

MILANMUN 2019

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

The Historical Committee is about re-enacting past conflicts and issues in order to find alternative possible diplomatic solutions different to the real outcomes. We have a knowledge of the outcome of the crisis (and the delegates know it, if they are prepared). But they should intervene with the mind of a delegate who does not know what has happened after the crisis situation. The outcome could be positive or negative for the world or for the countries involved and the delegates should think about alternatives to the real historic development.

It is necessary to bear in mind that some countries may have had different names or policies during that time if compared to what their position is today (Laos, for instance, had a tendency to follow a neutral course concerning the two blocks (USA and USSR) and officially became part of the non-aligned movement in 1964). Obviously, the debate will take place as if we were in that moment of crisis, specifically. Still nowadays some aspects are not so clear, as they were dim also in that time. But this is exactly what happens in our time. It is often not so easy to determine who is the protagonist of actions in debate (e.g.: in the case of bomb attacks. terrorists? secret services? mercenaries?).

THE CONTEXT OF THE COLD WAR

During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union fought together as allies against the Axis powers. However, the relationship between the two nations was a tense one. Americans had long been wary of Soviet communism and concerned about Russian leader Joseph Stalin's rule of his own country. For their part, the Soviets resented the Americans' decades-long refusal to treat the USSR as a legitimate part of the international community as well as their delayed entry into World War II, which resulted in the deaths of tens of millions of Russians. After the war ended, these grievances ripened into an overwhelming sense of mutual distrust and enmity. Postwar Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe fueled many Americans' fears of a Russian plan to control the world. Meanwhile, the USSR came to resent what they perceived as American officials' bellicose rhetoric, arms buildup and interventionist approach to international relations. In such a hostile atmosphere, no single party was entirely to blame for the Cold War; in fact, some historians believe it was inevitable.

New protagonists: New independent states: People's Republic of China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, the African colonies,...

There was no one process of decolonization. In some areas, it was peaceful, and orderly. In many others, independence was achieved only after a protracted revolution. A few newly independent countries acquired stable governments almost immediately; others were ruled by dictators or military juntas for decades, or endured long civil wars. Some European governments welcomed a new relationship with their former colonies; others contested decolonization militarily. The process of had a definite impact on the evolution of that competition. It also significantly changed the pattern of international relations in a more general sense.

The creation of so many new countries, some of which occupied strategic locations, others of which possessed significant natural resources, and most of which were desperately poor, **altered the composition of the United Nations** and political complexity of every region of the globe. In the mid to late 19th century, the European powers colonized much of Africa and Southeast Asia. During the decades of imperialism, the industrializing powers of Europe viewed the African and Asian continents as reservoirs of raw materials, labor, and territory for future settlement. In most cases, however, significant development and European settlement in these colonies was sporadic. However, the colonies were exploited, sometimes brutally, for natural and labor resources, and sometimes even for military conscripts. In addition, the introduction of colonial rule drew arbitrary natural boundaries where none had existed

before, dividing ethnic and linguistic groups and natural features, and laying the foundation for the creation of numerous states lacking geographic, linguistic, ethnic, or political affinity.

While the United States generally supported the concept of national self-determination, it also had strong ties to its European allies, who had imperial claims on their former colonies. The Cold War only served to complicate the U.S. position, as U.S. support for decolonization was offset by **American concern over communist expansion** and Soviet strategic ambitions in Europe. Several of the NATO allies asserted that their colonial possessions provided them with economic and military strength that would otherwise be lost to the alliance. Nearly all of the United States' European allies believed that after their recovery from World War II their colonies would finally provide the combination of raw materials and protected markets for finished goods that would cement the colonies to Europe. Whether or not this was the case, the alternative of allowing the colonies to slip away, perhaps into the United States' economic sphere or that of another power, was unappealing to every European government interested in postwar stability

However, as the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union came to dominate U.S. foreign policy concerns in the late 1940s and 1950s, the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations grew increasingly concerned that as the European powers lost their colonies or granted them independence, Soviet-supported communist parties might achieve power in the new states. This might serve to shift the international balance of power in favor of the Soviet Union and remove access to economic resources from U.S. allies. Events such as the Indonesian struggle for independence from the Netherlands (1945–50), the Vietnamese war against France (1945–54), and the nationalist and professed socialist takeovers of Egypt (1952) and Iran (1951) served to reinforce such fears, even if new governments did not directly link themselves to the Soviet Union. Thus, the United States used aid packages, technical assistance and sometimes even military intervention to encourage newly independent nations in the Third World to adopt governments that aligned with the West. The Soviet Union deployed similar tactics in an effort to encourage new nations to join the communist bloc, and attempted to convince newly decolonized countries that communism was an intrinsically non-imperialist economic and political ideology. Many of the new nations resisted the pressure to be drawn into the Cold War, joined in **the “nonaligned movement,”** which formed after the Bandung conference of 1955, and focused on internal development.

