

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Essay frame

Essay title: Assess the importance of ideological differences in the outbreak of the Cold War.

Introduction: Establish what the different ideologies were, i.e., the key differences between Capitalism and Communism. Set down a time frame to work within, perhaps 1945–50 (or to 1953 to end with the death of Stalin). Make your main argument clear, i.e., the opposing ideologies of the United States and the USSR were likely to lead to conflict; however, were these differences more important in creating the Cold War than traditional 'empire building' rivalries and other clashes of 'self-interest'? Self-interest could be defined as attempting to establish a 'sphere of influence' and protecting and expanding economic interests.

Paragraph 1: Deal first with the factor identified in the essay title, perhaps like this: *To a certain extent ideology can be seen as the driving force behind the outbreak of the Cold War...* Give examples of historians who argue that Soviet ideology was important. André Fontaine (1968) sees it as a struggle which begins in 1917 with the Bolshevik Revolution and concluded that aggressive Soviet foreign policy to be largely due to Communist ideology. Consider increasingly 'ideological' language used by the Americans in this period. Give examples from Chapters Two and Three that support this hypothesis.

Paragraph 2: Now look at the other side of the argument, perhaps this way: *It can also be argued, however, that 'expansionism' and self-interest were the reasons why the Cold War started...* Give examples of historians who support this view, e.g., the 'prophetic' writings of Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835, who warns of a balance of power confrontation between the two – not an ideological struggle. Also consider Henry Kissinger's writings in the 1980s which claim that the USSR's motives were not based on ideology, but rather on self-interest. Give historical examples to support the hypothesis, e.g., examples of Russian expansionism into the East and U.S. expansionism to the West before 1917. Give examples from Chapters Two and Three that support this hypothesis. You may wish to reconsider some of the examples for ideological expansionism chosen for Paragraph 1 and re-analyse them as self-interest, e.g., the USSR's control of the buffer states after 1945 could be interpreted in both ways.

Paragraph 3: Now address other factors or recent viewpoints on this issue. Historians writing since the collapse of the Soviet Union have brought ideology back to the fore, and see this as very important to the origins of the Cold War. However, their focus is on the ideology of Stalin in particular, and the Stalinist regime. John Lewis Gaddis writes (1997) that underpinning all the USSR's actions was ideology; it was the very justification for their whole system. Gaddis gives examples from domestic policy to highlight this, e.g., the continuation of communes even though they proved economically inefficient. He sees expansion and consolidation of power in Eastern Europe up to 1953 as safeguarding the Communist system and following Stalinist doctrine. This ideology is identified as dictating policy at Yalta and Potsdam, and from the 'Two Camps' speech onwards. Another example would be the treatment of the 'non-Stalinist' Tito. Find other examples to support these ideas from Chapters Two and Three.

Conclusion: Over to you! Remember to follow the 'weight' of the evidence given for each argument and refer explicitly to the question – how important was ideology for the superpowers?

More essay titles to try

Here are some other essay titles in which you could explore the historiographical debate on the origins of the Cold War:

- To what extent were Soviet policies responsible for the outbreak and development of the Cold War between 1945 and 1949?
- 'The Cold War was caused by fear not aggression.' To what extent does this view explain how the Cold War developed between 1945 and 1949?
- In what ways could Stalin be held responsible for the origin and development of the Cold War?
- To what extent was the Cold War caused by Truman's policies?
- How far did mutual distrust and suspicion cause the Cold War?
- To what extent do you agree that the wartime alliance between the USA and the USSR was 'unnatural' and 'bound to fall apart' after they had defeated their common enemies in World War Two?

THE COLD WAR GOES GLOBAL:
THE KOREAN WAR AND NSC-68

As you read this chapter consider the following essay questions:

- Why did the USA policy of a containment shift to Asia after 1949?
- Why did the Korean War start?
- What was the impact of the Korean War on the Cold War?

Cold War Timeline 1949–1953

1949	Sept	USSR gets the A bomb
	Dec	Communist victory in Chinese Civil War
1950	April	U.S. National Security Council produces NSC-68
	June	North Korea invades South Korea
	Sept	U.S. troops land at Inchon
	Nov	Chinese launch counter-offensive
	Dec	UN troops fall back to 38th parallel
1951	Feb	UN condemns China as aggressor in Korea
	April	Eisenhower dismisses MacArthur
	July	Truce talks start in Korea
	Sept	USA and Japan sign mutual security pact
	Oct	Greece and Turkey join NATO
1952	March	USSR proposes a neutral Germany
	Nov	Eisenhower elected U.S. President
1953	March	Death of Stalin
	July	Military armistice to end Korean hostilities signed

U.S. Foreign Policy 1949–1950

With the establishment of NATO in April 1949, the USA was optimistic that the Communists had been contained in Europe, first by the Truman Doctrine and now by NATO.

In fact, NATO was quite a 'cheap' option for the USA, as its power rested on the atomic bomb. The USA, therefore, did not have to invest huge sums of money into developing conventional forces in Western Europe to match the Soviet Red Army. However, it should be noted that the USA had little choice but to rely on its nuclear threat, as after World War Two the USA had **demobilized** its fighting men, whereas the USSR had not. Thus each side had its 'ace card' – land forces for the Soviets and the atomic bomb for the USA.

