The Korean War

Curriculum Guide for the
2020 East Asia in the Upper Midwest Teaching Initiative

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The Korean War's Place in the Classroom

Americans often refer to the Korean War (1950–1953) as the "forgotten war." This label, though, obscures the war's importance to the lives of Koreans, Americans, and Chinese. The number of people directly involved in the war underscores this fact. Millions of Koreans died during the war. Millions more lost their homes. The war ripped apart countless Korean families, leaving wounds that have yet to heal. Many American lives were forever changed by the war. According to the Veterans Administration, approximately 5.7 million served in the military during the Korean War with 1.78 million Americans serving in the Korean theater.[1] In total, over 33,000 Americans died in the war and a little more than 100,000 were wounded.[2] The war shaped the lives of many from the People's Republic of China (PRC), a key ally of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In total, approximately 2.2 million Chinese soldiers served in the war.[3] It also claimed the lives of over 115,000 Chinese people.[4] These staggering numbers brought the war into villages, towns, and cities across Korea, America, and China. From this perspective it is necessary to bring the Korean War into the classroom today to better understand how the war shaped Korean, American, and Chinese society.

The wide reach of the war outside of the Koreas, America, and China further underscores the need to bring the war into classrooms. The diversity of the American-led United Nations (UN) coalition that countered the northern DPRK's attack on the southern Republic of Korea (ROK) in June 1950 ensured that the war would have a large reach outside of the Korean peninsula, the US, and PRC. In total, the UN coalition counted members from twenty-one different countries. At the end of major combat operations in July 1953, Colombia, Belgium, Britain, South Africa, Canada, the Netherlands, Turkey, Luxembourg, Australia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Ethiopia, Greece, and France all had forces on the peninsula.[5] Units from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, and India provided medical assistance.[6] Indian representatives took an active role in the peace process and led the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) for prisoners of war—a body composed of representatives from Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. In this way, the Korean War was a global war that touched lives across six continents.

The war influenced the development of the ROK and the DPRK, two countries that have affected United States life and politics. Since the end of the war, the ROK has remained one of the America's most

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[1] "America's Wars," Department of Veterans Affairs, November 2019, https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf, Accessed: June 30, 2020.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "The Armed Forces in the Korean War," ANZAC Portal, March 13, 2020, https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/korean-war-1950-1953/korean-war/armed-forces-korean-war. Accessed: June 30, 2020.

[4] Wooyoung Lee, "Report: 24,000 Chinese soldiers killed, buried in lake in Korean War," United Press International, June 26, 2018, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/06/26/Report-24000-Chinese-soldiers-killed-buried-in-lake-in-Korean-War/9121529998671/, Accessed: June 30, 2020.

[5] "United Nations Command," United States Forces Korea, https://www.usfk.mil/About/United-Nations-Command/ Accessed: June 30, 2020.

[6] *The Encyclopedia of the Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History: Volume I: A-L*, eds. Dr. Spencer Tucker, Dr. Paul G. Pierpaoli Jr., Professor Jinwung Kim, Dr. Xiaobing Li, and Dr. James Matray (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2010), 323. See also "The Armed Forces in the Korean War," ANZAC Portal, March 13, 2020, https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/korean-war-1950-1953/korean-war/armed-forces-korean-war. Accessed: June 30, 2020.

steadfast allies. Forces from the ROK served in the Vietnam War, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other important military deployments. The economies of the US and ROK are inextricably linked. Through this relationship, strengthened during the war, cultural exchange has drawn the two countries together. South Korean companies like Samsung, Hyundai, and LG bring Korean technology to US shores and K-Pop and Korean cinema bring Korean popular culture into many American homes.

While the war created a great alliance, it also led to an ongoing rivalry with the DPRK. In the Cold War years, the DPRK challenged US power in numerous crises over the 1960s and 1970s. Since then, the threat posed by the DPRK has only grown. Famines and human rights abuses make the DPRK a pressing humanitarian problem. The growing DPRK nuclear arsenal and missile capabilities only add to the urgency. Understanding this crisis and its roots is a key component for actively informed citizens in the twenty-first century.

A complete education in American civics and the responsibility of citizenship requires an appreciation of how the Korean War shaped US institutions and of the US role in international bodies. UN involvement in Korean issues after World War II made it a natural forum to build a coalition to counter the DPRK attack in June 1950. Involving the UN imposed limits on the war, which enabled President Harry Truman to frame it as an effort to fight international lawlessness. Additionally, Truman intervened without a congressional declaration of war under the pretense that the Korean War was a "police action," a choice that would later haunt Truman and forever change the way the US waged war in the modern era.

Given these factors, lessons can be developed about the Korean War with direct relevance to broad Wisconsin state standards. The complexity of the war, documents from participants, and images like political cartoons, encourage higher-order thinking, a key goal of the state standards which calls for lessons that push students to "analyze an argument, weigh evidence, recognize bias (their own and others' bias), distinguish fact from opinion, balance competing principles, work collaboratively with others, and be able to communicate clearly what they understand."[7] Because of the frequency of Korean issues in the news and the war's influence on American and international institutions, the war meets the standards' demand for learning exercises with "real-world application."[8] The knowledge that students gain from Korean War lessons can help them make sense of their world and help them engage with it. Additionally, Korean War topics can be leveraged for authentic learning experiences. The rich variety of sources on the war, many of which are embedded in this guide, provide much fodder for student-driven projects. Beyond these broad objectives, the Korean War fits specific content statements for many levels of learning in Social Studies, English Language Arts, as well as for the larger effort for literacy in all subjects.

To make the history of the Korean War accessible, the guide is divided into four units organized around a key theme in the war's history. The first unit focuses on the fall of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), Korea's last royal dynasty, which led to Japan's colonization of Korea (1910–1945). During this period, social divisions emerged, and many Koreans lost control of their land and livelihood due to the institution of a repressive Japanese colonial system that was designed to extract resources and labor. Under these conditions, countless Koreans were exploited. These problems influenced Korean ideas about identity and the future of their country. Nationalists offered competing visions of Korea's future while often being repressed by foreign

[7] "Wisconsin's Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning: Research, Probing Questions, Resources, and References," Wisconsin Department of Education, 5. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cal/pdf/guiding-principles.pdf. Accessed: June 30, 2020.
[8] Ibid., 5.

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powers and their local allies. The social, economic, and political history of this critical moment shaped the Korean War and post-war history.

The second unit examines the Korean War as a civil war. Korean society was further polarized after Japanese colonization. Civil unrest and violence challenged the Soviet and United States occupations that followed the end of World War II. These occupying powers made important political choices that escalated violence against civilians and elevated some Korean groups, while suppressing others. Violence against noncombatants continued into the Korean War, forever changing the lives of the vast majority of the Korean population. To understand the Korean War, it is necessary to measure the violence perpetrated against innocents.

The third unit looks at the Korean War as an international war. Here, the guide situates the Korean War within the larger Cold War. It examines the ways the security concerns in the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, and United States shaped key moments of the war. A review of important military campaigns and the armistice negotiations highlights the war's place in military and diplomatic history. This section also reviews the difficult armistice process and explains the role played by neutral countries.

The final unit is centered on the war's influence on American politics and life. In this section, the guide reviews how the war shaped African American history as the Korean War was the first with racially integrated units. Additionally, the war's influence on ideas about family and gender is revealed. The chapter explores important laws passed during the war, like the Defense Production Act, and explains the Korean war's relationship with the Vietnam War. The unit ends with a discussion of the DPRK nuclear crisis.

An appendix of helpful primary sources and teaching documents follows a conclusion that revisits core themes. These documents run the gamut from major primary sources like the Korean Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919) and the Atlantic Charter (August 14, 1941) to oral histories from refugees and other participants. Additionally, the appendix has several newspaper articles from the Korean War that students can use in compare and contrast exercises. Political cartoons throughout the text can be used to prompt classroom discussions and assignments.

The many ramifications of the Korean War continue to echo into the twenty-first century. This guide aims to empower teachers to encourage student learning of and literacy in an important historical topic. The lessons learned from this guide will help students develop an understanding of what the war was about, what it meant to those who lived through it, and how it informs the world today. In this way, students and teachers can add their own voices and perspectives on why the war should no longer be referred to as "forgotten."

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Unit 1 • A Brief History of Korea from the Late Joseon Dynasty to the End of World War II (1910-1945)

Objectives:

- Provide a brief overview of the fall of the Joseon dynasty and the Japanese colonial period
- Understand how the fall of the dynasty and the colonial period shaped daily life for Korean people
- Identify how the decline of the dynasty and the colonial period influenced Korean ideas about identity

Disputes over Korea's future, central to understanding the Korean War, began well before June 1950. Western expansion into East Asia pushed long-standing dynasties into chaos. The ruling Korean dynasty, the Joseon, like the Qing, its Chinese neighbor, came under significant pressure from Western imperial powers and Japan in the late nineteenth century. British, French, and other Western powers weakened China's Qing dynasty, even as Japan's ability to project power in the region grew. This lethal combination set Korea, long a vassal of the Qing, on the path toward becoming a colony of Japan. While the Japanese attempted to develop Korean infrastructure, Koreans were oppressed during much of the Japanese colonial period. Ideas about freedom and Korea's future in this period influenced Koreans during the Korean War and beyond.

The Joseon dynasty (1392–1910 CE) left an important philosophical legacy to Korea. The dynasty established Confucianism as the official state ethos of Korea. Confucianism is a philosophy originally developed in China. Basic Confucian ideas hold that there is a harmony linking man, nature, and the cosmos. Humans are by nature social beings and should seek harmony in their relationships. Confucian ideas state that harmony can be achieved through respectful relationships between subordinates and superiors, thus respect for elders is the foundation of all human relationships. Development of the arts and learning is also important. Confucianism holds that human beings can become better by stressing education, the practice of ritual, and self-cultivation. Rulers can create harmony through the cultivation of the arts and by solving conflicts through mediation instead of by applying absolute, ironclad rules.

Confucianism, as practiced in Korea, enforced a powerful social hierarchy that challenged the dynasty's efforts to rule and brought about deep divisions in society that would shape the Korean War and its aftermath. Korean society during the Joseon Dynasty was primarily agricultural with most peasants cultivating the lands of elites, known as the *Yangban*. Confucian philosophy valorized service to the state by portraying such work as honorable and a sign of spiritual rightness. On the surface, Confucian practice held that any male could sit for a civil service exam. But in reality, it was difficult for commoners or middling members of Korean society to do so because they lacked the resources to compete with the Yangban. The Korean practice of Confucianism created greater divisions in Korean society by elevating the few aristocratic Yangban elites above the many peasants.[1] Treatment of Yangban and peasants differed greatly. The Yangban owned much of the land and escaped taxes and other obligations such as military service. The peasants, many of

[1] For more on the Joseon era and Confucianism, see Wanne J. Joe, *A Cultural History of Modern Korea: A History of Korean Civilization* (Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym, 2000), 19–33.

whom were tenant farmers, owed their lives and much of the fruit of their labor to the state.[2] These inequalities outlasted the dynasty and shaped the period of Japanese colonization and the Korean War that followed.

The spread of Confucianism from China to Korea is only one marker of the interconnectedness of the Asian world. The relationship is especially important because Korea served as a tributary state of China for hundreds of years and participated in the cultural development of China, both as a consumer of Chinese culture and as a contributor to the Chinese development of Buddhist and Neo-Confucian ideas.

Close examination of the challenge of imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries further underscores the interconnectedness between Korea, China, and other East Asian countries. Between 1839 and 1842, the British waged war against China to force the country to open trading ports, in what became known as "the Opium Wars." These wars ended with the Chinese signing what became infamously known as an "unequal treaty," in which China ceded Hong Kong to Britain, agreed to open trade ports to British merchants, and pay an indemnity to Britain. Later treaties with Britain, France, and other Western powers would lead to further erosion of Chinese sovereignty.[3]

A little more than a decade after the first Opium War (1839-1842), the United States set its sights on Japanese trade. Western powers were permitted only limited access to Japanese ports for over two hundred years, but in the first half of the 1850s, Commodore Matthew Perry visited Japan with the intention of opening Japanese ports to American trade. Japanese leaders agreed to open a few locations to the United States after a show of force from the U.S. fleet and tense negotiations.[4] This concession would be expanded in the years to come, contributing to the Meiji Restoration, a political change that led to centralization under the Japanese emperor, industrialization, expanding Japanese global influence, and the eventual colonization of Korea.[5]

The imperial powers targeted Korea, as they did many countries in Asia and other parts of the world. Unlike China and Japan, however, the Joseon dynasty's initial resistance to the West was successful. Korea stopped both American and French navies in the 1860s and 1870s from forcing treaty ports to be opened.[6] But Korea's abilities to resist imperialism would not last forever. In 1875, the Japanese government successfully provoked a crisis in Korea that ended with the Joseon dynasty's being forced to sign the Treaty of Ganghwa in 1876. This treaty ordered Korea to open Busan and two other ports to Japanese trade. The treaty imposed extraterritoriality on Japanese settlements leased on lands in the ports, which meant that Japanese and not Korean laws would apply to the Japanese. Britain, the United States, and other imperial powers had forced extraterritoriality on China a few decades before. Thus began Japan's colonization of Korea, a process that would take over thirty years.

Korean thinkers and reformers had different opinions on the path Korea should take during the years of Japanese and Western imperial expansion. Some argued that learning from Japan would be a smart strategy to maintain sovereignty. These thinkers were influenced by many of the same ideas as contemporaneous reformers in China, who sought to adapt modern ideas and technology in an Asian

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[2] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 53–64.

[3] For more on the Opium Wars, the challenges the Qing faced, and this moment's influence on Chinese history, see John E. Schrecker, *The Chinese Revolution in Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 114–22.

[4] For an excellent teaching aid on this period of American and Japanese history, see Peter Duus, *The Japanese Discovery of America: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford, 1996).

[5] Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan from Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 46–139.

[6] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, Translated by Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 264–66.

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context. On the other side stood many traditionalist Confucian literati. They viewed the Japanese as no different than Westerners. The father of the sitting king, serving as regent, was able to manipulate these sentiments and spark a military coup in 1882 that closed down Korean efforts to modernize along Japanese lines and resulted in the death of Japanese advisers and the burning of the Japanese legation in Seoul. In response, Japan pressured Korea to cede more trading privileges, and Korea lost its autonomy over trade tariffs.

This instability only increased the interest of China, Japan, and Russia in expanding their influence on the peninsula, a phenomenon that shaped Korean politics most directly in 1884 when a group of Korean modernizers who were pro-Japanese launched a failed coup that Chinese troops helped put down. Deft negotiating on Japan's behalf led to the Treaty of Tientsin in 1885. This agreement stipulated that both China and Japan would withdraw from Korea, that neither would send military instructors to Korea, and that both would give prior notice if they were going to send troops to Korea. Japan would later use this clause as an excuse to deploy forces to Korea, and so this critical part of the treaty hastened Japan's colonization of Korea and ended Korea's long-standing tributary relationship with China.

Near the time of this agreement, Russia expanded its influence in Korea. A Russian minister was dispatched to Korea in 1884. By 1888, Russia had concluded a treaty with Korea that opened a Korean city to trade, permitted Russians to live in an extraterritorial settlement, and granted Russia rights to navigate the Tumen River. With each of these treaties, Korea's right to self-rule was challenged. From the mid-1870s to the 1880s, Korean rulers lost more and more of their rights, while powerful nations played an increasing role on the peninsula.[7]

Korean peasants directly experienced the pains of expansion in the form of increased taxes to pay for new missions, indemnities to Japan, and modern buildings. Taxes doubled or in some cases tripled. Japanese traders added to this problem by making unfair loans to peasants secured by future rice production. Small rebellions popped up across Korea, and theft increased. The Korean countryside was fertile ground for a large insurrection.

The division between Korean peasants and elites reached the boiling point in the 1890s during the Donghak rebellion. The Donghak, or "Eastern Learning" movement, was a millenarian religious movement founded in 1860 that included elements of Christian monotheism and Korean folk beliefs. This movement connected directly with the social tensions between the Yangban and the peasants by emphasizing the equality of all people. In 1892, Donghak followers demanded that two Korean governors stop suppressing their movement. Concessions from the Korean governors emboldened the Donghak followers to ask the Joseon throne for reforms. The throne rejected this request and forcefully dispersed the followers. Violence escalated.[8] By 1894, the Donghak movement was waging military operations across Korea. Government repression of Donghak rebels increased with some rebels being executed, arrested, and displaced. This only bred more rebellion as the ranks of the Donghak peasants grew to several thousand. The salience of the Donghak movement testifies to the increasing dissatisfaction of Korean peasants with Korean elites. It marked an ever-growing division in Korea that would continue into the Korean War era.

In addition to marking Korean social divisions, the Joseon dynasty's inability to quell the rebellion had international consequences. The dynasty called upon the Chinese for help. Japan also intervened. Japan

[7] Kenneth B. Lee characterizes the Sino-Russo-Japanese interest in Korea as a veritable "three way power struggle." The outcome of this struggle shaped early twentieth-century Korean history. See *Korea and East Asia: The Story of a Phoenix* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 131.

[8] For background on the Donghak religion, see Wanne J. Joe, *A Cultural History of Korea*, 127–39.

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used the Donghak rebellion as a pretext to launch a war against China. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 ended with a Japanese victory. Among the terms of the treaty that ended the war, China ceded Taiwan to Japan and withdrew any claim to protect Korea. A humiliated Chinese state then faced further concessions to imperial European powers. The Donghak rebellion showed the weakness of the Joseon dynasty, advanced the weakening of the ruling Chinese Qing Dynasty, and provided further evidence of Japan's rise as an imperial power in Asia.

In the wake of the Donghak crisis, the Korean government passed reforms. Many of these changes failed to address the grievances of peasants in Korea, which testified to the great power of the Yangban and other elites. Further, more and more Koreans were becoming convinced that the Korean dynasty was relying on foreign governments to stay in power. In 1896, Philip Jaisohn and other Korean reformers founded the Independence Club. Initially supported by government officials, the democratic leanings of the club and the loosening of membership qualifications led to many peasants, laborers, dockworkers, women, and students joining. As the club grew, it moved away from symbolic projects toward advocating policies that would roll back concessions to foreign powers and push Korea to adopt a neutral foreign policy along with democratic reforms such as free speech, free assembly, and the right of the governed to shape their government. The club also promoted the establishment of textile mills, paper mills, and ironworks as well as schools in each village.

The Independence Club was important in modern Korean history in both the immediate and long term. The movement forced Russian military instructors to leave Korea and the closure of the Russo-Korean Bank, among other changes. In the long term, important Korean nationalist leaders including Syngman Rhee, president of American-allied South Korea during the Korean War, participated in the movement. The club's debates about Korea's future would shape the goals of Korean leaders in the twentieth century. The Joseon dynasty closed the Independence Club in late 1898 when the Emperor of Korea became convinced that the club's proposed reforms threatened royal power.

China experienced intense rebellions like those in Korea in this period. In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China. This nationalist rebellion was put down by foreign military force. Russia used this as an opportunity to establish a greater presence in Manchuria. In response, Japan established an alliance with Britain and then entered negotiations with Russia. At the center was Korea. Japan wanted Russia to recognize Japan's interests in Korea. When negotiations broke down, the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) broke out. Japan dispatched troops to Seoul. Under threat of force from Japan, Korea had to accept Japanese counsel, let Japan take measures to protect the Korean monarch, and allow Japan to occupy strategic points on the peninsula. Thus, Japanese presence on the Korean Peninsula only increased during the Russo-Japanese War.

US President Theodore Roosevelt mediated the negotiations that ended the war. Roosevelt endorsed Japan's claims on Korea to check Russian power and secure Japanese recognition of the US control of the Philippines. Among the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth that Russia signed with Japan ending the war was Russia's acknowledgment of Japan's interests in Korea and a pledge not to hinder any Japanese actions taken to reform the Korean government. The path was clear for Japan to colonize Korea. Following the treaty of Portsmouth, Japan signed a treaty with Korea in November 1905 that made Korea a protectorate of Japan. Five years after these agreements were signed, Japan annexed Korea, making the peninsula a formal colony.

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The history of Japan's colonial rule of Korea is divided into three eras: military rule (1910-1919), cultural rule (1919-1931), and the era of assimilation (1931-1945).[9] The first era, military rule, was characterized by the colonial government's repressive rule of the Korean people. In the run-up to colonization in 1910, Koreans had protested Japan's actions in both The Hague and in the streets. This led Japanese leaders to dissolve the Korean Army in 1907, which resulted in former Korean soldiers joining resistance groups known as Righteous Armies. To counter these insurgents and strengthen its grip on Korea, Japan increased the size of its forces in Korea, established a military police system, and restricted Korean-led patriotic and modernization movements. After colonization in 1910, Japanese police power expanded into every province of Korea. The military police were given wide-ranging powers, including the ability to impose summary convictions without trial. A significant number of Koreans were hired to serve as police assistants, and some also worked as spies for the Japanese. Many Koreans who allied with the United States during the 1950–1953 war gained experience working for the Japanese military police.

At the same time that police power grew, Japanese authorities restricted Korean freedoms. The Japanese governor general dissolved all organizations and associations, even those purported to create goodwill toward the Japanese. Japanese authorities banned the publication of educational books and any information believed to stoke Korean nationalism. Political freedoms enjoyed in Japan were not exported. Koreans had no right to political participation. They were deprived of freedom of the press and of assembly. Korean pro-independence activists were arrested, imprisoned, or executed.

Alongside these acts of oppression, the Japanese also attempted to reshape Korean society through educational reform, changes to land ownership, and assaults on entrepreneurship. Schools that taught in the Japanese language opened across the peninsula, and the colonial administration decreed Japanese to be the official language of Korea. To increase tax revenue, the Japanese undertook a cadastral land survey that was favorable to existing Korean landlords and to the growing numbers of Japanese landlords. Under these circumstances, tenancy rates increased. In 1911, the governor general ruled that anyone wishing to set up a company had to get his approval. These moves created further peasant resentment of Korean elites and made the chasm between Korean landlords and peasants even wider. Japanese decisions also greatly hampered the growth of the Korean entrepreneurial class to the benefit of Japanese companies. Reforms elsewhere enhanced the strength of Japanese banks on the peninsula. Japanese leaders wanted to remake Korean society to increase the colony's profitability for Japanese businesses. But in doing so, the Japanese exacerbated longstanding problems between Korean elites and peasants.

Despite Japan's repressive policies, numerous Koreans continued to resist the Japanese. Some established secret societies. Others opened private schools and night schools to instill Korean patriotism. Workers went on strike against Japanese owners. Peasants resisted by trying to stop the land survey and refusing to pay taxes. Koreans living abroad built anti-Japanese movements in places such as Manchuria. One such group, the Military School of the New Rising, trained three thousand soldiers to fight the Japanese. Although these groups did not agree on all issues, they understood collectively that they would need to work together to achieve the big goal of restoring Korea's independence.

As World War I drew to a close, US President Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric on the right of self-rule for colonized peoples gave new hope to Korean independence fighters. On March 1, 1919, Korean nationalists came together to read aloud their Declaration of Independence in Seoul and in Pyongyang,

[9] This division of the Japanese colonial period comes from Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2009). Many of the details in this part of the guide come from this book and Hildi Kang's *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

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launching the March First Movement. An estimated two million Koreans took to the streets in Korea and all around the world calling for Korean independence. The Japanese military police used force to suppress the three-month protest. Thousands of Koreans died or were injured.[10] The image of the March First Movement and its memory would be important to Koreans in the years ahead. Indeed, the March First Movement is cited in the preamble of the Republic of Korea's Constitution. Koreans drew on this critical moment in history for inspiration before, during, and after the Korean War because the movement showed that every Korean had a stake in Korean independence.

The March First Movement and the repression that followed caused a change in Japan's ruling strategy for Korea by ushering in the era of cultural rule. As part of this major shift, the Japanese government allowed the publication of Korean-language newspapers and journals, and allowed for some freedom of assembly. A more conventional police force replaced the military police. Koreans' reactions were divided. Some decided to work with the Japanese colonizers. These individuals served as government officials in Korea, built businesses that benefited from Japanese rule, and worked in education. Many Koreans concluded that for freedom to be possible, Korean society needed to be fixed. A Korean language campaign, a private higher education movement, and efforts aimed at promoting Korean economic growth are some of the kinds of movements that flourished in this era. Other Korean activists took a more radical approach, seeking the liberation of Korean peasants. Out of this mix, Korean expatriates abroad founded a Korean Communist party in 1918. By any measure, desire for social change typified Korean politics after the March First Movement.

Despite Japan's reforms and Korean activism, Korean peasants still struggled. The Japanese governor general undertook an initiative to expand rice production to mitigate a rice shortage in Japan. The Japanese built irrigation facilities and other improvements. These infrastructure improvements required peasants to join expensive irrigation unions, which pushed many peasants further into debt. Under this strain, some peasants had to give up their farmlands. These reforms had the net effect of increasing the power of Korean and Japanese landlords while also raising the level of anger among Korean peasants.

The reforms of the era of cultural rule did not dampen Korean desires for freedom. Outside of Korea, Syngman Rhee became the president of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea. Headquartered in China, this government-in-exile continued the fight for the Korean people. In Manchuria, Korean exiles fought Japanese troops and police. In 1919, the Righteous Brotherhood was founded, which aimed to liberate Korea by force. Targets included colonial agencies, high-ranking Japanese officials, and Korean collaborators. By the mid-1920s, many members of this group had entered China's Whampoa Military Academy, where they received formal military and officer training. Some of the officers trained at Whampoa emerged as leaders in North Korea after 1945 and would play important roles during the Korean War.

Within Korea, a multitude of activist groups continued to grow. In 1925, the Korean Communist Party was established on the peninsula. A few years later, in 1927, the New Korea Society was created, which aimed to prevent divisions among activists from stopping the drive toward independence. A labor movement and a peasant's movement also challenged Japan's economic exploitation. The 1920s were an exciting time for Koreans resisting Japan's colonization policies.

[10] Korean historians estimate that 7,500 Koreans were killed, 15,000 were injured, and over 45,000 were arrested. The Japanese Colonial government set the number at 553 killed; 1,409 injured; and 12, 522 arrested. See Michael E. Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth Century Odyssey* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 48.

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Economic depression and the Japanese drive toward greater imperial expansion in the 1930s ushered in the final stage of Japan's colonization of Korea, the era of assimilation, a time during which Koreans suffered greatly. As in the United States and other countries, the economic depression devastated many Korean peasants. The drop in the prices of rice, barley, and beans hurt Korean peasants, forcing many to become tenant farmers.

At the same time that Koreans suffered, Japan's imperial ambitions grew. In 1931, Japan launched a war against China under the pretense of combating Chinese dissidents in Manchuria. Japan's war in China and its larger efforts to dominate the Pacific in World War II shaped the lives of Koreans. Japan tried to tie the Koreans into the imperial project by forcing Koreans to pay respects at Shinto shrines, recite the oath of the imperial subject daily, and bow in the direction of the imperial palace. Japanese laws forced Koreans to speak more Japanese in their daily lives. Japanese authorities forced many Koreans to adopt Japanese-styled names, which constituted an assault on the Korean family tradition that many Koreans held sacred. The escalation of World War II only worsened the lot of Koreans. The Japanese forced Koreans to serve as soldiers, laborers, and sex slaves.[11]

As in previous decades, Koreans continued to resist Japanese rule. Many Koreans, including future North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, fought alongside the Chinese against the Japanese Imperial Army. Kim Il Sung and his regime would later use this period of history to argue that his government was the legitimate government of Korea. Soviet forces liberated Korea from the Japanese in August 1945, a historical moment that directly shaped the later period of American occupation and the course of the Korean War, the subject of the next unit.

Exploration of the fall of the Joseon dynasty and the rise and fall of Japanese colonization offers key insights into Korean War history, modern Korean history, and world history. For the Korean War, it shows that ideas about Korean identity and Korea's future, at the center of the 1950–1953 war, were being debated decades before the North Koreans decided to cross the 38th parallel. Nationalist leaders, including Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Sung, were articulating a wide range of competing ideas about the future course Korea should take in the decades to come. Supporters of these different political positions on Korea's destiny continued to debate each other past 1945, contributing to the roots of the Korean War. Acknowledging this difficult period of history provides insights into how Koreans coped with radical changes to their daily lives. The long history of the fall of the Joseon dynasty and the Japanese colonial period shows a consistent theme of Korean peasants being abused and dispossessed by both Korean and Japanese elites. Longstanding peasant anger over these issues underscored the need for land reform and political freedom, two issues at the center of the immediate post–World War II era and the decades that followed. The forces of Korean nationalism and peasant anger about injustices during the late Joseon Dynasty and Japanese colonial period fueled the strong desire for an independent Korea in the post-World War II era.

Lastly, by looking at this era, it is possible to connect Korean history to the larger Asian and global history. Korean, Chinese, and Japanese encounters with imperialism were entangled. The Korean case also offers helpful comparisons for understanding the age of empires. On the one hand, Japan's colonization of Korea was similar to the colonization of India and Vietnam, because economic development in Korea benefited almost exclusively the Japanese colonizers and a small, elite segment of the colonized Korean population. On the other hand, Korea's close proximity to Japan meant that Koreans were more involved in

[11] See C. Sandra Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). For a strong oral history collection see *True Stories of Korean Comfort Women*, Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and Keith Howard eds. (London: Cassell, 1996).

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local Japanese government institutions in Korea such as the military, police, and government bureaucracy than was usually the case in other colonized places. Both these factors matter, because many of those who collaborated with the Japanese would lead Korean politics in the post–World War II era. By considering the Joseon dynasty and the Japanese colonial period as a prelude to the Korean War, it is possible to see how the challenge of imperialism, World War II, and the ascendency of Asia in the post–World War II era shaped the first major Cold War conflict.

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Unit 2 • The Korean War as Civil War, 1945–53

Objectives:

- Demonstrate the ways that social divisions from the Joseon era, worsened by Japanese colonialism, contributed to increased violence and polarization in the immediate post World War II era and the Korean War
- Discuss the large number of violent incidents in Korea before June 25, 1950
- Illustrate the ways that civil violence and the international Korean War devastated North and South Korea

World War II remade the world. In Asia, the denouement of the war brought an end to Japan's formal colonial empire. But the war did not usher in peace for Koreans. Social divisions accentuated during the end of the Joseon dynasty and the Japanese colonial period led to violence and displacement. The joint Soviet-US occupation (1945-1948) led to the polarization of Korean political groups. This factor made it impossible for Koreans of differing political stances to work together and led to high levels of civil violence. As a result, hundreds of thousands of innocent Koreans died. Struggles over land ownership further pitted Koreans against one another and resulted in displacement. After North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, the US-led United Nations Command (UNC) responded with brutal bombing campaigns that left many Koreans homeless and ruined the Korean economy in both the DPRK and ROK. Civilians in Korea also suffered from atrocities committed by North Korean and UN forces alike. Korean families were torn apart by the division of the peninsula and the three years of fighting that followed. Given the centrality of this violence to the Korean experience before and during the war, the Korean War can only be understood by accounting for Korean, American, and Soviet decisions in the face of these problems.

Even before World War II ended, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt had already begun to set the tone for the postwar era. In past global conflicts between empires, colonial possessions changed hands at war's end. Roosevelt, an opponent of colonialism, refused to adopt this position and used his leverage as early as 1941 to promote an end to colonialism as a war aim. In August 1941, he and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill endorsed the Atlantic Charter, a statement that included the pledge that the Allies would "respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live" and the even greater vision that "all men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."[1] US leadership wished to remake the global order to achieve a more just world and prevent future imperial wars like those that had fueled Japanese and German conquests. Idealistic though it was, US leaders, including Roosevelt, made the critical error of not involving colonized peoples in their decisions, failed to reform aspects of US foreign policy that supported American empire, and often continued to make agreements with colonial powers that perpetuated imperial subjugation and violence.

[1] Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 304.



Title: Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill with other high-ranking government officials discuss the Atlantic Charter, 1941.

Source: US National Archives (US Navy)
https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/wwii/wwii-conferences/atlantic-charter/80-g-26854.html

While aiming to defeat Japan and dismantle its empire, Roosevelt and other Allied leaders did not consent to immediate independence for Korea or other former Japanese colonies. Roosevelt turned instead to a trustee model wherein occupying powers would rule former colonies with the goal of eventual independence. Drawing on the example of US rule in the Philippines, Roosevelt envisioned that the Allies would build up former colonies' state institutions and governance and then grant independence.[2] Roosevelt and the Allies believed that this was the only responsible way to pursue decolonization because immediate freedom would, they feared, cause suffering and civil strife. The outcome of the Korean occupation underscores the debatability of Roosevelt's principles as intense civil violence happened under the guidance of both Soviet and US occupiers.

Roosevelt made another important decision related to Korea: he brought the Soviet Union more centrally into the Asian theater of World War II. During the early years of the war, the Soviet Union had struggled to survive Germany's offensive. By early 1945, the tide had turned in the Soviets' favor. At a February 1945 meeting of Allied leaders at Yalta, Roosevelt solidified an agreement with the Soviet Union that included Soviet promises to enter the war against Japan soon after victory in Europe. The Japanese Army was still large and had fought hard for its empire. In the period before a successful atomic bomb, the Allies faced a tough invasion of the Japanese home islands. Roosevelt believed he needed all the help he could get to end the war with Japan.