The newly independent nations that emerged in the 1950s and the 1960s became an important factor in changing the balance of power within the United Nations. In 1946, there were 35 member states in the United Nations; as the newly independent nations of the “third world” joined the organization, by 1970 membership had swelled to 127. These new member states had a few characteristics in common; they were non-white, with developing economies, facing internal problems that were the result of their colonial past, which sometimes put them at odds with European countries and made them suspicious of European-style governmental structures, political ideas, and economic institutions. These countries also became vocal advocates of continuing decolonization, with the result that **the UN Assembly was often ahead of the Security Council on issues of self-governance and decolonization.** The new nations pushed the UN toward accepting resolutions for independence for colonial states and creating a special committee on colonialism, demonstrating that even though some nations continued to struggle for independence, in the eyes of the international community, the colonial era was ending.

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>

Concerning the Korean question Note: This report will not take into account all the events happened after the invasion of the Republic of Korea by the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, so the delegates will not have to consider all those events that came after.

Note: The delegation of People's Democratic Republic of Korea and the republic of Korea were not part of the UN at that time so they will not be present during the debate.

Note: Delegates should consider that due to the lack, both in terms of reliability and quantity of information from the North Korean/Soviet point of view, the majority of sources used in this paper are either coming from the US or its allies. For this reason this paper might be considered biased and leaning towards the american/western history of the events that led to the conflict.

This possible bias is not the result of the point of view of the Chair, rather than a consequence of the sources available to the general public.

Committee: Historical Committee

Issue: June 25th 1950 The attempt to reunify Korea

Student Officer: Paolo D'Elicio



Introduction

The morning of June 25th 1950 was marked by the crossing of the 38th parallel by the forces of the North Korean Army, the 38th parallel marked the separation between the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), a communist regime backed by the USSR and the PR China, led by communist leader Kim Il-Sung to the north, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) guided by the dictator Syngman Rhee, backed by the United States of America and its allies.

Korea between 1900 and 1945.

Until 1905 Korea had been a relatively independent country, although it had strong ties with the Chinese Empire. This situation changed drastically at the end of the 19th century, first with Chinese defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war and then with Japanese victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, Japan was enlarging its empire and aimed at subjugating Korea, after these two victories it consolidated its power over the peninsula.

In 1905 Korea became officially a protectorate of Japan, and in 1910 it was annexed to the Empire of Japan.

The years of Japanese Colonial rule were very harsh, the best lands were confiscated by the colonial government and distributed between Japanese settlers and rich Korean land-owners. Korean industry was developed to serve the needs of Japan and many Koreans were deported to Japan for forced labour.

Colonial rule of Korea ended on August 15 1945, following Japanese surrender to the Allies, Japanese Colonial Rule ended after 35 years.

The Partition of Korea

During World War 2 the question of Korea was often overlooked by the Allies leaders, the first time the question was addressed was during the Cairo conference in 1943, during which American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek convened that after the war Korea would have become united and independent.

The question of Korea arose again in August 1945, after Soviet intervention against Japan. The red army easily overran the Japanese crumbling forces in Manchuria and moved towards Korea. On August the 14th Stalin ordered its forces in Korea to halt on the line marked by the 38th parallel. The Soviet leader had agreed with the Americans on the proposal to establish two different occupation zones in the peninsula. The zone north of the 38th parallel was to be controlled by the USSR and the zone South the 38th Parallel was to be administered by the USA.

The two zones were so divided and on August 24th 1945 Soviet forces established in Pyongyang and on 8 September the Americans settled in Seoul and formed the United States Military Government in Korea (USMGIK). The division and separation of the halves of the country started immediately although some attempts were made in order to avoid it.

