lasting for almost a year, the Berlin Airlift kept West Berlin supplied by airplane. At the height of the airlift, a plane would land at one Berlin airport every forty-five seconds.

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Warsaw Pact

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Warsaw Pact

In response to NATO, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact, a defense treaty with Eastern European nations that were under Soviet control. For the duration of the Cold War both NATO and the Warsaw Pact maintained opposing military forces in Europe.

Image: Warsaw Pact emblem

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