

CHAPTER 9

From the United Nations to a Bipolar World, 1945–1953

Photographs of the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, seemed to say it all. The scene was the deck of the U.S.S. *Missouri*, at anchor in Tokyo Bay. In one picture, a small band of formally clad Japanese diplomats and soldiers stand ready to wield their pens in the shadow of the battleship's enormous 16-inch guns. Others show them surrounded by hundreds of U.S. sailors and the assembled representatives of the United States and its allies. The Japanese, dazed and forlorn, are a striking contrast to the casual attire and easy command of Douglas MacArthur, the American general designated to receive the surrender. Still other photos focus on gaunt spectators in khaki, Allied officers just freed from Japanese prison camps. Off camera, an armada of hundreds of Allied ships surrounded the *Missouri*; overhead droned a thousand B-29 bombers and five hundred fighter aircraft. Tokyo Bay overflowed with U.S. power.

Three months earlier, the USSR, partner of the United States, had celebrated the victory over Germany in Moscow's Red Square. Tens of thousands of troops paraded past two million spectators who had come out despite a cold, pouring rain. The troops carried the captured banners of more than two hundred German units, including the personal banner of Adolf Hitler. Atop Lenin's Mausoleum stood Josef Stalin and the Soviet Committee of Defense. As the troops marched past, they threw the German banners in a great pile before the socialist heroes, the living Stalin and the long-dead Lenin.

The images of the two events traveled far and wide, by still photo and newsreel. They announced victories, but they also said something more. Here were two colossal states—one the master of much of Eurasia, the other with dominion over the seas—that had the power to finish what others had started. In 1835, the



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General Douglas MacArthur (foreground, left) observes a Japanese general signing the surrender document aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, September 2, 1945. The surrender provided for the disarmament of Japanese forces and the occupation of Japan's home islands by U.S. troops, an occupation that would continue until 1952.

French historian Alexis de Tocqueville had predicted that the United States and Russia would someday dominate the globe. That day, it seemed, had arrived.

World War II created enormous human suffering and need, but it also created great opportunities. The United States possessed industrial leadership, unprecedented wealth, and command of the seas and the air. The Soviet Union, much poorer and facing a far greater task of rebuilding, nevertheless had powerful armies and influence among Communist parties throughout the world. Partners in war, the two states had sharply contrasting political and economic systems and different visions of the future. But they also had important common interests—a desire for greater international stability, a commitment to preventing either Germany or Japan from again becoming a military threat, and a common distaste for European imperialism. In 1945, neither American nor Soviet leaders wished for confrontation. Although wary of one another, they nevertheless hoped that their wartime alliance might extend into the peace. If the United States and the USSR could cooperate, they had the power to shape a more open and peaceful world.

Such a world did not emerge. Instead, with stunning swiftness, a new bipolar political system took shape. All but complete by 1950, much of the globe was

divided into hostile camps by economic and political contradictions that seemed immutable: capitalism versus communism, and pluralistic democracy versus totalitarian rule. This chapter examines how the relations between these one-time allies deteriorated, how the two great powers sought to remake those parts of the world that were under their influence, and how their ambitions intersected with those of other peoples who were charting their own futures.

The World in Motion

The war had set millions of people in motion, and peace did not bring rest. Some moved voluntarily, in search of better jobs; in the United States, for example, defense spending had stimulated rapid growth along the west coast and in parts of the south. More often, however, the movements were involuntary. In Asia, more than four million Japanese soldiers and civilians were repatriated to Japan from Korea, Formosa, and other parts of Japan's former empire. Some had served short stints in occupying armies and were glad to return home. Others were giving up jobs and homes they had occupied for years or, in the case of Korea, even for decades. Many Japanese soldiers and civilians in China were less fortunate still. Tens of thousands simply disappeared into prison camps in Soviet-occupied Manchuria or died at the hands of Chinese lynch mobs.

In Europe, Germans suffered similar fates. Approximately seventeen million fled or were ejected from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Most migrated westward to join the hungry and homeless in Germany's bombed-out cities where survival often depended on the charity of the Allied occupiers. Meanwhile, further to the east, Soviet authorities ruthlessly uprooted entire villages and towns in regions that had been Russian before World War I but had been independent or German-occupied since. Suspicious that the sympathies of the inhabitants of these areas might reside elsewhere, the Soviet government concluded that forced repatriation would both ease the process of reintegrating these lands into Soviet Russia and provide much-needed labor for new farms and industries in the Urals and Siberia. At the same time, Russian nationals thought to be more reliable were encouraged to move west to occupy farms and apartments in the Ukraine, eastern Poland, and the Baltic states. Within a year of the end of the fighting, the ethnic map of Eastern Europe was transformed.

These massive relocations were just part of a more general turmoil. Prisoners of war were being repatriated to all the former belligerents. Hundreds of thousands of laborers were making their way home: French and Belgians who had been forced to work in German factories; Koreans who had been impressed into service in Japan as laborers and prostitutes; and Chinese who had been dragooned into labor in the industries of Japanese-occupied Manchuria. Families took to the road to find more plentiful food. In Germany and Poland, Japan and China, parents searched for lost children and children for missing parents. Minority groups were vulnerable in all of the countries of Eastern Europe and sought protection by crossing borders to be among others like themselves.

The surviving Jews of Europe had no European homeland. Released from concentration camps and hiding places, they found their villages occupied by strangers, their possessions looted, and their families destroyed. Perhaps a million found passage to Palestine, still under British mandate, where Zionists sought to build a Jewish state in the face of British obstruction.

The turmoil led to famine. Ration cards distributed by the Allies in Germany during the winter of 1945–1946 entitled adults to less than a thousand calories a day, well below subsistence levels, while in Japan only last-minute shipments of grain from the United States averted mass starvation. Famine, in turn, was an open invitation to diseases. Rickets and other diseases of nutritional deficiency, long common in China, became widespread in Japan and Europe. Death rates from tuberculosis went up across Eurasia. Smallpox, seldom seen in Western Europe for a century, made a brief return, prompting emergency vaccination efforts. Wherever armies traveled, gonorrhea and syphilis followed.

Abysmal sanitary conditions were as dangerous to public health as starvation diets. Bombing had destroyed municipal sewer and water systems along with



Brown Brothers

A Berlin street scene, 1945. Bombing raids devastated many of the cities of Europe and Japan during World War II, leaving massive challenges of reconstruction. Food, water, and public health were atop the agenda; housing would be a problem for years to come.



GLOBAL Technologies

Antibiotics

The discovery of penicillin is a classic illustration of the maxim that chance favors the prepared mind. In the summer of 1928, Alexander Fleming, a Scottish bacteriologist working at St. Mary's Hospital in London, noticed an oddity while studying staph bacteria. A mold had accidentally contaminated one of the nutrient-rich agar plates upon which he was growing bacteria, and all around the mold the bacteria had died, as if by the action of a powerful antiseptic. Antiseptics were Fleming's main interest; he had already attained some notoriety for discovering that bodily secretions

such as saliva and mucus contain an antibacterial substance, lysozyme. So Fleming took note of what others might have dismissed as a fluke. He quickly cultured more of the mold (*Penicillium notatum*) and demonstrated that it produced small quantities of a substance, which he called penicillin, that was lethal to many types of bacteria. Neither Fleming nor others followed up on the discovery, however, perhaps because Fleming had conceived of penicillin as a local antiseptic rather than as an agent that might treat systemic infections.

A decade later, in 1939, scientists at Oxford picked up where Fleming had left off. The group, led by an Australian, Howard Florey, and a Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany, Ernst Chain, isolated a sufficient quantity of penicillin to conduct clinical tests. In 1941, they issued their report: penicillin had powerful effects on patients suffering from deadly staph infections and

hundreds of thousands of homes. Governments that had dissolved or were insolvent could hardly organize prompt repairs. Occupation armies, intent on protecting their own troops as well as maintaining public order, could provide some help, but hardly enough to prevent recurrent outbreaks of the diseases of filth such as typhus and dysentery.

The breakdown of systems built up over generations left health experts fearful that new epidemics might sweep the globe, as influenza had in 1918–1919. Public health, therefore, became one of the first priorities of international organizations, from the new United Nations to the ancient Catholic Church. New drugs and insecticides played a role in controlling infections and the insects that transmitted disease. Allied occupation forces and public health agencies dusted millions of soldiers and civilians with DDT, a powerful insecticide that had been discovered in Switzerland before the war. Effective against both the lice that carried typhus and mosquitoes that spread malaria, DDT was inexpensive and had few discernible effects on human health. Even more exciting was a new drug that was capable of rescuing patients on the verge of death from raging bacterial infections: penicillin. Still in short supply after the Allied victory, it joined nylon

promised to cure other diseases as well. Research on how to produce large quantities of the new drug then shifted to the United States, where resources were plentiful and laboratories had experience in culturing molds on an industrial scale. Introduced for use among troops in 1942, penicillin quickly eclipsed earlier remedies in treating a broad range of bacterial infections.

Even as clinicians were learning the powerful effects of penicillin, a Russian-born bacteriologist, Selman Waksman, working at Rutgers University was finding other microbes that produced antibacterial substances in the soil. Among these was a species that produced a substance, "streptomycin," that proved effective against some bacteria immune to penicillin, including the bacteria responsible for tuberculosis. During the next decade dozens of additional antibiotics were identified and produced, many from soil microbes and

others from laboratory synthesis. The nearly miraculous power of antibiotics, and their falling prices, prompted their wide use for preventive as well as therapeutic purposes. By the mid-1950s, antibiotics were being added to animal feed and given routinely to millions of patients suffering from nothing more than common colds.

Indiscriminate use had unintended consequences. Many bacteria had the capacity to evolve resistance to these miracle drugs after repeated exposure. And so, instead of savoring a decisive triumph, medicine found itself in an arms race with microbes, with scientists constantly seeking new antibiotics to supplement those that were losing their edge. Ironically, the evolutionary forces that had endowed some microbes with the power to produce antibiotics came to undermine the therapeutic revolution that had begun with penicillin and streptomycin.

stockings, cigarettes, and whiskey as a favorite of smugglers and black marketeers in Europe's desolated cities.

Valuable as the new substances were in controlling disease, the most important remedies were more basic: vaccination, the reconstruction of water and sewage systems, and the distribution of food to the hungry and coal to the cold. The work was carried out by private and public agencies, armies of occupation and local governments, physicians and laborers. Their collaborative efforts not only checked disease in many parts of Europe and in Japan but also helped overcome distrust between the victors and the vanquished. Healing had begun.