Both US and Soviet policy changed after the US atomic bomb test in July 1945. The bomb's awesome power encouraged Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, to hope that the Japanese would surrender before the Soviets entered the war against Japan. But that did not happen. During August 1945, the Soviets pushed into Korea, and the Japanese surrendered under the onslaught of two atomic strikes. Infamously, hours after Japan's surrender two American colonels with little knowledge about Korea suggested the joint occupation of the country along the 38th parallel with the aid of a *National Geographic* map. Stalin agreed to this joint occupation because he hoped that sharing the occupation of Korea would ensure the USSR some involvement in the occupation of Japan. As a boundary, the 38th parallel, did not correspond with an existing administrative border, nor with any sort of social division that had existed on the ground. These hasty decisions, made far from Korea, shaped Korean and world history for decades to come.

The vast majority of Koreans rejected the externally imposed division of their country and wished that Koreans would be able to determine the course of their country's future. At the same time, Soviet and US occupiers, largely ignorant of Korean issues and history, made critical mistakes that increased civil violence and dislocation in the occupation period. Long-standing social and political tensions in Korea, already acute during the fall of the Joseon dynasty and exacerbated by the Japanese, worsened during the occupation. The Korean people bore many of the costs of these early mistakes of the occupations in relation to these tensions. Korean peasants had been exploited and dispossessed for decades before the end of

[2] See Monica Kim, *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

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Japanese colonialism; concurrently, Japanese oppression and Korean aspirations for an independent Korea had radicalized many Korean activists. These factors meant Koreans challenged the occupations and sought to manipulate the occupying powers to their own ends, which often led to civilian deaths and even greater political and economic instability.

Korean civilians began to bear the costs of colonial liberation immediately following Japan's surrender on August 15. In the North, a significant number of occupying Soviet soldiers raped Korean women and pillaged towns. Initial Soviet policy further devastated the region as Soviet soldiers dismantled Korean factories and docks and shipped materials back to the Soviet Union. Soviet officials claimed these thefts were merely compensation for their short fight with Japan. After the initial looting, however, Stalin ordered a return to discipline. Soon, many ethnic Koreans who had previously emigrated to the Soviet Union arrived in the Soviet zone to help with the occupation. These Soviet Koreans stabilized the occupation and enabled the Soviets to remove Japanese civil servants and their allies. In short order, locals established people's committees in the Soviet zone. Soviet forces used these committees to help in their occupation efforts.



Soviet soldiers arrive in Korea in 1945. Courtesy of The Atlantic.

Source: https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/10/world-war-ii-after-the-war/100180/

These committees also sped up land reform. During the decline of the Joseon dynasty and the subsequent Japanese colonial period, many Koreans lost their land to stresses caused by taxation, government initiatives to map Korea, and unfair loan arrangements. Indeed, by the start of the occupation, 3 percent of Koreans owned 64 percent of the land. That small percentage of Koreans also employed 85 percent of Korean farmers as tenants.[3] As early as February 1946, the central Interim People's Committee, established in Pyongyang to lead other local people's committees across the occupation, passed the North Korea Land Reform Law. This throughgoing reform act abolished the colonial-era land ownership system and stripped Korean landlords of their property, causing many to flee south. The law distributed the confiscated lands at no cost to poor farmers and former tenants, but levied a weighty state tax of 25% on all farm products.[4] Still, land reform strengthened popular support for the Soviet Civil Administration and the Korean Communist leadership in northern Korea. Soviet officials appointed Kim Il Sung as the leader of North Korea as another way to buttress their occupation. Kim Il Sung was a young Communist partisan who had fought alongside

[3] Inhan Kim, "Security Trumps Ideology: Comparison of Land Reforms in Japan and South Korea during the U.S. Military Occupation," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations,* 23, no. 2 (2016): 127.

[4] See Chong-Sik Lee, "Land Reform, Collectivisation and the Peasants in North Korea," *The China Quarterly*, 14 (April-June 1963), 65-81.

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Kim Il Sung Meets with Soviet officials in 1947.

Source: Korea Times:
http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/12/120_77492.html

Chinese guerilla soldiers against the Japanese Imperial Army in the 1930s and later joined the Soviet Red Army during World War II. To strengthen Kim's grip on power, Soviet authorities banned anti-communist and pro-US groups. The Soviets met resistance with violence. In late 1945 and 1946, anti-communist riots broke out. Three weeks after the establishment of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Kim Il Sung proclaimed the North Korean government the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on September 9, 1948.

Life was arguably worse for ordinary Koreans who lived south of the 38th parallel. In September 1945, General John R. Hodge and the XXIV Corps arrived in Korea. Hodge initially entered his occupation duties focused more on repatriating Japanese soldiers and other immediate concerns, such as suppressing political leftists, than on how he could prepare Korea for independence. Hodge was concerned about maintaining social stability so he worked closely during the initial weeks of the occupation with former Japanese colonizers and their Korean collaborators—a move that angered many Koreans. Even though the policy of direct reliance on Japanese colonizers eventually changed, a lack of Korean speakers in Hodge's command, and widespread doubts within the US government about Korean capabilities to self-govern led Hodge to continue relying on Koreans who had served the Japanese colonial system. To many other Koreans, Americans looked like they would carry forward hated Japanese colonial policies. Reflecting these realities, the US military government ruled the southern zone from the Government General Building, a massive edifice erected by the Japanese colonialists in the center of the capital city Seoul. Independence still seemed far away.[5]

Land reform was another area in which the US occupation stumbled. Upon arrival in Korea, US forces seized Japanese-controlled land but failed to move swiftly to redistribute it because US leaders were concerned about protecting the right to private property and wanted landowners to be compensated. In seeking stability, US occupation authorities empowered a newly formed Korean Democratic Party. This political group of conservatives and anti-leftists, many of whom had collaborated with Japanese colonialists, counted many major landlords among its members. This alliance, along with US and conservative Korean desires to counter bold plans launched by Korean Communist groups, limited the reach of land reform. Civil violence worked to enhance the power of those opposed to wider land reform. During the fall of 1946, striking workers resisted the failing early policies of the US occupation in an event known as the Autumn Uprising or Taegu Uprising. Historians debate what caused the uprising, but its end had a clear effect:

[5] Strong histories of the US occupation of Korea include Allan Millett, *The War for Korea: A House Burning* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015), and Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014).

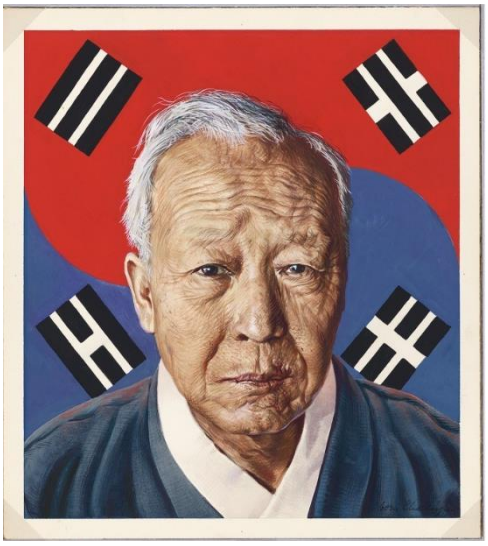
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increasing political polarization with an empowered right-wing and a weakened left-wing. The strengthened Korean right resisted land reform and, thus, such legislation would not be passed in South Korea until 1950.[6]

Cautious steps toward land reform did not stop civil violence. In some instances, Kim Il Sung and the DPRK were responsible for this problem, as they sent guerillas south. But in many cases, the civil strife in South Korea was the product of corruption, poverty, social disorder, and a seemingly out-of-touch Korean conservative political order. As the US moved to hand off rule of South Korea to a Korean government formed under the United Nations sanctioned election of 1948, civil war erupted on Jeju island. Demonstrations against police brutality and corruption sparked police and right-wing youth violence, causing tens of thousands of Korean deaths. Many of the victims were children, women, and elderly civilians who were merely related to the leftist protestors.

Civil strife across the peninsula and the need to counter the appeal of Communism ultimately motivated officials to pass a land reform law in 1950, just before the outbreak of the Korean War. The South Korean land reform law included compensation for landowners and other provisions that were disadvantageous to farmers. Such political factors delayed the onset of land reform. In South Korea, the redistribution of landholdings was not completed until 1951. Unlike in North Korea, individuals could own land in South Korea and use it as collateral for loans. This encouraged entrepreneurialism and economic growth. While land reform in South Korea seemed like a torturous process at the time for long-suffering Korean farmers, the way that it was pursued helped lay the foundation for Korean economic success in the decades to come.

To aid the US occupation's eventual transition to Korean self-rule, US authorities turned to the Korean nationalist leader Syngman Rhee. Born in 1875, Rhee participated in many efforts to help Korea navigate the end of the Joseon dynasty and counter Japanese colonization. Rhee had many long-standing friends and allies in the United States because he spoke fluent English, practiced Christianity, and had degrees from George Washington University, Harvard, and Princeton.[7] In the tumult of the occupation period, Rhee vehemently opposed Communist and leftist activists, a stance that made him appealing to US officials. Following the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) (the South Korean government) on August 15, 1948, Rhee and his ruling coterie, which enjoyed limited popularity among the people, took coercive measures to stifle the dissent of leftist and Communist groups, as well as moderates and rightists opposed to Rhee and the hasty formation of a new government that did not encompass the entire Korean peninsula.



Syngman Rhee. Painted by Boris Chaliapin. This painting is in the US National Portrait Gallery.

Source:
https://npg.si.edu/es/object/npg_NPG.89.TC1

[6] See Gi Wook Shin, "Neither "sprouts" nor "offspring": The Agrarian Roots of Korean Capitalism" in *Transformations in Twentieth Century Korea*, eds Yun-shik Chang and Steven Hugh, (London: Routledge, 2006).

[7] For Rhee's background, see David Fields, *Foreign Friends: Syngman Rhee, American Exceptionalism, and the Division of Korea* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2019).

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Image of captured insurgents in Life *Magazine, November 15, 1948.*

Insurgencies tested Rhee's position on handling domestic dissent. The instability on Jeju continued into the fall of 1948, spreading to mainland Korea when a battalion of the Republic of Korea Army in the nearby southwestern city of Yosu mutinied. Dissatisfaction over the departing US occupation forces' past actions, including the division of Korea at the 38th parallel, motivated the rebels. Historian Bruce Cumings highlighted one rebel newspaper that demanded "land redistribution without compensation to landlords, a purge of police and other officials who had served the Japanese, and opposition to a separate government for the South."[8] Insurgents re-established the town's people's committee and conducted "people's courts" to try and execute landlords, police officers, and other "rightists." The Yosu rebellion underscores the fact that the tensions that emerged at the end of the Joseon dynasty and during the colonial period mattered.

Rebellion on Jeju and in the surrounding area did not end until the spring of 1949.[9] Insurgency took root elsewhere in South Korea after the end of the US occupation. In Cholla and Kyongsang provinces, large numbers of leftist guerillas challenged Rhee's Republic of Korea. Like fighters elsewhere, wealth disparities and tensions over land reform fueled much of the fighting. Over the course of these crises, Koreans killed each other. Tens of thousands of Koreans were murdered, including many who were not leftists but had been accused of associating with the rebels. US military advisors, who were present in Jeju and Yosu, sanctioned the cruelty exhibited by South Korean rightists in their reprisals against not only confirmed and suspected leftists but also their relatives. Prior to these rebellions, a number of these military advisors had trained rightists in counter-insurgency tactics. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Koreans left their homes in the wake of civil violence, creating a refugee problem that would continue through the Korean War (1950–53).

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 escalated the pattern of violence and repression against ordinary South Koreans. As part of his anti-communist campaign in 1949, Rhee established the National Rehabilitation and Guidance League, or Bodo League. This program aimed to reform leftists, presumed leftists, and other marginalized people by bringing them into a repressive government-run ideological "reform" program. When North Korea attacked the South, South Korean forces summarily executed thousands of Koreans affiliated with the league on the suspicion that they might still have leftist sympathies. US military personnel reported these acts of violence up the chain of command, but US General Douglas MacArthur refused to seek an end to these atrocities. The chaos of the early part of the Korean War escalated incidents of civilian death.

North Korean forces entering South Korean cities and towns in the summer of 1950 also practiced mass violence against civilians. Days into their capture of Seoul, for example, North Koreans set up

[8] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: Norton and Company, 1997), 222.
[9] For a collection of essays on the Korean War, civil violence, and memory, see Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2011).

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intelligence networks that encouraged South Koreans to denounce one another. These denunciations often ended in public executions. North Korea summarily murdered Koreans educated in the US, those they suspected held pro-Japanese views, and those opposed to Communism. Numerous soldiers, judges, and Koreans affiliated with the South Korean government were also executed. As the war progressed and cities changed hands, both sides committed violence against civilians.[10]

The South Korean massacre of civilians in Geochang serves as one prominent moment of South Koreans murdering civilians during the war. In early 1951, South Korean forces executed hundreds of civilians, including women and children, in Geochang County, believing that they were Communist sympathizers. In a US news report, a Korean official dismissed incidents like these as "unavoidable wholesale measures" to find security, a symptom of a dirty war against Communist guerillas.[11] Under this cover, incidents of mass murder were ignored or suppressed.

Korean civilians also suffered under the onslaught of the war's aerial campaigns. At different moments in the war, US forces fired on refugees out of confusion or because they believed that the civilians had been infiltrated by guerillas. The massacre at No Gun Ri (July 26-29, 1950) was the most infamous incident of South Korean civilian deaths at American hands. Survivors of the No Gun Ri massacre claim that Americans massacred hundreds of Korean refugees as they sought shelter under a bridge. In the early months of the war, US planes strafed groups of refugees who got too close to American lines.[12]

At other moments in the war, refugees became symbols of the US commitment to help Koreans. For years, leaders like X Corps Commander Ned Almond and others highlighted the titanic effort to evacuate refugees from Hungnam in the winter of 1950 as an iconic moment in the war. Around the same time, the US Fifth Airforce evacuated nearly 1,000 Korean children from Seoul when the rebounding North Korean and Chinese forces threatened the city.[13] These



US airmen help Korean children into a plane during Operation Kiddy Car. Courtesy USAF.

Source: https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196362/operation-kiddy-car/

[10] See Dong Chon Kim, *The Unending Korean War: A Social History* (Larkspur, CA: Tamal Vista Publishing, 2009).
[11] George Barrett, "Village Massacre Stirs South Korea," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1951.
[12] See Sahr Conway-Lanz, "Beyond No Gun Ri: Refugees and the United States Military in the Korean War," *Diplomatic History*, 29, no. 1 (2005): 49–81.
[13] "Operation Kiddy Car," The National Museum of the US Air Force, May 12, 2015 https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196362/operation-kiddy-car/. See also Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: the Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015) 24-25.

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Civilian surveys the wreckage following a US raid in Pyongyang (1950) Courtesy Getty Images.

Source: https://wosu.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/visual-literacy/visual-thinking-strategies/

refugee evacuations testify to the massive amount of civilian displacement during the war. Some estimate that over 5 million Koreans became refugees during the war.[14]

Over the course of the war, United Nations Command forces waged an almost unimaginably destructive bombing campaign against North Korea. Historian Charles K. Armstrong estimated that the United States dropped over 600,000 tons of explosives on North Korea. That number included approximately 32,000 tons of napalm. Much of this was directed at civilian targets, especially after military targets were destroyed in the early months of the war. By comparison, the United States used a little more than 500,000 tons of bombs in the entire Pacific theater of World War II. By the end of the Korean War, nearly three million Koreans were dead, injured, or missing. At the time, the combined population of North and South Korea was approximately 30 million.[15] As Armstrong added, "the majority of those killed were in the North, which had half of the population of the South; although the DPRK does not have official figures, possibly twelve to fifteen percent of the population was killed in the war, a figure close to or surpassing the proportion of Soviet citizens killed in World War II."[16]

The pain of such losses on both sides of the parallel must be recognized to make sense of the Korean War. Virtually all Koreans who survived the war faced steep struggles in the years that followed. In addition to mourning significant losses, millions of Korean families were devastated by the war, many of them permanently separated by the North-South national boundary. In the South and in the North, the economy was in shambles. In South Korea, a massive black market emerged. Inflation grew rampant, cheapening the value of Korean currency.[17] Factories and farmland were devastated by fighting and bombing. Roads and rail lines were destroyed. Both South and North Korea grew dependent on foreign aid.

Korean efforts to address the costs of war shaped the Korean path moving forward. Through great sacrifice, help from the United States, and economic planning, South Korean leaders in subsequent decades established heavy industry, set high rates of economic growth, and ended their dependency on US aid. North Korea's fate was different. After economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s, the North Korean economy stagnated. In the long term, North Korea was never able to break away from foreign aid. The downfall of the Soviet Union and the weakening of the Communist bloc resulted in the failure of the economy and mass starvation in North Korea in the 1990s.

Koreans did not discuss the trauma of the war for decades. In North Korea, historical facts are often exaggerated to serve the ends of the government. These choices make it impossible for North Koreans to

[14] Mark Peterson with Phillip Margulies, *A Brief History of Korea* (New York: Infobase Publishing), 207.
[15] "US Census Bureau History: the Korean War," *Census History Home Page*, (June 2017), https://www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2017/june_2017.html, Accessed June 24, 2020.
[16] Charles K. Armstrong, "The Destruction and Reconstruction of North Korea, 1950–1960," *The Asia Pacific Journal* (March 2009): 1.
[17] See Jeong Min Kim, "From Military Supplies to Wartime Commodities: The Black Market for Sex and Goods during the Korean War, 1950–53," *Radical History Review* (January 2019): 11–30.

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gain a historically accurate understanding of the war, especially who started it. For example, North Koreans are taught Syngman Rhee and the ROK started the war even though the overwhelming evidence proves the DPRK initiated the fighting in June 1950. In South Korea, public discussions of the pre-1950 massacres, right-wing atrocities, and civilian suffering during the war did not begin until the rise of the democracy movement in the 1980s. In 1996, the South Korean government passed special laws honoring the civilian dead at Geochang and elsewhere. The pinnacle of this effort to understand the past was the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2005-2010). This Commission publicized long-forgotten acts of violence against civilians and opened South Korean society to continue memorializing and making sense of the colonial and war eras. South Korean intellectuals have done much work to restore the previously lost stories of civilian suffering during the Korean War. Much remains to be done in both Korea and the United States, however, to account for the costs of the war. Acknowledging the Korean civilian struggle during the occupation and the Korean War provides insight into the historical phenomenon of the war and helps take an accurate measure of the war's cost and the world it created.

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Unit 3 • The Korean War as International War, 1950–1953

Objectives:

- Illustrate the ways in which international trends and the security concerns of the Soviet Union, China, and the United States shaped the Korean War
- Discuss US and Chinese reasons for intervention in the Korean War
- Review the Korean War's place in the early Cold War
- Identify key campaigns and leaders in the Korean War
- Understand the main problems with the armistice negotiations

Social dislocation and repression at the end of the Joseon dynasty, the colonial period, and the occupation fueled violence on the Korean peninsula after World War II. International tensions between the United States and Communist powers escalated the level of violence, eventually adding an international dimension to the conflict. The Korean War was at once a Korean civil war and a proxy war between the US and the Communist blocs. The great Cold War rivalry shaped the pacing of the fighting, the campaigns of the war, and the difficult peace process. Measuring the international dimension of the Korean War reveals the influence the Korean War had on Chinese history, international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), and twentieth-century peacemaking. The ways in which the war transformed US society is covered in the next unit.

The US-British-Chinese-Soviet alliance that defeated Germany, Italy, and Japan fell apart shortly after the end of World War II. Leaders in the Soviet Union saw World War II as a war for survival. Moreover, the Soviet people bore more death and destruction than any of the Western Allies. His experiences in World War II convinced Soviet leader Joseph Stalin of the necessity of buffer states to protect the heart of the Soviet Union.[1] At the same time, US leaders, especially President Harry Truman, believed the war showed how dangerous it was to negotiate with dictatorships. Truman thought concessions from Britain and the United States had aided Adolph Hitler's efforts at expansion. Truman also believed stronger international institutions could have kept the peace.[2] These lessons from World War II made the clash between the Soviet Union and the United States almost unavoidable.

Soviet and US choices after the war increased tensions and created flash points. Expanding Soviet dominance of the newly liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe sparked numerous US protests. In early 1947, Truman announced a new US doctrine to counter Soviet efforts to take advantage of civil strife in Turkey and Greece. By the summer, the United States launched a huge financial assistance program known as

[1] For more analysis of Soviet decisions in the early Cold War, see Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) and Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956* (New York: Double Day, 2012).

[2] See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan offered large US loans to recovering European countries. This spending aimed to stabilize Europe and fight poverty. The Soviet Union and its allies rejected Marshall Plan money under the belief that it was to counter their plans to dominate Eastern Europe. Thus, the Marshall Plan and the Soviet reaction to it widened the gulf between Western Europe and the Soviet-controlled parts of the continent.

Growing tensions provoked the Soviet Union to pursue a showdown with the United States over European issues. In 1948, the Soviet Union began blockading the Western-controlled parts of Berlin, a city divided among the World War II victors. Stalin hoped that he could force concessions from the West by starving the US and US-Allied sectors of Berlin. Instead, the United States and Britain launched an impressive airlift that kept the city supplied with coal, food, and other supplies. Stalin eventually relented, but the Berlin blockade showed that the hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union was here to stay. The conflict presaged international tensions and Cold War crises that would dominate world politics for decades.



HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP?

This cartoon, titled, "How to Close the Gap?," is by American cartoonist D.R. Fitzpatrick. It was drawn in 1948. Source: American cartoon on the Russian attempt to drive the Western powers from Berlin by every possible means short of an outright act of war. Cartoon by D.R. Fitzpatrick, 1948.

Cartoon can be located on granger.com at https://www.granger.com/results.asp?image=0012291

Less than six months after the end of the Berlin blockade, two world events proved to be major setbacks to US policy. In August 1949, the United States lost its monopoly on atomic weapons when the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb. Later, in October 1949, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and victory in the Chinese Civil War, a move that underscored the defeat of the US-allied Chinese Guomindang Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek. These events limited American influence abroad and prompted growing criticism of the Truman administration for having "lost China" and for not doing enough to counter the spread of Communism.

Behind closed doors, Truman and his administration were becoming increasingly committed to a policy known as containment. This foreign policy plan held that the United States had to corral Soviet expansion. If the United States were able to do this, flaws within the Soviet system could cause an eventual breakdown in the Soviet Union. As part of this philosophy, Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced, in a January 1950 Press Club speech, a plan for a "defensive perimeter" that placed Japan and the Philippines at the center of the US Cold War containment line.[3] This line did not offer protection to the newly independent Republic of Korea (ROK) or the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan, although both countries were staunchly anti-communist. It appeared to many that the United States would not come to the rescue of the ROK, although the country had only ended the occupation of the peninsula in 1949. Some strategists questioned the strategic value of a US position on the peninsula. In a world of finite resources for defense, these planners did not believe American money or resources were best spent on South Korea, especially in light of the US's important, active missions like the rehabilitation of Japan and Europe.

[3] James I. Matray, "Dean Acheson's Press Club Speech Re-examined," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 22(1). Retrieved from https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/366.

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The lack of focus on Korean issues in Washington did not dampen Korean desires for unification. To counter those who questioned his claim to rule and find stability, Syngman Rhee and his anti-communist supporters conducted wide-ranging purges against suspected leftists. These moves foreshadowed a desire to unify the country. Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) leader Kim Il Sung worked toward unification by repeatedly pushing for Soviet and Chinese consent to attack the South between 1948 and 1950. After the US and Soviet occupations ended, sporadic fighting along the 38th parallel instigated alternately by ROK and by DPRK forces indicated a strong desire for a war for unification by the leaders of both Koreas.

Stalin supported Kim Il Sung's efforts to unify the peninsula as a relatively cheap way to distract the world from Soviet repression in Eastern Europe and to wage war against the United States and its allies. At the same time that Stalin challenged the West over Berlin from 1948 to 1949, he supported a massive buildup of the DPRK military. Stalin used these critical years to prepare North Korea for a war when he believed the strategic tides had turned to Soviet advantage.

The end of the Chinese Civil War in October 1949 seemed to provide such an opportunity. Mao Zedong's victory freed up Sino-Koreans who had fought for the CCP. Stalin believed the PRC would be a willing partner in North Korea's war. From November 1949 to May 1950, Soviet aid helped double the DPRK army in size, from 90,000 to 180,000.[4] In spring 1950, Stalin told Kim Il Sung that if he wanted Soviet support for a wider war with South Korea he must secure Mao's support. Stalin made it clear that the Soviet Union would not rescue the DPRK if they started to lose the war. These moves showed that the Soviet Union did not want to get involved in a direct war with the United States, one which could escalate into World War III.[5]

Kim Il Sung's request to Mao in mid-May 1950 put the Chinese leader in a difficult position. [6] On the one hand, Chinese Communist forces were still stamping out small pockets of Guomindang resistance. An end to the civil war was on the country's horizon; this fact held the promise that Chinese across the country would finally have a chance to rebuild and recover from many years of fighting. On the other hand, Mao believed he needed to cooperate with the Soviet Union. He also believed China had to support revolutionary movements in East Asia. A war in Korea could raise China's profile as a supporter of revolution and as a regional power. Such ideological fervor could also help China pursue reform at home.[7] A student of Clausewitz and Marx, Mao believed conflict inherently political and believed it could help "sweep away" problems confronting political reform and revolution.[8] Mao also thought political fervor and commitment could help a weaker army overcome a stronger one. These ideas made up part of what scholar Shu Guang

[4] See Allan Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

[5] For an international history of the Korean War decisions see See Haruki Wada, *The Korean War: An International History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012). See also, William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[6] The Woodrow Wilson Project's International History Declassified Program maintains a helpful collection of documents on Soviet-Chinese-Korean relations in the run-up to the June 25, 1950 attack. Teachers and students may find documents in this collection helpful in making sense of Kim Il Sung's advocacy in the immediate months following the end of the occupation years. See https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/134/korean-war-origins-1945-1950.

[7] For analysis on Chinese leadership and society in the Korean War era see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Richard Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao and the Origin of the Korean War* (Dulles, VA: Brassey, 2001) and Hajimu Masuda, *Cold War Crucible: the Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[8] See Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995), 13.

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Zhang described as Mao's "military romanticism." Given this complicated view of the prospects of war, Mao tentatively pledged support to Kim.



This Chinese poster, titled, "Smash the imperialist war conspiracy, forge ahead courageously to build our peaceful and happy life!" captures some of the sentiments of Mao's romanticism. It underscores the idea that a movement of Chinese people for reconstruction could stamp out the danger of the west, depicted here as small creatures falling away at the feet of the parade.

Source: https://chineseposters.net/gallery/e16-266.php



This Chinese poster from 1950 provides insight into how some in the PRC viewed US leaders and airpower. The text states, "The Chinese people absolutely cannot condone the encroachment of other countries, and cannot listen to whatever Imperialist who thinks that it can wantonly encroach its own neighbors without acting."

Source: https://chineseposters.net/gallery/e27-169.php

Hunger for unification under his leadership drove Kim Il Sung to take Mao's qualified support as hearty approval to attack the South. On June 25, 1950, Kim escalated the war for unification by attacking south of the 38th parallel. The ROK soldiers were caught off guard and were unable to stop the DPRK military. Rhee evacuated Seoul less than three days into the invasion. The ROK was in a fight for its survival, and it was losing.

Truman believed the US had to act when confronted with this crisis. Truman thought World War II had shown the danger in backing down in the face of challenges from adversaries. Further, his country's policy held that the United States had to contain Communist-backed expansion. Failure to do so would risk wider war and dislocation. Domestic political factors also pushed forward the decision to intervene. Escalating confrontation with the Soviet Union in Europe, the loss of the atomic monopoly, and Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War made many Americans and their Congressional representatives believe the United States was losing crucial ground to the Communist bloc and was under threat. Truman's decision to intervene in the crisis transformed the Korean War from a civil war into an international war.

Truman's choices in responding to the crisis set precedents for domestic politics, shaped the UN, and escalated other Cold War conflicts. Truman dispatched ground troops to stop the DPRK drive southward without pursuing a Congressional declaration of war. His decision to respond without a formal

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resolution from Congress was based on the need to respond quickly, assurances from members of Congress that such legislation was unnecessary, and fear that such a resolution would make the United States look more warlike and thus risk encouraging wider war.[9] A United Nations resolution passed in the days after the attack also gave Truman the ability to claim he was not waging war but countering international lawlessness, or running a "peace keeping mission." In the immediate days after the North Korean attack, leading Congressional representatives did not criticize Truman. Complaints from Congress would plague Truman in the months to come, however. Going to war in Korea without a Congressional Declaration of War set a pattern unbroken for the rest of the Cold War and the early post–Cold War years.

Truman's decisions on Korea shaped international institutions as well. The United Nations had been deeply involved in the post-war occupation of Korea. The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea dispatched observers for the 1948 ROK election. These same observers witnessed the attack south. Their testimony disproves any claim by the DPRK that the ROK started the war. Moreover, Truman believed international cooperation was key to stopping war. This impulse, along with a desire to share the burden of fighting and buttress US alliances, led Truman to pursue a UN resolution on aiding South Korea. The absence of Soviet representatives, who were protesting the UN's decision not to recognize the PRC as the government of China, allowed the resolution to pass the UN Security Council. In the short term, Truman's choice to go to the UN constrained the US in the war. The United States had to pay more attention to allied opinions, especially in relation to using nuclear weapons in the war. In the long term, the success of the UN coalition in South Korea proved the UN could enforce resolutions if their allies had the will to do so.



This cartoon, by British cartoonist David Low, illustrates the stakes for the United Nations. The artist is trying to suggest Truman's choice to lead the United Nations to pass a resolution defending the ROK after the DPRK attack saved the UN from the same fate as the League of Nations, another multinational effort to keep world peace that could not stop German, Italian, and Japanese aggression.

Source: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/cartoon_by_low_on_the_korean_war_30_june_1950-en-6e0a284f-0ae1-44e3-88f4-07c3f7f8fcc6.html

The involvement of the UN was only one way in which the decisions of the summer of 1950 shaped future wars. At the same meeting in which Truman decided to intervene in Korea, he increased support for the French war in Indochina, a move that indicated a wider US role in Vietnam. Truman also moved the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to block the PRC from attacking Taiwan and to prevent Chiang Kai-shek from attacking mainland China. Truman feared Chiang would use the Korean War to transform his effort to reconquer China. This move prevented China from conquering Taiwan and thus unifying China. It also made

[9] See Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Politics, Propaganda, and Public Opinion, 1950-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

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the United States the guarantor of Taiwan's security, a move that led to Sino-American conflicts during the 1950s. Taiwan's independence remains a point of tension in East Asia in the twenty-first century.

Truman designated General Douglas MacArthur the leader of the US-led United Nations Command (UNC). This choice shaped the path of the war. During World War II, MacArthur's was one of the US's most recognizable generals. In 1942 he was appointed Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific. After the war, MacArthur served as the head of the Allied occupation of Japan. His career successes before 1950 and his long tenure in East Asia convinced him that US military superiority and his own strategic brilliance would result in a quick and easy defeat of the North Koreans. MacArthur's confidence would both help and harm the UNC effort in Korea and later lead to a crisis in civil–military relations.



This monument in Korea honors the sacrifices of Task Force Smith and other UNC-allied fighters during the campaign for Osan. Task Force Smith faced significant supply and training issues. Courtesy US Army.

Source: https://www.army.mil/article/42373/task_force_smith_honored_at_60th_anniversary_ceremony_in_korea

Lack of preparedness for war hampered American efforts to meet the emergency of the North Korean attack in the South. Postwar budget cuts left units understaffed. Equipment was old and, in many cases, not maintained. Training was lax. US Commander Walton Walker, the head of the Eighth Army, the main US force in Korea, estimated readiness in the summer of 1950 at 40 percent.[10] These weaknesses exacted real costs on both soldiers and civilians as North Korean forces crushed Task Force Smith, one of the first US units deployed to Korea. Rapid conscription of South Korean forces, Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSAs), a program that placed ROK soldiers in battered US units, and the arrival of Marine Corps units made it possible for the United States, the ROK, and other UN allies to stop the North Koreans along the Busan Perimeter, named after the port city of Busan, where the UNC maintained a small hold on the country.[11]

[10] Stephen Taaffe, *MacArthur's Korean War Generals* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 16.

[11] See Allan Millett, *The War for Korea: 1950-1951 They Came From the North* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2010). For a more concise recounting of Korean War history see Allan Millet, *The Korean War: The Essential Bibliography* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2007).

