

# 5 The Marshall Plan

The idea behind the Truman Doctrine was to keep communism from spreading. That Cold War policy was known as “containment.”

**The Marshall Plan** was named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall, who introduced the idea in a speech at Harvard College. General Marshall was the U.S. Army’s chief of staff during World War II. The Marshall Plan was a team effort, developed by General Marshall and by Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, Minister to Russia George F. Kennan, President Truman, and others in his administration.



President Truman sends Secretary of State George Marshall off to London to attend the Conference of Ministers, 1947.

Two signs sat on President Truman’s desk. The first sign quoted a man from Truman’s home state of Missouri. It said, ALWAYS DO RIGHT. THIS WILL GRATIFY SOME PEOPLE & ASTONISH THE REST. They were the words of Mark Twain.

The second sign said THE BUCK STOPS HERE.

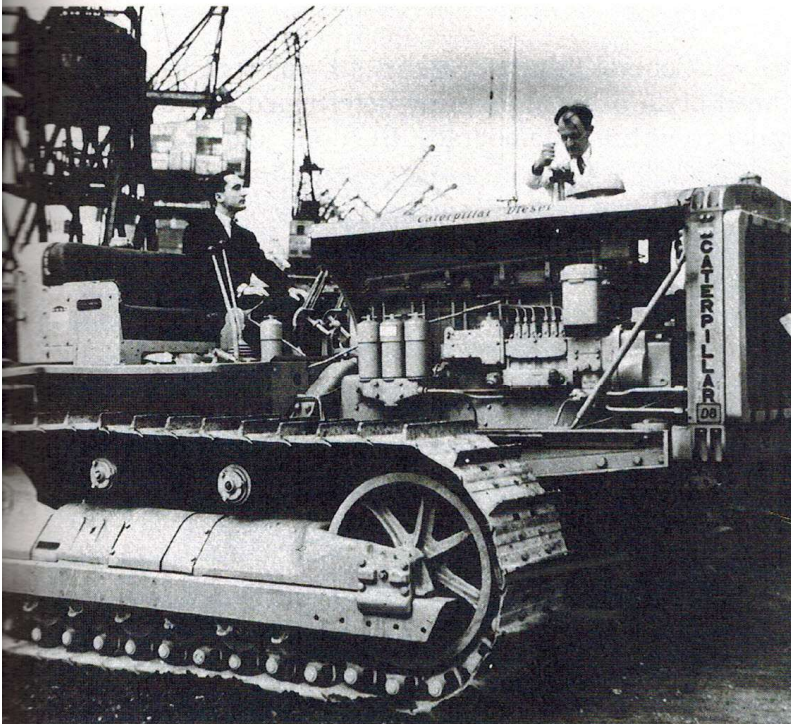
Which means: the president has the final word and can’t blame anyone else for his decisions.

Harry Truman had some big decisions to make. Those decisions would profoundly affect Americans and people around the world. In one of the most important of his decisions, he persuaded the American people to act generously to the defeated nations. What Harry Truman had in mind had never been done before in the history of the world.

Truman knew how defeated people feel after a war. He knew that his Confederate ancestors carried hate in

A Soviet cartoon portrayed an imperialistic Uncle Sam towed along by the European nations hungry for dollars—they would never get them, said the cartoon.





their hearts all their lives. He knew that Germany's anger after World War I had helped bring about a second world war.

So he supported a plan that would send billions of dollars in aid and assistance to our allies and to our former enemies. It was called the Marshall Plan, but it reflected President Truman's thoughts. After a terrible war, he was asking the winning nation to help everyone recover—including the losers. The president said:

*You can't be vindictive after a war. You have to be generous. You have to help people get back on their feet.... People were starving, and they were cold because there wasn't enough coal, and tuberculosis was breaking out. There had been food riots in France and Italy.... We were in a position to keep people from starving and help them preserve their freedom and build up their countries, and that's what we did.*

Marshall Plan aid was offered to all of Europe's nations—including the Soviet Union and those countries under Soviet control. The Soviet nations refused the aid. Sixteen nations accepted with enthusiasm. It was very expensive. It was very unselfish. The plan encouraged Europeans to use American aid and add their own brains and know-how. It worked. Prosperity began returning to the free nations of Europe. It also helped us. Those newly prosperous European nations now had money to buy American goods. And they did.

**Marshall Plan aid: (left) a U.S.-made Caterpillar bulldozer arrives to help rebuild France's electric power system; (right) a German construction worker in Berlin. The German poster says: BERLIN RELIEF PROGRAM—WITH MARSHALL PLAN AID.**

Someone who is **vindictive** wants to have revenge.

**Marshall Plan** aid was very concrete (that's a pun). U.S. money rebuilt steel mills in Belgium, ceramics factories in France, railroads in Germany, and bridges and buildings in a whole lot of places.