One of the first attempts made by the two superpowers was the Moscow conference in 1945 in which it was decided that the USA, the USSR, the United Kingdom and the Republic of China, would constitute a trusteeship up to five years and that a joint Soviet-American board would work to create a unified Korean government.

The reaction to the Moscow Accords

The political parties in both occupation zones reacted negatively to the Moscow agreements, it was a major blow to Korean independence movements whose aim was to create an independent state as soon as possible, without having to suffer another foreign occupation. The strong opposition to the four power trusteeship was also caused by the fact that Japanese domination at the beginning of the 20th century began when Korea became a protectorate of the Japanese Empire.

The only party to support the proposal of the trusteeship was the KCP, after a sudden policy change at the beginning of January 1946 ([Soviet aims in North Korea, p.21](#)), caused by an order coming from Moscow, which exploited the discontent caused by the agreements to take on its policy.

The failure of the trusteeship proposal

Since the publication of the final *proclamé* at the end of the Moscow conference, the division between the two Koreas deepened, the North supported the trusteeship plan at the condition, advanced by the Soviets in the joint Soviet-American committee, that only those political parties which openly supported or at least ready to take back their opposition to the trusteeship, would be part of it. The US refused this proposal, arguing that it violated the democratic principles of freedom of speech and opinion. The argument about which parties could be included in the election for the national assembly that would have governed during the trusteeship went on for months until May 16th 1946, when the works of the joint commission came to a stalemate. There was an attempt to re-open the talks of the commission later in 1947, but they failed definitively in July of the same year without any further progress.

The failure of the trusteeship plan resulted in both the USA ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950](#) p.164) and the USSR ([Soviet aims in Korea p.21](#)) taking steps to try to establish stable governments in their client states.

The Korean question at the UN

After the failure of the Joint Commission, the US government was searching for new ways to solve the issue bypassing Soviet obstructionism which had blocked the works of the joint commission.

The decision was taken to put the question of Korea in front of the United Nations General Assembly, and not to the Security Council to avoid the Veto from the USSR, on September 17 1947. The Soviet Union condemned this action saying that the question of Korea was a result of WW2 and thus it could have not been handled by the UN ([The UN Role in Korea in the Division of the Korean Nation.](#) pg.3).

The question was added to the Agenda despite strong opposition by the USSR, which meanwhile had made a proposal of a joint withdrawal of both American and soviet troops from Korea to let the Koreans decide for their fate without international interference. The US did not accept this proposal although a poll made in South Korea stated that 57% of the population was in favour of Moscow's proposal ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950](#) p.181).

The General Assembly eventually passed a draft resolution ([UNGA res. 112\(II\) 14/11/1947](#) p.16) which established the UNTCOK (United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea) a commission made up of 9 countries which had the task of organizing elections in the whole peninsula, and supervise the correct carrying out of the elections.

The Soviet Union refused to accept the UNTCOK legitimacy and denied the access of its commissioners in the Soviet Occupation Zone, The UNTCOK convened that if it was not possible to make the elections in the whole peninsula they should have been held only in those zones the UNTCOK was able to reach. The commission decided on March 11 that elections were to be held on May 10 1948, despite the opposition of the delegations of Canada and Australia ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950](#) p.184).

The Elections in the South

The period prior to May 10th elections in the South was marked by great instability, a major uprising started on April 3rd in the Island of Jeju, guided by communist guerrillas to postpone the elections. The uprising lasted until May 1949 and left at least 30.000 dead.

There was an attempt made by the leftist groups which opposed the elections to reconcile with the North, this attempt failed after that the North promised not to cut the electrical supply to the South during the Conference in Pyongyang on April 19th 1948 ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950](#) p.186), but a week later the supply was cut.

The elections were held on May 10th in a climate far from optimal, there are reports of police and rightist groups threatening the voters. Moreover the supervision of the UNTCOK was basically inexistent, due to the fact that there were too few observers to cover the entire territory.

The Elections were won by the rightist anti-communists guided by Syngman Rhee, and the UNTCOK report on June 25 of the same year stated that the election was *"a valid expression of the will of the electorate in those parts of Korea which were accessible to the Commission and in which the inhabitants constitute approximately two-thirds of the people of all Korea."* ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950](#) p.190).