Even as millions struggled for existence, birth rates began to rise, first in the United States, which saw a 20 percent increase between 1945 and 1946, and then in Europe and Japan. This baby boom, an expression of the private yearnings of millions for the intimacy and satisfactions of family life, had far-reaching social consequences. Small children require care, and many women who had entered the labor force during the war gave up their jobs to tend their families. Bumper crops of babies led millions to seek roomier homes and apartments, thus stimulating housing construction in areas where money was available, such as North

America, and making housing a critical political issue where it was scant, including most of Europe.

Later, as toddlers reached school age, teacher training and classroom construction became high priorities. An insatiable demand for toys, clothing, and other products for children fed the economic revival of Japan, where home workshops and factories catered to the tastes of Western consumers. Still later, as the baby boomers reached young adulthood, universities expanded to meet the swelling demand for higher education; industries discovered huge new markets for jeans and records, stereo systems and sports cars; and governments struggled to contain the explosive idealism of youth. Like a great tide, the demographic bulge could lift many boats, but it also tested their moorings.

In 1945, however, few observers anticipated a baby boom, and fewer still were anticipating its consequences. Reconstruction, not reproduction, dominated the headlines. The task was not simply to rebuild cities and rail lines but to reconstruct the economic and political systems that had failed so badly. World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II were catastrophes that showed how inadequate those systems were to control the passions, wants, and tools of modern times.

Memories of Versailles and Plans for a Postwar World

When confronted with large and complex tasks, human beings look to the past for ideas and lessons. We draw on experience when we build bridges, plan business enterprises, write laws, make wars, and negotiate peace. As World War II moved toward an end, the leaders of the Allies naturally looked for precedents to guide the reconstruction of international politics and trade.

The Political Settlement

The precedent that was nearest at hand was Versailles and the other treaties ending World War I. Allied leaders viewed this settlement as a model of the errors to be avoided. The peacemakers of 1919 had not sufficiently impressed Germany with the fact of its defeat, nor had they rooted out the militaristic tendencies in German society. They had created a League of Nations to promote world peace, but without giving it the authority to accomplish that goal. They had excluded an important power, the Soviet Union, from the settlement and quarreled among themselves. And the economic lynchpin of the Allied coalition, the United States, had turned its back on the peace treaty that it had helped to shape. Nor had the victors in World War I given serious attention to rebuilding international trade. Focusing on reparations and debts, they had failed to devise new mechanisms to manage such critical issues as tariffs and the interconvertibility of world currencies. The leaders of the Grand Alliance agreed that these mistakes had

inadvertently created instability that had led to a depression, the growth of fascism and militarism, and renewed global warfare.

Each of the leaders of the Grand Alliance appears to have been committed to building a durable peace. Britain and the Soviet Union had suffered tremendous losses in the war and faced formidable problems of recovery. The loss of life in Britain had been smaller than that in World War I but was large by any other measure: a quarter-million dead soldiers. The Germans had punished British cities with bombs and torpedoed hundreds of British merchant ships. The British people had been rationed and taxed to the point where, as soon as Germany was defeated, they voted Churchill's Conservative Party out of control of government. Two wars and a depression had turned Britain into a debtor nation. Workers were desperate for better food, more coal, better housing and medical care, and higher wages; they vented their dissatisfaction through widespread strikes. Many wealthy Britons had seen their estates broken up to pay taxes. British industries were falling behind their American rivals in technology; the British Empire was in disarray.

Soviet losses had been even greater. German armies had devastated European Russia, destroying cities, factories, mines, railroads, and farms. At least twenty million Soviet citizens had lost their lives; millions more were disabled. Soviet citizens lacked the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction publicly but yearned for more food, better housing, and an end to long working hours and shortages of basic consumer products. Stalin's grip on power was secure; so too was his understanding of Soviet Russia's need for a breather to recover from its extraordinary exertions.

The United States alone emerged from the war stronger than at the beginning. Its casualties had been smaller than Britain's, and they had been spread over a population three times as large. Its cities had been untouched by the fighting. War orders had meant jobs for the unemployed and growth for industry. Output of goods and services had doubled between 1939 and 1945. The state had taken on a massive amount of debt, but mostly in the form of war bonds sold to its own citizens. As in England, there was dissatisfaction with rationing and a demand for new housing, consumer goods, and higher wages. But the United States had far greater resources with which to satisfy those desires.

Whereas Britain and the Soviet Union wanted peace to rebuild, the United States wanted peace to enjoy. Its citizens were eager to welcome home the men and women who had gone overseas, rid themselves of ration coupons, and once again have the freedom to satisfy deferred wants. U.S. firms wanted to get back to business, building cars instead of tanks and selling products overseas as well as at home. The country's political leaders wanted to find a way to avoid another depression or another war. Most agreed that this would demand engagement in global politics rather than isolation.

As the armies fought, the Allies held a series of conferences at which they outlined the contours of a postwar settlement. They shared a common concern with the control of their main adversaries, Germany and Japan, and a common desire to prevent future wars. But each Allied nation also had national interests to

protect. The challenge was to weave a peace that would satisfy those interests while creating lasting stability.

There was reason for optimism. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin had worked together effectively during the war, despite strong differences in ideology, values, and personalities. More important, before World War II, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union had focused their main geopolitical ambitions on different parts of the world. Britain had given first priority to its empire and to Western Europe. Soviet Russia had concerned itself primarily with the security of its borders, especially in volatile Eastern Europe. The United States had traditionally held itself aloof from European affairs and concentrated on the Western Hemisphere and the oceans that flanked it. While the Big Three understood that the collapse of Germany and Japan would create new and overlapping security interests, especially in Europe and China, they also had reason to believe that their differences could be managed through compromise.

The most famous of these wartime conferences, held in the Crimean city of Yalta in February 1945, reinforced this confidence. There the Big Three approved a framework for administering occupied territories, pending a more comprehensive settlement, and completed plans for the first meeting of a new United Nations Organization, to be held later that year in San Francisco. Their agreements recognized the realities that were emerging on the ground. Anglo-American forces would hold much of Europe west of Germany's Elbe River; Soviet armies would occupy most to the east. Each of the Allies would assume primary responsibility for order and the restoration of civilian governments in the regions under its control. Germany itself would be divided into occupation zones, with each of the victors administering a slice; a council of the Allies would make decisions affecting the entire nation. Berlin, which was deep in the Soviet sector, would also be partitioned into zones but would be governed jointly. Further decisions about Germany's future would await a denazification of the nation. The Allied governments were divided, among themselves and internally, over whether Germany should ever again be reunited, but they all harbored deep concerns about Germany's proven capacity for war making. They believed it was essential to purge those responsible for the war from authority, not only in government but in other institutions as well. International courts would try those suspected of the most egregious conduct.

These agreements were generally satisfactory to each of the wartime partners. Stalin achieved recognition of what his armies were already winning: control of Eastern Europe. The Soviet frontier would be moved westward, roughly to the line that had been Russia's border before World War I. The Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia would lose their independence, a large slice of prewar Poland would become Soviet territory, and other states along the Soviet border would lose smaller areas to Moscow. Nations that had been victims of Germany would be compensated for these territorial losses. Thus, while Poland would lose its easternmost province to the USSR, it would acquire neighboring districts of Germany, including much of East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia.

Churchill and Roosevelt were also satisfied with the outcome of these meetings. The North Sea and Suez Canal would again be secure for Britain. Britain and the United States together would supervise Italy, and England would assume primary responsibility for maintaining order in Greece, Crete, and the Middle East. Roosevelt and Churchill won assurances from Stalin that the new governments of Eastern Europe, organized under Soviet auspices, would incorporate non-Communist groups that had established governments in exile in London during the war and would hold free elections at the earliest practicable date.

At least as important, they secured from Stalin a promise to enter the war against Japan within three months of the cessation of fighting in Europe. This was especially welcome to the United States, which was carrying the main burden in the Pacific. A Russian attack on Manchuria would tie down a large Japanese army that could otherwise complicate American plans for an invasion of Japan's home islands. In return for Soviet entry into the war, Stalin was promised a restoration of imperial Russia's former rights in Manchuria and control of Japan's northernmost islands, the Kuriles and Sakhalin (half of which was already Soviet territory). But the Allies also agreed that a postwar settlement in the Pacific would be largely a matter for the Americans and British to arrange, with the Americans assuming responsibility for the occupation of Japan and the British for accepting surrenders from Japanese forces in Southeast Asia.

The collegial relations among the Allies were reflected in the plans they made for a United Nations Organization. At the very least, the UN would be a vehicle for extending the Grand Alliance into the postwar era. Roosevelt, who nursed some of the idealism of his predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, hoped for more—that it would be a means of promoting international law and a first step toward the formation of a true world government. Like most governments, it would have legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislative part consisted of a General Assembly, in which all member states would have a vote. A smaller Security Council, with five permanent members (China, France, Britain, the United States, and the USSR) and several temporary members elected by the General Assembly, would respond to immediate threats to world peace and oversee the operations of an executive, the secretary general, who was charged with administering a civil service and a peacekeeping force. An International Court of Justice would adjudicate disputes between member states. The United Nations would also inherit many of the functions of the old League of Nations, including the distribution of trusteeships over the territories that had been League mandates, such as Palestine, and the coordination of international efforts to improve public health, education, and economic and cultural development.

Unlike the old League of Nations, the new UN would have the authority to undertake military action in the defense of peace, although only with the unanimous consent of the victorious powers. At Soviet insistence, the UN's charter granted the permanent members of the Security Council veto power over any of its resolutions, and peacekeeping required such a resolution. In practice, this meant that the UN could be a powerful agency for the control of international

disputes only so long as China, France, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union agreed to make it so.

The Economic Settlement

While Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin concentrated on politics, treasury officials and economists attended to the more technical but nonetheless crucial issue of postwar economic planning. Here the United States took the lead, with policies that flowed from U.S. assumptions about the war's causes. American officials, by and large, believed that Europe had suffered a second great war because the victors in World War I had shortsightedly imposed an unbearable burden of reparations on Germany and had failed to make realistic plans regarding the huge debts that Britain and France owed the United States. The burden of debt had disrupted international trade and banking and had triggered the Great Depression. That economic disaster, in turn, created the conditions under which Japanese militarists and German Nazis could seize power.

