



License applied: [CC-BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

**DOI: 10.38173/RST.2022.24.2.1:13-17**

<b>Title:</b>	<i>THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR AND THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE. SHORT CONSIDERATIONS</i>
<b>Author:</b>	Hadrian GORUN

**Section:** International Relations

**Issue:** 2(24)/2022

<b>Received:</b> 12 August 2022	<b>Revised:</b> -
<b>Accepted:</b> 7 November 2022	<b>Available Online:</b> 15 November 2022

Paper available online [HERE](#)

## THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR AND THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE. SHORT CONSIDERATIONS

Hadrian GORUN<sup>1</sup>

---

**ABSTRACT:**

*TRUMAN'S DOCTRINE IS THE FIRST AND ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CONTAINMENT POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. USA INTENDED TO PREVENT THE EXPANSION OF THE SOVIET-TYPE COMMUNISM IN EUROPE AND ALL OVER THE WORLD. GEORGE KENNAN WAS THE DIPLOMAT AND POLITICAL SCIENTIST WHO ELABORATED THE THEORY OF CONTAINMENT. IN THIS RESPECT THE MOST RELEVANT DOCUMENTS WERE THE LONG TELEGRAM AND THE ARTICLE ENTITLED THE SOURCES OF THE SOVIET CONDUCT. THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE STIPULATED AN IMPORTANT FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL AID FOR GREECE AND TURKEY.*

---

**KEY WORDS:** COLD WAR, TRUMAN DOCTRINE, USSR, USA, DEMOCRACY, TOTALITARIANISM, GEORGE KENNAN

After the end of World War II and the Nazi Germany's collapse, the nature of the international system totally changed<sup>2</sup>. In the post-war era there was a fast transition from the multipolarism of the inter-war period to bipolarism. The two superpowers, namely United States of America and the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.) will fight for supremacy in world affairs from all points of view. Thus they will perform as the main actors on the international scene.

The United Nations Coalition, that existed during the world conflict was considered to be strange by several historians. It was composed of two genuine Western democracies (U.S.A. and the United Kingdom), on the one hand and a symbol of leftist totalitarianism (the Soviet Union), on the other hand. Only the common interest in defeating German war machine, which seemed invincible, had brought together those three states with completely different political regimes.

After the achievement of this fundamental objective the days of this coalition were counted.

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor Ph.D. , "Constantin Brâncuși" University of Târgu-Jiu.

<sup>2</sup> A similar form of this text was also published in "Analele Universității Constantin Brâncuși. Seria Litere și Științe Sociale". See Hadrian Gorun, *Doctrina Truman (1947)- expresie a politicii de containment a Statelor Unite ale Americii*, in "Analele Universității Constantin Brâncuși. Seria Litere și Științe Sociale", No. 2/ 2008, 91-100.

Due to Great Britain's and France's exhaustion and devastation during the world conflict, global responsibilities will be almost completely taken over by U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.<sup>3</sup>.

So the coalition of the United Nations disintegrated after the world war. The two great powers were situated on positions of force. The speech of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, held on 5 March 1946 at Fulton University, Missouri, known in the history of international relations as the *Iron curtain speech* and the reply of the Soviet leader Iosif Vissarionovici Stalin represented the origins of what was called Cold War. Churchill was worried regarding Soviet expansion clearly manifested resorting to the installation of communist puppet governments in all states occupied by Red Army, as well in the Soviet zone of Germany. He advocated the perpetuation of the alliance between U.S.A. and British Commonwealth, to prevent the potential threat represented by Soviet Union<sup>4</sup>. The reaction from Kremlin came immediately. In Iosif Stalin's opinion, the British prime minister wanted to provoke a new war. Stalin even compared Churchill to Hitler<sup>5</sup>. A long period of latent conflict began. Several violent crisis carried out, some of them peripheral, named like this because they took place at the periphery of bipolar international system. There was no direct confrontation between the two superpowers.

Briefly, the Cold War represented a non-military confrontation, in the sense that there was no direct military conflict between the two blocs, the Western and democratic bloc, dominated by U.S.A and the communist one, whose hegemonic power was Soviet Union. Actually the Cold War had an important military feature. We think about the arms race.

