

## **UNIT 10**

### **PART I. FROM THE HOT WAR TO THE COLD WAR, PART II. CHINA, KOREA AND MCCARTHYISM**

#### PART I

CHAPTER 1 THE RISE OF THE DICTATORS.....	1
CHAPTER 2 MUNICH: ANATOMY OF A CRISIS .....	7
CHAPTER 3 ISOLATIONISTS, INTERNATIONALISTS AND LEND-LEASE .....	12
CHAPTER 4 WORLD WAR II AND JAPANESE-AMERICAN RELOCATION .....	17
CHAPTER 5 WAR IN EUROPE .....	23
CHAPTER 6 THE YALTA CONFERENCE.....	29
CHAPTER 7 THE DECISION TO DROP THE BOMB.....	39
CHAPTER 8 THE AFTERMATH OF THE DECISION .....	46
CHAPTER 9 FROM WARTIME ALLIES TO COLD WAR ENEMIES .....	50
CHAPTER 10 YEARS OF DECISION .....	55
CHAPTER 11 SOLUTIONS TO FIVE CRISES .....	61

#### PART II

CHAPTER 1 HOW CHINA BECAME A COMMUNIST COUNTRY .....	64
CHAPTER 2 WAR IN KOREA .....	69
CHAPTER 3 THE KOREAN WAR AND GENERAL MACARTHUR.....	72
CHAPTER 4 THE STRANGE CASE OF ALGER HISS.....	80
CHAPTER 5 MCCARTHY AND MCCARTHYISM .....	83

by  
Thomas Ladenburg, copyright, 1974, 1998, 2001, 2007  
100 Brantwood Road, Arlington, MA 02476  
781-646-4577  
t.ladenburg@verizon.net

## Part I

### Chapter 1

### The Rise of the Dictators

Light reflected off the mirrored walls along which the victorious Allied heads of state sat. More than a thousand diplomats, soldiers, secretaries, and reporters filled the vast hall. It was mid-afternoon, June 28, 1919, at the Palace of Versailles, just outside of Paris. President Wilson of the United States, Prime Minister Lloyd George of Britain, and Premier Clemenceau of France waited for the German representatives to arrive.

At 2:45, Dr. Hermann Muller and Dr. Johannes Bell entered the Hall of Mirrors. Muller and Bell listened tensely to the aged Clemenceau's reminders about Germany's obligations. Then they stepped forward to sign the treaty on the small table in the center of the room. As the Allied representatives lined up to put their own signatures on the document, cannons saluted and crowds cheered. World War I, which had shaken the very foundations of Europe and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, had finally come to an end.



**Clemenceau and Wilson at Versailles**

Many hoped that the Treaty of Versailles would bring a lasting peace. Yet in fewer than 15 years, the treaty's flaws contributed to the rise of militant dictators in the heart of Europe – in Russia, Italy, and Germany

#### The Flawed Peace

World War I, or the Great War, as it was known at the time, had begun in August 1914. Decades of territorial rivalry, militarism, national pride, and secret alliances had poisoned relations among Europe's most powerful nations. The sparks that ultimately ignited the war, ironically, originated from some of Europe's weakest nations, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire. When a Serbian anarchist assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, tensions heightened between Austria-Hungary and Serbia's eastern ally, Russia. A flurry of secretive diplomatic discussions ensued between these two nations and Europe's greatest powers, and within a matter of days Europe had been divided into two warring camps: the Central Powers (Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria, and Austria-Hungary) and the Allied Powers (France, Russia, and Britain); Italy and the United States would eventually enter the war to aid the Allies.

During the four years of brutal warfare in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 30 million soldiers were killed or wounded and hundreds of billions of dollars were spent. By the fall of 1918, Austria-Hungary and Germany were in a state of revolutionary disintegration. Moreover, the German army could no longer simultaneously defeat Allied attacks in the field and put down unrest in the streets. The German emperor gave up his throne; and on November 11, 1918, Germany asked the Allies for an armistice to end the war. Germans hoped that they would be given a fair peace based on the principles of President Woodrow Wilson's idealistic Fourteen Points for World Peace.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

Wilson's peace program, announced in January 1918, called for universal disarmament, the impartial adjustment of colonial claims, the self-determination of national peoples, and the formation of an international organization to keep the peace. In fact, however, the treaty imposed on the new German democratic government did not reflect the principles of the Fourteen Points. Germany alone was blamed for the war and made to pay for it; Germany was disarmed, deprived of its colonies as well as 10% of its lands, and barred from joining the League of Nations.

In keeping with promises made by Wilson, separate national entities were created. An independent Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Latvia and Lithuania, emerged from World War I, partially satisfying its people's national aspirations for independent governments. In contrast, Italy was denied both significant territorial gains and colonies, despite heavy wartime losses and promises from France and Great Britain. The newly formed Soviet government was not even invited to Versailles, and like Germany, was barred from joining the League of Nations. Within fourteen years, Russia (which had become the Soviet Union), Italy and Germany, the biggest losers at Versailles, were in the hands of dictators who threatened Europe's peace.

## Revolutionary Russia

The Russian Empire was the first state of the old order to be undermined by the war. Military defeat, economic hardship; and government mismanagement sowed discontent throughout Russia during the winter of 1916. Political opponents of Tsar Nicholas II took advantage of widespread strikes and mutinies. On March 12, 1917, they overthrew the monarchy. A constitution-writing assembly was to be elected in the fall to consider long-delayed reforms such as land redistribution. Meanwhile, the Provisional Government, led by prime minister Alexander Kerensky, held the reins of power in the Russian capital at Petrograd. The first democratically selected leader of the Russian Empire, Kerensky made the fatal mistake of resisting pressure to take Russia out of the World War I.

Many Russians believed that social and political reform should be enacted right away. The national council of worker and soldier organizations (the Petrograd Soviet) thought that the Provisional Government ought to end the war immediately. A veteran revolutionary, Vladimir Illych Lenin, returned to Russia in April 1917. His program, known as the April Thesis, sought to capitalize on impatience with the Provisional Government. He advocated ending the war with Germany and giving land to the peasants, control of factories to the workers councils, and independence to the nationalities. Lenin headed the Bolshevik Party, a dedicated group of professional revolutionaries. The Bolsheviks exploited the general discontent to undermine the authority of the Provisional Government, and on November 6, 1917, Lenin's supporters managed to seize control in a near-bloodless coup.

Lenin immediately went to work to consolidate Bolshevik control of Russia, which he renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He issued decrees that nationalized land, banks, and factories, and on March 15, 1918, his government signed a treaty with Germany. According to the harsh terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland (one-fifth of Russia) became independent states. Supported by the Allied Powers, enemies of the Bolshevik (later called the Communist) Party began a long civil war to unseat Lenin. The Communist government struck back by suppressing all other parties, murdering the Tsar Nicholas and his family, and founding a secret police force to terrorize opponents. Lenin also set up the Communist International (Comintern), a worldwide organization of parties that worked for socialist revolution.

Joseph Stalin, one of Lenin's lieutenants, was born Joseph Dzhugashvili in 1879 in Caucasian Georgia. Through ruthless determination, he had risen to the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party by the time of Lenin's death in 1924. Lenin never named a successor to head the USSR, and Stalin

lost no time in using his party influence to advance his cause. By 1929, he had succeeded in expelling most of the old Bolshevik leaders from the Communist Party. As sponsor of the Comintern, Stalin helped promote his supporters within the international communist movement. Through state-controlled media, Stalin reinforced his authority with propaganda that glorified both his character and personal achievements. The party, the army, the government, and ordinary citizens were subject to purges: literally millions were arrested for offenses against the state, tried with little fairness, and executed or deported to labor camps.

Stalin justified his methods by claiming that the Soviet Union had only a limited time to prepare for invasion by hostile capitalist nations. Beginning in 1928, he launched a series of five-year plans. These were nationally organized efforts to modernize agriculture and develop heavy industry. New dams, canals, coal mines, steel mills, and factories were established throughout the USSR to provide for the national defense. Peasants were forced to join collective farms that used mechanization in order to increase production. In the meantime, the Soviets fashioned defensive alliances for the USSR. National communist parties actively supported this Soviet foreign policy by seeking to form political coalitions with democratic parties. Mistrusting communist motives, however, many Western politicians were reluctant to cooperate.

## **Italy Under Mussolini**

World War I had a contradictory effect on Italy. Although Italy had fought on the victors' side, Italians felt defeated by the Treaty of Versailles. Despite Italy's heavy casualties, the Allies had failed to deliver on agreements made earlier. Italy was denied promised territory on the coast of Yugoslavia. Consequently many nationalist Italians became disillusioned with their wartime democratic political leadership.

In 1919, demobilization of Italy's army and the sudden collapse of military purchasing contributed to an economic downturn. With prices and unemployment at unprecedented heights, the situation of the average worker was desperate. Inspired by the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, employees staged sit-down strikes in factories, and peasants seized many great landed estates. Fearing social revolution, employers backed anti-socialist squads composed of ex-soldiers, nationalists, and property owners. These squads suppressed the unrest by attacking union meetings, burning radical newspapers' presses, and threatening dissident workers and their supporters. They called themselves *Fasci di Combattimento* (Combat Groups). This name came from the Latin word *fascio*, the bundle of sticks with an ax blade that had been a Roman symbol of authority.

Benito Mussolini founded the Fascist movement. Born in 1883 to a socialist blacksmith, Mussolini grew up supporting socialism. Before his thirtieth birthday, Mussolini became the editor of *Avanti*, the main newspaper of Italian socialism, until his backing of Italian intervention in the war on the Allied side brought about his ouster from his socialist party posts in 1914.

Ever resourceful, Mussolini turned to nationalists and Allied agents for money to finance a new pro-intervention newspaper. Claiming that Fascism was the way of the 20th century, Mussolini became a spokesman for anti-revolutionary Italian nationalism in 1919. He lashed out against Allied false promises concerning territories long desired by Italy and offered a nationalist alternative to Soviet-inspired communist revolution. After years of street warfare against socialists and democrats alike, Mussolini led a march on Rome. In November 1922, he was granted dictatorial power to "restore order" in his native Italy.



**Mussolini and Hitler**

Although Mussolini promised Italians the best of governments, only the wealthy, the connected, and the military thrived under fascist rule. To retain power, however, Mussolini had to offer some hope to the poor as well as a goal for fascist activists. In an effort to do so, he demanded a 'place in the sun' for his country." Italy's problems of overpopulation and underdevelopment would be solved, he claimed, when the Italian military conquered a new Roman Empire. After establishing dictatorial control of Italy in the 1920s, Mussolini began his attempt at restoring Italy to a position of greatness on the European

political landscape. December 1934 saw the beginning of the Italian campaign to annex Ethiopia. In 1936, Italy sent troops to help military and conservative forces overthrow the Spanish Republic. In 1937, Mussolini visited the Italian colony of Libya to encourage Moslems to take up arms in French and British-dominated Arab countries. In order to maintain the momentum of fascism and to gain access to colonial markets and resources, Mussolini seemed bent on wars of empire.

## Germany and National Socialism

Germany had been the biggest loser in World War I. The German armed forces had suffered almost 6 million casualties, and the country was on the verge of starvation as a result of the Allied blockade. By 1919, workers were revolting in Berlin and Munich. Furthermore, Germans were infuriated with and humiliated by the Versailles Treaty. By signing this treaty, Germany lost its air force, surrendered most of its navy and merchant marine to Britain, and agreed to maintain only a tiny army. In addition Germany was forced to give up land to Poland and to France. Britain and Japan claimed its colonies in Africa and Asia. The Saar basin was to be occupied by France, and the Rhineland would be demilitarized for 15 years. The Versailles Treaty severely weakened Germany militarily by stripping the country of its air force, forcing it to surrender most of its navy and merchant marine to Britain, and vastly reducing the size of its army. The Treaty also cut back on Germany's territorial holdings, giving some of Germany's land to Poland and France, permitting Britain and Japan to claim its colonies in Africa and Asia, allowing France to occupy the Saar Basin, and demilitarizing the Rhineland. Perhaps most embarrassingly, Germany had to accept sole responsibility for starting the war and pay 33 billion dollars to the Allies.

Ironically, World War I had been a time of great opportunity for Adolf Hitler. Born in Linz, Austria, into the family of a customs official, Hitler failed to realize his youthful ambition to enter art school. Alternately beaten by his domineering father and fussed over by his sentimental mother, Hitler blamed others for his problems. In his early adulthood, he lived a directionless life working as a day laborer in Vienna. When World War I was declared, Hitler's fortunes changed. He joined the German Army and served as an infantry corporal in the trenches in France where he won an Iron Cross. At war's end, Hitler worked with German army intelligence in Munich. In that capacity, he was sent to investigate a meeting of the National Socialist (Nazi) German Worker Party. Instead, he became a Nazi party member and discovered his ability to tap into an audience's fears and hopes through dramatic oratory.

To many Germans, Hitler had a compelling message. He told veterans that they had not lost the war; rather, they had been stabbed in the back by the "November criminals" who overthrew the Emperor

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

and established the German Republic. He informed middle-class people, worried about financial instability, that Jewish bankers and businessmen were responsible for their economic woes and ought to be expelled from Germany. He assured factory owners there would be an end to their labor problems by violent Nazi suppression of "Communist-inspired" unionists. He promised German patriots not only repossession of all "lost territory," but also the conquest of "living space" in the east. Hitler always hit upon his main theme — that all of Germany's problems were attributable to an international Jewish conspiracy. Only Hitler and the Nazis could save the Fatherland.

On November 8, 1923, Hitler attempted to overthrow the Bavarian state government in Munich. His coup failed when police opened fire on his followers, and Hitler was caught, put on trial, and imprisoned. Hitler emerged from less than a year in prison with a startlingly frank book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), in which he laid out his philosophy and plan of action. He also had resolved not to repeat his mistake of attempting a premature rebellion. Instead, he would destroy democracy by democratic means, winning over voters in order to install a Nazi government.

During the relatively prosperous years of 1924-1929, Hitler was unable to obtain his objective. Once the Great Depression hit Germany in 1930, however, many Germans were drawn to National Socialism. Still, the Nazis never won a majority in any national election. Conservative politicians, nonetheless, supported Hitler's elevation to the office of chancellor (prime minister) on January 30th, 1933, thinking they could control him. They were sorely mistaken.

In short order, Hitler and the Nazis consolidated their power. In February 1933, Nazi agents secretly set fire to the Reichstag, Germany's Congress building and blamed German communists for the deed. Constitutional rights then were suspended, and Hitler was granted the authority to make laws by the Enabling Act. By 1934, the Nazi revolution was complete. All German state governments were abolished. The civil service was nearly purged of all anti-Nazis. The National Socialist Party was declared the only legal political party in Germany. Independent unions were forced to join the Nazi Labor Front, and concentration camps were built for Hitler's opponents. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws persecuted and isolated German Jews. Jews were deprived of their right to vote, forbidden to marry non-Jews, and forced to wear stars. Soon, they would lose their right to engage in law, medicine, and business in general.

In 1935, Hitler denounced the Versailles arms limits and Germany accelerated a campaign to rebuild its military forces. German factories mass-produced planes, tanks, and ships. Hitler started to draft young men for military service, a campaign which began to pay off when German troops reoccupied the Rhineland in deliberate and calculated defiance of the Versailles Treaty. In 1936, the new German air force was dispatched as "volunteers" to Spain to back conservatives in that country's Civil War. Two years later, Hitler marched his armies into Austria and supervised a plebiscite that united the two countries. By 1938, Hitler held absolute power in Germany, controlled Austria, commanded the most powerful military in the world, and seemed poised for further confrontations.

## Dilemma for the Western Democracies

The rise of Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler created serious problems for the leaders of the Western democracies. That these dictators were preparing to challenge the status quo in Europe became increasingly evident. Would it be wise to be conciliatory and yield to those claims of the dictators that seemed just, or would compromise only whet their appetites for conquest and disruption? Should the democracies instead band together and respond aggressively to every challenge, or would this policy serve only to force the democracies into senseless wars in defense of distant lands and undeserving populations? Such were the questions that faced British, French, and American politicians in 1937.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                      |                        |                      |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Hall of Mirrors   | g. five-year plan      | m. Versailles Treaty |
| b. Francis Ferdinand | h. comintern           | n. regarding Germany |
| c. Fourteen Points   | i. Fascidi Combatti-   | o. <i>Mien Kampf</i> |
| d. Vladimir Lenin    | mento                  | p. Jewish conspiracy |
| e. Provisional Gov-  | j. "place in the sun"  | q. Enabling Act      |
| ernment              | k. Fascism's appeal to | r. Nuremberg Laws    |
| e. Brest-Litovsk     | Italians               | s. Rhineland         |
| f. Joseph Stalin     | l. Ethiopia            |                      |

2. Compare and contrast two of the three dictators discussed in the chapter in terms of background, philosophy, goals, and tactics.

3. Imagine that it is 1937 and you are a British, French, or American leader. What should you do about the rise of the Communist USSR, Fascist Italy, and National Socialist Germany in 1937? Advocate a strategy and give reasons why yours is the best course.

## Chapter 2

### Munich: Anatomy of A Crisis

September 28, 1938, "Black Wednesday," dawned on a frightened Europe. Since the spring Adolf Hitler had spoken often about the Sudetenland, the western part of Czechoslovakia. Many of the 3 million German-speaking people who lived there had complained that they were being badly mistreated by the Czechs and Slovaks. Cooperating closely with Sudeten Nazis, Hitler at first simply demanded that the Czechs give the German-speakers within their borders self-government. Then, he upped the ante. If the Czechs did not hand the Sudetenland to him by October 1, 1938, he would order his well-armed and trained soldiers to attack Czechoslovakia, destroy its army, and seize the Sudetenland.



Germany's demand quickly reverberated throughout the European continent. Many countries, tied down by various commitments and alliances, pondered whether—and how—to respond to Hitler's latest threat. France had signed a treaty to defend the Czechs and Britain had a treaty with France; the USSR had promised to defend Czechoslovakia against a German attack. Britain, in particular, found itself in an awkward position. To back the French and their Czech allies would almost guarantee the outbreak of an unpredictable and potentially ruinous continental war; yet to refrain from confronting Hitler over the Sudetenland would mean victory for the Germans. In an effort to avert the frightening possibilities, a group of European leaders converged at Munich

#### Background to the Crisis

The clash between Germany and Czechoslovakia over the Sudetenland had its origins in the Versailles Treaty of 1919. For 300 years, both the Czech and Slovak peoples had lived under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During World War I, many Czech and Slovak nationalists fought with the Allies against Austria-Hungary. Thus, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken up by the Allies



at Versailles, Eduard Benes was there to make sure that the Czech and Slovak peoples were rewarded with their own country.

Benes wanted the new state of Czechoslovakia to be as independent as possible. Thus, to provide Czechoslovakia with access to the Danube River trade route, Benes insisted that stretches of Hungary be added to his new country in the south. Czechoslovakian industry's fuel demands were met by claiming Polish coal mines to the north. Because Czechoslovakia needed a defensible Western frontier, Benes arranged for the annexation of the German-speaking Sudeten Mountain region.

The 3,000,000 Sudetenlanders, 15 percent of the Czechoslovak population, had expressed unhappiness with their situation since the 1920's. Once the dominant group in Austria-Hungary, they did not like their minority status and felt the government favored the Czechs and Slovaks. At first, their complaints were ineffective because the Sudeten Germans gave their support to many different political parties. With the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany in 1933, however, the Sudeten Germany Party (SDP) began to use Nazi finances, methods, and ideology to unite the majority of German-speakers in the region. Konrad Henlein, a gymnastics instructor, led the SDP in its campaign against the Czech government. His Karlsbad Program called for self-government for German-speakers and all other minorities, abandonment of all Czechoslovak defense treaties, and Czech cooperation with Germany. President Benes refused to negotiate with Henlein and tried to suppress SDP propaganda and activities, claiming they were a threat to the existence of Czechoslovakia.

## Hitler Intervenes

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler wrote about his hatred of the Versailles Treaty and his ambition to unite all Germans under his leadership. Indeed, many statesmen agreed that Germany was unfairly treated at Versailles and were sympathetic to Nazi complaints about the division of former German land among other nations. Upon coming to power in Germany, Hitler embarked on an ambitious program to re-arm Germany and to overturn the Versailles Treaty. In 1936, his troops illegally marched into the demilitarized Rhineland province of Germany on the French border. In March 1938, he sent the German army into Austria to force the holding of an election on German-Austrian unification. This election, administered by Nazi officials, finalized the Anschluss, Austria's inclusion in the Third Reich. Then, in May 1938, Hitler began to demand that Czechoslovakia accept the SDP's Karlsbad Program or face German intervention. In September, Hitler increased the severity of the crisis by telling Premier Benes that he no longer trusted the Czechoslovak government's intentions. Now, as protector of the German people, he told Benes to turn the Sudetenland over to Germany or face the consequences.

Facing a German deadline of October 1, 1938, Benes agreed to grant limited self-rule to the Sudetenland. His government, however, refused to comply with German conditions: that Czechoslovakia hand the Sudetenland over to the Reich and drop all its treaties with powers hostile to Germany. Benes noted that Hitler's mistreatment of German Jews gave him little moral right to criticize Czech policy toward the minority Sudetenlanders.

Fearful of German expansion, the USSR promised the Czechs its support. Because Poland and Romania refused to permit the Red Army to cross their territory, however, that support could only come from the Soviet air force. France had to face the possibility of going to war with Germany with no hope of directly aiding its Czech ally six hundred miles away. Failure to back up Czechoslovakia would cause France to lose the lynchpin of its anti-German alliance system in Eastern Europe.

The French would certainly not consider war with Germany without the backing of their British allies. Yet this meant that Britain might be dragged into a war over Czechoslovakia, a country with which

it had neither political nor trade ties. Thus, as the Germany Army mobilized on September 28, the British military was on alert, civilians dug air raid shelters, and children were evacuated from London. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain expressed the nation's fearfulness and sense of unreality in a radio address that began: "how horrible, how fantastic, how incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing."

## **Preparations for Munich**

Then Mussolini proposed a last-minute conference in Munich in which Hitler, Daladier of France, and Chamberlain of Britain were to meet on September 29 to try to solve the crisis. Conspicuously excluded were Stalin of the USSR and Czech President Benes. At the conference, the position of Britain was of key importance. France's backing of Czechoslovakia in a war against Germany essentially hinged on maintenance of the Anglo-French alliance. The instructions of the British delegation, therefore, would, in effect, determine the results of the conference.

Two schools of strategic thought debated these instructions. Chamberlain, a Manchester businessman before he went into politics, believed he could come to terms with Hitler. His appeasement faction would advise the delegation to avoid war by persuading the Czechs to give the Sudetenland, which after all was German, to Germany. Chamberlain argued that President Benes had already agreed to most of the SDP's and Germany's terms. Furthermore, Hitler promised that the Sudetenland would be his "last territorial demand in Europe." Sacrificing Czechoslovakia, it seemed, would prevent a major European war.

The son of an aristocratic family and ex-commander of the Navy, Winston Churchill headed the stand-fast faction. He wanted the delegation to offer full backing to France and urged Czechoslovakia to stand up to Germany. Hitler's actions over the past five years indicated that war with Germany was inevitable. By backing Czechoslovakia now, Churchill argued, Britain had the advantage of fighting for a good cause, with willing allies.

## **Appeasement vs. Standing Fast**

In deciding which set of instructions to give the Munich delegation, British statesmen had to consider the strategic situation in Europe. In terms of raw strength, opposing sides would appear to be about equal. Czechoslovakia had an army of 30 divisions (one division had approximately 10,000 soldiers), an advanced weapons industry in the Sudetenland (the Skoda works), and a 1500-plane air force. France could field 100 divisions behind its fortified border (the Maginot Line) with Germany. Because of geography, however, none of these troops would be able to directly reinforce the Czechs. Britain could immediately promise France no more than 150 planes, two non-motorized divisions, and the support of the Royal Navy. Against this force, Germany could convene a standing army of 40 divisions, the most modern and well-equipped in Europe, with triple that number of reserves. Because of the distrust of Poland and Romania, which would not permit Red Army troops to cross their territories, the best the USSR could offer Benes was the use of 1,000 Soviet planes.

