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**Forum:** Historical Committee

**Issue:** The Korean War

**Student Officer:** Eren Hanioglu

**Position:** President

## **Introduction:**

The tension between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was the main conflicts marking the second half of the 20th century. Following World War II, the USA and the USSR were the most prominent global superpowers, and this led to an inevitable rivalry between the two nations, ambitious in their contest for dominance in the new system that had arisen following the war which had such a devastating effect on the world. Both countries attracted allies, and blocs formed, dividing the world. While capitalist countries such as those in western Europe aligned themselves with the USA in NATO, countries of Eastern Europe came together with the Warsaw Pact, together with the USSR. Even though there was no direct war between the two nations, proxy wars occurred in zones such as Korea and Vietnam, where the blocs supported the side closer to them politically.

The Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953 was the first military action that took place as a result of the Cold War. The main contenders were the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), more commonly known as North Korea, with a Communist government under the leadership of Kim Il-sung, and the Republic of Korea, also known as South Korea, following a more Western system under the leadership of Syngman Rhee. The USA and NATO supported the South, while China and the USSR supported the North.

## **Definition of Key Terms:**

**Proxy War:** A regional conflict between the spheres of influence of two countries, without an outright war between the two stronger countries. Examples are the Korean War and the Vietnam War.



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**Socialism:** Often misused, Socialism is the government's control over economic production and distribution. Private property is not valid in such societies. Being a less extreme system compared to Communism (see below), workers are still paid according to the work they do.

**Communism:** Also often misused, Communism is a more advanced stage of Socialism, in which the government is still in charge of production and distribution systems, but the principle of "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" is followed. There are no classes in Communism.

**Republic of Korea Army (ROKA):** The name given to South Korean forces.

**Korean People's Army (KPA):** The name given to North Korean forces.

## **Background Information:**

Following the Second World War, Japanese occupation was lifted from the Korean Peninsula, and two new states emerged: North Korea under Kim Il-sung, and South Korea under Syngman Rhee. The 38th parallel was declared the border between the two countries. Even before an official war broke out, there was tension between the states, following opposite ideologies and being backed by rival countries in the Cold War. It is important to note that both states were dictatorships. Approximately 10,000 soldiers were killed before the war began.

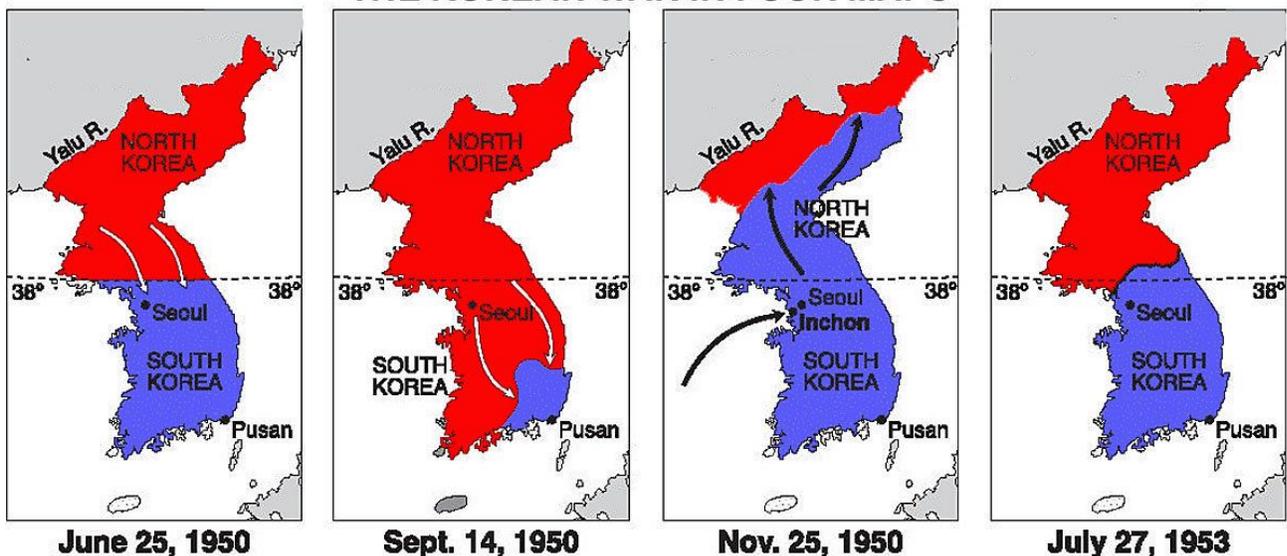
The North Koreans began strengthening the KPA with equipment from the Soviet Union. When Joseph Stalin approved an invasion of South Korea in early 1950, the time had come for an invasion. On the 25th of June in the same year, forces of the KPA crossed the 38th parallel, and Seoul, the South Korean capital, was captured by the KPA. The ROKA made a well-organized retreat, however the need for US involvement was evident. Instead of declaring war explicitly, the USA guided the UNSC to pass resolutions calling for member states to aid the ROKA. The USSR did not veto this as they were boycotting the Security Council. The USA sent in General Douglas MacArthur, a 5-star general that oversaw the successful Allied occupation of Japan, and even though combined US and ROKA forces showed little success at first, advancements were made as time progressed. A challenging amphibious landing at Inch'on led to the retaking of Seoul by late September. ROKA troops proceeded past the 38th parallel, and the KPA retreated. Kim Il-sung requested help from the People's Republic of China. Mao Zedong was in favor of



