

## The Long Telegram

After World War II, both the United States and the Soviet Union sought political control of the world. In 1946 George F. Kennan, a Foreign Service officer, was Chargé d’Affaires in Moscow. Kennan issued the “Long Telegram” to the U.S. State Department detailing Joseph Stalin’s foreign policy and outlining what would become his containment policy. This policy would influence United States and Soviet relations in the Cold War for years to come.

### PRIMARY SOURCE

“. . . For these reasons [I] think we may approach calmly and with good heart problem of how to deal with Russia. As to how this approach should be made, I only wish to advance, by way of conclusion, following comments . . .

. . . (Two) We must see that our public is educated, to realities of Russian situation. I cannot over-emphasize importance of this. Press cannot do this alone. It must be done mainly by government, which is necessarily more experienced and better informed on practical problems involved . . . I am convinced that there would be far less **hysterical** anti-Sovietism in our country today if realities of this situation were better understood by our people. There is nothing as dangerous or as terrifying as the unknown. It may also be argued that to reveal more information on our difficulties with Russia would reflect unfavorably on Russian American relations. I feel that if there is any real risk here involved, it is one which we should have courage to face, and sooner the better. But I cannot see what we would be risking. Our **stake** in this country, even coming on heels of tremendous demonstrations of our friendship for Russian people, is remarkably small. We have here no investments to guard, no actual trade to lose, virtually no citizens to protect, few cultural contacts to preserve. Our only stake lies in what we hope rather than what we have; and I am convinced we have better chance of realizing those hopes if our public is enlightened and if our dealings with Russians are placed entirely on realistic and matter of fact basis . . .

. . . (Four) We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in past. It is not enough to urge people to develop political processes similar to our own. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at least, are tired and frightened by experiences of past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will . . .”

—George Kennan, in a telegram to the Secretary of State, February 22, 1946

### VOCABULARY

#### **hysterical**

an extreme reaction based on fear or anger

#### **stake**

an interest in a task or enterprise

### DBQ Analyzing Historical Documents

- 1 Analyzing** According to Kennan, what is the point of educating the American public about the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union? Why do you think he stresses this point? Use examples from the excerpt to support your answer.
- 2 Identifying** Why does Kennan believe the United States should promote its political process and its view of how the world should ideally function to other countries?
- 3 Describing** Why does Kennan state that there is no risk in disclosing more information to the public?