However, by the autumn of 1949 two key events occurred that shifted the balance of power in favour of the USSR: the Soviet Union got a nuclear bomb of its own and China fell to the Communist forces of Mao Zedong.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO consisted of USA, Canada, Ireland and 13 European states. It was the first peacetime military alliance in U.S. history. Under its terms an attack on one member of NATO was an attack on all. In 1952, Greece and Turkey joined and then in 1955, much to the dismay of the USSR, West Germany joined. The USSR responded by setting up the Warsaw Pact (see Chapter Three, page 34).

The USSR gets the Bomb

As mentioned above, U.S. security and the key basis of NATO's power was the nuclear bomb. In August 1949 this security was shattered when the Soviet Union announced that it had developed its own atomic weapon. The USA had lost its 'ace card'. Not only that, but the USSR had achieved this far more quickly than the Americans had anticipated.

China falls to the Communists

During the Chinese Civil War (1945–1949) the USA had given limited support to the Nationalists under **Chiang Kai-shek**. When the country ultimately fell to the Communist guerrilla forces of Mao Zedong, the **White Paper** report on this clearly stated that the USA could not substantially have altered the outcome. It suggested that Chiang and his forces were simply too unpopular with the Chinese people, and that it had been more a case of Nationalist 'collapse' than Communist 'victory'. The White Paper saw Mao as somewhat 'independent' from Moscow. Secretary of State Dean Acheson expressed the U.S. government's view in 1949:

The reasons for the failure of the Chinese National Government appear ... not to stem from any inadequacy of American aid. Our military observers on the spot have reported that the Nationalist armies did not lose a single battle during the crucial year of 1948 through lack of arms or ammunition. The fact was that the decay which our observers had detected in Chongqing early in the war had fatally sapped the powers of resistance of the Guomindang. Its leaders had proved incapable of meeting the crisis confronting them, its troops had lost the will to fight, and its government had lost popular support. The Communists, on the other hand, through a ruthless discipline and fanatical zeal, attempted to sell themselves as guardians and liberators of the people. The Nationalist armies did not have to be defeated; they disintegrated. History has proved again and again that a regime without faith in itself and an army without morale cannot survive the test of battle.

Thus, in 1949 the American experts in Asia believed that they had done what they could in China.

The Red Scare: McCarthyism and the anti-Communist crusade in America

Anti-Communist feeling was strong in the USA after World War Two, but it reached fever-pitch in the 1950s, encouraged by Senator **Joseph R. McCarthy** of Wisconsin, who alleged that the Soviet Union had a conspiracy to place Communist sympathizers into key positions in American life. McCarthy's accusations led to 'purges' and **show trials** of those accused of 'un-American' behaviour. Some historians have drawn parallels with the show trials in Stalin's purges of the 1930s. They affected every level of U.S. society – and no group, institution or individual was safe from suspicion. Perhaps the most infamous trial of the period was that of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were convicted of spying for the Soviets, and executed in 1953.

During the 1950s the 'anti-Red' crusade reached its peak. It helped to shape and intensify public opinion against Communism in America. McCarthy and his followers created an atmosphere of near-hysterical suspicion and fear of 'the enemy within', and McCarthy went as far as to call for a purge of 'comsymps' (Communist sympathizers) in the State Department. He claimed that the Truman administration was under Communist influence and that all American liberals were Communist sympathizers.

It was in this atmosphere in February 1950 that Dean Acheson was forced to make a speech appeasing the McCarthyites. Acheson and President Truman had been the focus of an attack by McCarthy for being 'soft on Communism' and Acheson decided to 'reconsider' the findings of the 1949 White Paper on China. He went as far as to claim that China under Mao was '... completely subservient to the Moscow regime'. In other words, his view was the reverse of the impression set down in the White Paper.

Following this, all but two of the State Department advisers on China who had said that the Guomindang was 'not worth saving' lost their jobs. They had fallen foul of the McCarthy purges. As a result, the U.S. government lost valuable experts on Far East foreign affairs.

Under continued pressure, Truman now called for a far-reaching review of U.S. foreign and defence policy in response to the new threats perceived as resulting from the Chinese Communist victory and the USSR's A-bomb. It seemed now that the USA might be engaged in a Cold War on two fronts and against a Soviet Union that was now a nuclear power.

In this new climate, President Truman was not able to recognize the legitimacy of the new Chinese government.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