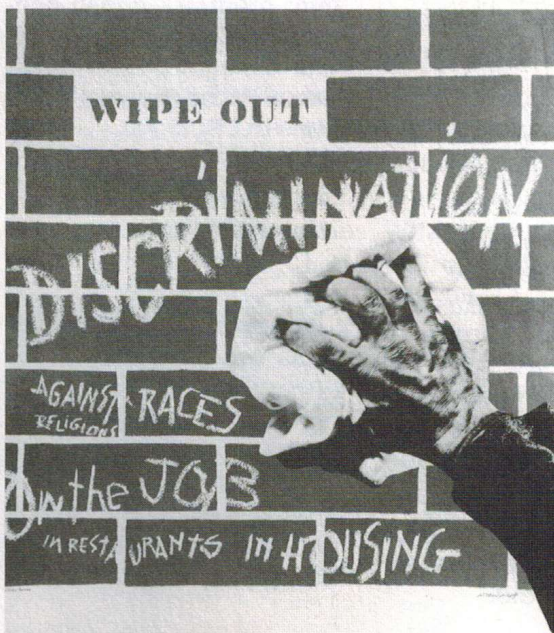
## A HISTORY OF US

**It was 1948**, the Soviets were blockading Berlin, and fear of a third world war panicked many in Washington. Secretary of State George C. Marshall stayed calm. A young aide asked him, "How in the world can you remain so calm during this appalling crisis?" Marshall, who knew his history, said, "I've seen worse."

*The Diet is the name of Japan's congress. What is the name of Great Britain's congress?*

**Discrimination** means choosing for unfair reasons. (The word has other meanings, too. Look it up.)

**"We cannot wait another decade or another generation to remedy these ills," said Truman. "We must work, as never before, to cure them now."**



CIO says "WIPE OUT DISCRIMINATION"

In East Asia, General Douglas MacArthur was sent to defeated Japan as head of an occupation army determined to rid Japan of its war leaders and bring democracy, freedom, and prosperity to that nation. The Japanese wrote a new constitution; it made Japan a democracy. Land was redistributed so that more people could have it. (Before, there had been a few huge landowners and many poor farmers; now there was a better balance. Soon there would be great prosperity.) Women were allowed to vote (39 were elected to the Diet). Secret political societies were prohibited. And religious discrimination was ended. The United States poured aid into Japan—food, clothing, medicines, and other supplies. Ancient temples and museums were restored. We were very generous. No nation had ever done that kind of thing for a defeated foe.

Another Truman plan, called "Point Four," gave aid to developing nations. Developing nations (another name for them is the Third World) are countries that are less wealthy and less modern than the industrial nations—many of those developing nations are in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Did everyone approve of these generous policies? Not at all. Some people in Europe and Asia said they didn't want to take aid from America. They thought we wanted something in return.

Some people in Congress yelled about all the money it was costing. "Why should we help others?" they asked. "Why should we help our former enemies?" they screamed.

Their screams were nothing compared to those heard when President Truman decided to do something to help people in the United States. He decided it was time to do something about civil rights for all citizens. He decided to do something about lynchings and segregation. The army, navy, and air force were all segregated. Blacks and whites served in separate units. Blacks got the worst jobs. That wasn't fair. Like other Americans, they were willing to fight for their country. Why should they be treated differently?

In Mississippi, when some black soldiers returned home, they were dumped from army trucks and then beaten. In Georgia, a black man was shot and killed because he had voted. When Truman heard of those outrages he was horrified. The president had been brought up on Confederate ideas, but he was also taught to know right from wrong. Maybe Mark



**In January 1946,** the first General Assembly of the United Nations meets in London, England. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes heads the U.S. delegation, which includes Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of the former president. In October, the General Assembly accepts a gift of \$8.5 million from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to pay for a U.N. headquarters site. That site is in New York City.

Truman's 1947 speech denouncing racial discrimination and pledging to fight it was the first ever made by a president to the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

A **lynching** is an outside-the-law execution.

Twain's words on his desk helped inspire him. He sent proposals to Congress to stop lynchings, to outlaw the poll tax that kept some people (mostly blacks) from voting, and to end segregation in the armed services. He created a commission on civil rights.

Remember the villains of prejudice and hate? People infected with those viruses began to howl. A Florida county commission said the president's program was "obnoxious, repugnant, odious, detestable, loathsome, repulsive, revolting and humiliating." A Mississippi congressman said Truman had "run a political dagger into our backs and now he is trying to drink our blood." Read on, and you'll see what happened next.

*Obnoxious, repugnant, odious, detestable, loathsome, repulsive, revolting, humiliating? Great words —what do they mean?*