The Origins and Nature of the Korean War*

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**CONTENTS**

Chapter I Geographical and Historical Background
Chapter II The American-Soviet Relations
Chapter III The Cold War, 1945-1950

Chapter IV The Division of Korea
Chapter V Immediate Causes of War
Chapter VI The First Week
Chapter VII Conclusion

CHAPTER I
Geographical And Historical Background

A nation’s geography does not determine the course of its history exclusively, but it does affect a nation’s destiny. It is particularly true in the case of Korea, and its geography constituted the greatest factor in the course of Korean history. The peninsula of Korea is the heart of Northeast Asia, which is composed of China, Japan, Siberia and the Korean peninsula. On the north, the Yalu and Tuman rivers with famous Mt. Paektu (White Head Mt.) as their source form the boundaries with Manchuria and Siberia; on the east, Korea faces Japan across the East Sea; on the west, China across the Yellow Sea; and on the south, it is bounded by the East China Sea and the Korean Straits. The peninsula of Korea is about one hundred and sixty miles wide and six hundred miles long, and has an area of 85,228 square miles.\(^1\)

Historically, Korea with its strategic location—“the heart of the strategic triangle of North Asia,” surrounded by Siberia, China and Japan—has been the target for Chinese and Japanese schemes for Far Eastern hegemony and the crossroads of Asiatic civilization.

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Numerous invasions by China (Sui and T’ang in the 7th century, the Mongols in the 13th century, the Manchus in the 17th century) as well as Hideyoshi (Japanese) invasion of 16th century were basically attempts for Asiatic expansion. While the Mongols attempted to conquer the island of Japan in the thirteenth century, Hideyoshi of Japan tried to invade China in the sixteenth century, both through Korea. In both cases, the control of the peninsula was the prelude for their Asiatic conquest, and their invasion of Korea turned the entire Far East into turmoil. As long as Korea was peaceful, there was peace in the Far East, but when the peace of Korea was affected by any dominant power, the peace of the Far East was endangered. Culturally, continental or Chinese civilization was first introduced into Korea, and then from there to Japan.\(^{(2)}\)

In the modern history of Korea, the peninsula had been a “pawn” in Far Eastern power plays, and it affected not only Sino-Japanese politics but also that of world’s great powers. As early as 1860’s Russia, France and the United States showed their interests in the peninsula and France and the United States sent expeditious to that country. In the 1880’s, the rivalry between China, Japan, Russia, and America and England in Korea affected European politics also, and the Anglo-Russian rivalry brought about the British occupation of Port Hamilton Is. of Korea. The first clash among the powers over Korea, however, was the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), which eliminated China from Korea. Then Russia replaced China in Korea and the result was the Russo-Japanese War ten years later. Japan won the war and the peninsula came under Japanese domination.\(^{(3)}\)

The remaining two—America and England—partly because of their geographical positions and partly because of their interests in other places (America in the Philippines and China, and England in China and India) did not meet the growing Japanese expansionism by force.\(^{(4)}\) With China and Russia eliminated, and without American and British opposition

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\(^{(2)}\) For general history of Korea in English see Woo-keun Han, *The History of Korea* (Seoul, 1970); Pow-key Sohn, Chol-chun Kim and Yi-sup Hong, *The History of Korea* (Seoul, 1970); C.N. Weems, *Hubert’s History of Korea* (New York, 1962), etc.


\(^{(4)}\) England in the renewed Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1905) and the U.S. in the Taft-Katsura Memorandum (1905) recognized Japanese domination of Korea.
in Korea, Japan annexed Korea in 1910. From there Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, and then in 1937 she invaded China, and in 1941 she attacked Pearl Harbor, marking the beginning of the Pacific War.

The peninsula of Korea played not a little role in bringing about two world wars. The Russo-Japanese War was fought primarily for the control of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria, which were the key for Russo-Japanese Far Eastern policies. Here Russia was defeated and in order to meet Germany in the West, she replaced the former Anglo-Russian enmity with the Triple Entente against the Triple Alliance, thus two rival political and military camps in Europe brought about W.W. 1. World War II had its origin in the East. It was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, which destroyed the balance of power in the Pacific and led to German-Italian aggression in Europe. Without the Korean peninsula, Japan probably could not have invaded Manchuria, and the history of the world might be different from what it is today.

With the elimination of Japan from Korea following V-J Day, the peninsula of Korea this time became a battlefield for the American-Soviet Cold War. The Russians continuously moved eastward, expanding its territory from Europe to the Pacific coast across the vast plains of Siberia, and the Americans moved westward, expanding its territory from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific Ocean and its influence to the Asiatic continent. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.—the two youngest but the greatest powers on earth today—are both products of revolutions (America for independence and the Soviet Union for Communism), and both Russia and America extended its territory and influence to the east and to the west respectively until they came to meet face to face on the peninsula of Korea in 1945. Therefore, it is not an accident that the two powers struggled for their interest and power in Korea following W.W. II. It was here that the first hot war broke out after the defeat of the Axis Powers, and the world looked on this peninsula for its peace.

CHAPTER II
The American-Soviet Relations

From the beginning of the American nation to the end of the Russian Empire in 1917, Russo-American relations were "loose and informal entente." But their interests in Manchuria just before and after 1900 "ruptured" their friendly relations. American interest in the Far East was primarily economic. When Russia occupied Manchuria in the Boxer
Rebellion, the U.S. stressed independence and territorial integrity and the Open Door of China, and Theodore Roosevelt believed "Japanese were fighting the battle of America in Manchuria" in the Russo-Japanese War. Roosevelt thought the Russian Czar "a preposterous little creature", and regarded the Russians "utterly insincere and treacherous" and believed that they were trying to close Manchuria against American commercial enterprise. Therefore, Roosevelt decided to support Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, and asked Russia and Japan to respect the "neutrality" and "administrative entity" of China. When the Bolshevik revolution came in 1917, Woodrow Wilson attempted to use economic and military force to prevent Communism. In January, 1918 Wilson decided to intervene in Russian Siberia to check Japanese ambition in the continent and to block Bolshevism in Russia. In order to block the Communists, Wilson favored Japanese cooperation, but the American Siberian expedition, according to Tompkins, was an "act of political expediency directed primarily at Japan." Wilson seems to have aimed at American control over the Chinese Eastern and Siberian railways when he cabled to acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk: "Irrespective of what policy may be toward Russia, and irrespective of future Russian developments, it is essential that we maintain the policy of the open door with reference to the Siberian and particularly the Chinese Eastern Railroad." Thus Wilsonian idealism, which gave great hope to the suppressed people throughout the world, was superseded by American political and economic interests in the Far East, and Wilson pursued a policy of anti-Japan and anti-Soviet in the Siberian venture. In short, America cooperated with Japan against the Bolsheviks and at the same time she kept eye on Japan for the control of Asiatic markets. V.I. Lenin, then the leader

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(6) Tompkin, *op. cit.*, p. 136. "Wilson wished Polk to mention to the Senate Committee the 'potential value' of the 'Trans-Siberian Railroad as a means for developing American commerce, particularly from the west coast of the U.S. to Russia." (p. 136)
of the Bolshevik revolution, well understood this situation, and, of the American-Japanese rivalry he said: "[Japan and America] want to fight; they will fight for the supremacy of the world, for the right to root." Of American financial support of Kerensky's Provisional Government, J.V. Stalin in 1917 said: "A coalition of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie (Milyuvkov!), the military (Kerensky!) and the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie that are obsequiously serving the 'virile forces' of Russia (Tsereteli!), financed by the American imperialist bourgeoisie—that in the present picture."(9)

