

# THE KOREAN WAR



# MAP OF KOREA

Durs is a single nation with 5,000 years of history; it is a valorous, ambitious nation that has been vigorously fighting against foreign invaders and successive reactionary rulers from olden times; and it is a talented nation that has contributed greatly to mankind's development of science and culture.

KIM IL SUNG



One myth perpetuated in the general history books is that the Korean War was a Soviet thing. The Soviets wanted to take over all of Korea and the North Koreans and Chinese being totally subservient did their bidding.

Until the 1990's, there was little evidence that contradicted this view. True, there was a rather obvious falling out between the Soviet Union and China in the 1960's, but this was seen as a change rather than a near inevitability dating back to the 1920's.

The opening of the former Soviet archives in the 1990's and greater openness (relatively speaking) from China paint a very different picture.

The official perspective from North Korea does tend to support the old version, but that county lies to itself and everyone else.





**The reality is the Korean War had far more in common with the First World War than anything that came after. This is not simply that it devolved into a stalemate of positional (trench) warfare, but how it came to be in the first place.**

**The major powers that fought in Korea (U.S., USSR and China) did not want the war but were drawn in through miscalculations and/or arrogance. The two countries that wanted a war were North and South Korea.**



**Their reasons, while diametrically opposed were identical. Korea had been divided by an arbitrary line on a map. It was not two countries but one. No one in Korea was happy with this and everyone wanted reunification. But the two governments were not about to compromise and give up any of their power in their half of Korea to make this happen.**



The Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945 was just that – an invasion of Manchuria. In addition to the destruction of the Japanese Army in Manchuria, the objective was to establish control over Manchuria and the Liaodung Peninsula which Russia had lost to Japan in the Russo-Japanese War.

Regaining control of Dailan (Port Arthur) for use as a military base was the primary

objective.

Pursuant to the Yalta Agreement, the Soviets entered into an alliance with the Chinese Nationalists in early 1946. In that alliance, the Chinese Nationalists accepted de facto Soviet hegemony over Manchuria and agreed to a 50+ year open ended lease of Dailan and the Liaodung Peninsula. The Soviets agreed to continue to ignore the Chinese Communists.





**Stalin and the Soviets did not have a good opinion of the Chinese Communists. They had supported the Nationalist Chinese in the 1920's and on and off through 1938 mostly because they were well paid in doing so. They did not consider Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communists to be proper communists or China to be a proper venue for communism. In their mind, China had little if any proletariat, being a nation of landowners and peasants both of which were deemed as anathema by the Bolsheviks. The thought that peasants constituted a "working class" in the Marxist sense was unimaginable to the Soviets. Basically they saw the Chinese**

**Communists as Communists in name only and somewhat of a joke.**

**Then there was the added fact that they did not think the Chinese Communists had any real chance of winning their civil war with the Nationalists (ongoing since 1927.) The Soviets were picky. They would not back a losing proposition despite their rhetoric. From their perspective, the prestige of the Soviet Union and Bolshevism would suffer irreparable harm if it backed a losing side (as it had in Spain) and would encourage dissent both at home and abroad.**



**They provided no support to the Chinese Communists after Japanese surrender and even went so far as to fight Chinese Communist guerrillas in Manchuria after the invasion. It was only in 1948 that they changed their attitude. Two reasons:**

**First, they had not supported Tito in Yugoslavia at all during WWII and he had succeeded despite this setting up a communist state and quickly turning his back on the Soviet Union (the final break occurring in 1948.) The Soviets would not back a loser but could not be seen to ignore a winner lest those countries under their control (and their own domestic population) saw that as weakness.**

**Tito and Tito-like situations would plague Stalin's thoughts for the rest of his life.**

**And in 1948, it became apparent to the Soviets (and most everyone paying attention) that Mao and the Chinese Communists were going to win. The Soviets could not afford the world learning that a communist revolution could succeed without them.**





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After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the Soviets had little real interest in Asia. Stalin was initiating his purges. He had no regard for the Chinese Communists and the Nationalist Chinese had turned to Germany for aid. Later, the Nationalists turned to Britain and then the United States. By then, the Soviets had a bigger problem, namely the German invasion of Russia.

There was an exception in 1939. The Japanese Army in Manchuria attempted to invade Mongolia which had been a Soviet client state since the mid-1920's. The Soviet Far Eastern forces drove the Japanese back brutally, convincing Japan that the Soviet Union was not worth aggravating.



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Asia did not really enter more immediate interest until Yalta when Roosevelt asked Stalin to intervene against Japan once the war with Germany was over. Aside from a concurrent agreement to ally with the Nationalist Chinese, no true restrictions to such intervention were discussed.

The Yalta declaration allowed the Soviets to regain territory lost to Japan, without specifying what that meant. The U.S. believed that meant Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles, ceded to Russia following the Russo-Japanese War.

The Soviets believed it could include their lost interests in Manchuria and the Liaodung Peninsula and possibly Korea, but Korea was not seen as a strategic priority.



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The initial “invasion” of Korea was in the far northeast and solely for the purpose of deploying their armies from Vladivostok into Manchuria. Only after their objectives in Manchuria and northeast China were secured would they consider turning south. Even then, while all of Korea would be ideal, they expected to go no further than Pyongyang.

This was because they expected a sizable U.S. force would land in the South to occupy Korea and Stalin had no intention of confronting the Americans in Asia for any reason. Asia was a side show. Eastern Europe was the theater of strategic interest.

That’s not to say Stalin had no intentions of ever confronting the west anywhere, just not in Asia and not at that time.

**Stalin was a true believer in the theories of Marxism but not an ideologue. He believed that Communism was the highest form of human social evolution and it was also a historic inevitability.**

**He was also a Bolshevik who believed evolution could be accelerated through conditioning – specifically Communism could be dictated from above and eventually society would conform.**

**He believed recent history was proof of this. World War I had seen the former Russian Empire fall under Communism. World War 2 had seen the Soviet Union rise to become one of the two pre-eminent superpowers and gain control over central Europe. And he believed, therefore, WW III was historically inevitable and that Communism would triumph (hence, war with the U.S. was inevitable.)**

**But he was more pragmatic than many Communists. Inevitable did not mean immediate. Moreover, in his mind immediate would lead to disaster.**

**The Soviet Union was destined to win the final struggle between Communism and Capitalism but this also meant it had to win and the Soviet Union of 1945 (and 1950) could not win that final struggle.**

**The Soviet Union was a wreck in the aftermath of World War II.**



**Over 20 Million Soviets were killed in the Second World War (soldiers and civilians.) (This number is a conservative estimate and is the number killed by combat operations or under German occupation and not the KGB or results of Soviet bureaucratic incompetence – which would increase this number.)**

**This was greater than 10% of the population of what had been the third most populous nation on Earth at the time.**

**Its economy was a wreck.**

**Most of its industry was located within the war zone (as in behind the furthest extent of the German advance or within range of German bombers). While much of this industry was relocated east of the Urals in 1941, not all of it was and the coal industry could not be. The coal mines and remaining factories had been sabotaged or destroyed before the advancing German armies rather effectively such that by 1950 it had yet to recover completely.**

**Most of the agricultural land had been ruined and had yet to recover completely.**

**And transportation was either destroyed (in the west) or worn out to the point it practically had to be replaced (in the east).**

**Stalin figured it would be at least twenty years – and probably longer before the Soviets could be confident of being ready for the final conflict.**



**U.S. rolled out their tanks and began a successful airlift that supplied the city of around 1 million for almost a year. He had underestimate both U.S. resolve and power.**

**Consequently, while he was willing to take advantage of opportunities that arose or mistakes and while he was willing to aggravate the U.S. diplomatically, he was no longer willing to openly confront the U.S. at least until the Soviet Union had recovered and was ready for such confrontation (in 20 or 30 years). Even then, he preferred that confrontation take place in Europe.**

**But he could not ignore Asia. In his mind, the failure to partition Japan as the Allies had partitioned Germany meant that in 20 years or less, Japan would recover from the War and be up to its old tricks. This meant in 20 years or less, the Soviet Union would have hostile powers on both fronts which meant the Soviets needed to prepare for that eventuality. They could not afford distractions like a major war. He saw Korea as just such a distraction.**

