

## **Stephen Venezia**

Essex History Institute: Early Cold War

Grade Level: 11

Time Span: Three lessons (55-minute periods)

Massachusetts History and Social Studies Frameworks: US11.18 Analyze the factors that contributed to the Cold War and describe the policy of containment as America's response to Soviet expansionist policies.

Essential Objectives: Students will understand the policy of containment and the perceptions Americans had of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union's perceptions of the United States.

Essential Questions:

- What were the geographic boundaries of Soviet control in Europe?
- What was the policy of containment and why was the policy chose to guide U.S. policy?
- What the United State's perception of the Soviet Union?
- What was the Soviet Union's perception of the United States?

### Day 1

- Distribute Handout A.: Instruct the students to refer to a map of postwar Europe. Fill in the countries and capitals and shade Soviet-occupied Europe one shade and Western Europe a different shade. (This can be done by referring to most textbooks or in a computer lab).
- Homework: Finish the maps

### Day 2

*Write on the board:* "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe".--Winston Churchill

- Divide students into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to define the meaning of the phrase.
- Have students find Stettin and Trieste and draw a line following national borders connecting the two locations.
- Distribute Handout B, The MsQCV and Handout C, George Kennan's "The Sources of Soviet Conduct".
- Instruct the students to analyze Kennan's document using MsQCV.
- Finish the MsQCV for homework:

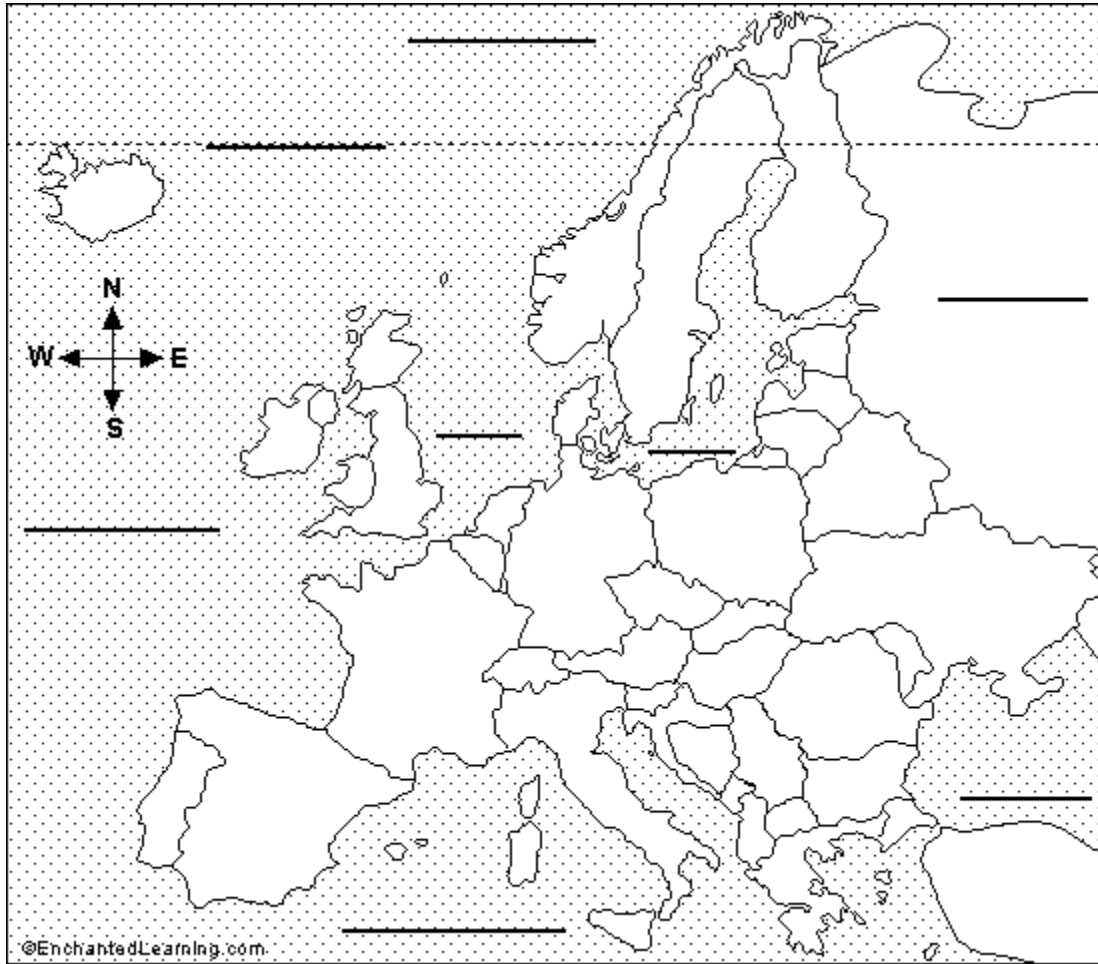
### Day 3

- Review previous night's homework. Discuss the students' findings and write them on the board.
- Distribute Handout C, Political Cartoons and Handout D, Cartoon Analysis.
- Ask the students to use the Cartoon Analysis sheet and analyze each of the three political cartoons in Handout C.