In order to prevent the Bolshevik movement, the U.S. pursued a policy of non-recognition of the Soviet regime. But she failed to block rising communist forces. Of the Bolshevik victory Lenin made the following interesting statement: "At the time of Brest there were two gigantically powerful groups of imperialist pirates; the German-Austrian group and the Anglo-Franco-American group...But we took proper advantage of the hostility between German and American imperialism."(10) From the beginning of the Soviet Revolution, the United States pursued an anti-Soviet policy along with Japan and other European powers.(11) But, despite superiority in men and weapons, the Allies' intervention in Russia failed, because of lack of unity among the Allies. Allied troops remained on Soviet soil several years, and the last evacuation of Allied troops took place in 1925 when the Japanese troops withdrew under the "pressure-diplomacy" of the Washington Conference of 1921-22. Thus the war of intervention by the Allies, according to Sayers and Kahn, began "in secrecy and dishonesty" and ended in "shameful disaster," and "its legacy of hatred and mistrust was to poison the atmosphere of Europe for the next quarter of a century."(12)

However, the change of post-war world situation gradually changed the American-Soviet relations also. Following the Great Depression of 1929, the first aggression came in 1931

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(11) By the summer of 1919, besides counter-revolutionary White armies, nations without declaration of war were fighting against Red armies in the Soviet Union.

when Japan invaded Manchuria. On December 12, 1932, the Soviet Union and China resumed diplomatic relations primarily against their common enemy Japan. Moscow hailed this Sino-Soviet rapprochement as "a great step forward in the task of preserving peace in the Far East." (13) On the same day, Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Minister, declared that the rising crisis in the Far East was "in no small degree" due to the absence of diplomatic relations among the nations situated on the shore of the Pacific Ocean. (14) While in 1917-18, the United States tried to block the Communists and keep an eye on Japan for North Asiatic markets, in 1932-33, her policy was to do business with the Soviet Union in the open and to check the Japanese advance in China with Soviet cooperation, (15) because both nations (US and USSR) would benefit by mutual trade and both were the Pacific powers that were concerned with Japanese expansion in the Pacific. Senator Hiram Johnson declared that normal relations with Russia would "remedy the perils from the Far East, and therefore from the world in general, than any other single act." (16)

By 1933, the Americans in general came to favor recognition of Soviet Russia, (17) because by this time isolationist Herbert Hoover was replaced by liberal Franklin D. Roosevelt, Japan already controlled Manchuria, and Hitler was rising in Germany. Roosevelt understood these developments and took the initiative in recognizing the Soviet Government. This (the recognition of Soviet regime) was done on November 16, 1933, the year when the two powerful leaders (Roosevelt and Hitler) came into power. (18) Pravda commented on the recognition: "The 16th of November will become an important date in the history of international relations of our epoch." (19) The later international events fully justified this prophecy! Had the two powers—the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R.—

(14) Ibid., p. 551. Litvinov here apparently refers to American non-recognition of the Soviet government. He said: "It is only when all States maintain relations with one another that we shall be able to speak seriously of international cooperation in the cause of peace..." (p. 551)
(15) Browder, op. cit., pp.71, 77; LaFever, America, Russia and the Cold War, pp. 4-5.
(17) In 1933, the poll taken by the Committee on Russian-American Relations showed that 63% favored, while 26.9% opposed the recognition of Soviet Government.
(18) By this time Stalin also has consolidated his power in the Kremlin. Within ten years the two (Hitler and Roosevelt) along with other nations on each side met by force of arms.
not been allies during the War, the post-war history of international relations would have been greatly different from what we have had.

As already pointed out, World War II began in 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Two years later, Hitler's Nazism came into power on the pretext of "saving Germany from Communism." In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, and the following year Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland, made the Anti-Comintern Agreement with Japan, and German-Italian troops invaded Spain. In 1937, Italy joined the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Agreement, and Japan invaded the Chinese mainland. In the following year Germany seized Austria, and the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis was formed "to save the world from communism." In September, 1938, the Anglo-French governments appeased Hitler and Mussolini at the famous Munich Conference, which left the Soviet Union without allies. The League of Nations had already become politically bankrupt, and the Franco-Soviet Treaty was "dead." But Neville Chamberlain, commenting on the Munich Pact, declared: "It means peace in our time." The general belief of European nations that Russia was the danger to world peace, however, soon proved to be untrue—Germany was the threat. Small European nations fell to the fascists' hands one by one—Spain, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Albania—while in the East Japan occupied most of the industrial sections of China. On March 10, 1939, Stalin said that the Axis powers, under the mask of the Anti-Comintern Pact, were waging aggressive war not only against the Soviet Union but also against the interests of the "non-aggressive states" England, France and the United States. But Stalin's warning was ignored. The result was the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact on August 23, 1939. A week later, September 1, 1939, Nazi troops invaded Poland. Two days later, England and France declared war on Germany.


(22) In the Secret Additional Protocol of this Non Aggression Treaty, it was agreed that the Baltic states (Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were to "represent the frontier of the spheres of interest of both Germany and the U.S.S.R." Text in Royal Institute of International Affairs, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), Vol. I (1933-1941), pp. 359-361. Stalin's Speech (March 10, 1939) in Ibid., pp. 315-322.
European nations joined the war one by one. Within two weeks, Poland was occupied by Nazi-Soviet troops. In Finland, meanwhile, a pro-Nazi Finnish government went to war with Russia in November. After three victorious months, Finland, however, lost the war to the Red Army. At this time the anti-Soviet elements in England, France and the United States were strong, while undeclared war was already going on between Germany and Russia. By June, 1940, the British Army evacuated its troops from Dunkirk. On June 10, Fascist Italy declared war on France and England. Four days later, Paris fell to the Nazi Army. The Red Army, meanwhile, occupied Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Bessarabia. Now the German and Soviet troops stood face to face in the middle of the European continent. The year of 1941 was significant. On April 6, the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia, and on June 22, Hitler’s troops attacked the Soviet Union.\(^{23}\) Italy, Rumania, Hungry and Finland joined the Nazis against the Soviet Union. Then there came the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7 by Japan.\(^{24}\) Both Italy and Germany declared war on the United States, and thus the general and global war came into being.

The Japanese attack on America quickened Soviet-American cooperation in the anti-Fascist war. But ever since 1917, there had been considerable anti-Soviet elements in the United States. When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, many Americans believed that the Red Army was an "undisciplined rabble." The anti-Soviet Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, along with Czarist Russians abroad, effectively continued anti-Soviet propaganda. "The almost unanimous opinion" in the United States was that "Stalin could not last long." The New York Post was quoted as saying that it would be "a miracle bigger than any seen since the Bible was written to save the Reds from utter defeat in a very short time."\(^{25}\) The anti-Soviet Fascist propaganda in the United States was aided by the so-called America First Committee,\(^{26}\) which spread anti-Soviet, anti-British and isolationist propaganda among the people at the end of 1940. Charles A. Lindbergh,\(^{27}\) the prominent


\(^{24}\) Japanese "Imperial Rescript" for the attack states: "the sources of evil will be speedily eradicated and an enduring peace immutably established in East Asia, preserving thereby the glory of Our Empire." (Copy of Imperial Rescript Declaring War, Plate No. 1, writer’s library)


\(^{26}\) The original leaders of the America First Committee included General Robert E. Wood, Henry Ford, Senators Burton K. Wheeler and Gerald P. Nye and Representatives Hamilton Fish, Clare E. Hoffman and Katherine Lewis and others.