After the elections the National assembly reunited and started the process to create the Republic of Korea. Process that was concluded on August 15 1948. The United Nations recognized this new state as the only legitimate government in Korea, in fact it stated: "there has been established a lawful government (the Government of the Republic of Korea) having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult... and that this is the only such Government in Korea." (United Nations General Assembly, resolution 195 (III)).

The division is complete - Prelude to war

Following the proclamation of the US backed ROK, on August 15 1948, the Soviet and North Koreans responded with the creation of the DPRK in the North on September 9 1948.

Since the first days of these two newly born countries tensions arose constantly. Both Syngman Rhee and Kim Il-Sung declared their respective governments as the rightful governments of the whole peninsula, and ready to unify the country through military means if necessary.

In the North, although Soviet forces had withdrawn from Korea, many military advisors were left to train and organize the KPA (Korean People's Army), which was growing bigger every day, thanks to Soviet training and equipment, by 1950 it comprised 110.000 men.

In the South both Syngman Rhee and other South Korean officials often spoke of the possibility of unifying the country by war, but the South Korean Army was far less trained and equipped than their northern counterpart. In fact the southern army was kept under-equipped by the US which feared the possibility of a South Korean aggression, but it must be noted that the American government continued sending funds to finance the ROK's security forces, but aimed at making it capable to defend itself not to attack the North.

June 25th 1950

The sentiment that a war was imminent was present in both Koreas since 1946, and it grew steadily in the years, especially after the creation of the two different states in the North and in the South. Tensions both in politics and on the border continued to rise, there are reports of border skirmishes along the border prior to June 25 1950 carried out by both Korean security forces.

The rising tensions exploded on the morning of June 25th 1950, when North Korean forces crossed the line of the 38th parallel. The responsibility for the first attack is still strongly debated, although there are documents coming

from the USSR that underline the fact that prior to June 1950 North Korea had prepared a plan to invade the South ([Soviet aims in North Korea](#) pg. 30), it is still disputed whether if the North Koreans responded to a South Korean trespassing of the 38th parallel line, as the DPRK government still affirms, or whether it was a full fledged invasion by the KPA.

Key Nations, NGOs and UN organizations

People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK): along with the Republic of Korea (ROK) the People's Democratic Republic of Korea was, obviously, one of the main actors during the crisis which led to the outbreak of the Korean War.

Officially founded on September 9th 1948, following August 25, 1948, "election of deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly", an election made on the whole Korean territory. The foundation of this new state came as a response to the elections held on May 10th 1948, under the supervision of the UNTCOK (United Nations Temporary Commission On Korea), a subsidiary body of the UN created by General Assembly on November 14, 1947. Such elections were held only in the southern part of the country, due to the fact that the Soviet Union refused to recognize it, and resulted in the election of the South Korean National assembly and the creation of the so-called "Republic of Korea".

The DPRK was the evolution of the People's Republic of Korea, a temporary government founded in August 1945 based on regional people's committees. But the PRK government was bound to be short lived and by December of the same year it collapsed. The DPRK was a Stalinist-Communist regime guided by Kim Il-sung, a communist resistance fighter who spent the years from 1930 to 1945 fighting the imperial Japanese army which occupied Manchuria and Korea. before in Chinese communist guerrillas and after as a major in the Soviet Union's Red Army.

The creation of the DPRK was heavily supported by Stalin's USSR, which helped Kim Il-Sung, who had been fighting during the 1941-45 years in the Red army, thus being a figure suitable for what Stalin was looking for. That is a person who knew the Soviet Union's apparatus and had been part of it, so he would have followed Stalin's diktat, or at least according to the soviets officials([The Making of Modern Korea by Adrian Buzo](#) p.56) he would have done so.

Republic of Korea (ROK): Officially founded August , 1948, following the elections held on may 10th 1948, under the supervision of the UNTCOK, with the dictator Rhee Syngman as its first president.