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While that perimeter held, MacArthur developed a bold plan to switch the tempo of the war, allowing the UNC to transition from defensive to offensive fighting. Over the objections of leaders in the US Marine Corps and some skepticism from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, MacArthur advanced a proposal to conduct an amphibious landing at the western port city of Incheon, halfway up the peninsula. This bold gambit threatened to trap DPRK forces and cut the North Korean supply lines. It also revealed that North Korean forces were imbalanced and gave the UNC the initiative in the fight. A contingent of US, South Korean, and other allied forces quickly recaptured Seoul, while another part of the UNC forces fought north from Busan. The possibility of completely destroying the North Korean forces and unifying the peninsula was too tantalizing for the UNC allies, especially Syngman Rhee. Crossing the 38th parallel would give Rhee the chance to end the artificial division created at the end of 1945 and unify both North and South Korea. MacArthur promised the war would be over by Christmas 1950. In October, US-led UNC forces haphazardly dashed forward to deliver on their commander's pledge.



Yu Yong-Bong, a KATUSA, poses with an American serviceman in 1952.

Source: https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/common/printpreviews.asp?categoryCode=177&newsIdx=267303

The below map identifies the Incheon landing.

Source: https://nj.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/1d561db0-05bb-4838-8048-fc045db69c14/the-korean-war/#.XvY5hShKiM8



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In Beijing, Chinese leaders saw the UNC push north, especially US participation in that drive, as a grave danger to their border with the Korean peninsula. Rapidly collapsing North Korean forces also upset Chinese officials. Eerily similar to the view of US leaders, Chinese officials feared that if the North Korean Communist revolution were stopped, it would threaten the viability of Communist revolution elsewhere, including at home. Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai said the Korean War "cannot be separated from other international issues."[12] As such, a loss there would damage PRC credibility and prestige. He continued to argue, "If Korea fell down, breaches in other places would also be opened, one by one. If the enemy were allowed to break down the gate of the Eastern front and make its way into our house, how could we devote ourselves to construction?"[13] To maintain the Chinese Revolution at home, it was necessary to fight in Korea.

With the goal of preventing a wider war, Chinese officials sent messages to the United States via intermediaries that crossing the parallel would trigger their intervention. But US and ROK military and civilian leadership ignored these threats. Indeed, when Truman met with MacArthur at Wake Island in early October 1950 MacArthur discounted the danger. He added that if the Chinese did intervene, it would end in the "greatest slaughter" of Chinese forces.[14]

Despite this confidence, a massive Chinese offensive over the winter of 1950 would prove MacArthur wrong. Under Chinese attacks that seemed to never end, the UNC fought its way out of the Chosin Reservoir and undertook massive evacuations of UNC forces and thousands of civilians from Wonsan and Hamhung. While the frigid winter of the December 1950 campaign hurt both sides, Chinese forces suffered enormous casualties as many Chinese soldiers were sent into the field unprepared and thus froze to death. These operations would be among the most famous of the war. Near the start of the New Year in 1951 Seoul fell again to Communist forces, changing hands for the third time since June 1950.

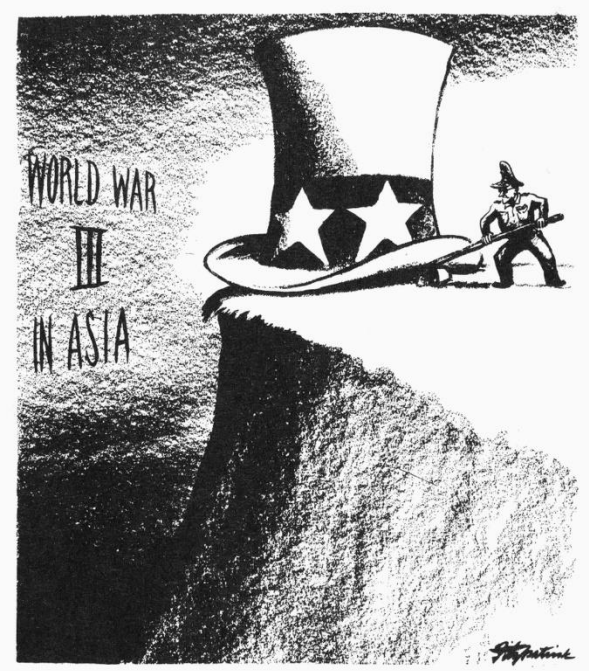
During this chaotic period, Walton Walker, then in command of the Eighth Army, died in a jeep accident, causing a critical change in US war leadership. His replacement, General Matthew Ridgway, provided the necessary vision to restore the UN forces' poor morale and reform the dysfunctional command structure nurtured under MacArthur. In Washington, Truman became more adamant about limiting the Korean War. The Chinese intervention made him dread possible intervention by the Soviet Union even more. Such an outcome, he believed, would give way to World War III. These policy aims and Washington's trust of Ridgway drove a wedge between Truman and MacArthur. MacArthur wished to expand the war into China. Never one to shy away from the spotlight, MacArthur increasingly aired these disagreements in public, despite repeated orders from Washington not to do so. In April 1951, Truman fired MacArthur. Truman's popularity plummeted and MacArthur returned to a hero's welcome in the United States. But he soon lost credibility as more Americans realized he had violated the orders of a democratically elected official and had been rightly dismissed.[15] In this way, among others, the Korean War tested the strength of US institutions.

[12] Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 159.
[13] Ibid., 159.
[14] Omar Bradley, *Substance of Statements Made at the Wake Island Conference* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951), 5.
[15] See H.W. Brands, *The General and the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Doubleday, 2016).

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While MacArthur, Truman, and their respective supporters argued in public and private, Ridgway advanced the UN line. The UN forces recaptured Seoul for the last time in March 1951. In short order, UN forces held the best terrain slightly north of the 38th parallel, a position known as Line Kansas.

MacArthur's dismissal changed military relationships on the peninsula. Ridgway took MacArthur's old role in Japan as head of the Far East Command and General James Van Fleet took control of the Eighth Army. Van Fleet believed artillery was the best way to counterbalance Chinese numerical superiority. He also thought he could minimize casualties by maintaining a ready force that went on offensive operations. Van Fleet drew on both of these ideas to counter a massive Chinese attack in the summer of 1951 known as the Chinese Spring Offensive. Under Van Fleet's leadership, UNC forces stopped nearly twenty-five Chinese and North Korean divisions with artillery and aggressive counterstrikes. By July 1951, exhausted Chinese and North Korean forces decided to pursue negotiations with the UN. Over the course of long negotiations to follow, fierce fighting was waged over strategic hills along the line that separated the two forces. Many Americans, Koreans, Chinese, and UN allies died fighting on hills, such as Hill 281, Hill 395, the Nevada Complex, T-Bone, and Pork Chop Hill, among others. To understand the Korean War, it is necessary to see how frustrating the last two years of the war were for all parties. Hills were taken, lost, and retaken while no progress was made in the peace negotiations.



NOT A GENERAL'S JOB

This cartoon, from D.R. Fitzpatrick, criticizes MacArthur for speaking against Truman's foreign policy decisions while still on active duty. It was released one day before Truman fired the general.

Source: https://www.posterazzi.com/cartoon-macarthur-1951-nnot-a-generals-job-american-cartoon-published-the-day-before-president-harry-s-truman-removed-general-douglas-macarthur-from-his-post-as-supreme-commander-of-u-n-forces-in-korea-for-insubordination-including-efforts/

A problematic negotiation process stood at the center of this frustration. At the start of the negotiations, Communist representatives tested their UNC counterparts by attempting to humiliate them. PRC and DPRK negotiators seated the UNC representatives in low-seated chairs and made accusations against their western counterparts. The UNC strategy also slowed the peace deliberations because the Truman Administration insisted on voluntary repatriation, the principle that Chinese and Korean prisoners of war (POWs) should be allowed to choose whether or not they wanted to return to their home countries.

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This Karl Hubenthal cartoon, published on the eve of the 1952 election, contrasts Democratic candidate campaign statements praising Truman's domestic reforms with the costs of the Korean War. It illustrates the emotions of that critical election.

Source:
https://osucartoons.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/66F1FF83-D46E-4961-8A33-854684494428

Factors that motivated this position included concerns about what would happen to returned POWs. Some feared POWs would be put back into combat for a renewed attack in the South.[16] Humanitarian concerns also played a role; Truman believed that POWs repatriated to Communist powers could be executed or suffer further persecution, as had been done to repatriated Soviet POWs after World War II. That this bargaining position did not conform to the 1949 Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners, an international agreement that mandated repatriation of POWs, added even greater complexity to the issue. Communist negotiators rejected voluntary repatriation because they doubted the process of determining POWs' views would be fair. The Chinese and North Koreans also saw the voluntary repatriation process as a way for the United Nations Command to humiliate them in front of an international audience. The peace process could not move forward because of this issue.

While the armistice negotiations dragged on and both sides continued fighting near the 38th parallel, the Korean War influenced domestic politics. Truman's popularity sunk in 1951 because of the war. In 1952, defeat in the New Hampshire primary prompted Truman to announce he would not seek a second term. Adlai Stevenson took on the difficult mission of defending Truman's foreign policy in the 1952 election. For their candidate, the Republican Party nominated Dwight D. Eisenhower for the presidency. Eisenhower, an iconic military leader in World War II, attacked the Truman administration on its choices in the Korean War. Indeed, in the most famous speech of the campaign Eisenhower pledged to go to Korea to review the conditions there and find peace. Broad confidence among many Americans that Eisenhower could more effectively end the Korean War was one of the key reasons that enabled him to win a smashing victory in the 1952 election. True to his promises, the new Eisenhower administration looked for ways to change the tempo of the fighting. Eisenhower discussed using atomic bombs in the war, eventually sending back-

[16] See Monica Kim, *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: the Untold History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). See also Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: the Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

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channel threats to the Chinese. The new President also escalated the air war, approving attacks on targets that had been prohibited during the Truman years.

As Eisenhower pursued these policy changes, an important political event happened in the Communist world. In March 1953, Stalin died. Stalin's Soviet successors wanted to move away from a policy of confrontation toward one of peaceful competition with the United States and the anti-communist bloc. The dictator's death also removed a key voice for waging the war as a way to distract the West. When the United States offered to moderate its position on repatriation by agreeing to repatriate sick and wounded POWs in an operation known as Little Switch, Communist bloc representatives accepted the concessions. The path seemed clear for further compromise and the completion of armistice negotiations.



This Karl Hubenthal cartoon from April 1953 responds to the complex Korean War peace negotiations. The cartoonist channeled racial stereotypes about Chinese and other Asian people to criticize the progress of discussions.

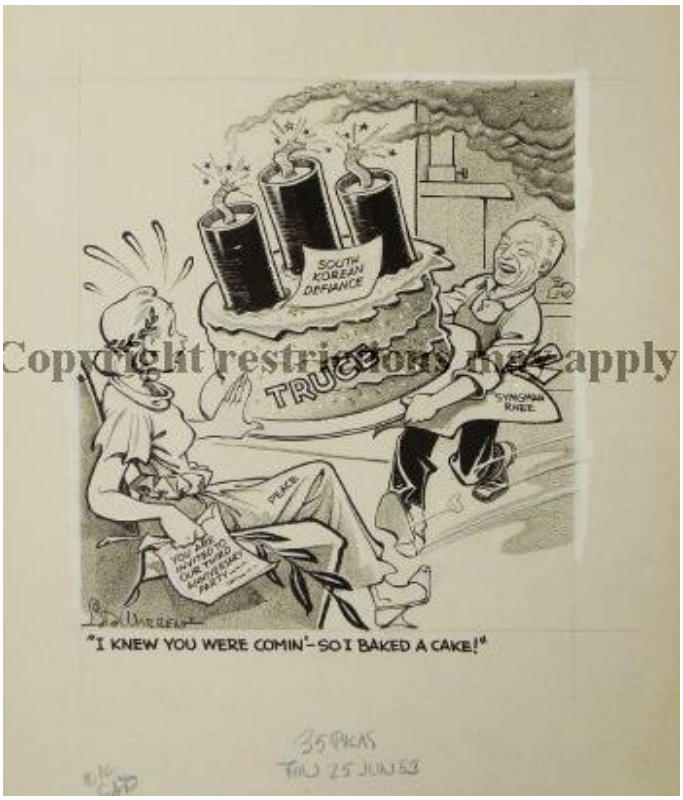
Source:
https://osucartoons.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/C8026EBA-47A0-4B95-81D2-775944239395

A key player in the negotiations and execution of the repatriation agreements was the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee. This group, refereed by representatives from India, was composed of officials from Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. It helped run the interviews for each prisoner of war. In these interviews, prisoners of war could choose to go to the country they fought for, stay in enemy territory, or move on to a neutral country. India's leadership of the Commission stemmed from its longstanding interest in Korean issues. Before the war, Indians participated in the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, the body that oversaw the 1948 elections in the ROK. During the war, Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru saw the war's relationship towards the viability of the United Nations as an organization to resolve wars. The strong likelihood of future conflict in the rough transition from colonial to free societies in Asia and elsewhere further underscored the value of such an institution to Nehru and others. As such, Indian political leaders pushed hard for a peaceful resolution to the war. Indeed, historian Robert Barnes concluded that India's deft diplomacy deserved "credit for nudging along the process toward peace"[17]

Rhee resisted the progress in repatriation negotiations in the summer of 1953. Such an agreement would destroy Syngman Rhee's goal of unifying the peninsula. He loudly protested a move toward an armistice; he feared it would leave Korea divided for many years. Rhee also worried that the United States might disengage from Korea when the fighting ended. The movement toward an armistice led Rhee to nearly derail the entire process. Approximately a month before the start of the cease-fire, Rhee ordered all non-

[17] Robert Barnes, "Between the Blocs: India, the United Nations, and Ending the Korean War," *The Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 18: 2, (Fall 2013), 279.

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This L.D. Warren political cartoon from June 1953 mocks Syngman Rhee's attempts to resist the armistice negotiations.

Source: https://osucartoons.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/EE48B536-CDA0-44CB-9768-766783506448

communist Korean POWs in his custody released. Freeing thousands of Korean POWs undermined the effort at repatriation, voluntary or involuntary. To placate Rhee and keep the peace, the United States signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROK and offered a heavy aid package. Rhee's efforts did not derail the peace though they did lengthen the war. On July 27, 1953, an armistice ended major combat operations during the Korean War.

But the armistice did not end the division of Korea nor did it stop occasional incidents of violence on the parallel. Korean and US forces continued to fight. Significant operations in this period of ongoing fighting included the January 21, 1968 Blue House Raid, a North Korean attempt to assassinate the South Korean president in his official residence, the January 23, 1968 DPRK seizure of the USS *Pueblo*, and the August 18, 1976 ax murder incident, which occurred as North Korean and American soldiers fought over trees in the Demilitarized Zone, the area dividing North and South Korea. Understanding the international dimensions of the Korean War, the key campaigns of the war, and the challenges of the negotiation process not only helps make sense of an important part of modern international history but also offers insight into the origins of one of the most difficult problems of the twenty-first century: maintaining peace in East Asia while Korea remains divided. The continuing relevance of this issue to American foreign policy and domestic politics is just one area among many in which the Korean War shapes life in the United States, the subject of the next unit.

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Unit 4 • The Korean War and American History and Life, 1950–Present

Objectives:

- Analyze the ways the Korean War shaped life on the American home front
- Identify the legacies of the Korean War for American domestic institutions
- Understand the large influence the Korean War had on American foreign policy in the Cold War era
- Review the roots of continuing tensions between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)

Though popularly called the "forgotten war" in the United States, the Korean War shaped American life and history in dramatic ways. At home, the demands of the military emergency accelerated the integration of African Americans into the armed forces. The war also expanded the persecution of gay Americans and hampered efforts at domestic reform. Domestic mobilization for the war was mixed as the federal government, businesses, and workers fought over the boundaries of partial mobilization. At the same time, the war enlarged the military budget and solidified emerging ideas about security threats that would lead to the Vietnam War. Hostility between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) stretched beyond the 1950s into the post-Cold War era. Measuring how the Korean War shaped domestic life and foreign policy outlines the war's important legacies in US history.

The shock of the DPRK strike south in June 1950 directly shaped the integration of the US military and wider efforts to break segregation and lessen racial injustice in American life. President Harry Truman ordered the integration of the armed forces in 1948 under Executive Order 9981, but until the Korean War, many military authorities had resisted President Truman's order. In the immediate years after the order was signed, Army leaders argued African Americans were unfit to serve. Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall claimed African Americans were "fearful, unreliable, and lacked the manly virtues of the warrior."[1] Army Chief of Staff Omar Bradley took a different approach, resisting efforts to use the Army to enact domestic reforms. Many enlisted men reflected this hostility to desegregation. A 1949 Department of Defense study found that 61 percent opposed integration.[2] Local southern communities, where many military posts were established, added another aspect to the problem because these communities were home to segregated businesses. Racially motivated violence outside these posts against African Americans in the wake of the executive order slowed integration as well.

The demands of the Korean War on both resources and foreign policy motivated civilian leadership to push integration with greater vigor after June 1950. US civilian and military leadership perceived the response to the DPRK as a national emergency and sought ways to bring more men and women into the military. Integration was also linked to the pursuit of American foreign policy objectives during the war. Some believed images of African Americans persecuted in the United States hampered US efforts to convince the

[1] Mitchell Lerner, "'Is It For This We Fought and Bled?': The Korean War and the Struggle for Civil Rights," *Journal of Military History*, 82 no. 2, (April 2018), 530.
[2] Ibid., 531.

rest of the world of its moral righteousness in the Cold War. Communist opponents of the United States used US examples of racial violence to court allies in Asia, Africa, and South America. Many in the US government believed that the unjust treatment of African Americans in the US mattered for Cold War diplomacy and the international image of the US in the bipolar world order. African American activists seized on this argument. In one letter to an official, civil rights activist Roy Wilkins reasoned that maintaining segregation in US units would confirm "in the minds of the Koreans and others that this was a racial war."[3] In this way, many in the US government came to believe integration served the immediate needs of the Korean War and larger US Cold War diplomatic interests.

While the integration of the armed forces quickened, African Americans had mixed experiences within the military during the war. Close to the front lines, many African Americans made lasting friendships with their fellow soldiers regardless of race. But in rear areas and at home, African Americans encountered discrimination. African Americans were court-martialed more frequently than their white counterparts. Future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall went to Korea to investigate conditions for African American soldiers. In addition to confirming that African Americans were disproportionately court-martialed, he found the court-martial hearings were short and African Americans were not provided legal counsel. Outside of the military justice system, African Americans experienced racially motivated violence at military installations. Indeed, the hold of white supremacist organizations was so strong on some white servicemen that they founded Ku Klux Klan branches while being held captive within Korean War prisoner of war camps. For these men, enduring starvation, abuse, and indoctrination together was not enough to create solidarity. Communist camp commandants used this factor to divide and manage American prisoners of war.

Discussions at home about African Americans and the war changed the way many in the African American community viewed the war. Some African Americans believed coverage of African American soldiers in the media was unfair. The failure of legislation aimed at barring discrimination in war work also disappointed many African Americans. Claims that military service could help African Americans gain freedom and legal protections lost their potency during the Korean War. This factor shaped African American activism during the Vietnam War.

The emergency nature of the Korean War also helped open up new positions for women in the military. Like African Americans, women had served in all of America's wars. But their roles were often restricted, and their ability to rise in rank was also limited. This changed during the Korean War. Women served in all branches of the US military. Their roles varied. Women served as motor vehicle operators, recruiters, photographers, air traffic controllers, mechanics, telephone and teletype operators, and cashiers in addition to doing important work as nurses, a more traditional military occupation for women. New ranks were open to women during the war as well, including the position of wardmaster, a supervisory position usually assigned to male medical noncommissioned officers. While not all of these women served in the Korean theater, they provided support to the war effort and made an important contribution.

As the needs of the Korean War pushed integration forward and opened opportunities for some women, Cold War imperatives led to the idealization of the heteronormative family and repression of other Americans. Some activists and commentators argued women belonged in the home and could only find purpose in their roles as mothers. Many women felt pressured to conform to traditional gender roles.[4] At the same time, war on the Korean peninsula increased anxiety about alleged pro-communist traitors. Within the

[3] Ibid., 523–524. For more on the African American experience in the Korean War see also Jeremy Maxwell, *Brotherhood in Combat: How African Americans Found Equality in Korea and Vietnam* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018).
[4] See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

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federal government, purges of gay and lesbian Americans increased twentyfold following the North Korean strike south. Anti-communist legislators attacked gay people under the belief that their sexual identity indicated a weak moral base. Some also argued that gay men were leading a revolution against masculinity that was as dangerous as the spread of Communism. Historian David K. Johnson argues that gay activism in response to these attacks marked an early effort to secure rights for gays and lesbians.[5]

Anti-communist ideology also shaped the treatment of returning Korean War veterans. The military stalemate pushed some Americans to believe that Korean War veterans lacked martial skill and moral strength. The use of prisoners of war by China and North Korea for propaganda purposes caused anti-communist activists to focus on that subset of veterans. Though these prisoners had survived extreme privation and forced marches, like the "Tiger Death March," some observers believed they were a possible fifth column. Additionally, observers were confused by the ideological dedication of Chinese, North Korean, and South Korean partisans within United Nation Command camps. They concluded that the Communists had brainwashed their own soldiers. In this context it was easy for psychiatrist William E. Mayer and others to argue that the Korean War era cohort of American veterans was susceptible to brainwashing. Mayer reasoned that American POWs had compromised their values in the camps because they "fell short of the historical American standards of honor, character, loyalty, courage, and personal integrity."[6] *The New York Times* and other publications shared Mayer's views with the world. The activism of Mayer and his allies had long-term implications for the lives of prisoners because returning prisoners of war were followed for years after the war by federal agents. This phenomenon of viewing Korean War POWs negatively led to the creation of the US military Code of Conduct in 1955.



This image, from the 1962 film Manchurian Candidate, depicts a brainwashed American murdering a fellow soldier on orders from his Communist captor. The film was nominated for two Academy awards and is listed on the National Film Registry (Library of Congress).

Source: https://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/weed-reviews-hypnosis-and-medicine-and-gord-downie-needs-to-step-out-of-the-indigenous-spotlight-1.4171996/hypnosis-in-medicine-no-chickens-involved-1.4172069

[5] See David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[6] "Reds Had Big Plan for Brain Washing, Cincinnatian Says," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 5, 1954. Lewis H. Carlson, *Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War: An Oral History of Korean War POWs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 7. Melinda L. Pash offers a social history of Korean War veterans in *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: the Americans Who Fought the Korean War* (New York: NYU Press, 2012). See also Richard Severo and Lewis Milford, *The Wages of War: When America's Soldiers Came Home—From Valley Forge to Vietnam* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

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This Herb Block cartoon from 1951 highlights the rampant anxiety many Americans had during the Korean War. In the upper right corner, a determined Joseph McCarthy aims to "smear" anyone who does not support fascist Spanish leader Francisco Franco and Chinese Nationalist anti-communist leader Chiang Kai-shek. Source "Say, what ever happened to 'freedom-from-fear'?" August 13, 1951. Reproduction from original drawing. Published in the Washington Post.

Source: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblocks-history/fire.html

Politicians and activist groups used surging anti-communist sentiment to advance efforts to counter government reforms. Minnesota Congressman Walter Judd equated the effort at reform itself with pro-communist sentiment. He said, "Communists emphasize all the bad conditions in our country—Jim Crowism, the discrimination, the slums, inadequate education, or medical care."[7] Judd reasoned that to highlight the country's problems was a Communist act. The American Medical Association took a similar approach in its campaign against expanded government intervention in health care. Such reforms, the group argued, would lead to a "socialist state."[8] In Los Angeles, local issues and the war intersected. In 1951, in the middle of the war, the LA City Council changed its policy toward public housing. Instead of supporting activists' campaigns for government-assisted public housing, the Council reasoned that efforts were part of the "creeping cancer of socialism" in American life.[9] Dwight Eisenhower, a firm anti-statist, channeled this resistance to the expansion of the federal government into a successful bid for the presidency in 1952.

At the same time that domestic opposition to government spending grew at home, the military budget and spread of the US military exploded in response to the Korean War. Over the course of the war, the annual defense budget grew from a low of $13.5 billion before the war to $50 billion in 1951.[10] The war

[7] Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: the Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 216.
[8] Ibid., 208.
[9] Ibid., 208. See also, Don Parson, "The Decline of Public Housing and the Politics of the Red Scare: The Significance of the Los Angeles Public Housing War," *Journal of Urban History*, 33 no. 3 (March 2007), 400-417.
[10] Paul Pierpaoli Jr., "Truman's Other War: The Battle for the American Homefront, 1950–1953," *OAH Magazine of History*, 14 No. 3 (Spring 2000), 16.

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contributed to the foundation of what Dwight Eisenhower later called the "military industrial complex." The trend of high military spending, started in the Korean War era, extended through the Cold War and well past it, despite efforts by later presidents and reformers to balance the budget.

This massive spending increase caused economic problems, including inflation and shortages. To manage these issues and better mobilize the economy for the needs of the war, Truman used the 1950 Defense Production Act to create regulatory agencies to control prices and wages. This led to a crisis in 1952 when steelworkers threatened to strike for higher wages, something steel companies would not grant without a higher price for steel set by Truman's Office of Price Stabilization. Before the strike could happen, Truman seized the steel mills. The steel mill owners filed suit. The US Supreme Court ruled in their favor, arguing that Truman did not have the authority to seize the mills. A strike soon followed. The Korean War marked a break with the past in that defense spending would never return to its prewar levels, and mobilization efforts for future wars would not resemble those of World War I and World War II when powerful government regulatory agencies shaped the economy and American life.



This cartoon, published in the New York Journal American in 1952, criticizes Harry Truman for taking control of the steel mills. Original held at the Harry Truman Presidential Library. Found in James N. Giglio, Harry Truman in Cartoon and Caricature (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001), 139.

The way Truman and others perceived the needs of the Korean War also changed US alliances. The US increased aid to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies. In the words of political scientist Robert Jervis, the Korean War changed NATO from "a paper organization built on a symbolic American commitment to a force capable of resisting Soviet attack."[11] Jervis continued, "Korea was an unpleasant reminder of the deficiencies of having to mobilize an army after the war had started. Allied forces were nearly pushed off the peninsula before adequate reinforcements could arrive, and the same could happen in Europe."[12] Jervis's comments here underscore a larger characteristic of the war's influence on defense. The low standard of readiness in the summer of 1950 and the disaster of early efforts like Task Force Smith to counter the North Korean drive convinced many US leaders that the country could not afford to reduce the military budget or to retract commitments. The risk of not being prepared for the next war was too high.

Perceptions of the Korean War by key US decision makers added to the sense of danger. Instead of seeing it as the escalation of a civil war that was being waged among Koreans, many believed it was solely a gambit by the Communist bloc calculated to expand its reach. This solidified a change in the way the US viewed the Soviet Union and its allies as well as American foreign policy goals. Over the late 1940s, the US–Soviet rivalry grew, but the need to contain the Communist bloc through an internationalist foreign policy was still debated. As late as 1949, Republican Party leader Senator Robert Taft voted against ratification of NATO and urged Americans to consider the costs of larger US overseas commitments. On the other side of the political spectrum, former Vice President Henry Wallace, a leading liberal voice after World War II,

[11] Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24 No. 4 (December 1980), 580.
[12] Ibid., 580.

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pushed for a reconciliation with the Soviet Union during the late 1940s and, like Taft, also argued against NATO. The shock of the Korean War made these positions untenable. Both Taft and Wallace moderated their opposition to overseas commitments.

The change in Taft and Wallace's views signaled an even larger phenomenon: the growth of what students of the era called the "liberal consensus," a set of widely held ideas that included support for anti-communist, interventionist foreign policy. The Korean War cemented the view among many in Washington that the Communist bloc had to be contained. The belief that the expanding Communist revolution would endanger non-communist societies, a philosophy later known as the "domino theory," gained wider acceptance after the Korean War. This had a profound influence on US life throughout the Cold War. Fear of expanding Communism led US interventions and regime change in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954). These moves signaled a growing pattern of American involvement in the domestic politics of foreign countries that continued to the end of the Cold War.

The most significant of these interventions, the US support for the French and, later, for the anti-communist government of Vietnam, was closely linked to the Korean War. The Vietnam War shared much with the Korean War. Both wars started as civil wars tied to the legacy of colonialism. And they both transformed into international Cold War confrontations. Truman escalated US support for the French in Indochina while making choices about the Korean War in the summer of 1950. The unfolding war in Korea also made an impression on Senator Lyndon Johnson, the leader who as president would introduce ground troops to Vietnam in the mid-1960s. Chinese intervention in the Korean War in the winter of 1950 haunted him while he made decisions about increasing the US presence in Vietnam. Johnson dreaded that the Vietnam War would turn into a wider war in the same way that the Korean War had in late November 1950. He made choices to control bombing targets with this in mind. To understand the US leaders' approaches to the Vietnam War it is necessary to account for how policy changed during the Korean War and how memories of the Korean War shaped American perceptions of Cold War conflict.

South Koreans made a substantial contribution to the anti-communist alliance in the Vietnam War. Though largely missing from the popular American collective memory of the Vietnam War, over 300,000 South Koreans fought in the Vietnam War.[13] Early on in the conflict, Korean leaders offered to help the US effort though the Mutual Defense Treaty signed after the Korean War did not obligate them to do so. In 1954, South Korean President Syngman Rhee offered to send a division of Republic of Korea (ROK) forces to help the French in Vietnam. Americans declined that offer. Rhee's eventual successor, Park Chung-hee, again offered to send forces in the early 1960s. By 1962, South Korea dispatched a military observer group to South Vietnam to help the anti-communist cause there. Many factors, including anti-communist sentiment, domestic politics, and the possibility of more US aid, prompted the South Koreans to maintain a large military contingent in South Vietnam. Korean leaders hoped to show that the ROK took the alliance seriously and would be an active ally. Indeed, by the late 1960s, South Koreans made up 20 percent of the infantry combat troops under US control.[14] The ROK forces stayed until the end, withdrawing with the US forces in 1973.

[13] Kim Bumjoon (Daegu), "U.S. and Korean Vietnam Veterans Honored," US Army, November 8, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/196565/us_and_korean_vietnam_veterans_honored. Accessed: June 17, 2020.
[14] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014), 337.

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This political cartoon from 1968 demonstrates how the crises in Korea and Vietnam in 1968 raised the pressure on President Lyndon Johnson.

Source:
https://digitalcollections.usm.edu/uncategorized/digitalFile_71b48f9e-af2e-4ec6-afb4-972f5d0054cc/

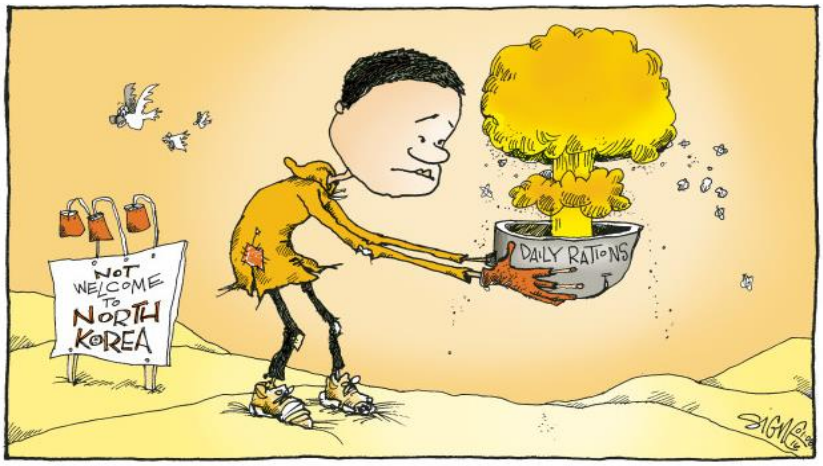
The DPRK also played a role in the Vietnam War by embracing the Communist cause there. Over the late 1950s the DPRK provided modest aid to the North Vietnamese even as the DPRK struggled to rebuild. In the face of the great devastation wrought by the war, North Koreans made inroads in rebuilding their society and achieved laudable economic growth over the late 1950s and early 1960s, outpacing South Korea's gross national product until the mid-1960s.[15] The DPRK was willing to risk this economic growth to provide aid to the Vietnamese in their war with the US. North Korean leader Kim Il Sung explained the DPRK's support as part of an effort "to ensure that Vietnam will defeat the American imperialists even if it means that North Korea's own economic plan will be delayed."[16] While some in the Communist bloc viewed the North Korean program as selfless, others saw it as an effort to mobilize North Koreans for an eventual war with the US.

In line with that thinking, Kim Il Sung acted on the desire to change the post-armistice strategic picture on the Korean peninsula in early 1968, starting what some have called the "Second Korean War." On January 21, 1968, thirty-one DPRK commandos infiltrated South Korea. They planned to assassinate the South Korean president. When that failed, the DPRK captured the US spy ship USS *Pueblo*.[17] The US, then embroiled in countering the major North Vietnamese campaign known as the Tet Offensive, saw the seizure of the *Pueblo* as a North Korean attempt to hamper the US effort in Vietnam, possibly coordinated between the Communist powers. Given this context, and the DPRK desire to maximize the moment for propaganda purposes, negotiations for the release of the crew continued for months. The sailors were released only when the US agreed to sign a document it had already publicly denounced. Secretary of State Dean Rusk described the strange end to the *Pueblo* crisis by saying, "It is as though a kidnapper kidnaps your child and asks for a $50,000 ransom. You give him a check for $50,000 and you tell him at the time that you've stopped payment on the check and then he delivers your child to you."[18] While it seemed nonsensical to US leaders, Kim's ability to extract such concessions from the United States served his domestic political interests because he could argue that he had forced his old opponent to negotiate. In Kim's view, the

[15] These economic gains caused many Koreans living in Japan to move to North Korea, a phenomenon explored in the award-winning documentary *Dear Pyongyang* (2006).
[16] Benjamin Young, "The Origins of North Korea-Vietnam Solidarity: The Vietnam War and the DPRK," *North Korea International Documentation Project-Woodrow Wilson Center* (February 2019), 7. (Available online).
[17] See Mitchell Lerner, *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002). See also Balázs Szalontai, "In the Shadow of Vietnam: A New Look at North Korea's Blue House Raid and the Pueblo," *Journal of Cold War History* 14 no. 4 (Fall 2012).
[18] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War*, 381.

