PrepUS History

End Unit – Post WWII America

The Cold War Reading and Questions

**Directions: Read and annotate the following section.**



**Wartime Relationships**

Before the end of World War II, leaders from major Allied countries met to talk about the future. They wanted to talk about what should happen to Europe after the war. The leaders had different ideas about what should happen.

The U.S. president was Franklin Roosevelt. The prime minister of Great Britain was Winston Churchill. They wanted to stop the Soviet Union from getting too strong in Eastern Europe. The Soviet leader was Joseph Stalin. He wanted to control Eastern Europe. The leaders agreed to split Germany up. They split it into four zones. The United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France each took one zone. Stalin agreed to hold free elections in Eastern Europe. He also offered to help plan a new international organization.

President Roosevelt died suddenly in April 1945. Vice President Harry S. Truman became president. Truman helped set up an international organization called the United Nations, or U.N. Fifty nations met for the first time in June 1945. They hoped the U.N. could help prevent wars.

Stalin kept Soviet soldiers in Eastern Europe. He set up communist governments there. Winston Churchill saw that Eastern Europe was cut off from Western Europe. Churchill called this division an **“iron curtain.”** President Truman thought it was important to practice **containment,** in other words, to stop communism from spreading. Truman made a plan to hold back the Soviet Union.

Truman soon used his plan. Communists were trying to take over the Greek government. There was also trouble in Turkey. The Soviet Union was pushing Turkey to give it important navy bases. President Truman asked Congress for money to help Greece and Turkey. This became known as the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine said the United States would fight the spread of communism anywhere in the world.

After World War II, Western Europe had many problems. Homes and buildings had been destroyed. People did not have jobs. They were hungry. People wanted anything that would make their lives better, even communism. The United States gave help. From 1948 to 1951, the U.S. sent $13 billion worth of food, supplies, machinery, and aid to Western Europe. This program was called the Marshall Plan. The United States hoped the aid would keep Western Europe from becoming communist.

**Crisis in Berlin**

Germany was divided into four zones. The three western zones were controlled by the United States, Great Britain, and France. The eastern zone was held by the Soviet Union. Berlin was Germany's capital. It, too, was divided into four zones. Berlin was deep within the Soviet zone.

Truman wanted to reunite the different parts of Germany. Stalin did not want to. He thought this would be a danger to the Soviet Union. The United States, Great Britain, and France said they would unite their three zones. This included their parts of the city of Berlin.

Stalin tried to block this. He put soldiers outside of West Berlin to stop supplies from coming into the city. He thought the Western countries would change their minds.

President Truman wanted to stick to his plan, yet he didn’t want to risk war by taking military action. The United States and Great Britain organized an **airlift.** This means they used airplanes to drop in food, fuel, and other supplies. They bypassed the Soviet soldiers.

**The Cold War Deepens**

Berlin was an early problem in the Cold War. A **cold war** is a war in which the two sides try to frighten each other with their words and weapons, but they do not fight.

Democracies in the West worked together. In 1949, the United States, Canada, and 10 other countries formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. Each country agreed to help another if it was attacked. In response, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact. This included the communist governments in Eastern Europe.

Other parts of the world saw changes. Many countries that had been colonies won their freedom. These included the Philippines, India, Burma, and Pakistan. The U.N. also created the state of Israel. In China, communist forces took over the government. Their leader was Mao Zedong. The United States was afraid that communism was growing even stronger. It seemed that Asia was a strong ally of the Soviet Union.

**A New Red Scare**

During the Cold War Americans feared communist **subversion.** Subversion is an effort to overthrow a government. Americans worried that communists were sneaking into the government.

There were stories in the news about **espionage,** or spying. In 1948 Whittaker Chambers said Alger Hiss had given him secret U.S. documents which Chambers had passed on to the Soviet Union. Hiss was sent to jail for **perjury,** or lying in court. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were members of the Communist Party in America. They were accused of giving the Soviet Union secrets about America's atomic bomb. They were put to death.

Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin hunted for communists in American government. He accused many people of being communists. Often, he did not have any proof. People who were accused lost their jobs. At first, people believed McCarthy. Many people were afraid he could accuse them of being spies. McCarthy's hearings were on television. He accused respected Army officials of being spies. People began to see that McCarthy was wrong. They saw him as a bully. The word **McCarthyism** is used to describe a serious accusation without evidence. Congress **censured,** or publicly criticized, Senator McCarthy.