\(^{27}\) An aviator, pro-Nazi and anti-Sovietist. Received on October 18, 1938 the Order of the German Eagle from German Government.
spokesman of the America First Committee, was quoted as saying that Soviet Russia would be a “useless ally,” and war against Germany was the “wrong war”, emphasizing “the right way lay to the east” (Soviet Union). Lindbergh advocated in 1938 that England and France permit Germany to “expand eastward into Russia without declaring war.” The America First Committee was disbanded following the Pearl Harbor attack, but the anti-Soviet propaganda went on. The anti-Soviets in the United States protested the Lend-Lease Aid to the Soviet Union, and when the Red Army opened a strong counter-offensive, they declared that Moscow and its Comintern would soon “communize” all of Europe. Even the Soviet’s “separate peace” with Nazi Germany was predicated by the anti-Soviets, and on April 28, 1942, President Roosevelt warned that the war effort “must not be impeded by a few bogus patriots who use the sacred freedom of the press to echo the sentiments of the propagandists in Tokyo and Berlin.” As Nazi Germany neared its end, another call for “a new anti-Soviet alliance to save Western civilization from the menace of ‘Soviet imperialism’” was echoed. This was exactly what the Nazis wanted, and after the defeat of Germany and Japan, the anti-Soviets’ “propaganda” became reality. Now the Soviet Union and communism did become a menace to the United States and to the West. However, in 1941, the United States preferred the U.S. S.R. to Germany as a lesser evil. As Harry S. Truman, Democratic Senator from Missouri, said: “If we see that Germany is winning we should help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don’t want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances.” The Allies’ unity during the war was solid, and even General Douglas MacArthur, commenting on the Red Army, in 1942 said: “The world situation at the present time indicates that the hope of civilization rests on the worthy banners of the courageous Russian army.” On December 1, 1943, the Allies at the historic Conference of Teheran, Roosevelt,

(28) Sayers and Kahn, op. cit., p. 132.
(29) Ibid., p. 133.
(30) Ibid., p. 132n.
(33) Ibid., pp. 135-6.
(36) See Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943. Part I.
Churchill and Stalin determined to "wipe out" Nazism by joint action of the Allies. The Declaration of Teheran was followed by the Yalta decisions of February, 1945. Here the three leaders decided not only post-war policies but also a United Nations Conference to be held in San Francisco in April for a new international order of peace and security. To the great sorrow of the world, on April 12, 1945, the eve of the San Francisco Conference, Roosevelt died. On May 2, 1945, the Red Army took Berlin and on May 8, the war in Europe came to an end. In the Far East, meanwhile, the United States dropped two atomic bombs—one on Hiroshima on August 6 and another on Nagasaki on August 9. On August 8, the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan as pledged at Yalta. Within one week Japan surrendered unconditionally. This was on August 15, which closed World War II.

CHAPTER III
The Cold War, 1945–1950

On January 6, 1945, in his message to Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said:

The nearer we come to vanquishing our enemies, the more we inevitably become conscious of differences among the victors...Nations, like individuals, do not always see alike or think alike, and international cooperation and progress are not helped by any nation assuming that it has a monopoly of wisdom or of virtue. (1)

President Roosevelt well prophesied the forthcoming cold war as the Allies came nearer to vanquishing their enemies. Unfortunately, Roosevelt died before the end of the war, and his warning against the danger of a split among the victors was overrun by the law of politics—"power is the factor in world politics"—following the V-J Day. Roosevelt’s words—"It is not only a common danger which united us but a common hope"—proved

(37) See Foreign Relations of the U.S.: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, Part II. At Yalta, the Soviet Union pledged to enter the Pacific war within 2-3 months after the defeat of Germany on the conditions that Russian rights violated by Japan in 1904 be restored. For the agreement on conditions see Ibid., p. 984.

(38) For the last days of Japanese Surrender see The Pacific War Research Society, Japan’s Longest Day, Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1968. Imperial Rescript Ending the War (Plate No. 167), Photoduplicated copy in the writer’s library.

only part of it—"a common danger." The end of World War II marked the beginning of the Allies' split, and the former Axis-Allies conflict was replaced by the Soviet-American cold war. Now both German and Japanese military powers were destroyed, China had to recover from its war damage, former Anglo-French influence was disappearing, and the United Nations became not an able world police but an organization made up of two political camps—Soviet and American or Eastern and Western blocs. The end of Fascism meant also the end of the Soviet-American common necessity for cooperation, and the elements of the East-West alliance were quickly replaced by mutual suspicion, consciousness of opposing ideologies and national interests. Because of these negative factors involved in their relations, both powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, sought their security not in the United Nations but in an "exclusive" "national security." One's security meant insecurity to the other, and vice versa. Therefore, the course taken by each of the two powers had been expansion of its influence against the other, and the struggle and conflict of the two blocs became known as the "Cold War." Several studies have been made on the origins and nature of the Cold War. According to the "traditional" or "orthodox" American view, "the Cold War was the brave and essential response of free men to Communist aggression." Some traced the Cold War to the Soviet "expansionism" and "classical Russian imperialism and Pan-Slavism" which confronted the West at the end of W.W. II. The "revisionist" historians, however, assert that external influences—especially American diplomacy—had an important impact on Soviet policy. They conclude that "unrealistic and sometimes truculent" Western diplomacy (especially between 1945-1947) was a major cause of the Cold War, because it reduced policy alternatives open to the Soviet Union and thus induced Russia to choose "hard line" policies.

The two superpowers competed and struggled for power politically, militarily and economically in the world, and communism played an important role in the Cold War. By 1950, the Soviet Union occupied or succeeded in having Communist regimes in the

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(2) LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1975, Ch. 1-3; E.P. Hoffmann and F.J. Fleron, Jr., The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy (Chicago, 1971); N.A. Graebner, Cold War Diplomacy, 1945-1960 (1962); L.J. Halle, The Cold War as History (167). Also see W.B. Smith, My Three Years in Moscow (1950).
(4) Ibid.
following areas: In Europe, the Red Army occupied Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania on August 3, 1940 and helped set up Communist regimes there; Poland in 1944; Yugoslavia on November 11, 1945; Bessarabia and part of Bucovina in 1945; Albania on January 11, 1941; Hungary in May, 1947; Bulgaria in December, 1947; Rumania in December, 1947; Czechoslovakia in February, 1948; San Marino on February 26, 1949; and East Germany, which was occupied by the Red Army in 1945, in September, 1949. In Asia, Outer Mongolia on October 30, 1945; Inner Mongolia on May 12, 1917; North Korea on September 10, 1948; and China in October 1, 1919. This, charged the United States, means "Communist imperialism," and the Soviet Union with its "International Communism" (Cominform) dreams of world conquest and therefore threatens world peace and security.

On the other hand, the United States by 1950 extended anti-Soviet influence throughout almost all the world except to the Soviet bloc nations. In 1949, the United States gave support to Iran: 1947, she sent military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, and in September, 1947, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Treaty of Rio de Janeiro) was signed; in 1948, the Marshall Plan formed an European Economic bloc of sixteen nations plus West Germany; on April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty (later NATO) formed a North Atlantic political and military bloc of twelve nations; and in 1950, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was signed with eight NATO member nations. In Asia, three billion dollars in aid has gone to the Nationalist


(7) This treaty was signed by 19 out of 21 Latin American governments by which all parties were obligated "to take positive action to assist in meeting an armed attack against any state of the hemisphere." Full text of the treaty in Raymond Dennett and Robert K. Turner, Documents on American Foreign Relations (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press), Vol. IX, 1947, pp. 534-540.


(9) The 16 nations included: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey.

(10) Article 5 of NATO states: "An armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." Text in Dennett and Turner, Documents on Am. For. Rel., Vol. XI, 1949, pp. 612-15; For its communiqué see Ibid., pp. 607-9. See Kennan, Memoirs, p. 337-41; Truman, Memoirs, II, pp. 277-300.

China since V-J Day; reindustrialization and rearmament have begun in Japan; and economic and military aids have been given to the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia and Indochina, etc.

This, charged the Soviet Union, means a political and military encirclement of "Anglo-Saxon aggression" and "imperialism" directed against the Soviet Union. It is led, charged the U.S.S.R., by American capitalist "warmongers" and Wall Street. The Soviet Union further said that while the East was forming a Peace Pact, the West formed military pacts.

Thus both powers denounced the other as an aggressor and imperialist while claiming itself to be a peace-lover. As indicated above, the world, within five years after V-J Day, was sharply divided into two camps. The Eastern European nations lined up with the Soviet Union, while the Western and inter-American nations went to the American bloc. In the Near and Middle Eastern nations, many of which were newly established, the U.S. was pouring in money, while the U.S.S.R. poured in ideology. In the Far East, both powers were trying to win as many nations as possible on its side, and, while the greatest population (China) went to the Soviet side, the greatest industrial base (Japan) remained firmly on American side.