This analysis, which owed much to the writings of the British economist John Maynard Keynes, suggested that a more durable political settlement would have to rest on sound economic planning. Consequently, one of the first international conferences devoted to planning for peace was a meeting among treasury officials and economists. It convened in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, just after the Normandy landings in 1944. The meeting, dominated by U.S. officials, produced a new framework for international trade that was to prevail for decades. Participants, including forty-four Allied nations, agreed to make the U.S. dollar the medium for settling international accounts. Other nations agreed to fix the value of their currencies to the dollar, meaning that they would buy dollars if their currencies were losing purchasing value and sell them if their currencies were gaining value. The effect would be to impose discipline on central banks by making it more difficult to finance trade deficits by deflating the value of their currencies, as had often been done during the depression. In turn, the United States agreed to maintain the value of the dollar by agreeing to purchase dollars with gold on demand at a fixed rate of one ounce for \$35. The architects of the system hoped that these fixed exchange rates would foster confidence among traders and investors and thereby encourage commerce. Not incidentally, they would also pry open new foreign markets to American business, especially in regions where the British pound sterling had reigned supreme. To further promote stability, the Bretton Woods agreements created an International Monetary Fund (IMF) and an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The former would lend dollars to member nations that faced deficits in their balance of payments. The latter, which became the nucleus of the World Bank, would promote economic growth by financing roads, docks, power plants, and other infrastructure projects. Both would be governed by those countries that contributed funds to them, with contributors enjoying influence proportional to their investment—an arrangement that gave the United States effective control of both institutions. In

1947, under U.S. prodding, another element was added to this framework, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which provided a venue in which barriers to international trade could be removed through collective effort. In 1995, this organization's ungainly name was simplified to the World Trade Organization.

American officials hoped that these new institutions would not only promote postwar reconstruction but also inoculate the world against the economic ills of the interwar years: trade wars, currency crises, high tariffs, and breakdowns in international commerce. The outcome could be beneficial to all, but perhaps most especially to the United States. American firms, with their efficiencies of scale, would thrive in a world without trade barriers. U.S. banks could find safe and lucrative investment opportunities abroad. Perhaps most important, free trade would foster peace and prosperity. Trade would breed interdependence, economic growth would expand the middle class, wealth would foster investment in education and social welfare, and prosperity would ultimately strengthen democratic political institutions. The outcome would be a world with little appetite for war or revolution.

From Allies to Adversaries

Despite the optimism of 1945, the Grand Alliance did not survive the war. Historians differ as to why. Some emphasize the clash of ideologies, seeing a breakdown of relations as inevitable when Western capitalism and Soviet communism came into contact. Others stress the clash of national interests: The victors quite predictably came into conflict as they filled the power voids left by the defeat of Germany and Japan. In both groups, there are schools of thought that highlight the aggressiveness of one side or the other: A capitalism that was hostile to communism sought to surround, contain, and choke the Soviet Union; or a communism that was hostile to capitalism expanded relentlessly to achieve the victory predicted by Marx and Lenin. Alternatively, Britain and the United States threatened Soviet security by pushing too hard for influence in Eastern Europe. Or the Soviets precipitated the Cold War by building an empire in Eastern Europe and threatening to extend it westward. These interpretations appeared in the late 1940s and 1950s and became part of the fabric of Cold War debate.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 did not end this contention, but it opened new sources of information to historical inquiry and sapped much of the political fervor of earlier times. Today historians generally agree that political factors generated the Cold War, while recognizing that ideological commitments often intensified the conflicts and eventually came to dominate public understanding of events. Stalin was a Marxist, but the interests of the state and the party often coincided. When they did not, Stalin consistently adopted policies that served the nation rather than ideology. Western leaders such as Churchill,

FDR, and Truman, while appalled by the Soviet Union's Communist system and alarmed at the prospect that Stalin might exploit Communist parties around the world to advance Soviet interests, were much more concerned with limiting the advance of Soviet power than in leading a crusade to eradicate Marxist ideas and politics. Only gradually did Western leaders, especially those in the United States, become convinced that all Communists were tools of the Soviet Union and implacable enemies of the free world. Ironically, this confusion of Soviet and Communist interests grew more common in the West just as the Communist movement itself began to show signs of deep division. The conflation of Soviet expansion and Marxist-inspired politics led to some of the worst excesses of the Cold War.

Increasingly, historians have come to view the Cold War as avoidable rather than inevitable. And they have also come to appreciate how often Soviet and American policy became captive to the interests of allies and client states. Despite their formidable resources, neither superpower could fully control its confederates, and both more than once found themselves drawn into a local conflict that escalated into an international crisis, not because they desired confrontation but because their clients did.

The Grand Alliance: Wartime Doubts and Postwar Insecurities

As the war in Europe ended, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union could draw some hope for the future from their cooperation in the recent past. In 1943 Stalin, in a concession to his allies, had disbanded the Comintern, the international organization promoting world revolution. The United States had supplied Soviet armies with billions of dollars worth of weapons and supplies. Britain had sacrificed lives and ships in delivering those supplies to Russian ports. And the leaders of the three allies had earned one another's respect through their wartime dealings.

Yet the past also provided grounds for suspicion. The Soviets recalled Western support for White Russian armies during the civil war of 1917–1920 and resented Western efforts to isolate the Soviet Union during the interwar years. Repeated postponements of the Anglo-American invasion of France had led Stalin to suspect that his allies wished to see Germany and Russia bleed each other dry. Western leaders were well aware of Soviet efforts to promote revolution in Europe following World War I and of the Marxist ideologues' announced aim of overthrowing capitalism around the world. They recalled the 1939 nonaggression pact between Moscow and Berlin with bitterness and found their ally's obsession with secrecy disquieting.

The victors put aside many of their suspicions during the heady days of 1945, but new tensions soon arose as the agreements reached at wartime conferences were put into effect. To the West, it seemed that Stalin was not only securing Soviet frontiers but also seeking every opportunity to increase Soviet influence. In Poland, Stalin maintained that it was impossible to satisfy both the Soviet desire for a secure border and the British and American insistence that the

country have a government that was representative of its people's wishes. To the south, the Soviet Union issued a clumsy ultimatum to Turkey in 1946, threatening severe consequences should the Turks not share control of the Dardanelles with Moscow. Stalin backed down when faced with Anglo-American opposition, but the attempt invited the British and Americans to interpret a Communist revolt against a British-backed government in Greece as another Soviet effort to reach the Mediterranean. Further east, a Soviet army that had occupied northern Iran during the war delayed its departure past a date agreed upon by the Allies, provoking a sharp exchange of words at the UN. These conflicts—squabbles, really—provoked anxiety about Soviet intentions.

The Soviets, for their part, were disappointed by U.S. reluctance to discuss reconstruction loans and angered by what they saw as Anglo-American efforts to renew the diplomatic isolation of the Soviet Union. In the background, but never forgotten, was the atomic bomb. Britain and the United States had collaborated closely in developing the weapon, but revealed nothing about the project to the Soviets until July 1945, weeks before the atomic bombing of Japan. Spies had given Stalin what diplomats did not: regular reports on his allies' progress. When the power of the weapon was demonstrated at Hiroshima, the Soviets were ready to launch a crash program to build their own atomic weapons. Even so, the Soviets did not test a bomb until 1949. In the meantime, U.S. leaders held an ace that the Soviets did not have, and this asymmetry only intensified Soviet suspicions of the West.

The Problem of Germany

Above all, Germany was a point of contention between the Soviets and the West. Germany's importance was obvious. Unified and rearmed, it could pose a mortal threat to the Soviet Union, and it was the only state on the European continent that could possibly do so. Should it ally itself with the USSR, it would be no less dangerous to Anglo-American interests because such an alliance would dominate Eurasia. In 1945, it was unclear whether a reunited and independent Germany would look east or west. The idea of dividing Germany pleased the French, who, as one journalist quipped, loved Germany so much that they wanted two of them. Other Allied governments made reunification their official policy, but none had a formula to achieve the goal. Many Germans wondered if their occupiers truly wished to do so.

Meanwhile, the Allies governed Germany through the awkward medium of zones and a Council of the Allies. Where the four occupiers could agree, action was swift. It was in the interest of all of the victors to make public examples of the leaders of the Third Reich, for example. Hence, they cooperated in trying high-ranking Nazis for crimes against humanity, most famously at Nuremberg in 1945 and early 1946. But cooperation soon broke down over economic and political issues. The Soviet Union, citing a wartime promise of reparations, stripped eastern Germany of industrial equipment, livestock, and civilian goods. At the same time, the Soviets encouraged millions of homeless Germans, displaced from Poland,

Czechoslovakia, and eastern Germany itself, to migrate west, thereby exacerbating the shortages of food, housing, and fuel in the Western zones.

The Western powers, faced with the task of feeding the swelling population of their sectors, came to believe that the economic recovery of Germany would, in the long run, better serve both German and Allied interests. From their perspective, the Soviets were seeking to satisfy their demands for reparations unilaterally and to extort political concessions by promoting instability in western Germany. From the Soviet perspective, the Western powers were seeking to rebuild a former enemy before aiding a partner.

Toward Cold War

Tensions over these and other issues grew as it became clear that the Soviets had no intention of allowing free elections in Poland or moderating their demands for German reparations, and as the United States and Britain took firmer measures to limit what they were coming to see as Soviet expansionism. In Germany, the United States and Britain canceled reparations payments to the Soviets and amalgamated their zones of control into a single economic entity, “Bizonia.” To the south, they increased their support for Turkey and funneled assistance to the government of Greece, embroiled in a war with Communist guerrillas. At the same time, the United States began to aid centrist political parties in France and Italy, where Communists were making alarming gains at the ballot box. In 1947 George Kennan, the influential American diplomat, found a word to describe the new policy: *containment*. The West, he argued, faced a determined adversary in Moscow that was intent on extending its power; it would have to respond vigorously to Soviet probes whenever they threatened vital interests.

It is conceivable that even as late as the beginning of 1947, solutions to many of the issues separating the United States and the Soviet Union could have been found. But confrontation was often easier than compromise. Soviet leaders had routinely portrayed the Soviet Union as a victim of encirclement. Stalin and his aides expected capitalist intrigue and used it, real and imagined, as a ready explanation both for the economic shortcomings of the Soviet system and the rigid discipline that the Communist Party imposed on political life.

Western leaders understood that Stalin sometimes used international tension to buttress his hold on power, but Moscow’s rapaciousness in Eastern Europe, its clumsy diplomacy, and its renewed promotion of international Communism made it easy to suspect more: that by fusing Russian imperialistic ambitions to the universalistic doctrine of Marxism, the Soviets had developed ambitions that were comprehensive and global, not limited and local.

Recently opened Soviet archives make it clear that Stalin’s strategy was far more cautious. He was focused on regaining the territories and spheres of influence that had been lost by Russia at Brest-Litovsk and on ensuring that Germany would not again strike eastward. World revolution would have to wait until the Soviet Union was much stronger and the West much weaker than in 1945. But to Western observers in the months after World War II, the Kremlin was

inscrutable, “a mystery wrapped in an enigma,” in Churchill’s phrase.¹ And the experience of the past decade seemed to teach that ruthless leaders of powerful nations had best be treated firmly.