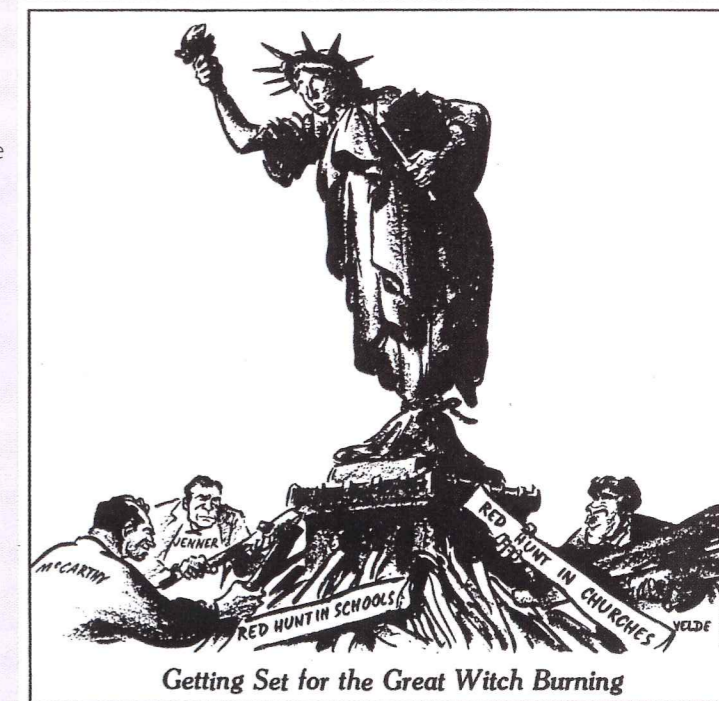
Research questions

- Research in more detail some of the key features and victims of the Red Scare in the USA:
 - The Hollywood Ten
 - HUAC (House of Un-American Activities Committee)
 - Alger Hiss
 - The Rosenbergs
 - Role of the FBI
 - The McCarran Act.
- Why was McCarthy finally discredited?

Cartoon analysis

McCarthy's attack on so-called Communist sympathizers, and the hysteria that it generated, led to what became known as 'witch hunts'. This term was derived from the religiously inspired witch hunts of the 17th century in Europe and America.

- Why is the Statue of Liberty shown in the cartoon being burnt at the stake?
- What point is the cartoonist making about the impact of McCarthyism on American society?



This cartoon by Velde from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* is a depiction of the American Statue of Liberty.

NSC-68: 'Total Commitment'

NSC-68 was a report of the U.S. National Security Council produced in 1950. It is seen by many historians, such as LaFeber, as 'one of the key documents of the Cold War'.

NSC-68 warned of how *all* Communist activity *everywhere* could be traced back to Moscow. It went on to say that recent developments had a 'global theme' and that they indicated the growing strength and influence of the USSR. This was the 'monolithic' view of Communism – in other words all Communism fed back to the 'nerve centre' in Moscow.

The report warned of an 'indefinite period of tension and danger'. It advised the U.S. government to be ready to meet each and every challenge promptly. The report suggested an immediate increase in military strength and spending to \$35–\$50 billion.

The key significance of NSC-68 was that it encouraged military and economic aid to be given to *any* country perceived by the USA to be resisting Communism.

Secret statement in National Security Council Report 68, State and Defense Department, Washington, April 1950:

[We advocate] an immediate and large scale build-up in our military and general strength and that of our allies with the intention of righting the power balance and in the hope that through means other than all-out war we could induce a change in the nature of the socialist system ...

The United States ... can strike out on a bold and massive program of rebuilding the West's defensive potential to surpass that of the Soviet world, and of meeting each fresh challenge promptly and unequivocally ... This means virtual abandonment by the United States of trying to distinguish between national and global security. It also means the end of subordinating security needs to the traditional budgeting restrictions; of asking 'How much security can we afford?' In other words, security must henceforth become the dominant element in the national budget, and other elements must be accommodated to it ...

This new concept of the security needs of the nation calls for annual appropriations of the order of \$50 billion, or not much below the former wartime levels.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Document analysis

Question

Read the above extract from NSC-68. Identify key phrases in this document, which you think would explain why LaFeber believes it to be one of the most important documents of the Cold War. Give reasons for your choices of particular phrases.

Revisionist historians have criticized American perceptions of Soviet intentions expressed in NSC-68. They see these perceptions as being based on a false premise, and as an 'excuse' for U.S. expansionism – the findings had little to do with the 'real' nature of the Soviet threat.

But the question was: would Americans be willing to pay? The recommendations would require a vast increase in expenditure – the American taxpayer would have to foot the bill. As historian William S. Taubman comments, Acheson may have overstated the case in order to persuade the U.S. public to 'put their money where their anti-Communist mouths were'.

The Korean War: the first 'hot war'

President Truman's Democratic Party faced difficult congressional elections in November 1950. Truman wanted to shelve the issues of the recognition of China and of commitment in Asia and the recommendations of NSC-68 until afterwards. However, on 25 June 1950, 90,000 North Korean soldiers launched an invasion into South Korea. Truman had no time now for sober consideration as to whether 'total commitment' on a global scale was a wise policy to follow. The North Korean attack was seen as a clear example of Soviet expansionism. Again, it is possible to see here the United States' belief in a monolithic Communist bloc; the North Koreans were assumed to be acting on the orders of Stalin. There was a fear that failure to take action would undermine the credibility of the USA in its determination to resist Communism and would encourage a '**domino effect**' in neighbouring states. As Truman put it:

If we let Korea down, the Soviets will keep right on going and swallow up one piece of Asia after another ... If we were to let Asia go, the Near East would collapse and no telling what would happen in Europe ... Korea is like the Greece of the Far East. If we are tough enough now, if we stand up to them like we did in Greece three years ago, they won't take any more steps.

This idea that Communism would quickly spread from one country to another became known later as the domino effect (see Chapter Six). The U.S. response in Korea was thus dictated by the same policy it had used in Europe: containment.