The Cold War has involved two groups of countries with totally opposite ideology and political and economic systems: on the one hand Western system, which promoted democratic values, political diversity, more parties in political life, individual freedom, human rights, a free market economy and on the other hand, the communist system, imposed by the U.S.S.R. in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. They were called people's democracies. In fact, they were satellite states which adopted the Soviet political, social, economic and institutional pattern. In their foreign policy these states were completely obedient to Moscow. There was a single political party that identified with the State itself, a genuine Party-State. The individual rights were respected just theoretically. In reality, the rights and freedoms were flagrantly violated. The oppression, fear and terror were constantly practised and maintained by the political police, the useful tool of all totalitarian regimes. In the Eastern bloc the political police had different names (NKVD and GPU, in the USSR under Stalin's rule; People's Security and later Security of the State or simply Securitate in Romania; STASSI in East Germany, AVH in Hungary etc.). Actually its *modus operandi* was similar. The Communist system has set up a centrally planned economy using coercion to annihilate ownership and private initiative. According to Raymond Aron, there are five main elements that define the totalitarian regime: 1. The party holds monopoly on political activity; 2. Monopolist party is armed with an ideology, which gives it (to the party) an absolute authority. Therefore, the ideology becomes the official truth of the state; 3. To spread this official truth, the state had a double monopoly, the monopoly over the means of coercion and the means of persuasion and the entire means of communication as well; 4. The most of the professional and economic activities are controlled by the state. Thus they become somehow a

---

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Milza, Serge Berstein, *Istoria secolului al XX-lea. Lumea între război și pace, 1945-1973*, vol. II, translated by Marius Ioan, (Bucharest: Bic ALL, 1998), 144.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, translated by Mircea Ștefancu, Radu Paraschivescu (Bucharest: BIC ALL, 2002), 388.

<sup>5</sup> André Fontaine, *Istoria Războiului Rece. De la Revoluția din Octombrie la Războiul din Coreea 1917- 1950*, vol. II, translation and notes by George and Delia Răzdolescu Potra (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1992), 27-28.

part of the state. So the State is inseparable of its ideology and the respective activities are a part of the official truth; 5. Because any activity will become activity of the state and will be subject of ideology, an error committed as part of an economic and professional activity is simultaneously an ideological mistake. The final result will be a police and ideological terror<sup>6</sup>. Raymond Aron antithetically defined the two types of regimes, democratic, western and that specific to totalitarian Soviet Bloc: on the one hand, we have competition, constitutionalism, pluralism of the social groups and the state of the parties, and on the other hand, monopoly, revolution, bureaucratic absolutism and the partisan state, which are also known as the ideological one<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, the Cold War had political, economic and mainly, ideological characteristics. On 22 February 1946, George F. Kennan the United States' chargé d'affaires in Moscow has made an extensive analysis of the Soviet policy. The document called the *Long Telegram* is suggestive because it articulates the *containment* theory. The authorities of Washington had the mission to contain the expansion of the Soviet-type communism. According to Kennan's *Long Telegram*, the Soviet foreign policy rooted deep in the Soviet system itself, being an amalgam of communist ideology and old- fashioned tsarist expansionism. Stalin considered Western powers as irremediably hostile. From immemorial times, the Russian Empire has sought to expand its territory. Tsarist Russia tried to impose and make permanent its domination over Poland. Petrograd also considered that Bulgaria had been in its sphere of influence<sup>8</sup> and sought to gain authority over strategic points such as Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits and the city of Constantinople, the capital of the former Ottoman Empire. The U.S.A. had to be prepared for a difficult and long struggle due to the totally opposite objectives and principles of the two superpowers of the international system. A *modus vivendi* between Kremlin and White House was improbable.

A document even more significant in order to explain the concept of *containment* was an article published in 1947 in *Foreign Affairs* review. This article was signed X, but actually its author was the same George Kennan. He entitled his article *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, which explains that hostility towards democracy was inherent in the nature of Soviet internal structure<sup>9</sup>. As a diplomat in Moscow, Kennan has known very well Soviet realities. The element of the entire U. S. policy towards U.S.S.R. had to be a long-term containment, patient but firm. U.S.A. had to watch carefully the expansionist tendencies of Soviet Union. It was necessary to oppose Russians a strong power "at any point in which they will show signs of willingness to violate the interests of a peaceful and stable world."<sup>10</sup> Thus, USA will not strive to force the Soviets to withdraw from the countries which were in their spheres of influence. However, United States had to prevent the expansion of the Soviet influence in other important areas.

The civil war of Greece, in which Communist and royal forces were involved- the latter helped by the English army-, represented the reason for Truman Doctrine. This was the first manifestation of the American containment policy on the European continent. The Truman Doctrine had to face the expansion of the Soviet-type communism. The communists were supported by some of Moscow's satellite states, as Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania.

---

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Aron, *Democrație și totalitarism*, translated by Simona Ceaușu (Bucharest: All Educational, 2001), 212-213.

<sup>7</sup> Anton Carpinschi, *Doctrina politice contemporane* (Iași : Editura Moldova, 1992), 55-56.

<sup>8</sup> H. Kissinger, *Diplomația*, 393- 394.

<sup>9</sup> H. Kissinger, *Diplomația*, 398- 399.

<sup>10</sup> Apud Pascal Boniface, *Relațiile Est-Vest 1945-1991* (Iași: Institutul European, 1999), 13.

