

## Korean War chronology

(**Bold** text used to signify early Cold War developments outside Korea; *italics* indicate Soviet and Chinese role)

1945 Korea hastily divided at 38th parallel between advancing U.S. and Soviet forces.

1946 **U.S.-Soviet tensions over eastern Europe compounded in spring by Soviet troops in Manchuria (NE China) and Iran.** *Civil War begins in China between U.S.-backed Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek and Communist forces of Mao Zedong covertly backed by Soviet Union.*

1947 **Pres. Truman announces aid for Greece and Turkey in what becomes known as the Truman doctrine on defense of freedom (Mar.); Marshall Plan proposal for European economic recovery (June).**

1948 **Stalin tightens grip on eastern Europe, beginning with coup in Czechoslovakia (Feb.), and creates war scare by blockading overland access to West Berlin (June); Truman administration gets Congress to approve Marshall Plan and forms North Atlantic Treaty Organization.** Korea split between two regimes -- North Korea under Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang and South Korea under Syngman Rhee in Seoul. Each claims national legitimacy. **“Huk rebellion” led by Philippine Communists reaches peak 1949-early 1951, alarming Washington.**

1949 **First Soviet A-bomb test (July); Kim lobbies Stalin to support an attack on the South; Rhee represses domestic opposition in South Korea; Communist victory in Chinese civil war followed by creation of the People’s Republic of China (Oct.) and Nationalist retreat to Taiwan.**

1950 **U.S. recognizes French-backed Vietnamese government (Feb.) with aid following in the Spring; Stalin negotiates treaty of alliance with Mao while giving Kim conditional green light for an attack and providing heavy military equipment (Jan.-Feb.); Sen. Joseph McCarthy warns Americans of internal security danger (Feb.); Truman’s National Security Council issues alarmist international assessment (NSC-68 in Apr.), laying basis for a major military build up; Mao gives Kim guarded approval for invasion (Apr.).**

Kim's forces invade South Korea (25 June); Truman quickly counters with U.S. troops, orders U.S. navy to protect Nationalist government on Taiwan, and secures UN backing for international force commanded by Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur’s Inchon landing (Sept.) breaks siege of Pusan perimeter, forcing North Korean forces to retreat. *Prompted by Stalin and a desperate Kim, Mao orders Chinese forces led by Peng Dehuai to intervene (Oct.).*

UN forces approaching Yalu River (Oct.-Nov.) are surprised by Chinese intervention and thrown back south of Seoul. Truman declares state of emergency (Dec.) amidst public criticism and allied discontent. He hints at possible use of atomic weapons in Korea. Ridgway takes direct command of UN forces and stabilizes combat lines roughly along the 38th parallel.

1951 Truman fires MacArthur for insubordination (Apr.); *Chinese spring offensive stalls.* Stalemate on battlefield prompts peace talks (July) at Kaesong and later at Panmunjom. POW issue deadlocks talks.

1952 **U.S. tests H-bomb (followed by Soviets less than a year later);** Eisenhower, promising to end war in Korea, wins presidency by landslide (Nov.).

1953 **Stalin dies (Mar.);** Korean War armistice (July): Rhee’s acquiescence secured by promise of a defense treaty.