

THE STRUGGLE OF THE COLD WAR BEGINS

Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War Two, came to America after the war to warn of the new threat posed by the Soviet Union. His 1946 speech, condensed here, is famous for coining the term “the iron curtain.”

Winston Churchill’s Warning

The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle [peak] of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American democracy. For with this primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future.

The awful ruin of Europe, with all its vanished glories, and of large parts of Asia glares us in the eyes. Our supreme task and duty is to guard the homes of the common



people from the horrors and miseries of another war. We are all agreed on that.

Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future. It is my duty, however, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.

Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe: Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia.

All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form and another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and in some cases increasing

measure of control from Moscow.

The Communist parties have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers, and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control.



In a great number of countries throughout the world, Communist fifth columns [secret agents] are established, and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to directions they receive from the Communist center.

I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines.

But what we have to consider here today, while time remains, is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries.

Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens, nor will they be removed by a policy of appeasement.

If the Western Democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering those principles will be immense and no one is likely to molest them. If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty, then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all.

Group Discussion: *What does Churchill warn is happening in Europe? What does Churchill say Russia and its communist leaders want to accomplish? What does he want the non-communist countries to do?*

In 1947 President Harry S. Truman urged the U.S. to take an active stand on the side of any nation that asked for help resisting communist take-over attempts. His speech before Congress, condensed here, declared "The Truman Doctrine."

The Truman Doctrine

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion [force]. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan.

Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members.



We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes [governments].

This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

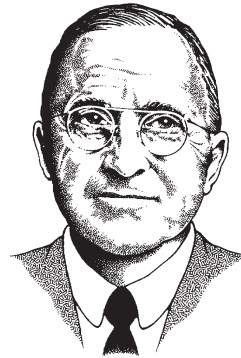
At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life.

One way of life is based upon 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 a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression [elimination] of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation [take-over] 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.



The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world – and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Group Discussion: *Why does President Truman believe it is important for the U.S. to help other nations that are threatened by communism? What conditions does he say promote the growth of communism and other totalitarian government systems?*