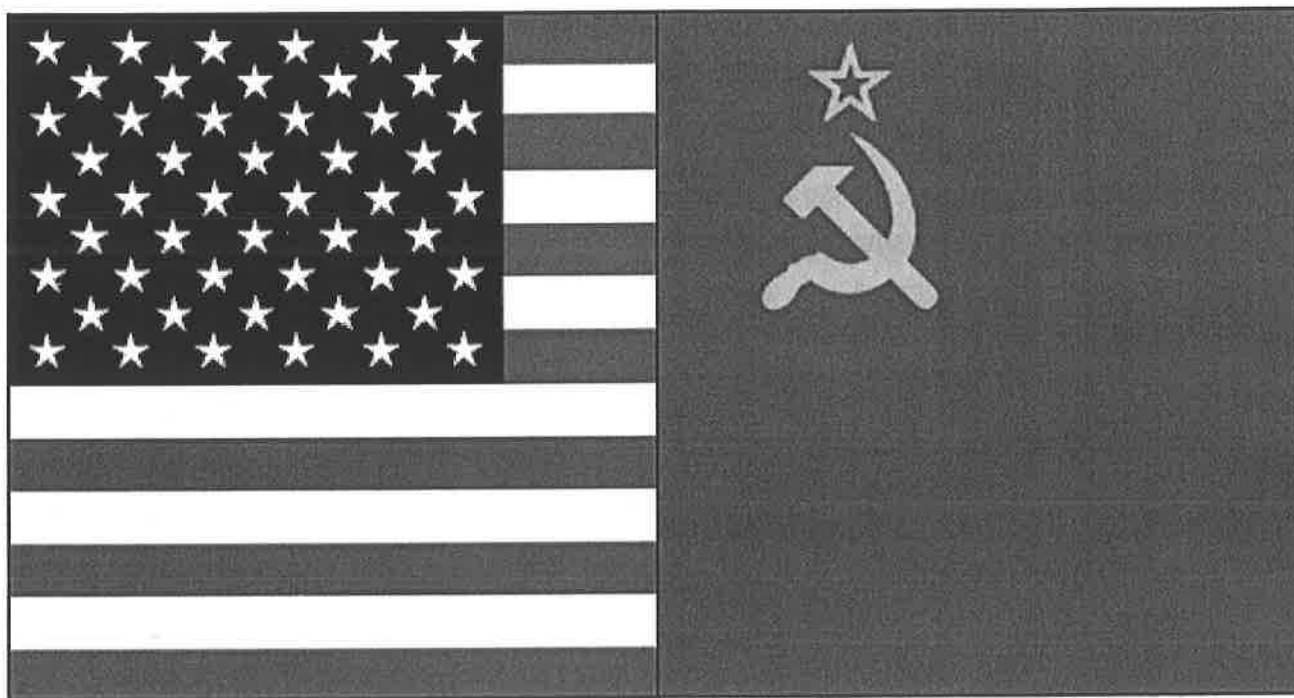

The Geography of the Cold War: What Was Containment?

EV



Overview: From the end of World War II in 1945 until 1991, the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a battle of nerves called the Cold War. Throughout almost all of this period the United States was guided by a foreign policy called ‘containment.’ This Mini-Q asks you to express your understanding of containment using mostly maps as your sources.

The Documents:

