

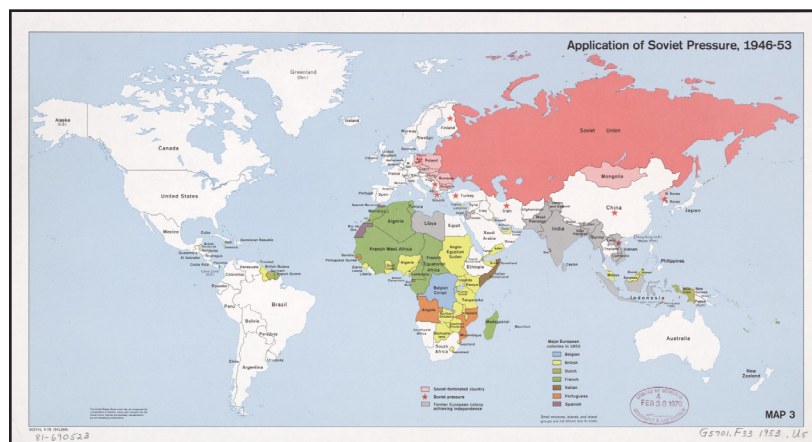


Dwight D.
Eisenhower
Memorial

NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

LESSON

Eisenhower and the Origins of NATO



Duration

One 45-minute period

Grades

7-12

Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, World History, Geography



Historical Background

By 1949, four years after the end of World War II, the former Allied powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France) split into two factions regarding the future of occupied Europe. One side, consisting of the United States, Great Britain, and France, supported democratic governments and capitalist economies for all European nations and opposed attempts by communists to gain influence. On the other side, the Soviet Union imposed communist governments and command economies in Eastern Europe, asserting that a buffer of loyal governments was necessary to prevent a future invasion from the west.

The establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on April 4, 1949, formally created a new alliance between the United States and European nations to counter the Soviet Union. By signing the treaty, each member nation agreed to defend any other member in the event of an attack. On December 19, 1950, the new organization announced the appointment of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as its first Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

Objective

Students will gain an understanding of the NATO military alliance, why it was formed, and why individual countries agreed to sign the treaty to become members. Working in pairs or small groups, students will be assigned a country to represent. Students will first review the global political context by examining sources related to the Berlin Airlift. Students will then locate their country on a map and use the map to assess whether or not joining a military alliance would be a good idea. What does joining the NATO alliance mean? Does an alliance make war more or less likely? How will the Soviet Union view the new alliance? Using sources to address these questions, students will work together on a brief statement explaining why their nation should or should not join NATO.

Essential Questions

1. Why was NATO formed?

Sources

- » “Why did the Cold War Begin?” Eisenhower Memorial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLJKVVtiR3g>

Teacher Notes: This video (3:22 minutes) summarizes the origins of the Cold War.



Interesting details:

- *The film describes the breakdown of the World War II alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union.*
- *The film notes that the United States advocated for European countries to have free market economies while the Soviet Union worked to control countries on its borders to make sure they were communist governments with command economies and allied militarily to the Soviet Union.*
- *The film also briefly mentions the Soviet blockade of Berlin, Germany, in 1948-1949 when no trucks or trains from western Germany were allowed to enter Berlin. Deliveries by United States and British military planes — an operation known as the Berlin Airlift — supplied the city with food and other necessities.*
- *The blockade lasted 11 months before the Soviet Union lifted the restrictions.*
- *The film notes that the Soviet Union developed nuclear capabilities.*
- *The film mentions that NATO was founded and that Eisenhower was selected as the first Supreme Allied Commander.*

» “Berlin Divided — 1948.” 1948. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Archives.

http://www.nato.int/ebookshop/video/declassified/#/en/sources/511_berlin_divided_-_1948/

Teacher Notes: A map of Berlin indicating which Allied nations controlled which sections of the city.

Interesting details:

- *The four major allies of World War II each controlled a section of the city after the war.*
- *The city of Berlin itself was in eastern Germany, an area controlled by the Soviet Union.*
- *At this time, in 1948, Germany had not yet been divided into East Germany and West Germany; Berlin had not yet been divided into East Berlin and West Berlin.*

» “The Berlin Airlift — 1948.” 1948. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Archives.

http://www.nato.int/ebookshop/video/declassified/#/en/sources/1002_berlin_airlift_-_1948/

Teacher Notes: This video (4 minutes) explains the origins of the Berlin blockade by the Soviet Union and the decision by the United States, Great Britain, and France to supply the city by air.