Under these conditions, President Truman, concerned with the victory of Communist China and the growing confidence of Soviet leaders by its success with the atomic bomb, and pressed by domestic critics (McCarthyism) and the China Lobby, decided to reevaluate the American Cold War policies. On January 30, 1950, he requested a general policy reappraisal about the National Security position, and the National Security Council began work on a highly secret document which became known as NSC-68. President Truman examined the study in April, and Sec. of State Acheson, over opposition from George Kennan and Charles Bohlen, "the two top State Department experts on Russia", determined to launch a global offensive to reclaim the initiative in the Cold War and to

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(12) As of 1950 some exceptions are: Communist Yugoslavia broke off with Moscow; Argentina was more anti-American than anti-Soviet; Guatemala was more communistic; and Honduras was more anti-British, etc.


shut up critics at home." (15) This "NSC-68", according to LaFeber, "proved to be the American blueprint for waging a Cold War during the next twenty years." (16) It was to meet the Soviet menace (expansion and Communism), and its recommendations were: (1) to oppose negotiations with Russia; (2) to develop hydrogen bombs; (3) to rapidly build conventional military forces; (4) to increase taxes for the new expensive military establishment (17); (5) to mobilize American society for "sacrifice" and "unity"; (6) to have a strong alliance system under U.S. direction; and (7) to undermine the "Soviet totalitarian" from within by making "the Russian people our allies in this enterprise." (18) According to this "NSC-68", the U.S. Government decided to meet the Soviet expansion and communism not by containment but with global "positions of strength" for a complete victory, and the Korean War provided the opportunity for its implementation as Acheson later said: "Korea came along and saved us." (19) Thus, it was the Korean peninsula that the post-war Cold War turned into "hot war."

CHAPTER IV
The Division of Korea

Korea first became a post-war issue among the Allies in 1943 when the Cairo Conference, represented by Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill, declared on December 1 the following statement:

"The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent." (1)

This promise of liberation and independence of Korea by the Allies was reaffirmed

(15) Ibid., p. 98.
(16) Ibid., p. 97.
(18) LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War..., p. 99.
(19) Ibid., p. 100.
(1) Foreign Relations of the U.S.: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943, p. 449. For the American and British Drafts of the Communiqué see Ibid., pp. 399-404. American Draft reads: "We are mindful of the treacherous enslavement of the people of Korea by Japan, and are determined that that country at the proper moment after the downfall of Japan shall become a free and independent country." But British Draft became the text of Cairo Declaration. Text of Cairo Declaration also in Se-jin Kim (ed.), Documents on Korean American Relations, 1943-1976 (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), p. 27. Hereafter cited as Documents on Korean-American Relations.
by the Potsdam Proclamation on July 26, 1945, which was signed by Truman, Stalin and Attlee. At Cairo Chiang Kai-shek "stressed on the necessity of granting independence to Korea," and the three leaders agreed to recognize independence of Korea after the war and to welcome the U.S.S.R. to adhere to this agreement "at any time." Several days later at Teheran, when Churchill asked Stalin if he had read the proposed communiqué on the Far East of the Cairo Declaration the latter replied that he had and that "although he could make no commitments he thoroughly approved the communiqué and all its contents." Stalin further said that "it was right that Korea should be independent, and that Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores Islands should be returned to China." However, the independence of Korea did not mean immediate independence as far as the Allies leaders were concerned. The Cairo Declaration stated "in due course" for Korea's independence, and at Yalta Roosevelt and Stalin discussed (February 8, 1945) the trusteeship of Korea by the United States, U.S.S.R., and China. Roosevelt at Yalta felt that the period of trusteeship of Korea "might be from twenty to thirty years," considering fifty years' experience for the people of Philippines "to be prepared for self-government." To this Stalin said, "the shorter the period the better." According to Roosevelt's report to the Pacific War Council (January 12, 1944), he even suggested "a 40-year tutelage" for Korea since "Koreans are not yet capable of exercising and maintaining government." At Yalta when Stalin inquired whether foreign troops would be stationed in Korea, Roosevelt "replied in the negative, and Stalin expressed his approval of this." As to the composition of Korean trusteeship, Roosevelt told Stalin that he "did not feel it was necessary to invite the British to participate," but felt that the British might resent this. Stalin replied that the British "would most certainly be offended" and Churchill might "kill us", and that Britain "should be invited" to the trusteeship of Korea. It was here at Yalta where Stalin, in "a toast to the alliance" between the three great powers,

(3) Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943, p. 325.
(4) Ibid., p. 389.
(5) Ibid., pp. 566, 869.
(6) Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, p. 770.
(7) Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943, p. 869.
(9) Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, p. 770.
remarked prophetically that it was not so difficult to keep unity in time of war against common enemy, but the “difficult task came after the war when diverse interest tended to divide the Allies.” He said that “he was confident that the present alliance would meet this test” and that it was their duty to keep the alliance strong in peacetime.\(^{(10)}\)

The unity of the alliance was tested in the division of Korea by American-Soviet joint occupation in 1945. Prior to the Yalta Conference, the U.S. had studied a plan for post-war status of Korea. According to this plan, Korea was to be militarily occupied and Allies representatives of U.S., Britain, China and U.S.S.R. (if it has entered war in the Pacific) should participate in the occupation and military government.\(^{(11)}\) The joint action in establishing Korean independence was felt “important and necessary” because China and the U.S.S.R. “are contiguous to Korea and have had a traditional interest in Korean affairs,” the U.S., Britain and China promised Korea’s independence at Cairo, and “any single power might serious political repercussions.”\(^{(12)}\) However, the “leading role” should be played by the U.S., partly because of the “trust which Koreans will place in the U.S. not to harbor imperialistic designs.” The military government, according to this plan, should administer all of Korea “as a single unit and not as separate zones.”\(^{(13)}\) As to the Soviet participation, the U.S. felt that because of Soviet interest and position in the Far East, it would be “advisable” to have its representative on an interim international administration “regardless of whether or not the Soviet Union enters the war in the Pacific.”\(^{(14)}\) According to General Collins, Army Chief of Staff during the Korean War, it was “at Potsdam” where Truman, Churchill and Stalin “agreed on a joint American-Russian occupation of Korea” following the surrender of Japan “with the 38th Parallel as a temporary dividing line” between the occupying forces.\(^{(15)}\) At Potsdam, according to General T.S. Timberman, Russia asked America to “coordinate” with them or “assist” them in an amphibious landing in Korea. But General Marshall of the U.S. explained to the Russians that it was “impossible” because the U.S. was building up its total military effort for the invasion of Japanese homeland.\(^{(16)}\) The U.S. at this time was so

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\(^{(11)}\) *Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, 1945, pp. 358-59.


much concerned with the defeat of Japan that she did not plan "land operations" in Korea before the invasion of Japanese mainland, and her agreed lines with Russia for "air and naval forces" ran not along the 38th Parallel but "across extreme northern Korea." The U.S. experts, says Truman, believed that U.S. air operations from Kyushu could control Korea "without difficulty," and, on the areas of military operations he denies any agreement on definite lines such as 38th Parallel. He says:

Agreement was also reached on lines to mark off areas of operation for the respective air and naval forces. These ran generally from the northern tip of Japan across extreme northern Korea. No lines were set up for land operations since it was not anticipated by our military leaders that we would carry out operations to Korea. (17)