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DPRK's continuing resistance against the US demonstrated his commitment to national independence as well as his revolutionary credentials to Koreans, north and south of the 38th parallel. The Pueblo Incident only deepened post-Korean War hostilities between the US and the DPRK.



This 2016 political cartoon by Signe Wilkinson captures the true tragedy of the post-Cold War era. North Korean people suffered mass starvation at the same time their government pursued a nuclear weapons program.

Source: https://www.cartoonistgroup.com/store/add.php?iid=137656

While the DPRK's aim to confront the US continued through the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the fall of the Soviet Union shaped the DPRK's trajectory in significant ways. North Korea never achieved economic independence from a key patron, the Soviet Union. As such, the DPRK economy, which had begun a lengthy downward spiral in the 1970s, crashed when Soviet aid stopped in 1991. Famine spread. Hundreds of thousands of North Koreans died from starvation in the mid- and late 1990s.[19] At the same time, the fall of the Soviet Union and dissolution of the Communist bloc removed the need for the DPRK to stay in the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to abide by the inspection requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In that context, the DPRK used its developing nuclear weapons program as a bargaining chip to seek economic aid as well as diplomatic and other concessions from South Korea, the US, Japan, and other countries.[20] Among these concessions was the easing of economic sanctions and a nonaggression pact that would establish the possibility of a formal end to the Korean War and of peace accords with the US.

US foreign policy after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 made the DPRK's efforts to achieve such goals untenable. President George W. Bush labeled North Korea part of an "axis of evil," along with Iran and Iraq. As negotiations broke down, the DPRK continued its efforts to develop a nuclear weapon. In 2006, the DPRK conducted its first nuclear test. Since then, DPRK weapons technology has advanced, while mutual hostilities between the DPRK and the US have remained the same. The cause of peace on the Korean peninsula remains an important factor in both international and US domestic politics, as well as the complex regional politics of Northeast Asia, which involve the Koreas, China, Japan, Russia, and the US.

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[19] Andrew S. Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine: Famine, Politics, and Foreign Policy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2001). See also Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid, and Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[20] See Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2013). See also Robert Galucci, *Going Critical: the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2004) and Balázs Szalontai and Sergey Radchenko, "North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives," Cold War International History Project Working Paper 53 (August 2006). Available online at https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/north-koreas-efforts-to-acquire-nuclear-technology-and-nuclear-weapons-evidence-russian.

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Despite the key importance of Korean security to regional and international peace, American media and political elites still see the Korean War and the DPRK in simplified terms. Far too often, the local causes of the war are ignored. The Korean War is reduced to a battle between good and evil within a Cold War frame. The differences among North Korean, Chinese, and Soviet views during and after the Korean War are minimized. Recognizing the complexity of the Korean War as both a local and international war, the role of the United Nations Coalition in prosecuting the war, and the diversity of allied opinion during the war could help those concerned about Korean issues to gain a clearer understanding of the war. This, in turn, could help inform future policy. Mastery of key lessons of the Korean War armistice negotiations like the necessity for empathy in negotiations and the centrality of trust-building to finding peace, in particular, could provide avenues for de-escalating future crises on the peninsula.

Though the Korean War lacks the cultural footprint of World War II or Vietnam, the war influenced American history in significant ways. Ideas about the Communist threat, the struggle to mobilize the US in what was referred to, in 1950, as a "police action," and memories of the war contributed to important decisions in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. While many do not realize it, Americans and Koreans share the experience of living in a world shaped in fundamental ways by the Korean War.

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The Korean War's Key Themes and the Classroom

For Midwesterner Jean Lee, Director of the Hyundai Motor-Korea Foundation Center for Korean History and Public Policy at the Wilson Center, the Korean War is critical history. Like millions of other Koreans, the war changed Lee's family's life. In a summer 2020 article for *The Wilson Quarterly*, Lee described how the war forced her family to flee their home "empty handed with just the clothes on their backs."[1] Lee's grandfather and his sons faced peril from both Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and United Nations Command (UNC) forces. Over the war's course, family members died or went missing, never to be seen again. As the family rebuilt their lives after the war, Lee's father and uncles left for the US where they prospered. After reviewing this history, Lee concluded that understanding the war's history was critical for peace on the peninsula. On more intimate terms, remembering the war, she wrote, "is essential to understanding what shaped my father's life—and ultimately mine."[2] Though their experiences vary, the same is true for millions more in Korea, the US, China, and across the globe. The Korean War changed many lives. This curricular guide delivered the history of the war in thematic turns. Five core lessons emerged over the course of the guide that should inform the way instructors teach the Korean War. Review of these core themes will help teachers deliver well-rounded lessons that match core learning goals.

The first core theme centers on the war's origins. Simply put, the Korean War did not begin in 1950. Nor did it start during the occupation of Korea after World War II. The war's origins are instead located in the downfall of the Joseon Dynasty and the Japanese colonial period. Korea's encounter with Japan and the West's drive for empire, and, later, Japan's colonization of Korea led to violence, exploitation, and dispossession for many Korean people. The ways in which Korean nationalists responded to these injustices and the visions for Korea they had informed the difficult years of post-World War II occupation, the Korean War, postwar reconstruction, and decolonization.

The second core lesson of this guide deals with the dual nature of the Korean War as both a civil war and an international crisis. Koreans killed each other during the joint occupation period (1945-1948) and during the war (1950-1953) as regimes in both North and South Korea solidified. US and Soviet advisors were often complicit in these human tragedies. The violence of the Jeju insurrection, Yosu rebellion, and the Bodo League Massacre need to be accounted for to understand the war and how it influenced Korean lives. Moreover, it is important to note that in the decades that followed the war, both the South and North Korean governments disseminated partial and even distorted memories about the Korean War and its atrocities in order to bolster their political legitimacy among their respective citizenries.

At the same time, the war would not have taken the course it did without the Cold War rivalry. Joseph Stalin's help in building Kim Il Sung's Army empowered that force in June 1950. The US-led UNC saved the Republic of Korea (ROK) from destruction because of its alignment with anti-communism and to uphold the post-war liberal internationalist order. Ideological imperatives and border security worries

[1] Jean Lee, "Guns and Hunger," The Wilson Quarterly (Summer 2020), https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/korea-70-years-on/remembering-conflict-one-familys-story/, Accessed: July 3, 2020.
[2] Ibid.

motivated the People's Republic of China (PRC) to save the DPRK from annihilation. The war was a critical and formative moment in the nascent Cold War.

The centrality of ideas, a part of the Cold War, is the third theme to draw from this guide. Ideas about freedom and security animated many of the key moments in the Korean War. Different visions about Korea's future motivated the whole range of nationalists--from conservatives to Communists--in the colonial period, during the joint occupations, and beyond. During World War II, Franklin Roosevelt's notions about the end of colonialism and the need for trusteeship in decolonized places like Korea contributed to the occupation of Korea. During the Cold War, thoughts about the danger of Communism and its relationship to US liberties motivated US intervention. Later, Mao's military romanticism was a key factor in pushing Chinese intervention forward. Perceptions of the present and ideas about the future matter.

Ideas also interacted with the fourth key theme: the change the Korean War wrought on international and American institutions. At the end of World War II, Harry Truman and his allies believed war could be prevented by active international institutions and robust US involvement in world affairs. These ideas led Truman to continue the effort to establish the United Nations that he inherited from Roosevelt. The UN showed its value in Korea by overseeing elections in southern Korea in 1948. Enforcement of the Security Council Resolutions to counter the DPRK's attack south demonstrated that the UN could support its own resolutions with force, thereby raising the UN's credibility as a peacemaker. Later peacekeeping missions across the world stood on the foundation created by the Korean War effort.

The Korean War also influenced US institutions. Truman did not pursue a Congressional declaration of war as US activity supported the UN effort. Later Presidents followed Truman's example. Defense budgets grew over the war, creating what Dwight Eisenhower called a "military-industrial complex." Douglas MacArthur's showdown with the President placed a strain on civil-military relations. Truman showed civilian leaders still maintained dominance over the military, but MacArthur's dismissal demonstrated how contested the boundary was between US elected authorities and the military during the war. Truman also tested the limits of Presidential authority in his application of the Defense Production Act, a piece of legislation discussed during the COVID-19 crisis and other emergencies in the 21st century.

Debates over Presidential power and the Defense Production Act underscores one aspect of the final theme: the legacy of the Korean War lives with Americans today. The nature of the war's end meant that the US and DPRK never ended their rivalry. The DPRK continues to threaten--and feel threatened by--the US and its regional allies. The DPRK's growing nuclear arsenal and extensive human rights abuses can only be understood through an appreciation of the nationalism that drove the Korean War, how Koreans suffered during the war due to Cold War geopolitical competition, and the ideas that developed as a reaction to the war's end.

All of these themes relate to core learning goals. Lessons on the Korean War can be leveraged to encourage student-centered learning that empowers students to take risks and ask big questions. These lessons can also be used to raise literacy in numerous subjects and provide insight into real-world problems. In so doing, teachers and students can make their own contribution to discussions on the Korean War and why it matters.

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Appendix
(Primary Sources)



EAST ASIA
IN THE UPPER MIDWEST

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Unit 1

Donghak Reforms

Over the course of the Donghak rebellion (1894-1895), Donghak leaders created an organization to govern Chŏlla province known as "Overseer's Offices." This list of reforms highlights the movement's economic, political, and social goals. Some of the economic issues listed here, like taxation, continued to create social divisions for years after the movement.

Excerpts from Reforms Proclaimed by the Donghak Overseer's Office:

1. The Ill will that has long persisted between Tonghak believers and the government shall be eradicated. There should be cooperation in all aspects of governance.
2. Crimes committed by greedy and corrupt officials shall be investigated and severely punished.
3. The wrongdoers among the rich and powerful shall be severely punished.
4. The wicked among the Confucian literati and the yangban class shall be ordered to mend their ways.
5. Slave registry documents shall be burned.[1]
6. There shall be improvements in the treatment of the seven classes of low born and butchers shall no longer be required to wear the "Pyongyang hat."
7. A young widow shall be allowed to remarry.
8. Improper levies of sundry taxes shall be completely terminated.
9. In recruiting officials, regionalism shall be eliminated and talented persons shall be appointed irrespective of their birthplace.
10. Persons who are in league with foreign enemies shall be severely punished.
11. All past debts, private or public, shall be declared null and void.
12. Farmland shall be equitably redistributed for cultivation.

Source: Peter Lee, William Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume 2: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Yôngho Ch'oe (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2000), 265-266.

[1] Korean slavery was abolished in 1894. For more background on Korean slaves see Bok Kim, "Nobi: A Korean System of Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 24 No. 2 (2003), 155-168. See also, Hyunjoon Park and Kuentae Kim, "The Legacy of Disadvantaged Origins: Blocked Social Mobility of Descendants of Nobi Great-Grandfathers in Korea (1765–1894)" *Social Forces* (December 2019), 677-701.

Associated Press Coverage of the Annexation of Korea

American political leaders and military officials guided US policy towards an active role in East Asia at the end of the 19th century. To lessen tensions between the United States and an expanding Japan, President Theodore Roosevelt decided to endorse Japan's claim on Korea. Roosevelt later said that Korea was, "utterly impotent either for self-government or self-defense."[2] Favorable views on American and Japanese empire influenced American news coverage of colonization of the pacific. On August 27, 1910, The Daily Northwestern (Oshkosh, WI) published this Associated Press coverage of the 1910 Japanese annexation of Korea.

JAPANESE CONTROL TO BENEFIT KOREA

Annexation Of Latter By the Island Empire is Declared Beneficent Move for Inhabitants

EMPEROR GAVE HIS ASSENT

Title of Former Ruler of the Hermit Kingdom Was the Only Matter of Dispute—Will Still Be Known as "Whang' or King—Members of Imperial Family Will Be Created Japanese Peers—Koreans May Be Privy Counselors

(By Associated Press)

Seoul, Korea August 27.—Lieutenant General Terauchi, Japanese resident general in Korea and negotiators of the convention of annexation which, it may be stated will be officially promulgated next Monday, said today in a statement to a report of the Associated Press regarding annexation: "No stone will be left unturned to make the Koreans and the world feel that Japanese rule in Korea is a beneficent thing. It will and must imply no degradation for the natives, who under annexation will enjoy the same rights as Japanese. It is the wish and command of the emperor of Japan that every effort be made to make Koreans feel no humiliation but rather relief at the annexation. The policy of Japan in administering the new portion of the empire will be directed toward a steady improvement of conditions and the development of the resources of Korea."

FOREIGN TREATIES LAPSE

It may be stated with authority that although the treaties of Korea with foreign powers lapse with annexation, the present customs tariff of Korea, which is much lower than that of Japan will be continued for an indefinite period under Japanese rule. Interesting details of the negotiations leading to the annexation are made public. The assent of Emperor Yi-Syek and of his predecessor Yi-Heui, to the annexation, was given willingly, it is said, the only hesitation shown when the terms were being discussed being in regard to the titles which will hereafter be borne by the former emperors. The original Japanese terms proposed the title of grand duke but the emperor of Korea insisted upon the styled "Whang" or king to which Japan assented.

TREATED AS JAPANESE

The princess of the Korean emperor's house, it was consented, will be treated as Japanese and an annuity of $750,000 will be granted them. The royal family will be allowed to reside where they please and will probably remain in Korea. Members of the imperial family and some of the high dignitaries of the kingdom will be

[2] Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920) 409. Found online at https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3335.

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created peers of the Japanese empire, substantial grants of money being awarded them. Koreans will also be appointed privy counselors.

RESIDENT GENERAL LIBERAL

The attitude of the resident general is regarded as generous and no apprehension of protest or disturbance when the details of the annexation are published, is entertained. These will not be promulgated before August 29. It is said that Resident General Terauchi will remain in Korea as governor general for several months, after which he will probably be succeeded by Baron Simpei Goto, Japanese minister of communications.

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Korean Declaration of Independence, 1 March 1919

In the years following the 1910 Japanese annexation, Koreans continued to agitate for freedom from foreign rule. American President Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric on self-determination inspired many Korean nationalists. On March 1, 1919, Koreans came together to proclaim the Korean Declaration of Independence. This document was later referenced in the Republic of Korea's constitution.

Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919)

We hereby declare that Korea is an independent state and that Koreans are a self-governing people. We proclaim it to the nations of the world in affirmation of the principle of the equality of all nations, and we proclaim it to our posterity, preserving in perpetuity the right of national survival. We make this declaration on the strength of five thousand years of history as an expression of the devotion and loyalty of twenty million people. We claim independence in the interest of the eternal and free development of our people in accordance with the great movement for world reform based upon the awakening conscience of mankind. This is the clear command of heaven, the course of our times, and a legitimate manifestation of the right of all nations to coexist and live in harmony. Nothing in the world can suppress or block it.

For the first time in several thousand years, we have suffered the agony of alien suppression for a decade, becoming a victim of the policies of aggression and coercion, which are relics from a bygone era. How long have we been deprived of our right to exist? How long has our spiritual development been hampered? How long have the opportunities to contribute our creative vitality to the development of world culture been denied us?

Alas! In order to rectify past grievances, free ourselves from present hardships, eliminate future threats, stimulate and enhance the weakened conscience of our people, eradicate the shame that befell our nation, ensure proper development of human dignity, avoid leaving humiliating legacies to our children, and usher in lasting and complete happiness for our posterity, the most urgent task is to firmly establish national independence. Today when human nature and conscience are placing the forces of justice and humanity on our side, if every one of our twenty million people arms himself for battle, whom could we not defeat and what could we not accomplish?

We do not intend to accuse Japan of infidelity for its violation of various solemn treaty obligations since the Treaty of Amity of 1876. Japan's scholars and officials, indulging in a conqueror's exuberance, have denigrated the accomplishments of our ancestors and treated our civilized people like barbarians. Despite their disregard for the ancient ones of our society and the brilliant spirit of our people, we shall not blame Japan; we must first blame ourselves before finding fault with others. Because of the urgent need for remedies for the problems of today, we cannot afford the time for recriminations over past wrongs.

Our task today is to build up our own strength, not to destroy others. We must chart a new course for ourselves in accord with the solemn dictates of conscience, not malign and reject others for reasons of past enmity or momentary passions. In order to restore nature and just conditions, we must remedy the unnatural and unjust conditions brought about by the leaders of Japan, who are chained to old ideas and old forces and victimized by their obsession with glory.

From the outset the union of the two countries did not emanate from the wishes of the people, and its outcome has been oppressive coercion, discriminatory injustice, and fabrication of statistical data, thereby deepening the eternally irreconcilable chasm of ill will between the two nations. To correct past mistakes and

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open a new phase of friendship based upon genuine understand and sympathy—is this not the easiest way to avoid disaster and invite blessing? The enslavement of twenty million resentful people by force does not contribute to lasting peace in the East. It deepens the fear and suspicion of Japan by the four hundred million Chinese who constitute the main axis for stability in the East, and it will lead to the tragic downfall of all nations in our region. Independence for Korea today shall not only enable Koreans to lead a normal, prosperous life, as is their due; it will also guide Japan to leave its evil path and perform its great task of supporting the cause of the East, liberating China from a gnawing uneasiness and fear and helping the cause of world peace and happiness for mankind, which depends greatly on peace in the East. How can this be considered a trivial issue of mere sentiment?

Behold! A new world is before our eyes. The days of force are gone, and the days of morality are here. The spirit of humanity, nurtured throughout the past century, has begun casting its rays of new civilization upon human history. A new spring has arrived prompting the myriad forms of life to come to life again. The past was a time of freezing ice and snow, stifling the breath of life; the present is a time of mild breezes and warm sunshine, reinvigorating the spirit. Facing the return of the universal cycle, we set forth on the changing tide of the world. Nothing can make us hesitate or fear.

We shall safeguard our inherent right to freedom and enjoy a life of prosperity; we shall also make use of our creativity, enabling our national essence to blossom in vernal warmth. We have arisen now. Conscience is on our side, and truth guides our way. All of us, men and women, young and old, have firmly left behind the old nest of darkness and gloom and head for joyful resurrection together with myriad living things. The spirits of thousands of generations of our ancestors protect us; the rising tide of world consciousness shall assist us. Once started, we shall surely succeed. With this hope we march forward.

Three Open Pledges

1. Our action today represents the demand of our people for justice, humanity, survival, and dignity. It manifests our spirit of freedom and should not engender antiforeign feelings.
2. To the last one of us and to the last moment possible, we shall unhesitatingly publicize the views of our people, as is our right.
3. All our actions should scrupulously uphold public order, and our demands and our attitudes must be honorable and upright.

Source: "Declaration of Independence" (March 1, 1919), trans. Han-Kyo Kim, Asia for Educators: An Initiative of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University, 2-3.

Asia For Educators has a great number of primary source documents, art pieces, and lesson plans: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/

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Yi Sanghwa, "Does Spring Come to Stolen Fields," (1926)

Many Korean intellectuals reflected on Korea's status in works of history, literature, and poetry during the period of colonization.

Yi Sanghwa: "Does Spring Come to Stolen Fields," 1926

The land is no longer our own
Does spring come just the same
to the stolen fields?
On the narrow path between the rice fields
where blue sky and green fields meet and touch,
winds whisper to men, urging me forward.
A lark trills in the clouds
like a young girl singing behind the hedge.
O ripening barley fields, your long hair
is heavy after the night's rain.
Lightheaded, I walk
lightly, shrugging my shoulders almost
dancing to music the fields are humming----
the fields where violets grow, the field
where once I watched a girl planting rice, her hair
blue-black and shining----

I want a scythe in my hands, I want
to stamp on this soil, soft as a plump breast,
I want to be working the earth and streaming with sweat.

What am I looking for? Soul,
my blind soul, endlessly darting
like children at play by the river,
answer me: where am I going?
Filled with the odor of grass, compounded
of green laughter and green sorrow,
Limping along, I walk all day, as if possessed
by the spring devil:
for these are stolen fields, and our spring is stolen.

Source: Peter H. Lee, *Korean Literature: An Anthology*, ed. Peter H. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 80.

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Testimonies from *Under the Black Umbrella*

The period of Japanese colonialism made big impressions on Korean children. Historian Hildi Kang and her husband, Sang Wook Kang, conducted oral histories with children who lived through this period of Korean history. A sampling of the stories they heard are below.

Chŏng Kŭmjae:

I lived in a poor farm village; however, right across the river from our village is Kyŏnggi Province and there, in the larger town, was a French Catholic parochial school. I attended that school. The principal was a French priest, and we called him Priest Im. All the teachers were Korean.

We learned in Korean until the third grade. Then the edict came down to do all teaching in Japanese. Since the teachers themselves did not speak Japanese very well, we really struggled together. In order to make us speak in Japanese, no matter how poorly, they gave each of us ten tickets. If, during class, somebody spoke in Korean, then they took away one ticket. If all ten got taken away, they lowered your grade.

Yi Sangdo:

In those days there were still many boys with long hair in braids, and one of the rules of the new Japanese primary schools was to cut off the long hair. Since I grew up in the city, I didn't have long hair to begin with. Those other boys, the ones from the country, had to cut their hair.

In my class some older boys talked down to men [used a lower level of speech]. So we eleven-year-olds stuck together and said, "Hey, we are all in the first grade and we are all learning the first sounds of the Japanese alphabet. You are no better than us. We are equal." I noticed these older ones learned a lot slower than we did---apparently they had too many distracting thoughts. They were taller, but duller.

The town had another primary school for the Japanese children. We never had any trouble with those kids. It's not that we got along well, they just avoided us. Their parents told them not to play with Korean kids. You know how Korean boys are, when they fight, they just go all out and get wild! Japanese boys didn't fight like that.

Chŏng Chaesu:

One morning when I was in second grade [1931], they told all of us to assemble on the school ground, and Japanese detectives surrounded us. They all rode horseback; I was terrified!

Nearby, the high school students had rioted, so to prevent us primary kids from getting involved, the mounted police came every day for almost a year. They could do this because there was only one Korean primary school in our town, which made it easy for the police to come and watch us.

U'Ch'an'gu:

My worst day came in January 1934, my third year in agricultural high school. We came to school one snowy morning and saw a huge caravan of expensive cars coming to school grounds. We were curious and thought some important person must be visiting.

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Then the school office boy came to my classroom with a small piece of paper. When Teacher read the paper, his face went pale and his hand began to shake. He said to me, "You are summoned to the principal's office." The way he went so pale warned me that something bad was about to happen.

When I got to the office, seven other students already stood there, surrounded by detectives. The principal said, "You are summoned to the police station. You must go now."

The detectives started to handcuff us, but the principle spoke up and said, "Not here. This is just a school. Do it outside if you must." So they did.

The detectives put all of us in prison for twenty-nine days, with no summons, no nothing. On the thirtieth day, they took us out, put all our possessions in small bags, and took us to another police station for another twenty-nine days. They made that switch five times. It turned out that they had a rule that without any investigation or hearing, they could detain a person for only twenty-nine days. So they were trying to follow that law…

In the third prison, torture began. They had gotten wind of a plot to have a nationwide student uprising and they thought we were part of it. They feared it might be a repeat of the Kwangju student uprising that swept the country. They wanted to nip it in the bud.

I found out later that a fourth-year Korean student in our group of eight, named Sin, was a contact point in our school for the uprising. The police really tried to learn things from him—signals, codes, people's names. I insisted that I had no knowledge at all about the plot.

So they tortured me. With my hands tied behind my back, they beat my cheeks, slapped my face, then with a long rod like baseball bat, they hit me everywhere. The most painful thing was being tied on a long bench, on my back, and then they poured water on my face. When I couldn't breathe, I fainted. Then they revived me. I kept saying I didn't know anything, and they poured it again and it started all over. It lasted two or three hours and then they started over again…

After so much of this, time after time, Sin, the leader, finally confessed. Then one by one, the rest of us broke down and confessed. I admitted being part of the network of planning in our school. They detained us about two more months, the eight of us. I was one of three who were not indicted but were released on probation for three years…When I tried to get back into the school, they would not let me in. They told me, however, that since I was a good student, I should try other schools.

Every time I moved my boarding house, from one place to another, invariably within a couple of days the police detective would show up to let me know that he knew I had moved, and that he was watching me. They knew my every movement. Every one.

Source: Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 39-41, 47-48.

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Unit 2

The Atlantic Charter

Before the Japanese strikes on US forces in Pearl Harbor, US President Franklin Roosevelt resolved that World War II would not be waged to preserve colonialism. He convinced British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to endorse a statement of war aims on August 1941 known as the Atlantic Charter. These goals, applied to Korea, provided some of the justification for the post-war occupation of Korea.

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measure which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

Source: "The Atlantic Charter," August 14, 1941, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp, Accessed: July 9, 2020.

Song Park Interview, Legacies of the Korean War

The Soviet and US occupation did not go smoothly. Tensions from political polarization following the fall of the Joseon dynasty and Japanese colonial period led to violence in the occupation era. Below is an excerpt of Ramsay Liem's interview with Song Park. Ms. Park lived through the occupation and Korean War and then moved to San Francisco. She recalls the occupation and the bombing of civilians during the war.

After independence, and there was, temporary government. And then there were two parties running, left to the communism and right to, you know, democracy. So, the two sides of people killing each other. It was political turmoil. And then they kill each other. They, you know, blame each other and they kill. It's power struggle. So, in many villages, killings went on, and many people were accused. Many innocent people were accused. If you are friend, you did something, just get together for no reason, and then they doubt you, you plotted something. So my father happened to be a very intelligent man and had a lot of friends. So he was naturally accused of something. But he's just an innocent citizen. But, one of his friends, we were in same village and he was, well I don't know, I still don't know what he was, but he was beat to death in front of family…So, my father was very scared because he was very close friend, so he had to, you know, run. Just in case.

Korean War Memories

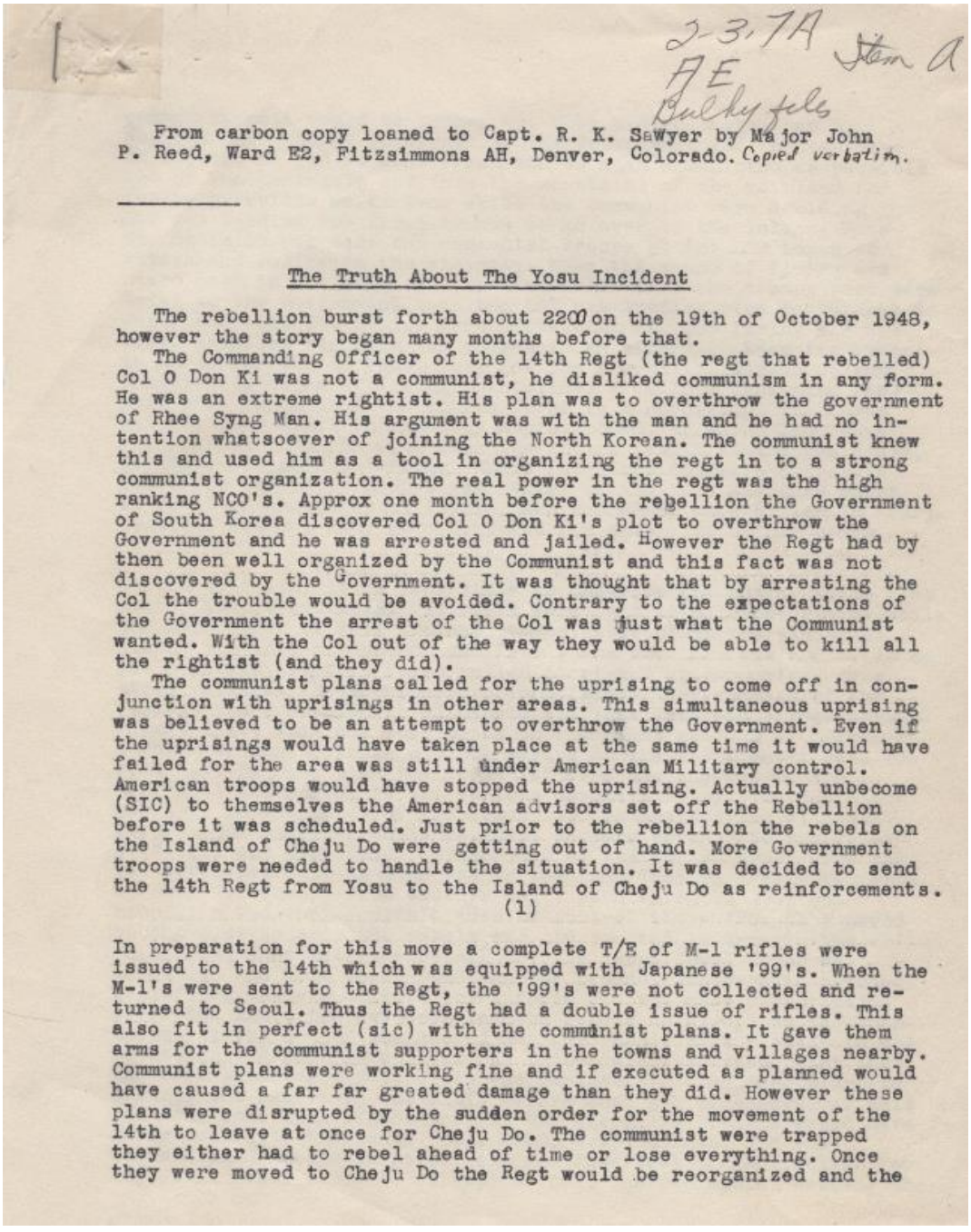
And then one day, I will never forget that moment, one day, you know the plane just flies very low. At that time, I guess the peasant was working rice field. I knew later, all Korean peasants wear white, so, they're not supposed to bomb, you know people who dressed white. But I knew that later, not at that time. So they were just working in the field, near where I was staying and all of sudden, plane was just drop bombing, and I, I thought, I was going to get it. It was a single plane, and the plane just came through, and very low. They could even see the peasants even. But they did anyway. I just, stay, right under, there's a tent, tents were made of all the rocks. I just put down my hands and then stay right there. I was so scared. I've never been scared so much. Yeah, that was some, that was some experience, which I will never forget.

Source: Song Park Interviewed by Ramsay Liem, Legacies of the Korean War (Online), http://legaciesofthekoreanwar.org/story/song-park/, Accessed: July 9, 2020.

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The Truth About the Yosu Incident

During the occupation, Americans witnessed high levels of civil violence and strife between Koreans. Some American officials played a more active role in the violence. US Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) Commander Gen. William Roberts ordered his Korean counterpart, Constabulary Commander Song Ho-song to counter the insurgency on Yosu "with an overwhelmingly superior force and crush it."[1] This report, by G-2 Army Intelligence officer John P. Reed, describes how the Yosu rebellion was repressed. This document was found by Prof. Charles Kim at the National Archives.



2-3.7A Item a
AE
Bulky files

From carbon copy loaned to Capt. R. K. Sawyer by Major John P. Reed, Ward E2, Fitzsimmons AH, Denver, Colorado. Copied verbatim.

The Truth About The Yosu Incident

The rebellion burst forth about 2200 on the 19th of October 1948, however the story began many months before that.

The Commanding Officer of the 14th Regt (the regt that rebelled) Col O Don Ki was not a communist, he disliked communism in any form. He was an extreme rightist. His plan was to overthrow the government of Rhee Syng Man. His argument was with the man and he had no intention whatsoever of joining the North Korean. The communist knew this and used him as a tool in organizing the regt in to a strong communist organization. The real power in the regt was the high ranking NCO's. Approx one month before the rebellion the Government of South Korea discovered Col O Don Ki's plot to overthrow the Government and he was arrested and jailed. However the Regt had by then been well organized by the Communist and this fact was not discovered by the Government. It was thought that by arresting the Col the trouble would be avoided. Contrary to the expectations of the Government the arrest of the Col was just what the Communist wanted. With the Col out of the way they would be able to kill all the rightist (and they did).

The communist plans called for the uprising to come off in conjunction with uprisings in other areas. This simultaneous uprising was believed to be an attempt to overthrow the Government. Even if the uprisings would have taken place at the same time it would have failed for the area was still under American Military control. American troops would have stopped the uprising. Actually unbecome (SIC) to themselves the American advisors set off the Rebellion before it was scheduled. Just prior to the rebellion the rebels on the Island of Cheju Do were getting out of hand. More Government troops were needed to handle the situation. It was decided to send the 14th Regt from Yosu to the Island of Cheju Do as reinforcements.

