



Communism in Asia

“The prestige of the Western world hangs in the balance. . . . It is plainly apparent that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest.”

—General Douglas MacArthur, 1950

◀ American soldiers in Korea

The Korean War Period

Objectives

- Explain how the situation in Korea became the Korean War, the first military conflict of the Cold War.
- Describe how the Korean War ended.
- Explain how the Cold War led to a Red Scare in the United States.

Reading Skill

Analyze a Cause-and-Effect Chain

Consider how events can snowball out of control when a single cause has multiple effects that, in turn, lead to multiple causes. As the United States entered the Korean War period, this occurred often. Look for the multiple cause-and-effect chains in this section. To find them, read the text following each subheading, and then trace a chain. Watch for events having specific cause-and-effect relationships and not those just occurring in sequence.

Key Terms and People

stalemate	Joseph McCarthy
demilitarized zone	censure

Why It Matters At the outset of the Cold War, the United States used political and economic means to battle against Communism. However, the Cold War suddenly turned hot in the East Asian nation of Korea. As American soldiers fought in the Korean War, other Americans hunted for Communists in America.

Section Focus Question: How did the United States respond to the invasion of Korea and its aftermath?

Conflict in Korea

In 1910, Japan occupied the Korean Peninsula and ruled it harshly. After Japan's defeat in World War II, Korea was divided at the 38th parallel of latitude. The Soviet Union backed a Communist government in North Korea. The United States backed a non-Communist government in South Korea.

Tensions between North and South Korea continued to increase. Then, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops suddenly invaded South Korea. Armed with Soviet tanks and artillery, the North Koreans shattered the South Korean army and pushed south. Within three days, the invasion had reached South Korea's capital, Seoul (sole). Korea, it appeared, would soon fall to the Communists.

President Truman quickly responded to the attack. At his urging, the UN Security Council voted to send a military force to Korea. Truman appointed World War II hero General Douglas MacArthur to lead the force. Although 16 nations sent troops to fight under the UN flag, 90 percent were American. The Soviet delegate was not present at the UN debate and so failed to veto the proposal.

The first UN forces to arrive at the front were badly outnumbered and poorly supplied. They fought bravely but were pushed back almost to the tip of the Korean Peninsula. As fresh troops and supplies arrived, however, the defensive line held.

Then, in September, General MacArthur launched a bold counter-attack. UN forces at Inchon, a port city near Seoul, were able to **pursue** the North Koreans back across the 38th parallel into North Korea. MacArthur's forces chased the North Koreans almost to the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China.

China's government responded angrily. As UN soldiers neared the Yalu, masses of Chinese troops crossed the border. The UN forces were overwhelmed. Soon, the battlefield was once again in South Korea. There, the war settled down into a stalemate, a situation in which neither side wins.

Truman Versus MacArthur General MacArthur believed that the United States could win in Korea only if it attacked China. MacArthur publicly called for the bombing of supply bases in China. President Truman was more cautious. He believed that an American attack on China might start a new world war. Truman warned MacArthur against making further public statements.

MacArthur disregarded these warnings. He publicly argued that he could not win the war because of politicians in Washington. Truman was furious and fired MacArthur.

Peace Talks Meanwhile, the stalemate in Korea continued. In July 1951, the opposing sides began peace talks. These talks would continue for two long years. All the while, the fighting and the killing continued.

Vocabulary Builder

pursue (per SYOO) *v.* to follow; to attempt to capture or achieve



The Korean War

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Skills Activity

When North Korea invaded South Korea, UN forces came to the aid of South Korea.

(a) **Read a Map** To what line of latitude, farthest south, did the North Koreans push into South Korea?

(b) **Apply Information** Locate the 1953 armistice line. How might this have affected people's views about the war?

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KEY

- Farthest North Korean advance, September 1950
- Farthest UN advance, November 1950
- - - Farthest North Korean-Chinese advance, January 1951
- Armistice line, July 1953

CHINA

Yalu R.

Pyongyang

NORTH KOREA

Panmunjom

Inchon

Seoul

SOUTH KOREA

Sea of Japan (East Sea)

Yellow Sea

0 km 100
0 miles 100

Albers Conic Equal-Area Projection

A cease-fire finally ended the fighting in July 1953. The border between the warring sides stood almost exactly where it had been before the war. The two sides agreed to establish a **demilitarized zone**, an area from which military forces are prohibited. It still divides the two countries a half-century later.

The war's toll was horrendous. At least two million Koreans died in the fighting. Most of them were civilians. American losses totaled well over 30,000 dead and more than 100,000 wounded. Thousands of soldiers from other nations also were killed.

With the cease-fire, the fighting ended in Korea. However, tensions between North and South Korea continued well into the next century. Two heavily armed forces continued to face each other across the demilitarized zone.

 **Checkpoint** How did the United States become involved in the Korean War?

Fears at Home

In Section 1 of this chapter, you learned how American confidence was shaken by the Communist victory in China and Soviet possession of the atomic bomb. The failure to win a decisive victory in the long stalemate in Korea further worried Americans.