After initially sending aid to South Korea, the USA sponsored a resolution in the United Nations calling for military action against North Korea. Truman saw this as an important test of the UN. If the UN ignored the North Korean invasion, it would be following the same mistakes of its predecessor the League of Nations, that is, not standing up to aggressor states. As the USSR was boycotting the Security Council in protest at the refusal of the USA to allow Communist China a seat on the Council, this resolution was passed on 27 June 1950. On 1 July, U.S. troops arrived in Korea, soon to be joined by 15 other nations under a UN commander – American General Douglas MacArthur. Thus the USA once again found itself at war and this, as Acheson later explained, 'removed the recommendations of NSC-68 from the realm of theory and made them immediate budget issues.'

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Review question

Look back over the chapter so far. What a) international considerations and b) domestic considerations would have had an influence on Truman's decision to become involved in the Korean War?

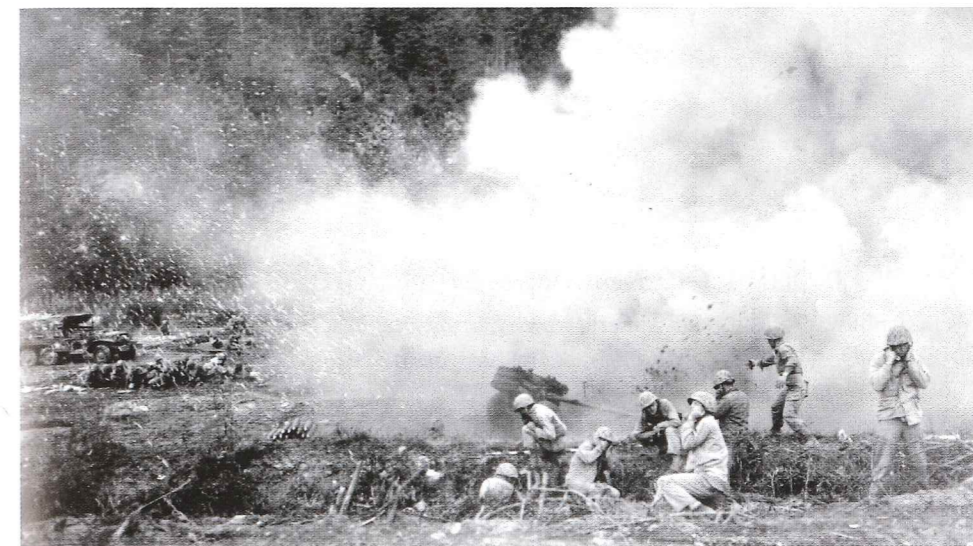
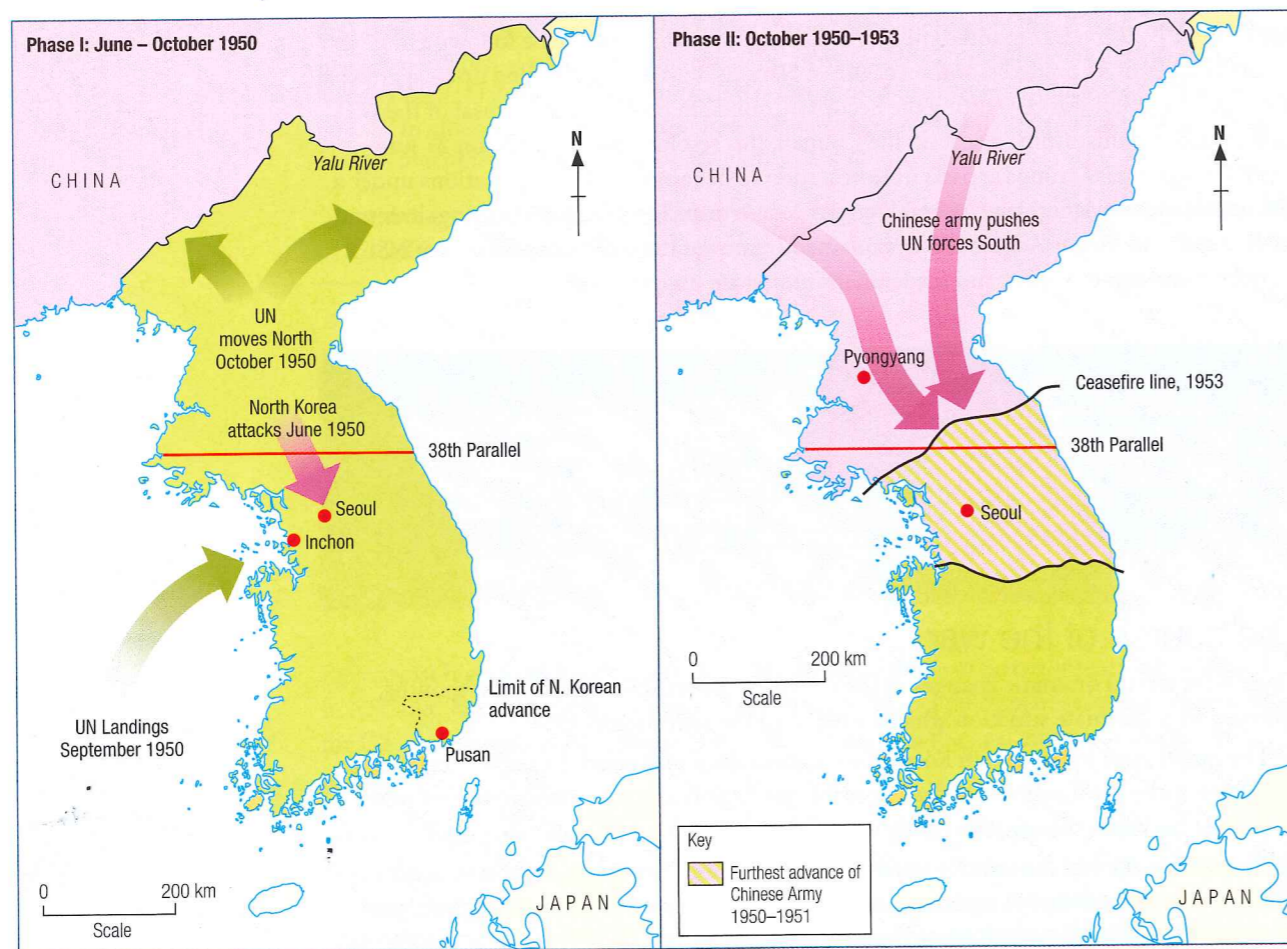
The course of the war

