

# THE SUPERPOWERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE KOREAN WAR

## Source A

An act of aggression such as this creates a very real danger to the security of all free nations. The attack upon Korea was an outright breach of the peace and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. By their actions in Korea, Communist leaders have demonstrated their contempt for the basic moral principles on which the United Nations is founded. This is a direct challenge to the efforts of the free nations to build the kind of world in which men can live in freedom and peace.

Furthermore, the fact that Communist forces have invaded Korea is a warning that there may be similar acts of aggression in other parts of the world. The free nations must be on their guard, more than ever before, against this kind of sneak attack.

The principal effort to help the Koreans preserve their independence, and to help the United Nations restore peace, has been made by the United States. We have sent land, sea, and air forces to assist in these operations. We have done this because we know that what is at stake here is nothing less than our own national security and the peace of the world.

*Radio Address to American Public by President Truman, Broadcasted on  
11<sup>th</sup> April, 1951.*

## Source B

So far as Korea is concerned, my thoughts are not on any regret for the basic determination of to enter the Korean War, which was unquestionably the correct one. But I think we will be on very dangerous terrain if we fail to recognise the distinction between these two outcomes.

It was not tolerable to us that Communist control should be extended to South Korea in the way in which this was attempted on June 24. The negative psychological impacts resulting from our mere acceptance of this development would have been wholly disruptive to our prestige in Asia.

Nevertheless, it is beyond our capacity to keep the entire Korea permanently out of the Soviet orbit. I believe that it is not essential to us to see an anti-Soviet regime extended to the entire Korean peninsula. We could actually tolerate a part of Korea being nominally independent, but actually amendable to Soviet influence, provided that this state of affairs does not threaten the security of Japan, and the region as a whole.

*Confidential memorandum from George F. Kennan to Dean Acheson,  
23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1950.*

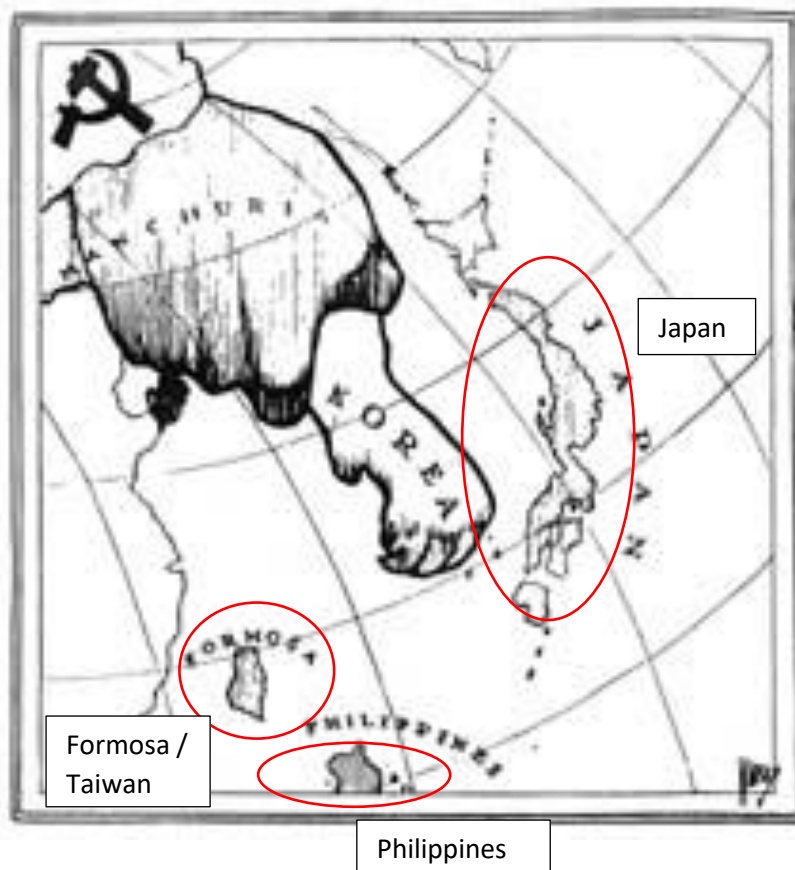
### Source C

During this period, Kim Il Sung and other Korean leaders were firmly determined to unify the country by military means, without devoting the necessary attention to studying the possibility that existed at that time for peaceful reunification through the broad development of the democratic movement in South Korea.

Calculating that the USA would not enter a war over South Korea, Kim Il Sung persistently pressed for agreement from Stalin and Mao Zedong to reunify the country by military means. Stalin at first treated the persistent appeals of Kim Il Sung with reserve, noting that “such a large affair in relation to South Korea... needs much preparation,” but he did not object in principle. The final agreement to support the plans of the Koreans was given by Stalin at the time of Kim Il Sung’s visit to Moscow in March-April 1950. It was only after securing this agreement that Kim proceeded to China to secure the support for Mao, and later make concrete preparations for the attack.

*Classified Internal Historical Document prepared by Soviet Foreign Ministry, for the purpose of background information for Soviet officials, published in 1966.*

### Source D



*An editorial cartoon published in the New York Times, entitled: “The Cat’s Paw and the Chestnuts”. Published in 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1950.*

### **Source E**

This is regarding the requests by Kim Il-Sung for us to approve his proposed invasion of the South with conventional military forces. We agree with your opinion that the Korean Army ought not to pursue an attack at the present time. At one time we also pointed out to our North Korean friends that the attack on the South by the Korean People's Army that they had planned should not be undertaken since this attack had not been prepared from either a military or a political standpoint. In our opinion at the present time our North Korean comrades ought to concentrate their efforts in the struggle for the unification of Korea on developing a partisan movement, creating liberated areas in South Korea, and a comprehensive strengthening of the People's Army of Korea.

*Adapted from a telegram sent by Stalin to Mao Zedong,  
26<sup>th</sup> October 1949.*

### **Source F**

In connection with plans for a military intrusion into the North, South Korean authorities are increasing the size of the "Army of National Defense." Americans are transferring to the South Koreans a significant quantity of various types of weapons and ammunition. South Korean authorities are taking measures to receive weapons on a much larger scale. This is the main purpose of the South Korean diplomatic mission in Washington.

South Korean authorities have concentrated a large number of troops in areas adjoining the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. According to the information received, the total number of troops in this area has reached 41,000 persons. According to the report of the commander of a South Korean battalion, who is connected to the North's intelligence service, the number of troops in the Pyongyang direction will be increased to 30,000. The plans for the operation against the North have been worked out and in the first brigade they have already been passed to the battalion commanders. The actions are supposedly planned for the month of June. In connection with these plans the South Korean authorities are taking decisive measures to suppress uprisings in the South and to defeat completely the democratic movement.

*Confidential Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador to North Korea, to Moscow,  
2<sup>nd</sup> May 1949.*

**How far do Sources A – F support the assertion that the Korean War was part of a concerted effort by the Soviet Union to expand its influence? (30m)**