The strategic importance of Czechoslovakia to Britain hinged on more than military statistics. While the British government had no traditional relationship or ties with Czechoslovakia, the British armed forces were responsible for defending both Britain and its worldwide empire. France was Britain's main ally against Germany and the fortifications in the Sudeten Mountains of Czechoslovakia were the key strong point in the French alliance system opposing Germany in the east. Indeed, the German Army General Staff estimated that it would take three months to smash these fortifications.

British, French, and German statesmen all believed that the USSR was capable of trying to cause a war in Western Europe that would lead to widespread communist revolution. Likewise, statesmen feared that once the Red Army entered central Europe, it would never leave. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was eager to make a defensive alliance to limit German expansionism. If the allies allowed Hitler to take Czechoslovakia, there was no certainty that Stalin would not make his own best deal with Hitler, which would allow Germany to attack France.

## For Appeasement

However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbor, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in a war simply on her account. If we have to fight, it must be on a larger issue than that.<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister Chamberlain

## For Standing Fast

There is a price at which peace of any kind can generally be preserved. for the most militant aggressor will hardly resort to actual war, if he can secure his most outrageous aims by mere threat... To buy off the bully by giving in to his demands leaves might still triumphant over right... To some of us peace so secured seems more immoral than war.<sup>2</sup> G.M. Gathorne-Hardy

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                      |                            |                                     |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. "Black Wednesday" | g. Anschluss               | m. 30 divisions                     |
| b. Versailles Treaty | h. October 1, 1938         | n. Maginot Line                     |
| c. Eduard Benes      | i. "digging trenches"      | o. wide-spread communist revolution |
| d. Sudetenland       | j. Neville Chamberlain     | p. USSR-German alliance             |
| e. Konrad Henlein    | k. last territorial demand |                                     |
| f. Karlsbad Program  | l. Winston Churchill       |                                     |

2. Describe the issue creating conflict between Germany and Czechoslovakia

3. Prepare a case with at least three different arguments for the British delegation at the Munich Conference to appease Hitler by giving him the Sudetenland, or stand fast at the risk of World War II.

<sup>1</sup> Francis L. Loewenheim, *Peace or Appeasement* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs 1920-1934* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 342.

## Epilogue: Aftermath of Appeasement

The advocates of appeasement made British policy at the Four-Power Conference in Munich. The French and British delegations did indeed agree to the annexation of the Sudetenland by Germany. In exchange for this gift, Hitler promised that this was his last territorial demand in Europe. He also signed a treaty with Chamberlain in which he pledged to remove possible sources of differences and thus contribute to assure the peace of Europe. On his return to Britain, Chamberlain was met at the airport by cheering crowds. Waving this agreement, he claimed to have brought back from Germany "peace in our times."

The stand-fast faction in Britain was bitterly disappointed. "There is no merit in putting off a war for a year," wrote Churchill, "if, when it comes, it is a far worse war or one much harder to win." He contended that in appeasing Hitler, Britain had allowed Germany to re-arm, gain air superiority, build the Siegfried line in the Rhineland, unify with Austria, and now take over the strategic Sudetenland. By 1938 the balance of power, Churchill pointed out, had been allowed to tip in Germany's favor.

The Czechs were given no choice in the matter. They were told to pull their forces out of the Sudetenland, which was promptly occupied by German troops. Overnight, Czechoslovakia lost 15 percent of its land area, 20 percent of its population, and 75 percent of its industry. No sooner had Hitler's troops taken control of the Sudeten fortifications than Hungary and Poland grabbed the choice pieces of Czechoslovakia that they desired. Within months, Czechoslovakia was reduced to a chaotic and defenseless state, one-half its original size. Motivated by a desire to reverse the deteriorating conditions in Czechoslovakia — or so he claimed — Hitler extended German control over the rest of the country in March 1939. Thus, six months after the Munich Four-Power Conference deprived it of its defensible borders, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist.

Soon after Hitler began to complain about the conditions of the people who spoke German in western Poland. Humiliated by Hitler's untrustworthy behavior, Chamberlain quickly signed an unconditional defense treaty with Poland. But on August 23, 1939, Hitler and Stalin signed a non-aggression pact that secretly made plans to divide Poland between them and allowed the Soviets to grab Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as well as Finland. The stage had been set for the beginning of World War II which began with Germany's invasion of Poland eight days later.

## Chapter 3

### Isolationists, Internationalists and Lend-Lease

In the previous chapter we saw that between 1936 and March 1939, Germany had taken the Rhineland, Austria, and most of Czechoslovakia without firing a shot. In the summer of 1939, Hitler began to demand that Poland return any territory it had been given under the Versailles Treaty. This region, the Polish Corridor, separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. When the Poles refused, Hitler launched an awesome attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. Cut off and outnumbered 3 to 1 by German troops, the Poles surrendered in less than four weeks. Unable to help Poland directly, Britain and France nevertheless declared war on Germany. The British Corps and the French Army manned defensive positions on Germany's borders.

Hitler appeased the Soviet Union in the east by the secret agreements in the Non-Aggression Pact, which gave Stalin Germany's permission to invade Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and eastern Poland. Linked to Stalin's absence at the Munich Conference, the pact played a vital role in Hitler's success. Hitler protected Germany's northern border by conquering Denmark and Norway in April 1940. Meanwhile, behind the Siegfried (defensive) Line, German generals concentrated the German army's strength for a massive blow against British and French positions.

At this point the United States became the only country in the world that could rescue Britain and its Empire. British pleas for American aid sparked a lively national debate over U.S. foreign policy. This chapter asks: Should the United States give up the security of 3,000 miles of ocean to help save Britain from Hitler's Germany?



**Hitler in Paris**

#### The Fall of France

On May 10, 1940, the German army made the first maneuver in the battle of France by invading neutral Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg. The Allied armies on the French-Belgium border hurried north to aid the embattled neutrals. As one Germany army was confronting the Allies in Holland, however, another prepared to break through Allied lines to the east. In the Ardennes Forest on May 13, 430,000 German soldiers lined up behind a battering ram of 7 panzer (armored or tank) divisions through French colonial troops and forded the Meuse River. Within hours, a 50-mile-long column of German tanks and troop trucks was racing across northern France, closely supported by dive bombers.

The Allies were taken completely by surprise. Their front lines collapsed as dug-in Allied divisions were encircled from the rear or forced to retreat. Expecting a replay of World War I warfare, French generals had committed all their armored divisions to front-line

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

positions. As a result, they only had cavalry and infantry to counter-attack against German tanks that broke through their defenses. The Germans were simply moving too fast for Allied generals. Employing blitzkrieg (lightening war) tactics German paratroopers landed behind Allied lines, seizing bridgeheads and other strategic choke points such as railroad junctions. Terror and confusion were further spread by the Luftwaffe, the German air force. Their planes routinely machine-gunned civilian refugees to tie up Allied supply routes.

With breakneck speed, the Germans drove west, reaching the English Channel on May 20th. The entire British army and a French army, a total of 35 divisions, were thereby cut off in Belgium from the main French force. Their backs were to the sea.

At this point, Hitler could have destroyed the surrounded Allied armies in Belgium by cutting off their escape route to the English Channel. Instead, he called a halt to his panzer column advance. The British seized on this opportunity to pull their army back to Dunkirk. There, between May 26 and June 4, 1940, the Allies evacuated 338,000 British and French troops across the channel to safety; 860 boats and ships carried out this escape, assisted by bad weather and a temporary halt in Luftwaffe raids.

## The Battle of Britain

The Luftwaffe had 998 heavy bombers, 316 dive bombers, and 1,056 fighters within range of Britain. The Royal Air Force (RAF) had only 640 fighters. At the end of July 1940, Hitler's air war against the RAF

began. For two perilous months, the battle raged, with the Luftwaffe launching around-the-clock attacks on RAF aircraft, airfields, and radar installations. Then, in response to British Bomber Command attacks on Berlin, Hitler changed his strategy. Just as the German air force was winning the battle to destroy the RAF, Hitler ordered the Luftwaffe to bomb British cities.



**St. Paul's Cathedral, London,  
December 29, 1940**

September 7, 1940, witnessed the first massive air raid against London with 300 Luftwaffe bombers escorted by 648 fighters. That same night, a second wave of attackers bombed London. In all, 4,400,000 pounds of explosives were dropped on Britain's capital that day. Subsequent German air raids reduced large parts of London and other British cities to blackened rubble.

In the autumn of 1940, the Luftwaffe "Blitz" continued to pound British cities. German submarines, called U-boats, sank increasing numbers of ships transporting arms and food to the besieged island. German (Wehrmacht) soldiers, singing "We March Against England," trooped into channel ports. At this point, the British realized, that only the United States could save them.

## Britain's Plight

By the fall of 1940, Britain possessed fewer than 1,000 field artillery and anti-tank guns and fewer than 260 tanks. These weapons could only equip two divisions to defend the British Isles. The German invading force was expected to be 20 times larger. The RAF now numbered less than half the size of the Luftwaffe. And the Royal Navy consisted of but 100 destroyers, aircraft carriers, and battleships. This force was overextended in trying both to shield Britain from the German army and to keep worldwide supply routes open.

Meanwhile, the British treasury was as empty as Mother Hubbard's fabled cupboard. By October 1940, only \$2 billion remained in the treasury. This amount was already slated for partial payment for an order of \$5 billion worth of arms and supplies from the United States. Without a US loan, the British had no way of buying the supplies absolutely essential to their defense. As British Ambassador Lord Lothian told New York reporters, "Well, boys, Britain's broke. It's your money we want." Britain, however, was running up against an old American tradition, isolationism.

## America's Dilemma

In his 1796 Farewell Address, George Washington advised Americans to avoid "entangl[ing] our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition" a policy that had been followed for 120 years. During this time, the United States grew and prospered without becoming overly involved in overseas wars. More than 130 years later many Americans believed that the United States was dragged into World War I by acting as Britain's arms supplier, transporter, and banker. The resulting 160,000 US casualties and the unpopular Treaty of Versailles subsequently turned many Americans against participation in international politics.

Isolationist legislators tried to avoid a similar US military engagement in the 1930's by passing neutrality legislation. These laws, like the McReynolds Neutrality Act of 1937, specifically required the US to follow a policy of "cash and carry" for products sold to nations at war. The purchaser of equipment had to pay in cash and carry the supplies in its own ships. The British lacked the ships and the money to meet these requirements.

To get around the restrictions of such neutrality legislation, President Roosevelt devised a clever plan. He would simply lend Britain war materials. Britain would not have to return the materials until the war was over. Roosevelt made a simple analogy to explain this concept to the American people. He reduced Britain's problem with Germany to a situation of a neighbor whose house was on fire:

*If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help put out the fire. Now what do I do in such a crisis? I don't say to him before the operation, "Neighbor, my garden hose cost me \$15.00. You have to pay me \$15.00 for it." I don't want \$15.00. I want my garden hose back after the fire is over.*

The Lend-Lease Act, HR Bill 1776, an act to further promote the defense of the United States, was drafted in January 1941. It would give the President the power to "sell, transfer title to, exchange, lend, and otherwise dispose of any defense article to any country whose defense the President believes vital to the defense of the United States."

Roosevelt's plan to lend Britain arms and supplies split the country into opposing camps. Internationalists thought that the Lend-Lease Act would enable the president to lend Britain the arms to

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

defeat Hitler before Germany became a danger to America. Thus, the British, and not Americans, would do the fighting to stop Hitler. Borrowing from Roosevelt's analogy, isolationists countered by asking what would happen to the lender's house if his neighbor lost his hose in trying, and failing, to put out the fire. They declared that the Atlantic Ocean, not the English Channel, was the US's real line of defense against Germany.

## Internationalists

The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war which will enable them to fight for their liberty and our security. Emphatically we must get those weapons to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have to endure....We must be the great arsenal of democracy<sup>3</sup>  
President Franklin Roosevelt

Grant Hitler the gigantic prestige of a victory over Britain, and who can doubt that the first result on our side of the ocean would be the prompt appearance of imitation Nazi governments in a half-dozen Latin American nations, forced to be on the winning side, begging for favors, clamoring for the admission to the Axis [Germany and Italy]. What shall we do? Make war upon these neighbors; send armies to fight in the jungles of Central and South America; run the risk of outraging native sentiment and turning the whole continent against us? Or shall we sit tight while the area of Nazi influence draws ever closer to the Panama Canal and a spreading checkerboard of Nazi airfields provides ports of call for German planes that may choose to bomb our cities?<sup>4</sup>  
Editorial in *The New York Times*

## Isolationists

We are divided because we are asked to fight over issues that are Europe's and not our own — issues that Europe created by her own short-sightedness. We are divided because many of us do not wish to fight again for England's balance of power or for her domination of India, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, or for the Polish Corridor or for another treaty like Versailles. We are divided because we do not want to cross an ocean to fight on a foreign continent for foreign causes against an entire world combined against us.<sup>5</sup>

We must turn our eyes and our faith back to our own country before it is too late. And when we do this a different vista opens before us. Practically every difficulty we would face in invading Europe becomes an asset to us in defending America. Our enemy, and not we, would have the problem of transporting millions of troops across the ocean and landing them on a hostile shore. They, and not we, would have to furnish the convoys to transport guns and trucks and munitions and fuel across three thousand miles of water. Our battleships and submarines would be fighting close to home bases; we would then do the bombing from the air and the torpedoing at sea. If any part of an enemy convoy should ever pass our navy and our air force, they would still be faced with the guns of our coast artillery and behind them in the divisions of our army.<sup>6</sup>

Charles Lindbergh

3 The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York: Macmillan, 1943), p. 640.

4 The New York Times (April 30, 1941), p. 18

5 The New York Times (April 24, 1941), p. 12

6 Charles Lindbergh, *An Autobiography of Values* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 194.



## Suggested Student Exercises:<sup>7</sup>

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                     |                        |                          |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Polish Corridor  | g. Lord Lothian        | m. internationalists     |
| b. Ardennes Forest  | h. "European ambition" | n. Arsenal for Democracy |
| c. blitzkrieg       | i. "cash and carry"    | p. They, not we          |
| d. Dunkirk          | j. garden hose         | p. The Jungles of ...    |
| e. the "blitz"      | k. Lend-Lease Act      | q. Europe's Problems     |
| f. England's plight | l. isolationists       |                          |

2. Describe the course of World War II from September 1939 to September 1940. Write your description from the British perspective.

3. As your teacher directs, prepare an argument favoring the isolationists' or internationalists' position. You should consider the following points:

- the self-interest argument : is it better to fight in Europe with the help of allies, or use 3000 miles of ocean as its chief line of defense?
- the tradition argument : should the US continue following a policy of 'not entangl(ing) our peace and prosperity ...'?
- the morality argument: should the US leave millions of Europeans to live and die under a harsh Nazi dictatorship.

## Chapter 4

### World War II and Japanese-American Relocation

Japan's invasion of China began September 19, 1931. Japanese military planners pretended that they were simply responding to attacks on Japanese property by "bandits in Manchuria," a province in China. By 6:30 a.m., three battalions of Japanese troops had taken most of the city of Mukden. This incident began a 14-year-long attempt by Japan to conquer China.

Within a few days, the Japanese took control of all 693 miles of Manchuria's railroad and then the cities along the tracks. After six years of preparations in Manchuria and along China's northeast coast, the Japanese stood ready to move on Peking, China's old capital. In July 1937, the Chinese Nationalist Army under General Chiang Kai-shek retreated before the better-equipped Japanese. At Shanghai in November 1937, the Chinese fought a spirited but losing battle. This unexpected and united resistance provoked the Japanese into an all-out attack on the new Chinese capital, the infamous "rape of Nanking."

After driving Chinese soldiers out of the city in December 1937, Japanese armed forces killed an estimated 300,000 Nanking civilians. Japanese soldiers committed almost every atrocity imaginable. They bashed heads of babies against walls, used live children for bayonet practice, burned and buried men alive, strafed civilians from planes, and raped between 20,000 to 80,000 women. This massacre went on for about two weeks, ending shortly after Christmas day, 1937.

All of these events were reported in US newspapers. The Roosevelt administration protested Japanese aggression and gave financial assistance to China. Intent on forcing Chiang to agree to Japanese economic control of China, Japan paid scant attention to foreign scoldings. Moreover, America continued to sell aviation gas and scrap metal to Japan.

#### Internationalists and Isolationists

From 1937 to 1941, Japan advanced southward in China, attempting to cut Chiang's government off from foreign arms shipments. When the Japanese moved to cut off Chinese supply routes in north French Indochina in June 1940, President Roosevelt was faced with conflicting advice from members of his cabinet. Internationalists favored strong retaliation, which in this case meant depriving Japan of the scrap metal and aviation gasoline used to fuel its war machine. Other advisors, isolationists, believed that Japan would invade most of Asia if the US denied its supply of gas and metal. They advised no interruption of trade with Japan, continuing negotiations, and no threats.

While this debate transpired in Roosevelt's cabinet, a similar discussion took place within the Imperial government of Japan. One group, known as the *Joi* faction (expel the barbarians), had earned the support of the Japanese army and wanted to continue the conquest of southeast Asia. Another group, the *Kaikoku* (open the country) faction, wanted peaceful trade with the West. Backed by businessmen, the *Kaikoku* were willing to retreat from Indochina and China in order to continue trading with the United States.

## "Things Are Automatically Going to Happen"

While the opposing factions in Japan fought for control over foreign policy, negotiations between the United States and Japan concerning China and Indochina continued. When Japanese troops took over airfields in southern Indochina, internationalist advisors persuaded President Roosevelt to halt all trade with Japan on July 26, 1941. Since this action deprived the Japanese of their main oil supply, they immediately began negotiations to restore US-Japanese trade. Japanese policy-makers, however, were unwilling to comply with America's demand that Japan stop its aggression against China. As the diplomats talked, a Japanese fleet of six aircraft carriers sped toward Hawaii. The deadline for the diplomats was set at November 29, 1941. After that, as a coded Japanese cable predicted, "things are automatically going to happen."

The secret date for launching the attack passed with no notable concessions from the United States. Skirting normal shipping lanes, the Japanese fleet continued to approach Hawaii from the northwest. To maintain the element of surprise, the fleet sailed in radio silence without lights, and no telltale garbage was dropped overboard.



**USS. West Virginia and Tennessee at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941**

Eight American battleships in Pearl Harbor were docked one next to the other. None hung the protective netting used to deflect torpedoes. Warned of a possible Japanese attack, US commanders ordered planes lined up wing-tip to wing-tip and ammunition kept under lock and key to prevent sabotage. Blips reported by a radar operator were thought to be American B-17's coming in from California. A naval duty officer questioned the reported sighting of a miniature sub at the mouth of the harbor. Convinced that all necessary precautions had been taken, General Short and Admiral Kimmel were prepared for their regular Sunday morning golf game.

Up until 7:54 a.m., December 7, 1941, no one seriously suspected anything. One minute later, the entire American base was under attack as 360 Japanese planes swooped down from the skies.

completely unopposed. Torpedo and dive bombers attacked eight US battleships and ten other vessels. Other Japanese planes bombed and strafed US aircraft on the ground as frantic US fliers tried to get airborne. When the day was done, over 2,400 Americans were dead, eight battleships were sunk or disabled, and 177 planes were destroyed. The Japanese lost only 29 planes and 100 men.

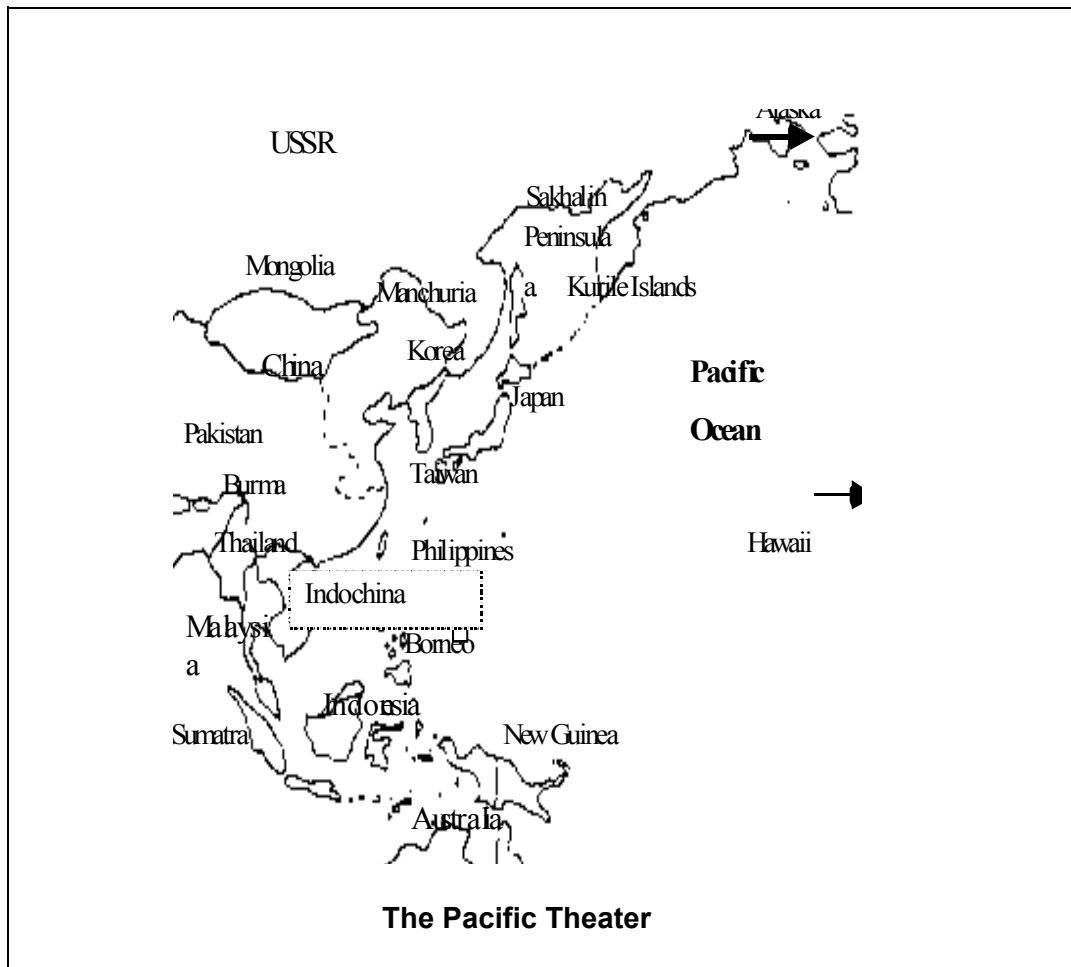
## Follow-up Conquests

*The attack on Pearl Harbor was part of a calculated risk. Britain was fighting for its life against Germany. The rest of Europe was in the hands of the Axis. In June, Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union, despite their previous agreement. The Soviet Union was now fighting Germany at the gates of Moscow. The Japanese gambled that they could knock out the US navy and so discourage Americans that they would not have the resolve to wage successful war against Japan. The Japanese, however, failed to destroy both the US aircraft carrier fleet, which had been out on maneuvers, and the American fighting spirit.*

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

Japan lost no time after Pearl Harbor in carrying out its plan of conquest. American forces in the Philippines and British bases in Hong Kong and Malaya were attacked the same day. Within weeks, the Japanese took Thailand, Burma, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies [Indonesia], Borneo, and parts of New Guinea. Many islands in the South Pacific, including Wake, Rabaul, and Guam, also fell into Japanese hands. Lacking the battleships and aircraft destroyed at Pearl Harbor, the United States could do little to prevent these conquests.



On December 8, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed the angry and shocked people of America. The President said that December 7 was a day that would "live in infamy" and concluded that a state of war already existed between the United States and Japan. The Senate and House quickly voted to declare war.

## The Home Front

If Pearl Harbor helped Americans in any way, it taught them they could not avoid war by trying to remain neutral. The American people supported their president over the next three and one-half years when he asked them to make sacrifices in order to win the war. Eight million Americans contributed by serving in the armed forces; 322,000 died. Young men prepared to be drafted right after high school; many voluntarily left school before graduation to fight for their country. Women volunteered for the WACS (Women's Army Corps) and the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

Civilians helped by planting victory gardens, collecting paper and scrap metal for recycling, and working long hours in defense plants. Women volunteered their time at service organization and raised children without the help of their husbands; celebrities entertained the troops. All were limited by food and gasoline ration cards. Prices were strictly controlled by the OPA (Office of Price Administration).

