The Marshall Plan

Summary: The Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Program, was a U.S. program providing aid to Western Europe following the devastation of World War II. ... In addition to economic redevelopment, one of the stated goals of the Marshall Plan was to halt the spread of communism on the European continent.

The Marshall Plan and Recovery

After World War II much of Europe was destroyed from the constant fighting and fallout of the war. Armies from both sides had bombed roads, bridges, supplies, and communication buildings throughout Europe. The European nations and their citizens needed to rebuild. This was not easy however. Many governments were out of money because they had used all their resources in fighting the war.

Fear of Communism:

The United States, as well as much of Europe, had allied with the Russians in order to defeat Hitler and the Germans. However, now they were worried about the Russians and the spread of communism. If Western Europe did not rebuild and grow strong quickly, it may soon fall to communism.
Communism is a type of government and way of life. Its goal is to form a country where everything is shared equally. All people are treated equally and there is little private ownership. In a communist government, the government owns and controls most everything including property, education, transportation, and farming.

The actual results of communist governments however, have been nothing like the ideal concepts of communism. The poorest people that were supposed to be helped by Communism, were treated horribly by the leaders of the government. For example, it is estimated that Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin had over 40 million people murdered for the "good of the state". Stalin created labor camps for anyone who disagreed with the government. He even created famines (lack of food) in order to break the will of the people and gain total control.

Communist states generally have much less freedom. They prevent the practice of religion, order certain people to work certain jobs, and prevent people from moving around or moving to other countries.

Fortunately, the land of the United States had been free of destruction during World War II. The US economy was doing well, making the United States the richest country in the world. They wanted to help Europe and their allies recover from the War and prevent Russia from spreading its control and communism to Europe.

The Marshall Plan:

In order to help Europe recover from the war, the United States came up with the Marshall Plan. It is named after Secretary of State George Marshall. The Marshall Plan offered help and money to European countries in order to recover from World War II so they could restart their economies.

Although the US had already been helping Europe to recover, the Marshall Plan made it official in 1948. Over the next four years the US gave $13 billion in assistance to Western European countries. The US also offered assistance to Russia and its allies, however, they turned it down.

Success:

By the time the Marshall Plan funding ended, all of the countries that participated had larger economies and were stronger than before the war. The plan was successful in helping Western Europe recover economically from the war and stopping the spread of communism to those European nations.
Assignment 1 - Guided Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer. When you locate the answer for the multiple choice questions, if you are working online please highlight the correct response using the highlight feature on the toolbar above (the highlight feature looks like a little marker) or circle the correct response if you are working on a paper copy.

1. Who was the Marshall Plan named after?
   a. Secretary of State George Marshall
   b. President Marshall
   c. Thurgood Marshall
   d. Chief Justice John Marshall

2. In addition to helping Europe, what did the U.S. probably expect in return from the Marshall Plan? (critical thinking)
   a. Leniency in punishing war criminals
   b. Help in monitoring Germany
   c. European assistance for Russia
   d. Permission to create U.S. military bases in Europe

3. How much in aid did the United States provide through the Marshall Plan?
   a. $100 million
   b. $1 billion
   c. $2 billion
   d. $13 billion

4. Why did many countries in Europe need help from the United States?
   a. Because their infrastructure was destroyed by the fighting in the war
   b. Because their economies were struggling
   c. Because many of their roads, bridges, and cities had been bombed
   d. All of the above

Assignment 2 - Supportive Document & Questions

Directions: Read and analyze the following document then answer in complete sentences the questions that follow to the best of your abilities.