

**COLD WAR (1947-  
1991): NATO VS.  
WARSAW PACT**



# COLD WAR (1947-1991): NATO VS. WARSAW PACT

## Description

Through the use of various primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basics of the Cold War armed standoff between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Using this knowledge, students will then theorize and debate as to whether or not Putin's latest moves in the Crimea signal his attempt to create another eastern bloc to oppose the modern incarnation of NATO, and what moves (if any) the members of the western alliance might be able to do to stop Russian advances in Eastern Europe.

## Subjects

World History

## Grade Level

11-12

## Duration

90 minutes

## Tour Links

- NATO Headquarters, Brussels
- Presidential Palace, Warsaw
- Berlin Wall Memorial, Berlin
- Soviet Memorial, Berlin
- Freedom Square, Budapest
- Friendship Arch, Kiev

## Essential Questions

- What is NATO? When and why was it created? Is NATO still relevant since the end of the Cold War?
- What was the Warsaw Pact? When and why was it created? Why did it disband?
- Are Russia's moves in the Crimea and Ukraine a prelude to the creation of a new Eastern Bloc to oppose NATO?

# Academic Summary

## **North Atlantic Treaty (excerpts), 04 Apr 1949**

ARTICLE 1: The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 2: The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

ARTICLE 3: In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

ARTICLE 4: The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

ARTICLE 5: The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually, and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

ARTICLE 6: For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

- on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the territory of Turkey or on the islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
- on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

## **Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (excerpts), 01 May 1955**

### **(commonly referred to as the "Warsaw Pact")**

Taking into consideration at the same time the situation obtaining in Europe as the result of ratification of the Paris agreements, which provide for the formation of a new military grouping in the shape of the "Western European Union" together with a remilitarized Western Germany, and for the integration of Western Germany in the North Atlantic bloc, which increases the threat of another war and creates a menace to the national security of the peace-loving states,

Convinced that, under these circumstances, the peace-loving states of Europe should take the necessary measures for safeguarding their security, and in the interests of maintaining peace in Europe,

Article 1. The contracting parties undertake, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations Organization, to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force, and to settle their international disputes by peaceful means so as not to endanger international peace and security.

Article 2. The contracting parties declare their readiness to take part, in the spirit of sincere co-operation, in all international undertakings intended to safeguard international peace and security and they shall use all their energies for the realization of these aims.

Moreover, the contracting parties shall work for the adoption, in agreement with other states desiring to co-operate in this matter, of effective measures towards a general reduction of armaments and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other weapons of mass destruction.

Article 3. The contracting parties shall take council among themselves on all important international questions relating to their common interests, guided by the interests of strengthening international peace and security.

They shall take council among themselves immediately, whenever, in the opinion of any of them, there has arisen the threat of an armed attack on one or several states that are signatories of the treaty, in the interests of organizing their joint defense and of upholding peace and security.

Article 4. In the event of an armed attack in Europe on one or several states that are signatories of the treaty by any state or group of states, each state that is a party to this treaty shall, in the exercise of the right to individual or collective self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations Organization, render the state or states so attacked immediate assistance, individually and in agreement with other states that are parties to this treaty, by all the means it may consider necessary, including the use of armed force. The states that are parties to this treaty shall immediately take council among themselves concerning the necessary joint measures to be adopted for the purpose of restoring and upholding international peace and security.

In accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations Organization, the Security Council shall be advised of the measures taken on the basis of the present article. These measures shall be stopped as soon as the Security Council has taken the necessary measures for restoring and upholding international peace and security-

Article 5. The contracting parties have agreed on the establishment of a joint command for their armed forces, which shall be placed, by agreement among these parties, under this command, which shall function on the basis of jointly defined principles. They shall also take other concerted measures necessary for strengthening their defense capacity, in order to safeguard the peaceful labor of their peoples, to guarantee the inviolability of their frontiers and territories and to provide safeguards against possible aggression.

Article 8. The contracting parties declare that they will act in the spirit of friendship and co-operation with the object of furthering the development of, and strengthening the economic and cultural relations between them, adhering to the principles of mutual respect for their independence and sovereignty, and of non-interference in their internal affairs.