For the American economy, the war meant a complete end of the Great Depression. By the time the war was over, the United States had produced 274,000 planes, 85,000 ships, and 100,000 tanks or armed vehicles. These products not only met needs for our armed forces, but served as an 'arsenal for democracy' for our allies.

## Relocation of Japanese-Americans



Although all Americans had good reason to be proud of their country's war effort, there is one chapter in that story that has become very controversial. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress passed a very unusual law. The law required the War Department to move some 112,000 Japanese-Americans who lived in the west coast states further inland. Pressure for this law came from whites living on the Pacific coast in areas with relatively large numbers of Japanese-Americans. Even before Pearl Harbor, these Japanese-Americans were discriminated against by whites who felt threatened by their Asian appearance, different culture, strange language, and economic success which was often attributed to their willingness to work harder and live on less than their white neighbors. After December 7, white fears were heightened by rumors, such as one printed in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in early 1942. In this article, Hawaii's Japanese-Americans were accused of intentionally blocking the roads to Pearl Harbor with their "wheezing jalopies"\* during the air raid.

Between March and May, Japanese-Americans were told that they had to "relocate" to one of many camps throughout the United States. They were given a week to sell their cars, homes, and businesses and report to local detention centers for further orders:

### Western Defense Command and 4th Army Wartime Civil Control Administration

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

**Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 27 - dated April 30, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the area by 12 o'clock noon, Thursday, May 7, 1942.**

Japanese-Americans were ordered to take as much bedding, extra clothes, and household items as they could carry. Pets had to be left behind. Japanese-Americans were not allowed to bring such household items as refrigerators, washing machines, and stoves. These were to be stored by the

\* Old and often broken-down cars.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

government at the owner's risk. Owners hurriedly sold other property, such as cars and trucks in the week between the removal order and the date to report. Houses and farms that could not be sold or rented stood idle until taken over for non-payment of taxes or mortgages.

Japanese-Americans were transported from detention centers to relocation camps, where most of them remained until the war ended. Those who volunteered to fight for the United States were released. Some young men refused to enlist because they resented the way the government treated them. Others were allowed to move to the Midwest to work in defense plants. Most Japanese-Americans, however, were forced to stay in relocation camps. Entire families had to live in single rooms with thin partitions to separate family areas. They ate in cafeterias, like those used to feed soldiers. The relocation camps were surrounded by barbed wire with sentries standing in watch towers to prevent escapes. The camps themselves were in remote, semi-deserted areas far from the west coast, and were uncomfortably hot in the summers and freezing cold in the winters.



**Japanese-Americans being relocated into internment camps, April 29, 1942**

The US government tried to close these camps and resettle the inmates several times during the years between 1943 and 1945. Opposition was so strong, that it was not until January, 1945 that the last camp was closed. When finally released from relocation camps, many Japanese Americans found that they no longer owned the homes, businesses, and farms they had left behind. The estimated value of their lost property was \$350,000,000.

## **Arguments for and Against the Camps**

Anyone speaking for the relocation camps of the 1940s remembered Nanking and Pearl Harbor. These advocates of relocation pointed out that ethnic ties had caused the Sudetenlanders to work with fellow Germans against their countrymen. Would not the Japanese-Americans behave the same way, as they allegedly already had acted at Pearl Harbor? Moreover, most Japanese-Americans lived in California, the region of the United States most vulnerable to Japanese invasion. Some commentators suggested that the very lack of sabotage so far indicated that Japanese-Americans were planning a major campaign of disruption later on.

Those who opposed detaining Japanese-Americans on the basis of race made analogies to Hitler's 'ethnic cleansing' of Jews and gypsies in Europe. They thought it was unfair and against the fundamental principles for which the US was fighting to force someone to go to a camp solely on the basis of his/her ancestry. Indeed, people of German and Italian ancestry were not being moved away from the equally menaced east coast. Perhaps it was jealousy and the desire for farms and businesses belonging to the Japanese and not national security which was behind the move to remove them. Moreover, no Japanese-Americans had, as yet, been convicted of sabotage or treason.

I am for immediate removal ... to a point deep in the interior. Sure, this would work an unjustified hardship on ... 90 percent of the California Japanese. But the remaining 10 percent have it in their power to do damage—great damage to the American people. They are a serious menace and you can't tell me that an individual's rights have any business being placed above a nation's safety. If making 1,000,000 innocent Japanese uncomfortable would pre-vent one scheming Japanese from costing the life of an American boy, then let 1,000,000 suffer.<sup>8</sup>

Every man who cares about freedom, about government by law, must fight for it for the other man with whom he disagrees with the same passion of insistence as he claims for his own rights. If we care about democracy, we must care about it as a reality for others as well as for ourselves; yes, for aliens, for Germans, for Italians, for Japanese. For the Bill of Rights protects not only American citizens but all human beings who live on our American soil, under our American flag.<sup>9</sup>

## Suggested Student Exercises:

- Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:
 

a. Manchuria	f. Kimmel and Short	j. relocation camps
b. "rape of Nanking"	g. Pearl Harbor damages	k. what could and could
c. Indochina	k. attacks after Pearl Har-	be taken to camps
d. <i>Joi</i> and <i>Kaikoku</i>	bor.	l. Henry McLemore
e. "automatically going to	i. US war effort at home	o. Bill of Rights
happen."		
- Describe the attack upon Pearl Harbor and explain the reasons for it.
- Do you think that Japan's attacks on China and the United States and evidence of subversion by Japanese-Americans discussed in this chapter justified the internment of any Japanese-Americans in relocation camps?

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in DeAnne Sobul, ed., *Encounters with American History* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1972), pp. 140-41.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in E.H. Spicer, *Impounded People: Japanese-Americans in the Relocation Centers* (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 9-10.

## Chapter 5

### War in Europe

By 1942, much of the world had fallen under the control of the Axis powers. Having capitalized on its December 7 attacks, Japan occupied practically the entire western Pacific. Germany dominated continental Europe, and Italy possessed conquests in the Balkans and North Africa. In contrast, the Grand Alliance of the United States, USSR, and Britain was at bay. Britain was under air attack and threatened with a cut-off of Middle-Eastern oil. German invaders occupied most of European USSR. The United States, still licking wounds inflicted at Pearl Harbor, retreated before the Japanese offensive in the Pacific.

At war with Germany and Italy as well as Japan, US leaders had to decide two basic questions. First, where should the bulk of America's armed forces be used, in Europe or the Pacific? Early in 1942, President Roosevelt opted for a "Germany first" policy. Second, America's war planners had to determine how to wage war in Europe. Should the British and US forces begin the struggle in Europe with an immediate frontal assault on Germany? Or should the Allies launch a long series of attacks along the edges of Hitler's empire in order to disperse German troops? Stalin and Roosevelt called for a landing as soon as possible to divert German troops from battle in the USSR. Churchill, mindful of British losses in the trenches during World War I, argued against a premature invasion to free France.

#### War in the Desert

The question of how to attack Germany was settled in 1942. Churchill got Roosevelt to agree to Anglo-American operations in North Africa. The struggle there had begun on June 10, 1940, when Mussolini declared war on Britain and attacked British forces in Egypt. The British responded by driving Italian troops back into Libya. With the British on the verge of snuffing out all Italian resistance in February 1941, Hitler came to Mussolini's rescue by sending General Erwin Rommel to Africa. Rommel's daring, cunning, and confident leadership were to earn him the nickname "The Desert Fox." Commanding the crack Afrika Corps, Rommel found many ways to trick the commanders of larger British units. For instance, Rommel once deceived a British opponent into surrendering to a smaller number of German troops by dragging brush behind his tanks. This fooled the British into believing Rommel was getting reinforcements. Using such tactics, along with speed and good intelligence, Rommel forced the British to retreat 350 miles toward Alexandria, Egypt. Only lack of supplies and a German setback at Alam Haifa in the summer of 1942 prevented a complete British collapse.

In November 1942, the tide of battle turned against Rommel. After building up a vastly superior tank corps, British General Bernard Montgomery managed to break through Rommel's lines at El Alamein on November 4, 1942. On November 8, American troops landed at Casablanca and moved on Tunisia and Rommel's rear positions. In February 1943, reinforced with fresh troops, Rommel cleverly wheeled west to defeat the inexperienced Americans at Kasserine Pass, but his subsequent attempt to break Montgomery's lines in the east failed. Now the Allied forces came at Rommel from both the east and the west. They captured nearly 1/2 million enemy soldiers in Tunisia. With North Africa in their hands, the Anglo-Americans decided to invade Italy through Sicily, a tactic that would put the Allies in a position to attack Germany by way of the "soft underbelly" of Europe: the Italian peninsula. Accordingly, Allied planners once again postponed an invasion of France across the English Channel.



## **Sicily and Italy**

On July 10, 1943, in history's largest amphibious operation, 160,000 British and American soldiers landed on Sicily's south coast. Lacking defensive artillery, the Italians put up only token resistance. German reinforcements, however, were able to delay the Allied conquest of Sicily for a month. Meanwhile, the Italian government headed by Mussolini was overthrown. A new government under Marshal Badoglio promptly began to negotiate an armistice with the Anglo-Americans. When Badoglio announced the armistice in September 1943, German troops occupied Rome, placed Mussolini back in power as their puppet, and set up defensive positions.

In the Italian campaign, American and British generals faced a series of German defensive lines that took full advantage of the rivers, valleys, and mountains that criss-crossed the peninsula. In addition, Montgomery's cautious style of generalship always seemed to give the Germans the chance to fall back to new entrenched positions. Consequently it took the Anglo-Americans eight months to advance the hundred miles from Naples to Rome, less than one-half miles per day. They were not able to push the Germans back to Florence until August, 1944. In fact, when the war in Europe ended in May 1945, parts of Italy were still in German hands. Europe's soft underbelly had proven to be rock-hard.

## **Operation Barbarossa**

On June 22, 1941, during the early stages of the African campaign, the German army and other Axis forces attacked the Soviet Union along a 200-mile-long front. Ever the restless gambler, Hitler was impatient with the stalemate against Britain that dated back to his futile attempt following the fall of France to gain superiority over England's skies. He was also fearful that Stalin might attack Germany while his armies were preoccupied in the west. On the first day of battle, the German Luftwaffe destroyed most of the Soviet air force on the ground. With air superiority thus assured, 190 German, Italian, Hungarian, Finnish, and Romanian divisions smashed across the Soviet frontier from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. German bombing and the confusion of Soviet authorities broke down military lines of command and supply. Employing 19 panzer divisions, blitzkrieg tactics, and long flanking maneuvers, Germany cut off and surrounded large elements of the Red Army. In these great battles of encirclement, the German army beat 200 Soviet divisions and captured 1.5 million prisoners by mid-August. (Most of these Soviet POW's later died in German concentration camps. A six-week halt in the German advance to permit capture of the Ukraine—as well as the early arrival of winter—gave Stalin time to reorganize Soviet defenses. Still, on December 2, German tankers in the outskirts of Moscow caught sight of the onion-domed Kremlin towers. Further north, in Leningrad, Germany began a siege that lasted three years and caused 1,000,000 civilian casualties.

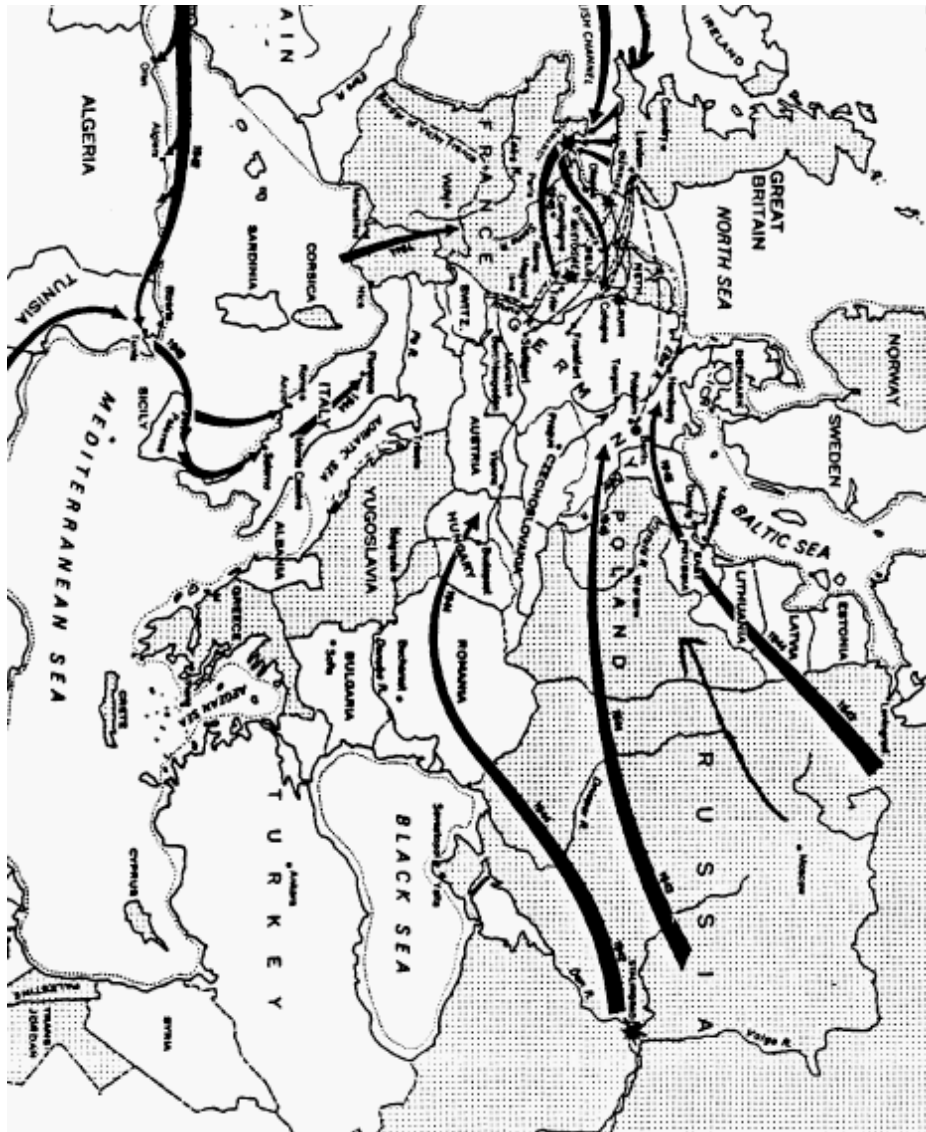
## **War in Russia**

By the end of 1941, German troops had occupied most of European Russia. The coldest winter in 100 years, troop exhaustion, and supply shortages caused the German advance to slow to a halt. Nevertheless, the battle front extended from the gates of Leningrad in the north through the outskirts of Moscow to the Black Sea in the south before Stalin threw his Siberian reserves into a whirlwind winter offensive against German lines before Moscow. In fighting from December 1941 to May 1942, the Red Army managed to create a protective zone around the nation's capital. Meanwhile, the Luftwaffe lost hundreds of planes and air superiority in the east while attempting to support the hard-pressed German infantry.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

In the summer of 1942, Hitler ordered his generals to resume offensive operations, but on a new front. He planned to attack in the south, across the Don River. This offensive had two objectives. One army was to drive south into the Caucasus Mountains and take the oil fields in Georgia. The other army was to seize Stalingrad as a base for a future attack on Moscow and as the northern flank of the Caucasus expedition. By August 23, 1942, General Paulus's 6th Army reached the Volga 30 miles north of Stalingrad.



**Europe at war, 1939-45**

## Source: unknown

At this point, traffic on the Volga could have been halted and Stalingrad put under siege. Eager for the glory of taking Stalin's namesake city, however, Hitler sent Paulus's tanks into street warfare in Stalingrad. On the first day of the attack, Luftwaffe air raids killed 40,000 civilians — 10 percent of the city's population. The Volga bobbed with the bodies of Russians strafed as they fled the city by boat. Still, determined worker militia and Red Army assault groups fought German soldiers house by house in hand-to-hand combat. Soviet anti-tank guns, sent from new factories east of the Urals, took a toll in German tanks. Axis reserves were chewed up in relentless battle in ruined factories and apartment

buildings. In the words of one German Stalingrad veteran, "Dogs flee howling from this hell. Rocks break under this strain. Only men survive."

On November 19, 1942, Soviet Marshall Zhukov attacked German lines north and south of Stalingrad. Surprise was complete, as Soviet tank columns smashed through lightly held defenses to encircle the 6th Army at Stalingrad and threaten the northern flank of the Caucasus offensive. German generals had to decide whether to permit the 6th Army to fight its way out of the trap, or to leave it in place to cover the retreat of the Caucasus invasion. Hitler chose the latter, and the southern expedition fled northwest to safety. The price was sacrifice of the 270,000 men of the 6th Army. What remained of this force surrendered to the Red Army on February 2, 1943.

After the fall of Stalingrad, desperate Germans retreated to shorten their front and their over-extended supply lines. The flanks of the advancing Red Army were exposed in frontline bulges, called salients, such as the one at Kursk. Hitler hoped to regain the offensive by pinching off the Kursk salient from the north and south. The Soviets received advance warning of German plans and hardened their defenses with deep mine fields and anti-tank guns. German forces launched their attack on July 5, 1943, spearheaded by virtually all the panzer units in the East. This attack stalled against Soviet defenses. On August 3, the Red Army struck back and in an epic battle involving 8,000 tanks threw the Germans back across the Dnieper.

After the Battle of Kursk, the Germans were on the defensive in the USSR. The Red Army fielded more and better tanks, artillery, and rifles, all flowing from factories in the Urals. Lend-Lease trucks from the US provided sufficient transportation for Red Army troops. Allied bombing of Germany deprived Hitler's armies of tanks and ammunition. Again and again, Soviet tank divisions cut through German positions, slashing supply and communication lines and surrounding pockets of prisoners. German generals were not aided in their attempts to repel Red Army attacks by Hitler's insistence that every position be held to the last man. This wasted troops and sapped German counter-offensives. Thus, with each Red Army attack, Germany and its Axis allies reeled back. First, they surrendered the European USSR, then Poland, then Romania and Bulgaria. In February 1945, virtually all of eastern Europe was in Soviet hands. The Red Army's 215 divisions had pushed the German forces back to the borders of the Reich, but the cost of victory had been high: 1700 destroyed cities and towns in the USSR and an estimated 25 million Soviet dead.

## Operation Overlord

At the end of 1943, the Allies finally agreed upon a cross-Channel attack on Germany by way of France. This decision, made at the Teheran Conference, pleased Stalin because it would cause Germany to transfer soldiers from the USSR to France. Overlord, as this operation was called, had actually been in preparation for a long time. Since British intelligence had gained access to German coded messages in 1939, Allied generals knew the troop strength of the units defending the Normandy beaches. German spies in England had been turned into double agents who sent false information back to their spy masters. To confuse German generals as to the target of the cross-channel invasion, fake armies were created through camouflage and false radio messages. Dummy paratroops divisions, radar blinding devices, and loud-speakers that played the sounds of a mock invasion were all part of the "wizard war" to fool German defenders. A network of French saboteurs, RAF air supply, and British commandos were set up to attack the German rear.

Thanks to these preparations, the Anglo-American invasion fleet of 6,100 ships achieved complete surprise at Normandy on June 6, 1944. Paratroopers took over roads leading to the beaches early in the day. Then, behind shelling from 600 warships, 150,000 men — American, British, and Canadian troops —

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

under command of US General Dwight Eisenhower, stormed ashore. Bombardments from 14,000 Allied bombers and fighters kept German heads down. Nevertheless, members of the first invasion group, as shown in the popular war movie *Saving Private Ryan*, suffered near ninety percent casualties. Later, portable harbors were towed across the Channel and pipelines were quickly installed to fuel the Allied war machine as the Allied beachheads linked up and deepened.



**Destruction in Germany, March, 1945**

The German strategy, master- minded by the legendary Edwin Rommel, to drive the invaders back into the sea had thus been defeated. Three reasons for the Allies success include: First, inferior weather forecasting which caused German generals to leave their posts, because they thought the seas were too rough for a landing; second, the Allied deceptions, such as false radio instructions to Luftwaffe pilots which misdirected counterattacks; third, and perhaps the most important, Hitler's believing planted intelligence reports that Normandy was a diversion for a second and bigger invasion, which led to his refusal to release tank reserves for combat in Normandy until the end of July.

By mid-July, the Allied build-up in Normandy was so strong that Hitler's reserves could no longer make the critical difference. Montgomery's 2nd Army of 250,000 men with 1500 tanks simply overwhelmed German manpower and armor in grueling battle. The fact that the Red Army engaged three out of four available German soldiers was of great help to the Anglo-American cause. By the time General Omar Bradley attacked the southern end of the German line at Avranches, the last German reserves had already been committed to battle. Thus, on July 31, when General Patton's tanks poured through the Avranches gap, they had only the open plains of France before them.

In face of the Allied breakout of over 2,200,000 troops, the German army pulled back to the Fatherland's border defenses. In December, as the Anglo-American forces massed for the final assault on Germany, Hitler made one last desperate gamble. Secretly, he moved all available troops into position in the Ardennes Forest, as he had four and a half years before. On December 16, under cover of cloudy weather, German soldiers attacked US Army units and drove a deep bulge into American lines (hence the name the Battle of the Bulge). Once they recovered from their surprise, Allied troops fought back bravely. They stopped the intended German drive to the Channel. Better weather allowed the Allies to bomb German positions, while British and American armies counterattacked. Meanwhile, a Soviet offensive in Poland prevented the arrival of German reinforcements. By February, the demoralized Germans had been pushed back to the Siegfried Line of 1939. The mighty Allied armies now stood at the east and west borders of a drained and defeated Germany. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker, and a week later, his government surrendered. Victory had finally been achieved in Europe.

**Suggested Student Exercises:**

1. Identify or define and briefly show the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |   |                          |                        |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Decisions on theater of war and strategy | e. Marshall Badoglio     | j. Kursk               |
| b. The Desert Fox's tricks                  | f. difficulties in Italy | k. Eisenhower's tricks |
| c. El Amana'in                              | g. Barbarosa             | l. Normandy invasion   |
| d. 160,00 Allied soldiers                   | h. Leningrad             | m. Battle of the Bulge |
|   | i. Stalingrad            | n. VE Day              |

2. Assuming the role of a British, American, or Soviet general, describe your country's war effort against the Axis in terms of three of the following:

- a. Major battles
- b. Suffering of soldiers and civilians
- c. Contribution to ending the war

3. Talk to relatives of your grandparents' generation and come to class prepared to share their World War II experiences.

## Chapter 6

### The Yalta Conference

While Germany and the Allies were engaged in the Battle of the Bulge, US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill prepared to meet with Marshall Joseph Stalin of the USSR. The three leaders were scheduled to confer on Soviet territory at the Black Sea resort town of Yalta in early February 1945.

The Big Three, as they were called, had previously met in Teheran, Iran, where they had discussed plans to defeat the Axis. Stalin, still concerned that the brunt of Germany's forces were directed at Russia, inquired again as to when the Western allies would divert Hitler's attention from the eastern front by opening up a second front in France. This time, with Germany at the verge of defeat, the leaders of the Grand Alliance met to determine the nature of the post-Axis peace. They would redraw the world map and decide the boundary lines of countries in Europe and Asia. Specifically, they would reach crucial decisions on Germany, Poland, Eastern Europe, Japan, and on the formation of the United Nations.

This chapter provides information to enable your class to re-enact the Yalta Conference. Each of you will play the part of an advisor to one of the three most powerful people in the world: Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, or Joseph Stalin. The class will actually make decisions on issues that were discussed by these world leaders. Your job will be to get the best possible deal for your country. At the same time, you must maintain the wartime alliance essential to defeat Germany and Japan. The important issues you will have to resolve are summarized below:



**Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta,  
February, 1945**

#### **Problems Addressed at the Yalta Conference**

##### **1. Germany**

With the armies of Britain, the United States, and the USSR at the borders of the German Empire, the future of Germany had to be discussed. Some diplomats thought Germany should be permanently divided among the victorious Allies so it could never again disrupt the world as it did in 1914 and in 1939. Others favored a temporary occupation of Germany until a more democratic German state

could be established. Moreover, the leaders discussed the importance of holding Germany accountable for the great damage it caused to Europe in both lives and property.

