

CHAPTER
29
SECTION 5

Section Summary

THE END OF WORLD WAR II

While the Allies enjoyed their victory, the huge costs of World War II began to emerge. As many as 50 million people had been killed. The Allies also learned the full extent of the horrors of the Holocaust. War crimes trials, such as those at **Nuremberg** in Germany, held leaders accountable for their wartime actions. To ensure tolerance and peace, the Western Allies set up democratic governments in Japan and Germany.

In 1945, delegates from 50 nations convened to form the United Nations. Under the UN Charter, each member nation has one vote in the General Assembly. A smaller Security Council has greater power. It has five permanent members: the United States, the Soviet Union (today Russia), Britain, France, and China. Each has the right to veto any council decision. UN agencies have tackled many world problems, from disease to helping refugees.

However, conflicting ideologies soon led to a **Cold War**. This refers to the state of tension and hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1946 to 1990. Soviet leader Stalin wanted to spread communism into Eastern Europe. He also wanted to create a buffer zone of friendly countries as a defense against Germany. By 1948, pro-Soviet communist governments were in place throughout Eastern Europe.

When Stalin began to threaten Greece and Turkey, the United States outlined a policy called the **Truman Doctrine**. This policy meant that the United States would resist the spread of communism throughout the world. To strengthen democracies in Europe, the United States offered a massive aid package, called the **Marshall Plan**. Western attempts to rebuild Germany triggered a crisis over the city of Berlin. The Soviets controlled East Germany, which surrounded Berlin. To force the Western Allies out of Berlin, the Soviets blockaded West Berlin, but a yearlong airlift forced them to end the blockade.

However, tensions continued to mount. In 1949, the United States and nine other nations formed a new military alliance called the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**. The Soviets responded by forming the **Warsaw Pact**, which included the Soviet Union and seven Eastern European nations.

Review Questions

1. What was the purpose of the post-World War II war crimes trials?

2. Why did the United States offer aid under the Marshall Plan to European countries?

READING CHECK

What was the Cold War?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *convened* mean in the underlined sentence? The word *convene* comes from the Latin *convenire*. In Latin, *con-* means “together” and *venire* means “to come.” Use this word-origins clue to help you figure out the meaning of *convened*.

READING SKILL

Recognize Sequence List the sequence of events that led to the Berlin airlift.
