



LIBERATION & LEGACY

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

APRIL 12, 1945

US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage while resting at the “Little White House” in Warm Springs, Georgia.

APRIL 30, 1945

Adolf Hitler commits suicide within his bunker in Berlin, days before the city falls to Soviet forces on May 2.

MAY 7, 1945

Nazi General Alfred Jodl signs the unconditional surrender of all German armed forces set to go into effect at midnight the following day. This date marks the end of fighting in the European theater of World War II.

JULY 17 - AUGUST 2, 1945

New US President Harry S. Truman meets with Allied leaders at the Potsdam Conference to discuss the postwar order, and Truman demands an unconditional surrender from Japan, which Japanese leaders refuse.

AUGUST 6 AND 9, 1945

Two atomic bombs, “Little Boy” and “Fat Man,” are dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Six days after the bombing of Nagasaki, Japanese Emperor Hirohito announces Japan’s surrender to the United States via radio broadcast.

OCTOBER 24, 1945

The United Nations formally comes into existence after the founding Member States ratify the UN **Charter**. October 24 marks United Nations Day, which the UN General Assembly set as a public holiday in 1971.

NOVEMBER 20, 1945

The International Military Tribunal (IMT) begins presiding over trials against Nazi war criminals held in the German city of Nuremberg. The trials continue until October 1, 1946.

APRIL 29, 1946

The Tokyo **War Crimes** Tribunal commences with 28 Japanese leaders put on trial, charged with 55 separate counts of criminal activity related to waging warfare and **crimes against humanity**.

JULY 4, 1946

Representatives of the United States and the Philippines sign the Treaty of Manila in which the US relinquishes any claim of sovereignty and recognizes the independence of the Republic of the Philippines.

MARCH 12, 1947

President Harry S. Truman delivers a speech before Congress, known as the Truman Doctrine, stating the intention of the United States to assist countries under threat of communist takeover, marking a clear end to the isolationism that characterized US foreign policy before World War II.



(Image: Ed Westcott/American Museum of Science and Energy.)

JUNE 5, 1947

Secretary of State George C. Marshall delivers a speech outlining a program to rebuild war-torn Europe. This speech later leads to Congressional approval of the Economic Cooperation Act in 1948 and a \$12 billion investment in the reconstruction of Western European countries.

JUNE 25, 1947

The first edition of the work that comes to be known as *The Diary of a Young Girl* is published by Contact Publishing in Amsterdam. The diary, kept by Jewish teenager, Anne Frank, captures glimpses into her life during the two years her family hid from Nazi forces. The diary quickly becomes an international best seller and remains one of the most familiar sources related to the Holocaust.

AUGUST 14-15, 1947

The British government partitions British India into two independent states, establishing the nation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947, and the nation of India the following day. August 15 later becomes India's Independence Day, celebrating the end of British rule.

JUNE 24, 1948

After Soviet forces attempt to block other Western powers from accessing the Western sector of Berlin, which remained under Allied control, an airlift program begins to carry food and other supplies to the people of West Berlin. The airlift continues until September 30, 1949, and represents one of the first direct confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the emerging **Cold War**.

JULY 26, 1948

President Harry S. Truman issues Executive Order 9981, formally desegregating all US armed forces. The order declares that "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."

APRIL 4, 1949

Western democracies sign the North Atlantic Treaty in an effort to hinder the spread of **communism** and the growth of Soviet global power. The Treaty, which establishes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), creates an alliance built on military cooperation. Article 5 of the Treaty states that an armed attack on one of the Allied members constitutes an attack on all.

AUGUST 29, 1949

The Soviet Union conducts its first successful test of an atomic bomb at a test site in Kazakhstan. This test marks a new era of **Cold War** tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, initiating an **arms race** that comes to define diplomacy and daily life throughout most of the remaining decades in the twentieth century.

OCTOBER 1, 1949

The People's Republic of China is founded under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Following Japan's surrender in World War II, a civil war broke out over the control of China that lasted from 1945 to 1949. Communist forces in China, backed by the Soviet Union, ultimately prevailed over the Nationalist forces, leading to the creation of a new Communist power.

JUNE 25, 1950

After two separate governments—one communist and the other democratic—claim sovereignty over Korea, Soviet and Chinese forces join North Korean forces in an invasion of South Korea. This event marks the beginning of the Korean War and the first armed conflict of the **Cold War** in which Soviet and American forces fight for dominant influence over the region.