In the event of the organization of a system of collective security in Europe and the conclusion of a general European treaty of collective security to that end, which the contracting parties shall unceasingly seek to bring about, the present treaty shall cease to be effective on the date the general European treaty comes into force.

Done in Warsaw, on May 1, 1955, in one copy each in the Russian, Polish, Czech, and German languages, all the texts being equally authentic. Certified copies of the present treaty shall be transmitted by the government of the Polish People's Republic to all the parties to this treaty.

NATO vs. the Warsaw Pact...

In the twenty-first century, an age of interconnectivity, global communication and economic interdependence, the terms above seem like remnants from a bygone era. Today, in an age where the biggest threats appear to come from radical terrorists rather than nuclear superpowers, few Americans under the age of 40 know or remember much about the Cold War or the Iron Curtain. Old maps showing the countries of the world divided into shades of "blue" and "red" lie dusty and deteriorating in the back of old storage closets.

In the decades following the Second World War, two armed camps found themselves in an armed standoff that would dominate world affairs for the next half century. The threat of nuclear annihilation and radiation fallout would govern everything from geopolitical decisions to school drills for over four decades. Walls, barbed wire and guard towers would go up. Missiles and tanks stood at the ready year after year, waiting for the attack each side was sure would inevitably come. Eastern Europe, controlled from Moscow under the Soviet sphere of influence, would find itself locked behind an "Iron Curtain" facing Western Europe and the United States. As the two camps settled into what became known as the "Cold War", each side blamed the other for mistrust and aggression. Generations of people on both sides grew up with a sense of mistrust and hatred for people who had once been allies. As time wore on, many on both sides looked back to those days in 1945 when the USSR and the USA worked together to defeat Germany, but unfortunately in an age of nationalistic propaganda, such analyses focused largely on blame and how evil the other side had become in the days since Hitler's downfall.

In 1949, the United States organized the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance of western nations dedicated to defending each other against Soviet aggression. According to the provisions of the NATO treaty, an attack on any one of the signatories would necessitate a response from the remaining alliance countries. Led by the United States and the United Kingdom, the NATO alliance sought to create a western bloc. As the first NATO Secretary General, Lord Ismay of Britain put it, "NATO was created to keep the Russians out and the Americans in." The flash point in Europe was in Germany, a nation divided between the western powers and the Soviet Union after the Nazis surrendered. Both sides spent millions building up their military forces along the border. When the Soviets tested and detonated an atomic bomb in August 1949, tensions increased.

On 09 May 1955, four days after the United States, Britain and France formally ended their occupation in what had become West Germany, the newly independent country was granted membership in NATO. In Moscow and across the Iron Curtain, communist leaders believed they needed to act. Five days later, on 14 May 1955, Soviet representatives meeting in Warsaw, Poland with representatives from their satellite nations (including the newly designated "East Germany" signed an eastern bloc alliance. Commonly referred to as the "Warsaw Pact", the pact was specifically designed to counter the NATO alliance. The stage was set for intensification in the Cold War. Over the next 35 years, military buildups on both sides ensured a fragile, yet lasting armed peace, albeit under the constant threat of nuclear annihilation.

Today that threat is gone ... or is it? In the late 1980s, a series of economic crises rocked the USSR. Overspending on the Soviet military, a problem since the early days of the 1960s, finally caught up with the communist regime. Western ideas of capitalism and individualism broke the government's hold on the minds and hearts of Soviet citizens across Eastern Europe. Marches and speeches in Berlin, Poland and Hungary were broadcast live around the world via new technologies. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall, a 28-year-old cold, stone barrier and the very tangible and hated symbol of Russia's "Iron Curtain", suddenly and without warning opened its gates. Hard-line communist governments across

Eastern Europe resigned or agreed to call for unrestricted elections. By December 1991, the Soviet Union was gone. As the nations of Eastern Europe one by one declared their independence, the Warsaw Pact fell apart. Of the two alliance systems, only NATO still survives, although today it is more of an economic accord than a military one. As of 2014, there are 28 current NATO member states stretching across Europe, including (much to the dismay of Russia) 10 former Warsaw Pact countries.