(1)

In preparation for this move a complete T/E of M-1 rifles were issued to the 14th which was equipped with Japanese '99's. When the M-1's were sent to the Regt, the '99's were not collected and returned to Seoul. Thus the Regt had a double issue of rifles. This also fit in perfect (sic) with the communist plans. It gave them arms for the communist supporters in the towns and villages nearby. Communist plans were working fine and if executed as planned would have caused a far far greated damage than they did. However these plans were disrupted by the sudden order for the movement of the 14th to leave at once for Cheju Do. The communist were trapped they either had to rebel ahead of time or lose everything. Once they were moved to Cheju Do the Regt would be reorganized and the

[1] Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), 132-133.

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communist cell would be broken up. They had no choice but to abandon the attempt to overthrow the Government and instead make an attempt to get as many armsn and as much ammunition as possible out of the peninsula and into the mountains of the mainland for future guerrilla work. Even while the communist were deciding the LST was loading the first troops to go over to the Island. Once the decision was made the communist troops at the LST began to attack the police in the vicinity. When the sound of firing was heard back in the main area the communist told the troops that were loyal to the Government that the LST Was loading rice to be sent to Japan and that the police were protecting it. The firing was the loyal soldiers fighting the police in an effort to keep the piece in Korea for the Koreans. They got the troops all worked up and immediately began attacking the police. From this beginning they were able to control the entire force in a rebellion. The force quickly grew until in numbered approx. 3000, of which 1800 were well armed. They ran wild over the entire length of the peninsula, killing, raping and burning. There (sic) actions were extremely cruel and sadistic. Babies were taken by the legs and torn apart in front of the parents. People, men and women were killed in every possible method. Many were tortured for some time before being

(2)

beaten to death. It is impossible to describe the horror which took place. Stupid communist villagers were left to hold the cities while the main force of well trained communist swept up the peninsula taking the town of Sunchon and from there cut into the mountains on the mainland. As this force rolled it picked up supporters from every village. These supporters immediately took command of the village and proceeded to eliminate all loyalists and anyone they didn't like. This all took place on the night of 19th of October 1948. American advisors did not arrive on the scene until late the next day. By that time the communist were already out of the peninsula and moving to the various mountain areas. The Peninsula was left in the hands of the communist leaders and the village forces. The American advisors, Capt Hausman advisor to the Chief of Staff, and Capt Reed, advisor G-2 of the Korean Army, were the two advisors. Capt Hausman was in command. They were able to round up only 470 troops from another Regt. With which to stop the rebellion and they couldn't even be sure of these 470. They moved on the 21st to stop the rebels and did succeed in bringin the action to a halt. They held the rebels until a large loyal force was assembled and then began retaking the ground. Contrary to popular belief the leaders of this loyal force did not make a tactical error and leave the way open for the rebels to escape to the mountains. By the end of the second day the rebels were already in the mountains. Further it was obvious from a military standpoint that the best solution was to close the peninsula and at once start to destroy the rebels in the hills before they got organized. If this had been done much of the present day guerrilla trouble would have never come into existence. Capt Reed, Capt Hausman, and the Commanding Generals in Seoul, all realized that it was foolish for any small rebel force to attempt to hold the peninsula. However the

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prime factor governing the tactics was not the military viewpoint. The Government of South Korea was new and estremely weak. It

(3)

was possible for a political collapse if the situation was not cleared up in a very short time. Politically it was of the most importance to retake the peninsula especially the town of Yosu. Thus the first step was retaking of Yosu. After that the rebels were attacked in the mountain areas. Neither the Korean Army officers nor the American Advisors can be accused of a tactical blunder. The policy for the attack was dictated by the political situation and there was no other way than to do as it was done. The work of the Military Advisers under General Roberts command was excellent done and it is a grave error to accuse either the American officers or the Korean officers of tactical blunders.

The Korean Army immediately started a purge program of all units to eliminate the communist cells. And it was successful in all cases except at the Townoof Taegu. The communist cells tried to start a rebellion at Taegu and did kill a few loyal officers but the situation was brought under control with a matter of hours.

It is hard to say what might have happened if the communist had succeeded in pulling a Nationawide rebellion, as planned.

(4)

Note - Underscoring, above, on the copy loaned by Major Reed was inked in. Ink was same color as ink on Reed's accompanying letter . . . RKS.

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Syngman Rhee, "Where Do We Stand Today," 1 March 1950

Historical anniversaries provide political leaders with a valuable opportunity to explain their values and relate to the past. On March 1, 1950, a few months before the North Korean strike south, Republic of Korea President Syngman Rhee reflected on the course of Korean history and the future of the South Korean state.

"Where Do We Stand Today"

UNITED RESISTANCE OF FREE COUNTRIES OF ASIA

By SYNGMAN RHEE, *President, Republic of Korea*

Delivered in Seoul, Korea, March 1, 1950 (Seoul date)

THERE are days in the lives of men and of nations that carry a significance none of us wish to minimize or ignore. Today—March the first—is such a day in the living history of Korea. It was on a Saturday at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon in 1919—thirty-one years ago—when the great spirit of the Korean people rose out of the chains cast upon them by force and by treachery, and reasserted the dignity and the eternal being of our ancient nation.

The world has had few occasions to observe such an example of simple heroism as the people of Korea performed on that day. Let us review the circumstances and refresh our souls by contemplation of the courage and the devotion to freedom demonstrated on that brave day.

In 1919 the world had recently emerged from a shattering and destructive world war. The evil military power of aggression had been smashed and the democracies had won a war that, it was hoped, would end for all time the selfish ambitions of imperialistic powers. In Paris the statesmen of the world, led by America's immortal Woodrow Wilson, were gathered to insure the right of self-determination to all liberty-loving peoples in every land. This was their ideal, proclaimed in ringing words for all the world to hear.

Korea was far from Paris. The eyes and the ears of our people were shuttered by Japanese military power. The words of the statesmen in Paris were not directed to us, for Japan, our ruthless oppressor, had been their war-time ally. Yet in our cities and on our farms those words were heard. In the fall of Germany our people read the lesson of tyranny's defeat. In the depths of their own hearts the patriots of 1919 heard whispering echoes of freedom's promise. And they determined that come suffering or come death, they would cast off their chains and stand before the forum of the democratic world as free men and women.

In January and February of 1919 a thrill of renewed hope and courage ran through our oppressed land. Daring men met in cellars to print in secret a declaration of independence that had been hewed by hand on wooden blocks. School girls trudged from village to village, carrying copies of the declaration hidden in their sleeves. In hundreds of communities from the Straits of Korea to the Tumen and Yalu Rivers, men and women met in hidden council to plan the day of liberation.

The soldiers and police and spies of the enemy dwelt in our midst, watching alertly for any signs of revolt. Tens of thousands of our people joined in planning and preparing for the day of liberation, yet no sign was given to betray their purpose to our oppressors.

Then the fateful day arrived. At the Bright Moon Restaurant in Seoul, thirty-three leaders met calmly for a last meal together. Then they read the Declaration of Korean Independence, signed their names to it, and called in the police. All over Korea, at the same hour, huge crowds gathered to hear the same brave words.

After the Declaration was read, the millions of patriots in every district of our land brought out our forbidden flag and marched peacefully and joyously down hundreds of village streets. There was no violence, no hatred, no lashing at the oppressors in our midst. With dignity and restraint, the people of Korea proclaimed the inalienable truth that they were and would remain free and independent. Here in our homeland those patriots swore eternal allegiance to the bold sentiments uttered by the peacemakers in Paris. We, too, a nation over four thousand two hundred years old, were and of right ought to be, the masters of our own destiny—despite the bayonets and the bullets of the Japanese who had seized and who ruled our land.

Such was the spirit of that first day of March, thirty-one years ago. Thousands of our people died in the following weeks to seal with their blood the living truth that Koreans will not and cannot be enslaved. This was the heritage they have left to us. This is the faith—theirs and ours—in which our Republic was born and in which it lives.

Today we meet in the aftermath of another war which was fought in order that tyranny might not prevail. Once again the right of freedom was proclaimed and the aggressors were struck down. And once again we in Korea find the hard-won peace marred by foreign despots in our land.

This time, however, we have powerful friends. This time half our country and two-thirds of our people are free. This time we exercise our own government in at least a part of our ancient nation.

May this day be in our hearts a time of reverence for the past, of courage for the present, and of dedication for the future. The seeds planted in 1919 have not yet come to full harvest, but they have proved of hardy growth. Doubters and traitors have sought to trample down the tender growth of national freedom but the great mass of our people have sturdily cultivated and nurtured the precious planting of March the first. Never shall we falter or fail until the harvest of a reunited and independent Korean nation is secure.

Where, then, do we stand today?

This is a question that I cannot answer except in terms of the ideal so bravely proclaimed on that March day thirty-one years ago. Here on the platform beside me sit the last three survivors of the noble thirty-three signers of our Declaration of Independence: *Oh Seichang, Oh Hayong,* and *Lee Kapsoo.* What was in their hearts, and in the hearts of the millions of other patriots, who arose with defenseless breasts to face the fury of our nation's ruthless oppressors?

First and foremost, they demanded that Korean self-government should and must be restored. This goal was finally achieved for half our country on August 15, 1948, when the Republic of Korea was formally inaugurated. But while we rejoice in this partial restoration of our nation, we do not forget the enslaved millions who still must bow beneath the yoke of the conqueror north of the 38th parallel.

It is our solemn vow today that so long as true Korean hearts beat out the pulse of life in this our native land we never shall know peace or rest until the unity and freedom of our nation are once again complete.

Some of our friends from across the seas tell us that we must not cherish thoughts of attacking the foreign puppets who stifle the liberties of our people in the north. I say to them today, as I say to you, that Korean ears never yet have been deaf to the cries of our brothers in distress. We hear the call from the valleys of the Diamond Mountains and

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the slopes of Pakdusan and to this call we shall respond. The task to which we set our hands in 1919 will never be complete till freedom makes glad the hearts of all our people in every corner of this our ancient land.

The ambition of the Soviet Union has over-reached its power. The architects of world revolution in the Kremlin have finally gone too far. The fall of China is already recognized as merely the prelude to the further onward sweep of Asian communism. The patience and endurance of the free world have been dealt too hard a blow. In our demand for the redemption of our conquered northland, we shall not much longer be without allies. The statesmen in the democracies are coming to see the issue for what it is—that the free world must either stand together against communist imperialism everywhere or else fall everywhere beneath the terror of totalitarian rule. The march of events will eventually catch up with the Korean dream. We shall not have to stand alone in our demand that Korean national unity must be restored.

Within this portion of our homeland in which we have been able to govern ourselves, much has been accomplished and much remains to be done. This much we know: the past eighteen months of struggle against harsh economic conditions and under the shadow of constant military threat have yet been months of steady and substantial advance.

The heavy weight of tenantry has been legally lifted from the land, and most of our farmers will soon own the land they cultivate. Where else around the globe has a reform of this magnitude been achieved so quickly and so thoroughly? Of this we have a right to be proud.

The land that was so sadly depleted during the war has again been built up to high productivity through fertilizer purchased under the American program of ECA. Our food production has attained new records, thus making it possible for us to export 100,000 tons of rice.

Slowly but substantially our industrial production has been restored. Despite the heavy blow of the cutting off of our normal flow of electricity from thte north, we have generated the electric power to light our homes and keep our factories at work. Our miners have more than quadrupled the amount of coal mined, and this amount will soon be still further greatly increased. Our fisheries, handicapped though they are by lack of every essential supply, are contributing their part to our national recovery.

Educationally we had to start from rock bottom, recruiting and preparing teachers, opening new schools, writing and printing textbooks, training technicians, and establishing the principle that every child is entitled to a basic education at the expense of the state. Illiteracy has been enormously reduced. Yet we are far from having achieved what we have in mind. We need more and better schools of every type, more equipment, better trained teachers. There is no goal more important to our nation or dearer to our hearts than to have a soundly educated free citizenry, able to perform every duty, public and private, of a modern and progressive State. In the completion of this task we shall not rest.

One of the greatest challenges that confronted us has been to develop the means of self-defense. The front line of the world conflict between democratic freedom and communist totalitarianism runs squarely through the middle of our nation. We cannot seek security in remoteness from the great struggle that rends humanity today. The foe is entrenched in the northern half of our land and we have had to face the daily threat that he would march into the southern half, as well.

Our continued existence as a free nation depends squarely upon two factors: the good will of our democratic allies around the world, and the skill and courage of our own army and navy. We need them both.

The morale and the fighting quality of our troops have been proved over and over again. We are proud of them. We know their quality and we are grateful that they have placed the living wall of their courage between our homes and the foe. We cannot, however, blind ourselves to the plain facts of modern war. Courage alone is not enough. Small arms alone are not enough. We need and we shall continue to try to get the planes and ships, the tanks and heavy artillery that our situation demands.

In a broader sense we all must realize that our security rests basically in our association among the brotherhood of free nations. In today's world there is no nation, however powerful, that dares to stand alone. Our fate is inevitably bound in with the fate of freedom all around the globe.

We are grateful to the United Natiors, which has not retreated from its responsibility for helping to unite our divided country. We have been glad to submit in every detail to the requirements for unity laid down by that great international body and we trust that its efforts will never cease until democracy and freedom are also extended to the north.

On this March first it is particularly fitting for us to acknowledge the helpfulness of the United States. Without the military and economic aid of America, we should not be celebrating our freedom today. It is largely owing to the vision and statesmanship of President Truman that the democratic nations have found the spirit and the means of saying to communist imperialism that its aggression must cease. It was the Truman Doctrine that prevented communist victories in Greece and Turkey and Iran, that halted the growth of communism in France and Italy, and that saved Berlin in the dark months of the Soviet Blockade. It is this same spirit of united resistance that will stop the communist onrush in Asia.

The democratic nations of the world have had abundant opportunity to learn that in the face of determination and courage, communist aggression turns back. Surely the lesson so learned will not be neglected in this part of the world.

On previous occasions I have called for formation of a pact between the free countries of the Pacific area determined to maintain both the integrity of their institutions and their sovereign independence. There is every reason that the free states of Asia should join together in ever increasing unity and strength, much as earlier the free states of the Atlantic community joined together. All free peoples must have learned the hard lessons of recent years that in union—and only in union is there strength. The evidence is overwhelming in the reversal of the communist tide in Europe after the free nations there began to work together. Here in the Pacific area it is time that we also lock the stable doors before someone steals all the horses.

As I see it, initially, such a pact in the Pacific would not be either directly or indirectly in the nature of a military alliance. It would be an agreement to develop the widest possible interchange between signatories, and the widest possible domestic development within signatory states, of social, cultural and economic intercourse. Without military strength of course, the free nations cannot successfully resist the communist imperialists. But without economic and cultural stability and unity, there also would not be successful resistance. I propose that we begin at the economic, social and cultural level in developing our pact for the Pacific. How it grows thereafter, time alone can say.

To the patriots of March 1, 1919, I say: "The fight

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you commenced, we are carrying on. Not all the goals dreamed of on that brave day have yet been achieved. But we are on the way. The courage and vision of 1919 are not lacking in this year of 1950. We here dedicate ourselves anew to the same devotion to liberty which animated the Mansei Revolution. United in spirit, united in purpose, and united in strength, our goal of a prosperous, progressive, free, and united people surely will be won."

To you, my co-workers and fellow citizens, on this March 1st, 1950, I conclude: "Let us stand shoulder to shoulder together as we face forward to the tasks yet remaining to be done. Ours must be the suffering and hardship out of which a better nation shall arise. Let us do our duty. Let us perform our tasks. And together we shall lay the foundation for a future that will match and over-match the glories of our country's past."

Source: Syngman Rhee, "Where Do We Stand Today?" March 1, 1950, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, (March 15, 1950), 346-348.

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Kim Il Sung, "Every Effort for Victory in the War," 26 June 1950

On June 25, 1950, the forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK). The next day DPRK leader Kim Il Sung issued a speech falsely accusing the ROK of starting the war, and proclaiming that the DPRK would conduct a "decisive counteroffensive action" to reunite the Korean peninsula by force. In the speech, Kim presents a selective rendering of the facts in an attempt to shift the blame for the division of Korea entirely on Syngman Rhee and the United States. This inaccurate view of Korea's division and the outbreak of the Korean War still predominates in North Korean propaganda.

Dear fellow countrymen,

Dear brothers and sisters, Officers, noncommissioned officers and men of our People's Army, Guerrillas operating in the southern half of the Republic, on behalf of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I appeal to you as follows:

On June 25, the army of the puppet government of the traitor Syngman Rhee started an all-out offensive against the areas of the northern half of the Republic all along the 38th parallel.[2] The valiant garrisons of the Republic, fighting fierce battles to counter the enemy's invasion, frustrated the advance of the Syngman Rhee army.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, having discussed the prevailing situation, ordered our People's Army to start a decisive counteroffensive action and wipe out the enemy's armed forces. On the orders of the Government of the Republic, the People's Army drove back the enemy from areas north of the 38th parallel and has advanced 10-15 kilometres south. It has liberated a number of towns including Ongjin, Yonan, Kaesong and Paechon, and many villages.

The traitorous Syngman Rhee clique has launched a fratricidal civil war against the people, although the entire patriotic people of our country have made every effort to reunify the country by peaceful means.

It is universal knowledge that the Syngman Rhee clique that is dead set against the country's peaceful reunification, had long since prepared for civil war. It frantically expanded armaments and desperately endeavoured to prepare the rear by bleeding the people in south Korea white. Through unheard-of terrorist despotism, it outlawed all democratic political parties and social organizations in south Korea, arrested, imprisoned and slaughtered patriotic, progressive personalities, and ruthlessly suppressed the slightest manifestations of discontent against Syngman Rhee's reactionary regime. Hundreds of thousands of our people's best sons and daughters who fought for the country's independence, freedom and democracy have been imprisoned and slaughtered by the enemy.

To cover up their design of launching a civil war, the Syngman Rhee clique incessantly provoked clashes on the 38th parallel to keep our people in a state of constant unrest, and sought to shift the responsibility for the provocative clashes on to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In the course of preparing for the so-called "expedition to the north," the Syngman Rhee clique, on the instructions of the U.S. imperialists, did not even hesitate to enter upon the road of collusion with the Japanese militarists, the sworn enemy of the Korean people.

The traitorous Syngman Rhee clique has sold off the southern half of our country as a colony and a military strategic base to the U.S. imperialists and placed its economy under the control of U.S. monopoly capitalists.

[2] This is not true. The DPRK initiated the war on June 25, 1950.

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The U.S. imperialists have seized the arteries of the economy and completely dislocated the national economy in the southern half. The U.S. imperialists are plundering rice, tungsten, graphite and many other natural resources vitally needed in our country. Middle and small entrepreneurs and traders in south Korea, under the pressure of U.S. capital, find themselves doomed to bankruptcy. In the southern half of our country, the majority of factories and mills have been closed down, the number of unemployed people has reached several millions, peasants have not yet been given land and agriculture keeps declining year by year. The people in south Korea are in a wretched plight, and are on the verge of starvation.

Dear fellow countrymen,

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, together with all the patriotic, democratic political parties, social organizations and the entire people of our country, has done all it could to avoid a fratricidal civil war and horrors of bloodshed and to reunify our country by peaceful means. As early as April 1948 the Joint Conference of Representatives of Political Parties and Social Organizations of North and South Korea made the first attempt to reunify our country in a peaceful way.

The traitorous Syngman Rhee clique, however, frustrated this attempt and, on instructions from the U.S. imperialists and their tool of aggression, the so-called U.N. Commission on Korea, staged separate elections in south Korea on May 10, 1948 and stepped up preparations for an armed attack on the northern half of our country.

In June last year, 72 patriotic political parties and social organizations in north and south Korea affiliated with the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland proposed reunifying our country peacefully by means of holding general elections with a view to attaining the peaceful reunification and complete independence of the country. The entire Korean people enthusiastically supported the proposal, but the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique rejected it, too.

The Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Father land, reflecting the will of the entire people, again made a proposal on June 7, 1950 to expedite the peaceful reunification of the country. But the traitorous Syngman Rhee gang also pre vented this proposal of the D.F.R.F. for promoting the peaceful reunification of the country from being carried out, threatening to label anyone favoring it as a traitor.

On June 19, 1950, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, expressing its unshakable will for the reunification, independence and democratic development of the country in accordance with the wishes of the democratic political parties and social organizations, advanced a proposal for achieving the peaceful reunification of the country by means of uniting into a single all- Korea legislative body the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the south Korean "National Assembly."

The traitorous Syngman Rhee clique responded to the unanimous desire of the entire Korean people for the country's peaceful reunification and our just, sincere proposal by launching a civil war.

What objective does this traitorous clique intend to achieve in the fratricidal civil war which it has ignited?

Through the fratricidal war the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique seeks to extend the anti-popular, reactionary ruling system in the southern half to the northern half of the Re public and rob our people of the achievements they have made in the democratic reforms.

The reactionary Syngman Rhee band tries to take the land away from the peasants, who have become its masters as a result of the agrarian reform effected in the northern half of the Republic on the principle of confiscation without compensation and of free distribution, to return it to the landlords, and deprive the

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people in the northern half of all democratic liberties and rights they have won. The traitorous Syngman Rhee clique seeks to turn our country into a colony of U.S. imperialism and make the entire Korean people slaves of U.S. imperialism.

Dear brothers and sisters, A great danger has befallen our country and people.

In this war against the Syngman Rhee gang the Korean people must defend with their lives the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its Constitution; wipe out the traitorous puppet regime in the southern half and liberate the southern half of our country from the reactionary rule of the traitorous Syngman Rhee clique; restore in the southern half the people's committees, the genuine people's power, and accomplish the cause of the country's reunification under the banner of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea…

Source: Kim Il Sung, "Every Effort for Victory in the War," June 26, 1950, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works Volume One*, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1971), 287-291.

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Excerpts from *Voices from the Korean War*

"A Korean Housewife's Story," from *Voices from the Korean War: Personal Stories of American, Korean, and Chinese Soldiers*, Richard Peters and Xiaobing Li eds., (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 206-209.

Sometimes the saddest and most tragic stories in war are not about the soldiers, but about the civilians, especially the women and children. The Korean War, like WWII, saw thousands of civilian refugees on the roads enduring the hardships of a homeless existence while trying to flee from an invading army. This is a story about one South Korean family, living in Seoul, who fled from the North Korean army in the early days of the war. Told by a Korean housewife and mother, she describes the hardships the family suffered while trying to survive during the brief but oppressive North Korean occupation of South Korea.

Lee Hyun Sook

Housewife in Seoul, Korea (Translated by her daughter, Lee Hong Im)

AT THE BEGINNING of the Korean War in 1950, I lived in Seoul with my husband, Lee I. Won, and our nearly two-year-old daughter, Lee Hong Im. I was twenty-four years old at the time, and I stayed home to take care of the house and my little girl. My husband had an office job working for the electric department in Seoul.

At the time, we knew there were big problems between South and North Korea. Sometimes we heard about shootings around the 38th Parallel, which divided the two Koreas. We also knew that sometimes those living in North Korea crossed the Han River by boat to get into South Korea. Some even paid money to cross the river.

The North Koreans attacked on June 25, early in the morning. I was home and first heard the news on the radio. At that time most people had

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very little money or food, because it was near the end of the month, but we knew we still had to leave before the North Koreans arrived in Seoul. Fortunately, every day I had saved a handful of rice, so we had some food to take with us on our journey to the South.

Together with my sister and her family, we crossed the Han River on a boat, with my husband carrying the bag of rice. Unfortunately, my sister was not a very healthy person, and she had several small children, so we could only walk about ten miles a day. We walked for about fifteen days to Hong Song, a city about seventy miles south of Seoul near the West Coast. We chose Hong Song because this is where my husband's family lived. There were many others trying to escape the North Koreans, and some became so weak from lack of food they dropped out along the way and died. We saw many dead people on the way to Hong Song. Because we had some rice, we were okay. We even had some rice left over when we finally arrived in Hong Song.

Everything seemed so peaceful when we entered the city, and we were quite hopeful. We lived with my husband's family, and everything seemed to be okay. Then, after we had been in Hong Song only about two days, the North Koreans arrived, and our lives were changed forever.

Because he loved his country so much, in Hong Song my husband belonged to a local patriotic society. He received no pay, but sometimes gave the local police information on those who supported the North Koreans. The North Koreans, however, regularly arrested and put in jail anyone they suspected of supporting South Korea.

To stay out of jail, my husband and some of his friends hid in the basement of his older brother, Lee Chang Won, who lived in a very big house in Hong Song. He was an important official in the South Korean government, and sometimes he would hide as many as fifty people at one time in his basement.

At this time it was very difficult to know who to trust because there were many people in the South who welcomed the North Koreans, especially in the early part of the war. The North Koreans made Communism sound so wonderful that many thought it must be like heaven. It seemed to have a special appeal for both those with very little education and those with a lot of education. Many college students supported the North Koreans, especially those who studied in Japan.

While my husband's older brother was very helpful to those who were wanted by the North Koreans, and hid many of them in his basement, he

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had a friend who supported the North Koreans and who became an important head man in the North Korean police. Even so, he didn't interfere with my family as long as we all stayed out of sight and caused no problems.

Unfortunately, one day my husband got tired of his basement hideout and decided to walk around outside. He was seized by the North Korean police, who brutally beat him up. When the friend of my husband's brother learned what happened, he came to our house and took my husband to the police station.

That night my husband never came home. I went to see my husband's brother to see if he knew what happened. Together, we went down to the police station and found my husband so badly beaten he was near death. His clothes were so soaked in blood they stuck to his skin when removed. When the head policeman, the friend of my husband's brother, learned what happened he made sure my husband received medical attention. Then he permitted my husband to go home. Without his help, I'm quite sure my husband would have died.

While my husband continued to suffer terribly from the beatings, it was no longer safe for him to remain in our house. Fortunately, the friend of my husband's brother understood this. So late one night he came to our house and took my husband to another house about five miles away, where he could hide more safely.

My husband stayed in this house for several months, almost like a dead person. During the day he had to be very quiet and could hardly move. At first he still could not walk, but at night he exercised with a rope, and he built up his strength until he could walk again. Eventually, however, even this house became too dangerous for him to stay. So, with some other South Koreans who were wanted by the North Korean police, my husband and the others moved into the mountains, where they all lived in a cave.

Many of those who hid from the North Koreans were the former leaders of South Korea, often professional people with a college education. The North Koreans especially disliked these people and treated them with great cruelty. I know of one occasion when the North Koreans gathered about twenty to thirty of these people in a large building, then closed the door and gave each a good beating. Then they gave shovels to each person and led them into nearby mountains. After they had all dug a hole with their shovels, the North Koreans tied their hands behind their backs and shot them beside the holes. They just toppled over and fell into the holes all by themselves.

My husband and his friends remained hidden in the mountains about

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two months, until the UN forces drove the Communist forces back into North Korea. When they finally emerged from their cave they were angry toward all of those who had worked for the North Koreans, and they tried to make sure they were arrested and sent to jail.

Gradually, my husband recovered from the beatings by the North Korean police. He spent the rest of the war in the South Korean army, although he was restricted to light duty because of his injuries. My daughter and I continued to live in Hong Song with my husband's family until the war ended and he returned from the army in 1953. Then we all went back to Seoul, to the same house, which somehow had survived all the fighting. My husband went back to his old job in the electric department, but unfortunately he died in 1958. Since my daughter eventually married an American serviceman from Oklahoma, in 1985 I came to Oklahoma. In 1989 my daughter and I went into the laundry business in Edmond, Oklahoma. We called the company "Tammys." Together, my daughter and I owned and operated Tammys until the early part of 2002, when we sold it and started a new business. We still live in Edmond today.

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Unit 3

Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky to Mao Zedong, 14 May 1950

The Soviet Union played a central role in Kim Il Sung's rise to power. Indeed, their sponsorship raised his profile within Korea and gave him the opportunity to bring the North Korean government under his control. Given his close relationship with the Soviet Union, Kim sought Stalin's approval to strike south. In this document, from May 14, 1950, Stalin's foreign minister Andrey Vyshinsky confirms to Mao that the Soviet Union approves of the North Korean decision to strike south. Vyshinsky also adds that Chinese disagreement with this choice could stop the drive toward war.

For Mao Zedong.

"Cde. Mao Zedong!

In a conversation with the Korean comrades Filippov [Stalin] and his friends expressed the opinion, that, in light of the changed international situation, they agree with the proposal of the Koreans to move toward reunification [*pristupit k obiedineniiu*]. In this regard a qualification was made [*pri etom bilo ogovoreno*], that the question should be decided finally by the Chinese and Korean comrades together, and in case of disagreement by the Chinese comrades the decision on the question should be postponed until a new discussion. The Korean comrades can tell you the details of the conversation.

Filippov [Stalin]."

Telegraph the fulfillment [*ispolneniie telegraf'te*].

VYSHINSKY

Source: Wilson Center Digital Archive <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115976>. *Since the end of the Cold War documents on the origins of the Korean War emerged from the archives of the former Soviet Union and its central/eastern European allies. Some of these documents are collected at the Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center.*

Dean Acheson, Excerpts from the Press Club Speech, 12 January 1950

Growing hostility with the Communist bloc and domestic responses to Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War led to a policy of containment. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced a policy for East Asia that left both the Republic of Korea and Republic of China out of the US's defense perimeter even though both countries had anti-communist governments. Some strategists doubted the value of Korea. Containment's costs also motivated a review of defense commitments.

January 12, 1950

...I am frequently asked: Has the State Department go an Asian policy? And it seems to me that that discloses such a depth of ignorance that it is very hard to begin to deal with it. The peoples of Asia are so incredibly diverse and their problems are so incredibly diverse that how could anyone, even the most utter charlatan, believe that he had a uniform policy which would deal with all of them. On the other hand, there are very important similarities in ideas and in problems among the peoples of Asia and so what we come to, after we understand these diversities and these common attitudes of mind, is the fact that there must be certain similarities of approach, and there must be very great dissimilarities in action...

There is in this vast area what we might call a developing Asian consciousness, and a developing pattern, and this, I think, is based upon two factors...One of these factors is a revulsion against the acceptance of misery and poverty as the normal condition of life. Throughout all of this vast area, you have that fundamental revolutionary aspect in mind and belief. The other common aspect that they have is the revulsion against foreign domination. Whether that foreign domination takes the form of colonialism or whether it takes the form of imperialism, they are through with it. They have had enough of it, and they want no more...

Now, may I suggest to you that much of the bewilderment which has seized the minds of many of us about recent developments in China comes from a failure to understand this basic revolutionary force which is loose in Asia. The reasons for the fall of the Nationalist Government in china are preoccupying many people. All sorts of reasons have been attributed to it. Most commonly, it is said in various speeches and publications that it is the result of American bungling, that we are incompetent, that we did not understand, that American aid was too little, that we did the wrong things at the wrong time...Now, what I ask you to do is to stop looking for a moment under the bed and under the chair and under the rug to find out these reasons, but rather to look at the broad picture and see whether something doesn't suggest itself...

What has happened in my judgment is that the almost inexhaustible patience of the Chinese people in their misery ended. They did not bother to overthrow this government. There was really nothing to overthrow. They simply ignored it...They completely withdrew their support from this government, and when that support was withdrawn, the whole military establishment disintegrated. Added to the grossest incompetence every experienced by any military command was this total lack of support both in the armies and in the country, and so the whole matter just simply disintegrated.

The communists did not create this. The Communists did not create this condition. They did not create this revolutionary spirit. They did not create a great force which moved out from under Chiang Kai—shek. But they were shrewd and cunning to mount it, to ride this thing into victory and into power...

Now, let me come to another underlying and important factor which determines our relations and, in turn, our policy with the peoples of Asia. That is the attitude of the Soviet Union toward Asia, and particularly towards those parts of Asia which are contiguous to the Soviet Union, and with great particularity this afternoon, to north China.

The attitude and interest of the Russians in north China, and in these other areas as well, long antedates communism. This is not something that has come out of communism at all. It long antedates it. But the

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Communist regime has added new methods, new skills, and new concepts to the thrust of Russian imperialism. This Communistic concept and techniques have armed Russian imperialism with a new and most insidious weapon of penetration. Armed with these new powers, what is happening in China is that the Soviet Union is detaching the northern provinces [areas] of China from China and is attaching them to the Soviet Union. This process is complete in outer Mongolia. It is nearly complete in Manchuria, and I am sure that in inner Mongolia and in Sinkiang there are very happy reports coming from Soviet agents to Moscow…

I wish to state this and perhaps sin against my doctrine of non-dogmatism, but I should like to suggest at any rate that this fact that the Soviet Union is taking the four northern provinces of China is the single most significant, most important fact, in the relation of any foreign power with Asia.

What does that mean for us? It means something very, very significant. It means that nothing that we do and nothing that we say must be allowed to obscure the reality of this fact. All the efforts of propaganda will not be able to obscure it. The only thing that can obscure it is the folly of ill—conceived adventures on our part which easily could do so, and I urge all who are thinking about these foolish adventures to remember that we must not seize the unenviable position which the Russians have carved out for themselves. We must not undertake to deflect from the Russians to ourselves the righteous anger, and the wrath, and the hatred of the Chinese people which must develop…We must take the position we have always taken—that anyone who violates the integrity of China is the enemy of China and is acting contrary to our own interest. That, I suggest to you this afternoon, is the first and the great rule in regard to the formulation of American policy toward Asia.

