

HL Paper 3



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Sample

History for the IB Diploma Programme



The Americas

 Pearson

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**The Americas during
the Cold War
(1945–1991)**

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Key concepts:

Cause and consequence
Continuity and change
Significance
Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter examines why and how the Cold War transformed the Americas between 1945 and 1991, recasting the hemisphere's place in global affairs, through multiple perspectives. It presents the shifting foreign policies of the United States, Canada, and Latin American countries and explores how alignment and isolation alike turned states into pivotal regional and global actors. This chapter then shows how major crises and movements, reshaped domestic politics and redefined regional and global roles.

Timeline	
1947	Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Pact) creates hemispheric collective security.
1948	Organization of American States (OAS) founded in Bogotá.
1954	CIA-backed coup in Guatemala ousts Jacobo Árbenz.
1959	Cuban Revolution brings Fidel Castro to power.
1961	Alliance for Progress launched to promote reform and development in Latin America.
1961	Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails.
1962	Cuban Missile Crisis brings the US and USSR to the brink of nuclear war.
1965	US-led intervention in the Dominican Republic (Operation Power Pack).
1973	Military coup in Chile topples Salvador Allende; Pinochet regime begins. 1975: Operation Condor coordinates transnational repression among Southern Cone dictatorships.
1977	Torrijos–Carter Treaties set Panama Canal transfer and neutrality framework.
1979	Sandinistas overthrow Somoza in Nicaragua.
1983	US invasion of Grenada removes Marxist-leaning junta.
1986–1987	Iran–Contra scandal exposes covert US support to Contras.
1991	Collapse of the USSR marks Cold War denouement in the hemisphere.

Inquiry topic: The impact of the Cold War during the presidencies of Harry S Truman and Dwight E Eisenhower

Truman's containment policy

The Second World War came to an end in 1945, and the US and the USSR emerged as global superpowers. Both economic and ideological factors played an important role in determining whether their wartime alliance would survive.



Figure 4.1 Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at the Yalta Conference, February 11, 1945

In November 1943, the Big Three (Stalin (USSR), Roosevelt (US) and Churchill (GB)) met in Tehran, Iran, for their first wartime conference, at which they discussed what would happen to certain territories after a German defeat in the war. In February 1945, they met again, at Yalta, in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Red Army had driven the German forces back into Germany and, after the D-Day landings in France, Paris was liberated and the Allied forces marched towards the Rhine. At Yalta, there were discussions on what to do with Germany when it surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. It was agreed to divide Germany into **zones of occupation** and to divide Berlin, the capital city, into sectors to be occupied by the victorious powers. A similar agreement was reached over Austria, which had been absorbed into the German Reich (Nazi Germany) in 1938.

Activity 1

ATL Research, thinking, self-management and social skills

Working in pairs, research the issues discussed at Tehran (1943) and Yalta (1945), and determine how far the Big Three a) agreed or b) disagreed about them.

Conceptual Focus: Cause and Consequence

The Cold War is often seen as a consequence of the growing distrust among Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill when the fate of post-war Germany, in particular, was being discussed at Yalta. As the Cold War progressed, decisions made by leaders were the cause of proxy wars, revolutions, and crises.



The Declaration on Liberated Europe, signed at the Yalta Conference (also called the Crimea Conference), stated that, in theory, free and fair elections would be held in territory liberated by the Allied forces. Although this had been agreed on by the Big Three, Roosevelt was aware of Stalin's determination to create a security zone for the Soviet Union that would stretch across Eastern Europe.

On April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died. As vice president, Truman was immediately summoned to the White House where he was told the news by the president's widow, Eleanor Roosevelt.

As president, Truman now had the difficult task of ending the war; negotiating the post-war recovery; and, although he was not yet aware of this, deciding whether to use the **atomic bomb (A-bomb)**. Truman was informed of the Manhattan Project (a top-secret US research and development project focused on creating the first atomic bomb) only on April 24, 1945 when he received a letter from Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, asking for a meeting to discuss a 'highly secret matter'. Meanwhile, events were moving rapidly. On April 30, 1945, Hitler took his own life in his bunker in Berlin and on May 8, 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender ending the war in Europe.

Truman and the Cold War – relations with the USSR and containment

Roosevelt appeared to get on well with Stalin and there is some speculation that their seemingly warm relationship could have continued after the war. Truman, however, is often described as strongly anti-communist and is blamed for worsening relations with the Soviet Union and therefore contributing to the start of the Cold War – in particular, in relation to the meetings on April 22 and 23 between Truman and Vyacheslav Molotov, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. Molotov was on his way to the opening ceremony of the UN in San Francisco and stopped off in Washington to make a courtesy call at the White House. Edward Stettinius, then Secretary of State, advised Truman to take this opportunity to discuss Poland where, it was suspected, Stalin was not obeying agreements made at Yalta. Some historians consider this to have been the crucial meeting where relations between the US and the USSR took a downturn.