Communists in Government? Americans had absorbed a number of blows during the Cold War. Soviet possession of atomic weapons, the fall of China to the Communists, and the stalemate in Korea all led to worries about the ability of the United States to defeat communism. Many Americans worried that Communist sympathizers and spies might be secretly working to overthrow the U.S. government.

Two cases seized public attention. In the first, Alger Hiss, a former State Department official, was accused of passing government secrets to Soviet agents. Hiss's accuser, Whittaker Chambers, had been a Communist during the 1930s. In 1948, Chambers appeared before a committee of the House of Representatives. He claimed that during the 1930s, Hiss had given him top-secret papers to pass to the Soviet Union.

Hiss strongly denied passing any secret papers to the Soviet Union and sued Chambers for making false accusations. Then, Chambers produced copies of the papers. They became known as the "pumpkin papers" because Chambers had hidden them on microfilm in a pumpkin in his garden. So many years had passed since the crime that Hiss could no longer be charged with spying. However, Hiss was convicted of perjury, or lying, to the congressional committee and spent several years in prison.

Links Across Time

Korea

1953 A cease-fire agreement divides Korea into two countries.

2000 Today, Korea is still a divided nation. South Korea is capitalist, whereas North Korea is Communist. Both countries have discussed reuniting, but terms agreeable to both sides have not yet been reached.

Link to Today Online

North and South Korea Today What are the roles of North Korea and South Korea in the global community today? Go online to find out more about both Koreas today.

For: North and South Korea today
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The Hunt for Communists

"It's Okay—We're Hunting Communists"



The car is a symbol for the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Tire marks

Reading Political Cartoons Skills Activity

In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee led an investigation to find Communists in the moviemaking industry.

(a) Identify Main Ideas

What does the cartoon suggest about the way in which the investigation is being carried out?

(b) Recognize Points of View

How does the cartoonist feel about the success of the investigation? Explain.

Fears about America's security rose even higher in 1950 when several Americans were arrested on charges of passing the secret of the atomic bomb to the Soviets. In the most famous trial of the times, a married couple, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were found guilty of supplying secret information to the Soviet Union. They were sentenced to death. A worldwide outcry arose, but the Rosenbergs were executed in 1953.

Today, more than half a century after the trials of Alger Hiss and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, their roles are still debated. However, many questions of their involvement have been resolved. In the 1990s, the U.S. government released copies of secret Soviet messages that had been decoded after years of dedicated work. The messages appeared to show that both Alger Hiss and Julius Rosenberg had spied for the Soviets. Ethel Rosenberg apparently was aware of the spying and may even have assisted her husband:

McCarthyism A climate of fear contributed to the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. McCarthy built his career by threatening to expose Communists. In a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, in February 1950, McCarthy waved a paper in the air. He claimed it contained the names of 205 Communists who worked in the State Department. McCarthy later reduced this number to 81, then to 57.

Vocabulary Builder

resolve (ree SAHLV) **v.** to settle or decide



Senator Joseph McCarthy

McCarthy refused to show the list to anyone. He did not even need to do so because many Americans were eager to believe him. His dramatic charges gained him a large following.

During the next four years, McCarthy's charges became more sensational. He led Senate hearings in which he bullied witnesses and made exaggerated charges. Eventually, the term *McCarthyism* came to mean accusing someone of disloyalty without having any evidence.

Aware of McCarthy's power to destroy careers, few people were brave enough to oppose him and his scare tactics. McCarthy finally lost his following in 1954 when a television audience of millions saw him make false accusations against the United States Army. Many Americans came to realize that McCarthy could not support the charges. Unfortunately, many lives had been ruined by McCarthy's wild charges. Soon after, the U.S. Senate voted to censure, or condemn, him. McCarthy died three years later. By that time, the Communist scare was mostly finished.

✓Checkpoint What techniques did McCarthy use to accuse people of being Communists?

★ **Looking Back and Ahead** After McCarthy's fall, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union continued. No one knew that the conflict between the two superpowers would drag on for almost 40 additional years.

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** How did the Korean War start?

(b) **Synthesize Information**

How did the U.S. response to the Korean War reflect the goals of the Truman Doctrine?

2. (a) **Describe** What did Senator McCarthy do in the 1950s?

(b) **Analyze Cause and Effect**

How did McCarthy's actions threaten democratic freedoms in the United States?

Reading Skill

3. **Analyze a Cause-and-Effect Chain**

Reread the entire text under the heading "Fears at Home." Analyze the cause-and-effect chain from American worries about global communism to government investigations and spy trials.

Key Terms

Read each sentence below. If the sentence is true, write YES. If the sentence is not true, write NO and explain why.

4. The Korean War ended in a stalemate; boundaries changed little and neither side won the war.

5. The United States censured Senator McCarthy by awarding him the Congressional Medal of Honor for his work fighting communism.

6. The soldiers were preparing to occupy the demilitarized zone.

Writing

7. You are preparing a multimedia presentation about McCarthyism. Write a few sentences to introduce your presentation. Then, write a brief introduction for a film clip of Senator McCarthy speaking. Finally, write a few sentences to conclude your presentation.