Stalin was not Hitler, but the American leader who was best prepared to appreciate the differences was no longer in the White House. Franklin D. Roosevelt had felt confident of his ability to work with Stalin and may well have had the agility and authority to do so. His successor, Harry S. Truman, lacked both. Truman came to the presidency in April 1945 with meager experience in foreign affairs and a tendency to think in terms of black and white rather than shades of gray. The Soviets, Truman soon came to believe, were bullies that needed to be stood up to. Otherwise, Stalin might, like Hitler, consume his neighbors, bite by bite.

The American intention of standing up to the Soviets became unmistakable in 1947. Great Britain, burdened by debt and a balance of payments crisis, was withdrawing as fast as it could from regions where it had expensive commitments. The eastern Mediterranean was one such area. Traditionally, Britain had made exclusion of Russia from the Mediterranean a lynchpin of British policy because it was on Britain’s line of supply to India and Asia. But by 1947 Britain’s Asian empire was fast dissolving, as were British military and economic capacities. The Big Three of World War II had become a Big Two. In recognition of its reduced circumstances, Britain invited the United States to assume its role in the Aegean—a role that Truman accepted eagerly. In March, Truman asked Congress to support the Greek and Turkish governments and announced that the United States would assist “free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure.”² This broad policy, soon dubbed the Truman Doctrine, gave public expression to what had become private conviction: An expansionist Soviet empire would have to be contained by vigorous American efforts.

The Truman Doctrine embodied several ironies. Neither the Turkish nor the Greek government was a product of free elections, and the Greek military was only slightly less brutal in its methods than were the rebels it sought to defeat. Those rebels themselves, we now know, owed far less to Stalin than to Tito, the Communist partisan who had assumed control of Yugoslavia after World War II. Indeed, Tito’s support of the Greek Communists violated Stalin’s own more cautious policy and was one source of the friction that would ultimately lead to a public break between the two Communist leaders. To American eyes, however, Tito was little more than a front man for the Soviets. In a final irony, by publicly associating the Soviets and the Greek Communist Party, Truman had

¹Winston S. Churchill, “The First Month of War,” Broadcast, London, October 1, 1939, in Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897–1963*, vol. 6 (New York and London: Chelsea House, 1974), p. 6161.

²Harry S. Truman, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives,” March 12, 1947, in Dennis Merrill, ed., *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, vol. 8 (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1996), p. 102.

inadvertently raised the stakes in the Greek civil war and given Moscow a reason to support the rebels. To have done less would have undermined Soviet claims to leadership of international communism and Stalin's title as personal leader of the movement. With Soviet help, Communist partisans prolonged the bloody fighting until 1949.

The blunt Truman Doctrine was followed, in June 1947, by the announcement of a more ambitious and subtle proposal for the revival of Europe: the Marshall Plan. Named after George C. Marshall, then U.S. secretary of state, the plan sought to jump-start the economies of America's trade partners. Both in Britain and on the continent industrial production remained far below prewar levels, currencies were weak, and food and coal remained in short supply. It seemed that Europe was falling into deeper economic trouble rather than recovering, and an impoverished Europe could never absorb the goods that U.S. industry was churning out. This raised the specter of a renewed global depression that would be disastrous for Europeans and Americans alike. Rather than impose solutions from Washington, however, Marshall urged European governments to negotiate priorities among themselves. The United States would then support the European agenda to the extent of its capacities.

Political goals were implicit in this economic program. In the two years since Germany's surrender, a wave of strikes had crippled European production, Communist parties had grown to the point where they threatened to win control in Italy and France, and many Europeans had resorted to smuggling, crime, and prostitution. Neither democracy nor peace, it seemed, could take root and flourish under such conditions. The plan also gave European governments a strong incentive to coordinate their planning and integrate their economies. This, too, was an American goal. Nations that were economically interdependent would be less likely to make war in the future and might even someday integrate to form a single superstate. Several influential European statesmen were already hatching such plans, most notably Jean Monnet, a French businessman and the architect of France's postwar economic policies. As seen from Washington, a unified, democratic, and prosperous Europe would share American interests and resist both Russian expansionism and domestic radicalism.

Marshall Plan loans and grants began to flow to Europe in 1948 and helped ignite two decades of robust economic growth. As U.S. officials had hoped, cooperation on economic planning also generated greater economic and political integration. In 1952, shortly after Marshall Plan aid ended, France and West Germany took the lead in forming a European Coal and Steel Community. The initiative eliminated barriers to the free movement of the two most basic industrial materials across the borders of participating states, which also included Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. In 1957 these same states reached agreement on the formation of a broader European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market, that had the aim of lowering tariffs between participating nations on a broader range of products.

Through these and other measures, the nations of Western Europe were creating a single market for goods that was about the size of the market in the United

States, albeit not as rich. The benefits were clear: Areas with distinctive resources or human skills could specialize and achieve economies of scale by producing goods for the entire EEC rather than for a single nation. By the early 1950s, Dutchmen were riding French-made bicycles, Italians were listening to German radios, the French were buying Italian shoes, and Europeans were again beginning to sell products in the United States.

Absent from the Marshall Plan and the Common Market were the nations of Eastern Europe. The United States had invited most European nations, including the Soviet Union, to participate in the Marshall Plan, although few in the West thought that the Soviets would take up the offer, and even fewer wanted them to. After some hesitation, the Soviets denounced the plan as an American plot to control European economies. Poland and Czechoslovakia initially announced that they would seek American assistance, but almost immediately reversed course under Soviet pressure. In the end, Europe divided along the Elbe on this issue, as it already had on others, and the plan that brought Western Europe together simultaneously distanced West from East.

Any residual hopes for cooperation between the United States and the USSR soon thereafter evaporated. In a breathtaking flurry of moves and countermoves, accompanied by increasingly vituperative rhetoric, the two great powers sought to solidify their positions in Europe. The Soviets drove non-Communists from the governments of Eastern Europe and purged Communist parties around the world to ensure their subservience to Moscow. In the West, the French and Italian governments excluded Communists from cabinet positions, and the United States adopted domestic security measures to exclude Communists not only from government but also from responsible positions in industry and education.

Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands formed a mutual defense pact, and the foreign ministers of France, Britain, and the United States began to take steps to unify their zones of Germany both economically and politically. The Soviets, alarmed by that prospect and determined to demonstrate their power, shut down roads and railways leading from the western zones of Germany to Berlin, intending to force the West to acknowledge Soviet control of Germany's capital. Rather than try to force entry by land—a hopeless task if superior Soviet ground forces resisted—the Western powers undertook to supply Berlin by air. The result surprised even many of their own experts: The airlift managed to supply the city's essential needs for over a year, until the Soviets lifted their blockade in September 1949.

The blockade did irreparable damage to the Soviet public image in the West and created a sense of crisis in many Western capitals. The Soviet army occupying East Germany greatly outnumbered the British, French, and American forces in the western sectors. The Soviets had demonstrated a willingness to use their power on the ground, not just to blockade Berlin but also to control the states of Eastern Europe. There they were imposing their will with a chilling ruthlessness—murdering uncooperative political leaders, imprisoning clerics, censoring the press, and attacking all institutions that could challenge the authority of their puppet governments.

Lacking certain knowledge of Soviet intentions but suspecting the worst, the governments of Western Europe lobbied Washington intensively for ironclad assurances that the United States would defend them against Soviet expansion. The best such assurance would be the continuing presence of American troops on the ground. At the same time, American officials came to see a sustained military presence in Europe as essential not only to check Moscow but also to ensure the stability of its Western partners. Should the governments of Western Europe be uncertain of American support, they might, it was feared, seek an accommodation with the Soviets along the pattern of Finland, where a peaceful border had been purchased at the price of a Soviet veto over Finnish foreign policy.

The governments of Western Europe and the United States converged on a solution that few had imagined in 1945: the formation of an alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Aimed squarely at Moscow, the NATO pact bound member nations to contribute troops and materials to a unified military command, led by American officers, that would defend both the borders of Western Europe and the sea lanes connecting Europe and North America. Formed in 1949, NATO ensured that an U.S. army would remain in Europe into the indefinite future, thus giving rattled Europeans tangible evidence of the U.S. commitment to their defense and anxious Americans a new tool to contain Soviet expansion.

Fear of the Soviets also had a second effect: It eclipsed Western concerns about a renewal of German militarism. Almost as soon as the new Federal Republic of Germany took form in 1949, Western officials began to urge its government to contribute to the collective security of Western Europe. In a sharp reversal of its earlier policies, France acceded to a full role for West Germany in the Western alliance, a position that reflected both France's deep concerns about the Soviet Union and its ambition to counterbalance British and American influence in Western Europe. By 1954 West Germany, led by a chancellor with impeccable credentials as an anti-Nazi and anti-Communist, Konrad Adenauer, had gained entry to NATO. The Soviet Union responded: In 1949 Moscow declared its own sector of Germany a state, the German Democratic Republic. Then, in 1955, the Soviets enrolled both East Germany and their other Eastern European satellites into their own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact.

Eastern and Western Europe thus came to be, in some respects, mirror images of each other—each had its own superpower patron, its own trade and currency community, and its own defensive alliance—but with important differences (see Map 9.1). The Western economies galloped ahead during the late 1940s and 1950s, while growth in Eastern Europe was modest. In Western Europe, the benefits of prosperity were diffused widely, through both improved wages and the expansion of government pensions, health insurance plans, and welfare benefits. In the East, the interests of workers and consumers were more often subordinated to those of the state; savings were invested in heavy industry and collectivized agriculture. While the United States pumped \$13 billion in Marshall Plan aid into the West, the Soviet Union extracted roughly the same amount from its neighbors through unequal trade contracts and war reparations.

In the West, democracy flourished, even if occasionally marred by the intervention of the United States in election campaigns; in the East, the Soviets exercised rigid control over political life, extinguishing democratic institutions where they had appeared after the war, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and repressing dissent among workers, among the clergy, and even within the Communist Party itself. East and West shared responsibility for the Cold War, but their systems did not have equal claim to economic efficiency, humanity, or political freedom.