Activity 2

ATL Research skills

Carry out some research into different **perspectives** on the **significance** of the initial meeting between Molotov and Truman.

The Potsdam Conference – Truman and the bomb

In July, Truman prepared for the **Potsdam Conference** in Berlin, although Margaret Truman noted her father's reluctance as he thought the American people disliked 'seeing their presidents cavorting [enjoying themselves] abroad at state dinners in royal palaces' (source, year). He was also concerned about when and what to tell Stalin about the A-bomb, if the test was successful. However, film producer Oliver Stone and history professor Peter Kuznick state that Truman's principal reason for going to Potsdam was to make sure the Soviets were coming into the war with Japan. The timing of the conference was delayed by two weeks to allow for the testing of the A-bomb and when news of its success came through, Churchill noted how Truman's behavior changed as he became far more confident in his dealings with Stalin. Truman was surprised when Stalin barely reacted to being told that the US had a new weapon. According to post-revisionist American Historian Gaddis, unlike Truman who had not

been told anything until he became president, Stalin was well informed, by Soviet spies, of what was taking place at Los Alamos (the central site for the Manhattan Project).



Figure 4.2 Front row: (L-R) Attlee, Truman, and Stalin at the Potsdam Conference, 1945. Back row: (L-R) US Admiral William Leahy, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, US Secretary of State James Byrnes, and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov.

Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Stalin concluded that this was not meant to end the war so much as to demonstrate US power to the Soviet Union. Zubok quotes Yulii Khariton (the physicist who oversaw the building of the first Soviet atomic bomb) stating that the Soviet leaders viewed this as 'atomic blackmail against the USSR'.

Another interpretation, however, is that Truman used the bomb to save Allied lives. According to Margaret Truman, when Truman met with advisors in May 1945, he was told an estimated 500,000 Allied troops might be killed if the main islands of Japan were invaded. Even though, a month later, in a paper prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a much lower estimate of 193,500 Allied casualties was given, the losses would still be considerable.

Activity 3

ATL Research, thinking, and communication skills

The use of the A-bomb has been viewed differently at various times since 1945. Carry out some research to investigate this and consider what it tells us about the nature of historical knowledge.

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki

For the US, dominating in nuclear weaponry raised the question of whether the US should share its knowledge with the USSR. One proposal was to establish a UN Atomic Development Authority, an international organization to control research in



The USSR declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945 when it launched an invasion of Japanese-occupied Manchuria.

The Baruch Plan was an initial proposal by the US to set up United Nations Atomic Energy Commission that would take over the development of nuclear energy, arms, and all uranium mines across the world. Truman was in favour until relations cooled with Stalin.



the field of atomic energy as well as the mining of uranium and thorium (radioactive elements used in nuclear technology). Known as the Baruch Plan (see info box), this also stated that the US would give up its stockpile of weapons only after a guarantee that no other nation could build A-bombs. When it came before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it was rejected by the USSR. US relations with the USSR were showing signs of strain.

1946 – the year of rhetoric

When we consider the events of 1946, we will see that growing fear and suspicion further undermined the relationship between the US and USSR. The US suspected Stalin of wanting to expand Soviet influence. For example, there was mistrust over the withdrawal of the Red Army from its wartime occupation of northern Iran (see Info box) as well as concern over Stalin's use of 'salami tactics' (see Info box) in Eastern Europe. The growing tension meant that both sides examined every public speech in an attempt to understand the true intentions of their ideological opponents. When we look for the origins of Truman's policy of containment, perhaps its roots are to be found here.



During the Second World War, Iran was used as a route to supply the USSR with weapons. This was known as the Persian Corridor. When the ruler of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, was suspected of growing closer to Nazi Germany, the UK and the USSR invaded. The Shah abdicated in 1941 in favour of his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, and the Allied troops remained there until 1946. It was agreed that the occupation would end but Stalin aroused suspicion by being slow to withdraw the Soviet troops.

The term 'salami tactics' was used to describe how Communist Party members from Nazi occupied Europe who had spent the war years in Moscow returned to positions of authority in the new governments of their home countries. Once they had political control, there were able to close down the other political parties in a 'thin slice by thin slice' approach.