Today, in an age where the biggest threats to global security and peace appear to come from radical terrorists rather than nuclear superpowers, few Americans under the age of 40 know or remember much about the Cold War, the Iron Curtain or the Warsaw Pact. It is easy for many westerners to look back with amusement at the Iron Curtain and the Cold War. Old videos showing students practicing nuclear drills where they would crawl under their school desks seem foolish given what we understand about the destructive power of those weapons. To many, those days are ancient history, belonging not to the daily discussion, but rather to the pages of a world or western history textbook with the likes of the Roman Empire, the Age of Enlightenment and Tsarist Russia. History has a funny way, however, of reminding people of its relevance.

On 27 February 2014, Russian military forces stationed in Crimea Province of Ukraine seized a number of provincial government buildings and surrounded Ukrainian army and air bases on the peninsula. To many of the region's citizens, the Russians were seen as heroes and liberators. Unlike the days of the Cold War, in today's high-tech information-driven world, events halfway across the world unfold live via Facebook and Twitter. Within minutes of the takeover, images of Russian troops confronting Ukrainian forces were streaming and being tweeted across the country and around the globe. Many Americans and Western Europeans were shocked at Russia's moves. News services scrambled to make sense of the events. Seen through the eyes of history, however, Putin's moves should hardly be surprising. Is simply trying to recreate the Russian sphere of influence, another "Iron Curtain"? Can today's moves in the Crimea be seen through the lens of 1949-1955, when then Soviet and American leaders created de-facto empires that pitted West vs. East in Europe?

Through the use of various primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basics of the Cold War armed standoff between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Using this knowledge, students will then theorize and debate as to whether or not Putin's latest moves in the Crimea signal his attempt to create another eastern bloc to oppose the modern incarnation of NATO, and what moves (if any) the members of the western alliance might be able to do to stop Russian advances in Eastern Europe.

## Objectives

1. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain the basics of the Cold War armed standoff between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.
2. Students will analyze, theorize and debate as to whether or not Putin's latest moves in the Crimea signal his attempt to create another eastern bloc to oppose the modern incarnation of NATO, and what moves (if any) the members of the western alliance might be able to do to stop Russian advances in Eastern Europe.

# Procedures

## I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: Does any country have the right to a “sphere of influence”? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the primary sources and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

## II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – NATO and the Warsaw Pact 1945-1989 (20 min)
- Video – NATO and the Warsaw Pact (15 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the sources/articles on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (20 min)
- Suggestion: Students read some of the articles for homework to prepare for class discussion.
- Suggestion: Break students into groups and assign different articles to each group.
- Suggestion: AP/Advanced students should concentrate on primary sources.
- Group Activity – Socratic Discussion: What were the basics behind the creation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact? Were the alliances necessary? (20 min)

## III. Closure

- Assessment – Essay / DBQ: Explain in detail the basics of the Cold War armed standoff between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.
- Follow-up assignment – Debate: Using knowledge gained in this lesson, students will theorize and debate as to whether or not Russian President Putin’s latest moves in the Crimea signal his attempt to create another eastern bloc to oppose the modern incarnation of NATO, and what moves (if any) the members of the western alliance might be able to do to stop Russian advances in Eastern Europe.

## Extension

### **On tour: NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium**

While on tour, students in Brussels can visit the NATO Headquarters where they can see for themselves the administrative center for the Western Alliance. The building also houses the North Atlantic Council, NATO’s senior political decision-making body. Visitors must stop at the Visitors Centre at the Main Gate. Expect security to be high.