*Possible solutions:*

- a. Divide Germany permanently among the Allies and make it pay \$20 billion (\$340 billion 2000 dollars) for damages done during the war; 80 percent of which would go to the USSR.
- b. Temporarily divide Germany into three occupation zones, one for each of the Allies. Allow these zones to be reunited through democratic elections. Allow reparations not to exceed \$10 billion (170 billion in year 2000 dollars).
- c. Same as “b” but give France part of the British and American zones and adjust reparations to Germany’s ability to pay.

## **2. Poland**

Poland had two governments. The communist government friendly with the USSR was known as the “Lublin Poles.” The other government, which had gone into exile in Britain after the German conquest in 1939, was called the “London Poles.” Members of both governments considered themselves Poland's lawful rulers. The Soviet Union also wanted territory in East Poland to act as a buffer against future invasions by Germany.

*Possible solutions:*

- a. Let the Lublin Poles organize the Polish government and give the Soviet Union eastern Poland. In order to make up for its loss to the USSR, give Poland the most eastern parts of Germany.
- b. Let the residents of eastern Poland decide by free elections whether to submit to Polish or Soviet rule; let those in eastern Germany decide whether to submit to Polish or German rule.
- c. Hold free elections in Poland under the supervision of American, British, and Soviet observers. Allow all groups to vote. Do not cede any part of Poland to the Soviet Union, and do not give any part of Germany to Poland.

## **3. Self-Government and Eastern Europe**

The leaders who convened at Yalta essentially held the fate of Eastern Europe in their own hands. They had to decide who would form governments in the Eastern European countries that had recently been freed of German control by the Soviet Union; their resolutions would have immense repercussions for the countries themselves and, more importantly, Europe and the rest of the world. Of lesser importance for Europe—but still on the agenda for the Soviet Union was the matter of colonial government, particularly in India.

*Possible solutions:*

- a. Let the USSR form the governments in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, etc. Allow these governments to take land from the rich and give it to poor farmers, stop exploitation of workers by wealthy businessmen, and maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

- b. Let the people in each liberated area in Europe, Asia and Africa determine how and by whom they will be governed. This means free elections to determine each nation's future including the West's colonies and Eastern Europe but not in the southern parts of the US
- c. Hold free elections in all Eastern European countries, but not in India or any other colonies belonging to the US, Great Britain, or France.

## 4. Japan and the Far East

The issue here was whether the Soviet Union would help the United States in its war against Japan and what the Soviets would want in return for that assistance. US and British leaders also feared that Stalin would shift his support from Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government of China to Mao Zedong's communist revolutionaries.

*Possible solutions:*

- a. The Soviet Union will join the war against Japan when it is in her interest. The USSR will be allowed to occupy Manchuria, Korea, Port Arthur, the Sakhalin Peninsula and the Kurile Islands, and will recognize the Communist party under Mao Zedong as the rightful ruler of China.
- b. The Soviet Union will declare war against Japan within three months of Germany's surrender and announce its support for the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek. In exchange, the USSR will be granted one-half of the Sakhalin Peninsula, military access to Port Arthur, and partial control of railroads in the Chinese province of Manchuria.
- c. The Soviet Union will go to war against Japan immediately, not ask for any territory, and announce its support of Chiang Kai-shek in his civil war against communist forces under Mao Zedong.

## 5. The United Nations

The world powers also debated over whether a world organization—similar to the League of Nations that had been borne out of the Treaty of Versailles—should be formed to settle disputes between countries peacefully and, if so, whether the USSR would participate and how many votes it would get.

*Possible solutions:*

- a. The USSR will participate in the United Nations, but with one vote for each of its 15 socialist republics (provinces) in the General Assembly. The United States and Britain will have one vote in the United Nations. (Note: at this time the USSR was the only communist country in the world; the UN would probably include 50 countries.)
- b. The Soviet Union will join the United Nations. Every country in the United Nations (including all of Great Britain's colonies) will have one vote in the General Assembly and the US, Great Britain, France, Nationalist China and the Soviet Union will have a veto in the Security Council, which would make all the important decisions.



- c. Same as B, but each of Great Britain's colonies and none of the USSR's provinces will have one vote in the General Assembly.

## 6. US Aid After World War II

Twenty five million Soviets were killed during World War II compared to 322,000 American deaths; most other nations also suffered great hardships during the war. Of the major countries involved in the war, only the United States emerged wealthier and stronger after it ended.

### *Proposed Solutions:*

- a. The United States will lend the Soviet Union \$6 billion at an interest rate of 2.37 percent without any conditions.
- b. The Soviet Union and Britain will ask for no more U.S assistance until each has repaid one half of its Lend-Lease aid.
- c. The United States will lend money to help Britain and the USSR recover from World War II as long as they lived up to their treaty commitments.

## Positions on the Issues

### ***The United States: Franklin Roosevelt***

*Background and general outlook:* Like President Woodrow Wilson under whom he had served, Franklin Roosevelt was an idealist. Roosevelt wanted to make the world a better place for everyone, not just Americans. Even before the United States declared war on Germany, Roosevelt met with Winston Churchill and had drawn up the *Atlantic Charter*, a document in which the United States and Britain pledged to support the rights of people everywhere to elect their own leaders and live in peace.

The principles of the Atlantic Charter and the hope of creating an atmosphere of trust with the Soviets were uppermost in Roosevelt's mind when he arrived at Yalta. He thought it most important to get Stalin to apply the principles of the Charter to Germany, Poland, and Eastern Europe. Roosevelt also hoped to get the Soviets to join the United Nations, an organization that was pledged to support the principles of the Charter. Roosevelt thought the United States should not push the Soviets too hard on difficult issues. He did not want to reawaken the fears and suspicions of the Soviets toward the non-communist world. In order to save many American lives, Roosevelt also wanted the Soviet Union to help the United States invade Japan, if such an invasion were necessary.

### *Specific interests:*

**Germany** - (option a) Roosevelt's belief in democratic principle inclined him to believe that Germany should eventually be allowed to reunite through free elections and that Germany should be only temporarily divided among the victorious Allies.

**Poland** - (option b) Roosevelt wanted a free, democratic, and united Poland. He was especially interested in free elections in Poland because of the Polish-Americans' vote in the United States, and he regarded Poland as a symbol of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

**Eastern Europe** - (option b) Roosevelt wanted the people of Eastern Europe to choose their own leaders by democratic and free elections. He also believed that the United States should maintain friendly and trusting relations with the Soviet Union.

**Japan** - (option b) Roosevelt wanted to end World War II quickly, with a minimum loss of American lives. Military leaders estimated American losses of half a million soldiers in an invasion of Japan. To avoid such staggering losses, Roosevelt wanted the Soviets to enter the war against Japan as soon as possible. In order to gain their support, Roosevelt might return some land Japan had taken from Russia in its 1905 war with Japan. The United States also wanted the Soviets to recognize the nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek, and offer no help to the communists under Mao Zedong take over China.

**United Nations** - (option b) Roosevelt saw the United Nations as the world's best hope for world peace. He needed Soviet cooperation in the United Nations because this organization could not work well without participation by all major world powers. Recalling the difficulty Woodrow Wilson had in getting Senate approval for the League of Nations, Roosevelt considered giving all major countries the right to veto decisions of the United Nations.

**US Aid** - (option b) Many in the United States pressured Roosevelt to collect on the Lend-Lease loans given to the USSR and Britain during the war. Still, Roosevelt was willing to lend money to the Soviets if they accepted the principles of the Atlantic Charter and acted in accordance with these principles. Attempts on the USSR's part to support communist revolutions anywhere in the world would end any chance of the Soviets getting help from the United States.

## **Great Britain: Winston Churchill**

*Background and general outlook:* Like all great British leaders, Churchill was more of a realist than an idealist. As a small island nation Britain constantly feared invasion by a more powerful nation. Before 1945, Germany posed the greatest threat to British security. During and after World War II, Churchill feared that the Soviet Union would take control of Eastern Europe, pressure Western Europe, and threaten England. Furthermore, Winston Churchill was extremely distrustful of Stalin (whom he regarded as a murderous and treacherous villain), and he violently opposed Communism as a system of economic organization because he thought it hopelessly unworkable and totally unfair to property owners.

Churchill hoped to stop the Soviet Union by forming a post-war alliance with France, the United States, and a reunited Germany. He made many attempts during and after the war to achieve this goal. Churchill had even suggested that the Anglo-Americans attack Germany by way of the Balkans to cut the Soviets off before they could enter Eastern Europe.

The British were steadfastly determined to keep their colonies (including India, Burma, South Africa, and Nigeria), which they considered the basis for British power, prestige, and wealth. Churchill believed that non-whites in the Empire were not ready for self-government. He once said he did not become Prime Minister in order to preside over the downfall of the British Empire.

*Specific interests:*

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

**Germany** - (option c) Germany played a key role in Churchill's thinking. He wanted it reunited as soon as possible so that it would serve as a stronger, more formidable element in opposition to the Soviet Union.

Churchill thought that, once Nazi leaders were out of politics and in jail, the USSR would pose a greater threat to peace in Europe than did a defeated Germany. He wanted France to have an occupation zone because this would make France a stronger ally. He also wanted to prevent the Soviet Union from taking whatever it wanted from its part of Germany. Such an action would weaken Germany, and Britain wanted a strong German ally.

**Poland** - (option c) Churchill wanted to restore what he thought was the rightful government of Poland – the government that consisted of the Polish leaders (known as the "London Poles") who had fled when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. As soon as the German army left Poland, Churchill wanted the London Poles to organize the next Polish government. He did not trust the Soviet Union or their "Lublin Poles," who he believed were puppets whose strings were pulled in Moscow. Churchill also opposed giving the Soviets any territory that belonged to Poland.

**Eastern Europe** - (option c) Churchill wanted countries in Eastern Europe, which at the time were mostly occupied by Soviet troops, to become independent countries once more. He hoped to achieve this goal with US and British-supervised elections in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other Eastern European nations. Churchill also believed that Britain should have full say over the government of former colonies (including Burma and Malaya) it had reconquered from Japan and had no intention of giving up control of India, Nigeria, or South Africa.

**Japan and the Far East** - (option c) Churchill would appreciate Soviet help in the Far East, but not at the price of many concessions that would make the Soviets more powerful and more threatening to Britain's Asian colonies and trade.

**United Nations** - (option c) Though Churchill did not share Franklin Roosevelt's idealistic vision of a new democratic world order based on this international organization, he had nothing against the United Nations. He did not, however, want to give the Soviet Union too much power in governing it.

**US Aid** - (option c) Churchill would appreciate as much aid as the US would be willing to give Britain, but Britain could not afford to repay its lend-lease loans as a condition for future aid. He was not directly opposed to lending money to the USSR as a means to control the actions of the Soviet Union.

## ***The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Joseph Stalin***

*Background and general outlook:* Stalin and most of the Soviet people would never forget that they had been invaded twice in 25 years by Germany. Nor would they forget with 25 million people killed during World War II, (compared to 332,000 Americans) Soviet losses that were greater than any other country's. Furthermore, the Soviet leadership liked to point out that they fought eighty percent of the German soldiers in World War II. The Soviets thought the non-communist countries were out to destroy the Soviet Union since they had helped counter-revolutionaries in the Russian Civil War (1919-21), failed to make a pre-war alliance against Hitler, allowed Hitler to take Czechoslovakia, and delayed opening up a "second front" in France for two years.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

Soviet negotiators also believed in their system of government. They thought what they called "socialism" was a much fairer way to share and produce wealth than the free enterprise system practiced in Great Britain and the United States. The Soviets claimed that under the system they called capitalism property owners get rich by taking advantage of workers. Soviet communists believed it was only a matter of time before the workers would overthrow all capitalist governments.

## *Specific interests:*

**Germany** - (option a) Stalin was determined that Germany be permanently divided under the supervision of Britain, the USSR, and the United States. Furthermore, the Soviets wanted to take \$20 billion (340 billion 2000 dollars) from what was left of Germany to repay the Soviets for a part of their losses during World War II.

**Poland** - (option a) Stalin called for a friendly, socialist government installed in Poland under the leadership of the Lublin Poles. He opposed a role in Poland's future for the London Poles, whom he regarded as puppets of Winston Churchill. Stalin also wanted parts of eastern Poland added to the USSR to provide a buffer area to absorb a possible attack from Germany in the future.

**Eastern Europe** - (option a) Stalin believed that, since the Soviet Union had driven the German Army out of Eastern Europe, it should be allowed to decide how the countries in this region would be governed. These countries would also serve as buffer states to protect the USSR from future attacks. He noticed that the United States and Britain had established a government in Italy without consulting the Soviet Union. Stalin thought Roosevelt and Churchill were hypocritical to insist on free elections in Eastern Europe when Britain did not grant free elections in its colonies and the United States denied the vote to Southern blacks.

**Japan and the Far East** - (option a) Stalin wanted to regain land taken from Russia by Japan in 1905: the Kurile Islands, the South Sakhalin Peninsula, and Port Arthur. In addition, Stalin wanted control of the railroads in Manchuria and an occupation zone in Japan. He also considered giving support to communist leader Mao Zedong as the rightful ruler of China. If the United States wanted the USSR to help invade Japan after the losses the USSR suffered against Germany, Stalin thought he could bargain for most or all of the above.

**United Nations** - (option a) Stalin suspected that the United Nations would be used as an instrument to embarrass or attack the Soviet Union, but he was willing to join the United Nations if the Soviets were given 15 votes in the General Assembly (one for every Soviet republic) and/or veto power in the Security Council.

**US Aid** - (a) The USSR desperately needed money to rebuild an economy devastated by four terrible years of warfare. Stalin was willing to accept help from the United States as long as there were no strings attached.

**Suggested Student Exercises:**

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to the rest of this chapter of each of the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. Big Three                                | d. London and Lublin Poles               |
| b. Yalta                                    | e. Security Council and General Assembly |
| c. Position of troops at time of conference | f. Six problems                          |

2. Make as strong an argument as you can to support your country's position on at least four of the issues discussed in the chapter.

3. As your teacher directs, sit with the other students representing your country. Talk with your group to be sure you all understand each issue and can argue for your country's position. Then elect a leader who will send several (up to three) students to each of the other two countries. The job of each diplomat is to get an idea of the concessions the other countries are willing to make. Be sure to argue for and explain the logic and fairness of your country's proposals. Then return to your group and report to your leader.

4. The leaders, with one advisor, will come to the center of the classroom to complete negotiations. Members of each country will sit in a circle around leaders and advisors and, with teacher's approval, may add appropriate comments.

## Epilogue: Results of the Yalta Conference

Germany was temporarily divided into four occupation zones, with the French zone carved out of those of the United States and British zones. Berlin, in the eastern (Soviet) zone, was also divided temporarily among the same four nations. Austria and its capital city, Vienna, were similarly divided.

Poland was to be administered by a coalition government, which would then hold free elections under Allied supervision. In addition, much of eastern Poland was given to the Soviet Union; Poland in turn was given eastern portions of Germany.

The USSR pledged to hold free elections in the Eastern European countries that had been liberated by the Red Army: Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

The Soviet Union promised to enter the war against Japan within three months of Hitler's defeat and it recognized Chiang Kai-shek as the legitimate ruler of China. In exchange, the Soviets received the southern Sakhalin Peninsula, the Kurile Islands, and Port Arthur.

The Soviets joined the United Nations; they were given three votes in the General Assembly and (along with the United States, Britain, nationalist China, and France) veto power in the Security Council.

No decision was reached about postwar loans.

## Opinions on the Yalta Conference

With the advantage of hindsight, many Americans charged President Roosevelt with negotiating an agreement with the Soviet Union which, like the Munich Accord, surrendered territory in exchange for empty promises. Roosevelt Democrats defended themselves by pointing to numerous Soviet concessions. Many historians of the period have argued that the Yalta Agreement was the best pact the United States and Britain could have hoped for, given the situation at the time. Read the following statements and decide which best characterizes the Yalta Agreement.

### USSR Appeased

*The real issue... is not what Stalin would or could have taken, but what he was given the right to take. This agreement provided Stalin with moral cloak for his aggressive designs in Asia, and, more important, with almost a legal title at the Peace Conference to the territories and privileges which he demanded.*<sup>10</sup>

*Chester Wilmot*

---

<sup>10</sup> Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); quoted in Richard Fenno, Jr., *The Yalta Conference* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1972), p. 76.

## Diplomatic Triumph

*The record . . . shows clearly that the Soviet Union made greater concessions at Yalta to the United States and Great Britain than were made by the allies. The agreements reached . . . were, on the whole, a diplomatic triumph for the United States and Britain.*<sup>11</sup>

*Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.*

## *Nothing Conceded*

*Aside from such things as the restoration of Russian sovereignty in Sakhalin or the Kuriles, the Western allies conceded nothing that Russia had not already taken or could not have taken.*<sup>12</sup>

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Which of the above quotations do you think are best supported by the facts?

In answering this question, consider at least 3 of the following:

- a. the position of the military forces of the major powers at the time of the conference
- b. the aims of each country
- c. the contributions of each to the war
- d. the legitimate interest of each side
- e. the results of the Conference

---

<sup>11</sup>Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians* (Garden City, NY: 1949), p. 295; quoted in Richard Fenno, op. cit. p. xiii.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Steele Commager, 'Was Yalta a Calamity? A Debate,' *New York Times Magazine* (August 3, 1952), p. 49; quoted in Richard Fenno, op. cit., p. xiii.

## Chapter 7

### The Decision to Drop the Bomb

On December 6, 1941 President Franklin Roosevelt met with a small group of scientists to convey an earth-shattering decision. He told them to proceed with experiments directed at making an atomic bomb. The next day Japanese planes all but sank the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. This act of aggression thrust the United States into a war with Japan and Germany. It also gave US scientists one more reason to make a bomb that could destroy an entire city in a single blast. The Manhattan Project, as the effort to make the atomic bomb was called, was placed under the direction of General Leslie Groves. This effort proceeded much as planned. Employing thousands of people the project cost \$2 billion, and was so secret that nobody even told Vice-President Harry Truman about it.

President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, shortly before scientists were ready to test the bomb. President Truman was informed of the plans to build the bomb after his first cabinet meeting. A few months later, he would have to make the controversial decision whether to use it.

#### War Against Japan

Although President Roosevelt officially committed the United States to a “Germany first” policy, he decided that the first blow should fall upon Japan. Therefore, on April 18, 1942, Colonel James Doolittle led a squadron of sixteen B-25 bombers in a daring air raid on Tokyo. They took off from the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet*, bombed Tokyo in the full light of day, and landed in nationalist-controlled China.

Destroying little of military importance, the Doolittle raid did have two important results. It gave a needed boost to American morale. It also caused Japan to make a fateful change in strategy. Japanese officials had already planned to take New Guinea for use as an air base for attacks on Australia, and they were determined to seize the Solomon Island chain down to Fiji to cut U.S.-Australia sea routes. As a result of the raid, however, Japanese leaders decided to attack east as well. In an effort to prevent future air raids, they attempted to lure the remaining US carriers to destruction at Midway Island. Japan unwisely planned three separate operations at the same time, thereby limiting the forces Japan could commit to any one of them. The 1942 division of Japan’s army strength, as we shall see, had fateful consequences for all three offensives.

#### Three American Victories

In the first of the three significant battles, on May 4, 1942 an American fleet intercepted Japanese invaders heading for Port Moresby, New Guinea. Over four days, more than 250 aircraft bombed, strafed, and torpedoed their targets. The Port Moresby battle was the first naval engagement in history during which opposing fleets never caught sight of one another. At the Battle of the Coral Sea, the US and Japanese fleets suffered roughly equal losses. The United States prevented the Japanese invasion of New Guinea, however, and the US was much faster than Japan at repairing damaged ships and building new ones.

In June 1942, Admiral Yamamoto, the architect of Pearl Harbor, set in motion a plan to trap and destroy the remaining US carriers at Midway. Yamamoto’s plan was to send one naval force to pretend to invade the Aleutian Islands, and then to stage an air raid on Midway. Yamamoto hoped to cause the US



# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

carriers to steam to the rescue of the Midway garrison, leaving behind slower support ships. At Midway, the American carriers would then be ambushed by a third Japanese fleet of battleships. Outnumbering the Americans, Yamamoto expected to blast the American fleet out of the water.

Unfortunately for the Japanese, US Admiral Nimitz had access to decoded Japanese messages and was not fooled by Yamamoto. Consequently, he sent all available US carriers, including the *Yorktown*, to await the Japanese at Midway. He planned to destroy the Japanese decoy carriers before Yamamoto's main battle force arrived. On June 4, US torpedo bombers located the Japanese carriers at Midway. Planes and guns protecting the Japanese carriers were trained at the low-flying US torpedo planes, luck intervened. squadron of US bombers caught sight of the Japanese carriers and swooped down unopposed from 19,000 feet. In five fiery minutes they sank three of the four enemy carriers and their planes which were being refueled. (The fourth carrier was found and sunk later the next day.) The Japanese navy had temporarily lost its sword arm.

After a crushing defeat at Midway, the Japanese desperately needed to regain the upper hand. Although the struggle for the Solomon Islands, northeast of Australia, lasted seven months, its result was no less destructive. In August 1942, US marines landed on Guadalcanal in the Solomons to prevent Japanese occupiers from building an airfield. If completed, the airfield could have been used to launch attacks against the US and Australian shipping. The 12,000 marines drove the Japanese into the jungles around the airstrip which the marines called Henderson Field. This maneuver led to a major land, air, and sea struggle. Time after time, the Japanese ferried invasion forces down the narrow waters between the two chains of the Solomons to attack Guadalcanal. Each time, they were beaten back by US ships, planes, and troops. Finally, on February 7, 1943, the Imperial Navy admitted defeat and pulled out the last of the Japanese Guadalcanal defenders. Japanese naval, aircraft as well as troop losses had been larger than those of the United States and far more difficult to replace. The tide in the Pacific had definitely turned in favor of the United States.

## Offensive in the Pacific

With Japan on the defensive, US planners decided to adopt a two-pronged strategy for the American offensive. General MacArthur would command the land attack on the Japanese Home Islands from the southwest. He would come by way of New Guinea and the Philippines. This strategy would allow him to keep the "I shall return" promise, given when he was ordered to leave the Philippines early in 1942, and to rescue the Americans left behind who were captured, imprisoned, and grossly mistreated by the Japanese. Meanwhile, Admiral Nimitz would oversee a naval advance on Japan from the east through the open waters of the Central Pacific. Here the United States could exploit its growing fleet of fast carriers to support amphibious (sea-land) troop attacks. Americans evolved a tactic to defeat Japan's system of interlocking navy and air bases. The United States would simply "leapfrog" around strongly held enemy islands. The bypassed base would thereby be cut off from its source of supplies and left to "wither on the vine." In this way American forces were able to advance on two fronts. Meanwhile, a US submarine blockade and aerial bombardment of the Home Islands reduced the Japanese ability to wage war.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

In October 1944, American forces began to drive the Japanese out of the Philippines. There they found that US prisoners left behind in the 1942 defeat had been grossly mistreated by their Japanese jailers. In February 1945, US Marines landed in Iwo Jima. The US needed Iwo Jima, 750 miles from Tokyo, as a refueling airfield for bomber raids on Japan. In the bloody battle that followed, nearly all of the Japanese defenders chose to fight to the death rather than surrender; the only prisoners taken were soldiers too



**Marines raising flag at Iwo Jima  
February 23, 1945**

weak to fight or commit suicide. Twenty-thousand US Marines were killed or wounded in trying to dislodge the stubborn enemy from their underground bunkers. The US victory at Iwo Jima was commemorated by the magnificent photograph of US Marines raising the American flag over the island.

On April 1, US Marines and Army units stormed ashore on Okinawa, the last of a series of stepping-stones to Japan. It took three months for the US to conquer this island. While the Japanese fought for every foot of Okinawa, the United States sank what was left of the Japanese navy. Over 280 US ships were damaged or sunk, however, in air raids. The most effective weapons the Japanese used were 3,500 planes loaded with explosives and captained by suicide (*Kamikaze*) pilots.

