

# The Korean Conflict: The Forgotten War

“Forgotten” b/c it occurred right  
after World War II and right  
before the Vietnam War.  
The Korean War often gets  
overlooked.

# Origins

- Korea was invaded and ruled by Japan from 1910 until 1945
- After WWII, Korea was split into two - North (USSR) and South (US) at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel



# 1949 Truman “loses” China

- Mao Zedong leads Communist Party to victory in China.
- Many in the US blamed Truman.
- United Nations recognizes Taiwan as legitimate government (home to Mao’s Nationalist opposition.)



# Korea Divided

- Soviet Union installs a communist government in the North
- US is sympathetic to/supports the South.



# Korean War (1950-53)



Kim Il-Sung



Syngman Rhee

**"Domino Theory":** The idea that if one nation in a region fell to communism, others would follow like toppling dominoes

# June 1950, North invades South

Pink = Area  
occupied by  
Communist forces

Blue = Area  
occupied by UN  
forces

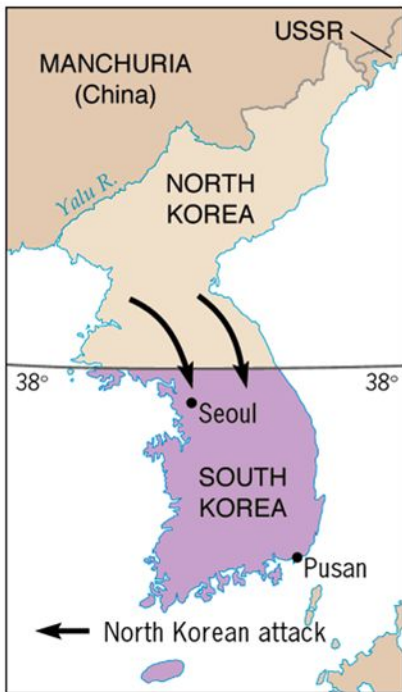


# United Nations Response

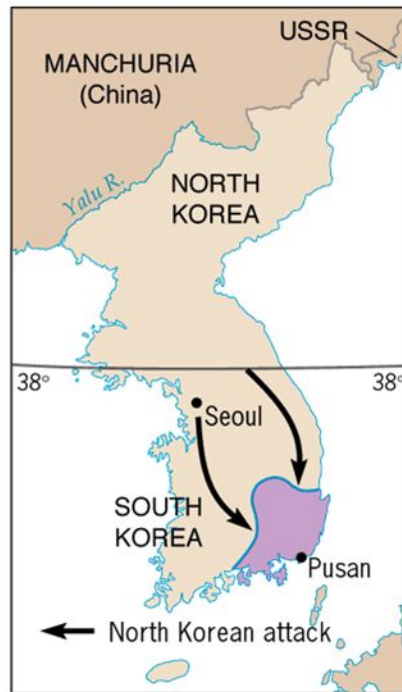
- Recall, the permanent members of Security Council wield decision-making power
- Soviet Union boycotting UN
  - Due to UN decision to award Taiwan UN seat for China
- Result of Sec. Council vote: UN to intervene



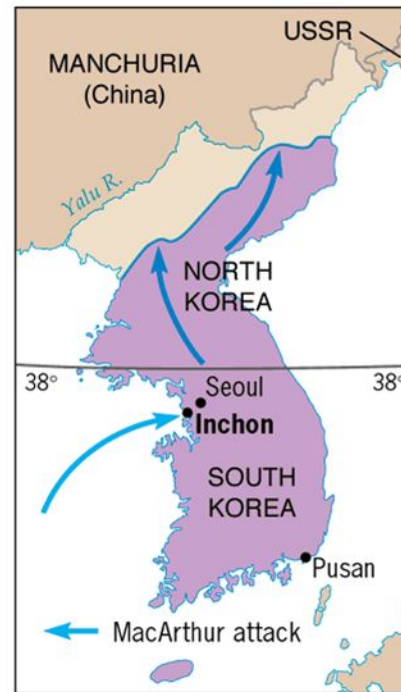
# The Shifting Map of Korea [1950-1953]



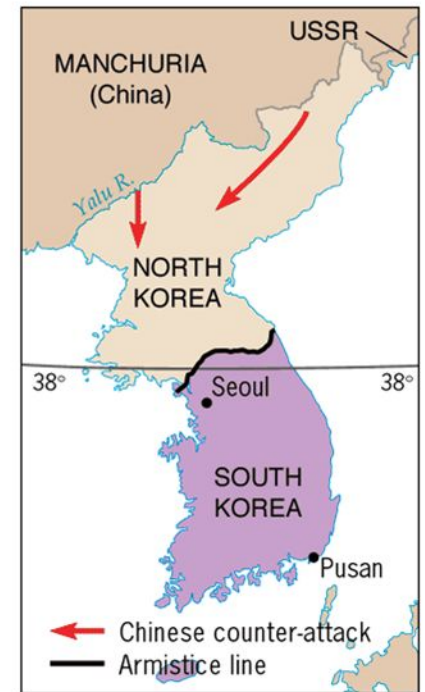
June 25, 1950



Sept. 14, 1950



Nov. 25, 1950



July 27, 1953



# Nov. 1950, China jumps in!

- Pushes US/South Korean forces out of the North
- UN/US counter-offensive



# The 38th Parallel

- Original dividing line of North and South Korea
- US and Chinese reach a stalemate near 38th parallel in 1951



# 1953: Year of Decision?

## *Negotiated Peace*

Settlement reached:

- Korea to be divided along 38th Parallel
  - North Korea will remain communist
  - South Korea will remain capitalist
- De-militarized zone (DMZ) along border



# Results



- North Korea devastated by war
  - 2 buildings left standing in Pyongyang, a city of 400,000 people
- US lost 54,000 lives
- Total lives lost over *2 million!*

# TODAY

- Most heavily fortified border in the world
- US troops stationed in South Korea
- North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons



# 5 Things You Need to Know about the Korean War



# Reflection Question



How is the United States' involvement in Korea in the 1950s an example of “containment”?