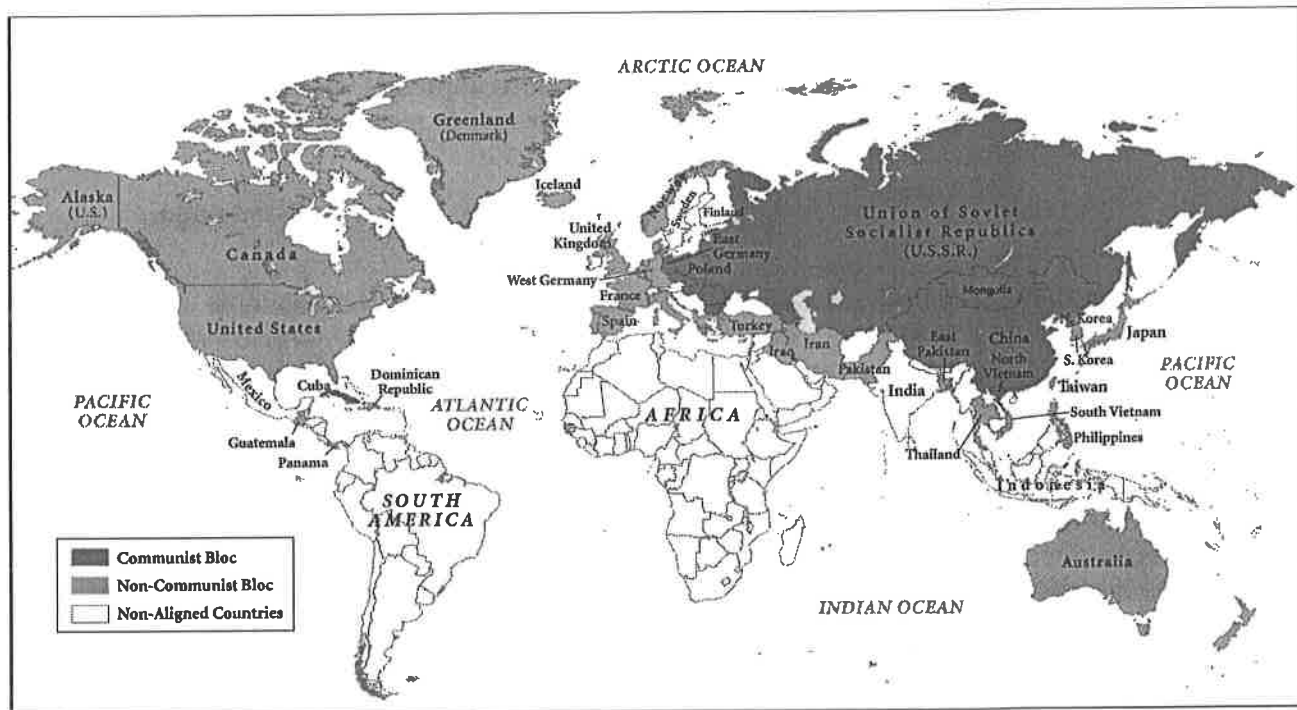
- Document A: The Long Telegram
- Document B: The Berlin Blockade and Airlift (map)
- Document C: The Korean War (map)
- Document D: The Cuban Missile Crisis (map)

A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

Hook Exercise: Containment

Directions: After World War II, most of the countries in the northern part of the world divided themselves into two large groups or blocs. One bloc was communist and was dominated by Russia, the largest republic in the huge country called the Soviet Union. The other bloc was largely democratic and was led by the United States. Examine the map below and answer the questions that follow.

Map: Two Worlds
Circa 1960



Questions

1. Including the Soviet Union, list two European countries in the communist bloc.
2. Excluding the Soviet Union, list the Asian countries in the communist bloc.
3. List five North American and European countries in the non-communist bloc.
4. List three Asian countries in the non-communist bloc.
5. With a partner, discuss why looking at this map would make both a Russian and American of 1960 very nervous. Write down your ideas.

Russian fears

American fears

The Geography of the Cold War: What Was Containment?

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It was a glorious meeting. On April 25, 1945, at the Elbe River in Germany, two powerful armies met. Coming from opposite ends of Europe, the Americans and Russians had cut Hitler's Germany in two. Now at the Elbe, soldiers from the Red Army of the Soviet Union reached out their hands to their American counterparts. It was a time for great happiness. World War II, the deadliest war in all of human history, was nearly over.

Unfortunately, the warmth of the handshakes did not last. The Soviet Union and the United States had serious differences. Their greatest difference was over a political and economic system called **communism**.