Previous to the creation of the ROK, the southern part of the peninsula was governed by the USMGIK (United States Military Government in Korea), which had many difficulties in establishing a strong and effective provisional government for a number of reasons:

1. There was a substantial linguistic barrier between the American officials and the Korean people, for this reason the USMGIK worked mainly with those intellectuals who had been educated in the US (for example Rhee Syngman), such intellectuals were mostly nationalists, thus a large part of the political parties and figures, mostly all those left-wing moderate parties were not included
2. The USMIGK lacked a group similar to the Soviet Koreans, people of Korean ethnicity who lived in the USSR, that at the end of the war were used by the USSR to establish a link between the occupying army and the people of the occupied zone; contributing to create in the civil population a rejection of the authority of the USMIGK
3. The American officials were mostly unprepared and did not know much about the political situation and history of the country, which resulted in them having to rely heavily on that fraction of the korean elite which spoke english, that, as stated in the previous point, tended to be right-wing/nationalist groups
4. The economical situation in the South was critical and contributed to the climate of political instability and social unrest which often resulted in violent protests. The economical situation was very complicated mainly

because of the fact that it had been created by the Japanese Empire to work effectively in synergy with the territories of the empire, namely Japan, Manchuria and the Northern part of Korea to sustain its economy. countrystudies.us/south-korea/9.htm

The creation of the Republic of Korea was heavily criticized by the Soviet Union and its allies, who all considered the UNTCOK, the body which supervised the elections, directly under control of the United States. And that was created in order to impose its policy in the region. As well as constituting a violation of the Moscow Agreements, signed in 1945.

The first year of the ROK were marked by ferocious political repression, numerous violent revolts and a general feel of extreme social unrest. All of this tensions sparked a violent revolt in the island of Jeju, where a group of communist guerrillas began a violent uprising, occupying 11 police stations and committing acts of violence against police officers, to protest the elections that were to be held only in the Southern part of the peninsula under the supervision of the UNTCOK. The revolt was put down with violence and the intervention of the army left an estimated 30.000 people dead or missing. The Jeju uprising is only one example of the climate of instability and tension that plagued the newly-formed Republic of Korea.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics USSR: After the end of War World 2, the Soviet Union had emerged together with the United States as the biggest world power, and even before the end of the war the two countries began their race to extend their spheres of influence on every corner of the world, this race began in the Korean Peninsula.

The Soviet Union bordered with the Korean peninsula, so its intervention in the post-war occupation and in the establishment of a Korean state was inevitable, although it played a minor part when compared to the US in the war against the Japanese Empire which occupied Korea. The Soviet Union intervention in Korea began on August the 9th 1945, when it officially declared war on the Japanese Empire, in just 3 weeks the Soviet army was able to defeat the Japanese and occupy Manchuria and the Northern half of Korea up until the 38th Parallel which marked the separation between Soviet and American occupation zones.

Since the time of the Tsarist empire, Russia has always played a part in the politics of Korea, not in the sense that it interfered with the politics of the Peninsula, or that it had an interest in gaining total control over it, but it pursued a policy to maintain a balance of power. This policy of balance of power was pursued also by Stalin after the division of the Peninsula, also because in opposition to the war in Europe, in Asia the Soviet Union played a minor role, and so Stalin was not in the position to dictate the terms in the post-war agreements on the partition of the territories occupied by the Japanese, and was forced to accept the American's proposal of dividing the peninsula along the 38th parallel.

In 1945 the main objectives that the USSR wanted to achieve in Korea were:

- A. to exclude Japan from it, Japanese expansion in 1905 in Korea was one of the main factors which caused the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war. So if Japan would have been put in the condition to exercise its influence on the Peninsula the USSR would have been threatened in the far east
- B. to ensure the independence of Korea so as to avoid the interference of countries that might put pressure on the Soviet Union
- C. to establish a state with which to maintain friendly relations.
- D. in the event of the establishment of a trusteeship over Korea, the USSR needed to have a key role in it.

The USSR soon after the end of the war supported the idea of establishing a trusteeship over the peninsula, dividing it into different occupation zones, as it had been for Germany, in order to protect its interest in the region. Nevertheless the Soviet occupation army began to close and isolate its occupation zone by cutting off reinforcements, supplies, coal and electricity supplies to the southern half of the country. However, the liberty of movement of people was not denied so in 1945 1.600.000 people moved from North-Korea and Manchuria to the

South Korea. Among these flow of people there were numerous opponents to Soviet occupation. This might have contributed to make easier the establishment of a Communist regime in the Soviet zone.