I suggest that the second rule is very like the first. That is to keep our own purposes perfectly straight, perfectly pure, and perfectly aboveboard and do not get them mixed—up with legal quibbles or the attempt to do one thing and really achieve another...What is the situation in regard to the military security of the Pacific area, and what is our policy in regard to it?

In the first place, the defeat and the disarmament of Japan has placed upon the United States the necessity of assuming the military defense of Japan so long as that is required, both in the interest of our security and in the interests of the security of the entire Pacific area and, in all honor, in the interest of Japanese security. We have American—and there are Australia—troops in Japan. I am not in a position to speak for the Australians, but I can assure you that there is no intention of any sort of abandoning or weakening the defenses of Japan and that whatever arrangements are to be made either through permanent settlement or otherwise, that defense must and shall be maintained.

The defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus. We hold important defense positions in the Ryukyu Islands, and those we will continue to hold. In the interest of the population of the Ryukyu Islands, we will at an appropriate time offer to hold these islands under trusteeship of the United Nations. But they are essential parts of the defensive perimeter of the Pacific, and they must and will be held. The defensive perimeter runs from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands. Our relations, our defensive relations with the Philippines are contained in agreements between us. Those agreements are being loyally carried out and will be loyally carried out. Both peoples have learned by bitter experience the vital connections between our mutual defense requirements. We are in no doubt about that, and it is hardly necessary for me to say an attack on the Philippines could not and would not be tolerated by the United States. But I hasten to add that no one perceives the imminence of any such attack.

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. But it must also be clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship. Should such an attack occur—one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from—the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which

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so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression. But it is a mistake, I think, in considering Pacific and Far Eastern problems to become obsessed with military considerations. Important as they are, there are other problems that press, and these other problems are not capable of solution through military means. These other problems arise out of the susceptibility of many areas, and many countries in the Pacific area, to subversion and penetration. That cannot be stopped military means.

The susceptibility to penetration arises because in many areas there are new governments which have little experience in governmental administration and have not become firmly established or perhaps firmly accepted in their countries. They grow, in part, from very serious economic problems...In part this susceptibility to penetration comes from the great social upheaval about which I have been speaking...

So after this survey, what we conclude, I believe, is that there is a new day which has dawned in Asia. It is a day in which the Asian peoples are on their own, and know it, and intend to continue on their own. It is a day in which the old relationships between east and west are gone, relationships which at their worst were exploitations, and which at their best were paternalism. That relationship is over, and the relationship of east and west must now be in the Far East one of mutual respect and mutual helpfulness. We are their friends. Others are their friends. We and those others are willing to help, but we can help only where we are wanted and only where the conditions of help are really sensible and possible. So what we can see is that this new day in Asia, this new day which is dawning, may go on to a glorious noon or it may darken and it may drizzle out. But that decision lies within the countries of Asia and within the power of the Asian people. It is not a decision which a friend or even an enemy from the outside can decide for them.

Source: Dean Acheson, "Press Club Speech," January 12, 1950, Central Intelligence Agency, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1950-01-12.pdf, Accessed: July 9, 2020.

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Differing Views on the Outbreak of the Korean War, 26 June 1950

Major news networks across the world reported on the North Korean attack on South Korea. But not all newspapers reported on the event in the same way. Sentiment of readers differed. That factor is stark in these two editorials. In the first piece, published by the Boston Globe *on June 26, 1950, the war is cast as a part of the larger Cold War. In the second piece, from the Times of India, the Korean War is discussed with focus on the border fighting of the previous months.*

"Crisis in Korea," *Boston Globe*, June 26, 1950.

Crisis in Korea

The invasion of the Southern Korean Republic by the armies of its rival, the Northern Korean satellite of the Soviet Union, has sharply increased tensions in the Far East; but it is by no means clear, as yet, whether this attack has larger implications. Nor is it possible, at this hour of the onslaught, to judge whether the defensive strength of the invaded republic suffices to turn back what is plainly a premeditated, carefully prepared act of aggression.

It has long been a practice in Northeast Asia for the Russians to make periodic tests of strength. The history of the twenties and thirties is full of such armed tussles, some of them very sizable, between Russia and Japan on the Asiatic mainland. It is possible that this latest affair is something of the sort. Another few days will clear up that point. Meantime, the speed with which the United States has moved to supplement the military strength of the Southern Koreans suggests that before the present fracus ends, the armies from above the famous parallel may have their hands full.

Russia's boycott of the emergency meeting at Lake Success is in keeping with her policy, devised to bring pressure upon the United Nations for admission to that body of Communist China. In the present situation, that policy has its drawbacks, as yesterday's meeting of the Security Council showed. Russian responsibility for the action of Northern Korea is unquestionable. Her control over the army of that satrapy is complete. Her complicity in this act of armed aggression completely stultifies all the propaganda emanating from Moscow in recent months professing her regime's devotion to peace.

The Korean affair could prove of great value to her in Asia, were it to result as her Northern Korean satellite doubtless expects. The stakes are high, in China, Southeast Asia, Japan, and even in Western Europe. It may be doubted strongly, however, that the Kremlin seeks to press that point too far. In the Iranian episode in 1946, where possibilities of advantage were greater, pressure of world opinion, mustered through the U.N., forced her to retire. The test in Korea finds the West infinitely stronger. Meantime, developments await demonstration of the capacity of the Southern Korean defense forces.

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"War in Korea," *The Times of India* (Mumbai), 26 June 1950

Although it is to be hoped that the sudden invasion of Southern Korean by troops of the Communist North Korean Government will prove to be nothing more than a larger edition of the recent frontier clashes along the 38th parallel reports of the campaign so far suggest that the hostilities may nevertheless develop into a large-scale war between north and south. One significant indication of the course which events might take is provided by the Pyongyang radio's claim that South Korea was responsible for starting hostilities at three points along the border. Moreover, a reluctance to prolong the present crisis might be deduced from the same radio's statement that unless South Korea immediately suspends operations, "the People's Republic will be obliged to resort to decisive counter-measures." Since 1931 border "incidents" internationally provoked as "feelers" have been a special feature in the Far East and it is possible that the present incursion of North Korean troops will be accordingly restricted. Against the background of tension which has been accumulating in Korea since 1945 there is, however, the possibility of a "feeler" developing into an uncontrollable avalanche causing grave international repercussions. Should events assume such a serious character nothing could minimize the dangers that would immediately result.

The United States government did right to appeal to the Security Council for an immediate consideration of the Korean problem. That was step which was especially appropriate in view of the close relations that have always existed between the international organization and the Southern Korean Republic. If there is even a remote chance of preventing the spread of hostilities and their consequent impact on the international situation the United Nations may yet be able to exert a beneficial influence. On the other hand if it is the determined purpose of the North Korean government to carry through with a penetration into the south it is difficult to see how the United Nations can at this stage take effective action. Whatever the result, the reference of the issue to the international organization is a decision the wisdom of which cannot be questioned. The infant State of South Korea was established under the direct auspices of the U.N. with America playing the role of "guide and philosopher." In recent months, however, opinion in the USA has been growing increasingly skeptical about the chances of survival of the South Korean Republic, and the US Congress at one time threatened to stop the aid the South Korean Government was getting from the USA.

The rational thing for both the USA and USSR to do under the circumstances will be to treat the present hostilities in Korea as a civil war—an internal affair for the Korean people to settle—and it is hoped that both will do so in equal measure. That the occupation of South Korea by troops from the North would be another big reverse for US policy in Asia and a victory for the Kremlin cannot be denied. But the issue has to be viewed from the point of view of not so much the USA's or Russia's cold war strategy as the interests of the Asian people. The people of Asia will resent nothing more than this that the Korean conflict could spread and their Continent become the scene of a major armed struggle between the two power blocs. They hope, therefore, that even if the Security Council fails to bring the war in Korea to a stop it will at least succeed in preventing it from developing into an international war.

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Harry Truman, "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea," 19 July 1950

Going to war in the 20th century was a complex act. In this document, Harry Truman offers his reasons for why the United States needed to stop the North Korean attack. He explains how he will manage mobilization. The speech itself was written with an eye toward the Cold War.

[Delivered from the White House at 10:30 p.m.]

My fellow citizens:

At noon today I sent a message to the Congress about the situation in Korea. I want to talk to you tonight about that situation, and about what it means to the security of the United States and to our hopes for peace in the world.

Korea is a small country, thousands of miles away, but what is happening there is important to every American.

On Sunday, June 25th, Communist forces attacked the Republic of Korea.

This attack has made it clear, beyond all doubt, that the international Communist movement is willing to use armed invasion to conquer independent nations. An act of aggression such as this creates a very real danger to the security of all free nations.

The attack upon Korea was an outright breach of the peace and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. By their actions in Korea, Communist leaders have demonstrated their contempt for the basic moral principles on which the United Nations is founded. This is a direct challenge to the efforts of the free nations to build the kind of world in which men can live in freedom and peace.

This challenge has been presented squarely. We must meet it squarely.

It is important for all of us to understand the essential facts as to how the situation in Korea came about.

Before and during World War II, Korea was subject to Japanese rule. When the fighting stopped, it was agreed that troops of the Soviet Union would accept the surrender of the Japanese soldiers in the northern part of Korea, and that American forces would accept the surrender of the Japanese in the southern part. For this purpose, the 38th parallel was used as the dividing line.

Later, the United Nations sought to establish Korea as a free and independent nation. A commission was sent out to supervise a free election in the whole of Korea. However, this election was held only in the southern part of the country, because the Soviet Union refused to permit an election for this purpose to be held in the northern part. Indeed, the Soviet authorities even refused to permit the United Nations Commission to visit northern Korea.

Nevertheless, the United Nations decided to go ahead where it could. In August 1948 the Republic of Korea was established as a free and independent nation in that part of Korea south of the 38th parallel.

In December 1948, the Soviet Union stated that it had withdrawn its troops from northern Korea and that a local government had been established there. However, the Communist authorities never have permitted the United Nations observers to visit northern Korea to see what was going on behind that part of the Iron Curtain.

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It was from that area, where the Communist authorities have been unwilling to let the outside world see what was going on, that the attack was launched against the Republic of Korea on June 25th. That attack came without provocation and without warning. It was an act of raw aggression, without a shadow of justification.

I repeat that it was an act of raw aggression. It had no justification whatever.

The Communist invasion was launched in great force, with planes, tanks, and artillery. The size of the attack, and the speed with which it was followed up, make it perfectly plain that it had been plotted long in advance.

As soon as word of the attack was received, Secretary of State Acheson called me at Independence, Mo., and informed me that, with my approval, he would ask for an immediate meeting of the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council met just 24 hours after the Communist invasion began.

One of the main reasons the Security Council was set up was to act in such cases as this—to stop outbreaks of aggression in a hurry before they develop into general conflicts. In this case the Council passed a resolution which called for the invaders of Korea to stop fighting, and to withdraw. The Council called on all members of the United Nations to help carry out this resolution. The Communist invaders ignored the action of the Security Council and kept fight on with their attack.

The Security Council then met again. It recommended that members of the United Nations help the Republic of Korea repel the attack and help restore peace and security in that area.

Fifty-two of the 59 countries which are members of the United Nations have given their support to the action taken by the Security Council to restore peace in Korea.

These actions by the United Nations and its members are of great importance. The free nations have now made it clear that lawless aggression will be met with force. The free nations have learned the fateful lesson of the 1930's. That lesson is that aggression must be met firmly. Appeasement leads only to further aggression and ultimately to war.

The principal effort to help the Koreans preserve their independence, and to help the United Nations restore peace, has been made by the United States. We have sent land, sea, and air forces to assist in these operations. We have done this because we know that what is at stake here is nothing less than our own national security and the peace of the world.

So far, two other nations—Australia and Great Britain—have sent planes to Korea; and six other nations—Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand—have made naval forces available.

Under the flag of the United Nations a unified command has been established for all forces of the members of the United Nations fighting in Korea. Gen. Douglas MacArthur is the commander of this combined force.

The prompt action of the United Nations to put down lawless aggression, and the prompt response to this action by free peoples all over the world, will stand as a landmark in mankind's long search for a rule of law among nations.

Only a few countries have failed to indorse the efforts of the United Nations to stop the fighting in Korea. The most important of these is the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has boycotted the meetings of the United Nations Security Council. It has refused to support the actions of the United Nations with respect to Korea.

The United States requested the Soviet Government, 2 days after the fighting started, to use its influence with the North Koreans to have them withdraw. The Soviet Government refused.

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The Soviet Government has said many times that it wants peace in the world, but its attitude toward this act of aggression against the Republic of Korea is in direct contradiction of its statements.

For our part, we shall continue to support the United Nations action to restore peace in the world.

We know that it will take a hard, tough fight to halt the invasion, and to drive the Communists back. The invaders have been provided with enough equipment and supplies for a long campaign. They overwhelmed the lightly armed defense forces of the Korean Republic in the first few days and drove southward.

Now, however, the Korean defenders have reorganized and are making a brave fight for their liberty, and an increasing number of American troops have joined them. Our forces have fought a skillful, rearguard delaying action, pending the arrival of reinforcements. Some of these reinforcements are now arriving; others are on the way from the United States.

I should like to read you a part of a report I have received from General Collins, Chief of Staff of the United States Army. General Collins and General Vandenberg, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, have just returned from an inspection trip to Korea and Japan. This is what General Collins had to say: "The United States Armed Forces in Korea are giving a splendid account of themselves.

"Our Far Eastern forces were organized and equipped primarily to perform peaceful occupation duties in Japan. However, under General MacArthur's magnificent leadership, they have quickly adapted themselves to meet the deliberately planned attack of the North Korean Communist forces, which are well-equipped, well-led, and battle-trained, and which have at times outnumbered our troops by as much as 20 to 1.

"Our Army troops, ably supported by tactical aircraft of the United States Air Force and Navy and our Australian friends, flying under the most adverse conditions of weather, have already distinguished themselves in the most difficult of military operations—a delaying action. The fact that they are preventing the Communists from overrunning Korea—which this calculated attack had been designed to accomplish—is a splendid tribute to the ability of our Armed Forces to convert quickly from the peaceful duties of occupation to the grim duties of war.

"The task that confronts us is not an easy one, but I am confident of the outcome."

I shall also read to you part of a report that I received from General MacArthur within the last few hours. General MacArthur says:

"It is, of course, impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy the future incidents of a military campaign. Over a broad front involving continuous local struggles, there are bound to be ups and downs, losses as well as successes...But the issue of battle is now fully joined and will proceed along lines of action in which we will not be without choice. Our hold upon the southern part of Korea represents a secure base. Our casualties, despite overwhelming odds, have been relatively light. Our strength will continually increase while that of the enemy will relatively decrease. His supply line is insecure. He has had his great chance and failed to exploit it. We are now in Korea in force, and with God's help we are there to stay until the constitutional authority of the Republic of Korea is fully restored."

These and other reports I have received show that our Armed Forces are acting with dose teamwork and efficiency to meet the problems facing us in Korea.

These reports are reassuring, but they also show that the job ahead of us in Korea is long and difficult.

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Furthermore, the fact that Communist forces have invaded Korea is a warning that there may be similar acts of aggression in other parts of the world. The free nations must be on their guard, more than ever before, against this kind of sneak attack.

It is obvious that we must increase our military strength and preparedness immediately. There are three things we need to do.

First, we need to send more men, equipment, and supplies to General MacArthur.

Second, in view of the world situation, we need to build up our own Army, Navy, and Air Force over and above what is needed in Korea.

Third, we need to speed up our work with other countries in strengthening our common defenses.

To help meet these needs, I have already authorized increases in the size of our Armed Forces. These increases will come in part from volunteers, in part from Selective Service, and in part from the National Guard and the Reserves.

I have also ordered that military supplies and equipment be obtained at a faster rate.

The necessary increases in the size of our Armed Forces, and the additional equipment they must have, will cost about $10 billion, and I am asking the Congress to appropriate the amount required.

These funds will be used to train men and equip them with tanks, planes, guns, and ships, in order to build the strength we need to help assure peace in the world.

When we have worked out with other free countries an increased program for our common defense, I shall recommend to the Congress that additional funds be provided for this purpose. This is of great importance. The free nations face a worldwide threat. It must be met with a worldwide defense. The United States and other free nations can multiply their strength by joining with one another in a common effort to provide this defense. This is our best hope for peace.

The things we need to do to build up our military defense will require considerable adjustment in our domestic economy. We have a tremendously rich and productive economy, and it is expanding every year.

Our job now is to divert to defense purposes more of that tremendous productive capacity—more steel, more aluminum, more of a good many things.

Some of the additional production for military purposes can come from making fuller use of plants which are not operating at capacity. But many of our industries are already going full tilt, and until we can add new capacity, some of the resources we need for the national defense will have to be taken from civilian uses.

This requires us to take certain steps to make sure that we obtain the things we need for national defense, and at the same time guard against inflationary price rises.

The steps that are needed now must be taken promptly.

In the message which I sent to the Congress today, I described the economic measures which are required at this time.

First, we need laws which will insure prompt and adequate supplies for military and essential civilian use. I have therefore recommended that the Congress give the Government power to guide the flow of materials into essential uses, to restrict their use for nonessential purposes, and to prevent the accumulation of unnecessary inventories.

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Second, we must adopt measures to prevent inflation and to keep our Government in a sound financial condition. One of the major causes of inflation is the excessive use of credit. I have recommended that the Congress authorize the Government to set limits on installment buying and to curb speculation in agricultural commodities. In the housing field, where Government credit is an important factor, I have already directed that credit restraints be applied, and I have recommended that the Congress authorize further controls.

As an additional safeguard against inflation, and to help finance our defense needs, it will be necessary to make substantial increases in taxes. This is a contribution to our national security that every one of us should stand ready to make. As soon as a balanced and fair tax program can be worked out, I shah lay it before the Congress. This tax program will have as a major aim the elimination of profiteering.

Third, we should increase the production of goods needed for national defense. We must plan to enlarge our defense production, not just for the immediate future, but for the next several years. This will be primarily a task for our businessmen and workers. However, to help obtain the necessary increases, the Government should be authorized to provide certain types of financial assistance to private industry to increase defense production.

Our military needs are large, and to meet them will require hard work and steady effort. I know that we can produce what we need if each of us does his part—each man, each woman, each soldier, each civilian. This is a time for all of us to pitch in and work together.

I have been sorry to hear that some people have fallen victim to rumors in the last week or two, and have been buying up various things they have heard would be scarce. That is foolish—I say that is foolish, and it is selfish, very selfish, because hoarding results in entirely unnecessary local shortages.

Hoarding food is especially foolish. There is plenty of food in this country. I have read that there have been runs on sugar in some cities. That is perfectly ridiculous. We now have more sugar available than ever before. There are ample supplies of our other basic foods also.

Now, I sincerely hope that every American housewife will keep this in mind when she does her daily shopping.

If I had thought that we were actually threatened by shortages of essential consumer goods, I should have recommended that price control and rationing be immediately instituted. But there is no such threat. We have to fear only those shortages which we ourselves artificially create.

Every businessman who is trying to profiteer in time of national danger—and every person who is selfishly trying to get more than his neighbor—is doing just exactly the thing that any enemy of this country would want him to do.

If prices should rise unduly because of excessive buying or speculation, I know our people will want the Government to take action, and I will not hesitate to recommend rationing and price control.

We have the resources to meet our needs. Far more important, the American people are unified in their belief in democratic freedom. We are united in detesting Communist slavery.

We know that the cost of freedom is high. But we are determined to preserve our freedom—no matter what the cost.

I know that our people are willing to do their part to support our soldiers and sailors and airmen who are fighting in Korea. I know that our fighting men can count on each and every one of you.

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Our country stands before the world as an example of how free men, under God, can build a community of neighbors, working together for the good of all.

That is the goal we seek not only for ourselves, but for all people. We believe that freedom and peace are essential if men are to live as our Creator intended us to live. It is this faith that has guided us in the past, and it is this faith that will fortify us in the stern days ahead.

Source: Harry Truman, "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea," July 19, 1950, Found on The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-and-television-address-the-american-people-the-situation-korea. Accessed: July 7, 2020.

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Omar Bradley, "A New Power is Born," 20 September 1950

To wage the war, US leaders looked to the United Nations. In some ways, this was a natural decision as the United Nations was involved in monitoring the elections in South Korea years before. Further, Truman and members of his administration believed international organizations were critical to world peace. In meeting the Korean War crisis, the UN could prove its worth. In this September 1950 speech, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Omar Bradley reflects on how the Korean War influenced the life and future of the United Nations.

A New Power Is Born

ARMED ACTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS

By GENERAL OMAR N. BRADLEY, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States*

Delivered before the Detroit Rotary Club, Detroit, Michigan, September 20, 1950

IN my opinion, the battle of Korea has already become one of the most significant military campaigns of history. Not because I believe that it is the first battle of a global war. And not because I credit the battle off Korea with the ultimate decision in the conflict between communism and freedom.

But in the battle of Korea—in the rice paddies, mountains, and native villages of this broken country—has been born a new power in this world: armed action by the United Nations.

Against a tyranny which understands only force, the United Nations had no recourse but to resort to the use of arms. The fact that free nations were able to meet aggression with armed-resistance has established the United Nations as a world power—a power for freedom, potentially stronger than any single nation, with a single dedication to the higher principles of humanity.

Although the United Nations had not yet established a world police force, war has precipitated armed action, and many of the free nations are now joined in a common effort to enforce the peace.

There is a second reason why the battle of Korea has already become so significant.

Without warning, communism went one step farther than it had ever gone before, and for the first time resorted to open and organized armed aggression to gain its oppressive ends.

In the battle of Korea—where our soldiers stood, fought, and retreated to stand and fight again—communism had shed even its pretense of peaceful intention, and stood fully revealed as a tyrannical military power bent on the destruction of free nations.

The peoples of the free world—and especially we Americans—had become victims of our own catch phrase "cold war," with its illusion that communism is merely an opposing ideology. We now recognize that communism is backed by military force which will be used whenever and wherever it is to their advantage.

Being rid of our illusions, we now recognize that communism is deeply impressed when opposed by military strength.

These two new factors will have a lasting impact on world affairs.

In Asia, in America, in Europe, coordinated armed action by the United Nations presents a new hope. Even in Russia it is a force to be reckoned with.

In the entire world—in free nations and slave nations alike—the revelation that communism depends on military force cannot be ignored.

Both of these factors are changing your way of living and mine.

Armed forces of the United Nations are now engaged in their first hard-fought battles for the enforcement of peace. The fate of this new force rides on the bombs from our planes, the guns of our ships, and the bayonets of our soldiers.

Its creation was not an unconsidered decision. There was hope, and there is still hope, that if free men resist strongly the first open and overt armed aggression, perhaps we may have successfully stopped a whole planned series of aggressive acts.

If that hope is misplaced—and communism takes another aggressive step—Korea at least sounded the full alarm, and we have at last begun to prepare in earnest to defend our freedom.

Now that the warning is sounded, if our preparations are halting, fumbling, or of half measure, it will be our own fault. The sleeping giant of free world strength has been aroused and has shaken off the wishful dream, to face the reality that we must be prepared.

Resisting aggression in Korea is not an isolated and unrelated action. It is the culmination of a series of actions, which brings to the side of free men the tremendous force of accumulated decision.

For five years we have worked shoulder to shoulder with other free nations in many worthy causes under the United Nations flag. Financially, economically, politically, and spiritually, the American people have given unselfishly to the strengthening of the free world.

Evidently these efforts alone have not been sufficient to win a permanent peace.

Now the United Nations call for fighting men and fighting weapons as well as our continued support in these other endeavors. Communism with its military threat demands our combined preparedness.

What this means to Americans is becoming more clear.

Many families are again bidding good-bye to their sons and brothers and husbands as additional soldiers, sailors, and airmen are called to the colors. For the future, a first estimate of three million men for the Armed Forces has been given.

The Congress of the United States has voted nearly 25 billion dollars for the defense forces, and for waging the war in Korea.

The President has outlined the economic and financial controls that will be required if our security is to be assured.

All of these steps have been taken in support of the United Nations' effort in Korea, and to assure that the new threat of communism in Korea and elsewhere is met with vigorous opposition.

During my lifetime and yours—in school and in church, and by our mothers and fathers—we have been taught to believe that peace was to be our "normal" way of life.

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It is hard to shake off a lifetime of belief, but now it appears that our "normal" way of life, for many years to come, may be tension and sacrifice. The ominous shadow is upon us, and we face the fact that a large part of our income and effort will have to be devoted to preparations for defense.

That is the lesson of Korea, where our new force was created, and communism tipped its hand.

From a military viewpoint we have seen the accomplishment of a miracle in Korea. Because Americans exercised the strong and vigorous leadership which the free world looked for, the armed forces of the United Nations were able to hold 1250 square miles of a beachhead, turn the tide of the battle, and take the offensive.

It is the first time in history—as far as I know—that any nation has made a successful piecemeal commitment of its armed forces in the face of a moving, hard-striking enemy—and won the initial decision. The enemy failed to drive the United Nations' advance forces out of Korea, which the communists confidently expected to do.

It is not the style of action Americans would have chosen. Normally, we would mobilize a sufficient number of troops to do the job; we would back them up with all the ships and guns and ammunition and airplanes and bombs that they would need. And then, when ready, we would strike hard. That's the way it happened in Normandy on D-Day.

In Korea, that was not the case. The aggressor started with an estimated 220,000 troops, and some air force. The South Koreans had less than 60,000 trained men, ready to repel border raids and provide internal security. The overwhelming odds had to be met quickly.

The simple battle report of the 88 days of fighting forms an interesting pattern. Immediately the Air Force and the Navy took to the skies and sea lanes to protect the evacuation of our citizens. Within three days, two companaies of the 24th Infantry Division arrived at the fighting front by air. The creation of a strong united ground, air, and sea effort began.

The rest of the story is by now familiar to all of the free world, thanks to the complete and courageous reporting of the military battles by the members of the press.

It is unfortunate that all of the member nations of the United Nations cannot have this uncensored version of the aggression that took place in Korea.

The heroic fighting against tremendous odds has pointed up—the great lesson of 1950—a lesson we might have drawn from the accumulation of events since 1945: that when and if we mobilize and apply greater military force than the communists, we win. If we don't, we lose.

This lesson applies locally on the battlefronts of Korea—and will probably be applicable internationally for years to come.

The historic significance of the military campaign in Korea will not be confined to defeat or victory in the Orient.

In the capitals of the world, the significance has not been lost. The 12 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have drawn from the lesson of Korea the urgency of vigorous preparation. There will be no excuse if we do not cease our complacent plodding to accomplish more quickly a spirited preparedness.

The United States of America is more than willing to do its share. Only last week our President pledged more American forces for Western Europe. We are reinforcing our troops who are already on the front lines of defense.

It is my hope, and it is the fervent prayer of every American that the aggression in Korea will be limited to that small country, and that it will soon be over. To those families whose men are engaged in this battle, the size of the struggle cannot minimize their sacrifices. The battle of Korea is as grim and fearful as any battle fought by any American in any war in history.

The vigorous fight and the valiant sacrifice that every Soldier and Sailor and Airman and Marine is making, is part of the free world's decision to resist aggression with force, even risking global war if communism decides to have it so.

This resolution to stand and fight is not a departure from the free world's policy of no aggression, no provocation for aggression, and no preventive war. The resolution to stand and fight simply says: we believe that communists and free peoples can live in the world without war, but if communists insist that only one or the other can survive, then we are determined that, with God's help, it shall be the free peoples.

Source: Omar Bradley, "A New Power is Born," September 20, 1950, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, October 15, 1950, 16-17.

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Ban Ki Moon, "Remarks at Korean War Anniversary Event," 25 June 2010

The Korean War remained an important part of the United Nations institutional memory. In 2010, then-Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon gave a speech about how the war shaped the United Nations and his life.

Mr. Joseph Calabria, Commander of the Staten Island Korean War Veterans Association,

Honorable Veterans of the United States and the Republic of Korea

My deepest respect and admiration [goes out] to all those who have died for the freedom and stability on the Korean peninsula - my deepest thanks to you.

Your Excellency Park In-gook, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

Honorable Ambassador Kim Kyung-geun, Consul-General of the Republic of Korea in New York

Honorable Consul-General Mr. Mehmet Samsar of Turkey

Distinguished leaders of the Korean-American community in New York,

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, I see the world through the eyes of a six-year old. I was six years old in 1950 when the Korean War broke out.

I was like every other six-year old child - full of hope...full of wonder...full of possibility. And then...the war broke out...suddenly, abruptly, a hell on earth.

My family and I fled our home. We hid on a mountainside with my grandparents. From there, I saw the bombs hit my village. From there, I saw my world go up in smoke.

Why...I could not understand. I could only feel pain...right to the bone. We wandered through mud and mountains. And I remember repeating a rhyme to myself, over and over: "Will I ever go back to my home – once I get through this muddy dirt road..." But, soon after, I saw something else.

The United Nations forces...led by the soldiers of the United States and troops from twenty one countries of the United Nations member states. You came to my country's rescue. You gave us our freedom. You led us back home.

To those of you who fought that war, let me say this: Sixty years later, I still see you with six-year old eyes – young, strong, larger than life. For me, ever since, the UN flag has been a banner of hope. That vision has driven me throughout my life.

Not long after the war, I was a young student, selected by the Red Cross to represent my country and see the United States. My group went to the White House. We met President [John F.] Kennedy at that time. He told us when it comes to the suffering people of the world, "there are no national boundaries...there is only a question of whether we can extend a helping hand." And, once again, in my mind's eye, I saw you.

Now I am privileged to lead the United Nations. I head UN peacekeeping forces around the world. I travel to some of the most desperate places on earth. And when I go to a war zone...or a refugee camp...or a hospital...I look out, and I can often see those same six-year old eyes of mine. I want that child to have what every young girl or boy deserves – hope...possibility...wonder...and peace and security.

For a time, the war took that from me. You gave it back.

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Dear friends, Ladies and gentlemen,

The United States paid a heavy price for the Korean conflict. So many people have lost, ultimately their lives. More that 37,000 young men and women gave their lives. So many families were broken, so many wounded. So many sacrifices that only you can know.

But here is what I know. You helped turn destruction into democracy. Out of rubble came an economic power. Out of tragedy emerged a free democratic society. That is your gift and your legacy. And we grow older. As we grow older, it grows stronger. And the Korean people and government have become very strong.

Some may call the Korean conflict the "forgotten war." For me, it is the "unforgettable victory." We thank you. We salute you. And we will never, ever forget your sacrifice and help. Thank you very much. Long live the United States, and long live the Republic of Korea, and most of all for peace and stability, freedom and democracy on the Korean peninsula and all throughout the world. That's my commitment as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I need your support. Let's work together.

Thank you very much.

Source: Ban Ki Moon, "Remarks at Korean War Anniversary Event," June 25, 2010, United Nations Secretary General, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2010-06-25/remarks-korean-war-anniversary-event. Accessed: July 9, 2020.

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Mao Zedong, "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," 11 June 1945

A firm belief in the power of ideological commitment motivated some of Mao Zedong's revolutionary zeal. This aspect of his world view encouraged him to intervene in Korea, despite facing foes—chiefly the United States—which were much better equipped and more advanced militarily. Mao believed that China's advantage in terms of manpower and his troops ideological commitment to his cause would secure victory. Mao's perspective on this topic is most clearly reflected in the following speech given in the closing days of World War II.

"We have had a very successful congress. We have done three things. First, we have decided on the line of our Party, which is boldly to mobilize the masses and expand the people's forces so that, under the leadership of our Party, they will defeat the Japanese aggressors, liberate the whole people and build a new democratic China.

Our aim in propagating the line of the congress is to build up the confidence of the whole Party and the entire people in the certain triumph of the revolution.

...We must also arouse the political consciousness of the entire people so that they may willingly and gladly fight together with us for victory. We should fire the whole people with the conviction that China belongs not to the reactionaries but to the Chinese people. There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man who Removed the Mountains." It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way.

With great determination, he led his sons in digging up these mountains hoe in hand. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them anyway?"

Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these mountains be cleared away?"

Source: Mao Zedong, "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed Mountains," June 11, 1945, Asia for Educators: Commonly Read Speeches and Writings of Mao Zedong (1927-1945), http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1900_mao_speeches.htm#foolish, Accessed: July 9, 1950.

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Mao Zedong, "Order to the Chinese People's Volunteers," 8 October 1950

In order to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States, Mao Zedong promoted the fiction that the Chinese Army that rescued the North Korean one was a volunteer army. Below is his call for these "volunteers" to act.

[Excerpts]

To leading comrades of the Chinese People's Volunteers at all levels:

1. In order to support the Korean people's war of liberation and to resist the attacks of U.S. imperialism and its running dogs, thereby safeguarding the interests of the people of Korea, China and all the other countries in the East, I herewith order the Chinese People's Volunteers to march speedily to Korea and join the Korean comrades in fighting the aggressors and winning a glorious victory.

