

Potsdam Conference Update

Soviet Union

Moderate Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: Victory in Europe (VE Day) has reduced the Soviet Union's leverage as the immediate threat in Europe has ended, lessening the importance of their military contributions on the Eastern Front.

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Soviet Union

Significant Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: Soviet demands for control in Eastern Europe have led to mistrust from Western allies. Stalin's actions are viewed with skepticism, weakening Soviet credibility in negotiations.

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Soviet Union

Significant Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: The USSR faces severe economic strain, as the war has devastated its infrastructure.

Reconstruction needs outweigh its capacity to make aggressive demands, forcing Stalin to shift focus to domestic stability.

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Soviet Union

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: The Red Army controlled much of Eastern Europe, including Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and parts of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This gave Stalin significant leverage, as the Allies could do little to remove Soviet influence without direct confrontation. The interconnection of European states meant that Stalin could refuse to provide Western Europe with the raw materials drawn from Eastern Europe under Red Army control.

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Soviet Union

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: At Yalta, Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan within three months of Germany's surrender. With the United States still preparing for a costly invasion of the Japanese home islands, this promise was crucial. The Soviets' entry into the Pacific War gave Stalin additional leverage, allowing him to negotiate for territorial gains in Manchuria and the Kuril Islands, as well as influence in post-war Asia.

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United Kingdom

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: Britain maintained occupation zones in Germany, particularly in the industrial regions of the Ruhr and Hamburg, which were vital for post-war economic recovery. This gave Britain a degree of leverage in shaping Germany's future and controlling potential Soviet influence.

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United Kingdom

Significant Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: Britain's role in Europe is bolstered by increased American support, and a strong post-war alliance with the U.S. makes British priorities in Europe more achievable.

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United Kingdom

Significant Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: Britain was financially exhausted by the war and heavily dependent on American loans and economic support (e.g., the Lend-Lease Program, which ended abruptly in 1945). This weakened Britain's ability to act independently, making it more reliant on U.S. decisions.

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United Kingdom

Moderate Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: The British general election in July 1945, held during the Potsdam Conference, resulted in Winston Churchill losing power and Clement Attlee becoming Prime Minister. This sudden transition weakened Britain's negotiating position, as Attlee lacked Churchill's established relationships with Truman and Stalin.

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United Kingdom

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: Despite post-war economic strain, Britain still controlled a vast empire, including key territories in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. This allowed Britain to negotiate from a position of global influence, even as its role in Europe diminished.

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United States

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: The United States has completed development of the atomic bomb, giving it an unmatched military advantage. Although not yet deployed, this technological edge strengthens U.S. influence in discussions.

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United States

Significant Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: The U.S., with a thriving economy and undamaged industrial base, emerges as an economic powerhouse, allowing it to shape European recovery plans and sideline Soviet economic priorities.

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United States

Significant Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: The atomic bomb and reduced need for Soviet assistance in the Pacific give the U.S. overwhelming leverage, decreasing the incentive to accommodate Soviet demands in Asia or Europe.

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United States

Moderate Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: While the Soviet Union had a massive land army, the U.S. dominated in naval and air power, allowing for global military projection in ways that the Soviets could not match.

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United States

Significant Gain in Negotiating Power

Description: The U.S. had the financial power to dictate the terms of European recovery, and with Britain in economic decline, America's role in shaping Western Europe's economic future was unparalleled.

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United States

Moderate Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: Although the U.S. was in a strong position, war fatigue at home meant that the American public wanted troops brought back quickly.

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United States

Moderate Loss in Negotiating Power

Description: Franklin D. Roosevelt had a working relationship with Stalin, but his death in April 1945 meant that the less-experienced Harry Truman was now leading negotiations.