4.3 How did the USA react to Soviet expansionism?

Truman's policy towards the USSR

- Communist domination was unacceptable (Yalta agreed for Soviet-friendly democratic governments)
- Unlike flexible FDR, Truman was hard-line
- Unlike FDR (got on well with Stalin), Truman was cautious and suspicious of Stalin
- Potsdam started late because Truman wanted to test atomic bomb
  - Stalin knew because of Manhattan Soviet Spies. When told, he nodded "Use it well"
  - This did not stop Soviet sphere expansion
  - Some historians believe Hiroshima and Nagasaki were to intimidate USSR
- March 1946 - Truman invited Churchill to make a speech; **Iron Curtain**
  - Truman approach: Iron fist
- Forced USSR out of Iran 6 months after WWII

Civil war in Greece 1944-1950

- When Germans retreated in 1944 there were two rival groups that had both participated in Nazi resistance
  - British supported **monarchists**; Tito and Stalin, **communists** (wanted soviet republic)
  - Churchill sent troops in **1945** to allegedly restore peace
- **1946** - Stalin appealed to the UN that British troops were a threat to peace
  - UN took no action so Stalin took matters in his own hands
  - Civil War developped
- British announced backed out on **24 February 1947** because they couldn't afford it
- White House panicked
  - March 1947 - Truman speech to Congress - foreign policy
  - Congress voted for an immediate $400 million in aid to be sent to Greece (and Turkey)
- Monarchists won 1950 (but corrupt and weak, always in crises)

Truman Doctrine

- Marked by American intervention in Greece
- Commitment to contain communism (reversed isolationism)
  - Prepared to send money, equipment and advice to threatened countries

Marshall Plan

- Economic aid
  - Idea that communism arised in times of hardship and poverty
- Sent **Secretary of State** (and former General) **George Marshall** to assess situation in Europe
  - June 1947
  - He found a ruined economy
    - Europe owed 11.5 billion dollars to the US
    - Bread rationing
    - Coal shortage in winter; Britain turned off electricity each day for a period
  - Suggested 17 billion dollars needed to rebuild
- December 1947 Truman put his plan to Congress; initially refused
  - **Congress accepted the Marshall Plan after Czechoslovakia**
    - 17 billion available over 4 years
- Plan was offered to every country
  - Allied nations, less to neutral and axis
  - Total 18 countries
  - Offered to communist countries, Stalin refused (Romania, Poland and USSR)

Czechoslovakia 1948

- Was ruled by left wing coalition trying to pursue policies independantly from Moscow
- Communists rose in **March 1948**
  - A pro-American minister (Jan Masaryk) was found dead below his open window; communists said he jumped

Marshall Aid

- Why?
  - Create **new markets** for American goods
    - They remembered the disaster of the Great Depression
  - Only given to countries embracing **democracy** and **free markets**
    - Government and economy US could approve
    - Stop **trade tariffs** and other restrictions to US firms
- **USSR reaction**
  - Stalin concerned and suspicious - plan against Soviet interests
    - If any Eastern country accepted, their economy would be tied to the US
      - Undermine Soviet control
      - Dollar imperialism - dominate states
      - Forbade any eastern European country to apply

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