# Choices Under Pressure

How Western leaders responded to communism and the risk of war

**TOT.C.9.2** "Explain the West's response to Communism in the early Cold War, including the policy of containment, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, escalation of atomic weapons..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Circle three pressures or risks in the passage, then underline a Western response to each one. Number each matched pair 1, 2, or 3 to show which response addressed which challenge.

### Responding Without Starting a War

(1) In 1947, U.S. leaders worried that poverty and political pressure could help communist parties gain power in Europe. Their policy of containment aimed to stop communism from spreading, not to overthrow every communist government. Under the Truman Doctrine, the United States offered aid to Greece and Turkey as they faced threats to their governments. The Marshall Plan sent money and supplies to rebuild Western European economies after World War II. U.S. officials hoped stable economies would make communist promises less attractive. These choices used money and political support rather than direct war with the Soviet Union.

(2) Berlin made the struggle visible. In 1948, the Soviet Union blocked land routes into West Berlin, a Western-controlled part of the city surrounded by Soviet-controlled territory. The United States and its allies flew in food and fuel during the Berlin Airlift until the blockade ended in 1949. That year, Western governments formed NATO, a military alliance promising collective defense. In 1955, the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies formed the Warsaw Pact in response to West Germany's entry into NATO. Each alliance claimed to provide security, but the opposing camps made a local crisis more dangerous.

(3) Fear also shaped weapons policy. After the United States used atomic bombs in 1945, the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb in 1949. Both sides built larger nuclear arsenals, believing powerful weapons might deter attack, even as the risk of catastrophe grew. Disarmament movements called for limits on testing and reductions in weapons. In 1961, East Germany built the Berlin Wall to stop people from leaving East Berlin for West Berlin. Western powers protested but did not tear it down by force, fearing a wider war. The Wall showed both the limits of Western action and the lasting division of Europe.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan each support containment?

2. How did the Berlin Airlift answer the Soviet blockade of West Berlin?

3. How did NATO address Western security concerns, and how did the Warsaw Pact affect the division of Europe?

4. Why did Western powers protest the Berlin Wall without tearing it down by force? Connect their choice to the danger of the atomic arms race.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief policy memo to a Western leader in 1961. Recommend an economic action and a security action, use a lesson from an earlier Western response, and explain how nuclear danger and calls for disarmament should shape your advice.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.9.2

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle three pressures or risks in the passage, then underline a Western response to each one. Number each matched pair 1, 2, or 3 to show which response addressed which challenge. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan each support containment? | **The Truman Doctrine offered aid to Greece and Turkey as their governments faced threats. The Marshall Plan rebuilt Western European economies to make communist promises less attractive.** |
| 2 | How did the Berlin Airlift answer the Soviet blockade of West Berlin? | **Western allies flew food and fuel into West Berlin after the Soviet Union blocked its land routes.** |
| 3 | How did NATO address Western security concerns, and how did the Warsaw Pact affect the division of Europe? | **NATO promised collective defense. The Soviet Union and its allies formed the Warsaw Pact, creating opposing military camps that made crises more dangerous.** |
| 4 | Why did Western powers protest the Berlin Wall without tearing it down by force? Connect their choice to the danger of the atomic arms race. | **They feared that using force could cause a wider war. With both sides building nuclear arsenals, such a war risked catastrophe.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1961, I would fund jobs in vulnerable Western European communities, as the Marshall Plan had done, to reduce the appeal of communist parties. I would coordinate with NATO allies to protect West Berlin's access routes without attacking East Germany. The airlift shows that supplying the city can be a strong response short of war. Since both sides have nuclear weapons, force against the Wall could trigger disaster. I would pair firm support for West Berlin with disarmament talks aimed at limiting weapons tests.

Accept other accurate economic and security recommendations grounded in the passage. The memo should connect an earlier response to a 1961 choice and address both nuclear risk and disarmament.