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aiding the North, and with air support from the Soviets, a series of Chinese offensives begun, which resulted in the recapture of Seoul. At this point, the US and the ROKA were supported by forces from many other countries, including Turkish, French and British forces. This combined group was under the authority of the United Nations Command (UNC). Soon after, Seoul was taken once again by the UNC and ROKA shortly afterwards. MacArthur's mistakes and independence resulted in President Truman relieving him of his duties in the April of 1951. Both sides soon began to realize that military victory would not be beneficial, as so much had already been lost. The USA adopted a policy of supporting a united, democratic Korea, but was willing to show leniency when it came to doing this by military means or overthrowing Kim Il-sung. At this point, China and the USA took charge of negotiations. No major events with significant impact occurred until the signing of an armistice on the 27th of July, 1953. The result was a slight alteration in the 38th parallel border, leaving the South with more land than it started off with. A DMZ (demilitarized zone) was established along the border. Overall, the war cost almost 5 million lives, with a significant number of civilians included in the death toll. The two countries were still technically at war for the next 65 years, and only recently on April 2018 did current South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un officially sign the Panmunjom Declaration of Peace during the inter-Korean summit. With this declaration, the two governments officially agreed to cooperate to end the Korean War and Korean conflict beginning an era of peace.

## THE KOREAN WAR IN FOUR MAPS





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Figure 1: The Korean War in Four Maps

## Timeline of Events:

Date	Description of Event
June 25, 1950	KPA forces cross the parallel, and the war officially begins. The same day, the UN requests that the invasion be brought to an end.
June 27, 1950	The US, through the UNSC, guides member states in aiding the South.
June 28, 1950	Seoul is captured by the KPA, resulting in the retreat of the ROKA.
September 15, 1950	An amphibious landing of UNC and ROKA forces occurs at Inch'on.
September 25, 1950	ROKA and UNC forces enter Seoul.
October 25, 1950 - January 5, 1951	A series of PRC offensives results in Seoul being retaken, along with a significant portion of land lost.
March 15, 1951	UNC and ROKA forces retake Seoul.
Late 1951, 1952, and Early 1953	The Stalemate period of the war takes place along the 38th parallel where the border was initially present, with not much territorial change.
July 27, 1953	An armistice is signed, determining the final border and establishing a DMZ.