In U.S.A. the internal developments seemed favorable to carry out a foreign policy more vigorous. In January 1947, Secretary of State James Byrnes was replaced by General George Marshall<sup>11</sup>. The new president of the U.S.A., Harry Truman, who had replaced Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1945, was more active and more intransigent than his predecessor in the field of the foreign policy. Peter Calvocoresi wrote that United States had taken over United Kingdom's role to help Greece and Turkey and had rationalized it in anticommunist terms<sup>12</sup>. Meanwhile, the decision of March 1947 which provided material support to Greece and Turkey, known as *Truman Doctrine*, anticipated the Marshall plan for recovery of the European economy with U.S. funds. At the end of 1946 and in the early 1947, the UK had a number of 40,000 people in Greece and provided a valuable military and financial assistance to the government of Athens and Ankara. In February 1947, Americans and British agreed that from military and strategic point of view, Greece and Turkey should not enter Moscow's sphere<sup>13</sup>.

The English Cabinet informed Washington that soon would be obliged to give up its program of financial and economic aid for Greece and that its troops would be withdrawn since March 1947. In these circumstances, the U.S. Secretary of State, General George Marshall, had received a desperate call from the Greek government requesting financial support, economic assistance and American experts. In Athens' opinion, the American aid was vital for the preservation of the Greek independence. Greece asked an immediate assistance due to the lack of food, fuel and clothing. The obtainment of the goods was essential for the establishment of peace and internal security, a sine-qua-non condition for economic and political recovery. Furthermore, the Greek authorities asked administrative, economic and technical experts. Because Great Britain was not able any longer to sustain the economic and financial support for Turkey U.S.A. had to help this country as well<sup>14</sup>.

Greece and Turkey represented very important territories from geopolitical and geostrategic point of view. The difficult situation of Greece has been accentuated because of the internal political instability.

Therefore U.S. President Harry Truman asked Congress to provide enough authority to executive power in order to extend the aid for Turkey<sup>15</sup>. The need to implement the policy of containment was also felt regarding Turkey, a country geographically located in Greece's proximity. One could say that there was an effort to put into practice a domino theory *avant la lettre*. This theory was elaborated by John Foster Dulles and applied in the case of Indochina Peninsula. The domino theory predicted that the entry of a state under Soviet control could lead to the fall of another neighboring state under the influence of Moscow, such as parts of a dominoes game. That is why, the conquest of power by the communists in Greece could have negative repercussions regarding Turkey and the Near East. U.S.A. , the prototype of Western democracy had the duty to support the countries susceptible to enter Kremlin's orbit.

In his speech addressed to Congress, President Truman expressed a wilsonian vision of the realities because he put in opposition two ways of life<sup>16</sup>, a way of life based on the will of the majority, free institutions, representative government, freedom of expression and religion, the right to resist political oppression. The other way of life meant the will of a minority over

---

<sup>11</sup> Jean Baptiste Duroselle, *Histoire diplomatique de 1919 à nos jours* (Paris, 2001), 467.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Calvocoresi, *Politica mondială după 1945*, (Bucharest: Editura Allfa, 2000), p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> [www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org), accessed on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008, Summary of telegrams from Greece, Poland and the USSR, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1947.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, Suggested Draft of the President's message to the Congress on the Greek Situation, March 7, 1947.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> H. Kissinger, *Diplomația*, 397.

the majority, the control of the press and of other means of communication by a minority, terror and oppression. Some of the primary characteristics of democratic regimes were therefore emphasized, being completely distinct of those of far-left totalitarian regimes. Harry Truman accused Soviet Union that it did not respect the promises assumed at Yalta, regarding the organization of free and fair elections and the creation of democratic institutions and representative governments in the countries from its sphere of influence. But these concepts of *democracy* and *democratic* were perceived in completely different ways in Moscow and in Washington. The United States, as President Truman said, “had to support free peoples which resist attempts of domination of minorities or outside pressures [...]. I think we should assist free peoples to build their destinies as they wish.”<sup>17</sup>

The Truman Doctrine, exposed to U.S. Congress on 12 March 1947, foresaw an aid of 250 million U.S. dollars for Greece and an aid of 150 million U.S. dollars to Turkey. The two chambers of the Congress will vote with a large majority the draft bill, and subsequently, on 22 May 1947, the President promulgated the law which placed the United States in the vanguard of the fight against Soviet-type communism. Despite the infusion of American money and material the civil war in Greece will not finish until early 1948 because of the guerilla warfare carried out by the communist forces.

Truman Doctrine is the first and one of the most significant manifestations of the U.S. containment policy, which will be also applied on the Asian continent during the Korean War (1950- 1953).

---

<sup>17</sup> [www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org), accessed on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008, Rough Draft of the President Message to Congress in Regard to Greece, March 9, 1947.