High-altitude bombing of Japan began in November 1944. Missions were flown at night in order to assure the safety of the bombers. Because of the distance and the darkness, these raids were not very successful. Then in May 1945, General Curtis LeMay changed the whole nature of air raids against Japan. Without bothering to get permission from his superiors, he ordered his bomber crews to fly their missions by night and close to the ground. Attacking with incendiary (fire-producing) bombs, this first low-level raid burned 16 square miles of Tokyo. It killed 88,000 and left 250,000 homeless. US Army Air Corps generals in Washington were pleased with the results of this raid and made plans for more to come. Eventually, US air raids destroyed forty percent of the built up area of 66 Japanese cities.

## Defense of the Homeland

After Okinawa, the Japanese prepared to defend their homeland. Japanese planners lacked sufficient planes to prevent bombing raids, adequate ships to intercept an invasion fleet, and enough soldiers to defeat the Americans once they landed. Nevertheless, they designed a defense plan with three stages:

1. 4,000 Japanese *Kamikaze* pilots would deliberately fly planes loaded with explosives directly into US invasion ships.
2. A wall of gunfire would mow down the invaders as they landed.
3. Human wave attacks would drive surviving Americans into the sea.

## Conditions in Japan

Japanese leaders who made plans for fighting off US forces knew little about how the average Japanese stayed alive from day to day. Incendiary bomb raids such as the one on Tokyo had destroyed most Japanese cities. Civilians who survived spent night after sleepless night in crowded air raid shelters.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

The Japanese population suffered from shortages of rice and other food. Even the potatoes planted to improve their meager diet were to make aviation gasoline.

To bolster their armed force, the Japanese drafted 15-year-old boys; these teenagers served in local defense units with men old enough to be their grandfathers. Only one in ten soldiers had a gun, and many of these weapons were of an ancient, muzzle-loading design. Civilians were asked to cut bamboo and fashion spears to attack heavily-armed US invaders. Weakened by hunger, these boys and old men could barely knock over straw puppets when they trained with their sharpened bamboo poles.

Japan's economic life was grinding to a halt in the spring of 1945. Japan lacked coal and iron as well as any reliable means of transportation. Production of ships and planes practically ceased altogether. The aircraft that the Home Islands possessed were no match for superior American fighters, and Japanese airfields were often virtually unprotected from American bombers.

Japan depended completely on the outside world for the food, raw materials, and fuel needed to continue the war and feed its population. The US Navy had all but blockaded Japan, sealing it off from sources of supplies. Meanwhile, five million Japanese soldiers in other parts of Asia had no way of returning to defend the Home Islands.

## **The Movement to End the War**

Many Japanese citizens must have suspected that their country had little chance in the face of the coming American invasion. Even the most peace-loving, however, did not dare to speak out against the war. Spies and informers reported defeatist talk to the authorities. In the highest circles of government, no one openly argued that Japan ought to accept the Allied demand for unconditional surrender. Assassinations had long been used by those in power against political opponents and had succeeded in silencing them.

Still, there were many high-ranking opponents of the war. They had a strong sponsor in Emperor Hirohito. Although removed from the day-to-day decision-making process of government, the Emperor was able to work behind the scenes. Through court officials, he was able to investigate the true state of Japan's war effort. After consulting privately with a group of former prime ministers, the Emperor became convinced that he himself had to intervene to end the Japanese people's unnecessary suffering.

The Emperor used his court and political privileges to help develop a peace plan. The peace faction would talk with diplomats from the neutral USSR. Perhaps the USSR could be persuaded to enter the war on Japan's side. If that failed, the Soviets could be asked to arrange an honorable peace with the United States on some other terms than unconditional surrender.

## **Arguments About Using the Bomb**

Not all the scientists who assisted in making the atomic bomb wanted to see it used. The faction opposed to dropping the bomb on a Japanese city was led by two scientists, James Franck and Leo Szilard. At the time they joined the Manhattan Project, Franck and Szilard thought the Germans were working on a similar project and might be the first to devise a workable atomic bomb. The German attempt to produce nuclear weapons failed completely. What was left of this effort fell into Allied hands in May 1945 with Germany's surrender.

As President Harry Truman began the process of deciding whether to use the bomb against Japan, he appointed an Interim Committee to advise him. It was made up of various military officers, scientists, and state department officials connected with the project. Almost from the beginning, committee

members seemed to lean toward using the bomb against a Japanese city. They argued that large civilian casualties were already being produced by conventional air raids. Voter war-weariness, bloodshed from an anticipated Japan invasion (official estimates were for 500,000 US casualties), and potential post-war problems with the Soviets were also mentioned as reasons to drop the bomb on a Japanese city.

Franck and Szilard issued their own report ahead of the Interim Committee. It read in part:

*The military advantages and savings of American lives achieved by the sudden use of atomic bombs against Japan may be outweighed by the ensuing loss of confidence [in the United States] and by a wave of repulsion sweeping over the rest of the world.*

*From this point of view, a demonstration of the new weapon might best be made before the eyes of representatives of all the United Nations, on the desert or on a barren [uninhabited] island. The best possible atmosphere for achieving an international agreement could be achieved if America could say to the world, "You see what sort of weapon we had but did not use. We were ready to renounce its use in the future if other nations join us in this renunciation and agree to put nuclear weapons under efficient international control." <sup>13</sup>*

Other reasons for opposing the use of the bomb were stated by Ralph Beard. Undersecretary of the Navy:

*During recent weeks I have had the feeling that the Japanese government may be searching for an opportunity that they could use as an excuse to surrender. Emissaries from the US could meet with representatives from Japan on the coast of China and tell them of Russia's position [on getting territory in Asia] and information concerning the proposed use of atomic weapons, together with assurance the President might care to make with regard to the Emperor of Japan and the treatment of the Japanese nation following unconditional surrender. It seems quite possible to me that this represents the opportunity [to arrange for the terms of an honorable surrender] which the Japanese are looking for. The only way to find out is to try it out. <sup>14</sup>*

A panel of scientists appointed by the Interim Committee disagreed with Franck and Szilard. They dismissed the effectiveness of a harmless demonstration of an atomic explosion, especially considering the limited supply of bombs. They argued that military use of the bomb was necessary not only to save the lives of American troops: the sheer frightfulness of its results might knock Japan out of this war and prevent future wars as well. They concluded:

*we can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use. <sup>15</sup>*

The Interim Committee advised President Truman to use the bomb against Japan as soon as possible on a target that was both military and civilian without issuing a prior warning of the nature of

---

<sup>13</sup> James Frank et al. "A Report to the Secretary of War," quoted in Morton Grodzins and Eugene Rabinowitch, eds., *The Atomic Age* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Truman Did Not Understand," *US News and World Report* (August 15, 1960), p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> Henry L. Stimson, *The Decision to Use the Bomb*, in Grodzins and Rabinowitch, op. cit., p. 35.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

the explosive power of this new weapon. Some of the arguments supporting this decision were later reviewed by the Chairman of the Committee, Henry L. Stimson:

*As we understood it in July, there was a very strong possibility that the Japanese government might determine upon resistance to the end, in all the areas of the Far East under its control. In such an event the Allies would be faced with the enormous task of destroying an armed force of 5 million men and 5 thousand suicide (Kamikaze) aircraft, belonging to a race which had already demonstrated its ability to fight to the death.*

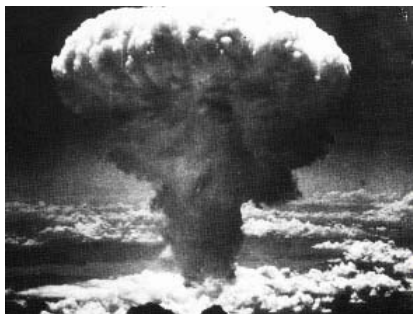
*I felt to extract a genuine surrender from the Emperor and his military advisors, they must be administered a tremendous shock which could carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the Empire. Such an effective shock could save many times the lives, both American and Japanese, that it would cost.*

*Nothing would have been more damaging to our effort to obtain surrender than a warning or a demonstration followed by a dud [bomb that would not go off] - this was a real possibility. Furthermore, we had no bombs to waste. It was vital that a sufficient effect be quickly obtained with the few we had.*<sup>16</sup>

## Japan Seeks a Negotiated End to the War

While American decision-makers were debating, the movement for peace at the highest level of the Japanese government was growing stronger. Japan's Supreme Council was called by the Emperor himself, an event that had never occurred before. The Council decided to seek Soviet help in arranging a negotiated peace. On the day in June that Okinawa fell, the Emperor appointed Prince Konoye, his favorite cousin, to negotiate with the Soviets. However, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov was too busy preparing for the July Potsdam Conference to meet with Konoye. US leaders were aware of Japan's intention to seek a negotiated end of the war, since messages were monitored by US intelligence agents who wrote about these negotiations in their diaries.

## Time for a Decision



In Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, the US began the Nuclear Age by exploding the first atomic bomb. Not long after its mushroom-shaped cloud rose over the New Mexico desert, President Truman faced an agonizing decision. Should he demand an unconditional surrender, making no specific reference to the nature of the atomic bomb, and use it on a military/civilian target if the Japanese refused to surrender without conditions? Or should he drop a demonstration bomb on some sparsely inhabited area and press for a negotiated surrender?

<sup>16</sup> Henry L. Stimson, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                      |                             |                               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Manhattan Project | g. Iwo Jima and Okinawa     | l. Interim Committee's and m. |
| b. Coral Sea         | h. 3 stage defense plan     | Stimson's arguments           |
| c. Midway            | i. potatoes                 | n. Frank's & Beard's          |
| d. Henderson Field   | j. blockade                 | arguments                     |
| e. Leapfrogging      | k. 5 million men under arms | o. demonstration bomb         |
| f. General LeMay     |                             | p. Hirohito & Konoye          |

2. Prepare a position paper arguing either:

- a. that President Truman should order the use of an atomic bomb against a Japanese city if the Japanese refuse to surrender immediately without conditions, or
- b. that President Truman should order that a demonstration bomb be dropped on some uninhabited area and assure the Japanese that they could keep their emperor if they surrendered immediately, or
- c. that President Truman force Japan's surrender by using conventional warfare.

In your answer consider:

Whether the Japanese were likely to surrender if they knew the US had a weapon as powerful as the Atom bomb we dropped on Hiroshima .

Whether the US was under a moral obligation to prevent the loss of lives of Japanese civilians, particularly women and children.

How use of the bomb by the United States would effect other country's opinions of the US. and her future relations with the Soviet Union.

## Chapter 8

### The Aftermath of the Decision

In the previous chapter, you were asked to decide whether the United States should drop an atomic bomb on a Japanese city without first demonstrating to the Japanese the awesome power of this weapon. This chapter reports what the United States did and how the war was ended. As you read this chapter consider if in any way, what you learn changes your opinions on the use of nuclear weapons.

#### The Potsdam Declaration

President Truman had been told that the first atomic bomb would be ready for use by August 1, 1945. The President received this information while at a conference in Potsdam with Soviet and British leaders. At the time the Potsdam Conference concluded, the components of an atomic bomb, including 100 pounds of uranium 235, were on their way across the Pacific. Nicknamed "Little Boy," probably because of its great size and five-ton weight, the bomb was assembled on the island of Tinian. Here a crew specially trained to fly the B-29's slated to drop the bomb was waiting. In the meantime, President Truman ordered the release of the Anglo-American Potsdam Declaration to Japan. While holding out hope for fair treatment, this surrender ultimatum omitted two important matters: (1) the future of the Emperor, and (2) the nature of the weapon poised for use against the Japanese. The declaration did say:

*We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese forces, and to provide proper assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.*

Hundreds of thousands of leaflets containing this warning were dropped all over Japan. No doubt millions of Japanese saw and read the warning which was written in their language. The Japanese government, however, made no official reply and unofficially dismissed it as American propaganda.

#### The Bomb and Its Effects

On August 4, 1945 the bomb was ready. President Truman gave orders that this and the other atomic bombs should be used as soon as possible. On August 6, 1945, the weather was perfect, as the first of three planes approached Hiroshima from an altitude of five miles. It was 8:15 am. The *Enola Gay* released its single bomb close to its target, the center of the city. Immediately afterwards, the plane turned upward sharply to avoid the shock wave of the blast. The bomb hurtled toward the city, where some 350,000 people were just starting their day's activities. It exploded 1,850 feet above the ground, the altitude at which experts believed the destructive effects of the bomb would be greatest.

In the city below, the air raid sirens had already sounded the all-clear. At that very moment, a blinding fireball exploded, raising temperatures briefly to one million degrees Fahrenheit. Within seconds, some 50,000 people, mostly civilians, were dead; fires were started up to two miles away. Altogether 71,379 people were killed or missing. Another 68,023 were seriously injured, most terribly burned, and eventually died of radiation exposure. Nearly 5 square miles of the city were reduced to rubble, and 8 out of every 10 buildings in Hiroshima were destroyed.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

The heat of the blast melted the eyes of soldiers that had witnessed the explosion from their positions at anti-aircraft guns. Children were killed instantly on their way to school and longshoremen died at their docks. What few medical supplies remained in Hiroshima were soon used up. The doctors who survived the blast were unable to do much more than ease the pain of the dying. The human dimensions of this tragedy are best described by a single example, multiplied 71,379 times:

*A first grader, Issaku Watanabe, was walking with a friend to their school at the instant of the explosion. Shocked and numbed, they turned in their tracks and started back to Issaku's house. On the way, Issaku's friend died. He himself, face inflated like a grotesque balloon, somehow managed to get home. The only clothes left on his body were a pair of underpants: even his shoes had disintegrated. By the time he reached home he was trembling all over.*

*While his mother ran to take him in her arms, he cried, "Don't touch me! Everything hurts so! Just let me sleep." In the house everything had been turned upside down. Issaku's mother managed to push two sofas together in the guest room. The boy lay down for a time. He could feel the skin in the palm of his hands had by now peeled completely away: he knew that his head was badly burned; his eyes and mouth grossly swollen.*

*As Mrs. Watanabe stood sadly over him what she could do for him, he muttered, "Mother, I can't see your face."*

*"Open your eyes slowly," she said, Then you will be able to see me. By now Issaku's pain had grown much worse. In obvious agony, he squirmed on the bed and threw up.*

*"What is it?" [his mother cried. "What hurts you worst?"*

*"My arms and legs," he muttered, his words barely audible.*

*What was she to do? There was no medicine in the house that could relieve the pains of such severe burns. In stricken silence, she sat down besides her suffering son; she was too saddened even to be able to cry....Sometime latter...Issaku was put on a wooden trestle and carried to a reception center. He was running a temperature. His mother kept putting wet towels on his forehead but they did no good. He was soon delirious, and at six in the morning he died...<sup>17</sup>*

## The Soviet Union Declares War on Japan

On August 7 and 8, the stunned Japanese government gathered what information it could to learn exactly what happened in Hiroshima. At 5 p.m. on the 7th, Prince Konoye, the Emperor's representative, was finally granted his long-delayed meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov. Molotov immediately informed the ambassador that the Soviet Union would declare war on his country within seven hours. Thus, all hopes ended that the Soviet Union would help Japan.

---

17 The Pacific War Research Society, *The Day Man Lost* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1972), pp. 245-246, 288.



# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

The next day, August 8, Soviet troops stormed across the Manchurian border and attacked Japanese forces. The Japanese army put up very little resistance.

On August 9 a second atomic bomb was dropped, this time on Nagasaki. Originally, this bomb had been scheduled for use on August 11, but a great effort was made to prepare the bomb and plane before several days of predicted bad weather. As a result, another 39,000 people were killed before the Japanese surrendered unconditionally.



**Nagasaki after the Bomb**

## **Japan Surrenders**

On August 10, the Japanese government informed the Allies that it would agree to the Potsdam terms if the Emperor was allowed to keep his position as head of the government. America's reply was vague. The Japanese were told that the Emperor would be "subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers" who would "take such steps as [it] deems proper to bring about the terms of surrender."

On August 15, the Emperor decided to end the fighting. His announcement was broadcast all over Japan. This was the first time in a very long history that a Japanese Emperor directly addressed his people.

American experts on Japan had predicted that the Emperor could end the war by ordering all his subjects to surrender. This is indeed what happened. In China, in Indochina, in Thailand, in Malaya, and on dozens of small islands in the Pacific, more than 5 million Japanese soldiers heeded the Emperor's request to lay down their weapons.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

In the peace that followed, Emperor Hirohito was permitted to maintain his role in the Japanese government. He died in 1989, much honored and loved by his people.

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                        |                                    |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Tinian              | e.- g. damage done by the bomb     | k. Watanabe            |
| b. Little Boy          | (at least 3 examples)              | l. Nagasaki            |
| c. Potsdam Declaration | h. - j. three things that happened | m. how the war ended   |
| d. <i>Enola Gay</i>    | to Issaku                          | n. fate of the Emperor |

2. Write your personal reactions to the information in this chapter.

3. Did the information in this chapter cause you to alter your opinion regarding the decision to drop the bomb on a Japanese city without warning? Why or why not?



**Celebrating victory over Japan Day in New York City**

## Chapter 9

### From Wartime Allies to Cold War Enemies

The arguments you are about to read are derived from three different schools of historical thinking. The first statement represents the traditionalist school, widely accepted by liberal historians. The second position is held by revisionist historians, who became more critical of US foreign policy during the Vietnam War. The third stance reflects the thinking of conservative historians, who think that the United States has not been tough enough with the USSR.

#### Three Schools of Interpretation

1) During and after World War II, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman tried to remain on good terms with the Soviet Union. They believed the key to a future of peace and prosperity was maintenance of good US-USSR relations. If the Soviets had met the Americans half way, the Cold War could have been avoided. The United States did everything that could have been reasonably expected to prevent the development of a state of hostilities with the USSR. It was Soviet suspicion and aggression that caused the break up of the Grand Alliance.

2) The United States and other Western democracies were as responsible as the Soviet Union for breaking up the Grand Alliance. The Soviets were ready to make a deal with the United States if the Americans had allowed them a defensive sphere of influence (where their interests would be recognized as predominant) in Eastern Europe. Instead, the United States kept holding the USSR to a higher standard of democratic behavior than was practiced in either the United States or the British colonies.

3) United States diplomats practically laid down on the ground to let the Soviets walk all over them. Americans should have learned from Munich that appeasing a dictator only increases his appetite for conquest. The United States should not have worried about how the Soviets might interpret its actions. If America had been tougher with the Soviets, they would have backed down and been far less of a menace to world peace in the future.

Most Americans living in the 1950s would agree with one of these statements. You are invited to join the debate and come up with your own position based on the facts and your interpretation of them. This chapter provides information that can help readers form their own opinion as to which school of historical interpretation they accept.

#### From Collaboration to Confrontation

##### *February 11, 1944*

Mussolini was overthrown, but Germany remained in command in Northern Italy. The United States and Britain recognized Badoglio's Italian government composed of conservative and liberal anti-fascist politicians. The Soviets complained that communist politicians who had led the resistance to Mussolini played only a minor part in the new Italian government, but their objections were

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

largely ignored. The US and Great Britain disarmed communist resistance fighters who had fought bravely against Germany and put the Italian king back on the throne.

## ***August 1, 1944***

With Soviet troops only 20 miles away, the Polish underground began an uprising against German occupation forces in Warsaw. The Red Army waited six months before resuming its Polish offensive. By October, the Polish Home Army of some 40,000, with ties to the London Poles, was defeated. In all likelihood, the Soviet Union delayed its attack for political rather than military considerations so that it could establish a friendly socialist government under the pro-USSR, Lublin Poles in Poland.

## ***December 3, 1944***

In Athens, unarmed, pro-communist demonstrators were shot by Greek police. British troops began clearing communist guerrillas out of Athens. The communist party of Greece was very popular because it resisted German occupation during World War II. It took the British six weeks to put down the communist rebellion. Prime Minister Stalin neither issued a formal protest nor helped the communist party in Greece. The communists later lost the elections.

## ***February 12, 1945***

The Yalta Conference ended with an agreement that provided for self-determination in Poland and East Europe. USSR membership in the United Nations with a veto in its Security Council, four-power occupation of Germany, German reparations, and USSR entrance into the war against Japan in exchange for concessions in Asia.

## ***April 12, 1945***



**President Harry**

Franklin Roosevelt died and an unprepared Harry Truman became President. Truman had not been informed about previous negotiations with the USSR and was given a quick cram course.

## ***April 21, 1945***

The USSR and a provisional government composed of communist Poles signed a 20-year treaty of mutual aid. The United States protested this violation of the Yalta Agreement. Stalin replied that he was justified in interfering in Poland's affairs for reasons of self-defense. He pointed out that the British had interfered in the affairs of Greece.

***April 23, 1945***

Recently informed of the agreements made at Yalta, Truman took the occasion of a diplomatic visit from Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov to tell him that it was high time for the Soviets to begin to carry out both the letter and the spirit of the agreement concerning Poland. Molotov responded that he had never been addressed in such strong language before. Truman replied that he would not have talked to him that way if the Soviet government had carried out its commitments.

***April 30, 1945***

At the UN organizational meeting in San Francisco, the United States and others denied membership to Poland's Lublin government. The Soviets protested. They protested again when the United States successfully backed UN membership for Argentina's pro-Nazi government.

***May 7, 1945***

Germany surrendered, ending six years of constant warfare in Europe. The United States quickly stopped shipping Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union. Ships already en route to the USSR were called back. The Soviets protested and the order was reversed.

***May 21, 1945***

Syria and Lebanon, former French colonies, broke off diplomatic relations with France because the French attempted to regain control over them. Within two weeks, French and Syrian troops clashed in Damascus. In September 1946, revolutionaries and French soldiers came to blows when the French tried to once more rule North and South Vietnam as well as Laos and Cambodia. Ho Chi Minh, a communist and a nationalist, prepared his people to fight a guerrilla war for Vietnamese independence.

***July 21, 1945***

In accordance with the Yalta Agreement, the US and Great Britain pulled troops several hundred miles back from positions in central Europe during the last days of World War II. Earlier, General Eisenhower restrained General Patton from taking Berlin, Germany, and Prague, Czechoslovakia to allow Soviets to occupy areas agreed upon at Yalta.

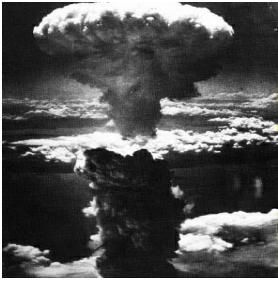
***July 17-August 2, 1945***

The USSR and the US and Great Britain met at Potsdam, Germany to resolve issues not settled at Yalta. Reparations from Germany were reduced from \$20 billion to what Germany was able to pay. The US and Great Britain did not want to allow the Soviets to bleed their German occupation zone of everything it had because they wanted Germany as a potential ally, in case relations with the USSR worsened.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

## **August 6 and 9, 1945**



The US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some historians believe the bombs were dropped more for the purpose of letting the Soviets know the US had the capacity to destroy the USSR than to force a quick Japanese surrender.

## **August 10-14, 1945**

The Soviets entered the war against Japan. Japan surrendered; under the terms of surrender, the USSR took over the Kurile Islands and the southern Sakhalin Peninsula. Moreover, the USSR was allowed to temporarily occupy Outer Mongolia, North Korea, Port Arthur, and parts of Manchuria. The United States refused to allow the Soviets a role in the occupation and reorganization of Japan, where General MacArthur had established a democratic government, distributed land to Japanese peasants, and given women the right to vote.

## **January 6, 1946**

The USSR-supported Polish government took over all industries in Poland and declared land redistribution. Communist officials began to limit freedom of press, speech, and assembly in order to weaken opposing parties. The Soviets defended these actions, and similar measures taken in Romania and Bulgaria as necessary to root out fascism and to build truly democratic peasant and worker governments. The Soviet Union also claimed it needed buffer states in its sphere of influence to protect it from invasion by hostile countries in the West.