**Find and highlight each of the following terms in the text along with their definition:**

iron curtain

containment

airlift

cold war

perjury

subversion

espionage

censure

**Answer each of the following questions thoroughly and in complete sentences.**

Which countries controlled the four zones in Germany?

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What was the purpose of the United Nations?

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What do you think Churchill meant by the term *iron curtain*?

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What did the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan work toward?

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Why was the Soviet Union against reuniting Germany?

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What four countries became independent or won their freedom during the Cold War?

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What concerns did the West have about China?

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What claim did McCarthy make against the Army?

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**Directions: Read and annotate the following section.**



**Conflict in Korea**

The Korean Peninsula is in Asia. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union both took control of the country of Korea. They split the country into North Korea and South Korea. They divided Korea along the 38th parallel. A *parallel* is a line of latitude.



North Korea had a communist government. South Korea’s government was not communist. It was supported by the United States. North Korea and South Korea did not get along well.

North Korea wanted to unite the country again. In 1950, the North Korean army invaded and took control of most of South Korea. South Korea controlled only a small area around a port city, Pusan.

President Truman thought the Soviet Union had backed the attack. He wanted to help South Korea without declaring war. He took some steps:

1. Truman sent American forces to Korea.

2. Then he asked the U.N. to take action.

3. The U.N. told North Korea to remove its army.

4. North Korea did not.

5. The U.N. agreed to send soldiers.

Most of these U.N. soldiers were led by General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur was an American general. Americans liked him for his bravery during World War II.

The U.N. and U.S. forces had a good start. They pushed the North Koreans back into their own country. Then MacArthur wanted to invade North Korea. He told President Truman that neither China nor the Soviet Union would enter the war. He told the president that the war would not take long. He promised that the soldiers would be "home by Christmas." This was in September.

When U.N. forces invaded North Korea, they got very far North. They got close to the Chinese border. The Chinese saw this as a threat to their own country. They sent hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers to fight in North Korea. China had indeed become involved in the war.

The Chinese soldiers pushed the U.N. forces back into South Korea. The Chinese soldiers captured South Korea’s capital city, Seoul.

**American Leadership Splits**

U.N. soldiers captured Seoul again. They then managed to push communist forces back into North Korea. There was much fighting at the 38th parallel. For a long time, neither side advanced too far. This is known as a **stalemate.** The stalemate went on for almost two years.

President Truman and General MacArthur disagreed about what to do in this war. MacArthur wanted to drop atomic bombs on China. He thought bombing supply lines and bases would bring victory. Truman did not want to drop bombs. He thought this would make the war worse.

MacArthur criticized the president. He wrote a letter to a member of Congress. He said in the letter that he was being stopped from doing his job.

The president could not allow his general to disobey an order. Truman concluded, or decided, to fire General MacArthur because of his disobedience.

The American public protested Truman's decision. They liked MacArthur. After he was fired, MacArthur did not simply leave. He was greeted as a hero in the United States. He made a speech to Congress. "Old soldiers never die," he said. "They just fade away."

In July 1951, peace talks began that would end the Korean War. The fighting finally ended in 1953. Truman's term as president had ended. Dwight Eisenhower then became president.

The agreement to end the war set up a **Demilitarized Zone** between North Korea and South Korea. This is a place where no military forces are allowed.

There was no clear winner in the war. The borders had hardly changed. More than 36,000 Americans had been killed. The total number of wounded was 103,000. Two million Koreans and Chinese had been killed.

The United States had shown the Soviet Union that it would use force to stop communism. That is the main purpose for which the Korean war was fought.

**Find and highlight each of the following terms in the text along with their definition:**

stalemate Demilitarized Zone

**Answer each of the following questions thoroughly and in complete sentences.**

Who invaded first? Whom did they invade?

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Why did President Truman and the U.N. send troops to Korea?

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How did dividing Korea into two countries after World War II lead to conflict? Give two reasons.

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Was MacArthur able to keep his promises to Truman? Explain.

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Why did President Truman fire General MacArthur?

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Do you think Truman was right to fire MacArthur? Explain.

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How did the United States work with the U.N. to achieve its goals in Korea?

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