



Postwar: Six Capitals, One Board

PROJECTOR GAME • TEACHER RUN SHEET

AP US HISTORY • UNIT 8

witsooth.com/games/postwar.html

THE SETUP

Six capitals share one board of six sliders.

Project the board. Split the class into the six groups below and hand each group its page. On its turn a group drags **one slider** up to **three notches** and presses **Done**. Turn order is redrawn every round. Three rounds, eighteen moves.

BEFORE YOU START • 5 MIN

Keep page 1. Hand out pages 2–7, one per group.

Give Berlin and Decolonizing Asia & Africa to students who will argue.

They have the least power on the board and the most at stake.

EACH ROUND • 10–12 MIN

The group at the board drags a slider. **The graphs move as they drag**, before they press Done.

An arrow in the group's color under each slider marks where that group wants it.

WATCH FOR THE TUG OF WAR

Washington can pull Soviet Grip down and Moscow can push it straight back up.

Every move they trade raises Risk of War, though neither side wants a war.

BETWEEN ROUNDS • 3 MIN

History moves sliders by itself. After round 1 Britain hands Greece to Washington and American Commitment rises. After round 2 the Berlin blockade raises American Commitment and Soviet Grip.

Read the card aloud. Groups fill in their reflection lines while it is on screen.

THE SIX GROUPS

US State Department

Contain them, and pay whatever that costs.

The Kremlin

Never again from the west. Hold the buffer.

Western Europe

Rebuild, and keep the empire if we can.

Decolonizing Asia & Africa

Independence, and no bloc owns us.

Mao's China

A quarter of humanity changes sides.

Divided Berlin

Two million people, 110 miles inside the Soviet zone.

WHAT THE FOUR MEASURES MEAN

MEASURE	STARTS AT	WHERE IT STOOD IN 1950
Western bloc strength	45	Marshall Plan complete, NATO signed, West Germany founded — call it 70
Soviet bloc strength	40	Eastern Europe held, the bomb tested, China allied — call it 62
Independence momentum	15	India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines free; nearly all of Africa still colonized — call it 27
Risk of war	20	Korea began in June 1950 and killed about three million — call it 62

Groups do not see this table. The scores are estimates for discussion, not measurements.



US State Department

"Contain Soviet expansive tendencies by the adroit application of counter-force."

You came out of the war with half the world's industrial output, no bomb damage and the only atomic bomb. You believe the mistake of the 1930s was waiting too long. The countries most likely to go communist are not being invaded. They are broke, and hungry people vote. Every answer you have costs money, and you have money to spend.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 – Loans, and no promises	 ► push up to 10	Broke and hungry countries vote communist. Rebuild them.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 – Friendly governments, some latitude	 ◄ pull down to 3	Push back where we can. Poland is already gone.
Arms Race	2 – Armies going home	 ► push up to 7	They read force, and they do not read anything else.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 – The bomb is not mentioned	 ► push up to 5	The monopoly will not last. Bank the advantage while it does.
Colonial Hold	8 – Troops sent to hold the line	 ◄ pull down to 3	Our allies' empires are a recruiting poster for the other side.
Room for Neutrals	4 – Pressure to declare a side	 ◄ pull down to 2	Neutrality in this fight is a gap they will walk straight through.

Gray box = where it starts. Colored box = where you want it. You get three moves, one per round, of up to three notches each. Any group can move any slider, including back.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Soviet power... is neither schematic nor adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, it is highly sensitive to logic of force.

George F. Kennan, US chargé d'affaires in Moscow, telegram 511 to the Secretary of State, 22 February 1946

Kennan says Soviet power retreats from force and ignores argument. If you believe that sentence, which slider becomes impossible to leave alone?

REFLECTION • FILL IN AS YOU PLAY

Round 1: which slider did you move, and which one did you leave alone to do it?

Name a group that pulled a slider back the other way. What did that cost on the graphs?

After the final board: your group scored a percentage. Did the graphs improve while you got it? Cite one number.



The Kremlin

"Whoever occupies a territory imposes on it his own social system."

You lost 24 to 27 million people and 1,700 towns. You have been invaded through the same corridor twice in thirty years, and you will not allow a third time. You have no bomb, no dollars and a wrecked economy. You have the Red Army, standing where it stopped, and you intend to keep it there.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 – Loans, and no promises		American money in Europe is American influence in Europe.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 – Friendly governments, some latitude		Twenty-seven million dead came through that corridor. Close it.
Arms Race	2 – Armies going home		We have no bomb and no dollars. We have the Red Army.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 – The bomb is not mentioned		A monopoly is a threat whatever its owner says. Break it.
Colonial Hold	8 – Troops sent to hold the line		No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.
Room for Neutrals	4 – Pressure to declare a side		A neutral country is one the Americans do not have.

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PRIMARY SOURCE

Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.

Joseph Stalin, in conversation with Yugoslav delegates, Moscow, April 1945; recorded by Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, 1962

Djilas wrote this down seventeen years later, after breaking with Stalin. Does that make it less useful as evidence? Say what you would check it against.

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Western Europe

"Rebuild, and hold on to what is left of the empire while we do it."