Interesting details:

- *The blockade of western Berlin by the Soviet Union was possible because the city was surrounded by Soviet-controlled territory in eastern Germany.*
- *The city of 2 million had to be supplied entirely by air.*
- *Planes — mostly from U.S. and British military bases in western Germany — carried food, gasoline, coal, medicine, and other supplies into western Berlin for almost a year (June 26, 1948 - May 11, 1949).*

» “Application of Soviet pressure, 1946-53.” 1978. Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/item/81690523/>

Teacher Notes: This map created by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) shows which countries were under Soviet Union control after World War II. The link provides access to high resolution versions of the map (JPEG 6.1 MB and TIFF 94.3 MB) that can be projected in the classroom, if desired.

Interesting details:

- *Note that most of Eastern Europe was “Soviet dominated,” as was East Germany.*
- *Note the stars on the map indicating “Soviet pressure.” These were locations where the CIA believed the Soviet Union was trying to gain control.*

» “The Council appoints General Eisenhower Supreme Allied Commander Europe.” North Atlantic Treaty Organization Archives.

<http://www.nato.int/archives/1st5years/graphics/eise.jpg>

Teacher Notes: This document contains the NATO council appointment of Dwight Eisenhower to the position of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

Interesting details:

- *The list of countries that signed the appointment were the countries that agreed to join the NATO alliance.*
- *The original 12 NATO members were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, United States, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Today NATO has 28 members.*

Materials

- » Origins of NATO Handout
 - » Things to Consider Resource
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Preparation

- Cue video “Why did the Cold War Begin?”
- Print out copies of the Origins of NATO Handout for each student.
- Print out copies of the Things to Consider Handout.
- Print out copies of sources for each group of students to examine together. The map titled “Application of Soviet pressure, 1946-53” may be easier for students to examine on a computer or projected on a screen.
- Cue the video “Berlin Airlift — 1948.”

Procedure

1. Depending on their background knowledge, summarize for students the state of world politics after the end of World War II. To set the stage for the simulation, show the video, “Why did the Cold War Begin?” from the Eisenhower Memorial. Focus question: What happens to the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union after the end of World War II?
2. Divide students into groups to represent the following Western European countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Finland, United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, and Norway. You may either assign students a country or have them draw from slips of paper bearing the name or flag of each country.
3. Have students form groups based on the country they represent. Tell the class that the year is 1949 and each group has been tasked by their government to study the question of whether to form an alliance against the Soviet Union. This alliance, called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) promises to assist any member in case of a military attack. Let students know that while many people in each country believe an alliance is a good idea, others believe that staying neutral would be wiser. There is a risk that joining NATO would antagonize the Soviet Union further. Key questions: What does joining the NATO alliance mean? Does an alliance make a war more or less likely? Teachers may want to make use of the Things to Consider Resource sheet to provide more context on some of the factors that influenced each country.



4. Pass out the “Berlin Divided — 1948” map for students to examine and the Origins of NATO handout for each student to fill out. Have each student write the name of the country they represent on the handout.
5. Show the video “Berlin Airlift — 1948.” Focus question: Remind students that the Soviet Union enforced a blockade on the U.S., British, and French sectors of Berlin from June 1948 to May 1949. Teachers may want to make use of the Teacher Notes above to provide background information about the blockade and the Berlin Airlift.
6. Direct students to use the sources provided to list three facts about the Berlin Airlift and how each fact might influence their decision to join the NATO alliance.
7. Have students examine the map entitled “Application of Soviet Pressure, 1946-53” from the Library of Congress (the map may need to be displayed on a screen for greater detail). Using the Origins of NATO Handout, have students work in groups to answer questions about the map. Let them know the point of this exercise is to treat the map like a source and to understand that maps do not just depict what the world looks like. Maps make an argument for a particular way of seeing the world.
8. Have each group locate their country on the map. Answer the questions on the handout. Discuss with other representatives of their country: Should their country join NATO? After a discussion have each group explain their decision on the handout (1 paragraph) including specific references to the sources they have examined.
9. Come together as a class and have each group share their answer and how they arrived at it.
10. Have students examine the document, “The Council appoints General Eisenhower Supreme Allied Commander Europe” and ask each group to locate their country’s name. Did their country join NATO?