There were several dramatic changes in the course of the war over the first few months, followed by a stalemate situation which lasted until the armistice in 1953:

- The initial push by the North Koreans took them deep into South Korea, leaving only a corner of the peninsula out of their control. South Korean and American troops were pushed back into this small area around Pusan.
- General MacArthur led the UN forces in an amphibious landing at Inchon in order to bypass the Korean troops and cut them off. Within a month he had retaken Seoul and driven the North Koreans back to the **38th parallel**.

- Encouraged by this success, the United States then redefined its war aims and, rather than just concentrating on 'containment', now decided on a policy of 'rollback'. This would mean liberating the North Koreans from Communist rule and reuniting Korea. UN forces crossed the 38th parallel into North Korean territory and began a rapid advance northwards, capturing Pyongyang, the capital of the North, in October.
- The march towards the Yalu River, however, made China concerned about its own security. On 27 November 1950, a force of 200,000 Chinese joined 150,000 North Koreans and sent the UN troops into a rapid retreat. Pyongyang was recaptured in December and by the end of 1950, the North Koreans and their allies had retaken all land up to the 38th parallel. There were heavy American casualties in the bitter cold, and many were taken prisoner.
- A stalemate then developed around the 38th parallel.
- Truman now realized that the United States needed to go back to the original aim of containing Communism above the 38th Parallel. MacArthur disagreed, claiming, 'Here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest. Here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words'. He was subsequently relieved of his command.
- Peace talks started in 1951 with a focus on the **repatriation** of prisoners of war (POWs).
- The war continued for another two years, during which time fighting continued, causing serious casualties (over 40 per cent of American casualties were in this period). The United States put pressure on China by threatening to use the atom bomb.
- A military armistice was finally signed at Panmunjom in July 1953.

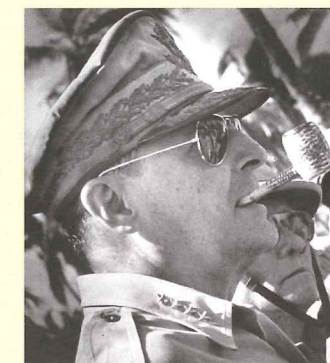
These maps show Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Korean War.



◀ A shell explodes among U.S. troops during a Korean War engagement.

i General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964)

MacArthur had fought in World War One and received 13 medals for bravery. He became Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army in 1930, and during World War Two he was the commander of the war against the Japanese – responsible for the successful island-hopping strategy that pushed the Japanese back from their island strongholds. Following the surrender of the Japanese, he was put in control of rebuilding Japan and developing a new constitution (see Chapter Six). At the age of 70 he was then put in charge of the UN forces in Korea. However, although he was successful in pushing back the North Koreans, he was dismissed by Truman in 1951 because of his public calls for the use of the atomic bomb against China. He returned to the USA to be greeted as a hero by the American public, but he was unsuccessful in his bid to be nominated as a presidential candidate in 1952.



STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Cartoon analysis

Questions

- 1 What is meant by the reference to using a 'roundish one'?
- 2 What is the problem with using only a 'suarish one'?



This American cartoon by Herblock appeared in the *Washington Post* newspaper in 1951.

Discussion question

- 1 Consider how the Korean War can be seen as
 - a a civil war
 - b a limited war. What do you understand by the term 'limited war'? Why was Korea called the first 'limited war'? Is it possible to define the term 'limited war'? What problems are there with calling Korea a limited war?

Why did North Korea attack South Korea in 1950?

This first 'hot war' of the Cold War era, which had such far-reaching consequences, was not one that the USA had expected to fight at any stage before 1950. Why then did it take place?

STUDENT STUDY SECTION**Research questions**

- 1 Study a map of Asia. Why can it be said that Korea occupies a key strategic position?
- 2 Which countries fought for this land at the end of the 19th century?