2. While in Korea, the Chinese People's Volunteers must show fraternal feelings and respect for the people, the People's Army, the Democratic Government, the Workers' Party and the other democratic parties of Korea as well as for Comrade Kim Il Sung, the leader of the Korean people, and strictly observe military and political discipline. This is a most important political basis for ensuring the fulfilment of your military task.

3. You must fully anticipate various possible and inevitable difficulties and be prepared to overcome them with great enthusiasm, courage, care and stamina. At present, the international and domestic situation as a whole is favorable to us, not to the aggressors. So long as you comrades are firm and brave and are good at uniting with the people there and at fighting the aggressors, final victory will be ours.

Mao Tsetung

Chairman of the Chinese People's Revolutionary Military Commission

October 8, 1950, Peking

Source: Mao Zedong, "Order of the Chinese People's Volunteers," October 1950, *USC US-China Institute*, https://china.usc.edu/mao-zedongs-order-chinese-peoples-volunteers-1950. Accessed: July 9, 2020.

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Excerpt from *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*

Chinese Marshal Peng Dehuai commanded all Chinese military forces in Korea from 1950-1953. His advocacy for intervention played a critical part in the People's Republic of China's decision to go to war in Korea. In the selection below, he describes his motivations.

DISPATCHING TROOPS TO AID KOREA

It was after the National Day of October 1, 1950.[2] Around noon on October 4, Beijing sent an airplane [to Xi'an] and asked me to board immediately and come to Beijing for an urgent meeting without even one minute's delay; I arrived at Zhongnanhai around four o'clock that afternoon.[3] The Central Committee was holding a meeting [at Zhongnanhai], discussing the issues regarding sending our troops to aid Korea. A comrade at the meeting told me that [before I arrived] Chairman Mao had asked the participants to focus their discussions on the disadvantages for China in sending its troops to Korea. After all had expressed their opinions, the chairman said, "All you said sounds reasonable and logical. When we, however, are standing on the side, just watching other people undergoing a national crisis, we feel terrible inside, no matter what." I did not say anything since I had just arrived there. I, however, said to myself that we ought to send our forces to rescue Korea.

After the [afternoon] meeting, comrades from the Administrative Bureau of the Central Committee took me to the Beijing Hotel. I could not get any sleep that night. I thought it was because of the soft bed, which I could not enjoy. But after I moved to the floor, I still could not sleep. I kept thinking and thinking about the war situation in Korea. America occupied Korea across the [Yalu] River, threatening Northeast China. It also controlled Taiwan, threatening Shanghai and East China. It could launch a war to invade China with any excuse anytime it wanted. The tiger always eats people, and the time when it wants to eat depends on its appetite. It is impossible to make any concessions to a tiger. Since America came to invade us, we had to resist its invasion. It would be very difficult for us to build up our Socialist country without challenging the American imperialists. If the Americans decided to fight against us, a quick war would be favorable to them, but a protracted one to us; regular warfare would be favorable to them but the methods [of guerrilla warfare] that

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we had used to deal with the Japanese [in World War II] would be favorable to us. In comparison to our situation during the War to Resist Japan, the current situation was much more favorable to us since we had political authority over China, plus Soviet assistance.

Moreover, we should send our troops [to Korea] in consideration of the future of our nation's reconstruction. It was always said that our Socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union, was much stronger than the capitalist camp. How could [we] show our power and strength if we did not send our forces to aid and save Korea? Our forces ought to be dispatched also in order to encourage the peoples of colonial and semicolonial countries to carry on their nationalist and democratic revolutions against the imperialists and invasions. Our forces ought to be dispatched in order to extend the influence of the Socialist camp. I repeatedly read the chairman's sentences in my heart a couple of dozen times: "All that you said sounds reasonable and logical. When we, however, are standing on the side, just watching other people who are undergoing a national crisis, we still feel terrible inside no matter what we may pretend." I understood Chairman Mao's instructions, which combined internationalism [to save Korea] with patriotism [to defend China]. Mao's first sentence, "All you said sounds reasonable and logical," obviously related to nationalism. [But these comrades were] not being internationalists if they thought [merely about China itself and not about] the crisis situation in Korea. I therefore believed that sending our forces to assist Korea was an absolutely correct decision. It was not only because of its necessity but also because of its brilliance and urgency. I had become convinced and fully supported this wise decision by the chairman. Mao needed a willing military commander since his first choice, Lin Biao, clearly was reluctant to take the assignment.

The Central Committee continued the discussion at the Yinian Hall [in Zhongnanhai] the next afternoon. After other participants spoke, I expressed [my opinion] in few words: "Sending the troops to aid Korea is necessary. If we lose, it means nothing more than a couple of years delay in liberating China. If the American military places itself along the Yalu River and in Taiwan, it could find an excuse anytime it wants to launch an invasion." The chairman decided to ask me to go to Korea. I did not decline. After the meeting, one of the participants said to me [as we walked along] Nanhai Lake, "It seems that age does not diminish you."

Source: *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millett, Bin Yu ed., (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 31-32.

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General Douglas MacArthur to Joseph Martin, 20 March 1951

Throughout the Korean War, Gen. Douglas MacArthur and President Truman clashed on the nature of the war itself. Truman went to war to contain communism in East Asia. MacArthur hoped to use "maximum counterforce" to actually defeat communism in East Asia. By 1951, the Truman Administration was seeking a negotiated end to the war, but MacArthur was still hoping for a decisive victory, which he believed possible if he was permitted to expand the war into China. While MacArthur was entitled to his opinion, he was ordered not to comment publicly on the foreign or military policy of the war without his statement first being cleared—an order he repeatedly violated. His letter to Republican House Minority Leader Joseph Martin repudiating Truman's policy and stating there was no "substitute for victory" was just one example of his violation of Truman's order. He was relieved of command on 11 April 1951.

General Headquarters,
Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers,
Tokyo, Japan, March 20, 1951.

Hon. Joseph W. Martin, Jr.
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Martin: I am most grateful for your note of the 8th forwarding me a copy of your address of February 12. The latter I have read with much interest, and find that with the passage of years you have certainly lost none of your old-time punch.

My views and recommendations with respect to the situation created by Red China's entry into war against us in Korea have been submitted to Washington in most complete detail. Generally, these views are well known and clearly understood, as they follow the conventional pattern of meeting force with maximum counterforce, as we have never failed to do in the past. Your view with respect to the utilization of the Chinese forces on Formosa is in conflict with neither logic nor this tradition.

It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomatic [diplomats?] there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom. As you pointed out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.

With renewed thanks and expressions of most cordial regard, I am

Faithfully yours,

Douglas MacArthur

Source: Douglas MacArthur to Joseph Martin, March 20, 1951, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 1, 299.
https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p1/d206

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Gen. Douglas MacArthur, "Farewell to Congress," 19 April 1951

Douglas MacArthur arrived home to acclaim. On April 19, 1951, MacArthur gave a speech to a joint session of Congress outlining his views. An excerpt is below.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and Distinguished Members of the Congress:

I stand on this rostrum with a sense of deep humility and great pride -- humility in the wake of those great American architects of our history who have stood here before me; pride in the reflection that this forum of legislative debate represents human liberty in the purest form yet devised. Here are centered the hopes and aspirations and faith of the entire human race. I do not stand here as advocate for any partisan cause, for the issues are fundamental and reach quite beyond the realm of partisan consideration…

I address you with neither rancor nor bitterness in the fading twilight of life, with but one purpose in mind: to serve my country. The issues are global and so interlocked that to consider the problems of one sector, oblivious to those of another, is but to court disaster for the whole. While Asia is commonly referred to as the Gateway to Europe, it is no less true that Europe is the Gateway to Asia, and the broad influence of the one cannot fail to have its impact upon the other. There are those who claim our strength is inadequate to protect on both fronts, that we cannot divide our effort. I can think of no greater expression of defeatism… You can not appease or otherwise surrender to communism in Asia without simultaneously undermining our efforts to halt its advance in Europe.

Beyond pointing out these general truisms, I shall confine my discussion to the general areas of Asia. Before one may objectively assess the situation now existing there, he must comprehend something of Asia's past and the revolutionary changes which are -- which have marked her course up to the present. Long exploited by the so-called colonial powers, with little opportunity to achieve any degree of social justice, individual dignity, or a higher standard of life such as guided our own noble administration in the Philippines, the peoples of Asia found their opportunity in the war just past to throw off the shackles of colonialism and now see the dawn of new opportunity, a heretofore unfelt dignity, and the self-respect of political freedom…

[East Asian security issues have] direct and immediate bearing upon our national security…[US victory in World War II moved] Our strategic frontier…to embrace the entire Pacific Ocean, which became a vast moat to protect us as long as we held it…For that reason, I have strongly recommended in the past, as a matter of military urgency, that under no circumstances must Formosa [aka Taiwan] fall under Communist control. Such an eventuality would at once threaten the freedom of the Philippines and the loss of Japan and might well force our western frontier back to the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington.

To understand the changes which now appear upon the Chinese mainland, one must understand the changes in Chinese character and culture over the past 50 years. [Over this time, the Chinese have become] a new and dominant power in Asia, which, for its own purposes, is allied with Soviet Russia but which in its own concepts and methods has become aggressively imperialistic…

I have from the beginning believed that the Chinese Communists' support of the North Koreans was the dominant one. Their interests are, at present, parallel with those of the Soviet. But I believe that the aggressiveness recently displayed not only in Korea but also in Indo-China and Tibet and pointing potentially toward the South reflects predominantly the same lust for the expansion of power which has animated every would-be conqueror since the beginning of time.

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[President Truman's decision to intervene in the Korean War] proved a sound one, as we hurled back the invader and decimated his forces. Our victory was complete, and our objectives within reach, when Red China intervened with numerically superior ground forces.

This created a new war and an entirely new situation, a situation not contemplated when our forces were committed against the North Korean invaders; a situation which called for new decisions in the diplomatic sphere to permit the realistic adjustment of military strategy.

Such decisions have not been forthcoming.

While no man in his right mind would advocate sending our ground forces into continental China, and such was never given a thought, the new situation did urgently demand a drastic revision of strategic planning if our political aim was to defeat this new enemy as we had defeated the old.

Apart from the military need, as I saw It, to neutralize the sanctuary protection given the enemy north of the Yalu, I felt that military necessity in the conduct of the war made necessary: first the intensification of our economic blockade against China; two the imposition of a naval blockade against the China coast; three removal of restrictions on air reconnaissance of China's coastal areas and of Manchuria; four removal of restrictions on the forces of the Republic of China on Formosa, with logistical support to contribute to their effective operations against the common enemy.

For entertaining these views, all professionally designed to support our forces committed to Korea and bring hostilities to an end with the least possible delay and at a saving of countless American and allied lives, I have been severely criticized in lay circles, principally abroad, despite my understanding that from a military standpoint the above views have been fully shared in the past by practically every military leader concerned with the Korean campaign, including our own Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I called for reinforcements but was informed that reinforcements were not available. I made clear that if not permitted to destroy the enemy built-up bases north of the Yalu, if not permitted to utilize the friendly Chinese Force of some 600,000 men on Formosa, if not permitted to blockade the China coast to prevent the Chinese Reds from getting succor from without, and if there were to be no hope of major reinforcements, the position of the command from the military standpoint forbade victory…

Efforts have been made to distort my position. It has been said, in effect, that I was a warmonger. Nothing could be further from the truth. I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting…But once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end.

War's very object is victory, not prolonged indecision.

In war there is no substitute for victory…

Source: Douglas MacArthur, "Farewell to Congress," April 19, 1951, American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches, https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/douglasmacarthurfarewelladdress.htm

The State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs has helpful teaching materials on the speech as well.

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Howard S. Levie, "Sidelights on the Korean Armistice Negotiations"

Korean War armistice negotiations commenced during the summer of 1951. Fighting did not stop in the Korean War while the talks continued. Negotiators found these discussions exceptionally difficult. Attorney Howard Levie, a staff officer for the US delegation, reviews the challenges the negotiators faced while crafting an armistice.

Sidelights on the Korean Armistice Negotiations

Colonel Levie's personal reminiscences and comments about the Korean armistice negotiations not only make interesting reading but illustrate the practical difficulties to be faced in trying to reach an understanding with communists. The author points out that the communist negotiators he encountered were individuals with a thorough training in communist dialectics. Considering their techniques will help in future negotiations since, according to the writer, communist negotiating techniques are as immutable as the laws of nature.

by Howard S. Levie • *Colonel, JAGC, United States Army*

THE NEGOTIATIONS for an armistice in Korea began on July 10, 1951, and terminated on July 27, 1953. Sufficient time has now elapsed so that, in view of the necessity of negotiating with communists which so frequently confronts the West during these days of overlapping crises, it might be both interesting and instructive to pinpoint and analyze some of the lessons learned from those negotiations, as well as to call attention to some of the things which tried the patience of the United Nations Command (UNC) negotiators almost to the breaking point and some of the occurrences which enabled them to keep their sense of humor. While the comments which follow are, of course, made with respect to the particular communists who represented the North Koreans and the Chinese at Kaesong and at Pan Mun Jom, as we shall see, communist negotiators are individuals with thorough training in communist dialectics.[1]

Experts will assert that there are three assumptions which must be the basis of any negotiations, whether such negotiations are between representatives of capitalism and communism, management and labor, or buyer and seller. The first of these assumptions is that both sides have a real desire to reach an agreement; the second, that each side is fair-minded and willing to be convinced; and the third, that each side will yield to a more reasonable view advanced by the other. It has even been asserted that if these three assumptions are not valid, negotiation is futile. As an academic matter this may possibly be true. However, if one takes a realistic view, it must be acknowledged that negotiations with communist nations are of necessity being conducted with increasing frequency and often with tangible results, although it may be stated categorically that in such negotiations the second and third assumptions listed above are rarely if ever valid on their part; and negotiators for the West will usually reach a point in the discussions at which they will seriously doubt the validity of even the first assumption.

When the negotiations began at Kaesong in July, 1951, most of the members of the UNC delegation and staff believed that both sides wanted an agreement ending the hostilities; and there were probably a few who were even so naive as to believe that the second and third assumptions listed above were as true of the communists as they were of the UNC. As the negotiations for agreed agenda stretched out for what seemed an interminable period of time, followed by a far more interminable period of negotiations over the question of the military demarcation line, the UNC negotiators at Pan Mun Jom began to doubt the validity of even the first assumption and to conclude that the whole exercise had merely been a communist method of obtaining a much needed breathing spell for their troops. Certainly, no communist negotiator will ever be found to be fair-minded or willing to be convinced, or to yield to another view, no matter how patently reasonable and correct such view may be. Of course this does not mean that logical arguments should not be advanced in discussions with them; it merely means that one should not be surprised or disappointed if a clearly reasonable proposal fails to win communist approval.

NOTE: The opinions expressed herein are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

1. In view of this fact, which is supported by all who have analyzed the problem, it is regrettable that Western negotiators frequently appear to be completely unfamiliar with established communist negotiating techniques. Analyses such as those made by Admiral C. Turner Joy, Senior Delegate for the United Nations Command at the Korean armistice negotiations in *How Communists Negotiate* (Macmillan, 1955) and by Nathan Leites in *The Operational Code of the Politburo* (McGraw-Hill, 1951) should be required reading and study for anyone designated to participate in negotiations with the communists, whether the subject be a military armistice in North Korea, imports from Czechoslovakia, or cultural collaboration with the USSR. Of course, the foregoing is not intended to convey the impression that it is possible to predict just how "hard" the communist position will be on a specific non-ideological matter.

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Inferiority Complex of the Communist Representatives

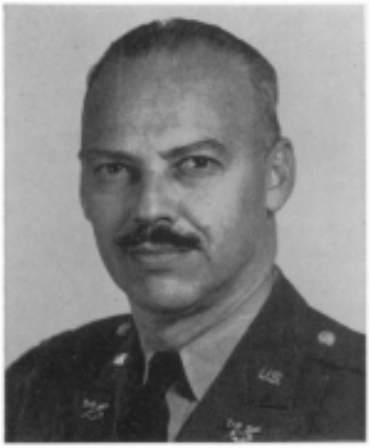
Without attempting to be a psychiatrist, it is safe to say that one of the first things which impressed the UNC personnel at the armistice negotiations was that, without exception, every communist representative, from senior delegate to substitute interpreter, suffered from an inferiority complex. This "chip-on-the-shoulder", "I'm-as-good-as-you-are" attitude is undoubtedly one of the many things which makes negotiations with communists so difficult. Perhaps Soviet successes in space will mitigate this, but psychiatrists will probably agree that a complete change in this mental attitude will require many more successes and a long period of time. The publicly expressed communist opposition to the use of helicopters by the UNC representatives was unquestionably motivated by their inability to provide a helicopter lift for their own personnel. Later, when bad weather compelled the UNC delegation to resort to travel by sedan, the communists strained all of their logistic facilities to obtain presentable sedans for the use of their delegation, and their correspondents began bragging to the Western press representatives a month before the vehicles actually arrived. (They were apparently unable to appreciate how negative was their success: the best of the newly acquired vehicles, the one in which their Senior Delegate traveled, was an old Chrysler.) When the UNC put in gravel walks around its side of the conference area at Pan Mun Jom, the communists immediately put in gravel walks on their side. When the UNC lined the sides of its walks with rocks, they lined the sides of their walks with bricks and painted them white. When the UNC planted small fir trees in the area, they planted large ones. When the UNC installed green sentry boxes to protect its military police from the weather, they countered with sentry boxes for their guards which were painted like barber poles—until jokes by the Western correspondents and by the UNC security personnel stationed at Pan Mun Jom caused them to reconsider and repaint.[2]

Another characteristic which appears to be endemic among communists is a complete lack of a sense of humor and an accompanying marked inability to be on the receiving end of a joke. The incident of the sentry boxes which has just been mentioned was one example of this. Another involved a ten-year-old Korean boy who one day followed the UNC convoy into the neutral zone. He was arrested by the communists, who claimed that he was a spy for the United Nations Command. The UNC liaison officers demanded and obtained his return and the Western press treated the whole thing as a huge joke, making numerous references to the ten-year-old "master spy". There were no further attempts by the communists, except domestically, to capitalize on that particular incident. Similarly, when a small anti-epidemic team of the Republic of Korea Army inadvertently drove its truck into the neutral zone the communists, in returning the men to the UNC liaison officers, labeled the incident as a "very serious violation" of the agreement creating the neutral zone. The Western press wrote humorous stories about the "invasion of the neutral zone by soldiers armed to the teeth with DDT spray guns", and nothing further was heard about the matter from the communists.

The Attempts To Appear as Hosts to Visiting Suppliants

When the meetings began at Kaesong, the communists did everything possible to create the impression that they were the hosts and that the UNC personnel were the visiting suppliants. Communist guards armed with submachine guns swarmed around the entire conference area. Packages of Chinese cigarettes and decanters of Chinese wine were on the conference table. And the communists attempted to dictate who could be included in the UNC party and refused to pass a UNC convoy which included news correspondents. Within twenty-four hours General Matthew B. Ridgway, the UNC Commander, ordered the conferences halted and laid down the terms upon which he would permit them to be resumed. The communists quickly agreed. This was the first of a number of occasions upon which an immediate display of a firm and irrevocable intent brought quick acquiescence from the communists. Not only the armed guards but the cigarettes and wine disappeared. It is probably appropriate to add that none of the UNC personnel had ever availed themselves of the communist hospitality and that when, more or less intentionally, American cigarettes were left overnight on the conference table, they would be found untouched the following day.

The plenary sessions, attended by all of the members of both delegations as well as numerous staff officers, interpreters and stenographers, were very formal affairs at which only previously prepared statements were delivered. They offered the communists an ideal platform for making propaganda statements. In the hope of expediting prog-



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2. Two others of the many examples in this area to which reference may be made were: the continued ostentatious use of a jeep which had been captured long before from UNC forces and on which the UNC designators and identification numbers had been retained; and the at times almost hysterical demands that the UNC negotiators stop referring to the communist side as "North Korean communists" and "Chinese communists" and give them their "rightful" names, "Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea" and "Chinese Peoples' Volunteers".

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ress, the UNC delegation proposed sub-delegation meetings which would have fewer of each side's personnel present and be conducted on a more informal basis. The proposal contemplated that each side would be limited to one delegation member, one staff officer and one interpreter. Ultimately, the communists agreed to this proposal except that they insisted that two members of each delegation be present, probably so that the Chinese representative could keep a halter on the one from North Korea. Eventually, however, more and more people were added to the sub-delegation meetings until they had assumed the status of small plenary sessions with prepared papers and stenographers. When that stage had been reached, the UNC delegation proposed passing the task of detailed negotiating to the staff officers, and while there were stenographers present at the staff officers' meetings, these latter remained on a comparatively informal basis throughout the duration of the negotiations. Although stenographers attended almost all of the various types of meetings, there were no agreed minutes; each side relied on its own records for what it had said and on its own stenographic record of the interpretations made by the interpreters of the other side for what that side had said. Nevertheless, disagreements as to what had or had not been said at a previous meeting were not too frequent.

Until the advent of the communist era, agenda were something upon which agreement was normally reached during the first five minutes of a diplomatic conference. Now, reaching agreement on agenda is sometimes even harder than reaching agreement on the substantive matters in issue. This is primarily because of the communist technique of attempting to trick the other side into substantive agreements by means of the wording of items on the agreed agenda. For example, both sides were agreed at the very outset that there should be on the agenda an item concerned with the selection of a military demarcation line, but the communist version of that agenda item was "Establishment *of the 38th Parallel* as the military demarcation line". Obviously, after agreement on such a wording for the agenda item there would have been little need for substantive discussions. Parenthetically, it is interesting to recall that while it took many months to get the communists to abandon the 38th Parallel, some months thereafter, when the UNC suggested using that line for determining which civilian refugees would be entitled to be sent to the other side, the communists asserted that the UNC was attempting to revive the "obsolete" 38th Parallel.

Communists' Low Regard for the Use of Tactful Language

The use of tactful language in international negotiations is merely evidence of bourgeois decadence in so far as the communists are concerned. (Khrushchev's performance at the 1960 meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, which so astounded most non-communist representatives, was probably considered to be standard operating procedure by the representatives of the satellite nations.) Any proposal that they made was invariably labeled "fair and reasonable". Just as invariably, any proposal made by the UNC was labeled "absurd and arrogant". Libelous statements about the United States, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China were the communist order of the day.[3] Every UNC action was characterized as "barbarous" and "criminal" and every UNC statement as "deceitful" and a "fabrication". It was obvious that all of this was part of a strategy planned to make the UNC negotiators lose their tempers, the theory probably being that when emotionally disturbed, unintended statements might be inadvertently made. But whatever the theory, the plan failed to work as the UNC negotiators, naive as some of them may have been when the negotiations began, quickly came to appreciate what was being attempted and had no difficulty in avoiding the pitfall which had been so carefully prepared for them. In fact, the communists soon found it necessary completely to reverse their tactics and to attempt to induce reciprocity by purported loss of temper on their side, loss of temper which could be turned on and off like water from a faucet. After a few polite but patently amused requests that they stop yelling across the table, this tactic was more or less abandoned, especially when one of the UNC staff officers pointed out that yelling served no useful purpose since it was in a language which he did not understand and, therefore, the "emphasis" made no impression on him. On occasions the communist interpreters, especially one crippled young Chinese who had been educated in England where he had probably received some fancied slight, would interpret with venom and hysteria a statement which had been delivered in what appeared to have been a comparatively placid manner.

Major General (later General) Henry I. Hodes, one of the original members of the United Nations Command Delegation, and the senior member of the first UNC sub-delegation, had a faculty for rubbing his Chinese counterpart, Chinese Major General Hsieh Fang, the wrong way. The informal sub-delegation meetings on the military demarcation line had come to a complete halt. After both sides had maneuvered for some time with no perceptible progress being made, General Hodes suggested that a coin be tossed to determine who would "break the ice". Hsieh Fang indicated great astonishment that General Hodes would be willing to let such an important matter be determined by the toss of a coin. To him the negotiatory technique employed was a matter of the utmost importance. General Hodes was just interested in getting the discussions moving.[4] During the course of these same meetings, General Hodes made a

3. The writer will, perhaps, be pardoned for one personal note. The limits of his endurance were reached when the communist Senior Delegate, North Korean Lieutenant General Nam Il, had the effrontery to assert that Japan had fought the United States to a standstill for four years but had surrendered to the USSR after one week of hostilities. He wrote a paper entitled "Let's Call a Spade a Spade" (all papers prepared by the UNC staff officers for presentation at plenary meeting were given catchnames for identification purposes), the first UNC statement which, while not descending to the communist level, did correct the record on a number of the more absurd communist assertions. The paper was approved by the UNC delegation and accepted by Admiral Joy. However, the latter desired the clearance of the United States Ambassador to Korea, John J. Muccio, before presenting it. The writer flew to Pusan, where the embassy was then located, obtained the desired clearance, and returned to the UNC camp at Munsan-ni. During the attendant delay, events had passed by the need for the paper, and it was never used.

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statement flatly contradicting Hsieh Fang and the latter muttered something under his breath. Later the UNC Chinese interpreter stated that Hsieh Fang had called General Hodes a "turtle's egg". That expression is apparently the Chinese insult supreme, based upon an old Chinese belief that the male turtle is incapable of fertilizing the eggs laid by the female turtle, that task being assumed by any male snake which happens to pass by, thereby making the product of the fertilized turtle egg not only illegitimate but the result of miscegenation. (The vocabulary employed in telling this story bears only a vague resemblance to that used in the original explanation of Hsieh Fang's mutterings which was given to the UNC representatives by their interpreter.) On still another occasion, when Hsieh Fang attempted to indicate his low regard for the United Nations Command Delegation by referring to Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy as "your Senior Delegate, whose name I do not recall", General Hodes answered by referring to the communist Senior Delegate and adding the phrase "whose name I trust you do recall". That ended that interchange very quickly.

When the UNC negotiators had no objection to something proposed by the communists they would unhesitatingly so state. Not so the communists. They would concede that their views were generally the same as those expressed by the UNC representative, or that they could see no reason why agreement should not be reached on the matter under discussion; but it was just plain impossible to get them to say a simple "yes". Naturally, there was much speculation on the UNC side that this difficulty arose because the communist representatives were not permitted on their own initiative to agree on even a minor administrative matter. No such difficulty arose when it came to getting them to say "no".

Similarly, it was practically impossible to obtain a direct answer to a question from the communists. Their usual technique was to answer a question with a question and then to insist that they had answered the question directed to them and that the UNC was refusing to answer their question. Their efforts to avoid answering questions sometimes resulted in situations which would have been amusing had it not been for the serious nature of the problem being discussed. Thus, on one occasion when Rear Admiral (later Vice Admiral) Ruthven E. Libby repeated a rather embarrassing question in connection with prisoners of war which he had previously asked North Korean Major General Lee Sang Jo (who, incidentally, could talk longer and say less than any after-dinner speaker whom the present writer has ever been compelled to endure), the latter came back with the rather startling statement that he had already "unmistakably refuted the question". On another occasion the communists had made a proposal which included the term "etc." after two unrelated items. The UNC representative asked what the "etc." meant and was told that it was a clear and unambiguous word requiring no explanation.

The UNC delegation, too, became experts in the game of dialectic materialism. During another sub-delegation meeting on the prisoner-of-war problem which matched the same two antagonists, Lee Sang Jo expressed his customary disapproval of a suggestion made by Admiral Libby by saying, "We categorically reject your proposal." The Admiral came right back with the statement, "We categorically reject your categorical rejection." And when Nam Il tried to stir up a little propaganda by asking questions about the methods used to quell the uprising among the prisoners of war at Koje-do, Admiral Joy answered him with the priceless statement, "We formally ignore your questions." Ignoring "formally" is quite a feat.

Over the course of time both sides became very reticent about offering compromise proposals. The UNC negotiators soon found that if they offered a compromise position somewhere between the announced positions of the two sides, the communists would reject it out of hand, but that for all subsequent negotiations the two extremes were their original position and the UNC compromise offer. The UNC negotiators evened the score when the communists made a proposal calling for their agreement to a demand made by the UNC on one matter in return for UNC agreement to their demand on an entirely unrelated matter. The UNC accepted their agreement on its demand and declined to agree to the communist demand on the other matter. It worked, but only once.

The communists were either amazingly unimaginative or severely restricted when it came to administrative matters. Every suggestion without exception for expediting the progress of the negotiations (sub-delegation meetings, staff officers' meetings, etc.) was made by the UNC representatives. And that wasn't because they jumped the gun, either. On a number of occasions the UNC representatives would ask the communists for a suggestion as to how some administrative matter should be handled. The communists would come right back and ask for the UNC opinion on the matter. It would be given to them, and the next day they would agree to it, usually with some minor and unimportant modification made just to show that they had had a hand in determining the matter. Incidentally, the senior UNC interpreter, Navy Lieutenant Horace G. Underwood, stated that he had found it necessary to adopt the policy of intentionally inserting at least one fairly obvious error in interpretations on which agreement was required, because then the communists would be satisfied when they corrected the error, whereas, if there was no error, they invariably proposed some change in substance. More inferiority complex?

It is sincerely hoped that these personal reminiscences and comments will to a small degree serve to supplement the more scientific surveys of communist negotiatory techniques in apprising representatives of the United States or of other Western nations who may in the near or distant future be designated to represent their countries in negotiations with communist nations. For it is safe to say that communist negotiating techniques are as immutable as the laws of nature.

4. The writer was present at the sub-delegation meeting at which this occurred and has always believed that General Hodes was fully aware of the effect which his proposal would have on the communists and used it as a type of "shock treatment" which was intended to restart the stalled discussions. This it certainly did.

Source: Howard S. Levie, "Sidelights on the Korean Armistice Negotiations," *American Bar Association Journal*, 48 No. 8 (August 1962), 730-733.

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Unit 4

"The Prospect is War," *Life Magazine*, 11 December 1950

Henry Luce, the publisher of Life Magazine*, advocated greater US involvement in East Asia after World War II. During the early Cold War, he criticized President Truman's policy on China, claiming that the US had betrayed anti-communist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek. Luce used* Life*,* Time*, and* Fortune *magazine and* The March of Time *radio and newsreels to promote his views. Some historians estimate his views reached a third of literate Americans. In excerpts from this editorial in Luce's* Life Magazine*, the Chinese are portrayed as obedient to Moscow.*

The news is disaster. World War III moves ever closer. War with the armies of Communist China is a fact. Our forces in Korea are caught in a cruel trap. Our leaders at home are frightened, befuddled, and caught in a great and inexcusable failure to marshal the strength of America as quick and as strongly as they ought to have done in recent months. Our principle allies in the U.N. are uncertain, unready, anxious to buy the appearance of peace at almost any price if only the enemy will make a deal. Our underlying policies in the U.N. and in Asia are exposed for what they have always been—fallacies born of the enormous fallacy that the Communists of Asia are not our enemies. Talk of using the A-Bomb is heard as it has never been heard before.

So says the news. But, in this hour of mortal choice, all that is not the heart of the news. The heart of the news is that at last we know—we really know—our enemy. We know that our enemy is the Soviet Union. We know that the Chinese Communist armies assaulting our forces in Korea are as truly the armies of the Soviet Union as if they would be if they wore the Soviet uniform…Wu [Hsui-ch'uan the People's Republic of China delegate] did for us what we could never quite do for ourselves. He made us see and acknowledge the truth about the Communists of Asia…he laid naked the total enmity of Chinese Communism, its total purpose to seize all Asia, its total identity to the Soviet program of world conquest…

…The immediate theater is of course Korea, and it may soon be mainland China. There is talk of refusing to undertake war with China, of refusing to "fight the proxies." All men of good will abhor the thought of war with China. But at this juncture Americans must keep the facts straight. First, there are no proxies in the armies of Communism. Second, we do not "want" war with China. The Communists force war upon us. Until and unless they cease to do so, there will be no possibility of peace with China. These are the facts, and the prospect is war…

…Whether our forces continue to fight in Korea will be decided by events. In any case, we must wage any war against Communist China principally from the greatest strategic asset we possess in Asia—the perimeter of islands provided by Japan, Okinawa, Formosa [Taiwan], and the Philippines…

The American people and many of our leaders are not prepared for these possibilities and this warfare. But the warfare is upon us; the possibilities lie before us. We must never forget that the real war is with our real and now recognized enemy. We must never forget that what we can do in Asia and elsewhere depends first of all on what we do at home to prepare for the ultimate war that our real enemy seems determined to force upon us. Let no man say that whatever may be in store is too much for our country and for all who look to us now.

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"Worth Repeating—Race Prejudice Ruining America as a World Leader" (From the National Baptist Voice)

This editorial was published in a newspaper that served the African American community in Arkansas. It argues that the US effort in Korea and the United Nations was in conflict with segregation and other oppressive policies.

Two incidents have happened in the past few months that show beyond any doubt that Race Prejudice is ruining America as a World Leader. Take the KOREAN WAR and, it is a war no matter how we talk about "POLICE ACTION." Walter Lippman, the great Columnist, notes that in every case the Americans, British, and French have to send soldiers to fight for them whereas Russia can get the natives to do all of her fighting. Russia has yet to send a single solider to fight for Communism in these distant lands. The fighting is done by the natives of the land. Why is this?