**By 1949, Stalin had come to the conclusion that a direct confrontation with the U.S. was premature and would at best cause a set back. In 1948, he had miscalculated. He had assumed that if the Soviets blockaded Berlin, the U.S. and West would give up rather than risk a confrontation. He was shocked when the**





**In the aftermath of WWII, China was a wreck.**

**Admittedly, it had been a wreck for decades, fragmented into numerous warlord fiefdoms following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in the first decade of the century and in a civil war ever since. While the warlord fiefdoms were largely no more, the civil war was alive and well, now between the Chinese Nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek and the Chinese Communists under Mao Tse-tung.**

**U.S. policy regarding China was similarly a mess.**

**This was more recent.**

**Even before the U.S. entered WWII, the U.S. had supported Chiang and the Nationalists in their struggle against the Japanese. Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931 and China proper in 1937.**



**What would become the China Lobby was a driving force behind this support. President Roosevelt was a supporter, often talking about his family connections with China with members of the China lobby or Chinese envoys.**

**Roosevelt had been to China as a boy visiting his grandfather. He either did not know or chose to ignore that his grandfather (and his grandfather's fortune) was a part of the opium trade with China in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – a trade reviled by the Chinese of the 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**The American public was inundated with pro-Chinese news thanks to Henry Luce and Time and Life Magazines. The narrative was that Chiang was America's best ally, certainly in the Pacific and probably in the world.**

**There was little in print contrary to this idealistic view of China. But things began to change...**



**Throughout most of America's war, American aid and support for China was headed by two men, both of whom had years of experience in China but they were also diametrically opposed about China.**

**Gen. Joseph Stilwell (left) had served China for several years by the 1930's, mostly with or as Military Attache in Beijing. He had a high regard for the Chinese people and no regard whatsoever for its government (such as it was) or its army officer corps. Stilwell would serve**

**concurrently in so many positions in the Far East that he could say he commanded himself, and they were commanded by someone else who he commanded and so on. He commanded all U.S. forces in the Far East, all U.S. Ground Forces, was Deputy Commander of Allied Forces, Chief of Staff of the Chinese Nationalist Army, Commander of a Chinese Army Group, and in charge of Lend Lease in the Far East to include China among other positions all at the same time. Stilwell was brilliant, but he was also spread way too thin. He had no respect for Chiang.**

**Stilwell did not arrive in theater until March, 1942. Until February, he had been slated to command U.S. forces in Europe but being the only senior officer fluent in Chinese with experience, he was sent east instead.**





Prior to Stilwell's arrival in the Far East, U.S. military support for China was represented by Claire Chennault (right). Chennault was a former Army Captain who had been passed over for promotion in the early 1930's and resigned from the Army. He had gone to China and hired to train a Chinese Nationalist Air Force. He would soon become the commander of that Air Force. In 1941, the U.S. government decided to send P-40 fighters with pilots and ground crews to the far east, an idea of Chennaults. Initiated before Pearl Harbor, none of the

pilots or ground crew were military (although almost all had been the day before they joined up.) The "Flying Tigers" would not actually engage the Japanese (in Burma) until after Pearl Harbor and soon after Chennault was recalled into the Army as a Brevet Brigadier General and placed in command of the China Air Task Force – all U.S. Army Air Corps units based in China. He was paid by the Chinese.

Stilwell and Chennault hated each other. Stilwell saw Chennault as a failed Army officer who was disloyal, unprofessional and little more than a mercenary. Chennault believed he knew more about airpower than anyone and as he had been in China longer than anyone else it was only natural he should be in charge.



**Chiang Kai-Shek saw America's entry into the war against Japan as victory over Japan. China had been fighting a brutal war with the Japanese for over five years by the time of Pearl Harbor. That war would ultimately cost China over 25 million lives. With America in the war, he saw his role as sitting back and waiting for it to end so he could then focus on the real enemy – the Chinese Communists (not that the war with Japan had ever truly stopped his war with Mao and the Communists for it had not.) He saw**

**American aid as a means to get rich and stockpile arms and ammunition for use against the real enemy and not something that should be wasted against the Japanese who would lose to the Americans no matter what happened in China. Naturally, the U.S. saw things very differently and getting Chiang to actually fight the Japanese (unless he had to – unless the Japanese attacked him) was all but impossible. The professionals in the Army and State Department wanted Chiang to fight and if he would not or could not, wanted him replaced by someone who would. Their problem was who could do so without causing China to disintegrate into chaos. By the middle of 1944, they believed there was someone who could if the logistics of supply could be worked out. That someone seemed to be Mao Tse-tung.**



**In 1944, U.S. support of communists was not what it had been or would be. In the 1920's and 1930's, the notion was unthinkable. The U.S. did not even have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union until November 1933, mostly due to the fact that many U.S. corporations either were doing business in the USSR or wanted to. (Most of the factories built in the USSR after the mid 1920's were designed by US companies and supplied with US tools.)**

**By 1944, the U.S. was supplying the USSR with food and war materiel. The Red Army moving west against the Germans moved on over half a million US made trucks fueled largely with US gasoline and its soldiers ate US rations. (Spam was well known in the Red Army and called The Second Front by soldiers.)**

**By 1944, the US and Britain were also supplying Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia.**





**By 1944, there were U.S. military units operating along side the Chinese Communists in northern China, mostly running emergency airfields in support of the bombing campaign against the Japanese, weather stations supporting that campaign and operations in the western Pacific and some intelligence operations. They were small in number, but were there.**



**And there were observers, some with the U.S. Army and others with the OSS. They were tasked with evaluating the Chinese Communist Army and its efforts against the Japanese. By 1944, they and their counterparts in the south with the Nationalists Chinese were of the opinion that the communists were less well equipped but better trained, better motivated, better led and far more effective against the Japanese than Chiang's Army (but not necessarily as well as the American trained and led Chinese units operating in Burma.)**



**By 1944, the professionals in the U.S. were fed up with Chiang. He was unreliable. He always demanded more support from the U.S. but rarely ever did anything with what he received and when he did, proved incompetent. He fired competent commanders and replaced them with lackeys who were incompetent. He supplied those lackeys but would refuse to supply units with competent commanders – fearing the competent generals would one day overthrow him.**

**There was serious discussion in the U.S. of dumping Chiang. This included assassinating him and installing a reliable leader (dumped because there were not any to be found) or shifting support to the Communists. The latter was not feasible. It was hard enough getting supplies to south China and the incompetent Nationalists. Getting supplies to Northern China was not feasible.**



**For the professionals, the only positive thing about Chiang was that his failing war with the Japanese tied down millions of Japanese troops who could be a real problem anywhere else. And Chiang always seemed to threaten to surrender if he did not get what he wanted from the U.S.**

**For the China Lobby and through Henry Luce the press (and thus the average American) Chiang was a hero. He was a Christian gentleman fighting a successful war for democracy against the Japanese (all of which were false). It came to a head in the autumn of 1944.**

**The professionals wanted to dump Chiang in any way possible. The China lobby wanted to dump the professionals. At first it seemed that Roosevelt might support the professionals. But the China Lobby had too much pull in an election year so in the weeks leading up to the election he dumped the professionals, gaining China Lobby support.**





**In October 1944, Stilwell was relieved of all his positions in the Far East. Ambassador Glauss, who had been in China for years resigned.**

**Stilwell was replaced by several men. Glauss was replaced by General Hurley (a reservist with no real job but who had been sent to China by Harry Hopkins to provide a report on the situation and to try and smooth things over with Chiang.)**

**Chennault believed he was logical choice for commander of U.S. forces. He was the only one. Command of U.S. forces in the Far East was split. Command in China went to General Wedemeyer. Chennault's China Air Task Force became 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force and fell under General Stratemeyer, Commander U.S. Air Forces Far East (with 20<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force.) Chennault lost his back channels to the U.S. and position with Chiang and would resign in disgust before the war ended.**



**Hurley (left) was not China Lobby per se but he had their support and believed their message. He was convinced Chiang was the future of China. He believed Chiang was democratic. And he believed he could broker a peace between Chiang and Mao. He managed to get them to agree to stand down in October 1945, but neither side was truly planning to do so. They would use the next few months to rearm, reorganize and resupply.**

