

1. The End of the War / Wartime Diplomacy

- The *Yalta Conference*, February 1945 (the "*Big Three*": Stalin, Roosevelt
 - agreement on dismemberment of Germany
 - France accepted as partner in future German arrangements
 - agreement to hold free elections in liberated countries

- The *race for Berlin*:

- Americans crossed the Rhine in April 1945
- Stalin wanted to capture Berlin first
- May 2nd, 1945: Soviet flag on the Reichstag →

- May 8th 1945: Victory in Europe

- The Potsdam Conference (July - Aug 1945):

- Truman had replaced Roosevelt and wanted to take a tougher stance against Soviet "*expansionism*" (by that time the USA had the *A Bomb*)
- Stalin wanted *war reparations* and a "*buffer zone*" of friendly states around the Soviet Union
- → growing suspicion between the USSR and its American and British allies

- The decision to drop the bomb: following Japanese rejection of an ultimatum, 1st bomb dropped on Hiroshima on Aug 6th and 2nd one on Nagasaki on Aug 9th.

→ 2 interpretations:

- a humanitarian "short cut" to end the war avoiding huge casualties which would have occurred in a "traditional" invasion of Japan
- a "warning" to Stalin

- September 2nd, 1945: *V J day* (Victory over Japan)

2. The Cost of the War: a Cataclysm

- total number of deaths estimated between 40 and 60 million among which 20 million in the Soviet Union alone.
- up to 10 million *displaced people*
- massive physical destruction, especially *transportation network* and *industrial infrastructure* as well as housing
- a changed balance of power: weakened Europe, Soviet ambitions, American triumph

3. Post-war settlements

- Occupation of Germany (four zones), demilitarization, denazification
- free elections in Austria (full independence only in 1955)
- occupation and disarmament in Italy
- transfers of territory in Eastern Europe (see map)

