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The Cold War. Shortly after World War II ended, the Soviet Union abandoned the nominal cooperation it had given Great Britain and the United States during the war and adopted a course of political and military aggrandizement that threatened another world war. Violating the pledges made during the war, Stalin by the summer of 1948 had brought Poland and Czechoslovakia and all of the Balkan nations except Greece under Russian domination. In Greece a civil war raged between Communist rebels, openly aided by Communist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and Greek Government forces. In the Middle East the Soviet Union made demands on Turkey for access to the Mediterranean and refused to remove Russian troops from the northern provinces of Iran until the matter was brought up in the United Nations. In Asia, the Soviets imposed a Communist government on Korea north of the 38th parallel and fomented rebellion in Malaya, the Philippines, and Indo-China. In China, Communist armies fought the Nationalist government for control of that nation. Mediation by General of the Army George C. Marshall, acting for the United States, in 1946 failed and the civil war continued. Nor could any settlement of the Austrian and German questions be reached because of the obstructionist actions of the Soviet Government. Furthermore its maintenance of a huge army, its intensified subversive and propagandistic activities throughout the world, including the United States, and technological advances in offensive weapons heightened the tension. The United States, anxious to avoid another conflict, took measures to counter the growing threat of Soviet power.

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