Background to the conflict

Japan had officially annexed Korea in 1910 and was still in occupation of Korea when World War Two ended. Korean nationalists, who had led a revolution in 1945 and who included many Communists, were not allowed to decide the fate of Korea in 1945 and it was agreed by the USA and the USSR that the two superpowers would take joint responsibility for repatriating the Japanese forces there. The 38th parallel line of latitude was taken as the dividing point, with the USSR occupying Korea north of the line and the USA occupying Korea south of the line.

This was originally intended to be a temporary arrangement and at the Council of Foreign Ministers' Moscow Conference in December 1945 the United States and the Soviet Union agreed on the creation of a Korean provisional government, followed by a short period of international trusteeship or supervision, leading eventually to independence.

This was difficult to achieve, however, because:

- As the Cold War developed, the USA and the USSR became less willing to co-operate.
- Despite the Moscow Agreement, separate administrations emerged on either side of the 38th parallel. In the South, the U.S. military government put forward as leader the elderly Syngman Rhee, a rebel who had fought against the Japanese and spent much of his life in exile. The Soviets supported the Communists and backed a faction headed by Kim Il Sung, a young Russian-trained Korean Communist who had been a guerrilla fighter against the Japanese. Although the two men were very different, they had much in common: both were Korean nationalists, both wanted to end the division of Korea and each saw himself as the leader of a united Korea.

In the increasingly tense atmosphere of the Cold War, the division of Korea was confirmed in 1947. The Americans persuaded the UN to establish a commission to supervise Korean elections. This commission was refused entry into the North, but observed a separate election in the South in May 1948. Although most Koreans opposed partition, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was set up in the South under Syngman Rhee. It was an undemocratic and strongly anti-Communist administration, which was recognized as legitimate by the UN General Assembly. In response, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was founded in the North under Kim Il Sung in September 1948 and was immediately recognized by the Communist bloc. 'The Cold War had thus institutionalized a Korean civil war in two hostile states, each claiming to represent all Koreans' (Callum MacDonald in *Korea: The War Before Vietnam*, Free Press, 1987).

The Council of Foreign Ministers

The Council of Foreign Ministers was an organization agreed upon at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 towards the end of World War Two. It consisted of the foreign ministers of the UK, USSR, China, France and the United States and had the job of drawing up peace treaties with various countries, sorting out territorial questions and making a peace settlement for Germany. At the later Moscow Conference it also dealt with how Japan and Korea were to be governed.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION**Review question**

What similarities and what differences are there in the way in which both Germany and Korea became divided into two separate countries?

Although the USA supported Syngman Rhee with economic and military aid, they did not intend to station troops there, and the U.S. military had left South Korea by mid-1949. Soviet troops left the North in 1948. The United States made it clear that they still saw Europe as the most important area in the Cold War, but decided to maintain a line of offshore strong points stretching from Japan to the Philippines rather than involve themselves in expensive military commitments on the mainland. This was made clear in Dean Acheson's 'perimeter' speech of January 1950, in which both South Korea and Taiwan were publicly excluded from the American defensive perimeter in the Western Pacific.

Why did the superpowers get involved?

So, having both withdrawn their troops, why did the superpowers become involved in a war on this peninsula? The thinking of orthodox historians followed the U.S. views of 1950: that this was an attack initiated and led by Stalin. Revisionist historians later claimed that Stalin had no role in the invasion, and that the North was possibly responding to attacks from the South. Historian Bruce Cummings, writing in 1981, stated that Soviet control over the DPRK was 'flimsy' and that Kim Il Sung could have acted independently of the Soviets since the DPRK was by no means solely reliant on Soviet arms. Fortunately, the opening of the Soviet archives after 1990 make it much easier to unravel the controversial causes of this war and to clarify the roles of Kim Il Sung and of Stalin.

What was the role of Kim Il Sung in starting the war?

Kim Il Sung's role is key to explaining this war. It is clear that both Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Sung wanted to unify the country. Thus a civil war would have existed here in any case, regardless of the involvement of the superpowers. However, neither side could unify the country on its own, and thus the involvement of the Soviets in support of Kim Il Sung or the Americans in support of Syngman Rhee was essential for success. Kim Il Sung put a huge amount of effort into persuading Stalin that he should back an attack on the South. Stalin initially had no interest in these plans and Kim Il Sung obtained Stalin's approval only after persistent appeals. Thus it is clear that the impetus for war came from Pyongyang and not from Moscow. The Truman administration's assumption in June 1950, and of many scholars writing since then, that the war was Stalin's initiative is therefore false, though his support for Kim Il Sung was key in allowing the war to go ahead.

What was the role of Stalin in starting the war?

Although initially unwilling to agree to Kim Il Sung's plans for a war against the South, the evidence shows that Stalin gave his approval at the beginning of 1950. There are several possible reasons for this change of mind:

- Stalin may have been more hopeful about the chances of world revolution. The fact that the Communists had won the Chinese Civil War, that the Soviets now had the atomic bomb and that the West was facing economic difficulties might have convinced Stalin that now was the time to push forward with spreading Soviet influence in Asia.

