



*Fighting Social
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Research Report

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Introduction

Korea was divided at the 38th parallel during World War II into a Communist northern half and an American-occupied southern half. “If the best minds in the world had set out to find us the worst possible location in the world to fight this damnable war,” U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1893-1971) once said, “the unanimous choice would have been Korea.” The peninsula had landed in America’s lap almost by accident.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Korea had been a part of the Japanese Empire, and after World War II it fell to the Americans and the Soviets to decide what should be done with their enemy’s possessions.



In August 1945, two young aides at the State Department divided the Korean peninsula in half along the 38th parallel. The Russians occupied the area North of the line and the United States occupied the area to its South. By the end of the decade, two new states had formed on the peninsula. In the South, the anti-communist dictator Syngman Rhee (1875-1965) enjoyed the reluctant support of the American government; in the North, the communist dictator Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) enjoyed the slightly more enthusiastic support of the Soviets. Neither dictator was content to remain on his side of the 38th parallel, however, and border skirmishes were common. Nearly 10,000 North and South Korean soldiers were killed in battle before the war even began.

The Korean war began on June 25, 1950, when some 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean People’s Army poured across the 38th parallel, the boundary between the Soviet-backed Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the north and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the south. This invasion was the first military action of the Cold War. By July, American troops had entered the war on South Korea’s behalf. As far as American officials were concerned, it was a war against the forces of international communism itself. After some early back-and-forth across the 38th parallel, the fighting stalled and casualties mounted with nothing to show for them. Meanwhile, American officials worked anxiously to





fashion some sort of armistice with the North Koreans. The alternative, they feared, would be a wider war with Russia and China—or even, as some warned, World War III.



Definition of Key Terms

Key Countries and Organizations:

North Korean People's Army (NKPA): The official army of North Korea. People's Republic of China

PRC: Communist China.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (PRK): North Korea.

Republic of Korea (ROK): South Korea United Nations

UN: International peace-keeping body founded in 1945.

Demilitarized Zone: A 'buffer' zone between North and South Korea which should contain no troops or weapons (but in practice is heavily militarized due to fear).

Inchon: Port on the West Coast of South Korea.

Pusan: Situated on the South-East coast of South Korea and was the only part of the country which was never touched by the NKPA.

Pyongyang: North Korean capital.

Armistice: In other words a ceasefire; both sides agree to stop fighting. An armistice usually makes way for a Peace Treaty yet North and South Korea never signed one, which technically means that they are still at a state of war.

NSC-81/1: National Security Council document that gave MacArthur the rationale to cross over the 38th parallel to invade North Korea.



NSC-68: The Department of State ordered a complete review of American strategic and military policy, and, in April 1950, the Department sent a paper calling for a broad-based and reinvigorated containment policy toward the Soviet Union, directly to the President. The paper later became known as NSC-68.

General Overview

1. Before The War

The North Korean invasion came as an alarming surprise to American officials. As far as they were concerned, this was not simply a border dispute between two unstable dictatorships on the other side of the globe. Instead, many feared it was the first step in a communist campaign to take over the world. For this reason, non-intervention was not considered an option by many top decision makers. (In fact, in April 1950, a National Security Council report known as NSC-68 had recommended that the United States use military force to “contain” communist expansionism anywhere it seemed to be occurring, “regardless of the intrinsic strategic or economic value of the lands in question.”) “If we let Korea down,” President Harry Truman (1884-1972) said, “the Soviet[s] will keep right on going and

swallow up one [place] after another.” The fight on the Korean peninsula was a symbol of the global struggle between east and west, good and evil, in the Cold War. As the North Korean army pushed into Seoul, the South Korean capital, the United States readied its troops for a war against communism itself.

2. During The War

At first, the war was a defensive one to get the communists out of South Korea, and it went badly for the Allies. The North Korean army was well-disciplined, well-trained and well-equipped; Rhee’s forces in the South Korean army, by contrast, were frightened, confused and seemed inclined to flee the battlefield at any provocation. Also, it was one of the hottest and driest summers on record, and desperately thirsty American soldiers were often forced to drink water from rice paddies that had been fertilized with human waste. As a result, dangerous intestinal diseases and other illnesses were a constant threat. By the end of the summer, President Truman and General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), the commander in charge of the Asian theatre, had decided on a new set of war aims.



Now, for the Allies, the Korean War was an offensive one: It was a war to “liberate” the North from the communists. Initially, this new strategy was a success. The Inch on Landing, an amphibious assault at Inch’on, pushed the North Koreans out of Seoul and back to their side of the 38th parallel. But as American troops crossed the boundary and headed north toward the Yalu River, the border between North Korea and Communist China, the Chinese started to worry about protecting themselves from what they called “armed aggression against

Chinese territory.” Chinese leader Mao Zeodong (1893-1976) sent troops to North Korea and warned the United States to keep away from the Yalu boundary unless it wanted full-scale war. This was something that President Truman and his advisers decidedly did not want: They were sure that such a war would lead to Soviet aggression in Europe, the deployment of atomic weapons and millions of senseless deaths. To General MacArthur, however, anything short of this wider war represented “appeasement,” an unacceptable knuckling under to the communists. As President Truman looked for a way to prevent war with the Chinese, MacArthur did all he could to provoke it.

