The Development of the Cold War

- With this increased tension, Truman released a foreign policy called the “Truman Doctrine” – this effectively tried to prevent any spread of communism in a policy of containment.
- He introduced it because he believed that the USSR was trying to increase its sphere of influence. Truman also had the atomic bomb, so they had the ability to enforce it with threats.
- With this policy, the Greeks were able to defeat the communist party in their civil war, and US-Soviet relations worsened because of their differing ideologies – Stalin set up Cominform in 1947.
- Furthermore, the US became far more involved with European affairs, and decided to set up the Marshall Plan, which offered economic aid to any European country.
- He did this almost as an alternative to communism, allowing the countries to repair infrastructure and recover from WWII without resorting to extreme ideologies.
- By 1953, the USA provided $17 billion through the Marshall Plan, but Stalin prevented any Eastern European countries from receiving it for fear of losing his influence.
- Truman’s reason for introducing the Marshall Plan could have also been in the US’s interest, because it meant that they had a degree of leverage over the Western European countries.
- Stalin set up Cominform in 1947 to allow the USSR to coordinate communist parties throughout Eastern Europe, following Soviet aims in foreign policy and introduced economic policies similar to that of the USSR.
- He used this to purge any members of Cominform who disagreed with Moscow (e.g. Tito in Yugoslavia).
- He also founded Comecon in 1949 (the Council for Mutual Assistance), as a response to Marshall Aid – it was designed to help Eastern Europe financially, but in reality it controlled the economies of the Eastern European states, and gave the USSR access to each country’s resources, encouraging specialisation.
- Berlin was divided into 4 zones as a result of the Tehran and Yalta conferences, but the US and British zones merged in 1948.
- The USSR blockaded Berlin from 24th June 1948, as representatives walked out of the Allied Control Commission, with Stalin accusing the US of interfering in Soviet affairs.
- He cut off access to infrastructure to try and starve West Berlin – he worried that the East was starting to prefer the capitalist way of life that was clearly visible in the centre of communist territory.
- Planes flew in from the west supplying 4600 tonnes of supplies every day – this was testing the policy of containment, with planes landing at 90 second intervals.
- As a result, Truman ordered B-29 bombers armed with atomic bombs in range of the USSR in the UK – the airlift lasted for 10 months (318 days), ending on 12th May 1949 when Stalin realised that he could not starve West Berlin out.
- Germany was subsequently divided into two zones with different currencies – the Federal Republic of Germany (W) and the German Democratic Republic (E).
- Western Europe needed constant help from the USA to prevent the USSR from expanding, so in April 1949 NATO was formed to unite countries of the west.