**But Hurley also agreed to allow Chiang's army to be shipped north on U.S. ships and airplanes, a region then controlled by the Chinese Communists. And the Chinese units sent north were the units from Burma – American trained and supplied and the most capable units in the Nationalist Army.**

**In March, 1945 the civil war resumed with a vengeance and the American trained units had great success against the communists.**



**Hurley proved far less patient than his predecessors. By the fall of 1946, he had resigned. Upon his return to the U.S. he was invited to give a talk by Henry Luce before a large group of China Lobby and their supporters. They expected a glowing report on an increasingly democratic (and Christian) China, after all Hurley's dispatches were nowhere near as pessimistic as those of his predecessors.**

**Hurley gave the talk. He was convinced that Chiang was useless and no ally of the U.S. worthy of note and more fascist than democratic moreover despite the initial successes by the Chinese Nationalists against the Communists, Hurley was convinced Chiang would do as always and snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and China would become a hostile, communist country.**

**Needless to say, Hurley was not invited back.**





**Not long after Hurley's pessimistic talk, Chiang fired General Sun Li-jen. Sun was educated in the U.S. and a graduate of VMI and had lead the 1<sup>st</sup> Chinese Army which had fought in Burma under General Joe Stilwell. He had been consistently the most effective Nationalist Chinese commander against the Japanese and practically the only successful one against the Communists. He was placed under house arrest and replaced by a general whose only qualification was absolute loyalty to Chiang.**

**(Among Sun's sins was he payed his troops rather than turn the money over to his superiors.)**

**Although a turn in battlefield fortunes would be months away, this relief is arguably a turning point in the Chinese civil war. From this point on, the Nationalist could not hope to win.**



**George Marshall had been Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army from 1939 until November 1945 and was one of the most highly respected public servants by both parties. After his retirement, President Truman sent him to China to assist Hurley in brokering a truce between Chiang and Mao. Mao was receptive, Chiang was not.**

**(Marshall had served in China in the 1920's as Commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stationed outside of Beijing – which had been there since the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.)**

**Marshall's less public role at the time was to report to Truman regarding aid to China. By 1947, U.S. aid to the Nationalist Army was over 1 Billion dollars per year – an amount equal to roughly 10% of the entire defense budget.**



**His final report in 1947 opined that peace was no longer possible. For the Nationalists to win, money was not nearly enough. Nothing short of a massive U.S. intervention could prevent the inevitable defeat of Chiang and the Nationalists. Such intervention would require at least a partial mobilization as the Army at the time was too small (that or a complete abandonment of Europe).**

**Military aid alone would not do as the Nationalists were incapable of winning no matter how much money and materiel they received. He recommended no one more dollar be sent to China.**

**Anyone who worked with the Nationalists on a daily basis agreed. The China Lobby did not but they rarely went there and when they did they were wined and dined.**





**Truman backed Marshall.**

**All aid was cut. All advisors were recalled and it became illegal for Americans to serve with the Chinese.**

**(Observers remained but they were just that – this included the U.S. Navy's Yangtse River Patrol which had been in China since the 1850's and whose mission had always been defense of U.S. interests in China. They would be pulled out in 1949.)**

**The results were predictable. The war turned against the Nationalists in 1948. Shanghai had fallen by the end of the year.**

**George Marshall was confirmed as Secretary of State shortly after his final trip to China without objections in the Senate.**



**When the U.S. decided to cut off all aid to the Nationalist Chinese in late 1947, the Cold War was upon them. In WWII, the U.S. had been willing to supply and support communist movements and countries provided they were fighting against the Axis powers. In Europe this included Tito's partisans as well as the French Resistance – which had a significant communist element. In Asia this certainly included Ho Chi Minh in Indochina and there was a willingness to support Mao in China had the logistics been feasible.**

**From 1946 onwards, this was no longer an option and merely suggesting it could be detrimental to one's career.**

**Thus the withdrawal of aid to the Nationalists was an abandonment of China as a whole, a thought that horrified the China Lobby at the time and led them to back virulent anti-communist politicians such as Joseph Macarthy later giving rise to the blame levelled against others as to who lost China.**

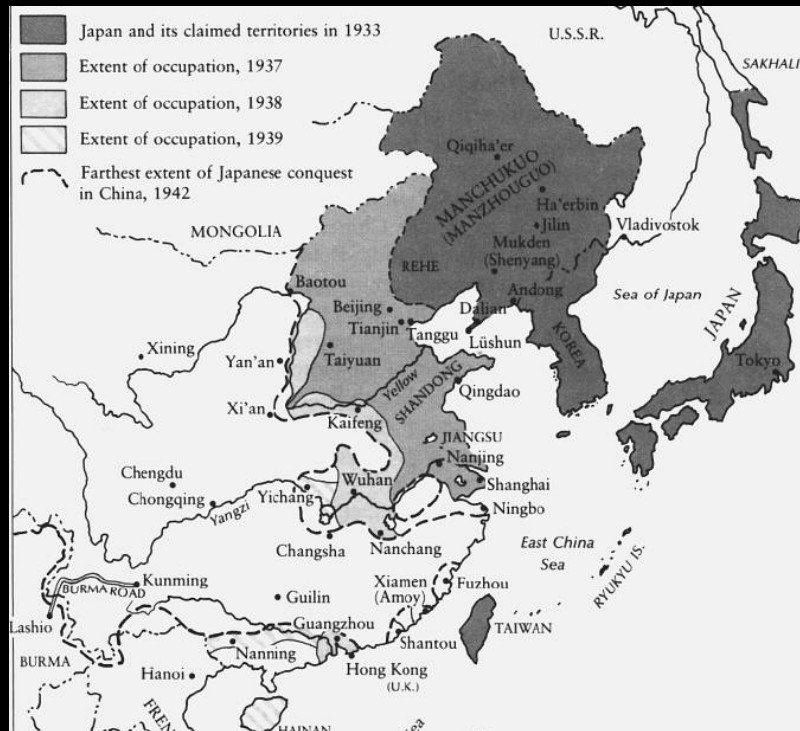
## Who lost China?

**We did not. It was never ours to lose. It's still there.**

**Chiang lost China. He lost it when Japan invaded southern China in 1937 and never truly had much of a chance after.**

**Mao and the Communists were in serious trouble in 1934 having been driven out of the south by the Nationalists and into remote centers around Yen'an far from the Nationalists. It was much closer to the Soviet Union, but at that time the Soviets backed Chiang and later had little apparent interest in China.**

**The Communists were cut off from the food of the south and, more importantly, from any reliable supply of weapons and ammunition. An aggressive agricultural campaign in the north made the food less of an issue, but there were no factories or mines or base for an arms industry.**





**From 1935 through the end of WWII, despite the apparent hardships, the Chinese Communists were well armed. They had no truly reliable base of supply, but they were supplied nonetheless. How?**

- Local Warlords while that lasted. They had weapons and ammunition.**
- Trade with Manchuria – although this was mostly support from Manchurians opposed to the Japanese who were able to get their hands on Japanese weapons and ammunition.**
- The Japanese – although not voluntarily.**

**But their biggest supplier was the Chinese Nationalists. At times this was deliberate policy to fight the common enemy, although that policy changed with the seasons. But there were plenty of sympathetic officers in the Nationalist Army who were more than willing to lose a supply shipment. And weapons and ammunition were readily available on the black market.**

**By the time the U.S. cut off aid to the Nationalists, captured Nationalist supplies made up the bulk of supplies and an increasing number of Nationalist soldiers, units – even entire divisions defected to the Communists. By 1948, the Communist Army was larger than the Nationalist Army and better equipped in general – at least in terms of infantry weapons.**

**When the U.S. cut off aid to the Nationalists, the Soviets jumped in to supply the Communists. They had not been a factor before 1948. They had little respect for the communist movement in China and little interest. Moreover, prior to 1948, investing in China would mean opposing the U.S. which Moscow was unwilling to do outside of Eastern Europe.**

**Once the Americans were out, that restraint was removed. The disregard remained but it was also in 1948 that Tito broke with Moscow. Overnight, Soviet policy changed.**

**Stalin could not allow another country to become a Communist state in such a way that they were not beholden to the USSR for their success. Moscow sent in massive amounts of aid and advisors.**