The creation of a communist state in North was guided by Moscow, which feared that parties such as the Yanan group, a group of Korean communist which had fought in the Chinese Civil War and were considered too aligned with the Communist Chinese Party and deemed not enough compliant to the line dictated by the Moscow. The local communist were mostly based in Seoul, thus were out of the occupation zone of the USSR, which refused to fuel communist uprising in the south to avoid conflict the US. In this context the USSR occupying government took advantage of all those government officials of Korean origin whose families had fled to the USSR and were born, educated and were part of the Soviet's bureaucratic apparatus. The role of the Soviet Koreans was essential to reunite all the different communist factions under the guide of Moscow.

In December 1945 in Moscow the Moscow agreements were signed; according to these agreements, before becoming an independent country Korea had to become a trusteeship controlled by UK, USA, USSR and the [Republic of China](#) for at least 5 years and the creation of a joint Soviet-American commission. But neither the USSR nor the US were in reality in favour of creating a trusteeship. The prospect of a unified Korea definitively ended on May 16 1946 when the joint commission adjourned *sine die*.

From that moment the division of Korea became clear, especially after the creation of the UNTCOK (United Nations Temporary Commission On Korea), that the Soviet Union refused to recognize in light of the fact that violated the UN Charter and that the US were using the UN to support their policy .

and the Soviet Union committed itself fully to help the Korean communist in creating a separate communist state North of the 38th parallel. This process took a great step forward when the Soviet announced their withdrawal in September 1947 and finally became reality on September the 9th 1948, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded.

Stalin supported Kim-Il-Sung's view of the need for a unification of the peninsula through military intervention after having been reassured that American intervention was unlikely in the event of a swift victory. This support was not only theoretical but also in practical terms. The Soviet Union committed itself to sell armaments, supplies and ammunition to its new ally. In addition to this after the Soviet withdrawal, many military advisors and attachés remained in the country to direct the creation of the KPA (Korean People's Army). Moreover, according to Yu Song-chol, a retired DPRK lieutenant general who translated the operational plan in 1950 ([Soviet aims in North Korea](#) pg. 30), the battle plan for the invasion of South Korea was drafted by Soviet Officials.

All these information underline the key role of the Soviet Union in the creation of North Korea, but this does not mean that the Soviet Union should be held responsible for the invasion, in fact Stalin did not take into consideration the idea of a North Korean aggression against the South for a long time, and although the Soviet did approve their allies plan the decision did not come from them.

United States of America (USA): Together with the USSR the USA were the major power soon after the end of World War 2. American intervention in Korea was quite new, especially when confronted with that of Russia, which due to geographical reasons since the end of the 19th had some type of relationship with Korea. The American occupation in Korea was since the beginning a very difficult one.

The involvement of the US in Korea started quite late in the war, the first official event which relates the US and Korea was the Cairo conference in 1943, where Roosevelt, Churchill and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek declared that after the war Korea would become "*Free and Independent*". But it was not until 1945 that the issue of Korea came up again in Washington's agenda, when following Japan's unconditional surrender the Americans had to decide how to divide Korea between the US and the USSR. It was decided to divide the peninsula in half along the line marked by the 38th Parallel.

The first elements of the US occupation army arrived in Korea on September 8th 1945, and soon after the first issues started to present themselves.

Firstly as soon as the occupying army arrived the *de facto* provisional government that was established before the surrender of the Japanese was stripped of its legitimacy, and the Americans refused to recognize it ([pg 114](#)), thus presenting themselves more as new occupiers rather than as liberators. Secondly the Americans saw with great suspicion the People's Republic of Korea (PRK), the people's committees that had been established, and that maintained law and order between the fall of the Japanese colonial system and the arrival of the Allies, and all those left-wing associations and unions that were present in the South. This mistrust was mainly caused by the fact that the Americans saw them as possible instruments in the hands of the USSR. Thirdly for a few days, up until September 12th 1945, General Hodges decided to retain in office General Abe Nobuyuki, Japanese governor of Korea, along with other high-ranking Japanese officials. This decision was heavily criticized by the Department of State, and fuelled the resentment that most of the South Korean population felt for the USMGIK (United States Military Government in Korea).

The USMGIK began to support and surround itself with rightist and conservative groups, the most prominent was the KDP (Korean Democratic Party) which was considered by the army officials as the most stable political group, one of the major critics moved to the KDP was the presence in its ranks of many collaborationists. It should be also noted, that it is highly probable that the army favoured mainly the right wing parties due to a growing fear of Soviet interferences, and the right wing or conservative parties were openly anti-communist.