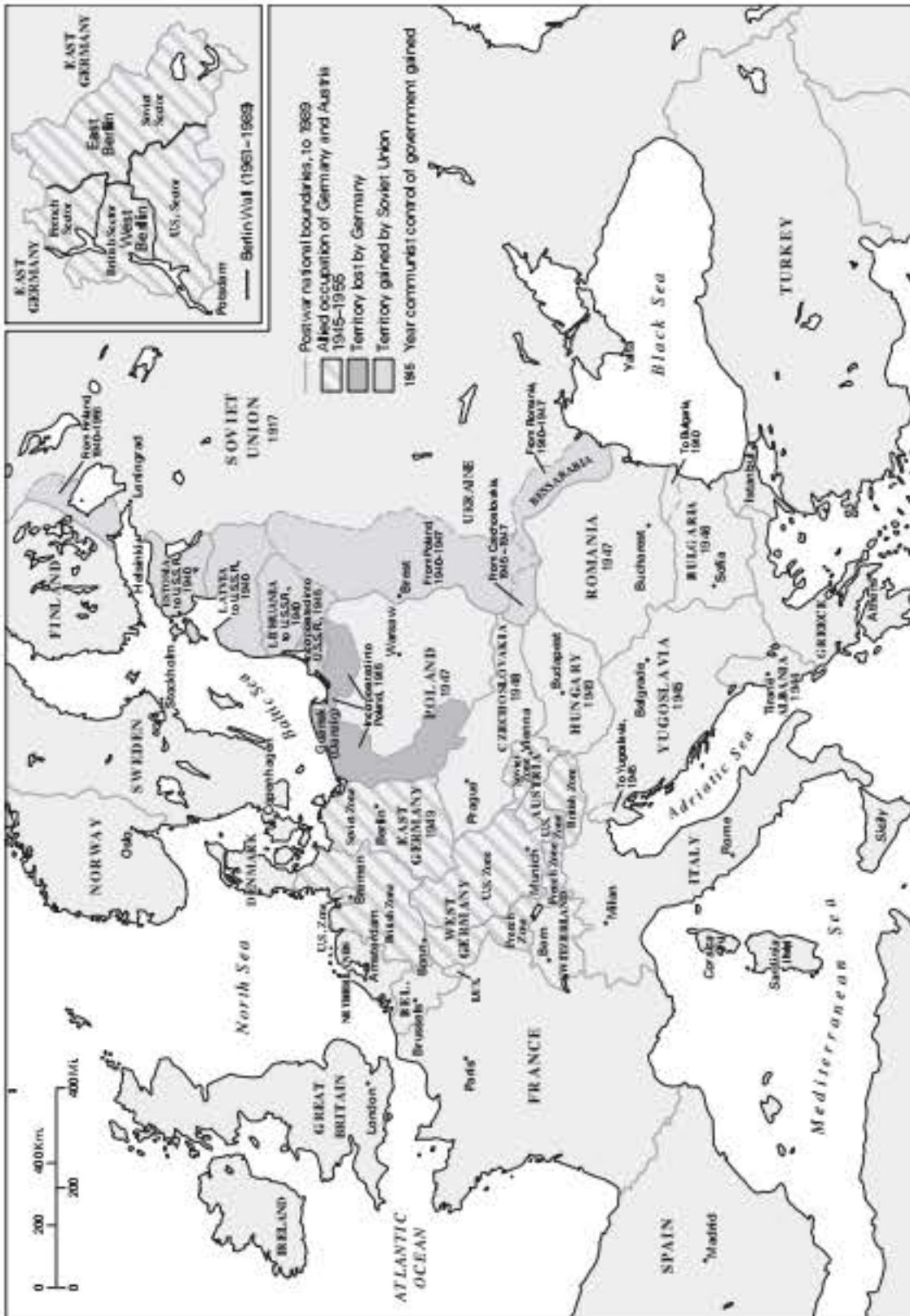
Asia in the Aftermath of World War II: Occupations and Nationalisms

The Cold War began in Europe but soon spread to Asia. As in Europe, conflict arose over territories that had been fought over during World War II. Following the Japanese surrender, the United States, the Soviet Union, and their allies all occupied parts of Japan's empire. The Soviets, whose armies had rushed into northern China during the final week of the war, occupied Manchuria and the northern half of the Korean peninsula. U.S. forces occupied Japan, the southern half of Korea, and parts of the Chinese mainland opposite Japan. British and Indian troops reclaimed the former British colonies of Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong and helped to reestablish the French in Indochina and the Dutch in Indonesia.

From Enemies to Partners: Japan and the United States

The Allies encountered some common challenges in each of these areas. Japanese armies had to be disarmed, new arrangements had to be improvised to maintain order and permit the movement of food and other essentials, occupiers had to find local leaders to assist in administration, and Japanese who were suspected of wartime atrocities had to be dealt with. The justice was often very rough. Military courts tried and ordered the execution of several hundred Japanese officers and officials in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia. In Manchuria, the Russians executed even larger numbers and put many of their Japanese prisoners into labor camps. Spontaneous attacks on Japanese occurred in China, Korea, and elsewhere, and even in Japan itself former war leaders were reviled for the suffering they had brought on their people.

An international tribunal that convened in 1946 under American auspices eventually handed down death sentences for a small number of Japan's top leaders. Its methods were far from perfect. American prosecutors assiduously protected Emperor Hirohito from indictment, selected targets for prosecution in arbitrary ways, and tried defendants on charges that many jurists considered weak, such as conspiring to mount a war of aggression. By the time of their end in 1948, even American authorities had lost confidence in the proceedings.



MAP 9.1 Postwar Europe.

Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin sketched out the main contours of Europe's postwar map at wartime conferences. Territorial changes in Eastern Europe reflected Stalin's aim to regain regions lost in World War I. The long-term division of Germany and its former capital, Berlin, into East and West was an unplanned outcome of the postwar occupation. As tensions grew between the Soviet Union and its former allies, enduring division came to seem preferable to a unified Germany that might tip the balance of power in Europe to one side or the other.

Politics made strange bedfellows in many parts of postwar Asia. In Japan, Hirohito needed MacArthur's consent to retain his throne, and MacArthur needed a cooperative emperor to establish his own authority to govern. Therefore, MacArthur established a cordial working relationship with the emperor who had given at least tacit approval to the war and had been a focal point of American hatred. In Indochina and parts of Indonesia, Allied officers armed their Japanese prisoners to help control Nationalist movements, while in South Korea Americans, utterly ignorant of local conditions, kept Japanese officials in administrative offices out of frustration with the politically fractious Koreans.

Much to the surprise and relief of Allied planners, MacArthur found it relatively easy to establish control of the Japanese main islands. He did not have to share power with the other Allies, and most Japanese accepted the occupation as a natural outcome of defeat. Many were disillusioned with their wartime leaders and exhausted by years of short rations and hard labor. Japan's cities had suffered even more damage than Germany's, its railroad system was in a shambles, and the nation was desperately short of food and fuel.

The U.S. occupation army brought essential supplies, currency, and far-reaching changes to Japan's political institutions. A team of American lawyers wrote a new constitution, which was adopted with modest changes by the Japanese Diet in 1946. It declared Japan a parliamentary democracy, limited the emperor to a largely ceremonial position, established universal suffrage and the equality of men and women under law, and renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Freedom of the press was guaranteed, although censors vetted newspapers and books for anti-American criticism until the occupation ended in 1952. Additional legislation gave hundreds of thousands of peasants title to their farms, strengthened the rights of labor unions, broke up some of the large, family-controlled trading companies, and broadened access to education. Here, as in Europe, the aim was to promote the development of a stable middle class as an anchor for the democratic political system.

The occupation-era reforms did not utterly change Japan. Many large firms associated with the wartime regime flourished under the occupation, as did the government's powerful bureaucracy. Officials in these large organizations exercised great influence on policy behind the scenes, both during the occupation and in subsequent years. Nevertheless, the changes that Japan underwent during the postwar occupation were dramatic even if not total, and on the whole they made Japan a far freer, more democratic, and more egalitarian society than ever before.

The War and Asian Nationalism

Neither peace nor democracy came so easily to other parts of Asia. Japan had launched the Pacific war on the pretext of liberating Asians from their European masters. It had quickly turned many European colonies into Japanese colonies, exploiting their peoples with a ruthlessness that often surpassed that of the Europeans. Nevertheless, the Japanese had worked with Nationalists in some areas,

such as Burma, and had stimulated the development of nationalism in others through anti-Western propaganda. An unintended consequence of Japanese occupation was at least as important: In many regions, Japanese rule evoked resistance, and those who had fought Japanese imperialism were little disposed to accept renewed European imperialism. Above all, the Japanese had demonstrated that European rule need not be a fact of life; Asians could defeat Westerners if they were properly armed and organized.

The Allies were divided over how to respond to nationalism and what to do about European colonies that had been occupied by Japan during the war. The old powers of Europe were reluctant to surrender their Asian territories. This was especially true of France, which was determined to reassert its control over Indochina, and the Netherlands, which quickly sought to reclaim oil-rich Indonesia. Both saw their colonies as dividend-paying assets that might help finance reconstruction at home. Imperial possessions also gave these much-diminished powers some claim to a role in global politics, a consideration that was especially important for the French, whose influence had declined dramatically in the twentieth century.

Britain, which had the most extensive empire of all, proved more flexible. While it was interested in retaining control of such strategic colonies as Hong Kong and Singapore, it had come to recognize the futility of trying to hold on to lands in which large and dogged Nationalist movements flourished. It had promised India its independence during the war, and when the Labour Party took control of the British government in 1945, negotiations quickly began on Burmese, Ceylonese, and Malaysian independence. Until the 1960s, British leaders hoped that their former colonies would assume positions in a British Commonwealth of Nations, a voluntary association offering members special trade privileges and a largely symbolic association with the mother country.” But much more than the French or the Dutch, the British recognized that the handwriting was on the wall for old-style European imperialism.

The Soviet Union simultaneously preached an aggressive anticolonial line while diligently working to rebuild and extend the old tsarist empire. Soviet ideology was clear: Lenin had denounced imperialism as a form of capitalist exploitation, and Soviet policy was to defend the rights of colonized peoples. But despite the anti-imperialist rhetoric, Stalin generally showed little interest in Asian nationalism. As in the west, he was concerned primarily with ensuring that the regions bordering the USSR were favorably disposed toward the Soviet state. This meant restoring the influence that imperial Russia had enjoyed in Manchuria and preventing Japan from again extending its power onto the Asian mainland.