**The problem was the aid was somewhat useless at first. The Communists were armed with Japanese and American weapons, none of which were compatible with Soviet weapons. To supply China, the Soviets had to effectively rearm some 3 million soldiers with weapons so their ammunition would work. Fortunately, the USSR was itself rearming the Red Army with new weapons and had demobilized somewhat following the war leaving a huge stockpile of older weapons.**

**(The Soviets were adopting the AK-47, still considered top secret.)**

**But this is not to say the Soviets trusted the Chinese.**

**There are generally four kinds of weapon systems you do not supply to another country if you think that country might one day use them against you or contrary to your interests:**

- 1. Ocean going warships. (In 1948, the Russians had few of these to begin with and certainly no surplus.)**
- 2. Combat Aircraft (Fighters and Bombers).**
- 3. Tanks.**
- 4. Artillery.**

**Mao saw no need for ships, given this was a land war. (He would soon regret this once the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan.) Mao also saw no need for aircraft. His forces had fought both the Japanese and the Nationalists without them. The Nationalists had few tanks and what few they had were marginal back in 1939 and easily dealt with by infantry in 1948. And for now, he did not need much artillery. Guerrillas do not typically use such weapons and the Nationalists did not have enough that worked with trained crews to pose a problem. That and if they needed a howitzer, the Nationalists tended to provide them one way or another.**

**The truth was the Chinese Communists could have won without Soviet support, but they were not about to turn it away.**





**To the shock and horror of the China Lobby and many others, Mao declared victory over the Nationalists on the mainland in October of 1949. Organized Nationalist resistance had ended and the government and what remained of its military (about 2 million in total) had relocated to Formosa (Taiwan).**

**But the war had not ended. The Nationalists had a small but capable air force of fighters, heavy bombers and ground attack aircraft capable of operating from Taiwan and hitting targets on the mainland including Shanghai and Beijing.**

**The bombing raids began even before the Nationalist evacuation was complete.**

**And the Chinese Communists had no way to defend against these attacks (not that the attacks themselves were effective.)**

**The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) numbered about 4,000,000 by October 1949. But it had a total of 50 trained and qualified pilots – most had been trained in the 1930's. It had more airplanes than pilots, most being captured from the Japanese or the Chinese Nationalists. It had few spare parts for the planes and less than 100 mechanics of any note.**

**It also had no anti-aircraft guns or radar. A plane at more than about 5,000 feet above ground level was totally immune from ground fire.**

**Moreover, while Chiang and the Nationalists had fled to Formosa, they were still nearby, separated from the mainland by about 112 miles of ocean. They also occupied smaller islands even closer to the mainland. The PLA had tried to invade a couple of those islands right after victory had been declared only to be thrown back with heavy losses by the defenders and the Nationalist Air Force.**

**Overnight, Mao reversed himself and decided China needed its own Air Force. There was only one place to turn – the Soviet Union.**

**While the Soviets proved more than willing to deploy Soviet fighter regiments, anti-aircraft regiments and radar, those were manned entirely by Soviet personnel and were paid for entirely by the Chinese. Stalin was disinclined to arm the Chinese with anything approaching a viable air force or air defense capability.**

**The cost of defending China – namely redeployments from Europe, convinced him to reconsider this as a long term option.**

**As it turned out, China would not field an Air Force of any size until November 1951, a little more than a year after they entered the Korean War. There were all kinds of problems to overcome.**

**The immediate problems, beyond the Soviets dragging their feet – which they did – was training.**

**There were very few Russians who spoke even broken Chinese. There were not many Chinese who spoke any Russian. None of the technical manuals or training materials were written in Chinese.**

**Not that this mattered as it turned out few of the Chinese soldiers sent for training could read. While most sent to train as pilots could, those sent to train as aircrew, ground crew or mechanics were largely illiterate. Learning to read Chinese takes years so that was not an option.**

**Part of the problem was that in order to be assigned to the PLAAF at all, a candidate had to be of proven political reliability. The Chinese who could read tended to be opposed to the Communists in one way or another (hence why the “recruits” had served in the Army for some time before being recruited). The Communist soldiers were mostly peasants who had never had or had very little formal education.**

**And as they were peasants, few had any prior experience with machinery.**





**Upon ousting the Nationalists from the mainland, Mao's goals had nothing to do with Korea. The Chinese Communists had to negotiate with the Soviets to even reoccupy and gain control over Manchuria, something Stalin would prefer not to do.**

**While the Nationalists were gone, China was by no means secured.**

**Moreover, China was a wreck. What industry it had was in ruins. Most of the technicians had fled the country. Agriculture was not much better. Mao was unwilling to become involved in any foreign adventures anytime soon until these problems had been resolved.**

**The exception was Formosa. Taking Formosa was his government's top priority, something they knew they could not do without ships and an air force which was why the air force was such a priority.**



**Initially, the Russians were aware of Mao's goals – the whole world was as he made no secret about it: Secure China, take Formosa. The Russians were not about to help China take Formosa nor to be seen as helping – and providing an air force that later took Formosa would be seen as helping.**

**Stalin did not want to provoke the Americans nor be seen as provocative – outside of Eastern Europe. Not yet.**

**If the Soviets got involved in a regional crisis in Asia, particularly if they had to redeploy forces from Europe to Asia, Stalin feared America and its allies would take advantage and destabilize if not invade the new Communist countries of Eastern Europe and there would be little**

**the Soviets could do to prevent it.**

**It was imperative that the lid remained on Asia, at least in situations that might otherwise provoke the Americans either in Asia or to take advantage elsewhere.**

**In July of 1949, Kim Il-Sung demanded that all Koreans – and in particular all Koreans with military experience – be repatriated to North Korea. The Soviets backed this demand – at least for the military personnel as it would ease their training burden in North Korea.**

**It is not known how many Koreans of either category were in China at the time. It is known many refused. Many soldiers convinced their commanders to have them declared essential and thus unavailable for transfer. Many others were merely Korean born, having lived in China all their lives and if deemed politically reliable, the Chinese would ignore their place of birth altogether. Many who could not get out of the sweep simply fled, mostly to South Korea.**

**In all, some 50,000 Koreans serving in the PLA were repatriated. This was probably not even a majority, but it was a huge influx for the fledgling NKPA (North Korean People's Army), enough so that Kim now felt a conventional war with the south was not only possible but winnable.**

**The Soviets did not agree. His army was still too small and his logistics inadequate to any task beyond defensive operations. The Soviets had provided tanks and armored fighting vehicles, but not in large numbers by European standards. They had also provided and trained an Air Force, one which was more than adequate provided no real air force of any size intervened.**

**The Soviets were also seriously concerned about any U.S. response. In their opinion, if the U.S. intervened, the North Koreans would lose.**

**In 1948, Soviet intelligence received a copy of NSC 48. NSC 48 was a policy paper for President Truman prepared by the newly formed National Security Council. (The number meant it was the 48<sup>th</sup> such paper, it had nothing to do with the year.)**

**The top secret paper had been proved by a Soviet spy, probably Alger Hiss although soviet documents do not identify the source. The soviet documents do identify Hiss as their agent and the most highly placed agent they had within the U.S. government moreover his position was such he could have had access to NSC 48.**

**NSC 48 discussed the strategic priorities of the U.S. in Asia and the Pacific. The paper strongly recommended that the U.S. not get involved on the Asian mainland. China was a write off. Southeast Asia was somebody else's problem. And Korea was not important enough to warrant deployment of U.S. forces. Aggression in those areas would not result in a U.S. response.**

**It should be noted this was a policy paper – a recommendation to the President. It was not policy just because it had been sent to his desk and he had read it.**

**It took this position because it noted the main strategic priority was Europe and the U.S. military was in no position to defend in Europe and do much of anything elsewhere, not without a massive increase in defense spending and military build up.**

**Stalin believed it was a trick to entice them into a confrontation in Asia with the United States.**





**In late 1945, when the Soviets occupied northern Korea, North and South Korea did not yet exist nor were they truly planned. Kim Il Sung was the Soviet's default choice for a leader. He spoke Russian better than Korean and he was politically reliable and loyal to Stalin. But he was not considered educated or bright by the Soviets. He was merely convenient and reasonably pliable and known to them.**