You are Britain, France and their neighbors. You won the war and you are broke. Your cities are rubble and your currencies are worthless abroad. In the winter of 1946–47 British factories shut for lack of coal. The French Communist Party wins over a quarter of the vote and sits in the government. You still rule several hundred million colonial subjects who want out.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 – Loans, and no promises	 ► push up to 9	There is no other money. Take it and argue about the terms later.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 – Friendly governments, some latitude	 no position	No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.
Arms Race	2 – Armies going home	 ► push up to 5	Defend ourselves enough that the Americans take us seriously.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 – The bomb is not mentioned	 hold at 2	We are the ground this would be fought over. Keep it quiet.
Colonial Hold	8 – Troops sent to hold the line	 ► push up to 9	Rubber, tin and oil paid for the recovery.
Room for Neutrals	4 – Pressure to declare a side	 no position	No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.

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PRIMARY SOURCE

Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.

Secretary of State George C. Marshall, commencement address at Harvard, 5 June 1947

Marshall says the policy is not aimed at any country. The Soviet Union was formally invited and refused. Was the invitation real? Give a reason either way.

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Decolonizing Asia & Africa

"We are not a wing of either bloc. We are most of the people on earth."

You were told this was a war for self-determination, and Churchill said the Atlantic Charter did not apply to you. Two million Indians served. Japan's conquests showed the European empires could be beaten. Now the empires are broke and both superpowers want you on their side. Independence comes with an alignment attached unless you refuse it.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 – Loans, and no promises	 ► push up to 4	Take the aid. Do not take the alignment that comes with it.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 – Friendly governments, some latitude	 no position	No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.
Arms Race	2 – Armies going home	 ◄ pull down to 1	Every dollar spent on arms is a dollar not spent on us.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 – The bomb is not mentioned	 ◄ pull down to 0	The tests happen on our islands and in our deserts.
Colonial Hold	8 – Troops sent to hold the line	 ◄ pull down to 0	Our first demand: the empires leave.
Room for Neutrals	4 – Pressure to declare a side	 ► push up to 10	Non-alignment is a foreign policy, not the absence of one.

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PRIMARY SOURCE

"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: all the peoples on the earth are equal from birth and have a right to live and to be free.

Ho Chi Minh, Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, 2 September 1945

Ho opens by quoting the United States. What is he trying to make Washington do, and what did Washington actually do?

REFLECTION • FILL IN AS YOU PLAY

Round 1: which slider did you move, and which one did you leave alone to do it?

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Mao's China

"The Chinese people have stood up. There is no third road."

You have been at war since 1937 — against Japan, then against the Nationalists, who are armed and funded by the United States. You are winning. When you take the cities you inherit a country of 540 million people with no working currency, a railway network in pieces and a century of foreign concessions to unwind. You will need a patron, and there is only one on offer.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 — Loans, and no promises	 ◀ pull down to 1	American ships in the strait and American guns to the Nationalists.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 — Friendly governments, some latitude	 no position	No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.
Arms Race	2 — Armies going home	 ▶ push up to 6	We have just fought for twelve years. We are not disarming.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 — The bomb is not mentioned	 ▶ push up to 4	Our ally's bomb is our shield.
Colonial Hold	8 — Troops sent to hold the line	 ◀ pull down to 0	A century of foreign concessions ends now.
Room for Neutrals	4 — Pressure to declare a side	 ◀ pull down to 1	Neutrality is camouflage. There is no third road.

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PRIMARY SOURCE

"You are leaning to one side." Exactly... Not only in China but in the world, without exception, one either leans to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism. Neutrality is camouflage and a third road does not exist.

Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," 30 June 1949

One group on this board is built entirely on the third road Mao says does not exist. Find them, and decide which of you 1950 proved right.

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Divided Berlin

"We are the front line of a war nobody has declared."

You are the two million people of Berlin's western sectors, 110 miles inside the Soviet zone. You were the capital of the country that started the war, so nobody owes you sympathy. You have no army, no currency of your own and no written right of access to the west. You have a vote, and the world is watching how you use it.

WHERE YOU WANT THE SIX SLIDERS

SLIDER	WHERE IT STARTS	YOU WANT	YOUR CASE
American Commitment Abroad	3 – Loans, and no promises	 ► push up to 10	The day the western powers leave, we are annexed.
Soviet Grip on the East	5 – Friendly governments, some latitude	 ◄ pull down to 3	Loosen it just enough that our sectors keep voting.
Arms Race	2 – Armies going home	 ► push up to 6	Defend the corridor. We are at the end of it.
Nuclear Brinkmanship	2 – The bomb is not mentioned	 hold at 2	We are 110 miles inside their zone. Do not wave it about.
Colonial Hold	8 – Troops sent to hold the line	 no position	No position. Spend your moves elsewhere.
Room for Neutrals	4 – Pressure to declare a side	 ◄ pull down to 3	A neutral Germany is a Germany nobody defends.

Gray box = where it starts. Colored box = where you want it. You get three moves, one per round, of up to three notches each. Any group can move any slider, including back.

PRIMARY SOURCE

People of the world, look upon this city and see that you should not and cannot abandon this city and this people.

Ernst Reuter, mayor-elect of Berlin, speaking to about 300,000 people in front of the ruined Reichstag, 9 September 1948

Reuter is not speaking to Berliners. Who is he speaking to, and what is he asking them to risk?

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