Assessment: Upon completion of the lessons students will do of the following:

- The students will select an event in the early Cold War, *i.e.*, *The Truman Doctrine*, *The Marshall Plan*, *the Korean Conflict* and compose an essay on, *George Kennan's "The Sources of Soviet Conduct."*
- Have students make a political cartoon employing symbolism, exaggeration, labeling, analogy, and irony. (I allow students to make a political cartoon of any time period the class has studied.)

# Handout A



## Handout B

### George F. Kennan “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” (1947)

Known as ‘the architect of containment,’ Kennan was a career diplomat who lived from 1904-2005. He wrote a long telegram message assessing the Soviet Union and its foreign policy in 1946 while serving in the American embassy in Moscow, and an abridged version of the message was published in a July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym ‘Mr. X’. By the time of this publication, Kennan had been asked to head the State Department’s new policy staff, and he was therefore in charge of long-term planning for American foreign relations. He later admitted he never clearly articulated what he meant by ‘containment’ (i.e., military, economic, political) but his intentionally vague language implied a widespread commitment to ‘contain’ Communism. An excerpt of the article appears below:

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The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances: ideology inherited by the present Soviet leaders from the movement in which they had their political origin, and circumstances of the power which they have exercised for nearly three decades in Russia. . . . The main concern [of the Kremlin] is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them. The main thing is that there should always be pressure, increasing constant pressure, toward the desired goal. There is no trace of any feeling in Soviet psychology that the goal must be reached at any given time.

These considerations make Soviet diplomacy at once easier and more difficult to deal with than the diplomacy of individual aggressive leaders like Napoleon and Hitler. On the one hand it is more sensitive to contrary force, more ready to yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front when that force is felt to be too strong, and thus more rational in the logic and rhetoric of power.

On the other hand it cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents. And the patient persistence by which it is animated means that it can be effectively countered not by sporadic acts which represent the momentary whims of democratic opinion but only by intelligent long-range policies on the part of Russia's adversaries—policies no less steady in their purpose, and no less variegated and resourceful in their application, than those of the Soviet Union itself.

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward "toughness." . . . The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness. For these reasons, it is the *sine qua non* of successful dealing with Russia that the foreign government in question should remain at all times cool and collected and that its demands on Russian policy should be put forward in such a manner as to leave the way open for a compliance not too detrimental to Russian prestige.

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes. . . .

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the Western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world. . . .

It would be an exaggeration to say that American behavior unassisted and alone could exercise a power of life and death over the Communist movement and bring about the early fall of Soviet power in Russia. But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. . . .

## Handout C

### MsQCV

- M** – This is the **main** idea of the article. Write one for each article. (Capital M)
- m** – These are the **main** ideas on each page. Select one-to-two per page. (lower case m.)
- s** – These are the **supporting** ideas. Select the most important ones per each main idea. Select one-to-two per page.
- Q** – This is a **question** raised in your mind that is not answered in the article. These must show thought and reflection. Select one-to-two per page.
- C** – This is a **connection** with something you already know. (“This is like,” “that reminds me of”) - This must be a connection, not a comment or summary statement. Write one-to-two per page.
- V** – Write concise definitions of **vocabulary** you do not know.

### Application

- M** - Write one-to-three sentences. These should be written at the beginning of the article.

For the others, you should write the appropriate letter beside the place in the text where the idea or fact is presented. Circle the letter. Beside the letter:

**m** or **s**: Write a few key words or a phrase that presents the critical part of the idea.

**Q** or **C**: Write a (cryptic) phrase or complete sentence.

**V**: Write the key words of the definition that fit as the word is used in the article. You are responsible for knowing the meaning of all the words in the article, in the context of the article. (If I give you a quiz on all of the words, you'll have the article in front of you.)

## Handout D

### Cartoon Analysis Guide

- **Symbolism:** Cartoonists use simple objects, or symbols, to stand for larger concepts or ideas. After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist intends each symbol to stand for.
- **Exaggeration:** Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or exaggerate, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point. When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that seem overdone or overblown.
- **Labeling:** Cartoonists often label objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for. Watch out for the different labels that appear in a cartoon, and ask yourself why the cartoonist chose to label that particular person or object. Does the label make the meaning of the object clearer?
- **Analogy:** An analogy is a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light. After you've studied a cartoon for a while, try to decide what the cartoon's main analogy is. What two situations does the cartoon compare? Once you understand the main analogy, decide if this comparison makes the cartoonist's point clearer to you.
- **Irony** is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use irony to express their opinion on an issue. When you look at a cartoon, see if you can find any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts. If you can, think about what point the irony might be intended to emphasize. Does the irony help the cartoonist express his or her opinion more effectively?

## Handout E

Using the Cartoon Analysis Sheet, analyze these political cartoons. What is the symbolism, exaggeration, labeling, analogies, and ironies in each of these cartoons?