**The Soviets were looking for a better choice; one more capable and certainly one reliable better known and more popular with the people. The U.S., USSR and certainly all Koreans were assuming a reunified Korea was in the future, not two Koreas. The Soviets wanted a leader acceptable to them and most Koreans and Kim was not that man. Unfortunately, they found no one who fit all criteria not named Kim – particularly loyalty to the Soviet Union.**

**In early 1946, the new United Nations as one of its first major resolutions decided that Korea should be a unified Korea but would not be independent any time soon. It would become a UN Trust Territory until the UN decided it was sufficiently stable and recovered to become an independent country. The resolution was introduced in the General Assembly by the British, negating any chance of a veto (by the Soviets). Only the Soviets and their satellites voted against the resolution although there is little doubt that had Korea had a delegation (or two) they would have voted against it as well.**



**Trusteeship had been set up for all the other former Japanese Colonies: The Marshall Islands, the Caroline Islands, Palau and the Northern Mariana Islands so there was a precedent. Under such a situation, a third party would oversee the administration of the trust territory and would be tasked to guide it towards independence. The trustee could not occupy the territory nor set up military bases without the approval of the resident population. The trusteeship was open ended and would continue until the local population, the trustee and the UN decided it could end at which time the country could become independent. (It could also choose to become a part of the trustee or another country by referendum at that time.) In practice, this meant the trusteeship would last decades.**

**As the Trustee was decided by the UN General Assembly and not the Security Council, and as the General Assembly of 1945-46 was dominated by the Western Allies and their supporters, it was a given the Soviets would never be named as Trustee in Korea and thus would be expected to vacate the country or potential risk the wrong war in the wrong place for a country of little real use beyond being a buffer. They were certain the US would be named Trustee and managed to stall implementation through the Security Council.**

**In 1947, to break the logjam, India volunteered to be trustee, but this was objected to by almost everyone of note.**



**In late 1947, the UN decided Trusteeship was never going to work and decided that Korea could hold national elections and upon those elections it would become independent. They were intended to be nation wide for a single country and government.**

**Syngman Rhee and the Korean politicians in the south were elated. Kim and the Soviets were aghast. Two third of the population (and votes) were in the South and outside of Kim and Soviet influence. A nation wide vote would mean the end of Kim's dreams and the Soviet satellite. What would become North Korea refused to participate. Instead they would hold their own elections for a nation wide government – one that barred the south from participating.**

**Syngman Rhee had headed the provisional government certainly since 1945 and in his and his supporters view since 1920. In May, he was elected president of Korea (all of Korea). The new legislature included seats for legislators from all of Korea and office space for their staffs, to include the provinces in the North. The northern seats would remain empty. By the standards of the day, it was almost fair as it was not certain even with Rhee's supporters shenanigans that Rhee would win.**

**Less than a month later, the North held its own elections although in this case there was little opposition – although Cho Min-Sil managed 10% of the vote despite not being on the ballot.**



**Neither Korea call themselves North or South. South Korea is the Republic of Korea and considers itself the legitimate government of all Korea.**

**Its flag is a traditional Korean flag.**

**North Korea is the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea and likewise considers itself the only legitimate government.**



**This was true in 1948 and is still the case today although as a result of the years to come both were forced to concede they had no control over the other.**

**As in 1948, both countries desire unification but under their system and not the other.**





**When Kim was “elected” Premier of the DPRK, his Korean was still heavily accented. He was barely known outside political circles in the DPRK. Few would recognize him. His cult of personality was years into the future, although he began to build it (with little success at first) from 1948.**

**Even before the elections of 1948, Kim and his provisional government took it upon themselves to try and overthrow the provisional government in the South. Agents were sent south to agitate strikes, unrest and even open rebellion. They succeeded in creating chaos here and there. A ROK Army regiment mutinied under their direction and two or at least part of two provinces revolted setting up communist governments for a brief time. All of these were repressed ... brutally. Most North Korean**

**agents were caught and shot. South Korean leaders in the unrest were shot. Participants and suspected communists were rounded up and imprisoned (and later shot.) Thousands died. But South Koreans began seeing the North as an enemy so that by 1949, North Korean agents would be outed to authorities before they could cause trouble.**

**The South retaliated sending raids north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and agents to encourage defection. They proved far more successful and defectors from the north told tales that made the Rhee government seem benign by comparison.**



**The Soviets began arming North Korea soon after the occupation began in August 1945. It was not large scale. The NKPA (North Korean People's Army) numbered around 120,000 total in 1950 at the outbreak of the war. But they were generally well trained and well equipped.**

**They would field 1 Armored Division and 10 Infantry Divisions based upon the Soviet model – whose divisions were only about 60% the size of US divisions.**



**It was made up of surplus equipment. The tanks and self propelled guns were WWII, the later being replaced during the war and the former in the subsequent years. Small arms were also WWII surplus.**

**Still, it was more than the South Koreans had. The Soviets chose to keep the NKPA small to discourage adventurism by Kim. But while small, its divisions were equipped for modern, mechanized warfare.**



**Kim felt it was too small. By 1949 it was only around 80,000 men. It was not enough to take on South Korea. In July, he demanded that Communist China repatriate any Korean nationals with military experience to North Korea as a quick means to expand his Army and as a means to provide it with veteran troops. About 50,000 soldiers from the PLA were repatriated by early 1950. Kim was convinced now he had an invincible force and could reunify Korea by conventional warfare.**

**He did not believe he needed an overwhelming force. Despite the failures of his infiltration raids, he was also convinced South Korea was ripe for rebellion and that once his Army crossed into South Korea, the people would rise up and overthrow Rhee's regime.**

**The Soviets were not convinced of any of this. They doubted the South Koreans would rise up in a way that would make anything easy for the North. They did not believe Kim had the supplies to sustain all but a short offensive (both in time and space. This was deliberate.) And they were convinced the Americans would intervene as soon as the North Koreans crossed the border and they would not help Kim if that happened. Kim was told "no" on several occasions prior to March 1950 but he kept asking and kept insisting he was right.**



**When Japan announced its surrender on August 14, 1945, it caught U.S. military planners somewhat by surprise. While they had planned on eventually occupying Korea, they had not planned on it happening until after an invasion of Japan – sometime in mid 1946. They were forced to scramble. Joe Stilwell's 10<sup>th</sup> Army in Okinawa – a reserve force for the invasion of Japan, was tapped to go to Korea. Stilwell died on leave before this happened. He was replaced by LGEN John Hodge who would command the 50,000 man (initially) Army of Occupation until June 1948. Hodge saw it as an Army of Occupation over a vanquished enemy. (MacArthur saw his 150,000 man force as a liberation force tasked with nation building and not occupation.)**

**An occupying army did not arm its former enemy. There were no efforts to form a combat force while Hodge was in charge. He formed a police force and constabulary for internal security only made up largely of Koreans who served as such for the Japanese during the Japanese occupation, which made him loathed by the Koreans.**

**By the time his tenure ended, the Americans were reluctant to arm South Korea to their standards. It was clear by then Rhee wanted to unify Korea under his rule and was more than willing to use force to do so if he had a force capable of doing so. The U.S. would build an army capable of internal security and defending against an invasion, but not offensive operations.**





**The Korean Military Advisory Group (K MAG) stood up in July 1948 replacing the Army of Occupation. It had about 1500 soldiers and their task was to oversee the training and equipping of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army. The ROC TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment which defined what an army unit was supposed to have in manpower and equipment) differed markedly for the U.S.**

**First, there were no tanks or armored fighting vehicles. (A late WWII infantry division either had its own tank battalion or one was assigned to it.) It had about 1/3 the amount of artillery per division as a U.S. division mixed between 105mm and 75mm PAK guns, neither of which could match the capability of the NKPA Soviet supplied**

**122mm guns in either range or firepower.**

**While the South Koreans gained an air service, this was restricted to small transport and liaison aircraft. These were unarmed and difficult to arm with anything useful.**

**This was deliberate. The goal was to deny Rhee an offensive capability without denying him the ability to defend against an attack. By June 1950, the ROK Army had over 150,000 men, outnumbering the NKPA in manpower but not in firepower. While publicly K MAG said this was an adequate force, privately they held out little hope if North Korea invaded.**

# THE THEORIST



Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, the critical American view of Communism was based largely on the documented writings and speeches of Lenin and Trotsky.

They were hardly the only voices, but were the best known in the West.

