

Document A

Truman Doctrine

Excerpts from PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN ADDRESS BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS, MARCH 12, 1947

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion.

...

We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

...

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

Document B

Marshall Plan

Formally called the European Recovery Program, this U.S.-sponsored program designed to rehabilitate the economies of 17 western and southern European countries in order to create stable conditions in which democratic institutions could survive. The United States feared that the poverty, unemployment, and dislocation of the post-World War II period were reinforcing the appeal of communist parties to voters in Western Europe. On June 5, 1947, in an address at Harvard University, Secretary of State George C. Marshall advanced the idea of a European self-help program to be financed by the United States. On the basis of a unified plan for western European economic reconstruction presented by a committee representing 16 countries, the U.S. Congress authorized the establishment of the European Recovery Program, which was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman on April 3, 1948. Aid was originally offered to almost all the European countries, including those under military occupation by the Soviet Union. The Soviets early on withdrew from participation in the plan, however, and were soon followed by the other eastern European nations under their influence. This left the following countries to participate in the plan: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and western Germany.