Thus, it seems that at Potsdam joint occupation of Korea was discussed with agreed line for air and naval operations but not definite line for occupation of Korea. At to the final decision of the 38th Parallel, which brought about the Korean War five years later, John M. Allison and James E. Webb (Under Sec. of State) of Department of State say that the line of division along the 38th Parallel was discussed by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee on August 11 and 12, 1945 for the draft of General Order No. 1 which would define the areas of responsibility for accepting the surrender of Japanese forces. The line was decided "on the basis of the recommendation" of the War Department and the review of General Order No. 1 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff was concluded on August 14, then approved by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee. With President's approval, the General Order No. 1 was telegraphed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to General MacArthur in Manila on August 15, 1945. (18) The Text of General Order No. 1 was communicated to Stalin as well as the British Government. In his reply of August 16 Stalin suggested "certain amendment" in the text but "made no reference" to the provisions of 38th Parallel. In Truman's words, it "was not debated over, nor bargained for by either side." (19)

According to Gen. Colline, the line was first prepared by Col. Charles H. Bonesteel (later General and U.N. Commander) and Maj. Dean Rusk (later Secretary of State) within 30 minutes at "about midnight, August 10-11, 1945" while the Russians were

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(18) House Report (81st Congress, 2nd Session), No. 2495, pp. 2-3; Ibid., No. 3495, p. 23.
just occupying Korea from the North.\(^{(20)}\) In order to prevent Russian advance to the southern Korea, the line was seized on the map by Bonesteel and Rusk because Seoul, the capital, was on the South and the line divided the peninsula almost equally.\(^{(21)}\) In deciding the line of division Sec. of State Byrnes wished it would be "as far north as practicable", but the army authorities, because of distance and lack of manpower, favored the 38th parallel which assured the U.S. of receiving the capital city of Seoul.\(^{(22)}\) Although the Department of State "urged" that Americans receive the surrender of Japanese forces "in all Korea," the line was proposed by the U.S. "as a practicable solution."\(^{(23)}\)

Thus, the 38th Parallel was decided and proposed to Russia by America, and Korea was to be divided into two separate zones! As to the purpose of 38th Parallel, J.M. Allison of the State Department said later:

The division between United States and Soviet forces along the 38th parallel was a line of demarcation adopted solely for the purpose of receiving the surrender of the Japanese forces. It was never intended by the United States to be the artificial barrier it has now become.\(^{(24)}\)

According to Truman, the division was expected to be "solely for the purpose of accepting the Japanese surrender and that joint control would then extend throughout the peninsula," since Stalin "had concurred in the idea of a joint trusteeship" of Korea.\(^{(25)}\) The suddenness of the Japanese surrender may have forced America to have made an "emergency consideration" on Korea. However, the division of Korea, from the American point of view, was "motivated by certain specific political objectives" as explained by L. M. Goodrich:

\[(1) \text{to prevent the occupation of all of Korea by Soviet forces which was considered unavoidable in the absence of such an arrangement}; \ (2) \text{to place the United States in as strong a position as possible to implement the promise of Korean independence}; \ (3) \text{to provide for the security of Japan and of U.S. forces during the period of the military occupation of Japan}; \ (4) \text{to limit the area of Communist control}.\] \(^{(26)}\)

\(^{(21)}\) Ibid. See *Foreign Relations of the U.S.*, 1949, IV, pp. 1037–1040.
\(^{(23)}\) Ibid., II, p. 361.
\(^{(24)}\) House Report (81st Congress, 2nd Session), No. 2495, p. 3.
As already mentioned, the plan for post-war status of Korea was to include the Soviet Union in the Korean occupation regardless of Soviet entry in the Pacific war. It was in U.S. interest to play the leading role in post-war Korea, to protect Japan and to prevent Communist expansion in Asia after the defeat of Japan. Therefore, the purpose of the division of Korea by the Soviet-American joint occupation is clear. Politically, Korea, occupying the strategic location of Northeast Asia, had to be independent or protected from one power domination, because political equilibrium in Korea would be very important to the powers, particularly the U.S., Soviet Union, China (and later Japan) whose interests in the Pacific were so great. This political factor, that the Korean peninsula affects the international relations in Northeast Asia, resulted in the decision for the Soviet-American joint occupation. Although the 38th parallel might have been decided rather in haste and with few political factors in its consideration because of sudden changes in the Pacific War, the parallel was fundamentally a political product. The Soviet-American forces occupied Korea in August-September, and soon the East-West Cold War appeared over the peninsula. Korea was the only place in the world where the two post-war powers stood directly face to face. (27) Because of the joint occupation, the Koreans were forced to choose one side or the other. Their centuries-old national unity now began to be torn to pieces because Korea's unity depended upon the Soviet-American unity and cooperation. On December 27, 1945, the Moscow Conference of the three Foreign Ministers of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union declared: "There shall be set up a provisional Korean democratic government" and to assist its formation, a Joint Commission consisting of representatives of the United States and Soviet Commands in Korea, was to be established. The Commission was "to consult with the Korean democratic parties and social organization" for the final development of an independent and sovereign Korea. Korea was to be under "a four power trusteeship" of the United States, China, U.S.S.R. and United Kingdom "for a period of up to five years." (28) Now the "in due course" clause in the Cairo Declaration became a five years' trusteeship. To the Koreans, the

(27) Germany was divided not by the two great powers but by four powers, including Great Britain and France.
word "trusteeship" meant another Japanese "protectorate" (29) by the powers, and they quickly and strongly protested against the Moscow Agreement. (30) The leftists, however, supported the Moscow Agreement although they too at first opposed it. The Joint Commission held its first meeting on March 20 at Seoul, which lasted until May 8, without conclusive results. The Commission became deadlocked over the problem of whether to admit to consultation of Korean political leaders who opposed the Moscow decision. The Russians wanted to exclude "certain" right-wing organizations which opposed the Moscow Agreement, while the United States insisted on including them. (31) The basic problem, however, was that each power wanted to have a Korean government friendly to itself. The Cold War grew hotter in the meanwhile, and the 38th Parallel became "an impassable barrier". The Soviet-American relations marked a "low ebb" in June, 1946, when the Russian Consular staff was "forced" by the United States to withdraw from Seoul. (32) Amidst these deteriorating Soviet-American relations, in April and May, 1947, Secretary Marshall and Foreign Minister Molotov exchanged notes on the possibility of resuming the work of the Joint Commission. (33) The results was the Second Soviet-American Joint Commission meeting which was held in Seoul on May 22. (34) The Commission, however, reached a deadlock again in August over the same issue of participation of Korea's political and social organizations in the consultation. (35) From its beginning the Anti-Trusteeship

(29) Japan, following the Russo-Japanese War (1905), forced a "protectorate" over Korea, and annexed the latter five years later (1910). In Korean, "protectorate" and "trusteeship" were confused, and the two terms were translated in Korean papers without clear explanation at first. Although the two different words were explained, the Koreans regarded them as the same meaning as far as self-government was concerned.


(31) The American position was that the Russian interpretation was a denial of "the rights of free speech", while Russia's position was that America took a stand "contrary to the Moscow Agreement" pertaining to Korea. See Truman, Memoirs, II, pp. 361-65.

(32) This was U.S. retaliation against Soviet refusal to allow American consular office in Pyongyang.


Committee attempted to block the work of the Joint Commission.\footnote{36} The United States attempted to "force" the rightists to cooperate with the Communists, but failed. Again the basic issue of the Soviet-American struggle for world hegemony set Korean questions aside and the fought their cold war instead.

