

## The Cold War Begins



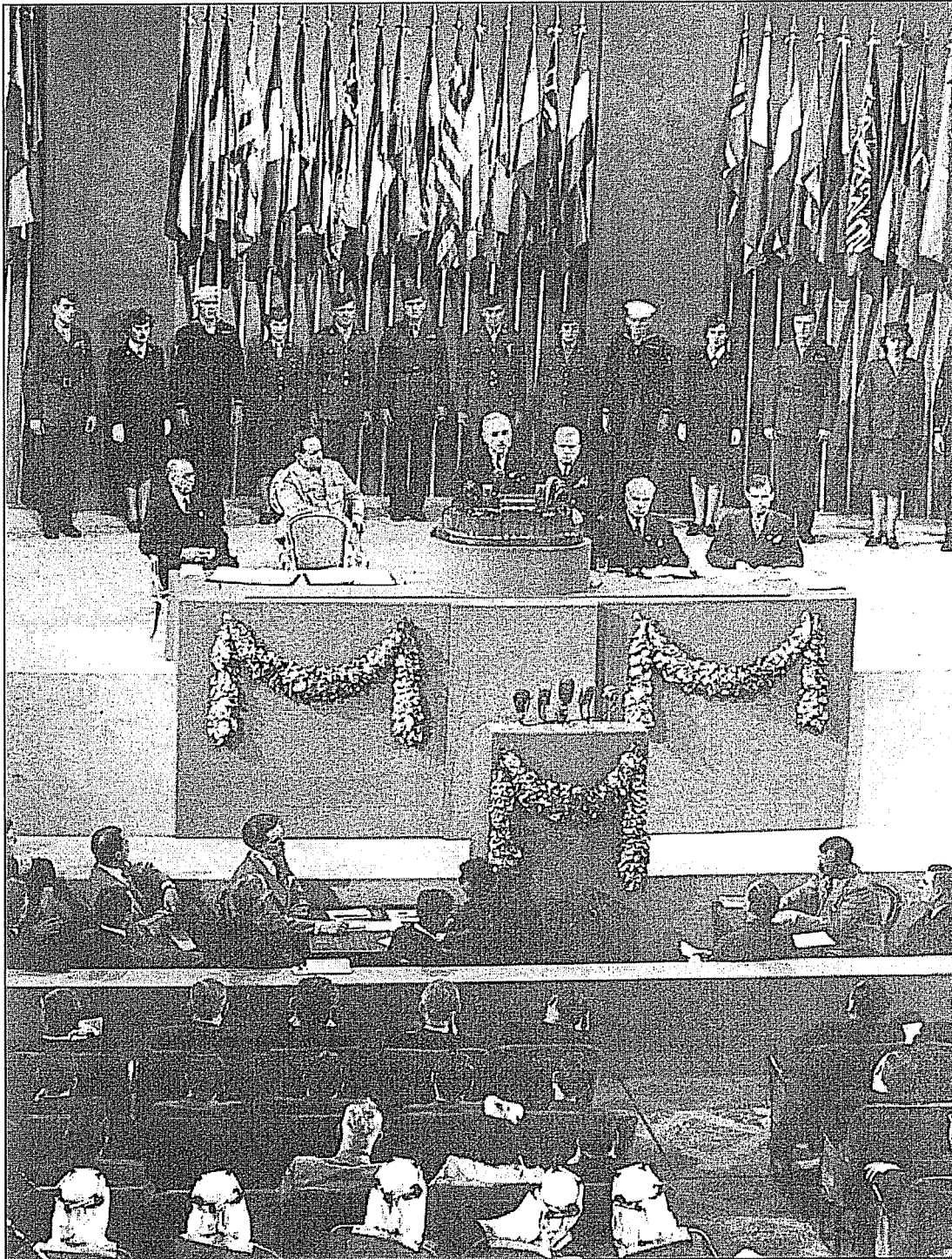
American and Russian soldiers meet across a bridge on the Elbe River in Germany near the end of World War II.

## **The Cold War Begins – Placard A**

At the end of World War II, much of Europe lay in ruins. The United States, however, emerged from the war stronger than ever. The Soviet Union, with its huge land mass and abundant resources, was also poised to become a great power. Together, these two superpowers would dominate world affairs.