Finally, in March 1951, he sent a letter to Joseph Martin, a House Republican leader who shared MacArthur’s support for declaring all-out war on China—and who could be counted upon to leak the letter to the press. “There is,” MacArthur wrote, “no substitute for victory” against international communism. For Truman, this letter was the last straw. On April 11, the president fired the general for insubordination.

3. After The War

In July 1951, President Truman and his new military commanders started peace talks at Panmunjom. Still, the fighting continued along the 38th parallel as negotiations stalled. Both



sides were willing to accept a ceasefire that maintained the 38th parallel boundary, but they could not agree on whether prisoners of war should be forcibly “repatriated.” (The Chinese and the North Koreans said yes; the United States said no.) Finally, after more than two years of negotiations, the adversaries signed an armistice on July 27, 1953. The agreement allowed the POWs to stay where they liked; drew a new boundary near the 38th parallel that gave South Korea an extra 1,500 square miles of territory; and created a 2-mile-wide “demilitarized zone” that still exists today.



The Korean War was relatively short but exceptionally bloody. Nearly 5 million people died. More than half of these—about 10 percent of Korea’s pre-war population—were civilians. (This rate of civilian casualties was higher than World War II’s and the Vietnam War’s.). Almost 40,000 Americans died in action in Korea, and more than 100,000 were wounded.





Major Parties Involved

1. China:

In 1949, October 1st, Communist leader Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This came as a result of a full-scale civil war between the Nationalist Party (otherwise known as the Kuomintang) and the Chinese Communist Party which was in force immediately after the Second World War and had been systematically growing since the 1920's. The US tried to prevent the rising of the PRC by writing up reports and sending Nationalist troops to areas of Japanese occupation, in order to claim the land. On the other hand, the USSR, which occupied parts of Manchuria, solely withdrew when Communist forces came to claim the land. After years of civil war and international tension, there was Communist victory and Chiang Kaishek, the former leader of the Nationalist Party found retreat in Taiwan. This therefore explains the cooperation between China and Russia for the support of Northern Korea.

2. United States:

Following the bleak period of the Second World War, the US became suspicious of the USSR's expansionist aims. The US itself wished to expand its economic influence to other continents and was pressured by the Republican Party to get involved in order to promote liberalism and worldwide trade. The US adopted the policy of containment after watching nations fall systematically one by one to Communism with the support of the USSR. Considering her own and global economic interests, the US decided to take the side of the South, setting up a nationalist puppet government led by Syngman Rhee to fight the Communist North.

3. USSR:

In 1917, during the First World War, Lenin led the nation into communism, which lasted up until 1991. The USSR led an isolationist policy at the very beginning, even dropping out of the First World War in order to focus on its new domestic and economic policies. However, after the closure of the Second Major countries and organizations involved Campion School Model United Nations World War, the USSR was interested in acquiring satellite states on its Eastern border as a means of protection since its borders had no mountains or geological barriers to fend off enemies. Additionally, USSR's ideology dating back to Tsarist Russia played a key role since it encouraged rivalry with the West and the building of an empire. Consequently, the USSR was interested in maintaining the Communist government which



existed in the north, to expand its sphere of influence. This was done by sending over arms and economic support.

Other key players include:

Britain, Australia, Canada, Philippines, Turkey, Greece (etc.) and the peace keeping body created in 1945, the UN.

Timeline of Key Events

<p>7 October 1950 UN forces cross 38th parallel</p>
<p>14-15 October 1950 Chinese troops respond to UN crossing 38th parallel and enter North Korea crossing international boundary, Yalu River</p>
<p>25 June 1950 North Korea invades South Korea in attempts to reunite nation, with 135000 men, thus initiating the Korean War</p>
<p>3 January 1951 Chinese capture Seoul. (Ultimately retaken by UN March 18)</p>



11 April 1951	A potential prelude to World War III Truman removes McArthur from command and asserts civilian control over the military
23 September 1951	“Heartbreak Ridge” and Start of Operation Summit (First Helicopter Deployment)
14 Oct 1952	The sides retired to their winter positions and repeated the 1951 scenario
26 April 1953	Negotiators return to Panmunjom and Communists agree to voluntary repatriation
6 July 1953	Last communist successful offensive to dislodge Americans (“Old Baldy”).
27 July 1953	Armistice (US, Korea and China) ending the Korean War (No treaty signed between North and South Korea)



Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

United Nations Command (UNC) was established on July 7, 1950 following the United Nations' recognition of North Korean aggression against South Korea. UNC signifies the world's first attempt at collective security under the United Nations system. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 83 and 84 provided the international legal authority for member states to restore peace on the Korean Peninsula, and they designated the United States as the leader of the unified command we know as UN Command. During the Korean War and the reconstruction period following the signing of the Armistice Agreement, twenty-two countries contributed either combat forces or medical assistance to support South Korea under the United Nations flag.

There have been several attempts to settle the conflict, and to build peace system between the two Koreas. They were: the Armistice Agreement in 1953, the July 4th Joint Communiqué in 1973, the North-South Basic Agreement in 1992, and the June 15th Joint Declaration in 2000

Possible Solutions

The Historical Security Council could work to appoint mediators, either independent or affiliated with a particular state or independent organisation, to help resolve the conflict. It could further take a formal position on the war, making it a matter of international affairs and putting it on the international agenda. Lastly, steps could be taken to eventually reach an agreement among the great powers in the SC to stop international meddling in the conflict. More direct steps could be taken, but with the veto powers that exist in the SC with a direct stake in this war, it is unlikely to pass





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