In its pure form, communism is a belief that private property should be replaced by community ownership. In the Soviet Union this idea was not easily accepted by the people. Russian leaders Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin were ruthless in their elimination of those who had different ideas about Russia's future. It is estimated that in the 1930s, Stalin was responsible for killing more than 10,000,000 Soviet people who he believed were in his way.

Soviet communists did not like **capitalism**. They opposed private ownership economies of the United States and its allies. Russian leaders believed that capitalism was doomed and that communism would spread throughout the world. This caused great tension and the emergence of a new kind of war, a **Cold War**. Mistrust ran deep. In the words of Winston Churchill, it was as if an "**iron curtain**" had been drawn between the Soviet-con-

trolled countries in Eastern Europe and the Western democracies.

The Soviets had suffered terribly in World War II, losing more than 27,000,000 soldiers and civilians. Stalin was determined that Germany would never be able to strike Russia again. To protect Russia, Stalin wanted a buffer zone in Eastern Europe, but he wanted more. It was no secret that Stalin and his successors wanted to expand the Soviet Empire.

If the Soviet policy was expansion, then the American policy was **containment**. Containment was the idea that the Soviet Union and Soviet communism should not be allowed to spread. One example of containment was the **Truman Doctrine**. In 1947, President Harry Truman declared that the United States would support "free peoples," like those in Greece and Turkey, who were being threatened by communists. The Truman Doctrine was followed by the **Marshall Plan**, which gave over 12 billion dollars in aid to help rebuild European democracies like France and West Germany. The idea was to give these countries resources so that communist ideas would not be so attractive.

By 1947 the United States and the Soviet Union were clearly on a collision course. Stalin and his successors were always looking for weak spots to push and probe, to test American commitment to containment. This Mini-Q features three occasions where the Soviets tested American containment policy. Your task is to examine the maps, then answer the question, *The geography of the Cold War: what was containment?*

Background Essay Questions

1. What happened at the Elbe River in April 1945?
2. The Soviet Union and the United States believed in two very different economic systems. What were the names of each?
3. The Soviet Union had a total of two leaders between the early 1920s and the early 1950s. What were their names?
4. Why did Stalin want control of Eastern Europe after WW II?
5. Define each of the following:

communism

capitalism

Cold War

Iron Curtain

containment

Truman Doctrine

Marshall Plan

1945 – World War II ends

1946 – Winston Churchill delivers “Iron Curtain” speech in Fulton, Missouri

1947 – Jackie Robinson signs with the Brooklyn Dodgers

1948 – Congress approves the Marshall Plan

1948-49 – Berlin Airlift

1950-53 – Korean War

1955 – US stockpile of atomic bombs estimated at 4000; Soviets have 1000

1962 – Cuban Missile Crisis

Document A

Source: "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" by X, *Foreign Affairs*, April 1947.

Note: This is a short passage from an 8,000-word telegram that was secretly sent to US State Department officials on February 22, 1946. X turned out to be George Kennan, an American Foreign Service officer stationed in Moscow. Earlier in the "long telegram," Kennan makes two main points:

1. Stalin and the Soviets believe that communism is better than capitalism.
2. Stalin and the Soviets believe they will win.

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In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.

Document Analysis

1. When was this document first telegraphed to American officials in Washington? Was this before, during, or after World War II?
2. Who was X?
3. Looking at the Note, what were the two points X wants American policy makers to remember about the Soviet Union?
4. What would historians probably agree is the most important single word in the document passage?
5. What do you think X would say to an American president who wanted to invade the Soviet Union? What is your evidence?
6. What is the meaning of containment?

Document B

Source: Map created from various sources.

1. At the end of WW II, Germany was occupied by four major powers. The western three zones unified and became West Germany. East Germany was communist, but the old capital of Berlin was divided up between the four powers.

2. On June 27, 1948, Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union decided to blockade any shipments (including food) coming into West Berlin.

3. West Berlin was completely surrounded by communism and may have had to surrender if it had not been for the US and its allies.