On August 26, 1947, Acting Secretary Robert A. Lovett proposed a four-power conference "to achieve the aims of the Moscow agreement."\footnote{37} When the Soviet Union rejected the new plan, the United States, on September 17, announced its intention to submit the Korean case to the United Nations General Assembly.\footnote{38} Russia then proposed, on August 26, to set up "a consultative body" consisting of representatives of "democratic" groups for a national assembly, and on September 26 she proposed withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea by January 1, 1948.\footnote{39} The United States rejected both of these proposals and proceeded with its plan to settle the Korean question through the United Nations. The result was the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on November 14 for the creation of a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea.\footnote{40} The Soviet Union and its bloc nations "boycotted" the resolution.\footnote{41} The UNTCOK was initiated by the United States, and when the U.N. Commission arrived in Seoul in January, 1948, it was refused entrance into the Russian-occupied north Korea.\footnote{42} On May 10, an election was held in the Southern zone, and on August 15, the Republic of Korea (\textit{Daehan Minguk}) was proclaimed with Syngman Rhee as President.\footnote{43} The United States and other nations of the American bloc recognized the Republic of Korea as the legal government in Korea, and the U.S. signed with the R.O.K. the Agreement On Aid

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{37}{Lovett's letter to Molotov in \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 31—33; \textit{Documents on Kor.-Am. Rel.}, pp. 39—40.}
\footnote{38}{Text of Marshall's Address in \textit{Documents on Kor.-Am. Rel.}, pp. 41—42.}
\footnote{42}{See Goodrich, \textit{Korea...}, pp. 57—64.}
\footnote{43}{See McCune, \textit{Korea Today}, pp. 235—346; Gordenker, \textit{The U.N. ...}, Chapters III, IV and V; Goodrich, \textit{Korea...} pp. 59—64; \textit{Truman, Memoirs}, II, pp. 373—74.}
\end{footnotes}
The Origins and Nature of the Korean War

(Dec. 10, 1949) and Agreement On Mutual Defense Assistance (January 26, 1950). The U.N. General Assembly also recognized the R.O.K. as "a lawful government" "having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult" in regard to the elections, and declared that the R.O.K. "is the only such Government in Korea." In North Korea, meanwhile, on May 1, 1948, the Korean "People's Committee" announced a new constitution, and on September 10 the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (Choseon Minjujui Inmin Gongwhagug) was proclaimed with Kim Il-sung as Premier. The Soviet Union and Communist nations recognized it as the legal government in Korea. Now there were established two rival regimes with American and Soviet support in the peninsula, and from this time on the Cold War in Korea developed rapidly and actively. By December 30, 1948, the Soviet troops withdrew from North Korea, and in March, 1949, North Korea concluded an economic treaty with the Soviet Union. In South Korea, by June 30, 1949, the United States also withdrew its troops from Korea, leaving only military missions behind to train Korean armies. By the end of 1948, the two opposing regimes were consolidating their governments, and each claimed that its government was the only legal government, and therefore had jurisdiction over all of Korea. Each denounced and attacked the other, and threats of war were heard on both sides. The Soviet-American Cold War now was to be fought in Korea by the Koreans. During 1949, and until June 24, 1950, the border incidents with armed forces at many points along the 38th Parallel were frequent. It was getting hotter every day, and the Land of Morning Calm could not be kept out of an actual shooting war any longer. The final clash did come on Sunday, June 25, 1950, when the continued and intensified Cold War and armed clashes along the border turned into a hot war with the Communist tanks moving toward the south.

(46) McCune, Korea Today, pp. 246-250; Goodrich, Korea..., p. 64; Gordenker, U.N...., pp. 49-142.
(47) U.S. State Department Statement on the Withdrawal of Troops from Korea, June 8, 1949 in Documents on Kor. -Am. Rel., pp. 76-77. See Ibid., p. 72; Goodrich, Korea..., p. 64; Gordenker, The U.N...., pp. 186-207.
(48) Goodrich, Korea..., pp. 72-101.
CHAPTER V
Immediate Causes of War

On the origin of Korean War, the UNCOKim reported to the Security Council on June 26, 1950 in the following words:

The origin of the conflict is to be found in the artificial division of Korea and in the failure of the occupying Powers to reach an agreement on the method to be used for giving independence to Korea.... this failure was not due to anything inherent in the attitude of the people of Korea themselves, but was a reflection of the wider differences of the policy of the big Powers.(1)

The above UNCOKim report rightly points out the basic origin and nature of the Korean War. Certainly the division of the country and the failure of US-Soviet governments to give the Koreans an unified and independent government, which was promised at Cairo and reaffirmed at Potsdam by the Allied Powers, were the causes of the war. The division and failure, however, were not the making and responsibility of the Koreans themselves, but rather a reflection and a result of the American-Soviet struggle and Cold War in Korea.

Apart from this basic and broad nature of the war, some other causes were given as contributing factors to the outbreak of the war. One of the much-argued points was Secretary Acheson’s reference to American military security of the Pacific area in his speech of January 12, 1950 on a Review of U.S. Policy to 1950. In this speech Acheson said: “The defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus.... The defensive perimeter runs from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands ...”(2) Korea and Formosa, according to this defensive line, were left out of American Pacific defensive line. Some argued that this particular section of Acheson’s statement was interpreted by Stalin as lack of American determination to defend Korea if the R.O.K. were attacked by the North Korean Communists; although Acheson in the same speech said that “we are interested in stopping the spread of communism” which “is the most subtle instrument of Soviet Foreign policy” and “the spearhead of Russian imperialism....”(3)

(1) Year Book of the U.N., 1950, p. 256.
(2) Documents on Korean-American Relations, p. 87. Full text of Acheson’s speech in pp. 83–89.
(3) Ibid., p. 86. See also Department of State Bulletin, XXII, No. 556 and No. 559.
Another point of argument for the cause of war is the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea in 1949. According to General Ridgway, the U.S. underestimated the strength of the North Korean People's Army, and it withdrew its troops from Korea "in deference to a resolution" of the U.N. General Assembly which was "drawn up and introduced by the U.S. itself, and in spite of warnings by the United Nations Temporary Commission and by Syngman Rhee that Korea was on the verge of a 'barbarious civil war!'" (4) The reasons for the U.S. withdrawal in the very face of such North-South strain was that the U.S. military leaders favored withdrawal of troops because of "little strategic interest" of Korean peninsula, and that there were "wrong reports" or mistaken intelligence of the Korean situation. On September 25, 1947 the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that "from the standpoint of military security, the U.S. has little strategic interest in maintaining the troops and bases in Korea", because in the event of war in the Far East, American forces in Korea "would be a military liability and could not be maintained without substantial reenforcement," and any offensive operation on the Asiatic continent "most probably would bypass the Korean peninsula." (5) Furthermore, in the spring of 1948 the National Security Council reported to President Truman that one of the three things the U.S. could do in Korea was to "abandon" Korea, and in early 1949 even General MacArthur favored "prompt withdrawal" of U.S. troops from Korea. (6) The U.S. classified documents on American withdrawal of troops from Korea in 1949, which was made public on April 16, 1977, verify the above statements and accounts of President Truman and General Ridgway. (7) It seems that General MacArthur's reports on the Far East influenced the views of National Security Council on Korea. (6) But as to the report on the possible invasion from the North, there were problems of "whether an attack was certain or when it was likely to come." (8) President Truman knew, as early as the spring of 1948, that Korea "was one of the places where the Soviet-controlled Communist world

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 374; 374–5. The other two things were US responsibility of Korea and continuous aid to Korea.
(7) The released documents promptly appeared on Korean newspapers in excerpt form in April on most of the dailies in Seoul.
might choose to attack." But, he says, the same thing could be said "for every point of contact between East and West," and it "did not apply alone to Korea." Another problem, according to Gen. Ridgway, was that the intelligence reports on the North Korean threat were taken as "just a normal aspect of the psychological Cold ‘War’" and that Tokyo placed "minimum credence in Oriental agents" and felt that "South Koreans especially had a tendency to cry ‘Wolf’ when there was no beast in the offing." However, it was South Korean President Rhee who rightly warned on May 5, 1950: "May and June may be a crucial period in the life of our nations. We lack adequate defense." R.O.K. Defense Minister Shin also warned on May 10 that "invasion by Communist North Korea was imminent." As Gen. Ridgway and President Rhee said Korea as well as America "were not prepared" for the invasion, and the R.O.K. lacked "adequate defense."

Thus, from the statements of leaders of the R.O.K. and the U.S.A. it may be concluded that both Korea and America recognized the existence of threat and danger of a Communist attack. But, the U.S. regarded Korea as a less important area than Europe or Japan in its global security system. The U.S. regarded Europe as the key in its global policy and Japan as the key in its Pacific policy, and therefore Korea was treated as an area of low priority. In the Far East, the defense of Japan was so important that even during the Korean War the basic mission of the U.N. Command, as instructed by the U.S. Government, was "the defense of Japan."