## **January 27, 1946**

Local elections were held in the American zone of occupied Germany with representatives ranging from communists to former supporters of the Nazis taking office. Later in the year elections were conducted in Italy. The pro-American Christian Democratic party (with American backing) came to power, and Italy was proclaimed a republic. The United States emphasized the need to rebuild Italy and Germany and supported amnesty for former Nazis. Industrial leaders who had backed Hitler and Mussolini were allowed to keep their factories and property. No major social reforms were undertaken.

## **February 9, 1946**

In a belligerent speech, Stalin boasted of the Red Army's power and the Soviet people's allegiance to communism. He proclaimed that capitalism had led to political repression, economic crises, and war and that it had made a peaceful international order impossible.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

**March 5, 1946**

Speaking in Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill declared that an "iron curtain" was descending on Eastern Europe, where "the Communist parties...have been raised to pre-eminence,. are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control," and "denying millions their basic freedoms." Churchill suggested that all English-speaking people establish "the condition of freedom and democracy" as fast as possible in these countries.

By March 1946, the wartime allies had become Cold War enemies, engaged in a deadly and dangerous competition for power that was to last for over 45 years and ended costing both sides trillions of dollars. Readers will be asked to decide who was most responsible for the growing state of post-war hostilities between these World War II allies.

## **Suggested Student Exercises:**

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. three schools of thought regarding the beginning of the Cold War | f. Syria, Lebanon, and Vietnam                   |
| b. forming the Italian government                                   | g. US/B troop withdrawal                         |
| c. Polish Home Army   | h. change in reparations from Germany            |
| d. revolt in Athens   | i. what US/B saw Soviets doing in Eastern Europe |
| e. seating the Lublin Poles at the UN                               | j. Iron Curtain speech                           |

2. Make three headings on your paper. Then review the reading and list events that support the case of each of the three schools. Be prepared to support your decisions,

**or**

as your teacher directs prepare a speech defending one of the three positions.

## Chapter 10

### Years of Decision

The following conversation might have taken place any time between 1946 and 1992. Each person in this debate represents a different approach to dealing with the Soviet Union. In this chapter, you will learn more about the thinking of leaders who argued these different positions concerning US/USSR relations. You will also have the opportunity to decide which approach you would like to use in response to each of five different challenges from the Soviets between 1946 and 1950.

*The United States has got to learn to live with the Soviet Union. The United States can't act like the world's police force, getting involved in Europe and mainland Asia, where we have no business in the first place. Let's recognize the USSR's defensive needs and look for ways of building trust and cooperation between our two countries.*

*Wait a minute! Unless the United States takes the lead in the battle against communism, the Soviets are going to take over the world. The only language those commies understand is force. What you have to do is draw the line. Then tell them if they cross it, they are going to get hit with everything we've got! We need a strategy that does more than stop the spread of Soviet domination. Our goal should be to roll back the Soviet empire and free captive people from communism.*

*You're right! You can't trust the Soviet Union. As long as they can get away with it, those Soviets will try to take over more countries. But we don't want to start World War III either. What America should do is stand up to the USSR by helping countries resist communism. Don't give the Soviets any easy victories, and they'll eventually stop trying to rule the world.*

### Sphere of Influence and/or Isolation

Before Pearl Harbor, most Americans wanted their country to maintain the foreign policy it had followed for most of its 160 years. After World War II, many wanted to return to the traditional isolationist policies practiced before the war. This would have meant keeping out of Europe's affairs. In turn, European countries would be expected to stay out of North and South America. After World War II, this line of thinking was expressed by Roosevelt's former Vice-President, Henry Wallace. Wallace, believed there were a number of different power centers or spheres of influence in the world. For real peace, he argued, the US must:

*...recognize that we have no more business in the political affairs of Eastern Europe than the USSR has in the political affairs of Latin America. We may not like what the Soviets do in Eastern Europe. Communist land reform, industrial expropriation [government take-over of businesses], and suppression of basic liberties offends the majority of Americans. But whether we like it or not, the Soviets will try to socialize their sphere of influence, just as we try to democratize ours.*

*We must realize that we are reckoning with a force which cannot be handled successfully by a "get tough with the USSR" policy. "Getting tough" never brought about real and lasting peace — whether with schoolyard bullies or businessmen, or world powers. The tougher we get, the tougher the Soviets will get. What we need to do is find issues on which we and the Soviets can cooperate.*



# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

*Then we can negotiate agreements on these issues and thus build up a peace based on trust and mutual interest.*<sup>18</sup>

## Containment

George Kennan, who served as ambassador to the Soviet Union, became one of America's most respected diplomats and Cold War strategists. Kennan's position was that Soviet leaders were not like Hitler. They were not impatient and reckless. They did, indeed, believe in their system, and they thought that the world's nations would eventually have communist governments. However, the Soviets could be stopped as long as the United States remained patient, did not back them into a corner where they had to fight, and applied constant but firm counter-pressure to contain them:

*[I]t is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. This will be done by the adroit [skillful] and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy. The Soviet threat cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.*



**President Eisenhower  
with  
Secretary of State Dulles**

*It is important to note, however, that such a policy [containment] has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward 'toughness.' While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable to considerations of prestige...It can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield.*

*[But] the United States has it within its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate and will promote tendencies...[to] the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. This eventually will bring Soviet leadership to adjust itself in one way or another to the logic of that [U.S.-produced] state of affairs.*<sup>19</sup>

## Massive Retaliation and Liberation

As Secretary of State under President Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles became the spokesman for the retaliation and liberation school of thought. Dulles believed we could never stop the Soviets from expanding by just waiting to see where they would attack next. Instead, the United States should take the offensive by liberating people and using the threat of nuclear war to stop Soviet expansion:

*["W]e shall never have a secure peace or a happy world so long as the Soviet communism dominates one-third of all peoples that there are, and is in the process of trying at least to extend its rule to many others.*

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Richard J. Walton, *The Price of Vision, The Diary of Henry A. Wallace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 2..

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Richard Hofstadter, ed., *Great Issues in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), Volume II, p.422-423, 427.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

*[A] policy which only aims at containing Russia where it now is, is in itself an unsound policy; but it is a policy which is bound to fail because a purely defensive policy never wins against an aggressive policy. If our only policy is to stay where we are, we will be driven back. It is only by keeping alive the hope of liberation, by taking advantage of that wherever opportunity arises, that we will end this peril which threatens the world.*

*We need a security system for ourselves and other free nations, a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost. Local defense will always be important. But there is no local defense which will contain the mighty land power of the Communist world. Local defense must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power [the atom bomb]. A potential aggressor must know that he cannot always choose battle conditions that will suit him. Otherwise he might be tempted to attack in places where we are weak.*<sup>20</sup>

## Five Crises

As we have seen, the philosophies of sphere of influence/isolation, containment, and liberation/massive retaliation, were advocated by various statesmen in the late 1940s and early 1950's and each still has its followers today. In the next few pages, you will read of five different situations faced by President Truman during this period. The reader should consider which of the three approaches to the Soviet Union is the best way to resolve each of these crises.

## War-Torn Europe

Two years after World War II ended, Europe had not begun to recover from the most destructive war in its history. Cities had been systematically destroyed, block by block. Where apartment houses once stood, rubble lay as far as the eye could see. There were no police, no fire departments, no running water, no sewers, no schools, and no operating factories. People fainted on the streets from hunger and froze to death in their homes. Some burned their own furniture for temporary relief from the cold. This was the situation everywhere in Europe: in Berlin, Rome, and London as well as in dozens of smaller cities, hundreds of towns, and thousands of villages.

To many it seemed that Europe would not recover. With no money to re-open factories, repair railroads, pave streets, replace residences, rebuild bridges, or to feed and clothe Europe's suffering millions the future held little hope.

These economic hardships also created great political difficulty. People on the verge of starvation could easily be tempted to support major economic changes. In France and Italy, for instance, somewhere between 25 and 40 percent of all voters were willing to vote for communist parties that made seductive promises to improve their lives, making it a distinct possibility that the communists would win the next election in Italy.

*Proposed solutions:*

a. State US concern and willingness to lend money.

---

<sup>20</sup>Adapted from Hofstadter, pp. 439

- b. Warn the Soviets that the United States would not allow a communist government to come to power in France or Italy and would take strong measures to restore democratic rule.
- c. Spend somewhere between \$130 and \$180 billion (2000 dollars) to put the countries of Western and Central Europe (including Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary) back on their feet so they could support themselves.

## ***Military Pressure on Greece and Turkey***

For many decades, Britain had considered Greece and Turkey to be in its sphere of influence, but in 1947 the British told the United States they could no longer afford to protect either of these countries. In Greece, communist-led guerrillas (with help from non-communists) were waging a civil war to overthrow the pro-British but corrupt and repressive Greek monarchy. This time, the Greek communist party was receiving help from the Soviet Union. The USSR sent in supplies by way of Yugoslavia. Without outside help, the King of Greece and his government could not defeat the revolt.

Meanwhile, the USSR was putting pressure on Turkey for an agreement that would place control of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles waterways in Soviet hands. Control over these choke points between the Aegean and Black Seas would give the Soviet navy free access to the Mediterranean. In addition, the Soviets wanted Turkey to grant them provinces in East Turkey that had once belonged to the Russian Empire.

### ***Proposed solutions:***

- a. Inform the Soviets that the United States frowns on their expansion into Greece and Turkey, but make no warnings and take no hostile actions.
- b. Threaten the USSR with military retaliation (from US B-29s that could carry nuclear bombs) if the Soviets tried to attack Turkey.
- c. Give Greece and Turkey \$9 billion (2000 dollars) worth of economic and military assistance so that they could defend themselves and remain independent of the Soviets.

## ***Coup in Czechoslovakia***

For three years after World War II, the Czechoslovakian government of Eduard Benes was undermined by the Soviet Union whose Red Army had driven the Germans out of the country. In February 1948, communists in the coalition Czech government threatened a coup d'état or seizure of the government to force Benes to turn the government over to them. An important resister against this coup, the son of Czechoslovakia's founder, Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk was found dead in the street under his third floor office window on March 10. Few American experts on Eastern Europe believed the police report that Masaryk had committed suicide.

### ***Proposed solutions:***

- a. Send a formal note of protest to the Soviet Union.

- b. Give assistance to anti-communist guerrillas in Czechoslovakia, and tell the Soviets they had three months to withdraw all of their troops from that country, or face nuclear destruction.
- c. Support other non-communist governments in Central Europe to strengthen them against similar tactics.

## ***Berlin Blockade***

The USSR announced that, starting April 1, 1948, it would carefully inspect all goods shipped through its occupation zone to West Berlin. In practice, this meant that the Soviets would make it impossible for the United States, Britain, and France to trade freely with Berlin. The British, French, and American occupation zones of Berlin would then become completely dependent economically on Soviet-occupied East Germany.

In taking action on April 1, the Soviets were not breaking a signed agreement. In the discussions of the future of Germany during the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the Soviet Union only gave oral consent for free access to Allied sectors of Berlin. The Soviets never made a written commitment to allow passage through their zone in East Germany to Berlin.

By July 1948, the Soviets had totally stopped rail and road traffic for the 110 miles between Berlin and the West. The Berlin blockade was the latest in a series of provocative Soviet actions. The Soviets had earlier taken goods worth many billion dollars out of East Germany as partial payment of \$10 billion they had been promised at Yalta. They also demanded reparations from the zones of their former allies. Furthermore, in response to a currency reform in the western zones, the Soviets flooded their zone with paper currency, causing inflation throughout Germany. The Soviets suspected that Britain, France, and the United States were working together ever more closely to create an independent West Germany. The blockade was, in part, an attempt to prevent further cooperation among the Western democracies.

## ***Proposed solutions***

- a. Allow unification of East Germany with Berlin, and unify British, French, and American occupation zones into West Germany.
- b. Use US tanks with air support to lead convoys into Berlin from West Germany; threaten to use nuclear weapons if the Soviets try to stop allied support for Berlin.
- c. Fly over the blockade and supply West Berlin by air until the Soviets open the routes to West Berlin again.

## ***Soviet Military Presence in Europe***

Shortly after World War II ended, the United States brought 90 percent of its troops home from Europe, leaving slightly more than 300,000 on the continent. In contrast, the Soviets maintained 4,000,000 Red Army soldiers under arms, none very far from Western Europe. Pro-Soviet satellite countries in East Europe had 1,000,000 soldiers - compared to 860,000 troops in West Europe. In addition, large parts of the

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

British and French armies were in Asia, trying to hold on to their colonies. These soldiers would not be available in time to defend their homelands in case of a Soviet attack. Unless one counted the US absolute superiority in nuclear weapons, the military balance in Europe had shifted to favor the USSR.

Up until 1949, US defensive strategy relied mainly on its possession of nuclear arms, but the Soviets exploded their first nuclear device in August that year. US strategy, henceforth, could no longer be based on America's sole possession of atomic weapons.

## *Proposed solutions:*

- a. Call for the countries of Western Europe to play a larger role in defending themselves. Make no commitment to come to their defense.
- b. Continue surrounding the Soviet Union with bases for US bombers equipped for nuclear weapons, and remind the Soviets of US supremacy in this regard.
- c. Strengthen US conventional (non-nuclear) forces in Europe, and ask Britain, France, and other Western European nations to increase their military strength.

## **Suggested Student Exercises:**

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                          |                        |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Henry Wallace         | e. liberation          | i. adroit and vigilant application |
| b. land reform           | f. massive retaliation | of counter-force                   |
| c. "school yard bullies" | g. George Kennan       | j. gradual mellowing'              |
| d. John Foster Dulles    | h. containment         | k. five major crises               |

2. State which of the three policies sounds most sensible to you. Give reasons to support your opinion.

3. Carefully read at least two of the five crises and prepare a report covering:

- the relevant facts of the case
- a proposed solution and reasons you reject it
- proposed solution and reasons you accept it

## Chapter 11

### Solutions to Five Crises

In the previous chapter, you were presented with five crises for US foreign policy makers. You were asked to choose among three solutions for each of these problems. This chapter will explain how President Harry Truman, his advisors, and Congress actually responded in each case.

#### War-torn Europe

On June 5, 1947, George Marshall, President Truman's Secretary of State, addressed Harvard's graduating class. In his speech Marshall announced that the United States was prepared to do whatever was necessary to assist Europe "in the return of normal economic health. Our policy," he stated, "is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist." The opponents of the aid package unsuccessfully argued that helping every anti-communist government throughout the world would bankrupt the United States.

Marshall's offer was grasped as a lifeline by the destitute nations of Europe. Before the end of June, foreign ministers of several Western European countries held a meeting attended by representatives of countries within the Soviet zones of occupation.\*\* Three months later, the non-communist nations of Europe drew up comprehensive plans for economic recovery. In December 1947, President Truman asked Congress for \$17 billion (170 billion 2000 dollars) over the next four years to pay for this program. Final approval of the plan was voted on March 31, 1948, shortly before an election in Italy in which a communist majority was predicted.

The impact of the Marshall Plan was both immediate and enduring. In the April 1948 elections, the communist party in Italy won only 31 percent of the vote. Over the next three years, industrial production in Marshall Plan countries increased by 37 percent, and steel manufacturing doubled. By 1952, output in most of these nations surpassed pre-war levels. This rate of growth has continued from the 1950s to the present day. In contrast, the countries of Eastern Europe, which were less industrialized before the war, have struggled economically under the communist economic system. Yet the total bill for the Marshall Plan was only \$12.8 billion, actually \$4 billion less than appropriated.

#### Greece and Turkey

President Truman's determination to contain Soviet expansion was expressed in a March 1947 speech in which he asked Congress to appropriate \$400,000,000 to help Greece and Turkey defend themselves. "If we falter in our leadership," Truman warned, "we may endanger the peace of the world and surely endanger the welfare of our nation." This speech and the aid package he requested are known as the "Truman Doctrine."

---

\*\* The USSR ordered the countries under its control to withdraw their request for aid.

Truman's request caused a flurry of protests throughout the land. The president, after all, was asking Congress to break with tradition. He asked Congress to supply arms and money to two small nations, neither particularly democratic, 4,000 miles from US shores. Neither Greece nor Turkey was viewed as vital to the defense of the United States. Neither was an important trading partner. However, the economic and political assistance provided by the United States helped Greece and Turkey in resisting communist pressure. By October 1949, the Greek government had won the civil war against their communist opponents. Turkey resisted the USSR's demands for bases and territory. As of the year 2000, both Greece and Turkey are still allies of the United States. Furthermore, after many years of right-wing military rule, Greece has become a democratic country.

## **The Coup in Czechoslovakia**

Truman did nothing to prevent the Communist party takeover of Czechoslovakia following Jan Masaryk's 1948 fall from his office window. Under the leadership of Communist Party chief Klement Gottwald, Czech industry was nationalized, collective farms were set up, opponents were jailed, and all economic ties with Western Europe were severed. In 1968 a brief attempt by reformers in the Czechoslovakian Communist Party under Alexander Dubcek to liberalize Czech society was suppressed by the Soviet Union without intervention from US President Johnson. US Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan also stood by when the Soviet Union suppressed similar efforts by reformers in Hungary and Poland to establish greater freedom and democracy. Real freedom for the people of communist Europe did not occur until Soviet troops finally left the area in the early 1990's.

## **The Berlin Blockade**

The most dramatic response to the Soviet challenge in Europe was the American airlift to Berlin. In July 1948, the USSR announced a halt to the flow of passengers and freight into West Berlin. The United States feared that this blockade might ultimately lead to the incorporation of West Berlin into East Germany.

America's response to this threat was the Berlin airlift, a plan to fly goods into West Berlin over the Soviet zone. The United States, Britain, and France managed to fly in 8,000 tons of goods very day, enough to feed, clothe, and supply the city of 2,500,000. As many as 1,071 planes in one day (almost one a minute) flew into West Berlin. The airlift brought West Berliners sufficient raw materials and fuel to supply their factories. Thoroughly embarrassed for 11 months, the Soviets finally lifted the blockade in May 1949. Around the same time, the American, French, and British zones of Germany were united into the Federal Republic of Germany. West Berlin was officially united with West Germany.

In 1961 the East German government closed the border between East and West Berlin and built a wall across the city. The purpose of this wall was to prevent East Germans from fleeing west in search of political freedom and better economic conditions. In the 1990's, Soviet troops withdrew from East Germany and by 1998, the two Germanies were re-united, ending 50 years of forced separation.

## **The North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

Following World War II, the Soviet Union did not withdraw its troops from Eastern Europe. Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg reacted to the threat of overwhelming conventional Soviet force in Eastern Europe. In 1948 these countries signed the Brussels Treaty to form a mutual defense pact. Supported by Congress and over objections of isolationists, President Harry Truman began negotiations that eventually led to the formation of the North Atlantic

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1949. Member nations pledged to defend one another in case of attack. Sixteen nations were the original members of NATO:

Belgium	Iceland	Italy	Portugal
Britain	France	Luxembourg	West Germany
Canada	Greece	Netherlands	Turkey
Denmark	Iceland	Norway	United States

For almost 40 years, NATO has helped protect Western Europe from the possibility of Soviet attack. In 1998, NATO actually added three countries from the former Soviet bloc, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The Soviet-led Warsaw bloc has collapsed, all nations that once were members are now free of Soviet control. Furthermore the Soviet Union itself has broken into separate republics and is now a shadow of its former self and no longer a strong military threat to the United States.

## Conclusion

The American response to the post-war crises in the late 1940s shaped US policy toward Europe over the next 50 years. Since the fall of Czechoslovakia in 1948, no Soviet troops have moved west from the Soviet-controlled parts of Europe. And since the Soviet Union no longer exists, the Soviet military threat to western Europe is over, and the east European bloc countries are free and independent.

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly tell the importance to this chapter of each of the following:

- |                              |                     |                                  |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Marshall Plan             | e. "if we falter"   | j. formation of West Germany     |
| b. Italian elections         | f. Jan Masaryk      | k. NATO                          |
| c. contrast between Germanys | g. Clement Gottwald | l. fate of Soviet Union          |
| d. Truman Doctrine           | h. Alexander Dubcek | m. outcomes in Greece and Turkey |
|                              | i. airlift          |                                  |

2. Did events prove that containment was the best policy for the US to pursue in response to the 5 crisis? Be prepared to support your answer.



## Part II

### Chapter 1

## How China Became a Communist Country

As we have seen the containment doctrine worked well in western Europe. Indeed, after 1945, the Soviet Union did not take over any country where it did not already have troops. Soviet attempts to detach Berlin from the West, to infiltrate into Greece, to capture control of Italy and France through communist party victories at the polls, all failed. The Marshall Plan put Europe back on its feet economically; the Truman Doctrine gave Greece and Turkey the help they needed to resist Soviet advances; the airlift saved Berlin; and NATO provided a guarantee of American military aid if needed. Americans had good reasons to be proud of their successes in this vitally important area of the globe.

Unfortunately, success among the relatively established industrialized states of Europe could not be duplicated in the shifting, agricultural societies of Asia. Here, and most particularly in China, Americans were confronted with a far more complex situation than in Europe and it is to this part of the globe that our attention now must turn.

### Forty Years of Revolution in China

There is an old saying known to people who knew Chinese history and culture that no revolution could succeed there without the support of its scholars and its peasants. Unfortunately, most Americans who evaluated policy decisions about China knew little about either its history or its culture.

Chinese civilization has a recorded history of some 4,000 years. These can be divided into a series of dynasties or empires, one following another as internal collapse was triggered by strong pressure from the outside. The last dynasty, the Manchu, was well in its death agonies during the latter part of the 19th century. One by one, the nations of the western world, took advantage of this weak Empire. England, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan each carved out spheres of influence for themselves where their nationals could profit from increasing trade, building railroads, and making investments. Chinese leaders, while sometimes eager for the contact with the West, cringed at the humiliation of seeing their



**Mao Zedong**

country carved up by foreigners.\* A revolution in 1911 overthrew the discredited Manchu Dynasty that could no longer protect its people. Dr. Sun Yatsen, the leader of the revolt, preached a doctrine of nationalism, democracy, and socialism. These principles, however, were merely borrowed from the West, and did not represent firm ideals held by the Chinese masses, or even the cultured and educated classes who played vital roles in China's political, economic, and cultural life. Out of Sun Yatsen's revolt, however, two distinct factions arose. The faction attracted to socialism was eventually led by the communist, Mao Zedong. But even this early comm Communism was not related to the Chinese experience; it was a Russian communism, dictated by men trained in the Soviet Union

---

\* Americas policy during the early 1900's, was not to get a sphere of influence of its own, but to be given equal access to all of the areas taken by the others. This was called the "Open Door" policy.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

who were filled with visions of oppressed factory workers overthrowing their bosses and establishing a government modeled after the USSR. Factory workers, however, comprised far too small a percentage of China's population to form the basis of a mass movement.

The faction encompassing the educated class of China (the 'scholars') included students, doctors, lawyers, and government officials outraged by repeated insults to China by foreign countries. They wanted a China capable of defending itself and determining its own destiny.

During the early 1920's, Chinese socialists and nationalists worked together in an uneasy alliance. But orders came from Moscow for a general strike and the overthrow of the old government. Workers struck, not once or twice, but many times. And each time they were overwhelmed by supporters of the old order, the Nationalists, who looked to Chiang Kai-shek for their leadership. The strikes were brutally suppressed, and the Communists were killed or forced to flee only to regroup, and again be asked to overthrow their employers.

Repeated disastrous failures finally convinced Mao Zedung that the Revolution in China must be based on Chinese conditions rather than Russian fantasies. More out of desperation than design, Mao looked toward the oppressed peasants in China who toiled their lives away on plots of ground barely sufficient to feed their families. Yet, these small farmers had to pay taxes, rents, and other obligations to rich landlords and/or greedy moneylenders. To make payment, they often had to do without nourishment, beg from rich relatives, and even sell their children into slavery.

Mao based his revolution on the idea that just like a fish that needs the ocean for survival, a revolutionary must be sustained by the people. The first task for Mao and his followers, therefore, was to win the support of the Chinese peasants who, like the factory workers in the Marxist Revolution in Russia, 'had nothing to lose but their chains.' Mao Zedung thus gained followers in the small, rural villages by telling farmers that they could till their own soil free from debts and other obligations.

On this simple principle, Mao recruited a guerrilla army, dedicated to redistributing the land and helping the poor farmers. To avoid the mistakes of almost all other armies in China's history, Mao commanded his men to help the people, to treat them with respect, to take nothing from them ("not even needle and thread") without paying for it, and to return all confiscated goods.