# Web Links

## Lesson Plan Websites

- [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/nato.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/nato.asp)  
North Atlantic Treaty (primary source) – from the Avalon Project at Yale University
- [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1955warsawpact.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1955warsawpact.html)  
The Warsaw Pact (primary source) – from the Modern History Sourcebook at Fordham University
- [www.nato.int/nato-welcome/](http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/)  
NATO (website) – Official website for NATO
- [www.history.com/topics/cold-war/formation-of-nato-and-warsaw-pact](http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/formation-of-nato-and-warsaw-pact)  
Formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact (primary source) – from the History Channel
- [www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nato.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nato.htm)  
NATO (website) – from the History Learning Site (UK)
- [www.historyteacher.net/AHAP/WebQuests/WQ-ColdWar/WQ-ColdWar-student-titlePage.htm](http://www.historyteacher.net/AHAP/WebQuests/WQ-ColdWar/WQ-ColdWar-student-titlePage.htm)  
The Cold War Web Quest (website). Great web quest created by Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, NY.
- [www.shsu.edu/~his\\_ncp/WarPact.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/WarPact.html)  
The Warsaw Pact (website) – from Nicholas Pappas, Professor of History at Sam Houston State University (TX)
- [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/soviet\\_union/su\\_appnc.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/soviet_union/su_appnc.html)  
The Warsaw Pact (web article) – from the Library of Congress
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/14/newsid\\_3771000/3771065.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/14/newsid_3771000/3771065.stm)  
On this Date: The Warsaw Pact (website) – from the BBC
- <http://mrkscoldwarb.wikispaces.com/NATO+v.+Warsaw+Pact>  
The Cold War: NATO vs. Warsaw Pact (website)
- [www.slideshare.net/elizkeren/nato-and-the-warsaw-pact-presentation](http://www.slideshare.net/elizkeren/nato-and-the-warsaw-pact-presentation)  
NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PowerPoint)
- [www.johndclare.net/cold\\_war7\\_ppt.pps](http://www.johndclare.net/cold_war7_ppt.pps)  
Iron curtain (PowerPoint). Outstanding PowerPoint from John D. Clare, retire history teacher and author of over 70 history books from the United Kingdom.
- [www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1](http://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1)  
Reading like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video). Great 2-minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes. From Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA. Highly recommended for teachers.
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1t4elhBgmQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1t4elhBgmQ)  
The Price of Peace and Freedom (video). 28-minute video specifically designed to explain the basics of the Cold War to Americans. Produced by the US Department of Defense. Highly recommended for all students and teachers.
- [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/why-russia-is-flexing-muscle-crimea/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/why-russia-is-flexing-muscle-crimea/)  
Why Russia is flexing its muscle in Crimea (video) – from PBS
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8mpF8lg7LQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8mpF8lg7LQ)  
Cold War – 2- Iron Curtain 1945-1947 (video). This 45-minute video is probably too long for most in-class showings, but it is well worth it. The video here is Part 2 of a 24-part series on the Cold War produced by CNN, a series that received international acclaim when it originally aired in 1998-99. CNN is re-airing the series in 2014. An excellent resource for AP/Advanced students studying the Cold War.
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKshC6bZj2U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKshC6bZj2U)  
History of NATO (video). Outstanding 4-minute video that is a great resource for all students and teachers.



## **Background Information**

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO>  
NATO – Wikipedia article
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw\\_Pact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_Pact)  
Warsaw Pact – Wikipedia article
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern\\_Bloc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Bloc)  
Eastern Bloc – Wikipedia article
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union)  
Soviet Union – Wikipedia article
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War)  
Cold War – Wikipedia article

## **Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans**

- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/germany/cold-war-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-1989](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/cold-war-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-1989)  
Cold War (1947-1991) – Fall of the Berlin Wall 1989
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/russia/nato-vs-warsaw-pact](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/russia/nato-vs-warsaw-pact)  
Cold War (1947-1991) – NATO vs. Warsaw Pact
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/russia/cold-war-iron-curtain](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/russia/cold-war-iron-curtain)  
Cold War (1947-1991) – Russia's Iron Curtain
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/czech/prague-spring-of-1968](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/czech/prague-spring-of-1968)  
Communist Czechoslovakia (1848-1989) – Prague Spring of 1968

## **Key Terms**

- Cold War
- Containment
- Eastern Bloc
- East Germany
- Iron Curtain
- NATO
- Sphere of Influence
- USSR
- West Germany