**Signs of Cooperation** At first there were hopeful signs that the United States and the USSR might cooperate in the postwar era. In February 1945, as the war was winding down, the “Big Three” Allied leaders—Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill—met in the Soviet city of Yalta. There they made plans for postwar Europe. They agreed to divide Germany into four Allied occupation zones to be administered by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Berlin, the German capital, lay within the Soviet zone but would also be divided among the Allies. In addition, Stalin agreed to support free and fair elections in the liberated countries of Eastern Europe.

## The Cold War Begins

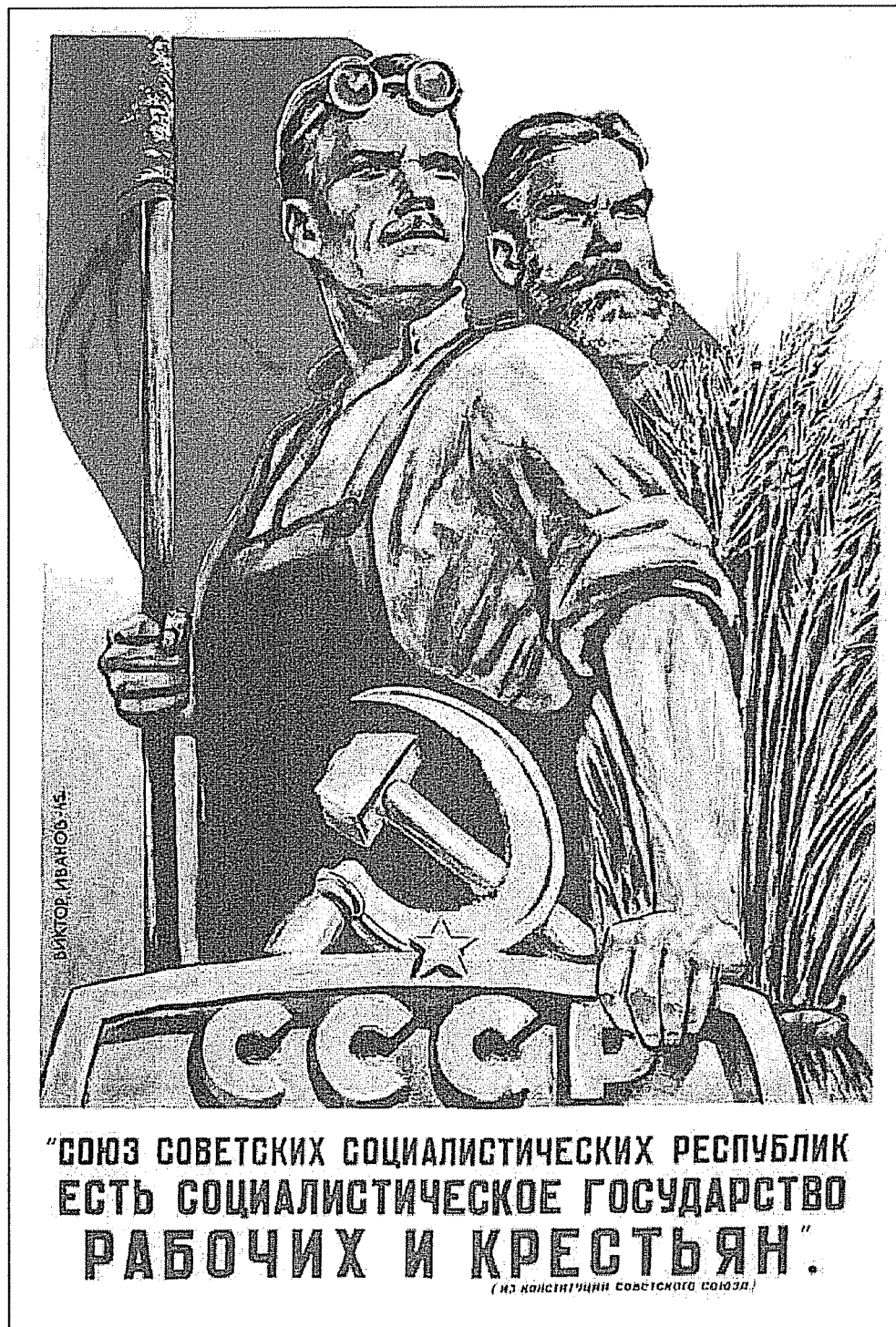


President Truman speaks at the conference in San Francisco where the United Nations Charter was drafted.