Both had come to believe that Communism cannot hope to coexist with Capitalism thus to survive it must spread.

The difference between the two was when. Trotsky believed now, Lenin believed when the Soviet Union was ready.

Regardless, they saw the USSR as the vanguard of world revolution.



# THE THEORIST



**Lenin died in 1924. Trotsky believed himself to be the natural successor but he had few friends and fewer allies. (Lenin had noted Trotsky was a brilliant organizer but an incompetent politician.)**

**When the struggle for a successor concluded, Joseph Stalin was in charge.**



**He had little use for Trotsky (and ultimately had him assassinated) or fomenting world revolution. The Soviet Union was in no position to provide more than token, moral support.**

**He believed the Soviet Union was more important than world revolution and securing it was the only priority.**

# THE THEORIST



**George Kennan (1904 – 2005) was a State Department bureaucrat and by 1940 was the Department’s expert on the Soviet Union.**

**He believed that Lenin and Trotsky were aberrations. It is said all politics is local and he believed Communism was no different in this regard. The policy of the Soviet Union differed only in degree from that of Imperial Russia.**

**Moreover, Russian Communism was Russian only. Communism elsewhere (not under Red Army occupation) was its own entity and could not be viewed simply as an extension of the Soviet Union.**

**What were the “local” interests?**



# THE THEORIST



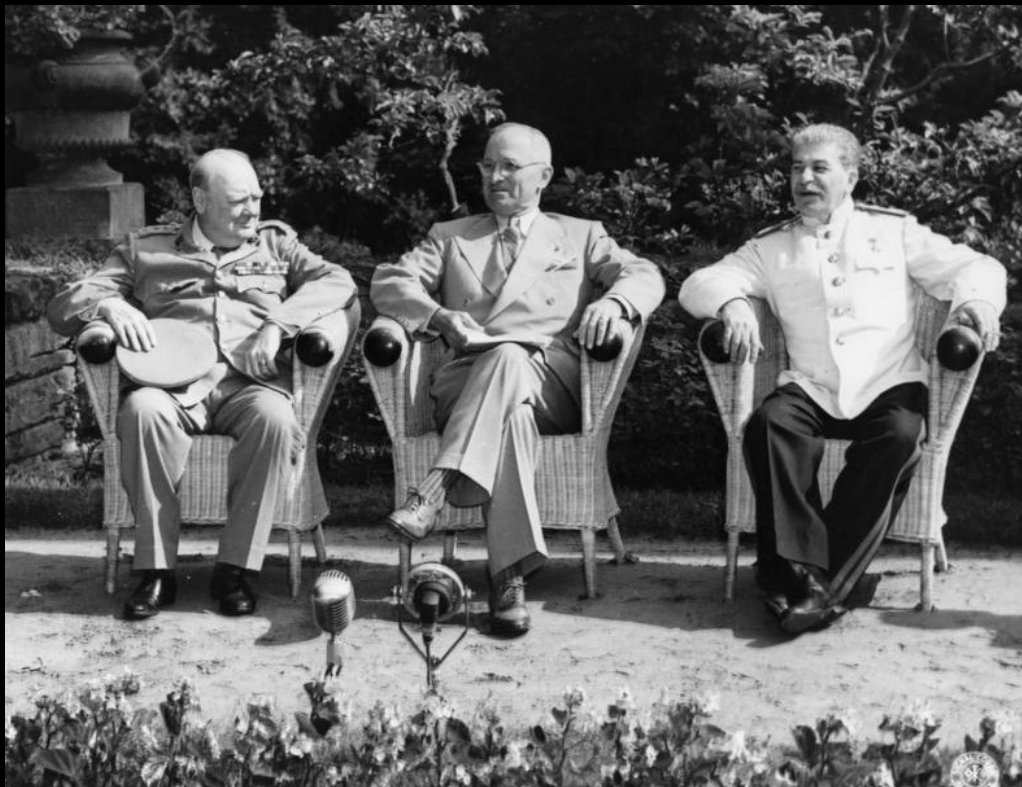
During the war, Kennan was posted with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow as advisor to the Ambassador and U.S. envoys. He did not have the ear of Roosevelt – for various reasons not in the least being he (Kennan) did not trust the Russians.

For reasons only known to Roosevelt, FDR trusted Stalin and truly believed he could work with the man.

In Kennan's opinion (and others) this was true so long as the only issue of note was the defeat of Nazi Germany. Beyond that, trust Russia to act in its own interests and be certain those would never align with your own.

# THE THEORIST

**Roosevelt may have trusted Stalin.  
Truman did not.**



**Roosevelt may have seen Yalta as  
a success, Truman saw it as an  
unavoidable surrender given that  
the only alternative – fighting the  
Red Army – was not in the cards.**

**The Roosevelt administration had  
more than a few members who  
supported Roosevelt's assessment  
of Stalin.**

**They were all gone within a few  
months. Truman wanted people  
who would counter Stalin.**

**People like George Kennan (if only  
he was even marginally  
personable.)**

# THE THEORIST



By 1946, Kennan believed Stalin was a threat not because he was a Soviet Communist but because he was Stalin.

To maintain power, Stalin needed an external, existential threat. He would expand the sphere of influence to provide a defensive buffer and to keep the people's focus abroad and not on domestic issues.

Kennan believed that containment was the key. The Soviet Union could not survive contained. Bolstering the West would deny Communism inroads.

Moreover, as only the Russians were Russian, treating its Allies as themselves and not as Soviet pawns could potentially undermine and perhaps roll back the Soviets.

At first (1946), Kennan had the ear of President Truman.

# THE THEORIST



**While history (and the opening of the Soviet archives) would show his view of Communism was correct, it was also very difficult to explain in simple terms.**

**While it was possible to be an anti-Stalin, anti-Soviet, nationalistic Communist such that what would work against one could not work against all, try explaining that to the average voter or politician especially without being patronizing (as was Kennan's wont).**

**The Americans preferred a monolithic threat. In WWI, this was the Kaiser even though each country fought for its own reasons. In WWII the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan) was a unified threat, even though they barely got along, rarely coordinated (or not at all in the case of Japan) and even worked against each other.**

**The communist threat was a multitude of challenges, not a single one.**

# THE THEORIST



An example from as early as 1945 was Josip Broz (Tito) and Yugoslavia. Tito had been born in what is now Croatia and fought in WWI with the Austro-Hungarian army as one of the youngest senior NCO's until he was captured by the Russians. He would then fight with the Red Army in the Russian Civil War before returning to Yugoslavia. He became a communist but not a Bolshevik having little use for the Russians.

In WWII he led communist partisans against the Germans and succeeded in liberating Yugoslavia (without Russian help). It was the only resistance movement that succeeded. When the Soviets tried to influence his new communist state, he broke with them completely and opened relations with the West. While he would not embrace western politics, nor seek an alliance, he would not support the Soviets or their policies either.



Tito would be a thorn in Stalin's side and he feared others might get similar ideas.



# THE THEORIST



**The U.S. would eventually see Tito's Yugoslavia as distinct from the Soviet Union and its satellites, but that would not be until the 1960's.**

**In the 1940's and 1950's a communist was a communist.**

**It was further believed at the time that when Moscow said jump, all communists would jump even though this had never been the case before and was not the case going forward except in the countries under Soviet occupation whose leadership existed only because the Red Army was there and had their backs.**



**As the events of 1989 would prove, once Moscow and the Red Army made it clear that a country was on its own, the communists governments' days were numbered.**

# THE THEORIST



**Kennan was brilliant and difficult. He clearly knew his subject – Russia. But he had few friends or true colleagues.**

**He had little concept of political realities and would not accept that what he believed important could be subordinated.**

**Moreover, while he was an expert on Russia, he knew little about anywhere else. Thus while probably correct that Communism was not purely Russian, he could provide little real insight regarding other Communist movements.**

**This would prove particularly true in regards to Asia.**

# THE THEORIST



**His idea of containment, however, seemed just simple enough (unless you asked him for details). His idea was based upon what soon became a false assumption: that military ability would not matter.**

**American policy was not so naïve but also turned on a false assumption: that the American armed forces could back up its diplomacy.**

**Moreover, as much as Stalin feared American military ability, it had effectively been frittered away by 1950.**

**The U.S. Army of 1950 outside perhaps Europe was less capable than it had been in 1939. The Navy, while the largest in the world, was not capable of a major war. The Air Force was brand new and believed that nuclear weapons were all that was necessary.**