Discussion question

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Kim Il Sung's role is key to explaining this war. It is clear that both Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Sung wanted to unify the country. Thus a civil war would have existed here in any case, regardless of the involvement of the superpowers. However, neither side could unify the country on its own, and thus the involvement of the Soviets in support of Kim Il Sung or the Americans in support of Syngman Rhee was essential for success. Kim Il Sung put a huge amount of effort into persuading Stalin that he should back an attack on the South. Stalin initially had no interest in these plans and Kim Il Sung obtained Stalin's approval only after persistent appeals. Thus it is clear that the impetus for war came from Pyongyang and not from Moscow. The Truman administration's assumption in June 1950, and of many scholars writing since then, that the war was Stalin's initiative is therefore false, though his support for Kim Il Sung was key in allowing the war to go ahead.

What was the role of Stalin in starting the war?

Although initially unwilling to agree to Kim Il Sung's plans for a war against the South, the evidence shows that Stalin gave his approval at the beginning of 1950. There are several possible reasons for this change of mind:

- Stalin may have been more hopeful about the chances of world revolution. The fact that the Communists had won the Chinese Civil War, that the Soviets now had the atomic bomb and that the West was facing economic difficulties might have convinced Stalin that now was the time to push forward with spreading Soviet influence in Asia.

- The United States' role in Japan could have provided an impetus to gain influence specifically in Korea. Stalin knew that the United States had changed its policy in Japan and was now turning Japan into a strong anti-Communist base (see Chapter Six, pages 58–9); if he could gain control of South Korea, this could secure the Soviet position in north-east Asia.
- Historian John Lewis Gaddis points out Stalin's opportunism as another possible factor – his tendency to advance in situations where he thought he could do so without provoking too strong a response. Acheson's perimeter speech could have provided Stalin with a 'tempting opportunity'.

Although changing his mind about supporting the attack, Stalin nevertheless remained cautious. He warned 'the Korean friends' not to 'expect great assistance and support from the Soviet Union, because it had more important challenges to meet than the Korean problem'. He also made it clear that Kim Il Sung would have to gain the approval of Mao Zedong. 'If you get kicked in the teeth, I will not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao for all the help'. Nevertheless, Stalin's support was key to enabling the invasion to take place, and Soviet commanders were involved in all aspects of the preparation and execution of the attack.

What was the role of Mao Zedong in the outbreak of the war?

When Kim Il Sung visited the People's Republic of China, Mao was initially sceptical about the success of the invasion, but gave his approval because Kim fostered the impression that Stalin was more enthusiastic than he actually was, and also Mao was at this time planning an invasion of Taiwan. He needed Soviet support for this and worried that if he expressed reservations about the invasion, Stalin might also show concern about the results of an attack on Taiwan. Having given his approval, he asked Kim if he needed troops stationed on the Korean border in case the Americans intervened, but Kim said that this would not be necessary. Mao then seems to have paid little attention to the actual preparations that were going on in North Korea.

When the attack on the South came, it surprised not only Mao, but also the South Koreans and the Americans. Planning to win the war quickly, the North carried out a massive tank attack, and it was the nature of this attack that caused the United States to take such swift and dramatic action.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Discussion question

John Lewis Gaddis suggests that the Korean War could be called 'A Comedy of Errors'. What misconceptions guided the thinking of Truman, Stalin and Mao during the planning and course of the Korean War?

Results of the Korean War

Actions of the United States

Fearing that this attack would be followed by further Soviet aggression elsewhere in the world, the USA carried out the following measures:

- NSC-68's recommendation to triple the defence budget was implemented.
- U.S. land forces in Europe were greatly strengthened.
- NATO was strengthened. Greece and Turkey were brought into NATO and military bases were set up in Turkey (which had a border with the USSR).
- The need for West Germany to become armed and integrated into NATO was given top priority.

Many of these measures had already been under consideration, and the effect of the Korean War was to accelerate these U.S. policies.

In Asia, the United States also took several important steps against what it saw as the threats of Communism (see also Chapter Six):

- The Treaty of San Francisco with Japan was signed in 1952. This enabled the United States to maintain military bases in Japan. The United States now also focused on building up Japan economically to make it a bulwark against Communism.
- Taiwan had to be defended as well. Already at the start of the Korean War, the U.S. Seventh Fleet had been sent to the Taiwan Straits to defend the island against possible Communist invasion. Following the Korean War, the USA supported Taiwan's Chiang Kai-shek with military and economic aid and continued to recognize Taiwan as the only official Chinese state until as late as 1971.
- China was now isolated by the United States. It was condemned by the UN as an aggressor and prevented from taking a seat in the UN Security Council.
- The USA also became committed to supporting other regimes in Asia that it believed were resisting Communism. This eventually led to US involvement in the Philippines and in Vietnam.
- SEATO (South-East Asia Treaty Organization) was formed as an anti-Communist containment bloc in the Asian area.

What did the Korean War and the subsequent actions of the USA mean for other countries?

For Korea: The cost in human lives and property was vast. There was also no hope now of reunification. This was no longer a local issue, but a Cold War issue and the ceasefire line turned into a heavily armed Cold War frontier. North Korea has subsequently remained under Communist rule. South Korea became a model capitalist success story with heavy American and Japanese investment.

For China: Although now isolated by the USA, China's reputation grew greatly and it became a major power in the region. It preserved its own revolution, took on the USA and successfully 'saved' North Korea. This increased Mao Zedong's reputation at home and strengthened the Chinese revolution. However, it also meant that valuable resources at home were diverted away from recovery to the war effort, and in addition that China's aim of uniting Taiwan and China was now far more difficult. Stalin's reluctance throughout the war to help Mao with any substantial military commitments also meant that from now on Mao would be less likely to rely on Soviet help and would be less bothered about following Moscow's lead. (See Chapter Eleven.)