The USMGIK policy in favour of the conservative/right-wing continued throughout 1945, when another step was taken to reinforce the anti-communist movement in the South. Syngman Rhee was allowed to return to Korea on October 16, who had been elected president of People's Republic of Korea. He was an ardent anti-communist who had studied in the US and spent his time in exile mostly there.

The American government supported the idea of the international 4 powers trusteeship on Korea, during the Moscow conference in 1945, the US delegation was the first country to propose such a solution. The US proposal was rejected in favour of the Soviet proposal. The decision of a possible trusteeship was heavily criticized by all political parties in the South, with only the USMGIK supporting it. ([American Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1945-1950 p144](#))

The American government opposed the proposal made by the USSR in the joint Soviet-American commission that only those political parties that were openly in favour of the trusteeship could participate in the election of the Korean Provisional government which would have ruled the peninsula during the five years of the trusteeship. American opposition to this proposal was due to the fact that all of the conservative groups led by Syngman Rhee in the South had harshly criticized the decision made by the Allies to put Korea under a trusteeship. In fact only the KCP was in favour of the trusteeship and if the proposal advanced by the USSR were to be advanced the country would have been in the hands of the Soviet backed KCP a possibility that the American government, which was starting to become more and more hostile to the USSR could never accept. The stalemate that arose in the joint Soviet-American commission led to the commission adjourning *Sine die*.

To resolve this stalemate the US government decided to take the issue of Korea in front of the newly created United Nations on September 17 1947. This move was not well received by the USSR, that considered this move a violation of the 1945 Moscow accord and a violation of the Charter. Despite the opposition from the USSR the American government pursued its policy to solve the issue through the UN and for this reason it refused to accept the proposal advanced by the USSR in the joint Soviet-American commission to withdraw all foreign troops by 1948.

The USA had definitively decided that no solution could be reached in direct talks with the USSR and the only place in which a solution could be found was in the UN. The American representatives submitted a resolution to the First Committee according to which the US and the USSR should hold elections supervised by the UN in each occupation zone, to elect a National Assembly. The resolution proposed also the creation of the UNTCOK United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea which would supervise the elections.

The resolution was adopted but the USSR refused to recognize the UNTCOK and the elections were held only in the South on May 10th 1948, and were won by the rightists group backed by the USMGIK.

The American attempt to solve the issue through the UN had miserably failed, in fact it resulted in the definitive separation of the two Koreas.

The American occupation forces believed that their work of establishing a Korean government had ended and started their withdrawal in 1948, but that was halted until June 30 1949, because the ROK government requested the US to maintain troops on their soil until the newly created government was able to defend itself. The US agreed, and maintained troops in Korea for another year.

In fact now that an anti-communist government had been established the American government sought to strengthen its new ally's army because many American officials believed that the ROK was too weak at that time and it might have collapsed if the United States had withdrawn their forces immediately.

Key events

1943 Cairo Conference, first addressign of the Korean Question

August 14 1945: Stalin accepts american plan to divide Korea along the 38th parallel

August 15 1945, Japanese surrender to the Allies, beginning of the Allied occupation of Korea.

August 24 1945: Soviet Occupation forces establish themselves in Pyongyang

September 8 1945: American Occupation forces establish themselves in Seoul

December 1945: Moscow conference, the allies foreign ministers decide to establish the four power trusteeship over Korea, creation of the Joint Soviet-American commission.

May 16 1946: the works of the Joint Commission come to a stalemate, the prospect of a unified Korea start to fade

July 1947: After a new attempt to solve the issue through the Joint Commission the dialogue fail definitively.

September 16 1947: The question of Korea is taken before the United Nations General Assembly

November 14 1947: The UNTCOK is founded, the Ukrainian Socialist Republic refuses to take part to the works of the commission; The Soviet Union refuses to recognize the legitimacy of such commission.

March 11 1948: the UNTCOK convenes that elections are to be held on May 10th 1948, possibly in the whole peninsula, if not possible only in those parts of the country where the commission is able to reach.

April 3 1948: beginning of the communist uprising in the Island of Jeju, the uprising will last for more than a year leaving behind at least 30.000 deaths.