Differentiation

Teachers may make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to students may help them notice important details within the sources.

Teachers may want to construct groups to pair advanced learners with those who may struggle. Possible extension: Have students research other international responses to the Cold War such as the Warsaw Pact and the Non-Aligned Movement. Which countries made up these groups?



When and why did they form? Do they still exist?

Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to interpret the sources, use their interpretation to accurately complete the NATO Origins handout, and create a policy recommendation for their assigned country on joining the NATO alliance.

Related Resources

Lesson Plans

- » *NATO and the Warsaw Pact*. Discovery Education.

https://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/teacherCenter/lessonPlans/pdfs/9-12SocialStudies_PostWorldWarIIEuropeNATOAndTheWarsawPact.pdf

Lesson plan designed to help students understand the U.S. foreign policy of containment in the midst of post-World War II Europe and to research events leading up to the formation of NATO.

Secondary Sources and Digital Resources

- » *The Berlin Airlift, 1948-1949*. Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State.

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/berlin-airlift>

Good summary of the events of the Berlin Airlift in the context of U.S. foreign policy at the beginning of the Cold War.

- » *American Experience: The Berlin Airlift*. Public Broadcasting Company.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/airlift-berlin/>

A good overview of the importance of the Berlin Airlift including maps, newspaper accounts of the operation, a timeline, and a teacher guide.

- » *World History Sources: Maps*. Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. <https://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/unpacking/mapsmain.html>

An excellent overview on using maps as historical evidence in the classroom. The site provides examples of the kinds of questions students can ask about maps and features brief essays explaining how historians use maps in their research.



Primary Sources

- » *Interview with Gen. Lauris Norstad on the origins of NATO.* Eisenhower Life Series: Higher Duty. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

https://eisenhower.archives.gov/education/eisenhower_life_series/higher_duty.pdf

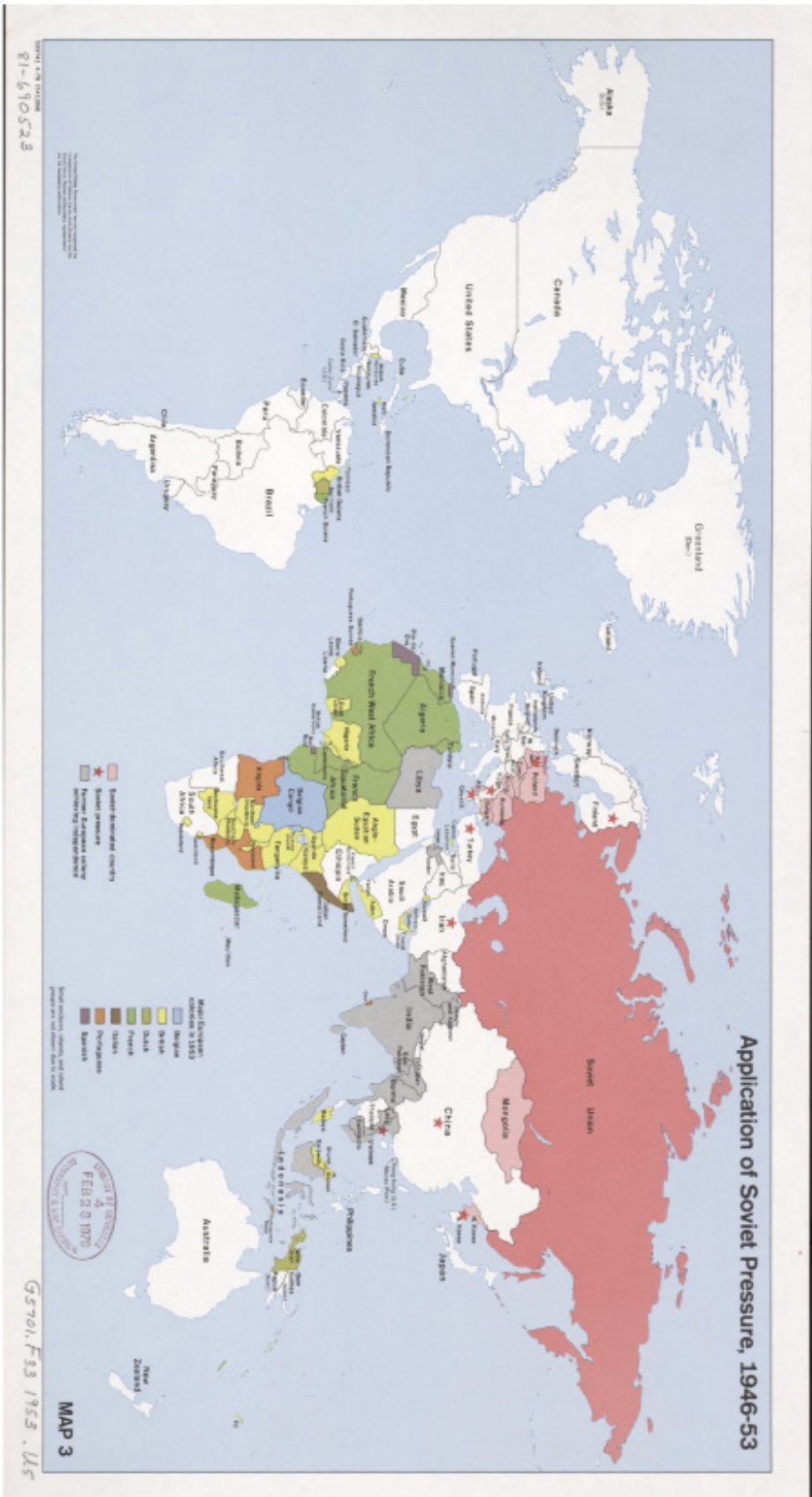
In this interview, General Norstad talks about some of the early meetings that were held during the formation of NATO and describes Eisenhower and his management style.



