

Despite an agreement to help European nations regain self-government, the Soviet Union installed communist governments in Eastern Europe in the years between 1945 and 1948. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin justified his actions on the premise that those nations provided a security buffer from European invasion. He also believed that the United States had promised him this "sphere of influence" in Eastern Europe as part of their wartime alliance. Perhaps most important of all, Stalin wanted to spread communist ideology. To further that aim, the Soviets imposed communication and travel barriers to the West—known as the "iron curtain"—throughout its sphere of influence. Angered and concerned by Soviet actions, the United States and its allies took steps to fight the spread of communism.

U.S. AIMS vs. SOVIET AIMS IN EUROPE	
The United States Wanted To...	The Soviet Union Wanted To...
• Encourage democracy in other countries to help prevent the rise of new totalitarian governments. • Gain access to raw materials and markets for its booming industries • Rebuild European governments to ensure stability and to create new markets for American goods • Reunite Germany, believing that Europe would be more secure if Germany were productive and less bitter about defeat.	• Encourage communism in other countries as part of the worldwide struggle between workers and the wealthy • Transfer the industrial equipment of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union to help rebuild its war-ravaged economy. • Control Eastern Europe to balance the U.S. influence in Western Europe • Keep Germany divided and weak, since the Germans had waged war against Russia twice in 30 years and had caused most of the 20 million Soviet deaths in WWII.