Stalin's speech and the Long Telegram

In February 1946, Stalin gave a speech in Moscow referring to the immense sacrifices made to win the Second World War and how yet more sacrifices would need to be made if the Soviet Union were to secure its borders. The US State Department wondered if this indicated a change in Soviet foreign policy and asked for clarification from George Kennan, a diplomat at the US embassy in Moscow. Kennan wrote an 8,000-word summary of Russian/Soviet history, known as the 'Long Telegram' in which he summarized what the Soviet Union's intentions might be and how Stalin planned to achieve them. According to Kennan, if the opportunity arose, the Soviet Union would always attempt to expand its influence, but it would back off if it met strong resistance. Although Kennan did not expressly propose containment until his famous Mr X article for the journal *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 (see Info box), it is likely that Truman's policy of containment began with the Long Telegram.

The Iron Curtain Speech

In March 1946, Truman invited Winston Churchill to visit the US and his home state of Missouri. At Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Churchill gave a speech, while Truman sat behind him on the podium. Although the original title was 'The Sinews of Peace', it became world-famous as the Iron Curtain Speech. Churchill spoke at length

Signed by 'Mr X', the Mr X article was entitled 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct'. Written anonymously by George Kennan, a diplomat at the US embassy in Moscow, the article stated a need to prevent further expansion of the Soviet Empire in Europe.



about the twin evils of war and tyranny; the United Nations (UN) as the great hope of the future; and preventing a new war with unity among nations. He spoke warmly of Stalin but also stated that there was nothing the Soviet Union respected more than military strength. Overall, Churchill delivered a mixed message that was respectful towards the Soviet Union but also warned that 'an iron curtain has descended across the continent' (LaFeber). Norman Friedman notes that the audience and the press were 'unenthusiastic' about the speech. The tone of the speech offended Stalin, who accused Churchill of 'setting out to unleash war with a race theory, asserting that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world' (LaFeber).

Activity 4

ATL Research Skills, Thinking Skills, Communication Skills

In 1946, Churchill was no longer Prime Minister. Given this, why do historians consider the Iron Curtain Speech to have been so significant?

To what extent does it help us to understand the origins of Truman's policy of containment?

The Stuttgart Speech

According to Friedman, Truman appointed James Byrnes as his Secretary of State because he felt his own background in foreign policy was limited and Byrnes would be able to offer valuable advice. In the autumn of 1946, Byrnes visited Moscow and Germany. In Stuttgart, on September 6, he gave a speech emphasizing the importance of German economic recovery. This was a clear divergence from Soviet policy, which was less keen on the rapid recovery of Germany.

1947 – a year of action

The relationship between Truman and Byrnes was not always easy. In April 1946, Byrnes had already written his letter of resignation, agreeing to stay on only until initial discussions with the Soviet Union were complete (Chace – an American historian who wrote extensively on the post-war leadership of the US). Meanwhile, Truman waited for General George Marshall to conclude discussions with the two factions in China – the GMD (Guomindang) and the CPC (Communist Party of China) – and to return to the US where he took up the post of Secretary of State in January 1947. The stage was now set for the practical application of the policy of containment.

The Truman Doctrine

The idea of containment is often linked to the Long Telegram of 1946, but it was not until March 1947 that the Truman Doctrine (the US foreign policy that committed to resisting communism) was announced in a speech given to Congress. By 1947, there was growing concern over the Greek **Civil War** raging between the monarchists and the communists. British troops had fought alongside the monarchists but Britain, unable to afford the cost, announced their withdrawal. This alarmed Truman who mistakenly believed that Stalin was financing the communists in Greece. Turkey was also of concern as the USSR wanted naval bases on the Black Sea and to share control of the Turkish Straits. If the Eastern Mediterranean fell under the influence of the Soviet Union, this would have very serious strategic implications for the US. Truman now proposed a \$400 million budget to aid Greece and Turkey.

Activity 5

ATL Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Research skills



1. Explain how the cartoon above helps you explain the significance of the Truman Doctrine to US foreign policy.
2. Do some research on the US policy of 'isolationism' and, based on what you have read so far, summarize to what extent you think US policy had changed in the immediate post-war period.

In fact, Truman had not fully understood the situation as it was Tito, the leader of Yugoslavia, (see Info box), who had been sending arms and troops to the Greek communists. Moreover, in February, 1948, Stalin warned Tito that Britain and the US would never allow the Soviet Union to extend its influence into the eastern Mediterranean and that the fighting must be brought to a halt.

Conceptual Focus: Continuity and Change

The Cold War brought about both change and continuity in the Americas. The change was that after the Second World War, the US emerged as a world superpower alongside the USSR, and their rivalry impacted policies throughout the world. In terms of continuity, the US did not immediately shift from its traditional foreign policy of 'isolationism' (that is, prioritizing its influence across the Americas). There was also both continuity and change in the countries of Latin America, where fear of, or the shift towards, communism may have influenced economic policies but rarely led to greater democracy.