“Berlin Divided – 1948.” North Atlantic Treaty Organization Archives.



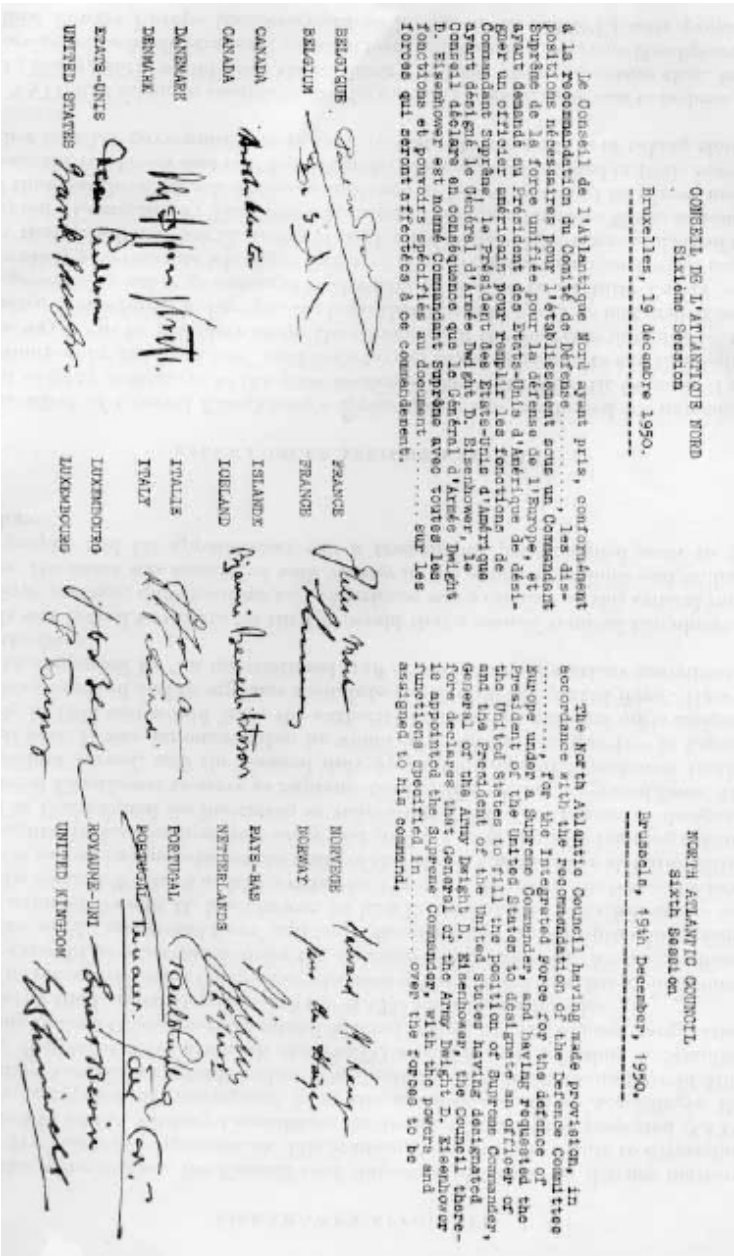
“Application of Soviet pressure, 1946-53.” 1978. Library of Congress.





