

Primary Source Reading 13-1 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Containment or Liberation?

■ About the Selection

Appointed secretary of state by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953, John Foster Dulles testified before the Senate during his confirmation hearing. In his testimony, a portion of which appears below, Dulles proposed the liberation of people under Soviet domination and criticized the containment policy that President Truman had pursued.

Reader's Dictionary



desisting: to halt

eviction: to force out

GUIDED READING

As you read, determine why—according to Dulles—the policy of containment failed. Then answer the questions that follow.

There are a number of policy matters which I would prefer to discuss with the committee in executive session, but I have no objection to saying in open session what I have said before: namely, that we shall never have a secure peace or a happy world so long as Soviet Communism dominates one-third of all of the peoples that there are, and is in the process of trying at least to extend its rule to many others.

These people who are enslaved are people who deserve to be free, and who, from our own selfish standpoint, ought to be free; . . .

. . . [W]e must always have in mind the liberation of these captive peoples.

Now, liberation can be accomplished by processes short of war. We have, as one example—not an ideal example, but it illustrates my point—the defection of Yugoslavia under Tito from the domination of Soviet Communism. . . .

The present tie between China and Moscow is an unholy arrangement, which is contrary to the traditions, the hopes, the aspirations of the Chinese people. Certainly we cannot tolerate a continuance of that. . . .

Therefore, a policy which only aims at containing Russia where it now is, is, in itself, an unsound policy; but it is a policy which is bound to fail because a purely defensive policy never wins against an aggressive policy. If our only policy is to stay where we are, we will be driven back. It is only by keeping alive the hope of liberation, by taking advantage of that wherever opportunity arises, that we will end this terrible peril which dominates the world, . . . It must be and can be a peaceful process, but those who do not believe that results can be accomplished by moral pressures, by the weight of propaganda, just do not know what they are talking about.

Ask you to recall the fact that Soviet Communism, itself, has spread from controlling 200 million people some seven years ago to controlling 800 million people today, and it has done that by methods of political warfare,

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psychological warfare and propaganda, and it has not actually used the Red Army as an open aggressive force in accomplishing that.

Surely what they can accomplish, we can accomplish. Surely if they can use moral and psychological force, we can use it; and to take a negative defeatist attitude is not an approach which is conducive to our own welfare or in conformity with our own historical ideas.

Source: *Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate 83rd Congress, 1st Session.*

READER RESPONSE

Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines below.

1. Why does Dulles call containment "an unsound policy"?

2. What Soviet Communist methods does Dulles think the United States should imitate?

3. What method does Dulles not recommend for liberating people from communism?

4. **Critical Thinking** What factors leading to freedom from communism did Dulles not foresee?
