The Korean War (1950-53)

After World War II, the Soviet Union took responsibility for accepting the surrender of Japanese troops in the part of the Korean peninsula north of the 38th parallel, whereas U.S. troops would receive the surrender south of that line. This decision resulted in the division and separation of many villages along the 38th parallel and families with ties across that line.

Both sides periodically instigated skirmishes across the 38th parallel, but the war formally began when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (The North) crossed the demarcation line and attacked the Republic of Korea (South) on June 25, 1950. Both Korean governments had been adamant about reunifying the peninsula, and the Soviet-supported DPRK saw an opportunity to do so with a swift strike. The DPRK army quickly pushed into South Korea, and by September, it had engulfed almost the entire peninsula and had forced the ROK army into a small area around Pusan. Upon hearing news of the attack, the United States immediately called for a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, which the Soviet Union was then boycotting over the issue of Chinese representation. **With the Soviets absent, the Security Council was able to pass a resolution condemning the actions of the DPRK and demanding that the Northern armies withdraw from the South**. The United States viewed the attack on the South as evidence that communism would actively challenge the free world and revised its security perimeter to include maintaining a non-communist South Korea. The UN sent forces composed of troops from 15 nations to the peninsula to stop the communist advance.

 Ultimately, the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) signed a mutual defense treaty, and U.S. troops became a part of the DMZ patrols on a semi-permanent basis.

When China entered the war on the North Korean side, General Douglas MacArthur suggested using nuclear weapons. President Truman rejected the plan, and MacArthur openly questioned the president's decision in the press. Truman relieved MacArthur of duty.

The Korean War had long-lasting consequences for the entire region. Though it failed to unify the country, the United States achieved its larger goals, including preserving and promoting NATO interests and defending Japan. The war also resulted in a divided Korea and complicated any possibility for ***accommodation, or an ability to make peace*** between the United States and China.