**Chiang Kai-shek**

## **The "Long March" and Japan's Invasion**

Chiang Kai-shek began to believe that the greatest threat to his control of China was Mao Zedung. Mao's 'liberated villages' and peasant armies operated in the most distant provinces which were inaccessible with modern transportation. Nevertheless, Chiang resolved to destroy these peasant enclaves and to end this threat to a united China. Chiang's armies pursued Mao's for well over a year across eighteen mountain ranges and twenty-four rivers, for 6,600 miles, (averaging 26 miles a day). By 1935 the exhausted Nationalist troops finally admitted defeat and the Communist survivors (20,000 out of the original 100,000) of this famous "Long March" rested in Yen-an. Here Mao established a state based on his principles, (not Russia's) and developed the philosophy and tactics which later helped him capture all of China. Chiang, meanwhile, was forced to pay attention to another threat to his rule coming from Japan.

Even before Chiang started chasing Communist soldiers across rural China Japanese soldiers invaded Manchuria, the richest and most industrialized province of China. Six years later (in 1937) the

Japanese extended their attack on China itself. Cleverly adopting the posture of Chinese patriots, Mao's Communist band pledged itself to throwing out the invading Japanese. They even forced a reluctant Chiang Kai-shek to publicly commit himself to that goal.\* Between 1937 and 1945 the energies of both factions in the Chinese civil war devoted themselves primarily to defeating Japan. US aid was extended to the Nationalists (known in China as the Kuomintang) before the U.S. officially entered World War II. After Pearl Harbor, Chiang became a valued ally. He was portrayed in the States as a valiant nationalist, struggling to bring democracy to his beleaguered country against impossible odds.

## Two Years of Juggling for Position

After Japan's surrender in 1945, the United States spent over \$2 billion trying to prop up Chiang's decaying Nationalist government. In addition, the US flew Nationalist troops around China, so that they and not the Communists, could take over the territories evacuated by Japanese forces. The U.S. also sold the Nationalists a billion dollars worth of American military supplies at bargain basement prices.

While the U.S. was so clearly involved in helping one partner in the struggle, it also tried to mediate between the two parties of the civil war. The US hoped to establish a coalition government. Chiang, however, would not allow the Communists into the government unless they first disbanded their armies; the Communists refused, unless they could be assured that Chiang would not again try to destroy them.

During these fruitless and frustrating negotiations (1945-47), U.S. advisors practically begged Chiang to reform his government. The US was particularly distressed by the fact that Chiang made no attempts to win the support of the Chinese people, end the rampant corruption in his government, and halt the often-brutal political suppression. While Chiang's policies were costing him political support, a savage, run-away inflation (prices eventually rose to 6,500 times their pre-war levels) forced civil servants into corrupt practices or poverty. Despite American aid and advice, Chiang's government seemed to have lost the will to reform itself and lost the support of China's scholars and its peasants.

Meanwhile, the Communists under Mao Zedong were able to exploit Chiang's weaknesses. By keeping his promises of land to the poor peasants, and continuing his successful political indoctrination program, Mao won the support of the poorest farmers in the countryside. By not alienating the wealthier peasants, Mao was able to extend his political base to include better-educated Chinese. The unfailing respect his army had for the people, whom they treated according to Red army orders, won Mao many followers who had been victimized by the looting, and rampaging Nationalist soldiers.

## The Nationalists Collapse

When fighting between Nationalists and Communist forces broke out once again in 1947, Chiang's troops outnumbered Mao's by three million to one million. In addition, the Nationalists controlled China's cities and major centers of population, about 80 percent of the country. The Communist base of action was the countryside, where they had established 19 'Liberated Areas' containing about 90 million people. However, the Nationalists were unable to capitalize on their advantages in numbers, American-supplied equipment, and trained men. Chiang made the fatal mistake of spreading his troops too thin by simultaneously (and against the wishes of his American advisors) attempting to take Manchuria and North China. In 1948, Chinese Communist troops threw off the guise of guerrilla soldiers and appeared in full battle array with captured Japanese and American tanks and artillery. Discouraged by years of purposeless fighting, lacking a sense of mission, led by corrupt officers who sometimes sold their

---

\* \* Chiang Kai-shek had been captured by rebels loyal to Mao, but was released on orders from Moscow, in exchange for a pledge to fight the Japanese. Putting Russia's interests above Mao's, the Kremlin leadership wanted China to divert Japan from an attack on the Soviet Union.

weapons and equipment to the enemy, the Nationalist soldiers either would not or could not fight effectively. In one battle, 100 miles from Nanking 327,000 Nationalist soldiers surrendered to a far smaller number of Communists. Defeat brought more discouragement as well as a brief cessation of American aid. In the spring, summer, and fall of 1949, all of China's great cities, one by one, fell into the hands of Mao's peasant armies. Chiang Kai-shek himself with the broken remnants of his once powerful armies fled and reached the island of Taiwan). Here the Nationalists imposed their rule on the 8,000,000 Taiwanese, while still claiming to be the legitimate government of the country they had lost. Having won the allegiance of the educated, Mao Zedong and his peasant armies were masters of China.

## Reaction in the United States

The American people were ill prepared for Chiang Kai-shek's sudden loss of China. Yet, there had been Foreign Service officers who had sent reports back to Washington advising the United States to begin befriending Communist leaders and abandoning Chiang Kai-shek. But these 'China hands' and other American experts on Asia were generally ignored and then accused of harboring pro-Communist sympathies. Reports from journalists such as Edgar Snow who sent glowing reports of Mao's peasant democracy from Yenan were frequently discounted or disregarded. For years the US Government, the media, and a well-organized 'China lobby' had touted Chiang Kai-shek's heroism and commitment to American principles in a difficult struggle against Japanese aggression and communist subversion. Then, with far too little preparation, the US State Department issued its famous China "White Paper" conveying the Government's official explanation why the US 'lost China.'

*The reason for the failure of the Chinese National Government do not stem from any inadequacy of American aid. The fact was that the decay which our observers had detected in Chungking (the Nationalist's capital) early in the war had fatally sapped the powers of resistance of the Kuomintang. Its leaders have proved incapable of meeting the crisis confronting them, its troops had lost the will to fight, and its government had lost popular support. The Nationalist armies did not have to be defeated; they disintegrated.<sup>21</sup>*

But this explanation did not satisfy Senator Knowland of California, the conservative wing of his Republican Party, and many Americans who were staunchly anti-Communist. Knowland set the tone for the debate over the loss of China, by criticizing the 'White Paper' as 1,054 page whitewash of "a wishful, do nothing policy which has succeeded only in placing Asia in danger of Soviet conquest with its ultimate threat to the peace of the world and our national security. What the Chinese army lacked, more than anything else, were the weapons which the State Department dangerously advised be withheld from its armies."<sup>22</sup>

21 Quoted in George C. Daughan, *The Cold War* (Xerox Publications: Middletown, Connecticut, 1973), p. 27.

22 Quoted in Ronald J. Caridi, *The Korean War and American Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1968), p. 10.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly describe the relation to the chapter of:

- |                          |                        |                     |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| a. scholars and peasants | f. Chiang Kai-shek     | j. Chunking         |
| b. Manchu Dynasty        | g. Long March          | k. China hands      |
| c. Sun Yat-sen           | h. Japanese attack     | l. "White Paper"    |
| d. Mao Zedung            | i. American assistance | m. Senator Knowland |
| e. communist's appeal    |                        |                     |

2. Do you think that the US government gave up too easily on Chiang Kai-shek's government as the China lobby believed? Or, do you agree with the China hands that we probably should not have supported a corrupt and ineffective anti-Communist government, even when there is no alternative to communist successes?

## Chapter 2

### War in Korea

Angry as Knowland and others were with Secretary of State Dean Acheson, there soon would be more provocation. During the summer of 1949, when America's policy of supporting Chiang Kai-shek was rapidly unraveling, a new China policy was being developed by the Truman administration. Acheson and his colleagues in the State Department assumed that a border dispute and other geopolitical tensions would quickly unglue the often-tenuous alliance between communist China and the Soviet Union. Aware of tensions between the Soviet Union and China stemming back to the 1920's, State Department experts were relatively sure that the United States could be in a position to play the two communist countries off against each other. For this strategy to work, however, the U.S. would first have to sever its ties with Chiang Kai-shek. The State Department was thus prepared to allow Mao to finish the Chinese civil war by crossing over to Formosa and defeating what remained of the Nationalist army. Thereafter, the U.S. was willing to extend diplomatic relations to communist China and allow its government to take Nationalist China's seat in the UN Security Council.

#### Two Koreas

In the wake of Chiang's downfall, the US Government assessed its commitments to other regions of Asia, particularly its support for South Korea. Korea, like Germany had been temporally divided between the victorious powers at post-war conferences with the Soviet Union. In this case, the Soviets were given temporary control over the land north of the 38th parallel, and the United States was given similar powers over the area South of the 38th parallel. In its region, the US attempted to establish a democratic government. Unfortunately, Syngman Rhee, the elected President, acted more like a dictator than a democrat. In an attempt to suppress all left-leaning opponents to his regime, he imprisoned more Koreans than Japan had in the last years of its occupation. North of the 38 parallel, Kim IL Sung, the pro-Soviet strongman, used communist ideology to justify a cruel tyranny. He claimed to be supporting land reform, income redistribution, and other "progressive" policies, similar to Soviet 'reforms' in Eastern Europe. In 1947, North Korea resisted calls from the United Nations to participate with the South in holding free elections to re-unify Korea as had been promised at a meeting in Moscow in December, 1945. In the meantime, the Soviet Union supported President Kim's goal of building a 135,000-man army in the North, and supplied it with 150 tanks, heavy artillery, and a credible air force. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops from North Korea in 1948. Meanwhile, the Republican dominated Congress failed to provide the Truman administration with the funds it needed to station a strong contingent of US troops in South Korea. The U.S. assigned a total of 500 military advisors to the Army of the Republic of [South] Korea (ROK) and helped it build its troop strength to 100,000 men. But, fearing that Syngman Rhee would make good on his threats to invade North Korea, the US failed to provide the ROK with tanks, heavy artillery, and airplanes.

#### Three Speeches

Reflecting the weakened strategic position the US faced in South Korea, Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech on January 12, 1950. In it he defined America's commitment to defending the countries of Asia. The line passed through the Aleutian chain of islands off Alaska, through Japan and the Philippines, but did not include South Korea, Formosa, or Indochina.\* The Joint Chiefs of Staff, future

president Dwight Eisenhower, and US commander in Japan, Douglas MacArthur, supported this assessment of the US capacity to effectively deploy its limited forces in light of Soviet superiority in Europe. This lack of commitment to defending South Korea and Taiwan, however, was severely criticized in a speech by Republican Congressman Walter Judd who predicted it would encourage a communist attack in these areas.

While Judd's speech is not well known today, one given by the junior Senator from Wisconsin on February 9, 1950 is still regarded as a watershed in American history. The speech put the place where it was given, Wheeling, West Virginia, on the map and blazed the name of the speaker, Joe McCarthy, across national headlines. McCarthy captured and articulated a feeling that the loss of Eastern Europe, the China disaster, Russia detonating an atomic bomb (in 1949), and several spy cases, were signs that America was losing the Cold War. McCarthy offered his countrymen a convenient and not implausible scapegoat, Communists in the Government:

*The reasons why we find ourselves in a position of impotency [in international affairs] is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous action of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. The bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been worst. In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.* <sup>23</sup>

## South Korea Attacked

As fate had it, Walter Judd's prediction came true at 4 a.m. on June 25, 1950 Korean time. Following a two-hour artillery barrage, North Korean troops led by 100 Soviet tanks, crossed the 38th parallel at three different points. The next day, the United Nations Commission at the border confirmed the facts of the attack. North Korean forces which had been seen massing at the border prior to the attack were drove the South Korean Army helter-skelter down the Korean peninsular.

News of the war reached President Truman at home in Independence, Missouri. He returned to Washington the next day, and closeted himself with Secretary of State Dean Acheson and other presidential advisors. Their immediate problem: to decide what response the U.S. should make to this unprovoked attack on a country the United States was not pledged to defend.

## Defend South Korea?

Whatever decision America made would undoubtedly affect its future relationship with Chiang Kai-shek. Surely the U.S. would not be fighting Communism in Korea while allowing other Communists to defeat a dedicated anti-communist whom the US had supported for 12 years. But the most important considerations were whether fighting a war in Korea was worth the potential loss in men and money; whether the US, having lost China, a country of 450 million people, should fight to save South Korea, a country of fewer than 20 million which it was not committed to defend. Furthermore, President Truman and his advisors had to decide whether scarce US resources should be used to defend an Asian country with little strategic value, when Western Europe was still vulnerable to Soviet attack.

There were powerful arguments for not allowing the North Koreans, with the support of Soviet weapons and Soviet-trained troops, to take the South. Wasn't the lesson of Munich that aggression must

---

23 Quoted in Richard Caridi, op. cit., p. 12.

# Digital History

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

be opposed before the aggressor gets too powerful to stop? Many of Truman's advisors feared that America's failure to come to South Korea's aid would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and an invitation to Moscow to attack other US interests, such as West Berlin. Containment had worked in western Europe as well as in Greece and Turkey. Was it now time to apply George Kennan's doctrine to Asia as well?

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly describe the relation to the chapter of:

- |                  |                                      |                               |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Kim IL Song   | d. policy to divide communist powers | g. attack on S. Korea         |
| b. 38th parallel | e. defense perimeter speech          | h argument to defend S. Korea |
| c. Syngman Rhee  | f. McCarthy's charges                | i. argument not to defend     |

2. As your teacher directs, make a case to defend or not to defend South Korea. Your argument should include:

- South Korea's importance or lack thereof to the US
- potential effect on strategy of splitting communist powers
- previous successes or failures of containment
- potential cost (in money and lives) to the United States



## Chapter 3

### The Korean War and General MacArthur

President Truman decided that the US could not afford to allow communist North Korea to overrun non-communist South Korea. His first action was to ask the Soviet Union to urge their client state to halt its attack and withdraw its forces. Truman's second step was to ask his ambassador to the UN to introduce a motion asking North Korea to desist its attack. When these measures failed the President ordered US forces to assist South Korean troops in stemming the tide of the invasion.

#### Rush to Combat

The US announced direct assistance to South Korea was announced on June 27, 1950, the same day the UN asked member countries to aid the Republic of [South] Korea (ROK). The next day US airplanes bombed North Korean troops. U.S. air support failed to stop the North Korean army which completed its capture of Seoul, the capitol of South Korea, on June 29. The next day Truman ordered U.S. ground forces into South Korea, and the first troops arrived on July 1st. Rushed into combat four days later, the troops were forced to retreat. On July 7th the UN created a united command, and Truman immediately appointed General Douglas MacArthur Commander of UN forces in Korea. Ultimately, sixteen countries, including the US and the ROK joined in the fighting, but the US supplied 2/3rds of the men, money and equipment. Along with South Korean troops, the US sustained the bulk of casualties. Altogether 33,629 US soldiers died in combat.

QuickTime™ and a  
Photo - JPEG decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

**Major turning points of the Korean War before  
November, 1950**

## Pusan and Inchon

During the remainder of July, 1950, US troops were rushed into Korea in a desperate effort to halt the communist advance. Despite heroic and energetic resistance by the outnumbered US soldiers, the communist advance continued. Prodded by General Douglas MacArthur, General Walt H. Walker finally ordered his troops to stop retreating and hold their ground. Within a week, UN forces completed a long defense perimeter around Pusan in the southwest corner of Korea. A desperate struggle ensued as North Korean troops unsuccessfully hurled themselves against UN defenses. With reinforcements arriving daily, including troops from friendly countries, UN forces were able to mount a brief though unsuccessful counterattack.

Meanwhile General MacArthur was hatching a daring plan for a quick end to the war. Rather than rely on a breakout at Pusan leading to a prolonged drive to Seoul against a well-prepared adversary, MacArthur decided to land the bulk of his forces far behind enemy lines at Inchon, port city to Seoul, the South Korean capital. Since the ocean tide in this area reached a height of 31 feet, the invasion would involve a great risk, or in MacArthur's words, a 'desperate gamble.' The invaders would have to achieve complete surprise, and a sufficient force must be landed in a brief interval, and then wait 12 hours for the next high tide for reinforcements. Initially the US Joint Chief of Staff was totally opposed to the plan, but MacArthur persisted and at last won their grudging approval. The operation took place on September 15th. With a flotilla of 260 ships, MacArthur's invaders managed to avoid two typhoons, thread their way around a poorly arranged minefield and scale an unguarded seawall. Within three days the ill-prepared enemy was driven out of Inchon. Two weeks after the initial landing General MacArthur, accompanied by South Korean President Syngman Rhee, addressed the Korean parliament in Seoul. In the meantime, General Walker led US/UN forces in a breakout of the Pusan perimeter, and after some hard fighting began chasing the communists northward, and the 50,000 US/UN troops were preparing to cross the 38th parallel.



**Landing at Inchon\_**  
National Archives



**UN troops crossing the 38<sup>th</sup>**

At this point the Korean War might have been over. The main UN objective, freeing South Korea, had been achieved, the enemy was routed, and the South Korean government was re-established in its pre-war capital. But few decision makers in Washington, DC were ready to leave the table just as the food was being served. Truman, his advisors, MacArthur, and the victorious UN soldiers wanted to continue the war until all of North Korea was liberated. England and India were not so sure and wanted UN forces to stop their attack at the 38th parallel. But President Truman was able to push a resolution through the UN

which authorized an invasion of North Korea for the purpose of ensuring "conditions of stability throughout Korea." The Truman administration advised MacArthur to continue the attack unless there was a danger of China or the Soviet Union entering the war. General MacArthur assured Truman and the Joint Chiefs that intervention by China would result in a 'great slaughter' of Chinese troops.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

The march northward proceeded at breakneck pace. Convinced that a hasty attack would annihilate the remnants of the North Korean army, UN units competed with one another to see who could cover more territory and capture more enemy soldiers. In the process UN units were badly stretched out — far ahead of their supply lines, out of communication with one another, and often low on food, fuel, and ammunition. Repeated warnings by the Chinese that they would not tolerate UN forces approaching the Chinese border marked by the Yalu River were ignored.

Unbeknown to MacArthur, US intelligence, or UN forces, 3000,000 Chinese soldiers had slipped across the Yalu River and were preparing to attack UN forces. When the attack came on October 25th, UN troops were caught by surprise. But within 10 days, the Chinese were defeated and disappeared. MacArthur then planned an offensive that started on November 24th. A race to the Yalu River, which the



**US soldiers in combat in Korea**

general promised would end the war and bring UN troops home by Christmas, was initiated. But the Chinese counterattacked two days after Thanksgiving. Thousands of Chinese soldiers, who had remained undetected in North Korea, attacked the 250,000 man UN forces at night. "[S]warming over hills, blowing bugles and horns, shaking rattles...and shooting flares into the sky" the Chinese came on foot, totally surprising UN troops and forcing them to retreat hundreds of miles. Since the Chinese armies maneuvered and attacked after sunset, UN forces could not take advantage of their air superiority. Seoul fell for the second time on January 5th and yet the retreat continued for another 70 miles.

Finally, the death of 8th army commander Walt H. Walker and his replacement by Mathew Ridgeway helped to stem the retreat. By March, UN forces were in command once more, Seoul was liberated for the second time, and UN forces were once again approaching the 38th parallel.

## MacArthur Fired: the Issues and the Reaction



**The General**

From his command post in Japan General MacArthur blamed much of the defeat suffered by UN forces on the lack of support for his armies. MacArthur differed with the Truman administration on three major points:

1. MacArthur wanted to use nuclear weapons, which the US possessed in far larger numbers than the Soviets. However, Truman ruled this out because the US possessed too few nuclear bombs, the mountainous terrain would make them largely ineffective, and world opinion would not support such a move.
2. MacArthur wanted to bomb Chinese bases and factories in Manchuria, and destroy the bridges crossing the Yalu River from China to North Korea. He believed this would allow him to destroy enemy troop concentrations, prohibit enemy armies from entering Korea, and destroy the enemy's source of supplies. But Truman believed that the Chinese might bomb US airfields in Korea and aircraft carriers in Korean waters, and bombing China might increase Chinese hostilities and bring the Soviet Union into the war.
3. MacArthur wanted to allow Chiang Kai-shek's forces to invade mainland China which he hoped would trigger a revolution against the Communist government, or at least draw Chinese troops out of Korea. Truman opposed this plan for fear it would involve the US in a land war in Asia — the 'wrong war at the wrong time, the wrong place, and against the wrong enemy.'

4. In summation, MacArthur firmly believed that the main aim of any war was to win, and that victory meant the liberation of North Korea. Any half-hearted measure was no better than appeasement, and would allow the enemy to regroup and start another war as soon as US defenses were down. President Truman was determined to fight only a limited war in Asia for the purpose of containing aggression against South Korea, and did not want to risk WWII, or committing too many scarce resources in a strategically unimportant sector at the expense of opening Europe to Soviet attack.

*General MacArthur wanted a military victory – he did not believe in fighting with one hand tied behind his back. During the course of the war, MacArthur constantly pressured his government for more freedom to fight the war without restrictions, was constantly irritated by orders from Washington, and occasionally spoke out publicly against the government which limited his action. President Truman repeatedly told the General to obey orders and refrain from publicly criticizing his administration. Finally, on April 11, 1951, the President carried out a decision he had made several days earlier and relieved the General of his command.*

Truman's advisors had warned him that firing MacArthur would be a very unpopular decision. But they had no idea that Truman's action would unleash an overwhelming outpouring of support for MacArthur. Two-hundred and fifty thousand Japanese came out to wish the General well when he left Tokyo. One-hundred thousand gave him a hero's welcome when he arrived in Hawaii; crowds of 500,000 greeted the General in San Francisco, and the airport in Washington, D.C. was crowded at midnight when the General arrived at the Nation's capital.

Congress took the unprecedented step of inviting General MacArthur to address both Houses to give his side of the story. President Truman spoke directly to the nation to inform the American people why he fired the General. Read the following excerpts from both speeches and judge for yourself who was right – the General or the President.