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“The Council appoints General Eisenhower Supreme Allied Commander Europe.” North Atlantic Treaty Organization Archives.





Origins of NATO Handout

Country represented:

After viewing the video “*Berlin Airlift – 1948*,” examine the “*Berlin Divided – 1948*” map closely. List three facts about the Berlin Airlift below and how each fact might influence your decision to join the NATO alliance.

Fact 1:

Impact on NATO decision:

Fact 2:

Impact on NATO decision:

Fact 3:

Impact on NATO decision:



Origins of NATO Handout

Examine the map “*Application of Soviet Pressure, 1946-1953.*” Find the country you represent on the map.

Does your country border a Soviet-controlled country?

What is the nearest Soviet-controlled country?

Is your country considered to be under “Soviet Pressure?”



Origins of NATO Handout

Assignment: *With your country group members, decide if you recommend that your country join NATO. Prepare a one-paragraph recommendation using at least three specific details you learned from the sources:*

After you have completed your recommendation, examine the source, “The Council appoints General Eisenhower Supreme Allied Commander Europe.” Did your country join NATO?



Things to Consider for Origins of NATO Lesson Plan

France:

Political and economic instability made France vulnerable to communism's ideological temptations.

France sought protection from any renewal of German militarism.

France was already part of the Brussels Treaty, which provided collective defense for member countries (Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg).

Italy:

Italy had a large communist party and was at risk to Soviet takeover.

Italy expressed interest in joining NATO before being asked to join.

Although Italy was integral to European culture, it had little political or military connection to Western Europe, which made it vulnerable.

Sweden:

The foreign minister at the time, Osten Unden, argued that Sweden should remain un-aligned with NATO and remain neutral although it considered itself part of the western world.

Finland:

Finland shared 1,300 kilometers (807 miles) of border with the USSR.

Finland had signed an agreement with the USSR that prohibited it from being part of any alliance that the USSR considered military in nature.



Things to Consider for Origins of NATO Lesson Plan

United Kingdom:

UK experienced political and economic instability after WWII.

Sought protection from a renewal of German militarism.

Wanted the United States to be involved in Western Europe's development.

Sought protection against Soviet aggression.

Already a part of the Brussels Treaty (Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg).

Belgium:

Brussels had signed the Brussels Treaty with Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1948, which provided collective defense.

Greece:

Civil war in Greece between the Greek army, backed by the US and UK, and the Greek Communist Party. NATO involvement would protect against further communist interference.

Norway:

Norway expressed interest in joining NATO if it was asked.

Halvard Lange, Norwegian Foreign Minister, believed neutrality was an illusion and that security would be found in association with other states.

Origins of NATO Rubric

	Fully Meets Expectations <i>3 points</i>	Minimally Meets Expectations <i>2 points</i>	Not Yet Within Expectations <i>1 point</i>
Factual Understanding	The paragraph demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) and identifies its key details.	The paragraph demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) but does not identify key details.	The paragraph does not demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence).
Sourcing	The paragraph demonstrates understanding of each source's origin, especially when it was created and the creator's goal.	The paragraph demonstrates partial understanding of each source's origin, when it was created and the creator's goal.	The paragraph demonstrates insufficient understanding of each source's origin, when it was created, and the creator's goal.
Evidence-Based Claim	The paragraph makes a reasonable claim about a country's decision regarding NATO membership and uses appropriate sources and evidence to support that claim.	The paragraph makes a reasonable claim about a country's decision regarding NATO membership but the sources and evidence only partially support the claim.	The paragraph makes a claim about a country's decision regarding NATO membership that is not supported by appropriate sources and evidence.