



## The Cold War

### PRIMARY SOURCE READING

#### *New Foreign Policy*

*On March 12, 1947, President Harry Truman stood before Congress and delivered a speech in which he detailed his plan for holding back the spread of communism. To illustrate the threat of communism, he used the example of Greece, a country whose government was in serious peril. Great Britain had been providing aid to the Greek government against communist guerrillas that were reportedly being supported by the Soviets. But Britain was removing its troops, and President Truman wanted the United States to take over where Britain left off.*

#### *Truman Doctrine*

##### **Terrorists Threaten State**

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the Government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A commission appointed by the United Nations Security Council is at present investigating disturbed conditions in Northern Greece and alleged border violations along the frontiers between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek Army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority to the Government throughout the Greek territory.

Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy. The United States must supply this assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate. There is no other country

to which democratic Greece can turn. No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek Government.

##### **Our Basic Foreign Policy**

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 on them totalitarian regimes. 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.

##### **Choice Facing Every Nation**

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

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 of personal freedoms.

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.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to

maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the charter of the United Nations.

From "Text of President Truman's Speech on New Foreign Policy." *The New York Times*, March 13, 1947.

**■ UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ** After you have finished reading the selection, answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. According to the Truman Doctrine, what is the purpose of the United Nations?  
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2. What are the two primary ways of life that Truman identifies?  
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3. What is the "Choice Facing Every Nation"?  
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4. What do you think Truman meant when he said that the world was not static and the status quo was not sacred?  
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5. What do you think was the primary fear underlying this message to Congress?  
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### ACTIVITY

Imagine that you have just heard the president's speech to Congress, and now you must report on it for a radio station. Make notes on the ideas presented in the Truman Doctrine, and then write a brief newscast delivering the highlights of the speech. Be discriminating about the information and incorporate some quotes.