

IV. America and Europe

A. The Aftermath of World War I - 1920

1. As World War I (1914-19) raged in Europe, Woodrow Wilson redefined America's relationship to Europe when he said, "The world must be made safe for democracy."
2. America entered the war, and made the decisive contribution, bringing that conflict to an end by forcing the German Empire (the main aggressor) to stop fighting and withdraw from conquered lands.
3. In the aftermath of the war, Wilson and other world leaders believed that democratic nations could create real peace, if they were free from the threat of empires. This is known as "internationalism." (As the name suggests, *internationalism* holds that nations create peace by having stronger relationships *between* them.)
4. This was the idea behind the new international organization called the "League of Nations" formed in 1920.
5. But it did not include the United States. In 1920 the American people elected Warren Harding president because he promised a "return to normalcy." Americans wanted to return to traditional political separation.



The emblem of the "League of Nations," the precursor to the modern-day United Nations. The United States did *not* join this organization.

B. The Failure of Internationalism

1. The League of Nations failed completely. Its goal was peace through internationalism. It led instead to World War II (1939-45).
2. The problem that internationalism cannot solve by itself is that sometimes people actually don't want peace! The German people before World War II are the best/worst example. They *wanted* war, and the internationalists did not know how to stand up to them.
3. Japan, Italy, and Nazi Germany took advantage of the internationalism of their enemies to prepare for war—a war that they almost won.
4. As we have seen, Japan made the mistake of attacking the United States at Pearl Harbor in 1941, dragging America into the war. Once again, the United States made the decisive contribution towards the defeat of all the aggressors.

C. Europe Made Safe: 1945-47-49

1. At the end of World War II, as we have already seen, the United States found itself in a stand-off with its former ally, communist Russia. This resulted in the announcement of the Truman Doctrine of 1947 that proposed a policy of containing communism.
2. Already by that point, the United States had agreed to add its might to a new form internationalism, called the United Nations, formed after the war in 1945.

3. If internationalism had failed so miserably to prevent World War II, why did anyone think it would work after the war? The answer is simple. It would be backed up by a world police power: the United States of America.
4. The milestones of 1945 (United Nations) and 1947 (Truman Doctrine) together represent the combination of *internationalism* and *interventionism*. Interventionism is a commitment to intervene—in the conflicts of others, around the world. It is the technical term that describes the role of a world police power.
5. The final step in securing Europe from the threat of Russian communist expansion was a permanent military alliance formed in 1949 called the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization" (NATO). This treaty pledges America's military aid to defend Europe from Russia.
6. Ever since the formation of NATO, America troops have been permanently stationed in Europe to protect it from Russia.



The emblems of the United Nations (top) and NATO (bottom) represent the new interconnected reality in which America is the world's police power.

C. Visualizing the American-European Interconnection

1. We already have learned to see modern American history as involving the two world wars and the subsequent Truman Doctrine. But it's important to see America's connection to Europe more strongly.
2. Here are the new facts that show America and Europe's interconnection:
 - a) After World War I, we will add *two* tick marks for 1920 — one for America and one for Europe. Europe attempted the League of Nations. America returned to normalcy.
 - b) After World War II, by contrast, we will add a line for 1945 — the United Nations, which America did join in a commitment to internationalism.
 - c) And we will add a link for NATO (1949), which is the treaty commitment of America to implement the Truman Doctrine and protect Europe.

