

The KOREAN WAR

*The First of
the Proxy Wars*

1950 - 1953



BACKGROUND

- ◉ Korea (as one country) under Japanese control since 1904.
- ◉ It was decided at Yalta (1945) that Korea would be taken from Japan and split at the 38th parallel.
 - North Korea under Soviet administration
 - South Korea under American administration



China

North Korea

★ Pyongyang

38th Parallel

Seoul ★

South Korea

CAUSES

- ◉ U.N. decides to hold free elections in Korea to determine the country's future.
- ◉ USSR not pleased!
 - Communists boycotted the election in the South
 - Officials in the North never allowed the elections to happen!

-
- ◉ Never the less, Syngman Rhee became President of the democratic South Korea
 - ◉ USA starts to pull troops out of S.K.
 - ◉ But the USSR left many weapons in N.K. including tanks!

- ◉ 1949 was an important year prior to the war:
 - China became communist under Mao
 - USSR has success with their A-bomb
- ◉ Thus the USA is eager to apply containment to Asia as well.

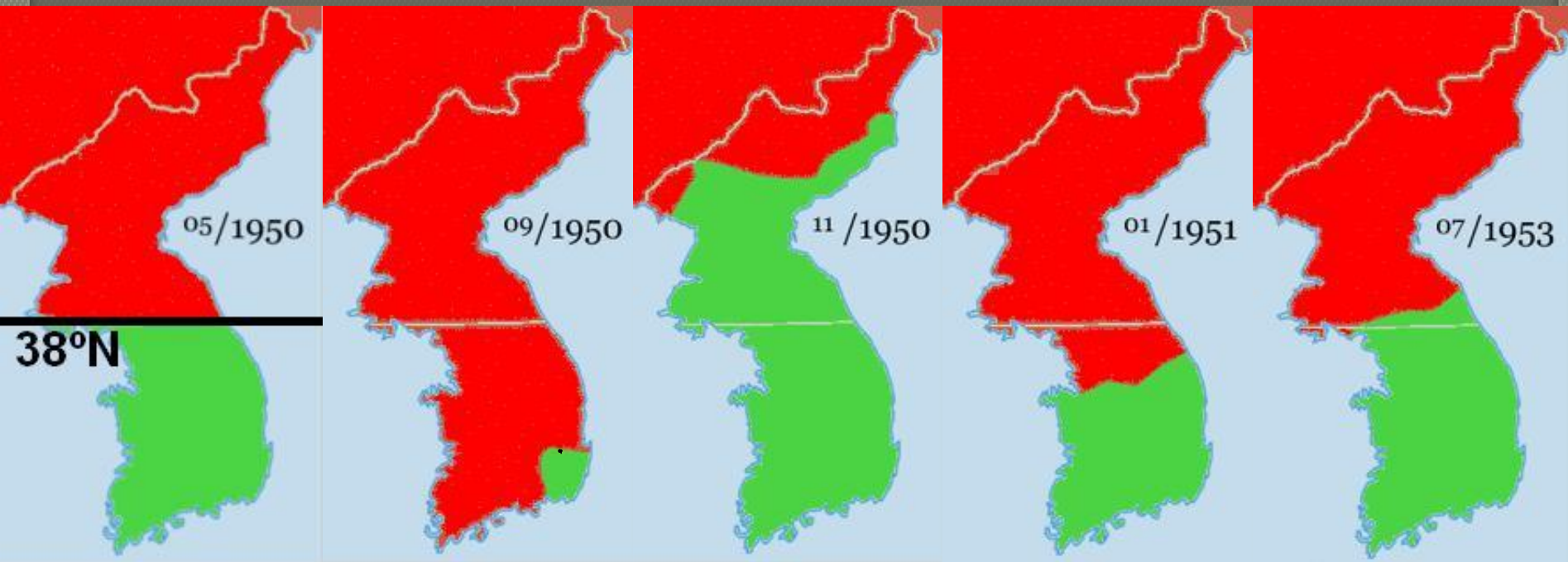


- Given these events, KIM IL-SUNG as leader of N.K., thought it the right moment to re-unite Korea under communism!



WAR

- Began June 25th 1950 as 90,000 N.K. troops began crossing the 38th parallel.
- Huge momentum shifts during 1st year.



-
- China sends troops to help N.K. Army.
 - U.S. General MacArthur asks President Truman for more reinforcements.
 - Truman doesn't want a "general war" with Korea.

-
- ◉ Technically the USA is in Korea as part of a UN force to help S.K.!
 - ◉ MacArthur became very critical of his government and wanted to use “the bomb” in Korea.

- ◉ Truman has MacArthur replaced!
- ◉ Battles continued along the 38th parallel until 1953 as the war became a **STALEMATE**.
- ◉ Truman replaced by Eisenhower.
- ◉ Stalin died, replaced by Khrushchev.



RESULTS:

U.S. CONTAINMENT OR U.N. PEACEMAKING?

- Greater tensions as USSR and Communist China were NOT in the UN Security Council during the war, they thus called the UN's actions to support S.K. **ILLEGAL**.
- USSR had left the Security Council in Jan. 1950 in a rage since the UN would not recognize Communist China as the legitimate representative of "China".
 - "China" at the UN was Nationalist China.

-
- Thus when the Security Council voted to help S.K. in July 1950, the USSR was not present and thus could not use their **VETO** power to stop it!

-
- “Peacemaking” is the diplomatic effort intended to move a violent conflict into nonviolent dialogue, to end the violence between the contending parties - usually done through negotiation and mediation.
 - Does what happened in Korea seem like peacemaking?

-
- It was convenient and fortunate to enter Korea under the “UN banner” but the USA would have sent troops there regardless to prevent the spread of communism.
 - Asia was key for the USA to halting the spread of Communism in other regions.
 - America had to take a stand and this is what they did in Korea.

The Domino Theory

- The idea that if one country 'falls' to communism, the same change is likely to happen to its neighbouring countries, similar to a line of domino's falling.
- So already in Asia, the U.S.S.R. and China were communist, and now so was North Korea ... who was next!?!? Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, etc ... !?!?!?



Videos:

- **Cold War Documentary - Korea - 1949 -1953** (46.31)
- **Korean War** (9:52)