

EXAMINING PRIMARY SOURCES

The Cold War: The Truman Doctrine of 1947

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority ... The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority ... I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or other outside pressures ... The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation.

—President Harry S. Truman (Excerpt from “The Truman Doctrine,” 1947)

1. What are the “alternative ways of life” to which Truman refers? _____

2. What is the foreign policy being advocated by Truman? _____

3. Critics of American Cold War policy argue that the United States was hypocritical in its foreign relations—that the United States was no better than the Soviet Union in imposing its will on various countries. Do you agree or disagree? Utilize the Truman excerpt in your response. _____