So far we have discussed the geographical and historical background of Korea, the American-Soviet relations, the Cold War, and some military aspects of U.S. policy in regard to the origins of the Korean War. The Korean War resulted from the American-Soviet struggle and the Cold War. But who or which side started the attack was one of the main issues at the U.N., and the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. so far have not yet agreed on this point. According to "direct observation along parallel by UNCOCK Military Obser

(10) Ibid.
(12) Quoted in Paige, The Korean Decision to Intervene, p. 72.
(14) President Truman particularly regarded Europe's economic power, such as skilled workmen, factories, and transportation network to be very important to world peace.
(15) Mike Mansfield, Ambassador-designate to Japan (April, 1977) said that Japan remains the key to "security, stability and peace in the Pacific." (Time, April 19, 1977, p. 18)
vers over a period ending 48 hours before hostilities began." the Commission's view on the Korean War was:

Commission's present view on the basis of this evidence is, first, that judging from actual progress of operations the Northern regime is carrying out well-planned, concerted, and full-scale invasion of South Korea, second, that South Korean forces were deployed wholly on a defensive basis in all sectors of the parallel, and third, that they were taken completely by surprise as they had no reason to believe from intelligence sources that invasion was imminent....

This was UNCOL report on Korea to the Secretary-General of the U.N. on June 26, 1950, and, based on the Commission's observation, it was North Korea that invaded South Korea. But basically it was the Soviet Union that is responsible for the invasion, because, in General Ridgway's words, "the war had been instigated by the Soviet Union and had been fought with tanks, planes, and guns supplied by that country." General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, had similar views when he said:

Red China is not the powerful nation seeking to dominate the world. Frankly in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff this strategy would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time and with the wrong enemy.

What Gen. Bradley means in this statement may be interpreted as North Korea is not the right enemy, China is not powerful enough to challenge the U.S., the Korean peninsula is not the right place to fight, the U.S. is not prepared in terms of time, and therefore the war is the "wrong war"—one the U.S. does not want to have. Then, why did the Soviet Union through North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950? According to GHQ report to Washington (six days before the attack), Soviet advisers believed that it was "the opportune time to attempt to subjugate the South Korean government by political means, especially since the guerrilla campaign in Sough Korea recently has met serious reverses." According to LaFeber, Russia aimed at both Japan and China: "A

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(19) Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 239.
short and successful war by a Russian controlled North Korea could intimidate Japan and check the expansive aims and reputation of Mao." (22) Of the Soviet control over North Korea, the Washington Post said that "the invasion of Southern Korea is of Soviet origin, Northern Korea is a Muscovite creature; the army above the thirty-eighth parallel would not move without orders from the Kremlin..." (23) The Dagens Nyheter of Sweden (June 26) regarded North Korea as a Soviet "puppet regime" and the war as a Soviet attack on the U.S.: "The war program is not controlled by North Korea because it is a mere puppet regime under the influence of Moscow. Therefore, it is the Soviet Union which commands the military operations in Korea. For the same reason, it is the United States which is being attacked." (24) Therefore, when President Truman decided to intervene in Korea, he aimed at the Soviet Union and Communism rather than North Korea itself. On his way to Washington by plane from Kansas, on June 26, the day after the war broke out, Truman seemed to have made up his mind on the Korean War. He expressed his feelings and decision of that day in the following words:

"The plane left the Kansas City Municipal Airport at two o'clock, and it took just a little over three hours to make the trip to Washington. I had time to think aboard the plane. In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted, ten, fifteen and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war. It was also clear to me that the foundations and the principles of the United Nations were at stake unless this unprovoked attack on Korea could be stopped." (25)

Thus the Soviet Union through North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea, and the

(22) LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945—1975, p. 103.
(24) The Truth Behind the Korean War, pp. 181—82.
CHAPTER VI
The First Week

On the morning of June 25, 1950, Sunday, the United Nations Commission on Korea sent the following communiqué to the United Nations Secretary-General Trygve Lie:

Government of Republic of Korea states that about 04:00 hours, 25 June, attacks were launched in strength by North Korean forces all along the Thirtyeight Parallel....

Pyongyang radio, meanwhile, declared “at 13:35 hours” of June twenty-fifth, that South Korea “invaded” across the Parallel during the night (June 25 morning), and that the “People’s Army [was] instructed [to] repulse invading forces by decisive counterattack, and placed responsibility for consequences on South Korea.” The United Nations Commission on Korea in the communiqué further said:

Commission wishes to draw attention of Secretary-General to serious development which is assuming character of full-scale war and may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the same day (June 25) Earnes A. Gross of the U.S. called on the Security Council to adopt a resolution for UN intervention in Korea. The Security Council quickly responded to Gross’ request and adopted (on the same day) a resolution through an emergency meeting. The resolution said that the Republic of Korea was a lawful government “having

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(26) According to I.F. Stone, the Korea War “was the outcome of deliberate and sinister maneuvering by those with an interest in war in the Far East,” and in Korea “the big powers were the victims, among other things, of headstrong satellites itching for a showdown which Washington, Moscow, and Peking had long anticipated but were alike anxious to avoid.” (I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969, pp. xi and xiv.)


(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

effective control of jurisdiction over that part of Korea." It determined that the attack constituted "a breach of the peace." It called for "the immediate cessation of hostilities," called upon "the authorities of North Korea to withdraw their armed forces to the Thirty-eight Parallel," requested the United Nations Commission on Korea to communicate on the situation, observe the withdrawal of the North Korean forces to the Parallel, and to keep the Security Council informed on the execution of the resolution; and called upon "all members to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities." (5) In Seoul, the R.O.K. (National Assembly) appealed on June 26 to the U.S. President and Congress for "increasing support" and asked that they "at the same time extend effectively and timely aid." (6) On the same day General MacArthur in Japan handed ten Mustangs over to South Korea and "munition and materials" were being prepared for shipment to Korea. President Truman said that the nations supporting the U.N. Charter could not tolerate a "willful disregard of the obligations to keep the peace," (7) and on the following day, June 27, he ordered U.S. air and naval forces to join with South Korea's army. He stated that it was done to "enforce the United Nations cease-fire order" and the air and naval forces would fight only below the 38th Parallel. He also ordered the Seventh Fleet "to form a protective cordon" around Formosa to prevent Communist attack. At the same time he "virtually ordered" Chiang Kai-shek to cease air and sea operations against the Chinese mainland, and said that the future status of Formosa was to be decided by the United Nations, or a peace-treaty with Japan. Additional American forces to the Philippines and speedy military assistance to Indo-China were also ordered. (8) Meanwhile the United States requested Russia to use its good offices to end the Korean hostilities. The eleven member Security Council voted 7–1 for an American resolution for United Nations military


(6) Documents on Kor.-Am. Rel., p. 109. See Truman, Memoirs, II, pp. 382–83. "The Korean Ambassador was downhearted almost to the point of tears.... I told him to hold fast -that help was on the way." (Truman, Memoirs, II, p. 383.)