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## Korean War

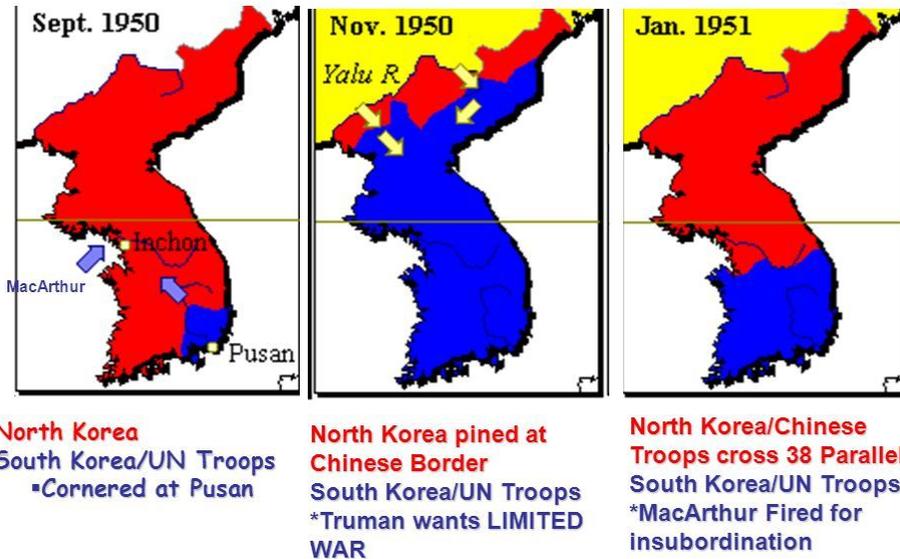


Figure 2: The Korean War in 3 maps (different stages than the previous image)

### Major Parties and Organizations Involved:

#### Republic of Korea

The ROK, also known as South Korea. A dictatorship under Syngman Rhee, they aligned with the USA and other capitalist countries. The capital, Seoul was exchanged four times during the war, eventually remaining under Southern control. The net result of the war was a territorial gain for the ROK.

#### Democratic People's Republic of Korea:

The DPRK, also known as North Korea. Being a communist state under the rule of Kim Il-sung, they were naturally on good terms with the USSR and the newly established People's Republic



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of China, both nations wishing to establish themselves as global superpowers against the USA. The net result was a territorial loss for the DPRK.

### **United States of America:**

Not wanting to declare outright war in the initial phases of the war, the USA under the Truman administration used their influence in the UNSC to call for member states to side with the ROK. Along with the UNC, they were crucial in the ROK's fighting chance in the war.

### **People's Republic of China:**

Newly established as a Communist government under Mao Zedong, the PRC aided the DPRK in the war. After the involvement of the USA and UNC, a series of Chinese offensives brought Seoul back under Northern control. They were crucial in supporting the KPA during the war.

### **Soviet Union:**

The war broke out mere months after Soviet leader Joseph Stalin approved a Northern invasion of South Korea. Soviet air force was essential in supporting the Chinese offensives.

### **United Nations Command:**

Composed of multinational troops from nations supporting the ROK, the UNC was led by the USA.

### **Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:**

On June 25, 1950, the very same day the war began, the UN called for the invasion to immediately come to an end. Two days later, the pressure of the USA resulted in UN member States supporting the ROK militaristically. However, this did not exactly "solve the issue," rather escalating the situation and causing a war.

The issue can still be said to be largely unsolved. Even though there is no active fighting between the DPRK and the ROK, it has been 65 years since the armistice, with no peace treaty signed yet. The armistice established a DMZ, which was crucial in solving the issue. However, there is still a significant amount of tension between the two Koreas, which can be traced to many differences between the states.



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The issue of Prisoners of War (POW) was also crucial. The idea of an “all for all” trade, which would result in a complete exchange had many flaws in it. Many prisoners the South had took were originally South Korean citizens being noticed to fight for the North. The issue of Northern atrocities against Southern POWs was also an important component of this issue.

## **Possible Solutions:**

Even though most of the committee will be a situation of war, if there is to be peace at the end of it, there are many things to consider. Any solution should consider all aspects of the issue: political, economic, humanitarian. The Prisoners of war (POWs) should also be dealt with as the war progresses, for the issues detailed above. The establishment of a DMZ was quite useful in reality, and it is encouraged that such measures also be taken in the committee. Measures to dissolve future tension between the Koreas would also be ideal, however they would be extremely difficult considering the differing economic ideologies and the influence of the Cold War.

Another thing to consider is the prospect of a united Korea. Should this happen through militaristic or diplomatic means, it may be a more permanent solution than simply an armistice. However, in this case, measure to unite the people and find common ground between very different countries must be taken.

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