

The two world wars have shown that the United States cannot distance itself from European nations that share our economic system and political values. As the largest and most powerful Western nation, we have no choice but to defend our partners in the free world. The defeat of Germany and Japan does not bring our international responsibilities to a close. On the contrary, the United States must not retreat to the head-in-the-sand isolationism that followed World War I. In an age of atomic weapons, there is no place to hide from international aggression. Like it or not, international relations in the post-war world will be dominated by a struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. In many respects, Soviet communism presents a greater threat than that posed by Nazi Germany. Soviet leaders are convinced of their mission to extend communism throughout the globe. Not only do the Soviets reject our principles of democracy and freedom, but they believe that conflict between the capitalist nations and themselves is inevitable. The threat posed by this ideologically inspired aggressive state is unique in modern history, and the future of Western civilization hangs in the balance.

The United States cannot turn its back on the threat of Soviet expansion. Western Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and Japan are too important to U.S. national interests to leave them vulnerable to Soviet aggression. By working with other free nations we can construct a strong barrier that will contain further Soviet expansion. Foreign aid can nourish democratic institutions and undercut the appeal of the communists in France, Italy, Greece, and other countries suffering from economic and political unrest. War with the Soviet Union is avoidable if we possess the will to stand up to Soviet military aggression. Our possession of the atomic bomb, a firm commitment to strengthening our armed forces, and our control of the oceans can be used to limit Soviet military actions. Fenced in by the power of the free world, Soviet communism will eventually wither and die, making room for a new generation of democratic leaders. Communism thrives only in conditions of misery, want, and strife. The United States and its allies must be vigilant in their efforts to contain its spread.



Charles C. Werner in *The Indianapolis Star*, 1949

*But what part shall the meek inherit?*

### FROM THE HISTORICAL RECORD

*Excerpts from a telegram sent by George Kennan from the U.S. Moscow embassy to the State Department, February 22, 1946*

"USSR still lives in antagonistic 'capitalistic encirclement' with which in the long run there can be no permanent peaceful coexistence.... [They believe that the] capitalist world is beset with internal conflicts, inherent in the nature of capitalist society.... Internal conflicts of capitalism inevitably generate wars... Everything must be done to advance relative strength of USSR... no opportunity must be missed to reduce

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strength and influence, collectively as well as individually, of capitalist powers.... At bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity.... Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic nor adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw – and usually does – when strong resistance is encountered at any point....

“We must see that our public is educated to realities of Russian situation.... Much depends upon health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue.... We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at least, are tired and frightened by experiences of past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will.... We must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. The greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism, is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.”

*Excerpts from a memorandum to President Truman prepared by Clark Clifford, special counsel to the president, September 24, 1946*

“[The Soviet leaders] with whom we hope to achieve an understanding on the principles of international peace appear to believe that a war with the United States and the other leading capitalist nations is inevitable. They are increasing their military power and the sphere of Soviet influence in preparation for the ‘inevitable’ conflict, and they are trying to weaken and subvert their potential opponents by every means at their disposal.... We should be prepared to join with the British and other Western countries in an attempt to build up a world of our own which will pursue its own objectives and will recognize the Soviet orbit as a distinct entity with which conflict is not predestined, but with which we can not pursue common aims.... [We must] as a first step to world stabilization seek to prevent additional Soviet aggression. The greater the area controlled by the Soviet Union, the greater the military requirements of this country will be.... The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics understand. The United States must use that language in order that Soviet leaders will realize that our government is determined to uphold the interests of its citizens and the rights of small nations.... The prospect of defeat is the only sure means of deterring the Soviet Union.... To maintain our strength at a level which will be effective in restraining the Soviet Union, the United States must be prepared to wage atomic and biological warfare.... In addition to maintaining our own strength, the United States should support and assist all democratic countries which are in any way menaced or endangered by the U.S.S.R. Providing military support in case of attack is a last resort; a more effective barrier to communism is strong economic support....

“Cooperation by the Soviets can result in increased trade.... [However,] economic aid granted to the Soviet government or other governments within its sphere, and the fruits of private trade with persons inside these countries, will go to strengthen the entire world program of the Kremlin.... Because the Soviet Union is a highly centralized state, whose leaders exercise rigid discipline and control of all governmental functions, its government acts with speed, consistency, and boldness. The United States can not afford to be uncertain of its policies toward the Soviet Union.... The American people should be fully informed about the difficulties in getting along with the Soviet Union, and the record of Soviet evasion, misrepresentation, aggression and militarism should be made public.... The United States should maintain military forces powerful enough to restrain the Soviet Union and to confine Soviet influence to its present area. All nations not now within the Soviet sphere should be given generous economic assistance and political support in their opposition to Soviet penetration.”

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## **THE UNITED STATES SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:**

1. Provide foreign aid to free countries in Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and Japan to enable them to resist Soviet encroachment and communist subversion.
2. Strengthen our armed forces—specifically our ability to wage atomic and biological warfare—in order to deter further Soviet aggression and contain the expansion of Soviet influence.
3. Educate the citizens of the United States and the free nations of the West concerning the true nature of the Soviet regime, its long-term threat to Western values, and the subversive role of the Communist Party in non-communist countries.
4. Cooperate militarily with non-communist countries so as to discourage Soviet attempts at expansion and ensure that non-communist governments have sufficient military resources to combat internal communist subversion and insurrection.

## **LESSONS FROM HISTORY**

- The Soviet threat is very different from that posed by Hitler's Germany. Soviet leaders are motivated by an ideology that predicts world conflict and conquest. In their eyes, war with the United States is inevitable. Thus, our country needs a new global strategy.
- While the Soviets have sought to take advantage of vulnerable nations along their border, they have ceased their actions when the risks became too great. The Iran crisis of early 1946 showed that the Soviets will back down when faced with determined opposition.
- Communism has grown only when the social fabric of a nation has been weakened by war, economic crises, or political strife. In nations with healthy economies and stable democracies, communism has had little appeal.
- For the past thirty years, Soviet leaders have condemned and attacked Western values of economic freedom and political liberty. There is no reason to believe that they will change their views or behavior in the foreseeable future.

## **ARGUMENTS FOR OPTION 2**

- The Soviets respect force and will stop expanding when faced with military strength, thus avoiding a major confrontation.
- Any country that falls under Soviet control strengthens the Soviet Union in its worldwide attack against capitalism and Western values.
- The American way of life is threatened by the avowed goals of Soviet communism and those who follow the communist ideology.
- The costs of economic and political aid in the short run will be much less than the inevitable war that will come if the Soviet Union is allowed to become more powerful than the West. In the long run, this strategy will force the Soviets to modify their behavior and work responsibly with other nations.