intervention in Korea.\(^9\) India and Egypt did not vote, Yugoslavia voted against it, and the Soviet Union was absent. “A few hours after” Truman’s statement on Formosa, the Republic of China insisted before the Security Council that Formosa was “an integral part of China” and said that she would “fight any trusteeship plan as a violation of Chinese sovereignty.”\(^{10}\) The North Korean regime, meanwhile, charged that the cease-fire order of the Security Council was illegal; because North Korea was not present when its affairs were discussed and two of the five permanent members of the Security Council (U.S.S.R. and the Communist China)\(^{11}\) did not participate.\(^{12}\) On the same day (June 27) the elements of North Korean forces entered Seoul, and the R.O.K. Government moved the capital to Suwon. President Rhee declared that “too little and too late” American military aid was responsible for the Communists’ drive on Seoul. On June 28, American air and naval units were “actively engaged” in Korean fighting, and the British naval forces in the Japanese waters were placed at the disposal of the United States. Pravda charged that the U.S. has taken a “direct act of aggression” against both North Korea and Communist China.\(^{13}\) On June 29, Russia rejected an American request to use its good offices to end the war in Korea. She said that she would not interfere with the internal affairs of Korea, and blamed the R.O.K. government and those who stood behind it for the fighting, asserting that the attack was “provoked by attacks by South Korean forces” on North Korea. The Peiping Government also declared that the presence of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Formosan Strait was “armed aggression against the territory of China and total violation of the United Nations Charter.”\(^{14}\) By June 28, North Korean forces captured Seoul as well as its port, Inchon, and headed to Suwon. American planes opened “a full-scale air offensive” in an effort to save Suwon. On June 30, General MacArthur made an eight-hour visit to Korea to talk with President Rhee and to inspect the front line. At Washington, meanwhile, President Truman authorized the use of

\(^{9}\) Text of US statement on Korea in the Security Council and that of Security Council resolution in Korean Crisis: Documents, 15, pp. 23–24; Documents on Kor., Am. Rel., pp. 111–12.

\(^{10}\) Current History, August, 1950, p. 116.

\(^{11}\) North Korean regime here regards Communist China as the legal government of China, and, therefore Peiping, not Taipei, should occupy the seat of the Security Council as a permanent member.

\(^{12}\) The U.N. Charter Article 27 (Section III) states: “Decisions of the Security of Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of seven members including the concurring votes of the permanent members.”

\(^{13}\) Current History, August, 1950, p. 114.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
American ground forces as well as of military aircraft in Korea against North Koreans, and a complete blockade of the Korean coast by the Navy. At Lake Success thirty-three nations supported the United Nations’ action in Korea, and the Republic of China offered to send 30,000 troops to Korea. Thus by the end of June Seoul fell and a complete collapse of the R.O.K. army was feared. In order to prevent the fall of the R.O.K. to the Communists, the United States acted quickly by allying the United Nations with the R.O.K. and sending American air, naval and ground forces to Korea against the North Korean communists. The United Nations also, without Soviet participation, quickly responded to the American call for intervention in Korea, and the world, for the first time since World War I, came to have another great war. Now the “People’s Army” of North Korea faced American-led United Nations forces, and its fate depended upon the aid of Red China and Russia. The prevailing sentiment throughout the world during the first week of the Korean War was a fear and speculation of World War II, as General M.B. Ridgway, later U.N. Commander, felt at the outbreak of the Korean War: “We were not prepared for war, and most of us who first heard this ominous message from the other side of the world told ourselves that World War II had begun.”

CHAPTER VII
Conclusion

The Korean peninsula, the center of northeast Asia, was invaded by neighboring powers as Poland was in Europe, and became the pawn of power politics like the Balkan peninsula was in World War I. This was primarily due to its geographical location, and Korea’s history and fate were greatly affected by it. The great invasions of the Mongols and Hideyoshi as well as the great wars of Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese were also primarily related to the Korean peninsula. The domination of the Korean peninsula was the prelude to the conquest of northeast Asia by China and Japan. The Mongols and Hideyoshi attempted to conquer other nations through Korea, and China, Japan and

(16) In the Korean War, 16 U.N. member nations participated. For the Communications to the U.N. from the representatives of various Governments (June-July) see Korean Crisis: Documents, 21−28, pp. 25−29. See Roy E. Appleman, United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November, 1950), Department of the Army, 1961.
Russia fought for the control of Korea. Then Russia and America, after their expansion toward the east and the west, respectively came to meet each other in Korea, and struggled there for world hegemony. America and Russia maintained rather friendly relations until they met in Manchuria. By the end of the 19th century both America and Russia extended its influence to the northeast Asia, and while Russia occupied Manchuria America announced an Open Door policy there. The Russo-American relations ended with the Bolshevik Revolution, and the United States intervened in Siberia to block Soviet Communism as well as to keep eye on Japan there. The American policy of blocking Soviet Communism and checking Japanese advances in China continued until Roosevelt recognized the Soviet Union in 1933. The rise of Hitler’s Fascism was regarded as a more dangerous and a greater threat to the United States than Stalin’s communism. The formation of Axis by Germany, Italy and Japan led to the formation of Allies, including communist Soviet Union. In the great war between the Axis and the Allies, the United States cooperated with the Soviet Union. The unity of Allies defeated the Axis powers, but Allies’ victory ended Allies’ unity and cooperation. The American-Soviet friendship and alliance now became rivalry, competition and struggle for world hegemony. The rise of Soviet Russia and its communism became the greatest challenge to the United States following World War II. While the Soviet Union expanded its influence to the Eastern Europe and to the northeast Asia (except U.S.-occupied Japan and Southern Korea), the United States extended its influence to the rest of the world. The two nations struggled for its influence with money, weapons and ideology. The so-called “Cold War” dominated not only American-Soviet relations but also post-war world politics.

As to Korea the Allies promised the independence of Korea at Cairo, and the defeat of Japan brought about liberation of Korea. But the Russo-American troops raced to occupy the Japanese-occupied territories, and the U.S.-proposed 38th Parallel divided Korea between American and Soviet zones. The wishes of the Department of State to occupy “as far north as practicable” was overruled by the military leaders who were more concerned with the occupation of Japanese homeland. The division of Korea now resulted in the American-Soviet Cold War in Korea, and the two governments failed in establishing an unified, independent government for Korea. The failure of the American-Soviet Joint Conferences was followed by a U.N.-supervised election which brought about the establishment of the R.O.K. The establishment of the R.O.K. was followed by the establishment
of a communist regime in north Korea, and by June, 1949 the American-Soviet forces left Korea. Now the direct American-Soviet Cold War in Korea was to be fought by the Koreans with American-Soviet support. The conflict and tension mounted every day, and within two years after its independence the Korean War broke out.

In the war, the Soviet Union supplied the North Koreans with tanks and guns, and the United States along with fifteen other U.N. member nations intervened in the name of a "U.N. police action." The newly rising Communist China also intervened by sending "voluntary forces." The war now became an great international war, and it was the struggle for power between the East and the West—Communism and Democracy. Korea, as in the past, again became a battlefield for great powers' struggle for power, and the armistice truce, which was signed without the R.O.K. representative, well explain the nature of the war.

In retrospect, it was a great mistake for the Allies to insert the phrase "in due course" in the Cairo Declaration which promised Korea's independence following the defeat of Japan. Roosevelt, like another Roosevelt one half century before, underestimated the ability of the Koreans, which brought about unfortunate effects on Korea and on the United States as well. The division of Korea was another unfortunate decision. Although the "suddenness" of Japanese surrender necessitated it and it was intended for accepting Japanese surrender, the division of Korea could probably have been avoided if the interest of Koreans were given little more consideration. The Moscow Plan for a 5-year trusteeship was also proved a mistake. Again, Korea's ability for self-rule was the issue. The Allies underestimated Korea's ability for self-rule, but overestimated their cooperation after the war. The failure of the Korean Provisional Government to get recognition from the occupation authorities was another mistake on the part of the Allies. If the Provisional Government were recognized, the Soviet position in Korea would have been much weaker than it had been, and both the war and the almost permanent division of the country might have been avoided. The American-Soviet Joint Conferences also failed, and the establishment of separate governments in Korea did not unify the country but divided it instead. Within two years Soviet weapons, American troops and (Communist) Chinese came to the peninsula of Korea. The long-negotiated truce ended the actual fighting, but no peace treaty was followed. A quarter of a century later, tension and conflict still exist in the peninsula and the country is still divided. Even the possibility of another war in
Korea is talked about. It is a lesson from the Korean War that peace in Korea is essential to the peace of Asia and world, and for the peace and stability in northeast Asia, Korea has to be unified and peaceful.