

COLD WAR ORIGINS, & U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE KOREAN WAR

I. HOW THE COLD WAR ERUPTED: EVENTS

- A. Background: President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) hoped to continue collaborating with the Soviet Union after World War II. FDR's plan for peace: The five major powers (U.S., Britain, France, the USSR and China) would cooperate to keep peace, as the European great powers did after 1815.
- B. Conflict over Poland, 1944.
 - Soviet dictator Josef Stalin wanted a communist Poland under Soviet control. So he created a communist Polish government to rival the non-communist Polish government in exile. This irked Western powers who first joined WWII to free Poland.
 - July 1944: the Soviets encouraged a Polish underground rising against the Nazis. Then the Soviet army halted on Warsaw's outskirts and let the Nazis slaughter the underground. Stalin refused even to let the U.S. and Britain air-drop supplies to them until it was too late. Not nice!
- C. Yalta summit, February 1945. Stalin agreed to reorganize the Polish government on a more democratic basis and to hold "free and unfettered elections" in Poland. But FDR agreed to let Stalin decide how much to reorganize the government, and how elections would be run. By conceding control of details to Stalin FDR in effect conceded on substance. William Leahy, a top FDR aide, warned FDR that "this [agreement] is so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without ever technically breaking it." FDR replied: "I know it, Bill ... But it's the best I can do for Poland at this time." In short, Yalta was a vague agreement.

Then FDR oversold the agreement to the U.S. public by implying that Stalin conceded more than in fact he had.
- D. Potsdam summit, July 1945. Stalin demanded territorial concessions in Turkey, Japan, and part of Libya (then an Italian colony). Truman refused. Some Americans read Stalin's demands to signal darkly aggressive Soviet intentions.
- E. Stalin's ominous Feb. 9, 1946 speech. Stalin called for a rapid Soviet military buildup and spoke of the wartime alliance as a thing of the past. This alarmed westerners.
- F. Iran, March 1946. Stalin failed to pull Soviet forces out of Northern Iran until he was pressured.
- G. Turkey 1946. Stalin sent Turkey an ultimatum demanding joint control of the Dardanelles. Truman stood firm and sent the battleship *Missouri* to the Mediterranean.
- H. Greece 1947. The West wrongly thought Stalin was instigating the Communist revolution in Greece. In fact he wasn't. Greek communists got aid from Yugoslavia's communist Tito government but not from Stalin.
- I. The Berlin Crisis of 1948-1949: a scary confrontation that stemmed from the struggle for Germany.
- J. Europe in ruins. Hence Truman fears pro-Soviet communist

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