4. America and its allies decide to support the West Berliners by air, flying in supplies for the over two million people for nearly a year. Everything from food to coal was provided. It was a stunning turn of events given that Americans had just three years earlier been fighting Hitler and the Germans.

5. On May 12, 1949, Stalin removed the blockade. Harry Truman and the nation were thrilled.

Legend:
 West Germany
 East Germany
 Airlift Routes
 Soviet Blockade
 Airfields

Map Labels: NETH., BELG., LUX., French zone, American zone, British zone, Soviet zone, Hamburg, Hanover, Frankfurt, Berlin, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA, EAST BERLIN, WEST BERLIN, French Tegel Airfield, British Gatow Airfield, American Tempelhof Airfield, Soviet

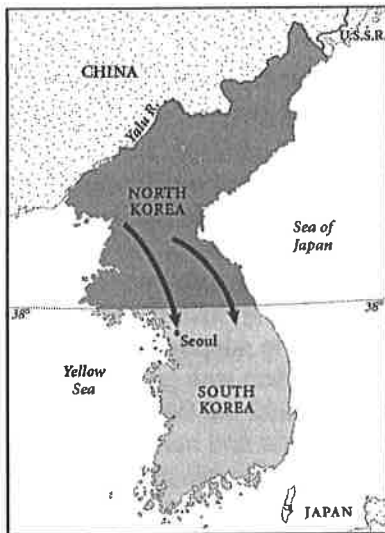
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Document Analysis

1. "In 1948, western Berlin was a pro-American island in a Soviet sea." Explain.
2. What did the Soviets do between June 27, 1948, and May 12, 1949?
3. Why do you suppose the Soviets did what they did?
4. How did Britain, the United States, and France respond to the June 27th action?
5. How does this document demonstrate the American policy of containment?

Document C

Source: Map created from various sources.



June 25, 1950

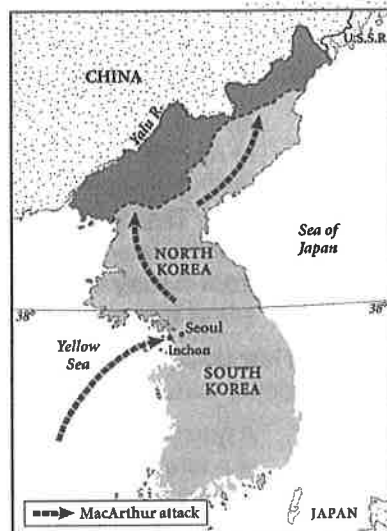
1 Communist North Korea (supported by the Soviet Union) invades US-supported South Korea. The attack comes without warning and President Harry Truman, with the help of the United Nations, vows to defend democratic South Korea.



September 14, 1950

2 American forces occupying Japan after WWII are sent to defend South Korea. The US and United Nations forces are nearly pushed off the Korean peninsula. The American commander is General Douglass MacArthur.

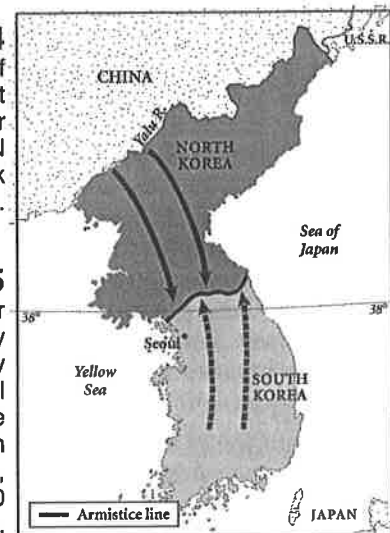
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November 25, 1950

3 MacArthur stages a risky, yet successful counterattack at the port of Inchon. North Korean forces are routed and pushed back all the way to the Yalu River, the border of North Korea and communist China.