April 19 1948: Conference in Pyongyang between the Southern leftist groups which did not accept the separate elections and the North Korea's Communist, last attempt made between elements from the North and the South to reconcile.

May 10 1948: Day of the elections in the South under the control of the UNTCOK.

June 25 1948: The UNTCOK publishes a report that determines the validity of the elections held the previous month,

August 15 1948: The Republic of Korea (ROK) with Syngman Rhee as its head is formed, the division of the two Koreas is complete

August 25, 1948: "election of deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly" election held on the whole Korean territory to elect the national assembly of the South to become DPRK

September 9th 1948: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is officially created, Kim Il-Sung is appointed as its supreme leader.

December 25 1948 : The withdrawal of Soviet forces from North Korea is complete.

June 29 1949: the withdrawal of US forces in Korea is complete, although some contingents were kept to train the South Korean forces.

June 25 1950: North Korean forces cross the line of the 38th parallel and march into South Korea, beginning of the Korean War.

Key terms or useful links

DPRK: Democratic people's Republic of Korea, communist, soviet backed state which was created in the Soviet occupation zone in 1948.

ROK: Republic of Korea, american backed, authoritarian conservative state, created in the American occupation zone in 1948.

UNTCOK: United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, commission created by the UN to supervise the elections in Korea to unify the country.

Trusteeship: supervisory control by one or more countries over a trust territory.

<http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/>

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD KOREA, 1945-1950 By HYUN WOONG

HONG <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=4CB14B4B4DB324E43F7E8BD74DC761FA?doi=10.1.1.428.731&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

SOVIET AIMS IN KOREA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE KOREAN WAR, 1945-1950: NEW EVIDENCE FROM RUSSIAN ARCHIVES: Kathryn Weathersby Florida State University <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFB76.pdf>

The Limits of Decolonization: American Occupiers and the "Korean Problem" in Japan, 1945-1948 Matthew R. Augustine <https://ijkh.khistory.org/upload/pdf/ijkh-22-1-43.pdf>

Hauben, Jay. (2018). The UN Role in Korea in the Division of the Korean Nation.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oclubJz1JzY-hMiFpq9Vjm0qHG15u1qH/view?usp=sharing>

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/134/korean-war-origins-1945-1950>

The Making of Modern Korea by Adrian Buzo

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k5fkIVzCyEKPB_BD5iVnQRVbO0rKjSGs/view?usp=sharing

The United Nations and The Peaceful Unification of Korea by Leon Gordenker

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CVoXKYoVym8uh6nGKPY_WaX8wtys-Jhn/view?usp=sharing

<https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1072&context=mscas>

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/sources>

Bibliography

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD KOREA, 1945-1950 By HYUN WOONG HONG

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=4CB14B4B4DB324E43F7E8BD74DC761FA?doi=10.1.1.428.731&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

SOVIET AIMS IN KOREA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE KOREAN WAR, 1945-1950: NEW EVIDENCE FROM RUSSIAN ARCHIVES: Kathryn Weathersby Florida State

University <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFB76.pdf>

<https://ijkh.khistory.org/upload/pdf/ijkh-22-1-43.pdf>

<http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/14.htm>

Kim, Hakjoon. "THE AMERICAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH KOREA, 1945-1948: ITS FORMATION, POLICIES, AND LEGACIES." *Asian Perspective*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1988, pp. 51–83. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42703907.

William Stueck & Boram Yi (2010) 'An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US–South Korean Alliance, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:2, 177-209, DOI: 10.1080/01402391003590200 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402391003590200>

Hauben, Jay. (2018). The UN Role in Korea in the Division of the Korean Nation.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oclubJz1JzY-hMiFpq9Vjm0qHG15u1qH/view?usp=sharing>

Fifield, R. (1957). *Korea: A Study of U. S. Policy in the United Nations*. By Leland M. Goodrich.

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/134/korean-war-origins-1945-1950>

The Making of Modern Korea by Adrian Buzo

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k5fkIVzCyEKPBD5iVnQRVbO0rKjSGs/view?usp=sharing>

The United Nations and The Peaceful Unification of Korea by Leon Gordenker

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CVoXKYoVym8uh6nGKPYWaX8wtys-Jhn/view?usp=sharing>

<https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1072&context=mscas> <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/sources>

UNGA RES 112(II)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/038/19/IMG/NR003819.pdf?OpenElement>