In Asia the White Man is afraid to put guns in the Hands of colored people for fear that those colored people will turn those guns on them. One dispatch said that the American policy was to train police forces to deal with internal problems and America did not give them HEAVY EQUIPMENT for fear the SOUTH KOREANS would start trouble themselves. There you have it. Why is it that we are afraid to trust the native with big guns and Russia is not?

Those who approach the question from an Economic angle contend that we are afraid to do so because we are backing "the Haves" against the "Have-nots" and we do not want the "Have-nots" to have big guns. This is the mistake of all people who put money first. This is the great mistake of the communists. The Love of Money is no match for Race Prejudice. A Prejudiced man will give up money and even life itself to hold onto prejudice. In Greece, where all were the same color America built up a great army and whipped the Communists. She was not afraid to give the WHITE GREEKS big guns. But putting Guns in the hands of Colored people is entirely another question. So Our sons and boys must do the fighting whereas if we were not filled with Race Prejudice the South Koreans would be fighting instead of running away as they are…

So no matter which way we look, the great millstone of race Prejudice hangs around our neck and cuts the ground from the moral leadership of the World. The sooner the American Church men learn that our system can only be maintained by naked force, the clearer we will think on World problems. The military leaders are correct: the Only salvation for a Race Prejudiced Nation is a big FIGHTING FORCE. To think otherwise is to hug a delusion.

Source: "Worth Repeating-Race Prejudice Ruining America as a World Leader," *Arkansas State Press*, August 4, 1950. *Capitalizations are as in the original.*

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Resolution of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an activist group for Civil Rights reform and justice, supported the Korean War effort. But the members of the board of the organization urged Americans to look closely at racial injustice and make changes to US society to help the country match its rhetoric and ideals with its practices at home. See below a resolution from the NAACP in its October 1950 issue of The Crisis*, the NAACP's magazine.*

KOREAN WAR

Association Supports Korean War: In its first meeting since the beginning of hostilities in Korea, the board of directors of the Association voted "support of the efforts of the United States and the United Nations to halt Communist aggression in Korea."

The board resolution, which "condemns unreservedly this breach of the peace by the armed forces of the government of North Korea aided and abetted by the Soviet Union," was passed at the regular monthly meeting on September 14.

"We are acutely aware," the resolution continues, "that victory over disruptive and sinister Communist forces cannot be achieved by guns alone. If America is to win the support of non-Communist Asia and Africa it will have to demonstrate that democracy is a living reality which knows no limitation of race, color or nationality."

Expressing hope for an early victory, the resolution "calls upon this government and the American people to take prompt and effective action to end all forms of racial discrimination and segregation in our military and civilian life." This means, the resolution asserts, "the abolition of separate Army units, the removal of barriers to employment opportunities, the end of segregation in education, the lifting of all barriers to housing, the elimination of all jim crow restrictions in travel, recreation and public accommodations generally, and the outlawing of outmoded patterns of segregation in the Nation's Capital."

Source: "Along the N.A.A.C.P. Battlefront," *The Crisis* (October 1950), 586.

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YOUNGSTOWN CO. v. SAWYER (1952, excerpts)

Mobilization for the Korean War created shortages. The war also prompted an expansion of Presidential power. Contesting the extent of what the President could do to manage the economy was a core problem of the Korean War era. In 1952, President Truman tested that boundary when he took control of the nation's steel mills under the authority of the Defense Production Act, an act to short circuit a pending labor dispute. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson ruled against President Truman's action. In his opinion for YOUNGSTOWN CO. v. SAWYER, Jackson explains his reasoning for voting against the President and suggests what the limits of Presidential powers should be. Excerpts from this decision could be used to review Presidential power and the Constitution.

That comprehensive and undefined presidential powers hold both practical advantages and grave dangers for the country will impress anyone who has served as legal adviser to a President in time of transition and public anxiety…The tendency is strong to emphasize transient results upon policies - such as wages or stabilization - and lose sight of enduring consequences upon the balanced power structure of our Republic.

…While the Constitution diffuses power the better to secure liberty, it also contemplates that practice will integrate the dispersed powers into a workable government. It enjoins upon its branches separateness but interdependence, autonomy but reciprocity. Presidential powers are not fixed but fluctuate, depending upon their disjunction or conjunction with those of Congress. We may well begin by a somewhat over-simplified grouping of practical situations in which a President may doubt, or others may challenge, his powers, and by distinguishing roughly the legal consequences of this factor of relativity.

1. When the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that he possesses in his own right plus all that Congress can delegate. In these circumstances, and in these only, may he be said (for what it may be worth) to personify the federal sovereignty…A seizure executed by the President pursuant to an Act of Congress would be supported by the strongest of presumptions and the widest latitude of judicial interpretation, and the burden of persuasion would rest heavily upon any who might attack it.

2. When the President acts in absence of either a congressional grant or denial of authority, he can only rely upon his own independent powers, but there is a zone of twilight in which he and Congress may have concurrent authority, or in which its distribution is uncertain…

3. When the President takes measures incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress, his power is at its lowest ebb, for then he can rely only upon his own constitutional powers minus any constitutional powers of Congress over the matter…

Into which of these classifications does this executive seizure of the steel industry fit? It is eliminated from the first by admission, for it is conceded that no congressional authorization exists for this seizure…Can it then be defended under flexible tests available to the second category? It seems clearly eliminated from that

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class because Congress has not left seizure of private property an open field but has covered it by three statutory policies inconsistent with this seizure.[1]

This leaves the current seizure to be justified only by the severe tests under the third grouping, where it can be supported only by any remainder of executive power after subtraction of such powers as Congress may have over the subject…Thus, this Court's first review of such seizures occurs under circumstances which leave presidential power most vulnerable to attack and in the least favorable of possible constitutional postures.

…I am not persuaded, that history leaves it open to question, at least in the courts, that the executive branch, like the Federal Government as a whole, possesses only delegated powers. The purpose of the Constitution was not only to grant power, but to keep it from getting out of hand.

[The Truman administration's logic is] that the President having, on his own responsibility, sent American troops abroad derives from that act "affirmative power" to seize the means of producing a supply of steel for them. To quote, "Perhaps the most forceful illustration of the scope of Presidential power in this connection is the fact that American troops in Korea, whose safety and effectiveness are so directly involved here, were sent to the field by an exercise of the President's constitutional powers." Thus, it is said, he has invested himself with "war powers."

I cannot foresee all that it might entail if the Court should indorse this argument. Nothing in our Constitution is plainer than that declaration of a war is entrusted only to Congress…The Constitution expressly places in Congress power "to raise and support Armies" and "to provide and maintain a Navy." (Emphasis supplied.) This certainly lays upon Congress primary responsibility for supplying the armed forces. Congress alone controls the raising of revenues and their appropriation and may determine in what manner and by what means they shall be spent for military and naval procurement…

That military powers of the Commander in Chief were not to supersede representative government of internal affairs seems obvious from the Constitution and from elementary American history. Time out of mind, and even now in many parts of the world, a military commander can seize private housing to shelter his troops. Not so, however, in the United States, for the Third Amendment says, "No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law." Thus, even in war time, his seizure of needed military housing must be authorized by Congress. It also was expressly left to Congress to "provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions. . ." Such a limitation on the command power, written at a time when the militia rather than a standing army was contemplated as the military weapon of the Republic, underscores the Constitution's policy that Congress, not the Executive, should control utilization of the war power as an instrument of domestic policy.

[1] Here Justice Jackson is referencing the Taft-Hartley Act, a law that passed over Truman's veto. This bill limited the power of unions.

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[The President's] command power is not such an absolute as might be implied from that office in a militaristic system but is subject to limitations consistent with a constitutional Republic whose law and policy-making branch is a representative Congress.

Source: YOUNGSTOWN CO. v. SAWYER (1952) found at https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/343/579.html

More teaching materials related to this topic can be found at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

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Dwight D. Eisenhower, "I Shall Go to Korea" Speech (1952, excerpts)

This speech, the most famous address of the 1952 Presidential election cycle, reviews the Korean War and shows the ways Eisenhower talked about the Korean War on the campaign trail. A close reading of this speech underscores how the Korean War was viewed in 1952 and why Eisenhower's campaign for Presidency was successful.

…World War II should have taught us all one lesson. The lesson is this: To vacillate, to hesitate-to appease even by merely betraying unsteady purpose-is to feed a dictator's appetite for conquest and to invite war itself. That lesson-which should have firmly guided every great decision of our leadership through these later years-was ignored in the development of the Administration's policies for Asia since the end of World War II. Because it was ignored, the record of these policies is a record of appalling failure...

When the enemy struck, on that June day of 1950, what did America do? It did what it always has done in all its times of peril. It appealed to the heroism of its youth. This appeal was utterly right and utterly inescapable. It was inescapable not only because this was the only way to defend the idea of collective freedom against savage aggression. That appeal was inescapable because there was now in the plight into which we had stumbled no other way to save honor and self-respect.

The answer to that appeal has been what any American knew it would be. It has been sheer valor-valor on all the Korean mountainsides that, each day, bear fresh scars of new graves. Now-in this anxious autumn-from these heroic men there comes back an answering appeal. It is no whine, no whimpering plea. It is a question that addresses itself to simple reason. It asks: Where do we go from here? When comes the end? Is there an end?...

My answer-candid and complete-is this: The first task of a new Administration will be to review and re-examine every course of action open to us with one goal in view: To bring the Korean war to an early and honorable end. This is my pledge to the American people. For this task a wholly new Administration is necessary. The reason for this is simple. The old administration cannot be expected to repair what it failed to prevent. Where will a new Administration begin? It will begin with its President taking a simple, firm resolution. The resolution will be: To forego the diversions of politics and to concentrate on the job of ending the Korean war-until that job is honorably done. That job requires a personal trip to Korea.

That job requires a personal trip to Korea. I shall make that trip. Only in that way could I learn how best to serve the American people in the cause of peace. I shall go to Korea...As the next Administration goes to work for peace, we must be guided at every instant by that lesson I spoke of earlier. The vital lesson is this: To vacillate, to appease, to placate is only to invite war-vaster war-bloodier war. In the words of the late Senior [Arthur H.] Vandenberg, appeasement is not the road to peace; it is only surrender on the installment plan. I will always reject appeasement...

In rendering their verdict, the people must judge with courage and with wisdom. For-at this date any faltering in America's leadership is a capital offense against freedom. In this trial, my testimony, of a personal

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kind, is quite simple. A soldier all my life, I have enlisted in the greatest cause of my life-the cause of peace. I do not believe it a presumption for me to call the effort of all who have enlisted with me-a crusade. I use that word only to signify two facts. First: We are united and devoted to a just cause of the purest meaning to all humankind. Second: We know that-for all the might of our effort-victory can come only with the gift of God's help. In this spirit-humble servants of a proud ideal-we do soberly say: This is a crusade.

Source: Excerpts from Dwight Eisenhower's Speech on October 25, 1952, found at https://www.juniorhistorians.com/dde-document-1/eisenhowers-october-25-1952-campaign-speech

More teaching material can be found at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library website.

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Dwight Eisenhower's Farewell Address (1961, excerpts)

The Korean War accelerated a massive military build-up. Despite later efforts, high defense spending remained a part of American life to the end of the 20th century. Excerpts from this speech by Dwight Eisenhower reviews the ways that the skyrocketing defense spending of the immediate years following the Korean War challenged the liberties and rights of the American people. It urges careful consideration of how large defense budgets could hamper American freedoms.

Three days from now, after half a century in the service of our country, I shall lay down the responsibilities of office as, in traditional and solemn ceremony, the authority of the Presidency is vested in my successor. This evening I come to you with a message of leave-taking and farewell, and to share a few final thoughts with you, my countrymen.

Like every other citizen, I wish the new President, and all who will labor with him, Godspeed. I pray that the coming years will be blessed with peace and prosperity for all. Our people expect their President and the Congress to find essential agreement on issues of great moment, the wise resolution of which will better shape the future of the Nation.

My own relations with the Congress, which began on a remote and tenuous basis when, long ago, a member of the Senate appointed me to West Point, have since ranged to the intimate during the war and immediate post-war period, and, finally, to the mutually interdependent during these past eight years…

We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of these involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

Throughout America's adventure in free government, our basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among people and among nations. To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people…

Progress toward these noble goals is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention, absorbs our very beings. We face a hostile ideology-global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method. Unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration. To meet it successfully, there is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle-with liberty at stake…

Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in newer elements of our defense; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research-these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we which to travel.

But each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs-balance between the private and the public economy, balance between cost and hoped for advantage-balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable;

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balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between action of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration…

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction. Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United State corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence-economic, political, even spiritual-is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly…Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been over shadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers…Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system-ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

…Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose difference, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war-as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years-I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight.

Happily, I can say that war has been avoided. Steady progress toward our ultimate goal has been made. But, so much remains to be done. As a private citizen, I shall never cease to do what little I can to help the world advance along that road.

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So-in this my last good night to you as your President-I thank you for the many opportunities you have given me for public service in war and peace. I trust that in that service you find somethings worthy; as for the rest of it, I know you will find ways to improve performance in the future.

…We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied; that those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full; that all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings; that those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy responsibilities; that all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity; that the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance will be made to disappear from the earth, and that, in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love.

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address" (1961), https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=90&page=transcript

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Korean War Poems

Veterans and poets in both the US and Korea have tried to make sense of the war during and after the war. A few of their poems are collected below.

"Pusan [Busan] Perimeter"
Resting was brief in the darkness and heat
The only sounds were the shuffling feet
Of refugees on the road hurrying away
As we in the fields awaited the coming of day

"Saddle up," the order was too soon passed
Then, the sound of men's boots on the road walking fast
What we were there for would happen soon
A battle was coming before next noon

Clouds of dust rise as we advance
Out of the darkness and dust, as if from a trance

Nearing the town we can see from a hill
The tanks and infantry there, firing at will,
Men running wall to wall among narrow lanes
Small crowded thatch houses engulfed in flames
Exploding shells and their shrapnel,
And corsairs napalming and strafing this Hell.

Under shining sun we go into the fighting ahead
As is in motion—except for the dead
There, lying in ditches and facing the sky,
Young men from both armies, silent voices joined
In an anthem of, "why?"

Afternoon brings rain and the corsairs are grounded
The advance slows, units regroup, the dead are counted.
The artillery shells and mortars start coming in
And we with the wounded seek shelter from the din.
By the bridge into a small tin roof building seems alright
To hide from the whistling shrieks and explosions into the night

The only light is a lantern hanging by the door.
The walls shield the stretchers of wounded on the dirt floor.
The explosions all around shake the ground through the night,
Each screaming explosion and its shrapnel brings a new level of
Fright.

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Will this night end? Can we survive?
If there does come a morning will we still be alive?

Then, unexpected, dawn shows in the sky
The shelling slows and corsairs begin to fly,
And we, oh so slowly, know that we did not die.

Was this somehow part of a test?
We'll soon move to more after another brief rest.

Source: Gerald Weigle, "Pusan Perimeter," *The Greybeards: The Official Publication of the Korean War Veterans Association* (March-April 2016), 24. Captain Gerald Weigle was a US Navy Corpsman, (1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division) who served in Korea from August 1950 to February 1951.

"Brothers"
Aren't you my second brother who left our hometown of apricot
blossoms with our bull
And were said to be roaming China?
"I came back to die.
Will Father forgive me?"

Brother! My brother!
Standing on one leg like a grasshopper,
In tattered quilted trousers of the People's Army
Your sunken eyes under blood-clotted forehead
Gleam with emotion

Those emaciated shoulders heaving in pitch darkness
I glimpsed while peering across the frozen 38th parallel
Stretching with an icy gleam in utter silence---
They are my brother's, without a doubt.

Father isn't alive any more.
Even Mother and sister, who called us desperately with pallid faces
Disappeared into the powder smoke one morning
Together with our hometown covered with apricot blossoms.

In this accursed age
Blood kin, who parted as enemies,
Now see each other only as spectres
That may be either dead or alive.

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Are you lying in a mountain cave tonight,
While I'm lying in a trench in a minefield?
In the sky we both look up at from our separate holes
The stars are so clear and bright
Their icy light freezes the earth.

Source: Yu Chong, "Brothers" in *Brother Enemy: Poems of the Korean War*, (Buffalo, NY: White Pine Press, 2002), 220.

"Destiny"

I go to the outpatients clinic with my assignment slip.
Yesterday's wounded ROK soldiers are nowhere in sight,
And only a doctor and a nurse pace the empty room.
Jeeps carrying wounded soldiers arrive
In the hospital yard.

Some are carried in on stretchers, some hobble in leaning on others,
And some hop in on one leg.
Beyond the window, the sight is the same as yesterday's,
Except they have red stars on their caps and a stronger odor
of sweat.
The doctor and the nurse do the same things they did yesterday.
Is that the spirit of the Red Cross?

Our destiny of partings, death, and imprisonment
Began that day.
The bitterness of many decades lay in wait.

Yu Chun-do, the author of this poem, was a doctor in the North Korean Army. She wrote this poem later in life, after the war.

Source: Yu Chun-do, "Destiny," in *Brother Enemy: Poems of the Korean War,* 115.

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Korean War Timeline

1392	Joseon Dynasty founded.
1839	Britain wages the first Opium War on China. This war led to major political and diplomatic changes in East Asia.
1853	The US Perry expedition forced Japan to open up its cities to US trade.
March 26, 1875	Syngman Rhee is born.
February 26, 1876	Treaty of Ganghwa is signed. This treaty marked the beginning Japanese efforts to colonize Korea.
May 8, 1884	Harry Truman is born.
December 26, 1893	Mao Zedong is born.
1894-1895	Donghak rebellion breaks out. First Sino-Japanese War breaks out when Chinese Emperor sends troops to help Korean emperor quell the Donghak revolution. Japan wins the war. China had to cede Taiwan and other lands to Japan.
1896	Koreans found the Independence Club.
1898	The US declares war against Spain. The US defeats Spain. In the treaty ending the war the US pays Spain $20 million for control of the Philippine islands.
1899	The Korean ruling dynasty closes the Independence Club.
1899-1902	The US wages war against Filipino nationalists. Over 4,000 Americans die in the war. The US State Department estimates over 200,000 Filipinos died during the US effort to gain control of the Philippines.
1904-1905	War breaks out between Japan and Russia. In a treaty mediated by US President Theodore Roosevelt, Japan gains control over much of Korea.
August 29, 1910	Japan formally colonizes Korea.
1911	The last Chinese dynasty falls.
April 15, 1912	Kim Il Sung is born.
1917	Russian revolution overthrows the Tsarist government. Lenin rises to power. Lenin's anti-colonial rhetoric inspires Ho Chi Minh and others.

1918	Korean Communist party founded.
March 1, 1919	Korean nationalists proclaim the Korean declaration of independence. The Japanese repress this movement.
1921	Chinese Communist Party Founded.
1927	Chinese Guomindang represses Chinese Communists. This begins the "White Terror" on mainland China.
1931	Japan begins its conquest of Manchuria. This attack starts World War II in Asia. Kim Il Sung joins the Communist Party.
1934	Chinese Communists go on the "Long March," a fighting retreat to Northwest China. Mao Zedong emerges as the leader of the Communist movement.
1937	Chinese generals kidnap Chiang Kai-shek and force him to agree to an alliance with the Chinese Communists to defeat the Japanese.
June 1941	Germany begins its campaign against the Soviet Union.
August 1941	Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill discuss the Atlantic Charter, a statement that marks the end of colonialism as a war aim in World War II.
December 1941	Japan attacks the US at Pearl Harbor. The US declares war against Japan, Germany, Italy, and the other Axis powers.
April 1942	US airmen led by General James Doolittle bomb Tokyo. These airmen crash land in China where they are helped by anti-Japanese Chinese. Japanese authorities execute thousands of Chinese in retaliation.
July 1944	The Democratic Party nominates Harry S. Truman for the Vice Presidency. Truman replaces Henry Wallace.
April 1945	Franklin Roosevelt dies. Harry Truman becomes President.
May 7, 1945	Germany surrenders ending World War II in Europe.
April-June 1945	The US and allies wage a bloody fight for Okinawa. Over 10,000 Americans died during the campaign. Approximately 90,000 Japanese and over 100,000 Okinawans died during the fighting.
July 1945	The US tests its first atomic device. Joseph Stalin confirms in a meeting with Harry Truman and other Allied leaders at Potsdam that Soviet forces will enter the war against Japan in August.
August 6, 1945	US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
August 8, 1945	The Soviet Union declares war on Japan.
August 9, 1945	US drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

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August 12, 1945	The US proposes to the Soviet Union to split the occupation of Korea at the 38th parallel. The Soviet Union accepts this offer.
August 14, 1945	Soviet forces enter Korea.
August 15, 1945	Japan surrenders to the United States and Allies. The Japanese colonization of Korea formally ends.
September 1945	US occupation authorities, led by General John Hodge, arrive in South Korea. Conservative Koreans in the south form the Korean Democratic Party. Kim Il Sung returns to North Korea.
October 14, 1945	Kim Il Sung makes his first speech at a major rally in Pyongyang.
October 16, 1945	Syngman Rhee returns to Korea after many years working for Korean independence in the US.
October 24, 1945	The United Nations is formally founded, as part of a larger process to build an international organization to promote peace after World War II
November 23, 1945	Student protests break out in North Korea.
December 18, 1945	The Soviets establish the North Korean Communist Party. Kim Il Sung is made head of this party.
March 5, 1946	DPRK enacts Law on Land Reform.
May 1946	The US-Soviet Joint Commission, a body created to figure out how to transition Korea toward independence, adjourns. This marks the end of the possibility of unification of the peninsula by international negotiation in the 20th century.
March 12, 1947	"Truman Doctrine" speech which outlines US support for anti-communist forces in Greece and Turkey.
June 5, 1947	George C. Marshall announces an aid program (eventually known as the "Marshall Program") to rebuild European economies following the devastation of World War II. The Soviet Union refuses to accept the aid. Countries under its influence in Eastern and Central Europe follow suit.
July 26, 1947	Harry Truman signs the National Security Act. This bill creates the position of the Secretary of Defense. The Air Force is made an independent branch. The National Security Council and Central Intelligence Agency are given formal statutory authority.
November 14, 1947	The United Nations passes a resolution that supports a referendum to unify North and South Korea.
February 8, 1948	North Korea officially establishes the Korean People's Army.
February 26, 1948	The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) decides to hold elections in South Korea after North Korea refuses to participate in UN supervised elections.

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April 3, 1948	The Jeju Uprising breaks out.
April 22, 1948	The North Korean government begins to draft a constitution to found the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (DPRK)
May 10, 1948	The UNTCOK monitors an election in South Korea. Many Koreans decide not to participate because the election appears to mark a permanent division of the peninsula.
June 24, 1948	The Soviet Union blockades Berlin. The Berlin Airlift begins.
August 15, 1948	The ROK is officially established in South Korea.
October 1948	Yosu Rebellion breaks out in South Korea.
September 10, 1948	DPRK is officially established in North Korea.
November 2, 1948	Harry Truman wins the Presidential election in a historic upset.
November 10, 1948	The Guomindang makes the decision to move Chinese art, artifacts, and other priceless treasures from mainland China to Taiwan. This move is part of a larger effort to begin shifting to the island as the Guomindang experienced more military defeats.
March 1948	Kim Il Sung meets with Joseph Stalin to ask for military and economic aid.
April 4, 1949	The United States signs the North Atlantic Treaty with Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. This treaty creates NATO.
May 12, 1949	The Berlin Blockade ends.
June 4, 1949	The Soviet Union decides to give North Korea military assistance.
June 29, 1949	The US occupation of South Korea formally ends. Only the Korean Military Advisory Group (less than 500 officers and enlisted personnel) remains.
August 29, 1949	The Soviet Union successfully tests its first nuclear device.
September 3, 1949	Mao Zedong refuses Kim Il Sung's request for aid to invade South Korea.
October 1, 1949	Mao Zedong proclaims the foundation of the People's Republic of China. This marks a shift in the Chinese Civil War. Members of the Republican Party and others argue Truman and his administration "lost" China.
December 1949	Chiang Kai-shek retreats to Taiwan. Mao Zedong travels to Moscow.
January 5, 1950	Harry Truman decides that the US will not give military assistance to Chinese forces on Taiwan.

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January 12, 1950	Dean Acheson gives an important speech on US foreign policy. Many interpret the speech as signaling that the US would not defend Taiwan or the Republic of Korea if they came under attack.
February 6, 1950	Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy makes a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia claiming the US federal government is riddled with Communist spies.
February 14, 1950	Leaders from the People's Republic of China and Soviet Union sign the "treaty of friendship, alliance, and mutual assistance"
March 30, 1950	After much lobbying by Kim Il Sung, Joseph Stalin agrees to support a DPRK strike south if Kim secures Chinese support.
April 1950	Soviet help for the DPRK military widens. The State Department's Policy Planning Staff finishes drafting NSC-68, a new US national security policy that embraces containment of the Soviet Union and calls for a massive defense build-up. Truman, wary of big defense budgets, does not confirm it as US policy until September 1950.
May 13-16, 1950	Kim Il Sung travels to Beijing to discuss Chinese support for a strike south. Mao provides his approval on May 15, 1950.
June 10, 1950	The Soviet Union provides formal approval of Kim's plan to strike south.
June 25, 1950	The DPRK forces strikes south. Truman decides to approach the UN to create a coalition to defend South Korea.
June 26, 1950	Truman approves US air strikes to slow the DPRK attack. Truman also approves the placement of the Seventh Fleet between Taiwan and mainland China to prevent both the Guomindang and Chinese Communists from using the Korean War to escalate the Chinese Civil War.
June 27, 1950	Syngman Rhee flees south from Seoul. The United Nations Security Council passes Resolution 83 which recommends UN member states help the ROK reverse the DPRK attack.
June 29, 1950	DPRK forces takes control of Seoul.
June 30, 1950	Truman approves sending US ground troops to Korea.
July 5, 1950	DPRK forces crush an unprepared US force known as Task Force Smith at Osan.
July 7, 1950	The United Nations approves resolution 84 which creates a unified command for UN countries supplying assistance to the ROK. Douglas MacArthur, Far East Commander, is made head of the United Nations Command (UNC).
July 12, 1950	Syngman Rhee gives up control of ROK forces to the UNC.

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August 4, 1950	UNC forces are able to stop DPRK forces outside of Busan and form the Busan Perimeter.
August 25, 1950	MacArthur provokes the Truman administration's ire by releasing an unapproved statement that attacks US policy toward Taiwan.
September 15, 1950	MacArthur launches Operation Chromite. UNC forces land at Incheon and swiftly defeat DPRK forces there. This move along with pressure from UNC forces near Busan leads to a massive DPRK retreat.
September 27, 1950	UNC forces capture Seoul.
October 1, 1950	UNC forces, with the ROK forces leading, cross the 38th parallel.
October 15, 1950	MacArthur assures President Truman at Wake Island that Chinese forces will not intervene in the Korean War. He adds that if they do intervene, UNC forces will easily destroy Chinese forces.
October 25, 1950	Chinese forces begin to attack UNC forces at the battle of Unsan.
November 27, 1950	Chinese forces attack Marines and soldiers at the Chosin Reservoir.
November 29, 1950	UNC forces begin retreat to Pyongyang and south.
December 11-24, 1950	UNC forces and massive numbers of refugees evacuate from Hungnam on ships for the South.
December 23, 1950	General Walton Walker dies in a jeep accident. General Matthew Ridgway is chosen as his replacement.
January 4, 1951	Under pressure from a renewed Chinese offensive, UNC forces retreat from Seoul.
January 25, 1951	UNC forces regroup and launch OPERATION THUNDERBOLT, an offensive north toward the Han River and Seoul.
February 10, 1951	Incheon is recaptured by UNC forces.
March 14-15, 1951	UNC forces retake Seoul for the last time.
April 2-5, 1951	UNC forces move ten miles north of the 38th parallel to Line Kansas.
April 11, 1951	Truman relieves Douglas MacArthur for insubordination. Ridgway becomes Far East Commander. Later, General James Van Fleet is given command of the 8th Army, a large component of forces that makes up the UNC.
April 22-30, 1951	A Chinese Spring Offensive pushes UNC forces from Line Kansas.
May 31, 1951	UNC forces return to Line Kansas.
July 10, 1951	Armistice discussions begin. Fighting continues.

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August 23, 1951	Armistice talks break down. Fighting continues.
October 14, 1951	General Dwight Eisenhower writes a secret letter for a few key supporters pledging that if nominated, Eisenhower will run for the presidency on a Republican ticket.
October 25, 1951	Armistice talks begin again. Fighting continues.
November 12, 1951	Ridgway orders Van Fleet to wage an "active" defense. No more offensive operations would be approved.
December 1951	UNC negotiators refuse to allow for forced repatriation of prisoners of war. Fearful of how prisoners will be treated, the UNC demands each prisoner have a choice of whether or not to return to their home country. This issue stalls the peace talks. Fighting continues.
January 1952	Eisenhower publicizes that he is a Republican and will serve if elected.
February 1952	Truman's approval rating drops to 22%.
March 1952	Eisenhower wins the New Hampshire Republican Presidential Primary. Truman loses the New Hampshire Democratic Presidential Primary. Truman drops out of the Presidential race.
July 1952	Eisenhower wins the Republican Party nomination for president. Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson wins the Democratic nomination for President.
October 24, 1952	Eisenhower pledges to go to Korea to seek an end to the war if he is elected.
November 4, 1952	Eisenhower wins the Presidential election.
December 1952	Eisenhower visits Korea.
January 20, 1953	Eisenhower takes the oath of office.
February 11, 1953	Eisenhower opens discussion of using nuclear weapons in Korea to the National Security Council.
March 5, 1953	Joseph Stalin dies. This shifts Soviet foreign policy away from confrontations with the West.
April 1953	UNC offers the forced exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, called Operation Little Switch. This move creates some trust between the UNC, PRC, and DPRK.
May 1953	US moves nuclear weapons to Okinawa. Through intermediaries, Dulles threatens China with nuclear strikes. US escalates air war in Korea, bombing dams in North Korea.
June 1953	Chinese and North Korean delegations broadly accept US proposals for repatriation. Later in the month, Syngman Rhee

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	releases 25,000 North Korean POWs who had expressed their desire to stay in South Korea. Rhee's action nearly derails the peace negotiations. US leaders promise aid and a mutual security treaty to get Rhee to accept the armistice.
July 6-11, 1953	Chinese forces attack US forces on Pork Chop Hill. US forces abandon the hill to the Chinese.
July 27, 1953	UNC, PRC, and DPRK representatives sign an armistice agreement ending major combat operations in the Korean War.
March-May 1954	Vietnamese forces begin to defeat French forces at Dien Bien Phu. Eisenhower pursues Congressional support for American intervention. Lyndon Johnson refuses to give such support, fearing "another Korea."
March 1955	Eisenhower threatens nuclear strikes against China in response to their bombardment of a Guomindang-held island in the Chinese straits. The bombing ceases in April 1955. A later crisis begins again in 1958.
April 1960	Protests lead to Syngman Rhee's resignation and exile from South Korea.
May 1961	General Park Chung-hee takes power in South Korea in a military coup. Park sets up an authoritarian regime.
1964	Park Chung-hee sends Korean troops to help the US effort in South Vietnam.
January 1968	DPRK comandos launch the Blue House Raid, an effort to assassinate Park Chung-hee. The DPRK captures the *USS Pueblo*.
December 1968	The DPRK releases sailors captured during its operations against the Pueblo.
August 1976	DPRK forces kill two American soldiers who are trying to trim a tree near the DMZ.
1979	Park Chung-hee is assassinated.
May 1980	South Korean pro-democracy protesters are repressed in Gwangju, South Korea.
1987	Numerous pro-democracy protests break out in South Korea. The South Korean government agrees to revise the Constitution.
November 1989	The Berlin Wall falls, marking the end of communism in Central and Eastern Europe.
July 9, 1994	Kim Il Sung dies. Kim Jong-il becomes the leader of the DPRK.
August-October 1994	US and DPRK negotiate the Agreed Framework to stop the DPRK's nuclear weapons program in exchange for help developing

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	nuclear energy. Discussions related to the Agreed Framework continue until 2006.
July 27, 1995	Korean War Memorial is dedicated in Washington D.C.
1995-1998	Prolonged famine kills tens-of-thousands of North Koreans.
2000	Jeju 4.3 Law is passed that requires a formal investigation into the Jeju Uprising.
2002	A few months after the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush names North Korea as a part of an "Axis of Evil."
2006	North Korea tests its first nuclear bomb.
2005-2010	South Korea undertakes a Truth Commission to document and investigate human rights abuses during the Japanese colonial period, Korean War, and after.
December 2011	Kim Jong-Il dies. Kim Jong Un, his son, becomes the leader of North Korea.
2013	Basketball star Dennis Rodman visits North Korea.
2014	Sony releases a film that mocks Kim Jong Un and North Korea. North Korea launches a cyberattack against Sony.
August-September 2017	President Trump threatens "fire and fury" in response to North Korean missile threats. Later Trump calls Kim Jong Un "rocket man."
2018	President Trump meets with Kim Jong Un in Singapore, becoming the first US president to meet with a leader from North Korea.

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