# UNPREPAREDNESS

	Army	Navy	Marines	Air Force
1939	189,500	125,200	19,432	(~28,000 USAAC)*
1945	8,266,000	3,320,000	470,000	(2,330,000 USAAF)*
1950	593,000	381,000	74,000	411,000

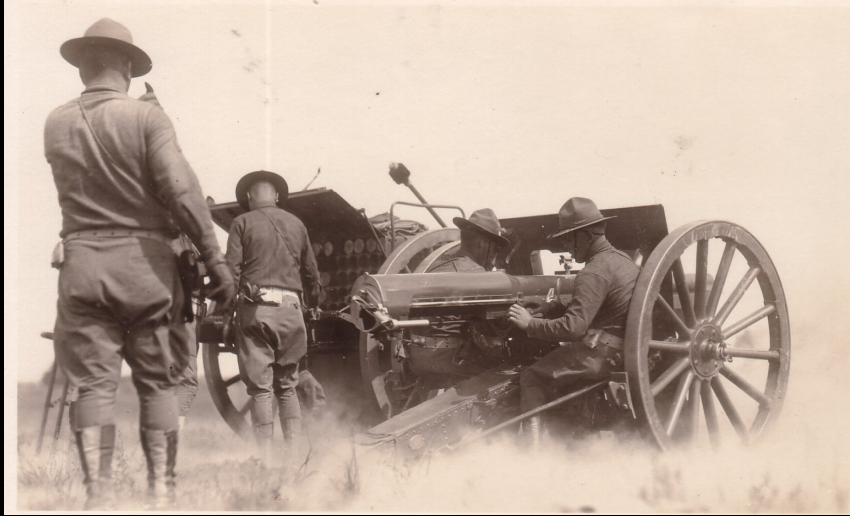
\* U.S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Army Air Force were part of the total Army manpower figures until the establishment of an independent Air Force in 1948.

However, while the total U.S. military manpower in 1950 (before the war) was over four times larger than in 1939, there were substantial qualitative differences.

While larger, as a whole the U.S. military of 1950 was less prepared for combat and less capable than its 1939 counterpart.

There are several reasons for this (as well as qualifications).

# UNPREPAREDNESS



The U.S. Army of 1939 was small – falling in between Portugal and Bulgaria in size. It was not even the largest in the Western Hemisphere (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Chile were larger. Mexico to deal with internal problems, the others to potentially deal with each other.)

But the Army was professional. Every soldier was a volunteer and the majority re-enlisted. While they were not well paid by any measure, they were paid which was more than many Americans could expect.



They were also well equipped (as an infantry force) and well trained. The Army had more weapons than it needed thanks to WWI surplus. The lean budgets had prevented modernization and expansion but not training.



# UNPREPAREDNESS



**But despite the budgets, by 1939 the U.S. Army was only one of two armies in the world that was fully mechanized (The other being the British.)**

**This did not mean they had a lot of tanks or even good ones. What it meant was the Army did not rely on horse transport to move its (limited) equipment, troops or supplies.**



**Aside from the British, every other army in the world at the time relied heavily on horse transport and the bulk of such armies moved at a walking pace (Including the German Army.) By the end of WWII, the Soviets and French were also mechanized, thanks mainly to U.S. trucks.**

# UNPREPAREDNESS

**The Army Air Corps of 1939 was small. Poland had a larger Air Force. But its size meant it was less expensive than it could be and easy to re-arm thus it was the most advanced in the world. This was because whenever a newer and better plane came along, the Air Corps could afford to replace its older ones. Size was its major weakness.**

**The Navy was the second largest in the world, only by a small amount. (Britain's was larger). It had been helped by the Washington and London Naval Treaties that severely limited new construction thus while it was older – most ships were built during or immediately after WWI, every one else of note was in the same boat. With the expiration of the London Naval Treaty of 1931, Congress had authorized a significant modernization and construction program.**

**All of the battleships, most of the aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines were at least ordered (in smaller numbers) before war was declared as were all of the Navy's airplanes which saw combat. In 1939, the Navy was the most prepared.**

**Most of the Army of 1939 was stationed in the continental United States. Its overseas commitments were in the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii and the Philippines and numbered under 30,000 men total.**

**The Army of 1950 was three times larger. But it was not professional. The majority of soldiers were draftees and while willing to do their time were not willing to do more than was absolutely necessary for a day longer than absolutely necessary. Congress had been littered with complaints from draftees about working hours, lack of time off, harsh discipline, too much marching and exercise etc and had pressured the Army to cut back on such activities. Well over half the Army was stationed overseas.**

**Moreover, the Army's budget had been slashed to the bone and beyond.**

**What had happened?**

**When Japan surrendered, both the public and Congress demanded the boys return home and to their civilian lives. The Army (and Navy and Marines) were not asked to suggest what size of peacetime force would be needed, just to cut, cut, cut. The Republicans wanted deep cuts to be able to cut the high income taxes (90% at the highest bracket). The New Deal Democrats wanted to cut the defense budget to fund not yet approved social programs.**

**The only branch that got what they wanted (in part) was the Air Force which wanted to be its own service, which they got in 1947.**



**The new Air Force was convinced strategic bombing had won the war and long range bombers armed with nuclear weapons had rendered conventional warfare obsolete. There was no need for an Army or Navy. Fighters were only needed to defend against air attack, not to support unnecessary ground forces. The Air Force believed the Convair B-36 was the future.**

**The B-36 was not designed to be a nuclear bomber. The Army Air Corps set down its specifications in 1940. They wanted a bomber capable of an immense bomb load and hitting targets in Germany from North America and returning without running out of fuel. The reason was that they feared that Britain might lose the war with Germany leaving the U.S. with no way to bomb Germany if the U.S. entered the war.**

**(The B-29 was a separate program aimed at Japan given the distances in the Pacific. The Air Corps initially wanted a bomber that could bomb Japan from the Philippines.)**

**Convair was awarded the contract in early 1942, but the funding was cut. Britain had not surrendered thus the intercontinental bomber was a lower priority. But low levels of funding continued as the Air Corps could see it would be useful in the future.**

**The prototype first flew in early 1946. This bomber was designed to carry both conventional and nuclear ordinance. By the time series production began in 1947, the new Air Force decided a conventional capability was unnecessary. As produced, the B-36 was only capable of carrying atomic weapons. Likewise, as nuclear weapons were at least as devastating as hundreds of B-29's, fewer new bombers were needed for the same punch.**

**As each B-36 squadron came into service, two or more B-29 squadrons were either retired or in some cases transferred to the Air National Guard.**





**The B-36 was expensive and the late 1940's were lean years for military budgets. Unless the Air Force received a much larger share of the budget, it would take a decade or more to bring the B-36 force on line. They went after the Navy.**

**In 1947, the Navy laid the keel for the USS United States. This new aircraft carrier would be three times larger than the Essex class of WWII. It was designed to carry a larger air wing of mostly jet aircraft (to be built later).**

**The First navy jet squadrons were expected to be operational about the time the United States entered service around 1950. The Air Force managed to convince the new Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson that the carrier was a waste of money, money better spent buying the B-36. Johnson cancelled the carrier. Six admirals including the CNO and Chief of Naval Aviation resigned in protest, but the carrier remained cancelled.**

**Johnson also wanted to get rid of the Army and Navy as a whole. He bought the Air Force "Bomber Barrons" line. Fortunately, while Congress would cancel the carrier, they refused to cancel the rest of the Navy or the Army.**



**Louis A. Johnson was a lawyer from Virginia. From 1937 until 1940 he had served as Assistant Secretary of War where he advocated for repeal of the Neutrality Acts and expansion of the Armed Forces. He resigned in 1940 when Roosevelt appointed Harry Stimson as Secretary of War, the position he wanted and felt he deserved.**

**His military experience was limited to serving as a Captain in logistics in WWI.**

**Truman named him as Secretary of Defense following his reelection in 1948. The reason? Johnson had been one of the few Democrats who funded Truman's campaign in the final**

