

North Korea and the USSR

- *Kim Il Sung: trained in the USSR and fought alongside the Chinese communists against the Japanese, tapped on propaganda extensively + promoted self-sufficiency and tried to isolate the country from the rest of the world to limit external influence and opposition + also convinced that Korea should be under ONE rule*
- *USSR: did not allow elections to take place because they were keen to establish their political and economic influence over the zone of occupation → with their support North Koreans established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (or NK) on 9 sept 1948*
 - *Forces redrawn at the end of 1948*

South Korea and the US

- *May 1948: 80% of the population took part in a national election at the 38th parallel*
 - *US backed Rhee for the position as president as Rhee campaigned for Korean independence during Japanese occupation + he was anti-communist, fluent english speaker and graduated from a prestigious uni in US*
- *Rhee: became increasingly authoritarian, arresting/killing his opponents (including suspected communists) + believed Korea should be united*
- *US: continued to support Rhee to prevent spread of communist influence from the North*

Tensions between NK and SK

- *Kim: tried several times to convince Stalin to support reunification of Korea → Stalin not interested as Soviet resources were stretched thin due to WWII + he only wanted to create a buffer zone of communist states in E.E. to protect USSR + he was not keen to stir up more conflict with US and further stretch Soviet resources by arming and supplying NK for war*
- *Rhee: eager to reunify Korea, but Truman refused to provide too much equipment and resources as he was scared it would be used to attack NK → Rhee still initiated border clashes to capture territories in the North though*

- July 1949: SK warships attacked NK military installations near Taedong river, sinking most of NK's west coast fleet → 1949 onwards: fierce fighting, small scale assaults and heavy casualties occurred at the 38th parallel

US and Soviet disinterest in Korea

- US: lay Korea outside their "defensive perimeter" in the asia-pacific (security policy announced on January 1950 by US secretary of State)
- Soviet Union: Stalin reluctant to support as he did not want to risk direct confrontation with US

Expansion of communism in China:

- Chinese Communist Party (CCP) fought against the Guo min dang (GMD) and CCP won, China becoming a communist state in October 1949 → US concerned about the implications of China turning communist
- US: pumped \$2 billion aid into China to support GMD → but since they were defeated they moved to Taiwan (off Chinese mainland) → US feared communism might start spreading throughout Asia → refused to accept CCP is the legitimate government and continued to look after GMD in Taiwan
- Soviet: delighted → supported Mao and the CCP and since they won, SU now had a powerful ally against US
 - 1950: Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance → which set out various agreements about land and transport in East Asia + loan of \$300 million from USSR to help rebuild China

USSR's atomic bomb:

- August 1949: USSR detonated its first atomic bomb → US no longer had the upper hand → so in late 1949 and 1950s Stalin was softer when it came to supporting Kim invading SK

US response to Communism in Asia

- Spies (US) reported that Stalin was using cominform to help communists win power in Malaya, Indonesia, Philippines, Korea etc → US feared that communist countries were

acting together to spread communism and would overrun asia + convinced that Stalin was orchestrating a process of communist expansion worldwide

- *April 1950: National Security Council Paper No.68 (NSC-68) + US defensive perimeter expanded*
 - *NSC-68: proved that Truman would be inclined to intervene if a war broke out → he could not risk NK winning as it would be a triumph for communism and a humiliation for the US*

Stalin and Mao shift their positions on Korea

- *Stalin: before 1950s → reluctant to help → but because of developments related to the CW → both superpowers sought to expand their global influence (esp in asia-pacific) + having control and influence over NK would give USSR a platform to spread communist ideology and counterbalance US influence in Japan*
- *Mao: could be responsible for supplying troops and support for NK if war broke out + even though he was wary of getting involved → was keen to show China was a force to be reckoned with*
- *Kim: could also be credited for changing their minds → he had a large army of well-trained and experienced troops → his determination, skill and persistent and determined advocacy for invasion of SK might have been the one that won over Mao and Stalin*