American interests were more diffuse. The United States opposed closed trading systems, whether they were dominated by Europe’s imperial powers, the Soviet Union, or Japan. It sought a stable Asia in which no power could again threaten U.S. control of the sea-lanes, as Japan had done. It also voiced support for Nationalist movements on the old Wilsonian principle that peoples should have a right to choose their own forms of government. These goals led the United States to grant the Philippines its independence in 1946 and to urge its allies to

follow suit in their own empires. They also led Roosevelt to insist that China should have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. An independent China would be open to American trade and investment; it might also serve as a counterweight to the Soviets and the Japanese in the years to come. But America's European interests remained more important than its Asian interests, and neither Roosevelt nor Truman was willing to alienate Europe's imperial powers by pushing decolonization vigorously. Consequently, Nationalists in Asia had to struggle for their independence (see Map 9.2).

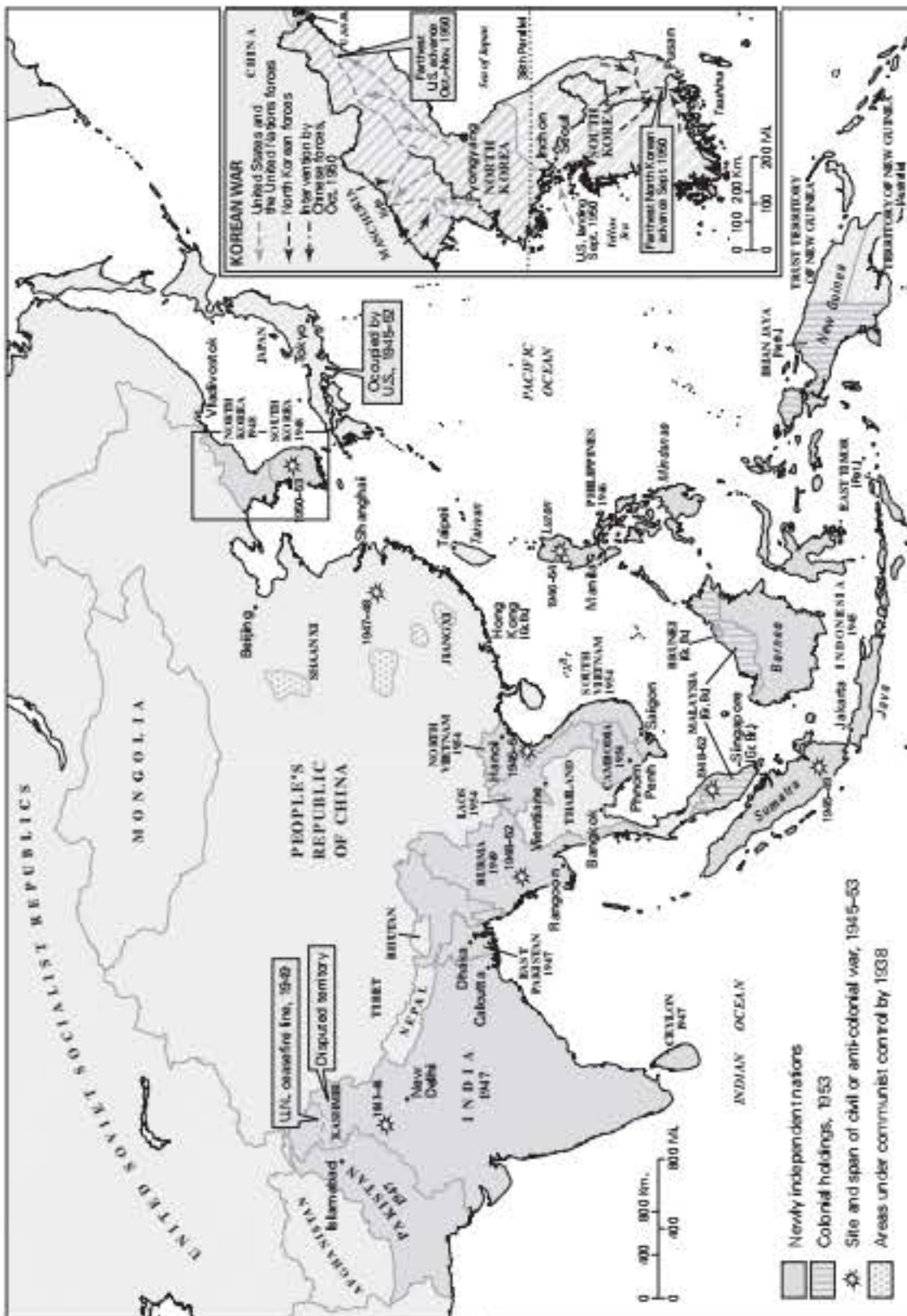
Wars of Independence: Vietnam and Indonesia

For some, the struggle began during the war. Ho Chi Minh, a widely traveled Vietnamese Marxist, launched a League for the Independence of Vietnam, or Viet Minh, shortly after Japanese troops entered Indochina in 1940. Working from a base in southern China, he and his associates ran a clandestine resistance in Vietnam's northern provinces. As soon as the war ended, they took possession of Hanoi and Saigon, Vietnam's two largest cities. On September 2, 1945, Ho issued a formal declaration of Vietnam's independence, quoting liberally from both the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man.

The declaration, however, did little to impress the Western Allies. Within weeks British and Indian troops, working with Japanese prisoners of war, had ejected Ho's followers from Saigon. French forces, mostly mercenaries enrolled in the French Foreign Legion, soon arrived. Assuming control of the south, the French offered Ho a deal that would have given limited autonomy to North Vietnam. Unwilling to accept either a divided nation or incomplete independence, Ho returned to Hanoi and reasserted his government's claim to represent all of Vietnam.

In November 1946, the truce between the French and the Viet Minh failed. France, having enlarged its forces in Indochina, seized Hanoi and other northern cities and threw the outnumbered Viet Minh on the defensive. Ho responded to the reverses by adopting guerrilla tactics and cultivating support in rural districts with his program of land reform and independence. Bolstered by supplies and recruits from Vietnam's many small villages, the strength of the Viet Minh swelled until, in the early 1950s, it was ready to engage large units of the French army. This the Viet Minh did brilliantly. It capped its campaign in the spring of 1954 by compelling a French army to surrender after a grueling battle over the town of Dien Bien Phu, a strong point in northwest Vietnam.

The Viet Minh victory came on the eve of an international conference in Geneva that had been convened by Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union to broker a cease-fire in Indochina. The French, exhausted by the long war and demoralized by their recent defeat, agreed to the creation of three nations in Indochina: Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Under the terms of a cease-fire agreement, Vietnam was temporarily divided at the seventeenth parallel of latitude, pending nationwide elections. Ho's Viet Minh government assumed



MAP 9.2 South and East Asia, 1945-1953.

Nationalists across Asia were quick to seek independence following the collapse of Japan's empire in 1945, leading to guerrilla wars against European imperial forces that were trying to reestablish authority in their prewar colonies. Independence sometimes introduced a new round of bloodshed as rival Nationalist parties, sometimes backed by outside sponsors, contended for power. The Korean peninsula, where a seersaw war was fought between North and South between 1950 and 1954, saw the bloodiest of these conflicts.

control of the north and an anti-Communist Nationalist, Ngo Dinh Diem, took power in the south. Elections, however, were not held. Instead, the United States incorporated South Vietnam into an alliance of anti-Communist states, the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and began subsidizing the Diem regime with money, military equipment, and advisers. Ho Chi Minh, who was securely in control of North Vietnam, had achieved a partial victory. It would take another two decades to accomplish his full goal: the unification of Vietnam under a Viet Minh regime.

While Ho Chi Minh contended with the French, another Asian Nationalist, Sukarno, led a campaign against the Dutch for the independence of Indonesia. Unlike Vietnam, Indonesia lacked a precolonial history as an independent state. An archipelago stretching more than three thousand miles from end to end, Indonesia was largely a creation of Dutch colonial rule. Its population included Malays, Chinese, Polynesians, and Papuans with diverse languages and cultural traditions. During World War II, Japanese occupiers had treated these subjects with contempt and brutality, impressing hundreds of thousands into forced labor in mines, oil fields, and rice paddies and causing approximately a million deaths. But the Japanese had also demonstrated the fragility of Dutch colonial rule and had sponsored the creation of an Indonesian militia.

Within days of Japan's surrender Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta, a pair of Indonesian Nationalists who had played a double game of collaborating with both the Japanese and the anti-Japanese resistance, seized the moment and declared Indonesia an independent republic. The Netherlands was in no position to respond forcefully, but Britain was. Alarmed that Nationalists in its own empire might follow the Indonesians' lead, Britain landed troops on Java, the most populous island of the archipelago, and, together with rearmed Japanese prisoners, established control of the island's major cities.

By late 1945, however, fighting on a large scale had begun between British forces and elements of the militia that Japan had armed. Neither the British nor the Dutch forces that replaced them could reestablish full control. Passive resistance in the cities, continuing violence in the countryside, and heavy pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Australia eventually convinced the Dutch that they were in a conflict they could not win. In December 1949, after four years of fighting, the Netherlands recognized Indonesia's independence, and a new government, under the presidency of Sukarno, assumed power.

Ethnicity, Religion, and Asian Decolonization: Burma and India

The nations of Indonesia and Vietnam were born of protracted wars, but anti-colonial movements could also take a more peaceful form. Following the Labour Party's victory in Britain's 1945 general elections, British policy shifted from the determined imperialism of Churchill's government to a more pragmatic stance. The Labour Party was eager to deliver on campaign promises of



French ambitions to regain control of Indochina collided with Ho Chi Minh's independence movement after World War II. The struggle culminated in a long siege of the French base at Dien Bien Phu, where ten thousand French prisoners, some pictured here, were taken prisoner in 1954. The defeat forced France to withdraw from Indochina later that year.

more plentiful food and housing, national health care, and the modernization of aging industries. It could not hope to accomplish such ambitious goals and simultaneously garrison unruly colonies from one end of the world to the other. The solution appeared inevitable: Britain would have to grant independence to those colonies that appeared to be ready, especially those that promised to be costly to hold. A series of agreements on the independence of India, Ceylon, and Burma followed in rapid succession.

In none of these states was there protracted fighting between colonizer and colonized, but in two of them, Burma and India, independence nevertheless brought bloodshed. The reason is not far to seek. Asian politics during the post-war years cannot be understood simply in terms of a conflict between Nationalists and imperial powers. The peoples under colonial rule were themselves often divided, and these divisions could make political change a contest involving three or more parties.

In some colonies, ethnicity was a critical issue. Such was the case in Burma, where tense relations existed between the Burmese of the lowlands, who constituted a majority of the population, and inland hill peoples, the Karens and Kachins, who had long depended on the British for protection. The Nationalist

Party that assumed power in 1948, when Burma obtained its independence, represented the interests of the lowlands; its control of government quickly sparked a rebellion among the Karens. The situation quickly grew yet more complex as Communist guerrillas, Chinese Nationalist troops, and other groups launched their own separatist movements. Under the pressure of these rebellions and political infighting among the Burmese Nationalists themselves, Burma's government evolved from a parliamentary democracy to rule by a military junta.