**months and the only one who wanted a job for doing so. He is generally considered the worst Secretary of Defense in History. And not just because he cancelled an aircraft carrier. (In some ways he did the Navy a favor on that one. Technology would come about in a few years that would make it obsolete or at least too costly to renovate – specifically steam catapults, more sophisticated radar and an angled flight deck.)**

**In 1949, NSC 68 was prepared. This policy document stated that the military was far understrength and reliance solely on nuclear weapons was dangerous, enough so that it recommended a significant increase in the conventional forces and no corresponding expansion of nuclear capability.**



**Johnson sent it on to Truman with a recommendation to ignore it. He was tasked to cut defense spending and NSC 68 flew in the face of his mission. In 1949, he was tasked to keep the budget for the Department of Defense to around 10 Billion. The Budget submitted to Congress was for only 6 Billion.**

**He saw little use in training or procurement except for the B-36, so the rest was gutted. While he could not know Korea was around the corner, his job was to see to the preparedness of the military. His budget would insure it was unprepared.**

**In the Army, if you did not fire a weapon in boot camp, you would not get any real opportunities to do so in the field. Maintenance and spare parts were cut to the point most weapons did not work. The ones that did were maintained by cannibalizing the others. In the Navy, the remaining carrier battle groups still trained (But not as much) but only because he could not get rid of them yet. In the Air Force, bomber commands were not hurting for maintenance or training, but the rest of the service was not so lucky.**

**Only the tiny Marine Corps was prepared, but no thanks to Johnson. He had slashed their budget to the bone and as soon as he could he would get rid of them. They were just more Army, in his mind and Truman tended to agree.**

**Why was the Marine Corps prepared.**

**It cheated.**

**When the military demobilized after WWII it had far more equipment than it needed. Much of it was scrapped. Some was sold or given to other countries. What could be sold in the civilian market was sold: trucks, jeeps, firearms, uniforms, tents, cots, field kitchen equipment, etc. Or at least the Army and Navy sold. The Army-Navy Surplus Store sprang up to sell the surplus to consumers. There was, however, no Marine Corps Surplus.**

**The Marine Corps dropped from about 600,000 men in 1945 to 75,000 by 1950. Surely they had equipment in excess of need? They did. But they only scrapped equipment that was deemed too worn out for further use. Everything else, guns, tanks, bombs, ammunition, even fuel, went into storage. The Marines had enough supplies in storage to train without additional funding for a decade or more so their training did not slow down.**

**Marines were professionals. All were volunteers. Most units were manned with veterans of the Pacific War. While there were recruits, the number was small. Moreover, Marine recruits wanted to be Marines. In the words of an underage Marine who landed at Inchon, you joined the Army 'cause you had to. You joined the Marines hoping for a war as no matter the size, the Marines would be there.**

**And they trained as if that war would start tomorrow.**



**From 1945 through 1950, U.S. forces in Korea were under the overall command of General Douglas MacArthur. For all practical purposes, this meant they were largely left to their own devices. MacArthur seldom visited Korea. He did not consider it important. He was in charge of the occupation of Japan and U.S. interests in the Far East and aside from Japan, only Taiwan and the Philippines mattered. But Japan was his primary concern.**

**MacArthur is a controversial figure mainly because of what would happen in Korea. But to a professional military officer, he would have been in any event. He was a very odd duck.**

**He was a genius, first in his class at West Point. He could be imaginative and innovative and well ahead of his time. But throughout his career he had moments of**

**monumental and inexplicable stupidity that would have seen less capable (and less connected) officers cashiered.**

**His administration of Japan after the war was arguably his finest moment. Despite gravitating towards the more extreme right wing in American politics, his policies in Japan made the New Deal seem conservative. Japanese communists would complain they could gain nothing because MacArthur had already delivered.**





**After Japan's surrender, the Soviets demanded to be allowed to send occupation troops. MacArthur refused. They were not needed. A Soviet staff was sent to be a part of the Allied Command, but he never met with it nor allowed his staff to do so.**

**But he changed Japan. Women got the vote for the first time. Labor unions were made legal and protected by the new Japanese constitution. Japan, on the brink of starvation did not starve to death. Returning Japanese soldiers found work on public construction projects rebuilding the burned out cities. There was massive land reform. Farm land became the property of those who farmed it and not the absentee landlords. Only heavy industry suffered at first, until others convinced MacArthur that a thriving economy needed a true industrial sector.**

**To this day, he is seen as one of Japan's great leaders and heroes, the same man who had accepted their unconditional surrender and had fought a long, bitter war against them in the Southwest Pacific.**

**He is not so well regarded in Korea.**



**MacArthur's Intelligence Officer was Charles Willoughby. Willoughby had served as MacArthur's Intel Officer since before WWII. Unlike his boss, he is not well regarded by anyone. Any other commander would have fired him long before as he was usually wrong about everything he was supposed to be right about. He was very good at telling MacArthur what MacArthur already knew and subordinated what MacArthur believed, but not once had he warned MacArthur of an impending mistake even when other intel officers below knew it was a mistake.**

**But he had been with MacArthur in the Philippines, played a good hand at bridge and did not violate MacArthur's rules about women. He would disregard reports from Korea in 1949 and early 1950 of an impending attack, convinced the North Koreans were not a threat even if they attacked – for that was MacArthur's opinion and MacArthur was right no matter the fact to the contrary.**

**By June 1950, KMAC and the ROK Army were convinced the North Koreans were preparing an offensive into the south. Patrols had observed the build up of units and supplies in the north. Deserters from the NKPA had reported the same.**

**Tokyo dismissed the warnings.**



**Prior to April 1950, despite Kim's repeated requests, the Soviets were opposed to any action against South Korea. Despite having a copy of NSC 48 which said otherwise, the Soviets were convinced any such attack would result in a full scale intervention in Korea by the U.S. and could be the provocation for a broader war, a war Stalin did not want for another decade or more.**

**On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speak before the National Press Club where he outline U.S. strategic interests overseas. In the far east, he mentioned and discussed Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines. He said nothing about Korea.**

**The Soviets picked it up and saw this as confirmation that NSC 48 was not a ruse, thus Korea was wide open. But they did not release their hound. They were not convinced he could win even if the U.S. stayed out and were certain he would need reinforcement to prevail. The Soviets were not willing to send one combat soldier into Korea even if the American's intervened. They would only agree to an invasion if China agreed to back North Korea with ground troops in the event they were needed.**

**They knew the Chinese would not agree anytime soon. In an earlier discussion about Korea, China made it clear that not one Chinese soldier would cross the Yalu without air cover, i.e. without a Russian or Chinese Air Force (preferably Chinese – meaning a few years later).**



**Kim went to Moscow in early March to once again beg to be allowed to invade. He gain asserted he was convinced South Korea would collapse as soon as he invaded and that the Americans would do nothing about it. While Stalin was now less concerned about the Americans, he was not convinced an invasion would cause a revolt in the South and as Kim's plans depended upon such a revolt – or massive support from either China or Russia, he told Kim that he would not agree unless Mao agreed, probably expecting Moea to disagree and end the nonsense.**

**Kim then went to Beijing and told the Chinese that he was going to invade South Korea and that the Soviets agreed. He did not ask the Chinese for support. The Chinese tried to discourage him. They were even less convinced Kim and the NKPA could win. The plan was poor. Kim had insufficient logistics. And the plan relied on the enemy doing exactly as Kim expected for even a remote chance of success. Kim told the Chinese they were wrong and it was already decided. Mao, Cho En-lai and Marshall Peng then demurred – but did not agree to support Kim.**

**Kim then went to Moscow and told Stalin the Chinese were onboard and Stalin then agreed his plans could go forward.**



# MAP OF KOREA

Durs is a single nation with 5,000 years of history; it is a valorous, ambitious nation that has been vigorously fighting against foreign invaders and successive reactionary rulers from olden times; and it is a talented nation that has contributed greatly to mankind's development of science and culture.

KIM IL SUNG



From April to June, alerts had been called in South Korea due to increased activity north of the border. Beginning in early June, a full alert was ordered and the border defenses manned by about 100,000 South Korean troops – a number that outnumbered the North Koreans.

Things grew quiet around the 22<sup>nd</sup> and no attack materialized. The Army stood down. As June 25<sup>th</sup> was a holiday, troops were granted leave or days off to spend with their families.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, only 38,000 troops remained manning the border defenses...