

The first confrontations between the two blocs

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Between 1945 and 1947, the Cold War led to certain localised conflicts. Greece was in the midst of a civil war since the autumn of 1946, and Turkey was threatened in turn. In this tense international atmosphere, the US President Harry S. Truman, advised by the diplomat George F. Kennan, redefined the country's foreign policy guidelines. On 12 March 1947, before a joint session of both Houses of Congress, the President outlined a new foreign policy doctrine aimed at stopping the spread of Communism. This doctrine was called *containment*. After having presented his country as the hope of the free world against 'Communist totalitarianism', Truman asked Congress to help the regions of Europe that were threatened by the expansion of Communism. To that end, he asked Congress to approve a 400 million dollar aid package for Greece and Turkey. He proposed that the aid might subsequently be extended to other nations. In the meantime, since March 1947, the fight against Soviet espionage was taking shape, and the *Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA) became America's intelligence agency.

After having let the United Kingdom act alone in Greece, the United States later intervened actively to help the anti-Communist forces. Applying the 'Truman Doctrine' of containment, the Americans also encouraged Turkey to resist Soviet claims to rights over naval bases in the Bosphorus. They also secured the withdrawal of Russian troops from Iran. In China, American aid was given to the Nationalist Chang Kai-Shek, but that failed to halt the advance of the Communists, supported by the Soviet Union.