## **The Cold War Begins – Placard B**

At Yalta, the Soviets also agreed to join the United Nations (UN). This international body was founded in June 1945, when 50 nations signed the UN Charter. The charter established a General Assembly of all the member-states, plus an 11-member Security Council to settle disputes. UN members agreed to promote peace, security, and international cooperation. They pledged “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

## The Cold War Begins



This Soviet poster from 1945 promotes the role of industrial and agricultural workers in building a socialist society.

## **The Cold War Begins – Placard C**

**U.S.-Soviet Divisions** Despite these hopeful signs, deep divisions between the superpowers made lasting cooperation unlikely. These divisions were based on the two nations' differing histories and different goals for the postwar world.

Some of the differences arose from the war itself. During the war, nearly 300,000 American troops lost their lives. Aside from the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, no fighting took place on American soil. The American economy also boomed during the war because of wartime spending. **In contrast, about 28 million Soviet people—soldiers and civilians—died during the war. The fighting devastated the Soviet Union and its economy. Virtually no Soviet citizen was untouched by the war.**

The two superpowers also had **contrasting goals and beliefs**. Having been profoundly scarred by the war, **the goal of the Soviets was to ensure their security**. During the war—and throughout its history—Russia had been highly vulnerable to invasion. **The Soviet state wanted to make sure it protected itself from any future attack**, particularly from the west. It wanted to create a **buffer zone** of friendly countries in Eastern Europe.

In neighboring countries, **the Soviets also wanted to promote regimes sympathetic to communism**, the ideological foundation of the USSR government. The United States hoped that capitalism would spread. **Soviet leaders were confident communism would succeed over capitalism** as ordinary workers and peasants in other nations followed the Soviet model.

The United States was also concerned with security. A key part of its strategy was to prevent hostile powers from taking control of the countries and resources of Eurasia, as the Axis powers had tried to do during the war. To accomplish that, the United States would need to maintain a strong military presence overseas, with military bases and strong allies in Europe and Asia.

**Americans believed that their system of democratic capitalism—with its ideology of individual liberty and personal freedom—would prevail over socialism**. To achieve that end, the United States required the free flow of global trade, with access to resources and markets for its goods.

Given their differences, the United States and the Soviet Union were unlikely to remain allies for long. Although they both wanted a peaceful, secure world, their contrasting perspectives on how to achieve that objective put them in conflict.



## The Cold War Begins



In this 1948 photograph, British military police put up a sign to mark the boundary between the British and Russian sections of the city of Berlin.

## The Cold War Begins – Placard D

The political term ***satellite state*** designates a country that is formally independent in the world, but under heavy political, economic and military influence or control from another country. The term was mainly used to refer to Central and Eastern European countries<sup>[1]</sup> of the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. It implies that the countries were "satellites" under the Soviet Union. Soviet Satellite states included Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and even countries outside of Europe like Cuba and Vietnam.

Iron Curtain, the political, military, and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II to seal off itself and its satellite states from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas. The former British prime minister Winston Churchill gave a speech at Fulton, Missouri, U.S., on March 5, 1946, when he said of the communist states, **"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."**

In response to the development of satellite countries, President Harry S. Truman asks for U.S. assistance for Greece and Turkey to prevent communist domination of the two nations. It was the US's official policy to prevent the spread of communism. This is known as the Truman Doctrine, as the official declaration of the Cold War.