In India, the issue was religion. By 1946 the British were eager to withdraw. But to whom should power be transferred? Internal divisions, which had been convenient for the British when they ruled India, now created a dilemma as they tried to leave. About one in five of India's four hundred eighty million inhabitants was Muslim, with the great majority of the others being Hindu. Although concentrated in the northwest and northeast, Muslim communities were scattered across the subcontinent. While the Congress Party advocated the formation of a unified India offering equal rights to all citizens, its leaders, including Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, were Hindu. A Moslem League, led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, had come to speak for many of India's Muslims. It advocated the partition of colonial India into separate Hindu and Muslim states. Britain could not satisfy one of these independence movements without denying the other.

In the end, religious divisions proved more powerful than the ideal of unity. In an agreement brokered by the British, the Congress Party and the Moslem League agreed to the creation of two successor states, a predominantly Hindu India and a largely Muslim Pakistan. All parties hoped for a peaceful division, but rioting commenced even before British rule officially ended. The bloodshed intensified when power was transferred in August 1947. Between a quarter and a half million Muslims died, some in their homes and many others as they fled India for Pakistan along refugee-filled roads and rail lines. Within weeks of independence, ten million Muslims had crossed the borders. Smaller numbers of Hindus moved in the opposite direction, and they, too, suffered appalling losses as the anti-Muslim riots in India sparked anti-Hindu violence in Pakistan. These convulsions generated hatreds among millions of citizens of both new nations. The enmity was only intensified as soldiers of India and Pakistan, once part of a common British-led army, fell to fighting over Kashmir, a district that straddled the northwestern frontier of the two new states. The combat found a temporary end in January 1949 through a UN-sponsored truce.

Religious and ethnic conflicts were not peculiar to India, Pakistan, and Burma. In Malaya, ethnic Chinese and Malays, nearly balanced in numbers, resented each other at least as much as they did their British rulers. Independence in Indonesia brought fighting between competing groups of Muslims on Java, some of whom were more influenced by indigenous religious traditions than others. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Muslims, who were concentrated in the southern island of Mindanao, nursed grievances against Catholics to the north who controlled

the economy and the government. In Vietnam, there was tension between minority Catholics and Buddhists and fighting between tribal hill peoples, who were allied with the French, and Viet Minh lowlanders. As in Europe after World War I, ethnic and religious loyalties could inspire both the construction and the destruction of states.

Asian Communism

Ideological divisions also rent many of the new nations of Asia. Communist parties, most of them led by intellectuals, had enjoyed modest success in Asia during the 1920s and 1930s by appealing to the interests of workers in such commercial centers as Shanghai and Manila. These methods were consistent with both Soviet experience and Marxist-Leninist theory, and they reflected the broad authority that Moscow enjoyed among Communists. The Bolsheviks had made a revolution and were running a state; other revolutionaries quite naturally looked to them for legitimacy and guidance.

Nevertheless, the urban proletariat in Asia was small, and Communist parties flourished only after indigenous leaders adapted Marxism to local conditions. This often meant emphasizing issues that concerned peasants: land reform, tax reform, the control of official corruption, medical care, and education. Not only were peasants far more numerous than urban workers, but rural districts were safer for revolutionaries than urban ones. When they were concentrated in a few cities, Communists could be watched and controlled by imperial authorities, whether European or Japanese. In the countryside, imperial control was generally weak, and revolutionaries could more easily blend into the background—so long, that is, as they enjoyed good relations with their hosts.

Several peasant-based Communist movements appeared in the 1940s, often as much out of necessity as of choice. While Communists had been harassed and sometimes imprisoned by European colonial governments in the 1930s, the Japanese imperial government had treated them as enemies of the state, often killing those they could catch and driving the survivors underground. Thus rural Communist movements took form in the agricultural districts of northern Vietnam; on the plantations of Luzon, the largest Philippine island; and among impoverished Chinese squatters in Malaya's jungles.

Red Star over China: China's Communist Revolution

The first and most influential of these movements had developed in China during the 1920s and 1930s. Its chief strategist, Mao Zedong, had long believed that peasants would be the surest base for a revolution in China. During the early 1930s, he had organized a stronghold in the villages and market towns of Jiangxi province, a couple of hundred miles west of the Taiwan Straits, by redistributing the land of uncooperative gentry and protecting peasants from the depredations of warlords and Guomindang tax collectors.

In 1934, after Chiang Kai-shek's Guomintang government cracked down on Communists throughout China, Mao and his small army were forced to take flight, undertaking what would later become known as "the Long March." Moving first to the west and then to the north, pursued much of the way by Guomintang troops, they finally settled in 1935 in a remote part of north central China near the Mongolian border. There, Mao and his band regrouped and gathered fresh support among the local peasantry, who found the honesty, discipline, and land reforms of the Communists appealing. As China's war with Japan intensified, Chiang was compelled to strike a truce with Mao. Thus relieved, Mao slowly enlarged his army and its range of operations, extending his control westward and undertaking more ambitious operations against the Japanese.

Throughout the long war with Japan, both the Soviet Union and the United States had recognized Chiang's Guomintang government as representing China, and the great bulk of American aid went to the Guomintang armies, which operated primarily in southern and central China. But the élan and aggressiveness of the Communist army contrasted sharply with the passivity of the Guomintang forces, and by the end of the war both Soviet and American observers began to consider Mao a significant threat to the Guomintang's authority. Although some American diplomats thought that a more even-handed policy might serve American interests, after the war the U.S. government opted to throw its full support to Chiang. The Soviets, meanwhile, began assisting Mao's army with captured Japanese weapons and war materiel.

The truce between the Guomintang and the Communists broke down in 1946, when Soviet occupation troops in Manchuria began to withdraw and both Mao and Chiang rushed to fill the vacuum. General warfare soon erupted. The Guomintang, with far larger armies, achieved a string of early successes and established control over almost all of China's major cities. Nevertheless, it was unable either to inflict a decisive defeat on the Communist. In 1949, after years of hit-and-run tactics, the Communists took the initiative and never again lost it. Moving from north to south, they isolated Chiang's forces and defeated them piecemeal. Within months a swelling Communist army secured control of most of the rest of China and drove Chiang and his half a million remaining troops to the island of Taiwan, where his government continued to claim it represented all of China. Mao, for his part, swiftly consolidated control of the Chinese mainland, replacing Guomintang officials with his own, driving foreign missionaries into flight, and executing many landowners and merchants. Stalin, who had long neglected the independent Mao, quickly acted to repair the damage by offering him diplomatic support, military aid, and advice on how to go about building a socialist economy.

Repercussions in Washington

Reports of Mao's victories arrived in Washington while relief flights were still flying into blockaded Berlin. In August, just months after Chiang fled to Taiwan, American reconnaissance aircraft detected evidence that the Soviet

Union had tested an atomic bomb, thus ending the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons. The American public reacted to these rapid-fire developments with shock and alarm. Not only had the Grand Alliance dissolved, but it now appeared to many Americans that Soviet Russia was leading an international conspiracy against U.S. interests.

And Soviet Russia seemed to have the initiative. Newspapers and magazines illustrated their coverage of these events with maps showing a red tide sweeping across Europe and Asia. Scientists planned radar systems to provide early warning of Soviet air attack. Missionaries returning from China recounted the horrors inflicted by the “godless” Communists, as did Catholic priests in speaking of the trials of the church in Eastern Europe. The Truman administration had watched the disintegration of Chiang’s forces with dismay, at first pumping weapons and money into the cause, and finally deciding that such assistance was largely wasted on the corrupt and hapless Guomindang. Now, with Mao firmly in control of the mainland, critics of the Truman administration began to ask, “Who lost China?”

Many Republicans thought they knew. The Truman administration, they claimed, had underestimated the Soviet threat and had failed to stop the advance of communism in China. Worse, it had neglected the danger that international communism posed at home. Pointing to evidence of Soviet espionage, of which there was a great deal, and of Communist influence among American intellectuals, the Republican Party honed its attacks on the Truman administration in the 1948 congressional elections. Successes in those elections produced the first Republican Congress since 1928 and led to even more aggressive use of the issue. When, in 1950, Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin recklessly charged that the U.S. State Department was itself riddled with traitors, a majority of Americans were prepared to believe him.

The Globalization of the Cold War

By 1950 the Cold War had come to the United States. It had also reached Asia. The defeat of the Guomindang altered both Soviet and American views on the balance of power in the Far East. Stalin, who had consistently underestimated Mao and overestimated Chiang, now had to scramble to justify his claims to leadership of international communism. This entailed a renunciation of privileges in Manchuria that had been granted to the Soviet Union at the end of the war and increased support for other Asian Communist parties, which the Soviets had long treated with benign neglect. More aggressive support of Mao and other Asian revolutionaries also served larger Soviet interests. It aligned the USSR more clearly with nationalist aspirations; sapped the power of America’s allies and client states such as France, Britain, and the Philippines, which all were fighting wars against Communist guerrillas; and forced the United States to divide its attention and its resources between Europe and Asia.

Containment and Korea

U.S. policy in the wake of World War II had taken account of Soviet threats in Asia but was flexible in dealing with the complex politics of decolonization. The United States had backed Indonesian independence, even though significant elements of the Indonesian Nationalist movement identified themselves as Marxists. The United States had armed and trained Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh while it was fighting the Japanese, and, after the war, it refused to sell the French military equipment for use in Indochina. In China, the United States sought a power-sharing deal between Chiang and Mao until events made that possibility utterly unrealistic. Even then, some U.S. diplomats, sensing a fissure between Mao and Stalin, believed that a good working relationship with Mao might someday be possible. But Mao's triumph was not seen as an isolated event; it was all too easily woven into a larger narrative that attributed all the disappointments of the postwar years to a masterful conspiracy hatched in Moscow.

After 1949 U.S. containment doctrine, which was already being applied in Europe, was extended to the Pacific. The U.S. government began to assist anti-Communist forces wherever they called for help against Communist challenges. Aid began to flow to the French in Indochina, where the Viet Minh was intensifying its war with Chinese help; to the newly independent Philippine government, which was combating a Communist insurrection on the island of Luzon; and to the British, who had become enmeshed in a war against Communist guerrillas in the jungles of Malaya. Each of these conflicts could have been understood in terms of local conditions. In the Philippines, it was a conflict between landless peasants and the estate-owning elites who dominated Philippine politics both before and after independence. In Indochina, it was a war of independence. In Malaya, it was at once an anticolonial war and a war of secession by a radical segment of Malaya's ethnic Chinese. But the lenses of Cold War anticommunism rendered these complexities invisible to the American public and, increasingly, to policymakers in Washington.

