

The Truman Doctrine

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The Truman Doctrine

In this tense international atmosphere, US President Harry S. Truman broke with the policy of his predecessor Franklin D. Roosevelt and redefined the country's foreign policy guidelines. On 12 March 1947, in a speech to the US Congress, the President presented his doctrine of containment, which aimed to provide financial and military aid to the countries threatened by Soviet expansion. Clearly aimed at stopping the spread of Communism, the Truman Doctrine positioned the United States as the defender of a free world in the face of Soviet aggression. An aid package of around 400 million dollars was granted to Greece and Turkey. This new doctrine provided a legitimate basis for the United States' activism during the Cold War.

Applying the doctrine of containment, the Americans 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 the meantime, since March 1947, efforts to crack down on Soviet espionage had been coordinated and the United States set up its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). These changes to external policy marked a real turnaround in the history of the United States, which had previously remained on the sidelines of European disputes. For the US, isolationism was no longer an option.