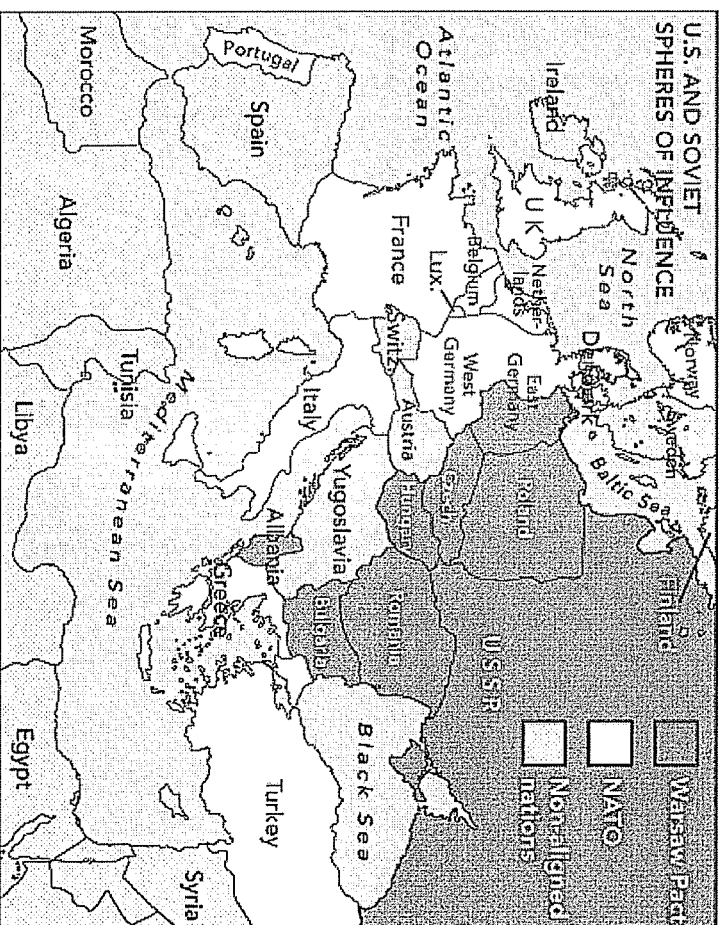
On March 12, 1947, Truman appeared before Congress to make his case. He said nations should adopt a way of life "based upon the will of the majority" and governments that provided "guarantees of individual liberty" or they could face a way of life "based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority." This latter regime, he indicated, relied upon "terror and oppression." "The foreign policy and the national security of this country was "threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by communists." The United States must support Greece so that it could "become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy." The "freedom-loving" people of Turkey also needed U.S. aid, which was "necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity."

**The Truman Doctrine was a de facto (indirect) declaration of the Cold War.** Truman's address outlined the broad parameters of U.S. Cold War foreign policy: the Soviet Union was the center of all communist activity and the United States needed to provide military and economic assistance to protect nations from communist aggression.

The United States followed up with another action **designed to limit Soviet power**. In June 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall unveiled a **financial aid plan to assist postwar recovery in Europe**. This plan, known as the Marshall Plan, was warmly received in Western Europe. But the Soviets forbade their Eastern European satellites from participating, recognizing that U.S. aid would undermine Soviet influence. The Marshall Plan eventually provided \$13 billion in aid to Western Europe, helping to promote economic growth and political stability.

The Western allies also announced plans to combine their German occupation zones into a new West German state. Angered by this move, **Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, declared a blockade of the Allied sectors of West Berlin in June 1948**. Berlin was entirely within the Soviet zone, but the city had been divided into Western allied and Soviet sections. **The Berlin blockade cut West Berlin off from all supplies brought in by land. Stalin hoped to starve the city into submission and force the Allies to retract their plans for West Germany.** Instead, the United States organized the Berlin airlift, a massive effort to fly food and other essential goods into Berlin. The plan succeeded, and after a year Stalin lifted the blockade. Soon afterward, **Germany split into two nations**. The Federal Republic of Germany, commonly known as West Germany, was under Western influence. **The German Democratic Republic, known as East Germany, became a Soviet satellite.**





## The Cold War Begins - Placard E - The Times Harden

## **The Cold War Begins – Placard E**

**The Lines Harden** By 1949, the lines of the Cold War were clearly drawn. Europe was divided between the communist East and capitalist West. The two sides **carried out the Cold War through economic policy, diplomatic actions, propaganda, espionage (spying), and secret operations.** Although the superpowers never engaged in a direct shooting war, the threat of violence was always present.

In 1949, the Western allies formed NATO, the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**. This group, which included the United States, Canada, and Western European nations, was **dedicated to mutual defense**. Members **agreed to treat an attack on one country as an attack on all**. Six years later, in 1955, the Soviet Union formed its own defense alliance, the Warsaw Pact, which included the nations of Eastern Europe.

These **mutual defense pacts revealed the rising military tensions between East and West**. They also reflected the **threat posed by nuclear weapons**. The superpowers had become engaged in an expensive and deadly arms race. This competition over weaponry created fears of nuclear war and raised the stakes in the superpower conflict.

The United States and Soviet Union also got involved in a **space race**. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik*, the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth. A few months later, the United States put its own satellite into space. In 1961, the Soviet Union sent the first human into orbit, followed soon after by the first American astronaut. In 1969, the United States landed the first men on the moon. The space race was another costly form of superpower competition, but it also brought important advances in science and technology.

The Cold War continued for more than 40 years. During that time, the superpowers sought to dominate each other and bring less powerful nations over to their side. The United States and the Soviet Union were not the only major players in the Cold War, however. Another important actor was China.