4 In November of 1950, communist China enters the war and pushes the UN and US forces back into South Korea.



July 27, 1953

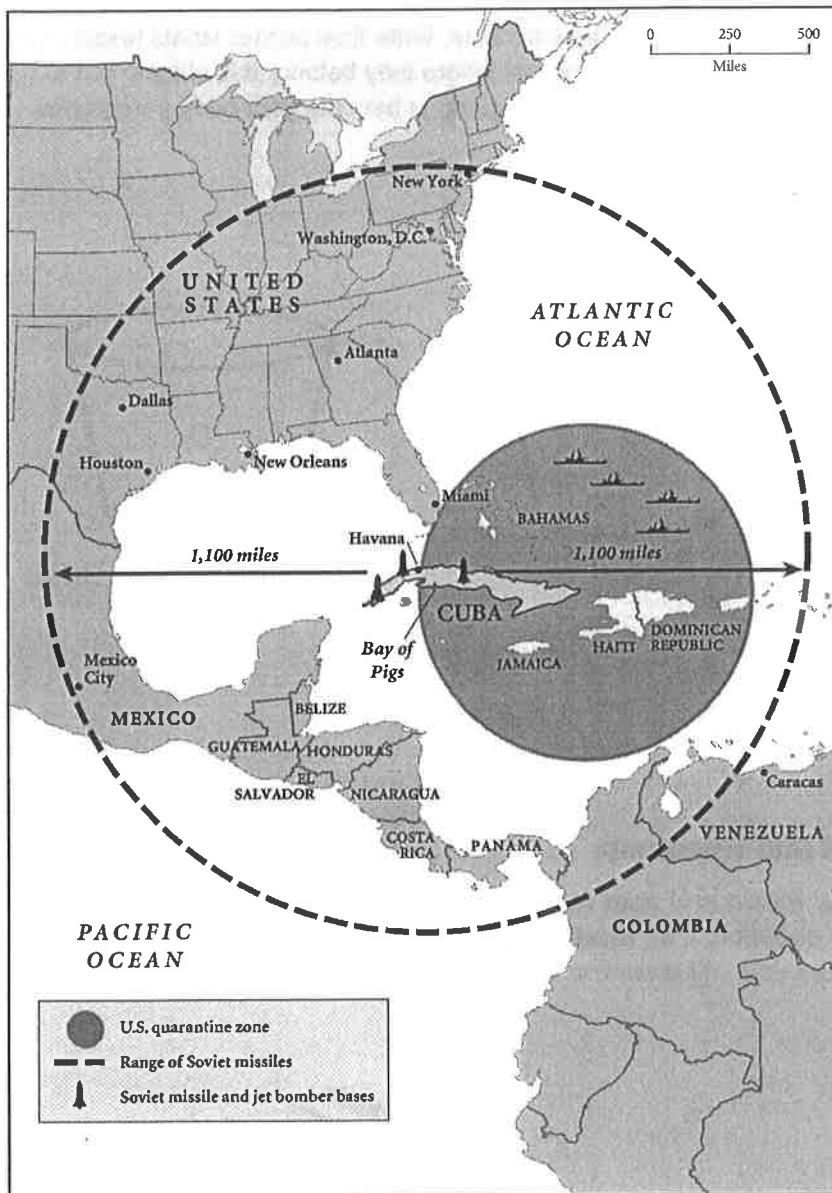
5 The war drags on for several years, finally ending in 1953 very close to the original 1950 borders. The war caused more than two million deaths, including over 50,000 Americans.

Document Analysis

1. On what date did North Korea first invade South Korea?
2. Who supported North Korea? Who supported South Korea?
3. North Korea only invaded when the Russian leader Stalin gave his approval. From what you know about Stalin, what was his motive?
4. Why might Communist China have decided to help North Korea?
5. How does this document demonstrate the American policy of containment?

Document D

Source: Map created from various sources.



Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline

January 1959: Cuba becomes communist under Fidel Castro.

April 1961: Bay of Pigs invasion with US support fails. Castro remains in power.

May 1962: Soviets secretly begin shipping 40,000 troops, 60 missiles and 158 nuclear warheads to communist Cuba.