Tito

Tito's real name was Josip Broz. He was the Communist Leader of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army during the Second World War. After the war, he became the leader of Yugoslavia. He did not always agree with Stalin, and Yugoslavia was expelled from the communist organization, Cominform, in 1948.

Activity 6

ATL Research Skills, Thinking Skills, Communication Skills



Map of the Eastern Mediterranean

1. With reference to the map of the Eastern Mediterranean, make a list of reasons to explain why the US was concerned about possible Soviet expansion into this region.
2. In groups, do some further research to find out about the crisis in Iran in 1946, and also the Greek Civil War, and how these influenced Truman's policy of containment.

The Marshall Plan

Following on from the Truman Doctrine came the European Recovery Programme (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan. There was growing concern that the European economy was struggling to recover from the Second World War. European markets could not afford to buy US goods, and the widespread hunger and poverty was also thought to encourage the spread of communism. George Marshall believed that the US should dramatically increase investment in Europe.

Between 1945 and 1947, the US had already donated over \$11 billion in aid and loans to Europe. The ERP would go further and invest a proposed \$17 billion in economic reconstruction. Furthermore, it would be available to all European countries, including the USSR.

The response of the US Congress to the Marshall Plan was mixed. The money involved was far greater than for the Truman Doctrine and there were objections that this would expand US involvement in European affairs.

Washington saw the communist **coup** in Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic and Slovakia) (see Info box), as evidence that communism could sweep through Europe. This was key to getting the Marshall Plan through Congress.

In 1948, Stalin ordered that the KSC (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) stage a coup to take over the government. The KSC was already popular, with Klement Gottwald, its leader, having been appointed Prime Minister of a coalition government. Gottwald now ordered the president, Edvard Beneš, to include a majority of communists in the Cabinet and although, technically, this was still a 'coalition', the communists were the dominant group.



The Economic Cooperation Act, the official title for the Marshall Plan, passed through Congress on April 3, 1948 (Jones). The ERP would work very effectively although the US was still mindful of the spread of communism. For example, both Italy and France had a strong Communist Party, and it was only when communist-organized strikes in France were suppressed, and the Italian Communist Party was defeated in the 1948 elections, that these countries received Marshall aid.



Checkpoint

Checkpoint: To what extent do you think the Marshall Plan was enacted out of US self-interest, humanitarian concerns, or a fear of communism?

To what extent, do you think, was the Marshall Plan a cause or a consequence of worsening US–USSR relations?

The term 'satellite states' was used to describe the link between those countries in post-war Europe that ended up with communist governments. Also known as the Eastern Bloc, these were closely linked to and influenced by the USSR.



The Soviet response to the Marshall Plan

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov used the phrase 'dollar imperialism' to describe what was perceived as US encroachment into Europe. There was further division between the US and the USSR when, in order for the plan to be carried out effectively in Germany, a new currency was introduced (the Deutschmark, which replaced the de-valued Reichsmark) in the combined zones of Britain, the US, and France. It was opposed by Stalin who ordered a blockade to stop the free movement of goods from the Allied zones of western Germany into the western sectors of Berlin. The Allied response to this was the Berlin Airlift (see Info box), which continued from June 1947 until May 1948. According to Zubok, Stalin had miscalculated and the blockade was a strategic failure. An ideological and economic divide had now emerged between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe. The Cold War was well and truly under way and so was Truman's policy of containment.

The Berlin Airlift was the Allied response to the Berlin Blockade. Food, goods and coal were flown into airports in the Allied sectors to provide West Berliners with essential supplies.



McCarthyism

The period of US history in the late 1940s and early 1950s is often referred to as the McCarthy era, named after Senator Joseph McCarthy who began a campaign against what he believed to be the communist influence inside the US government and society. As relations with the USSR worsened, there was growing fear of another war, especially after the Soviet Union tested its own atomic bomb in 1949. Within the US, as far back as 1945, there had been rumors of spy rings and communist infiltration. One example was the *Amerasia* case (see Info box) that came to the attention of the government in 1945.



In 1945, hundreds of state documents were found in the offices of *Amerasia*, a US communist magazine, that featured articles about Asia. After an investigation, a spy was uncovered who had been paid by the Chinese communists. According to Friedman the spy could not be charged because the evidence had been obtained by illegal wire taps but 'it would later be charged that the administration wanted to avoid any embarrassment by any exposure of Soviet espionage'. Another reason for dropping the charges was that there was no evidence of any of the secret information having been passed on to a foreign power. Even so, it was often used by McCarthy as evidence to support his claims of communist infiltration.

Later, in the autumn of 1945, a cipher clerk (someone who encodes and decodes messages) was detected in the Soviet embassy in Ottawa, Canada (see p. xx); and in Washington, also in the autumn of 1945, Elizabeth Bentley approached