Mao's victory in China broadened and deepened the involvement of the superpowers in Asia, focusing their attention on regions that had been of secondary importance only a few years earlier and encouraging them to increase their stakes in local conflicts. One of those local conflicts was in Korea.

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had given much thought to the Korean Peninsula at the end of World War II. Soviet forces had occupied the better developed northern half of the Japanese colony in 1945, and American troops had occupied the more populous, poorer, and agricultural south. The thirty-eighth parallel, which bisected the peninsula, served as the line of demarcation. Korea's partition, like Germany's, was intended to be temporary but soon became fixed. Talks aimed at reunification repeatedly broke down, with the Americans first agreeing to and then rejecting a joint Allied trusteeship over the entire peninsula and the Soviets rejecting UN-sponsored general elections. In 1948, UN-supervised elections to a general assembly in the south led to the formation

of a Republic of Korea under the presidency of a prominent Nationalist, Syngman Rhee. A few months later, the Soviets organized a separate state in the north, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, under the control of Kim Il Sung, a longtime Communist who had chaired a provisional government under Soviet auspices since 1946. Kim Il Sung employed the full range of Stalin's methods to impose an iron rule on his people, rooting out opposition, and committing North Korea to the expansion of heavy industry, collectivized agriculture, and military strength. Rhee, a fiery Nationalist but a poor democrat, developed his own brand of authoritarianism, albeit less efficient than Kim Il Sung's. By mid-1949, both American and Soviet occupation forces had withdrawn from the peninsula.

Few American observers gave the inefficient South Korean government a strong chance of survival, and fewer still believed that the peninsula was important enough to merit determined support. Both in public and in private, American diplomats carefully excluded South Korea from those regions where vital American interests were in play.

American diffidence toward Korea had an unintended consequence: It encouraged both Kim Il Sung and Stalin to believe that North Korea might achieve control of the entire peninsula by a swift military strike. In the spring of 1950, Kim secured Stalin's permission to attack the South, with the understanding that Soviet support would be indirect. The destruction of a nearby state that was allied, even if only loosely, with the United States would serve Soviet interests so long as Soviet troops could remain uninvolved. And here, as elsewhere, Stalin was to some degree a captive of his claims to leadership of an international struggle against capitalism. Mao, who was just consolidating his power in China, was less enthusiastic about Kim Il Sung's plans than Stalin, but he acceded to the wishes of his neighbors and allies.

In June 1950, the North Korean army launched a sudden and massive attack across the thirty-eighth parallel. The Soviet-trained North Koreans, some of who had fought for Mao in the Chinese civil war, possessed superior numbers and equipment and brushed aside the weak and ill-organized South Koreans. Within three days they had captured Seoul, the seat of the South's government; within a week South Korean resistance was on the verge of collapse.

The invasion stunned Washington and the West, not so much because of what it said about Stalin's intentions but because it indicated a recklessness that he had seldom shown before. With one eye on Europeans who were anxious about U.S. commitment and the other on domestic politics, Truman quickly ordered U.S. forces to assist the South Koreans and asked the UN Security Council to act against the aggressor. A Soviet veto would have blocked UN action, but the Soviet Union had absented itself from the Security Council some months previously in protest against the UN's failure to recognize Mao as China's legitimate ruler. In the absence of a Soviet representative, the Security Council swiftly condemned the North's action and called upon member nations to go to the defense of the South.

As the South Koreans retreated, a UN command was organized under Douglas MacArthur, and U.S. occupation troops in Japan were hurriedly ferried to Korea.

Ill prepared to fight and introduced piecemeal, they could at first do little to check the North Korean advance. But as additional troops arrived, including British and Australian units, and as U.S. air and naval forces were brought to bear, the North Koreans were halted just short of winning complete control of the peninsula. In September, MacArthur made surprise amphibious landings at Inchon, almost two hundred miles behind the lines of the North Korean army. The strike immediately reversed the tide. With their lines of supply cut, Kim Il Sung's armies began a headlong retreat. Within two weeks, UN forces, now including troops from fifteen nations, had retaken Seoul and ejected the North Koreans from most of the South.

MacArthur, convinced that he held a winning hand, secured permission from Truman to continue his drive northward, with the aim of not only repulsing the North Koreans but also reuniting the peninsula. By December, UN forces had all but achieved this goal. But once again, the tables were turned. Mao and Stalin, alarmed by the prospect of an American army on their borders, came to the aid of the North Koreans. With assurances of supplies and air support from Stalin, Mao ordered a quarter of a million Chinese troops to cross the Yalu River into North Korea. There, in December 1950, they surprised advancing UN columns, turning what had seemed a certain UN victory into a stunning defeat. Within weeks, the Allied troops were pushed south of the thirty-eighth parallel. The bloodshed was enormous as the Chinese units struggled to overcome the UN superiority in weapons with numbers. Eventually, though, firepower and UN reinforcements stopped and reversed the tide.

By the summer of 1951, UN forces had again pushed northward to the vicinity of the thirty-eighth parallel. Once again MacArthur urged a sustained advance, this time publicly expressing the desire to attack Chinese bases in Manchuria and to make use of Chiang's Guomindang troops. But neither Truman nor his UN allies wished to renew the Chinese civil war. MacArthur was relieved of his command, and after two more years of inconclusive fighting the war ended in a truce that left the Korean Peninsula divided in two. The United States and its allies, chastened by the Chinese intervention and heavy casualties, had become convinced that any further advance to the north would only evoke yet stronger Chinese and Soviet countermeasures. The Chinese, stunned by the intensity of the combat and the magnitude of their losses, decided that North Korea would afford an adequate buffer to protect their interests.

Korea became an Asian counterpart to Germany: a nation divided between Communist and capitalist spheres, a continuing source of friction, and the scene of bizarre maneuvers that ran the gamut from old-fashioned cross-border espionage to sabotage, assassination, and tunnel digging beneath the demilitarized zone separating North and South. American armies were to remain in Germany and Korea for decades to come as shields and tripwires. Large-scale fighting did not recur in either locale, but in both places the United States and the USSR sought to construct replicas of themselves—states that would exemplify the advantages of their competing economic and political systems.

CONCLUSION

It wasn't just Germany and Korea that were divided. By the mid-1950s, so was most of the rest of the globe. On one side, the Soviet Union had built a network of alliances that incorporated its satellites in Eastern Europe, China, and North Korea. On the other, the United States, which had never before committed itself to peacetime alliances, constructed a web of bilateral and multilateral agreements that included most of the nations of Western Europe, Greece, Turkey, and all the nations of Latin America, along with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan.

Intensive preparations for war accompanied the binge of treaty signings. The United States and its European allies reinstituted conscription, opened new defense plants, built airfields and naval bases all around the perimeter of the Communist world, and freely distributed surplus equipment from World War II to allied states. Believing that superior technology might serve as a counterweight to Soviet and Chinese numbers, the West accelerated research on new weapons: fission bombs with higher yields, miniaturized nuclear weapons for use in artillery and mines, intercontinental bombers, nuclear-powered submarines, long-distance radar systems, digital computers to improve the command and control of forces, and, most potent of all, a new and radically more powerful nuclear weapon, the hydrogen bomb. The Soviets, for their part, poured scarce resources into the weapons that had brought them victory over Germany—tanks, artillery, and fighter aircraft—and embarked on their own ambitious program of research and development, with the focus on nuclear weapons, jet engines, and rockets.

The remilitarization of international relations so soon after World War II affected economies and cultures throughout the world. The burden of defense spending crippled economic development in the Soviet Union, where upwards of 15 percent of gross domestic product was dedicated to preparations for war at the expense of investment in its backward agricultural sector and consumer products industries. The United States, with a much larger economy, absorbed the costs of the Cold War with less strain, but only by holding down spending on social services.

Some of its allies were not so fortunate. Britain, which tried to preserve its global military reach and at the same time provide its citizens with cradle-to-grave social services, lurched from one economic crisis to the next, unable to keep pace with the economic growth of its partner across the Atlantic, or even with some of its allies on the continent that were less ambitious in their postwar goals. Ironically, Japan, which was forbidden from rebuilding its military under an American-imposed constitution, found economic opportunity in this increasingly militarized world, investing resources in education and infrastructure that might otherwise have gone to defense.

Until the 1960s, the Cold War dominated culture as well as politics and economics. A stultifying Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy spread from Soviet

Russia, where it had already prevailed in the 1930s, into Eastern Europe. Artists, writers, and scientists who tested the limits of official censorship risked imprisonment. In China, Mao's regime periodically purged the ranks of intellectuals in the name of ideological purity. And while greater liberty prevailed in the West, new forms of censorship and self-censorship appeared, especially in the United States, where by the end of the 1940s anticommunism had become an article of faith. McCarthyism singled universities, movie studios, newspapers, and other institutions. As public and private organizations imposed loyalty oaths and conducted security investigations of their employees, the spectrum of respectable political opinion contracted to a narrow band.

The Cold War was to be the cardinal fact of international politics for two decades. It was a matrix for the emergence of new states from European colonies, for political debate, and for economic and technological development. But important as it was, the Cold War was not the only fact of international life. Diversity of opinion and ambition existed within each of the competing blocs, and outside of both were nations and peoples seeking their own paths to the future.

For Further Reading

- Judith M. Brown, *Modern India*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Sets the 1947 partition into a broader history of democracy in India.
- Robert Bud, *Penicillin: Triumph and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). A broad-scale history of antibiotics in modern culture.
- John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton, 1999). A masterful work on Japan during the U.S. occupation.
- David W. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction* (London: Longman, 1992). Strong on the intersection of politics and economics during the era of the Marshall Plan.
- John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Makes excellent use of archives opened in the 1990s.
- Robin Jeffrey, ed., *Asia: The Winning of Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1981). Fine essays on decolonization in Southeast Asia.
- Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005). Unsurpassed on how Europe moved from world war to Cold War and beyond.
- Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999). China in the postwar years.
- William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). Reliable and thorough.
- Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978). A good book on the history of the Cold War, notable for its balanced judgments and fluid style.
- Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). A penetrating analysis of Soviet policy.

Related Websites

Documents on American foreign policy, the NATO Treaty, the Bretton Woods Agreements, and the UN Charter

www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/20th.htm

Links to many excellent websites on the Cold War and U.S. foreign policy

www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/coldwar.htm