



**Social Studies Virtual Learning**

**U.S. History**

**Lesson 16**

**April 13, 2020**

# US History:

Lesson #16: April 13

## **Containment Policy and the Truman Doctrine**

Learning Target: The student will evaluate the US Containment Policy of communism and the Truman Doctrine.

# Warm Up

What is the purpose of a container?

Examine the container shown here. What is its function?

What would happen to the orange juice if this container fell off of a table and shattered on the floor?

After World War II, US foreign policy applied what was called the 'Containment Theory.' What did the US want to keep 'inside the container?' and what could result if this element was allowed to spread outside of the boundaries of the container?



# Lesson Activity

Click on the link here and watch the video about the US policy that became known as the Containment of Communism. Think about how this policy is linked to the post-World War II Cold War conflict between the USA (capitalists) and the Soviet Union (communists).

US Containment of Communism (1:51)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPOMS3IAviM>

Write down the following questions and answers for this lesson on a piece of paper titled Lesson #16 April 13 Containment Policy and the Truman Doctrine.

1. There is a cause-effect relationship here connected to the US Containment policy. What is the 'cause' mentioned in the video clip that led to the American policy to contain communism?

## New Foreign Policies



The conflicting U.S. and Soviet aims in Eastern Europe led to the Cold War. This was a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in which neither nation directly confronted the other on the battlefield. The Cold War would dominate global affairs—and U.S. foreign policy—from 1945 until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

### United States Establishes a Policy of Containment

Faced with the Soviet threat, American officials decided it was time, in Truman's words, to stop "babying the Soviets." This changed stance toward the Soviet Union required the development of a new foreign policy. In February 1946 George F. Kennan, an American diplomat in Moscow, proposed a policy he called containment. By containment, he meant taking measures to prevent any extension of Communist rule to other countries. In Kennan's plan, such measures would mostly include diplomatic outreach and financial assistance to countries to help them resist Soviet influence.

## Lesson Activity

Read the information here on President Truman's new policy of dealing with communism known as 'Containment.'

Under the containment policy, assistance generally first went to countries near existing Communist states, where Communist influence was likely to be strongest. As a result, Western Europe was the first region to receive U.S. aid. This was a result of fears that communism would creep into the area from Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Billions of dollars in loans and material assistance flowed across the Atlantic into Western Europe.

As time passed, however, the containment policy came to depend more on military intervention than on purely financial assistance. When the Soviet Union also began sending aid to its allies and exerting influence in various parts of the world, the United States reacted. American troops and funds went to Asia, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere in hopes of keeping communism in check.

# Lesson Activity

Read the text section here along with the quote from President Truman and answer the questions that follow on your paper.

The idea of containment began to guide the Truman administration's foreign policy. Naturally, this placed the United States directly in opposition to the Soviet Union on the world stage. Several times over the next few decades, the United States intervened in conflicts around the globe in support of those who sought to keep Communists out of their homelands. In addition, the country would pour billions of dollars of economic aid into building up and supporting democratic governments. All of these efforts were focused on stopping the advance of communism.

"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes. . . .

Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence. . . ."

—Harry S. Truman

from a speech to a joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947

2. President Truman discusses providing economic aid to support free peoples. Why does he believe the collapse of free institutions and independence would be disastrous?

- A) because Truman says, "the Soviets would have the upper hand."
- B) because the discouragement or failure of democracy would quickly spread and threaten neighboring democracies.
- C) because Truman believes the Soviets may offer more money.
- D) because Truman says, "this could threaten our independence."

# Lesson Activity

Read the text section here titled  
Efforts to Rebuild Europe and  
answer the questions that follow.

## Efforts to Rebuild Europe



Truman's new containment policy was tested almost immediately in Europe. The heavy destruction caused by World War II had left much of the continent in financial ruin. Economic devastation led to political instability and talk of revolution in some countries. Truman and his advisers feared that these circumstances could lead to increased Soviet influence and the establishment of new Communist regimes.

### The Truman Doctrine

The United States first tried to contain Soviet influence in Greece and Turkey. For years, Britain had been financially supporting both nations' resistance to growing Communist influence in the region. However, Britain's economy had been badly hurt by the war. The formerly wealthy nation could no longer afford to give aid. It asked the United States to take over the responsibility.

President Truman accepted the challenge. On March 12, 1947, Truman asked Congress for \$400 million in economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey. In his statement, he expressed what became known as the Truman Doctrine. He declared that the United States would be supporting people around the world who were fighting against outside forces trying to take over their governments. Congress agreed with Truman. It decided that the doctrine was essential to keep Soviet political and economic influence from spreading. Between 1947 and 1950, the United States sent \$400 million in aid to Turkey and Greece. This greatly reduced the danger of Communist subjugation in those nations.

# Assignment

Add the following questions and answers on your paper titled: Lesson #16 April 13 - Containment Policy and the Truman Doctrine

3. According to the video clip, what is the main purpose of the Truman Doctrine?
4. Explain why Western European nations were the first to receive aid from the US. -
5. Which specific countries were the first to receive economic and military aid from the US?
6. How would you evaluate the goals of the containment of communism and the Truman Doctrine? Explain your opinion on these ideas - were they important? How might the world be different without US commitment to them?



# Reflection

Thinking Exercise:

After completing this lesson  
reflect on the questions posed  
here.

- How many examples of containers can you think of in our society?
- Where does the US draw the line regarding containment? Are we making a commitment to go to war anytime communism threatens to spread somewhere in the world?

# Additional Resources

Check out these links for more information on this topic

- How the Truman Doctrine Established the Cold War (4:51)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jb8aW46T3bg>
- Containment in the Cold War (7:17)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsodjQyi-7Y&t=31s>

# Answers

1. There is a cause-effect relationship here connected to the US Containment policy. What is the 'cause' mentioned in the video clip that led to the American policy to contain communism? The Soviets occupied several nations of Eastern Europe after WWII and established communist control there.
2. President Truman discusses providing economic aid to support free peoples. Why does he believe the collapse of free institutions and independence would be disastrous? B
3. According to the video clip, what is the main purpose of the Truman Doctrine? Its purpose is to provide financial aid to those countries fighting against communism.
4. Explain why Western European nations were the first to receive aid from the US - These nations were closest to Soviet influence in the neighboring Eastern European nations.
5. Which countries were the first to receive economic and military aid from the US? Greece and Turkey were the first to receive aid under the Truman Doctrine in 1947.
6. How would you evaluate the goals of the containment of communism and the Truman Doctrine? Explain your opinion on these ideas - were they important? How might the world be different without US commitment to them? Answers vary