

Lesson 3

Focus Question Three

Post World War II

At the end of World War II, the United States and Soviet Union became the world's dominant powers with a distrust and view of each other as hostile.

- ▶ After learning that the United States had atomic bombs and how destructive those bombs could be, Stalin felt an urgent need to strengthen Soviet military power.
- ▶ Discussions in the United Nations between the United States and Soviet Union tended to be harsh and belligerent.
- ▶ Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain Speech" in Fulton, Missouri, made it very clear that there was a major conflict between western democracies and the Soviet Union.

The United States took strong measures to contain the spread of communism: the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

- ▶ **The Truman Doctrine** was applied to Greece and Turkey. At the end of World War II, Greece was devastated and in a state of civil war. British occupation forces tried to maintain peace, but it was difficult. Local communists tried to take control of the country with help from nearby communist countries. The United States responded in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine, which provided economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey, nations that were threatened by communist insurgents.
- ▶ **The Marshall Plan** was designed to prevent the spread of communism in Europe. The Truman administration in 1947 adopted the Marshall Plan—a European Recovery Program supported by massive U.S. foreign aid. The Soviet Union refused to let nations under its control participate in aid from the Marshall Plan.

Germany became a hot spot: It was divided into two nations, the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin, and the allies responded with an airlift

- ▶ The Berlin Blockade was constructed by the Soviets in 1948. The Soviet Union was alarmed and closed off roads.
 - ▶ The **Berlin Airlift** was a response to the Berlin Blockade. The Truman administration responded with the Berlin Airlift. The Soviet Union could have responded in many ways. It could have gone to war, for example. Instead, it chose to permit the airlift to take place, and finally in May of 1949, eleven months after the Berlin blockade had begun, the Soviet Union decided to permit traffic to resume to the city.
 - ▶ Germany becomes a divided nation.
1. The allies (U.S.A., U.K., and France) decided to strengthen Germany in order to contain Soviet expansion. They set up a single currency (the Deutsche Mark) for the three zones they controlled, began rebuilding the country, and formally established the Federal Republic of Germany.
 2. The Soviet Union, which was invaded by Germany in both world wars with immense casualties, feared a strong Germany, dismantled German factories in its zone, took the machinery back to the Soviet Union to strengthen itself, and established a pro-Soviet state in its zone, which it called the German Democratic Republic.