

Truman doctrine

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



Truman Doctrine Ryan Hauppa A. Plan of Investigation The following questions will be investigated: What were the events and decisions that led to the development of the Truman Doctrine? What was its effect on US Foreign Policy and its impact on Greece, Turkey and Europe? Research will be conducted concerning the Post World War II Treaties as Potsdam, Soviet Union aggression, and the Greek and Turkey Crisis. These events prompted the development of the Truman Doctrine - the US foreign policy to contain the spread of Communism.

Truman's 1947 Address that introduced the doctrine to the world, his own personal thoughts, and the support and criticism of the policy will be examined. The doctrine will be analyzed as to how it shaped future American policies and programs as the Marshall Plan and led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War over forty years later. (Word Count - 143) B. Summary of Evidence World War II devastated Europe. Millions of people died. Many of those remaining were starving and in need of food and shelter since the farms and cities of many countries were destroyed.

Billions of dollars were spent. Countries were nearly bankrupt. Europe was in economic, social, and political devastation. After the surrender of Germany in 1945, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met first at Yalta and later at Potsdam in Germany. They met to resolve war reparations and boundaries of Germany. As part of the agreements, Germany was divided into East and West. The Eastern portion was controlled by the Soviet Union and the West by the United States, United Kingdom, and France. Berlin, the capital, which is inside Eastern Germany, was also divided by the four countries. Pemberton 50) In 1945 and 1946, Stalin, the leader of the Soviet

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Union, had been taking over new countries including Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia by establishing governments favorable to him. (CNN Cold War Appendix Maps) The Soviet Union focused next on Greece and Turkey. In February of 1947, Great Britain informed the United States in a " State Department Telegram" that that they could no longer provide financial aid to the governments of Greece and Turkey since they did not have themoneyand resources.

Both governments were being threatened by Communist insurgents. (Truman Library Telegram 1) Truman pledged that " it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures" in a " Address of the President of the United States" in March of 1947. (Truman Address 1) The economic aid program was costly amounting to total of more than \$400 million for the two countries to aid the pro-democracy governments and oppose the Communists. The policy was later called the Truman Doctrine.

Congress was divided over the program. Democrats wanted to give diplomacy and the newly formed United Nations a chance while Republicans were isolationist and concerned that the program was too costly. Despite a divided Congress, the program was adopted since both eventually were more concerned over the spread of Communism in the region. The Cold War confrontation had begun. The United States and its principles of freedom, capitalism, and democracy were fighting philosophically and economically against Communism and the Soviet Union. Donovan 286) Truman and George Marshall, his Secretary of State, then prepared for even greater aid

for the rest of Europe. Their objective was to rebuild Western Europe and prevent a Communism take over of the remaining free nations. The policy was called the Marshall Plan, the European Economic Recovery Program. Over \$13 billion in aid was provided in 1947. (Truman Memoirs 111) The Cold War was expanded. Stalin tried to disrupt the United States and its allies in 1948 and 1949 by shutting down access to Berlin.

Truman responded by airlifting supplies into the city until access was again. (Pemberton 102) Afterward, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949 to defend Western Europe militarily against a Soviet invasion as response by the United States in the Cold War. The Soviet Union in turn allied the Eastern European nations under the Warsaw Pact. (Pemberton 104) The Berlin Wall, the symbol of the Cold War, was built in 1961 and later torn down in 1989 after many years of conflict. The Soviet Union ultimately collapsed in 1991. (Word Count - 567) C.

Evaluation of Sources The most important source in investigating the topic of the Truman Doctrine is President Truman's Memoirs. The actual 1947 "Presidential Address Recommending for Assistance to Greece and Turkey" and critical government documents as the "State Department Telegrams for Greece, Turkey and the USSR" are included. Truman gives his own personal viewpoints of what happened while he was President. The researcher can obtain a clear view from the president himself. From his writings, you can tell that Truman was a hard working, "tell it like it is" man.

When he made a decision, he stuck with it and moved on. The decision to proceed with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan was difficult and not

very popular, but Truman did it because he thought it was the right thing to do. The limitation of the source is that it was written by Truman and may make him look too favorable. The other source most used was the book written by Robert Donovan, *The Presidency of Harry Truman 1945-1958 Conflict & Crisis*. Mr. Donovan was a journalist at the White House during the Truman presidency.

He provided critical firsthand insights into the actual events through his notes and research from the actual participants. His research into the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan was more thorough and comprehensive than most of the other sources used that were cited in the research paper. Mr. Donovan provides an excellent historical perspective of the pros and cons of Truman's and his staff's decisions. The limitation of the source is that the book was written in 1977 so it does not include the perspective after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union and Communism in Europe. Word Count - 285) D. Analysis Truman in his Memoirs describes his 1947 Address as follows: " This was, I believe, the turning point in America's foreign policy, which now declared that wherever aggression, direct or indirect, threatened by peace, the security of the United States was involved...After I delivered the speech the world reaction proved that this approach had been the right one". Truman went on further to describe in other addresses " the alternate ways of life...

One way is based on the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political

oppression...The second way of life is based upon the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedoms". (106) Truman believes that the United States and its democratic way of life is better than the Soviet Union and its evil oppressive way of life.

He wanted to make sure that the world understood his commitment by his strong language. The Communists should not quickly take over free countries and threaten the United States and its allies. His own divided Congress should beware of the past policies of isolationism and the hope that diplomacy and the United Nations could solve the crisis. The Soviet Union already had taken over the Eastern European countries in violation of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. The Greece and Turkey crisis was critical to victory in the Cold War. If either Greece or Turkey fell to the Soviet Union, the other would follow.

More nations would tumble " as a row of falling dominoes" extending Soviet domination to Europe, the Middle East oil fields, and Africa. (Hamby 391) (CNN Cold War Appendix Maps) Communism could have spread very quickly worldwide, but it did not. The Truman Doctrine is the epitome of the containment of Communism. (Donovan 284) Greece, Turkey, Europe, and even Russia, the former Soviet Union, are currently free and democratic nations. Europe was in economic, political, and social devastation after World War II. Winston Churchill once declared, " What is Europe now?

It is a rubble-heap, a charnel house, a breeding ground of pestilence and hate. " It was the perfect time for the Soviet Union to support Communism.

(Goldman 66) At over \$13 billion, it was aid on a much greater scale. The Truman Doctrine prompted the Marshall Plan. Truman in his Memoirs claimed that the plan was developed to do the following: (1) Counter increasing pressure of Communist imperialism, and (2) Rebuild Europe. By rebuilding Europe, America would help to establish that healthy economic balance which is essential to the peace of the world. 111) Rebuilding Europe was not only a national security issue but also a national economic issue. At the end of World War II, the United States was a major exporter. (Donovan 287) Without a strong Europe, the United States would likely have had a poor economy for many years because of lack of trade with Europe. Instead, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan led to over fifty years of prosperity for Europe and the United States and the end of the Cold War. (Word Count - 534) E. Conclusion With the Truman Doctrine, the United States entered a new era of foreign policy.

Great Britain, France, and Germany were no longer the colonial powers. The United States was the most powerful free nation in the world. The balance of power changed. Over the next forty years, the United States and the Soviet Union fought a Cold War for a way of life. The United States spent trillions of dollars, but the spread of Communism in Europe was contained. The result would have never have occurred had it not been for Truman's bold move in Greece and Turkey. The cost was great, but the cost would have been greater if United States lost. Europe could have turned Communist.

Instead, the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union collapsed. Russia has enacted democratic reforms and a capitalist economy, which is ultimate proof of the

success of the Truman Doctrine. (Word Count - 148) F. List of Sources

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