### **General MacArthur: There is No Substitute for Victory**

*The Communist threat is a global one. Its successful advance in one sector threatens the destruction of every other sector. You can not appease or otherwise surrender to communism in Asia without simultaneously undermining our efforts to halt its advance in Europe.*

*While I was not consulted prior to the President's decision to intervene in support of the Republic of Korea, that decision from a military standpoint proved a sound one. As I said, it proved to be a sound one, as we hurled back the invader and decimated his forces. Our victory was complete, and our objectives within reach, when Red China intervened with numerically superior ground forces. This created a new war and an entirely new situation, a situation not contemplated when our forces were committed against the North Korean invaders; a situation which called for new decisions in the diplomatic sphere to permit the realistic adjustment of our military strategy. Such decisions have not been forthcoming.*

*While no man in his right mind would advocate sending our ground forces into continental China, and such was never given a thought, the new situation did urgently demand a drastic revision of strategic planning if our political aim was to defeat this new enemy as we had defeated the old one. Apart from the military need, as I saw it, to neutralize sanctuary protection given the enemy north of the Yalu, I felt that a naval blockade against the China coast, removal of restrictions on air reconnaissance of China's coastal area and of Manchuria, removal of*

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

*restrictions on the forces of the Republic of China on Formosa, with logistical support to contribution to their effective operations against the Chinese mainland.*

*I called for reinforcements, but was informed that reinforcements were not available. I made clear that if not permitted to destroy the enemy built-up bases north of the Yalu, if not permitted to utilize the friendly Chinese Force of some 600,000 men on Formosa, if not permitted to blockade the China coast to prevent the Chinese Reds from getting succor from without, and if there was to be no hope of major reinforcements, the position of the command from the military standpoint forbade victory. We could hold in Korea by constant maneuver and in an approximate area where our supply line advantages were in balance with the supply line disadvantages of the enemy, but we could hope at best for only an indecisive campaign with its terrible and constant attrition upon our forces if the enemy utilized its full military potential have constantly called for the new political decisions essential to a solution.*

*Efforts have been made to distort my position. It has been said in effect that I was a warmonger. Nothing could be further from the truth. I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting. I have long advocated its complete abolition, as its very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means of settling international disputes.*

*But once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory, not prolonged indecision. In war there can be no substitute for victory.*

*There are some who for varying reasons would appease Red China. They are blind to history's clear lesson, for history teaches with unmistakable emphasis that appeasement but begets new and bloodier wars. It points to no single instance where this end has justified that means, where appeasement has led to more than a sham peace. Like blackmail, it lays the basis for new and successively greater demands until, as in blackmail, violence becomes the only other alternative.*

*Why, my soldiers asked me, surrender military advantages to an enemy in the field? I could not answer. Some, may say to avoid spread of the conflict into an all-out war with China; others, to avoid Soviet intervention. Neither explanation seems valid, for China is already engaging with the maximum power it can commit, and the Soviet will not necessarily mesh its actions with our moves. Like a cobra, any new enemy will more likely strike whenever it feels that the relativity of military and other potentialities is in its favor on a worldwide basis. The tragedy of Korea is further heightened by the fact that its military action was confined to its territorial limits. It condemns that nation, which it is our purpose to save, to suffer the devastating impact of full naval and air bombardment while the enemy's sanctuaries are fully protected from such attack and devastation.*

*I am closing my 52 years of military service. When I joined the Army, even before the turn of the century, it was the fulfillment of all of my boyish hopes and dreams. The world has turned over many times since I took the oath at West Point, and the hopes and dreams have all since vanished, but I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads of that day which proclaimed most proudly that old soldiers never die; they just fade away. And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty.*

## **President Truman: We Have Prevented World War III**

*Since the end of World War II — we have been working with other free nations to check the aggressive designs of the Soviet Union before they can result in a third world war. That is what we did in Greece when that nation was threatened by aggression of international communism. The attack against Greece could have led to general war. But this country came to the aid of Greece. The United Nations supported Greek resistance. With our help, the determination and efforts of the Greek people defeated the attack on the spot. Another big Communist threat to peace was the Berlin blockade. That too could have led to war. But again it was settled because free men would not back down in an emergency..*

*The question we have had to face is whether the Communist plan of conquest can be stopped without general war. Our Government and other countries associated with us in the United Nations believe that the best chance of stopping it without general war is to meet the attack in Korea and defeat it there. That is what we have been doing. It is a difficult and bitter task. But so far it has been successful. So far, we have prevented World War III. So far, by fighting a limited war in Korea, we have prevented aggression from succeeding and bringing on a general war. We do not want to see the conflict in Korea extended. We are trying to prevent a world war not to start one. The best way to do this is to make plain that we and the other free countries will continue to resist the attack. But you may ask: Why can't we take other steps to punish the aggressor? Why don't we bomb Manchuria and China itself? Why don't we assist Chinese Nationalist troops to land on the mainland of China?*

*If we were to do these things we would be running a very grave risk of starting a general war. If that were to happen, we would have brought about the exact situation we are trying to prevent. If we were to do these things, we would become entangled in a vast conflict on the continent of Asia and our task would become immeasurably more difficult all over the world. What would suit the ambitions of the Kremlin better than for military forces to be committed to a full-scale war with Red China?*

*Our experience in Greece and Berlin shows that it is the most effective course of action we can follow. If the Communist authorities realize that they cannot defeat us in Korea, if they realize it would be foolhardy to widen the hostilities beyond Korea, then they may recognize the folly of continuing their aggression. A peaceful settlement may then be possible. The door is always open. Then we may achieve a settlement in Korea which will not compromise the principles and purposes of the United Nation.*

*I have thought long and hard about this question of extending the war in Asia. I have discussed it many times with the ablest military advisers in the country. I believe with all my heart that the course we are following is the best course. I believe that we must try to limit war to Korea for these vital reasons: to make sure that the precious lives of our fighting men are not wasted; to see that the security of our country and the free world is not needlessly jeopardized; and to prevent a third world war.*

*A number of events have made it evident that General MacArthur did not agree with that policy. I have therefore considered it essential to relieve General MacArthur so that there would be no doubt or confusion as to the real purpose and aim of our policy. It was with the deepest personal regret that I found myself compelled to.*

## Suggested Student Exercises:

Based on the issues raised in this chapter and summarized in the following chart, did Truman make the right decision?

Issue	Truman's Position	MacArthur's Position
a. The goals of US policy :	Containment	Victory
b. The tactics that should be used:	Continued limited warfare	Bomb & blockade China, use nukes, & use Chiang to invade
c. who should make the final decision:	The President	The Generals

## Epilogue: After MacArthur

In his farewell speech to a joint session of Congress, General MacArthur said that, like the old soldier of the ballad he sung during his days as a cadet at West point, he would “never die, . . . just fade away.”

It took MacArthur quite a while to fade away. After being relieved of his command by Truman, he came back to a hero's welcome in the US, addressed a joint session of Congress, and was showered with more confetti in New York City than Charles Lindbergh had been for flying solo across the Atlantic Ocean. None of this proves whether the General was right or wrong in his dispute with the President. Let the following skeletal outline of events help you decide:

**April 11, 1951** MacArthur relieved of his command

**July 10, 1951** - Truce talks start between US, North and South Korean, and Chinese negotiators. Fighting tapers off. No more major offenses on either side. Battle lines conform closely to pre-war, 38th parallel.

**November, 1952** - Dwight Eisenhower swept to victory over Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson. With Korean War and peace negotiations still going on, Eisenhower promises to go to Korea if elected. It's expected that he will end the war.

**January, 1953** - John Foster Dulles becomes Secretary of State under Eisenhower. Dulles is a proponent of massive retaliation and liberation foreign policy.

**March 1953** - Joseph Stalin dies. Successors pledge to pursue a policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, and emphasize winning the “hearts and minds” of third-world countries through economic and political support.

**May, 1953** - Dulles asks India to relay message to China that the US is considering using nuclear weapons in Korea, bombing bases in China, and unleashing Chiang Kai-shek.

**June, 1953** - Revolt in East Germany put down by Soviet tanks. US, despite Dulles's belief in ‘liberation’ of countries behind Iron Curtain, does nothing but send food packages to East Germany and denounces Soviet Union.

# Digital History

---

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu)

**July, 1953** - Armistice signed with North Korea ends 2 years of negotiations and 3 years of fighting. One of the last issues to be resolved was the return of Chinese and North Korean prisoners who claimed they did not want to go back to their native land (they weren't forced to go back). Final armistice line parallels final battle lines of the war with an equal amount of territory above and below the 38th parallel going to each side.

**1953-95** - Korea still divided between North and South. Despite periodic incidents, the peace has held. South Korea is considerably more democratic in 1995 than it was in 1945; North Korea is now under the rule of Kim Il Sung's son, and is a one party dictatorship with a dysfunctional economic system, clearly behind the robust South Korean capitalist economic miracle. The US still has troops stationed in South Korea. And though the North is unable to feed itself, it still spends a good deal of its National income making weapons of mass destruction and intercontinental missiles needed to deliver them.

**2000-01** – Gradual thaw in North/South Korean relations, including some visits allowed across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel by families separated for fifty years, and more serious formal talks on issues that have long divided the two Koreas. U.S. so worried that North Korea might develop the ability to launch a nuclear missile that President Bush has proposed building a anti-missile defense system to protect the United States.



## Chapter 4

### The Strange Case of Alger Hiss

Alger Hiss seemed to have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Slim, tall, and handsome, with an aristocratic bearing, Hiss's list of prestigious schools included Harvard Law. His career included clerking for a Supreme Court Justice, advising President Roosevelt at Yalta, helping found the UN, and heading the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

On August 2, 1948 this man received a phone call informing him that Whittaker Chambers, an editor of *Time Magazine* and a self-confessed communist, was going to testify before the House of Un-American Activities Committee that he {Hiss} had also been a member of the Communist Party. Alger Hiss replied that he did not know Chambers, had never been in the Party, and had no friends who were communists. The next day, Chambers denounced Hiss before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Two days later, Hiss repeated his denials before the Committee and made such a convincing case that the Committee was fully prepared to drop the charges.

But before the Hiss case had ended and partially because of it, the threat of communists in the US government had become a national concern. Ultimately Hiss spent 44 months in jail for perjury and the rest of his long life protesting his innocence. In addition, thousands of Americans were dismissed from their jobs on questionable evidence that they were communists, communist sympathizers, or sympathetic to communist causes. Famous writers were unable to find outlets for their work; Richard Nixon became Vice-President largely based on his role in the Hiss case; and Senator Joe McCarthy rose from obscurity to becoming one of the most powerful men in America.

Was Alger Hiss really an agent of the Communist Party working on behalf of the Soviet Union as charged? Or was he an innocent victim of false charges and a misguided public looking for scapegoats for losses in the Cold War which included appeasement of the Soviets at Yalta, the "loss" of China to communism, and the firing of General Douglas MacArthur? Read the following chapter to familiarize yourself with the strange case of Alger Hiss, and prepare yourself to discuss the answer to this question.



**Alger Hiss with wife,  
Pricilla**

#### Hiss Accused

In August of 1948, Congress was getting ready to adjourn. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) had been busy finding communists in government, but the public was losing interest, and President Truman was planning to ask Congress to discontinue the committee. However, the interest of committee members was aroused by *Time Magazine's* Whittaker Chambers' assertion that he had close contact with fellow communist party member Alger Hiss between 1934-37. Two days later, Hiss testified that he never even met Chambers. The stories were so strikingly different that Chambers was recalled by a sub-committee of HUAC headed by freshman Congressman Richard Nixon. On cross-examination, Chambers gave a detailed account of Hiss's personal life. This account included the shape of Hiss' house, the arrangement of his furniture,

the terms of endearment he used to address his wife, and even his excitement in finding a rare prothonotary warbler while bird watching along the Potomac River. Chambers even claimed that he had

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

been a frequent guest in the Hiss household; that Hiss had given a car to a member of the Communist party; and that he had unsuccessfully tried to talk Hiss into quitting the Party.

Confronting this damaging testimony, Hiss came close to losing his composure. He claimed that most of the details of his personal life were publicly available, and many people knew of his bird watching habits. When pressed, Hiss admitted that he might have known Chambers under the name of George Crosley, and that he had given or sold his car to Crosley as part of a rental agreement. But Hiss continued to insist that he had no communist friends and that he never joined or worked for the party.

Chambers, now more confident, extended his charges against Alger Hiss. He said that Hiss was not only a member of the Communist Party, but had actually provided him with stolen documents from the US State Department. These documents, Chambers claimed, contained important American secrets and were passed on to Soviet officials. A typewriter belonging to Alger Hiss was supposedly used to type



**Congressman Nixon  
examining the  
famous pumpkin**

some of these documents, others were in Hiss's handwriting, and yet others copied on to microfilm. Pressed to corroborate this testimony, Chambers suddenly remembered that he had given some of the documents to a nephew living in Brooklyn, New York. Chambers went to Brooklyn where his nephew had stored them in an abandoned elevator shaft. He took them to his farm in Maryland where he kept them in his bedroom. Fearing that Hiss might send agents to find these incriminating documents, Chambers claimed he hid them in a hollowed out pumpkin on his farm. He turned them over to investigators led by Richard Nixon, who had thoughtfully brought a photographer along to get a picture of him examining the evidence.

With this sensational evidence in his hand, New York prosecutor Thomas Murphy convened a grand jury which indicted Hiss on two counts of perjury, one based on Hiss's claims he did not see Chambers after 1936, and the other that he lied about passing secret State Department documents to him. Because the statute of limitations had expired and the lack of eyewitnesses, Hiss could not be charged with treason.

At his trial, Hiss's lawyers charged the FBI with constructing the typewriter used to type the 'pumpkin papers', and brought forth dozens of character witnesses who testified in behalf of their client. The lawyers argued that this attack on Hiss was an attempt to discredit liberal Democrats. Hiss's defense team also found a witness to refute the only government informant other than Chambers who testified that Hiss was a member of the Communist Party. However, the defense failed to forcefully challenge changes in Chambers's testimony concerning when he (Chambers) left the Communist Party. These changes seemingly were made to coincide with the latest dates on the 'pumpkin papers.'

The prosecution, however, made an impression by producing the registration to the car that Hiss sold to William Rosen, an alleged communist, signed in Hiss's hand writing. The most damaging testimony against Hiss were the documents supposedly typed on Hiss's typewriter and the failure of Hiss's defense team to refute the FBI's expert witness that this indeed was the typewriter once owned by the Hisses. Hiss later claimed (and witnesses corroborated this claim) that the typewriter was not in his family's possession at the time the documents were typed. •

- 
- Whether the controversial papers actually contained important government secrets has not been established.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

Alger Hiss was found guilty of both charges in his second trial (the first had resulted in a hung jury). He spent 44 months in jail where he was a model prisoner. He never held another important job, was divorced from his wife, and spent the rest of his long life claiming his innocence. The Hiss trial is considered one of the most important of the 20th century, and Hiss' guilt or innocence is still being debated.

## Suggested Student Exercises:

1. Identify or define and briefly explain the relationship to the chapter of each of the following:

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| a. importance of Hiss case | f. HUAC           |
| b. 2 charges against Hiss  | g. typewriter     |
| c. Whittaker Chambers      | h. pumpkin papers |
| d. prothonotary warbler    | i. Richard Nixon  |
| e. George Crosley          |                   |

2. Make a list in which you evaluate the charges against Hiss. Use the following form as a model:

Evidence damaging to Hiss	Reasons (if any) to question evidence	Evaluation of evidence

3. Do you think there was enough evidence to convict Alger Hiss of perjury and passing government secrets to communist agents? Explain why you think there was or was not.

## Chapter 5

### McCarthy and McCarthyism

It was January, 1950 and Joseph McCarthy was upset. He had been a US Senator from Wisconsin since 1946 with little to show for the years he had been in office. He had a reputation as a drunkard, a braggart, and a weak legislator who, though a Republican, often voted with the Democratic Party. But now he faced a re-election campaign with nothing he could use to stir up the electorate.

But as luck would have it, while Senator McCarthy had dinner one night in January with three friends the conversation drifted to finding an issue that could help the Senator's campaign. After discarding such subjects as the St. Lawrence Sea way and a guaranteed \$100 a month pension for the retired, the subject of communism came up. Why not make a campaign issue out of the presence of known communists in the US government!



#### The Enemy Within

Armed with an issue, McCarthy approached party leaders to arrange a speaking tour. His first stop was Wheeling, West Virginia, where on February 9, 1950 McCarthy unleashed a torrent of criticism against the Democratic Party:

Six years ago, there were within the Soviet orbit 180,000,000 people. Lined up on the anti-totalitarian side there were in the world at that time roughly 1,625,000,000 people. Today, there are 800,000,000 people under the absolute domination of Soviet Russia. On our side, the figure has shrunk to around 500,000,000. In other words, in less than six years the odds have changed from 9 to 1 in our favor to 8 to 5 against us. This indicates the swiftness of the tempo of Communist victories and American defeats in the Cold War.

*The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this nation. It has not been the less fortunate who have been selling this nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer — the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs. The bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been worst . .*

*In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infiltrated by individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.*

*"This brings us down to the case of one Alger Hiss who is important not as an individual any more, but rather because he is so representative of a group in the State Department. It is unnecessary to go over the sordid events showing how he sold out the nation which had given him so much. Those are rather fresh in all of our minds. "As you know, very recently the Secretary of State [Acheson] proclaimed his loyalty to a man guilty of what has always been considered as the most abominable of all crimes — attempting to justify his continued devotion to the man who sold*

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

*out the Christian world to the atheistic world, [he] referred to Christ's Sermon on the Mount; this pompous diplomat in striped pants, with a phony British accent, [thus] endorsed communism, high treason, and betrayal of a sacred trust,* <sup>24\*</sup>

Senator McCarthy was totally unprepared for the sensation his speech caused. When asked at his next stop for the list of card-carrying communists in the State Department, the Senator said he would turn the names over to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, if Mr. Acheson would only call. The next day Senator McCarthy responded to an inquiry from the State Department that he had been misquoted. When McCarthy finally began to reveal names, he actually relied on an old list developed by an obscure investigator by the name of Robert Lee. The list had been circulating around Washington since 1947 citing *unproved* allegations against men and women who had at some time worked in the State Department. Many were no longer employed.

## Exaggerated Claims?

Using his talent for drama, Senator McCarthy made some notable changes in the allegations on the list. For example:

Unproved allegation on the Lee List	McCarthy's accusation in his speech
<p>This employee is with the Office of Information and Educational Exchange in New York City.</p> <p>His application is very sketchy. There has been no investigation. Though he is 43 years of age, his file reflects no history prior to June 1941.</p>	<p>This individual is 43 years of age. He is with the Office of Information and Education. According to the file, he is a known Communist. I might say that when I refer to someone being a known communist, I am not evaluating the information myself. I am merely giving what is in the file. The individual also found his way to the Voice of America Broadcast. Apparently the easiest way to get in is to be a Communist.<sup>25</sup></p>

## The Lattimore Case

Despite the drama of his charges, Senator McCarthy had not been able to name one yet unknown Communist who had substantially influenced America's China policy. Finally, McCarthy came up with a name, Owen Lattimore, who he claimed every school child knew was "the architect of our Far East policy," and was "Alger Hiss's boss in the espionage ring at the State Department." McCarthy added, that his own credibility would stand and fall on the Lattimore case.

A recognized expert on the Far East, Owen Lattimore was not even a regular employee of the State Department though he had served as an advisor on several occasions. Lattimore's public record included a letter of praise for his services in behalf of China from Chiang Kai-shek, opposition to various actions

24 Quoted in Daniel DeMello, *The McCarthy Era: 1950-54*, New York, Scholastic Book Services, 1968, pp. 7-12.

\* In the absence of any known recordings of McCarthy's West Virginia speech, the above is quoted from a speech given in the US Senate on February 20, 1950, making the same charges. Senator McCarthy used different numbers -when referring to the presence of communists in the State Department - sometimes charging there were 57, sometimes 81 and other times 205.

25. Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate*, (New York: Hayden Book Company, 1970), p. 57.

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

taken by the Soviet Union, and criticism of his most recent book by the Communist press. But all of this was discounted as Louis Budenz, like Chambers an admitted ex-Communist, testified before the Tydings Committee which was investigating McCarthy's charges, that he had heard Lattimore was considered by insiders to be a fellow Communist. Budenz's charges were never corroborated. Nevertheless, McCarthy's reputation as a fighter against communism soared, while Lattimore's reputation as a academician suffered.

## Further History of McCarthy and McCarthyism

The prestigious Tydings Committee completed its investigation of McCarthy's charges against Lattimore and the 57, 81, or 205 communists McCarthy claimed were in the State Department. The Committee the Committ6ee issued a report calling McCarthy's accusations a hoax riddled by numerous willful falsehoods. In response to this criticism, McCarthy labeled the Committee report "a disgrace to the Senate," and "a green light to the Red fifth column in the United States" before he even saw it.

Publicly opposing Senator McCarthy was akin to committing political suicide. Senator Millard Tydings was defeated in his bid for re-election by a virtually unknown Republican opponent, the victim of a doctored photograph allegedly showing him with the head of the American Communist Party. William Benton, a Republican who introduced a resolution to oust McCarthy from the Senate was



**President Eisenhower refrained from publicly criticizing McCarthy**

accused of "having established himself as a hero for every Communist and crook in and out of government." Benton did not survive his next bid for re-election. Accused by McCarthy "(0)f being part of a campaign so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man," General Marshall, former Supreme Commander of US forces in World War II and Secretary of State, resigned from his position in government. President Truman was weakened by McCarthy's charges of treason following the firing of General MacArthur, and did not run for re-election.

Despite the vicious nature of the charges introduced by Senator McCarthy, Republicans in 1952 used them as part of their political campaign that year. The Republican party platform accused Democrats of "shielding traitors to the nation in high places," and "working unceasingly to achieve their goal of national socialism," appeasing the Soviet Union at Yalta and Potsdam, causing the 'loss of China' by denying military aid to Chiang Kai-shek, and carrying on the Korean War "without a will to victory." Vice-presidential candidate Richard Nixon

accused the Democrat's presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, as "Adlai the Appeaser...who got his PhD from Dean Acheson's college of cowardly communist containment."

But if Republicans thought they were immune from charges by the senator they were mistaken. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, McCarthy continued his investigation of the State Department after Eisenhower became president. As a result, State Department employees were summarily fired, 30,000 books suspected of favoring communism were removed from overseas libraries, and some were actually burned. Inspired by the success of McCarthy's investigative techniques, private citizens and local government officials continued the hunt for communists, 'communist sympathizers,' and unwitting dupes of communist agents. The results were truly sensational. Loyalty oaths were required of anyone seeking a government job; failure to swear to one's loyalty to the United States was sufficient to deny anyone government employment. Vigilante committees removed books from local

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

libraries. Movie, radio, and television writers and actors with vaguely suspicious backgrounds were blacklisted. In Indiana professional wrestlers were investigated for communist connections and in Washington, D.C. the FBI investigated shoeshine men. School committee races were rife with charges of disloyalty, teachers were questioned and fired, books were banished from the classroom, curriculum was altered and courses were introduced on the evils of communism.

While fear of communist subversion swept the nation, the US Senate censored McCarthy. McCarthy had made the strategic mistake first of attacking the loyalty of men in the US Army, and secondly of revealing his often brutal and unscrupulous questioning techniques in 35 days of widely televised hearings. Horrified by what they saw on TV, the American public turned against Senator McCarthy. Politicians who had used McCarthy's accusations to advance their own political careers shied away from the senator. Newspapers no longer reported his charges. President Eisenhower said McCarthy was not welcome in the White House. Three years after his censor in 1954, Senator Joe McCarthy died of sclerosis of the liver, probably caused by his excessive drinking. Nevertheless, the debate over the validity of his charges continues to this day.

## Evaluations

Two contrasting views are presented below: The first, was written recently, and expresses the views of a man who thinks the US is still too influenced by people who are not completely loyal to their own country. The second quote comes from a Swedish newspaper, and was written during McCarthy's heyday:

A Positive View of McCarthy	A Negative View of McCarthy
Joe McCarthy's great achievement was that he helped popularize a deep public animosity toward Communism and its agents. McCarthy attacked liberalism itself, exposing its fraud by proving liberal's willingness to side with Communist infiltration and treason, to glamorize the brutality of Communist governments. Liberalism and Communism are both infected with the same materialistic secular virus and have such philosophical affinity that usually they can not be distinguished. Their identical world-view creates a "strong affinity between the Communists and New Dealers; between the progressive and totalitarian visions of the maximalist state." <sup>26</sup>	Those of us who shout loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all to frequently those who, by our words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism — The right to criticize * The right to hold unpopular beliefs. * The right to protest. * The right of independent thought. The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood, nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. <sup>27</sup>

Whichever statement you think best characterizes McCarthy and the hunt for communists in government he inspired, you should remember his accusations never resulted in the conviction of anyone on the charges of spying or treason. His actions did lead, however, to the dismissal of thousands of Americans from government and private sector jobs and were responsible for the widespread belief that America was losing its place in the world because of the 'enemy within' the government of the United States.

<sup>26</sup> Email: pha1941@hotmail.com

<sup>27</sup> Congressional Record, 81st Congress, 2d session (June 1, 1950), pp. 7894-7895.

**Suggested Student Exercises:**

1. Identify or define and briefly explain the relationship to the rest of the chapter of each of the following:

- |                        |                        |                    |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| a. search for an issue | e. Lee List distortion | i. George Marshall |
| b. losses in Cold War  | f. Owen Lattimore case | j. General Zwicker |
| c. enemy within        | g. Louis Budenz        | k. censure         |
| d. Dean Acheson        | h.. Tydings and Benton |                    |

2. With which of the two diametrically opposite views of McCarthy expressed in this chapter do you come closest to agreeing - and why?

Your answer should include:

- a. a discussion whether the US was 'losing the Cold War' because of the enemy within [communists in the US government] and not the enemy without [factors outside of the US beyond its control].
- b. whether you think Alger Hiss and Owen Lattimore were really guilty as charged
- c. an analysis of the evidence supporting McCarthy's charges