Korean war: 1950-1953

- *25 June 1950: NK invaded SK*
- *Truman sent advisors, supplies and warships to SK + put tremendous pressure on UNSC to condemn NK's actions and to call on them to withdraw troops*
- *US: biggest contributor to the UN budget and it was in a position to influence UN decision + largest contributor to UN forces (under the command of US general Douglas MacArthur)*
- *UN: committed to using member forces to drive NK out of SK → troops from other countries (turkey, indonesia, thailand) fought alongside with SK troops → other countries sent medical services and transportation*

Course of KW

June-Sept 1950: NK forces advanced rapidly → captured Seoul (capital) and most of SK → SK forces held on to a small area at Busan, which allowed UN forces to reinforce them and hold back NK advance

Sept-mid-Oct 1950:

- *UN forces landed in Incheon + UN forces in Busan drove NK back → MacArthur achieved original objective of removing NK from SK BUT he did not stop there as he wanted to limit operations north of 38th parallel aka eradicate communism*
- *China: multiple warnings that it would intervene to defend its border and launch a full-scale war if Americans crossed the 38th parallel and advanced towards Yalu River (MacArthur continued to advance) + Mao did not want a unified Korea that was non-communist and an ally to US → felt like his personal and China's prestige was at stake*

Mid-Oct 1950-April 1951:

- *Chinese forces began crossing into NK secretly*
- *MacArthur defied direct orders from Truman and UN and continued to advance towards the Yalu River, potentially expanding the scale of the war + even threatened to use the atomic bomb against China and NK*
- *(Late Oct 1950) 200000 Chinese troops joined NK → were highly motivated and equipped with Soviet Tanks and Aircraft*
- *(Dec 1950-Jan 1951) UN forces pushed back into SK*
- *(April 1951) Truman dismissed MacArthur*
- *Americans also employed psychological warfare to convince NK to stop fighting for the communists*

July 1951: UN troops recovered and resumed their attacks towards NK + Armistice talks began at Panmunjom

June 1951-July 1953: Fighting reached a stalemate and armistice talks stalled due to disagreements

April-July 1953: Armistice talks resumed at Panmunjom and armistice was signed

Stalling of armistice: US: took a hard line → Mao + Stalin: wanted to tie down US forces + give his army combat experience (Mao)

Aftermath of KW

- 3-4 million casualties, 1.4 million killed + cities, towns villages flattened due to fighting + hundreds of thousands forced to become refugees + NK was particularly devastated by US bombing raids
- Economy: 70% of textile industry + 70% of the chemical industry + 51% percent of the mining industry was destroyed
- Roads, bridges, railway lines, power plants and many other facilities were destroyed
- 90000 SK POWs, 8000 UN POWs and 100000 NK POWs → many died in captivity and a small number opted to remain in NK or China while a larger number remain in SK
- Armistice talks: although it was settled on paper, but there was still suspicion about whether all POWs had been returned + many POWs treated with suspicion because of the fear they might be brainwashed by the enemy and act against their own country
- DMZ created between NK and SK + and both sides agree to move troops back about 2 km from the border

Impact on US foreign policy

- US more determined to pursue a policy of containment in Asia → SK, Japan and Taiwan became central to US policy in Asia and US stationed troops and significant air power and naval ships in SK and Japan
- 1954: set up Southeast-Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in Southeast Asia and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in central Asia → US gave money, advice and arms to these allies while the leaders of these countries suppressed communist influence in their own countries
- USSR saw these as aggressive → accused US of trying to encircle the communist world → set up Warsaw Treaty Organisation/Warsaw Pact to counter NATO in 1955
- Increase in Military Power: to enforce policy of containment by military means, doubled armed forces in size in 1951 compared to 1950
- NATO followed this → european military power grew tremendously → they had 15 divisions in West Germany alone and NATO countries were spending more than 12% of GDP on defence (compared to 5.5% of GDP and 14 divisions in the entire world before KW)