For the USSR: Although the USSR had kept out of direct conflict with the USA, the results of the Korean War were not good for the Soviet Union. The USA's decision to triple its

defence budget, rearm West Germany, maintain troops in Europe and fight Communism in Asia meant that the Soviet Union was now embroiled in an even more intense and broader Cold War standoff than had existed in 1950.

For South-East Asia: The USA's perception of all Communist movements as being part of a 'monolithic' movement, and its commitment to intervene wherever it saw the threat of Communism on the move, meant that South-East Asia became involved in the Cold War. It was now harder for nationalist movements in the region to triumph in the post-colonial era and many of these groups were forced into increasing dependence on the USSR or China. However, it was only in Vietnam that the USA, the USSR and China became directly involved in the fighting.

The effects of the Korean War on the Cold War

The Korean War caused the globalization of the Cold War. The USA and USSR now found themselves embroiled in conflicts in Asia as well as Europe, and these conflicts would soon spread to other parts of the developing world. It also led to the militarization of the Cold War. To maintain the now increased military commitments, U.S. defence spending increased dramatically, running at around 10 per cent of American GNP in the 1950s. In Europe, there was also increased military spending, which helped to boost the economic prosperity of both regions. In the Soviet Union, the Red Army increased from 2.8 million troops in 1950 to almost 5.8 million by 1955. Stalin's successors, however, cut military spending sharply after 1955, though continuing the development of nuclear armaments.

The development of the military-industrial complex

The huge increase in spending triggered by NSC-68 had important effects inside the United States. It gave a boost to the arms production industries through greater opportunities to get government contracts. Many politicians, including Eisenhower, worried about the growing political and economic strength of this sector of industry – or the military-industrial complex as it became known.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Review activities

- 1 Annotate a map of the world to show the impact of the Korean War *or*
- 2 Draw a mind map/spider diagram to show the results of the Korean War.

Document analysis

Throughout this book, you will see many activities which are designed to help you develop the document analysis skills you will need for Paper One. The questions on Paper One will be looking to test your skills in:

- interpreting historical sources
- cross-referencing historical sources
- assessing sources for their value and limitations
- using sources in conjunction with your own knowledge in a historical explanation.

Interpreting historical sources

On the document paper, you will need to show an understanding of a range of different types of historical documents, e.g., statistics, cartoons, photographs or written sources.

You will need to be able to show that you understand what the *inference* or the *message* of the source is, and in order to do this well, you will need to use your contextual historical knowledge, e.g., your knowledge of the person who created the source or the historical events going on at the time the source was produced. Sometimes there may be several points being made in the source; you need to 'read between the lines' to understand the more subtle message the source conveys.

Cross-referencing historical sources

Cross-referencing questions sometimes ask you to look for similarities between two sources, sometimes the differences between two sources and sometimes both similarities and differences. Therefore, make sure you always read the question carefully. You need to show that you can handle more than one source at a time, so avoid paraphrasing each source and then waiting for the conclusion to explain the differences/similarities; switch between the sources throughout your answer. For each point of similarity or difference, include a brief quote or specific reference from each source to back up your argument.

Assessing sources for their value and limitations

This involves focusing on the origin and the purpose of the source in order to assess how useful it might be to the historian.

Origin

When using and interpreting sources you need to look first at the nature of the source, i.e., what kind of source it is – a photograph, diary, memoir, speech, cartoon or letter. The type of source will have an influence on how useful it is, e.g., a personal letter can be very useful because the person writing it will usually be giving private views.

You also need to look at where or whom a source comes from, and when it was produced. Your knowledge of the person or organization that produced the source will help you assess the source's usefulness, e.g., is the source written by someone who is likely to have known what was going on?

Purpose

Here you are looking at why the source was produced, written or drawn, and the audience it was intended for.

Was it produced for propaganda purposes? Was it produced to make a person support one particular viewpoint? Was it produced for private, personal purposes? Was it produced to inform people?

Always come back to the question. It is no good stating what the purpose and origin of a source is if you do not then apply this to answering the question. Use your conclusions about the origin and purpose of the source to answer the question that has been set.

If a question is asking for both value and limitations of a source, always start by looking for the value of the source and then move on to the limitations.

Don't forget that even if a source has many limitations, it can still be valuable to a historian. It just depends on what question the historian is asking. For example, a propaganda speech by Stalin is not very useful for explaining the true situation in the Soviet Union. However, it can be useful for showing us the nature of Soviet propaganda and the type of information that the Soviet Union wanted the Soviet people or the West to hear.

Questions

See if you can find an example of some of the following historical documents in relation to the Korean War. Assess why each type of document might be useful for a historian studying the nature of this war and how it was fought. What might be the limitations of each of these documents?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a Private letters/diaries | g Memoirs |
| b Poems/novels | h Drawings/paintings |
| c Cartoons | i Photographs |
| d Newspaper articles | j Statistics |
| e Government records | k Eyewitness accounts |
| f Speeches by politicians | |