October 15, 1962: US spy planes find evidence of medium range nuclear missile sites being rapidly installed in Cuba.

October 23: US announces a quarantine against ships carrying offensive weapons to Cuba.

Oct. 24: Numerous Soviet transport ships stop dead in water just outside the quarantine line.

Oct 25: Soviet SS-4 nuclear missiles become operational.

Oct. 28: Soviets begin to remove missiles, crisis is avoided.

April 1963: In a quiet agreement with Soviets, US removes missiles from Turkey.

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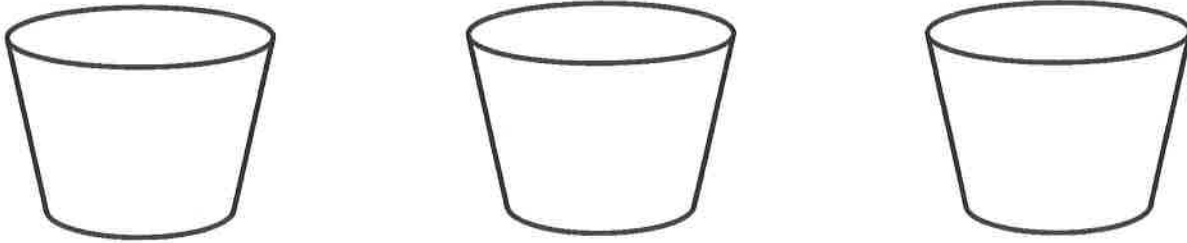
Document Analysis

1. What was the date of Fidel Castro's communist takeover in Cuba?
2. What is a quarantine? (Note: The Soviets had to look the word up.)
3. Using only information from the map, tell the Cuban Missile Crisis story.
4. How does United States action in Cuba demonstrate the policy of containment?

Bucketing – Getting Ready to Write

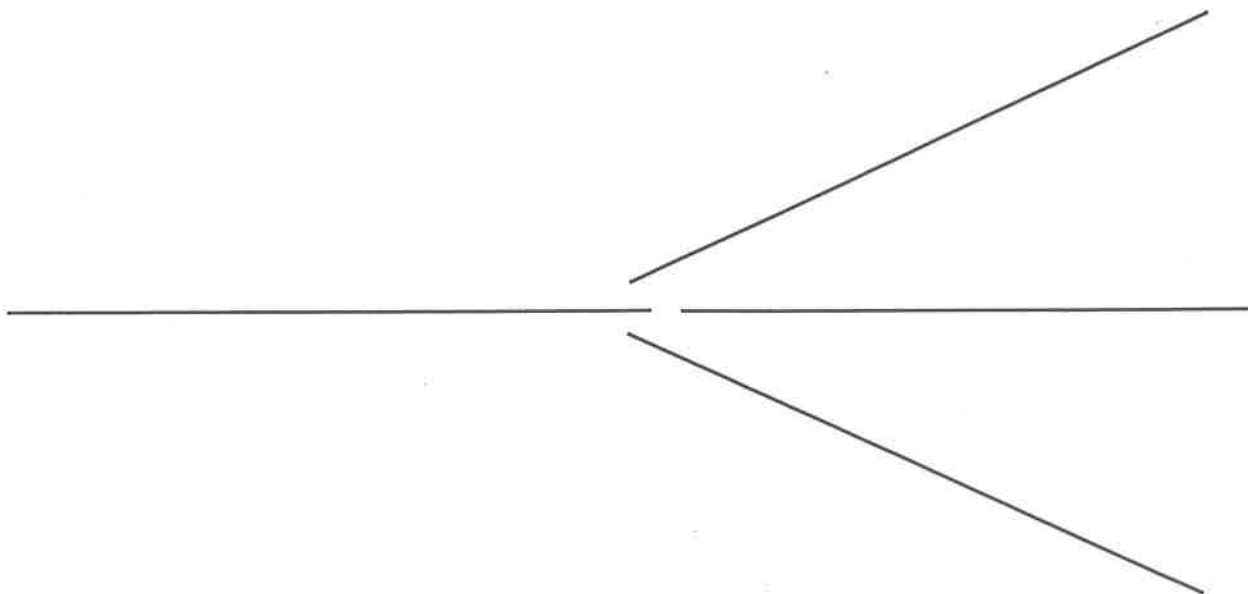
Bucketing

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.



