Worksheet 2: Stalin’s Election Speech

**Context:** On February 9, 1946, Stalin delivered an “election” speech to an assembly of voters in Moscow. In the USSR, elections were not designed to provide voters with a choice between competing candidates or programs. There was only one candidate for each position, and that candidate always endorsed the Communist Party’s positions on questions facing the nation. Election speeches were therefore used to inform citizens of the Party’s positions, to defend and justify those positions, and to identify the candidate as a person worthy of trust and responsibility. When one of the Party leaders spoke, everyone listened attentively, for such a speech might contain hints as to the future actions of the Soviet government. The speech was given at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Consider the point of view of Stalin (audience, background, purpose, beliefs, motivation, position, etc.) in making this speech.

- What does Stalin identify as the cause of World War II?

- How does Stalin’s explanation relate to Marxist principles?

- Although the Red Army had obviously achieved the military victory, why did Stalin emphasize so strongly that the Soviet social and state systems had triumphed?

- What words or phrases did Stalin use that contributed to the inflammatory nature of his speech?
Worksheet 2: Stalin’s Election Speech  

II. We tend to think of the Soviet Union as a quite closed society, but the international press covered this speech. Read the *Washington Post*’s “Stalin Blames Capitalism for 2 Wars,” and consider

--How does the *Post* summarize Stalin’s speech?

--What is the point of view (audience, background, purpose, beliefs, motivation, position, etc.) of the *Post*?

--Can we presume that the views of the *Post* represent those of US government officials? Of US citizens? Why or why not?
Worksheet 3: Kennan’s Long Telegram

**Context:** American officials in the US Embassy in Moscow, however, heard, translated, and analyzed it. George F. Kennan was a career foreign service officer in the US Department of State and a highly regarded student of Russian and Soviet affairs. Early in 1946, while serving at the American Embassy in Moscow, he sent a lengthy message to Washington, providing his own expert analysis of Soviet behavior. Placing Soviet expansionism squarely within the context of traditional Russian suspicion and insecurity, he argued that the USSR could not be fully trusted or reasoned with by the West, and must instead be treated with firm resistance and strength. This “Long Telegram” made a deep impression on Kennan’s superiors and helped to shape their thinking about US foreign policy. Later that year, Kennan was encouraged to submit an article for publication based on this telegram; it was published in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947, signed “X.”

**Guiding Questions:**

- Consider the point of view of Kennan (audience, background, purpose, beliefs, motivation, position, etc.) in writing this telegram.

- According to Kennan, what are the main principles of Communist ideology?

- According to Kennan, what were the main reasons for Soviet hostility toward the West?

- Why did Kennan believe that the Soviet leaders could never fully be trusted by the West?

- How did Kennan recommend that the West should counter Soviet expansion?

- Why did Kennan caution Western leaders to avoid gestures of outward “toughness” toward the USSR?

- What did Kennan think was US policy’s role in the breakup or mellowing of Soviet power?

- What words or phrases did Kennan use which increased the inflammatory nature of his telegram?
Worksheet 3: Kennan’s Long Telegram part II

I. How would you expect government officials and private citizens of the United States, Great Britain, and Soviet Union to react to this telegram, and later to the Foreign Affairs article? Why?

II. Kennan’s treatise was later edited, declassified, and published in Foreign Affairs in July 1946.
   A. What do you think prompted President Truman and the Department of State to make Kennan’s concerns available to the general public?

Worksheet 4: Churchill’s “Sinews of Peace” Speech

Context: In February 1946, several weeks after Stalin’s election speech, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited the United States. Increasingly concerned over Soviet behavior, he confided his fears in President Truman. The two men decided that Churchill should deliver a major address in Fulton, Missouri (Truman’s home state), to alert the world to the Soviet threat. That candid speech, in which Churchill used the term “iron curtain” to describe the barrier Moscow had placed between the West and the communist-dominated nations of Eastern Europe, startled many Americans and infuriated Stalin. Churchill issued a ringing call for the continuation of Anglo-American wartime cooperation, this time against a Soviet Union he viewed as bent on world domination. The address made headlines throughout the world.

Guiding Questions:

• Consider the point of view of Churchill (audience, background, purpose, beliefs, motivation, position, etc.) in making this speech.

• What evidence did Churchill give of Soviet expansionism? What events convinced him that Anglo-American cooperation must be preserved after World War II?

• If Churchill recognized “the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers,” why did he object so strongly to what the Russians were doing in Eastern Europe?

• Why did Churchill assert that “the old doctrine of the balance of power is unsound”? With what did he propose to replace it?

• Since Churchill was no longer Prime Minister, why did his speech have such a powerful impact?

• What words and phrases did Churchill use which made his speech so inflammatory?
Worksheet 4: “Churchill’s Sinews of Peace” Speech  

How would you expect government officials and private citizens of the United States, Great Britain, and Soviet Union to react to this speech? Why?

Next, look at the headlines and other materials related to this speech. How did the governments and private citizens actually react? Why?
Worksheet 5: Excerpts from Pravda’s Interview with Stalin, March 1946

**Context:** Stalin’s reaction to the “iron curtain” speech was vigorous and direct. In an interview in the Soviet newspaper Pravda, published in mid-March 1946, he characterized the former British Prime Minister as a man bent on war against the Soviet Union. He defended Soviet actions in Eastern Europe, pointing out the importance of that region for Soviet security and insisting that the governments there were democratic. Considering it unlikely that Truman would have appeared on the platform with Churchill had he disagreed with the latter’s remarks, Stalin also asserted that the Americans and British were banding together against their former wartime allies.

**Guiding Questions:**
- Consider the point of view of Stalin (audience, background, medium, purpose, beliefs, motivation, position, etc.) in giving this interview.
- Was Stalin’s accusation that Churchill’s speech reflected Anglo-American racism justified? Why/not?
- Why did Stalin consider Churchill’s list of “iron curtain” cities inaccurate?
- How did Stalin explain the Soviet presence, physical or otherwise, in many Eastern European countries? How did he explain the growth of communist parties in those countries?
- Why did Stalin contend that Churchill had no legitimate basis for criticizing recent developments in Poland?
- What words or phrases did Stalin use which made his interview more inflammatory?
Worksheet 5: Excerpts from Pravda’s Interview with Stalin, March 1946  

How would you expect government officials and private citizens of the United States, Great Britain, and Soviet Union to react to this interview? Why?

Next, look at the headlines and other materials related to this interview. How did the governments actually react? Why? See Appendix C

1. What is Churchill’s purpose in giving this speech? Who is his audience? In what ways have these factors altered the content and tone of his speech?

2. Has Churchill’s analysis changed? Why or why not?

3. In his third paragraph, Churchill mentions that the world situation has changed greatly since his speech in Fulton, Missouri. What has happened? (See Worksheet 1: Europe in Context) Why have these events happened?

4. One troubling situation existed in Iran—what was happening there? What did Churchill suggest would improve it?

5. Churchill praises the Soviet effort in World War II and notes that it was amply rewarded. What did The Soviet Union gain in the settlement agreements?

6. Despite this, there remained tensions in the Dardanelles—what was happening there? How does Churchill propose that this problem will be resolved?

7. What does Churchill foresee, generally, as the role of the United Nations Security Council?

8. Read the news excerpts in Appendix D—how have the speeches and articles of these few weeks in history altered how people view the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union?
A typical front page of the newspaper Pravda