Thesis Development and Roadmap

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your roadmap. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The roadmap is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.



Mini-Q Sample Essay

Geography of the Cold War: What Was Containment?

When my grandfather was a small boy growing up in Milwaukee in the late 1940s he always ended his bedtime prayers with "Amen. And I hope the Russians don't attack."

For a young boy, and for most Americans, these were scary times. After World II ended, the Soviet Union and the United States found themselves facing off in a new conflict called the Cold War. On the one side was dictatorship, communism, and limited freedoms. On the other side was democracy, capitalism, and freedom of expression. The Soviets were committed to expanding communist ideas and Soviet power. But what should the United States do? One answer came from an American Foreign Service officer working in Moscow named George Kennan. Kennan wrote that the best response to the Russians was "a long-term, patient but vigilant containment." (Doc A) But what exactly did that mean? What would containment look like in action? Three examples of containment help tell the story: the Berlin airlift, the Korean War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Berlin airlift began in June 27, 1948, and lasted until May 12, 1949. The Soviets under their leader Joseph Stalin had decided to shut off all land routes connecting western Berlin with the democratic countries to the west. (Doc B, map) Stalin seemed to be scaring England, France, and the United States so that they would abandon western Berlin and leave that part of the city to the communists. It appeared to be an act of expansion. So, following George Kennan's advice in his famous telegram, the West responded by patiently airlifting all food, clothing, coal and other goods to keep the western Berliners alive and well for nearly one year. They flew in about 270,000 plane loads of supplies. (Doc B) It was an excellent example of containment because the airlift kept communism from spreading into western Berlin.

Unfortunately, a second example of containment was a lot more violent. After World War II, Korea was divided into two parts, a communist North assisted by the Soviet Union, and a non-communist South assisted by the United States. In the summer of 1950, communist North Korea attacked South Korea. (Doc C) The United States decided to enter the war. It was not easy, and hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Koreans, died. The maps tell the story of how the South Koreans were almost pushed off the peninsula, then how the Americans under General MacArthur helped push the North Koreans back to the Chinese border, then how the Chinese communist army joined the North Koreans and pushed the Americans and the South Koreans back to the 38th parallel. In the end it looked like a draw, but in fact it was a successful case of containment. The United States and South Korea along with United Nations soldiers had held the original line at the 38th parallel. Communism was again contained.

A third example of containment was the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1959, Cuba under Fidel Castro carried out a successful revolution and set up a communist government. Three years later the Soviet Union began to secretly install medium range missiles on the island which were capable of striking the east coast of the United States. US spy planes discovered the missile sites and eight days later the US announced a blockade of the island. (Doc D) It was a very tense time. At the last minute the Russian leaders decided not to send their ships through the quarantine line and war was avoided. Five days later on October 28, 1962 the Russians began to remove their missiles from Cuba. Like Berlin and Korea, this was another case where the United States stood firm against the expansion of Soviet power and kept it contained.

The years of the Cold War were filled with tension. Each side knew the other had nuclear bombs. A mistake by either side could bring a nuclear disaster. Containment was a smart policy for America to follow. The idea was not to go after the Soviets with guns blazing, but patiently to hold back the Soviet Union and wait for the day when it might fall apart all by itself. In fact, this is what happened.

From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Working Title

Paragraph #1

Grabber

Background

Stating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and roadmap

Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: supporting detail from documents with document citation

Argument: connecting evidence to the thesis

Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #4

Baby Thesis for bucket three

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #5

Conclusion: Restatement of main idea along with possible insight or wrinkle

EV

Student Mini-Q Lined Paper

Lined writing area consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

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