

# Korean War

## The Korean War

The decade after the Second World War saw communism spread to the Far East. In 1950, communist North Korea **invaded** South Korea and within three months, had **conquered** most of their land. Following their policy of containment, the USA got UN backing to send **troops** into Korea to re-take the south, and if possible take the north too. The war lasted three years and peace was only achieved when the use of the atomic bomb was threatened.

This Revision Bite will help you learn the key dates of the Korean War and the eventual outcome.

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### *The Korean War*

In 1945, Korea was split along the 38th parallel between a **communist north** led by Kim IL Sung, and a **non-communist south** led by Syngman Rhee.

But communism was **growing** in the Far East. In 1949, the Communists had taken power in China. The US developed the '**domino theory**' - the idea that, if one country fell to communism, others would follow like a row of dominoes. Then, in 1950, a report by the American National Security Council ('NSC68') recommended that the US stop containment and start to roll back communism.

### **The war**

- In 1950, after getting the support of Russia and China, Kim IL Sung invaded South Korea.
- The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) easily defeated the Republic of Korea's army (the ROKs).
- By September, the NKPA had conquered almost the whole of South Korea.
- The USA went to the United Nations and got them to send troops to defend South Korea.
- The Russians couldn't veto the idea because they were boycotting the UN at the time.
- In September, UN troops, led by the US General MacArthur, landed in Korea and drove the NKPA back.
- By October, the UN forces had almost conquered all of North Korea.
- In November 1950, Chinese People's Volunteers attacked and drove the Americans back.
- They recaptured North Korea, and advanced into South Korea.
- The Americans landed more troops and drove the Chinese back to the 38th parallel, where Truman ordered General MacArthur to stop and sacked him when he disagreed.
- The war went on as border clashes until 1953 when America's new president, Eisenhower, offered peace, but threatened to use the atomic bomb if China did not accept the offer.

Recently, historians have shown that the Korean crisis **almost** led to a third world war - many US advisers wanted to use the atomic bomb.

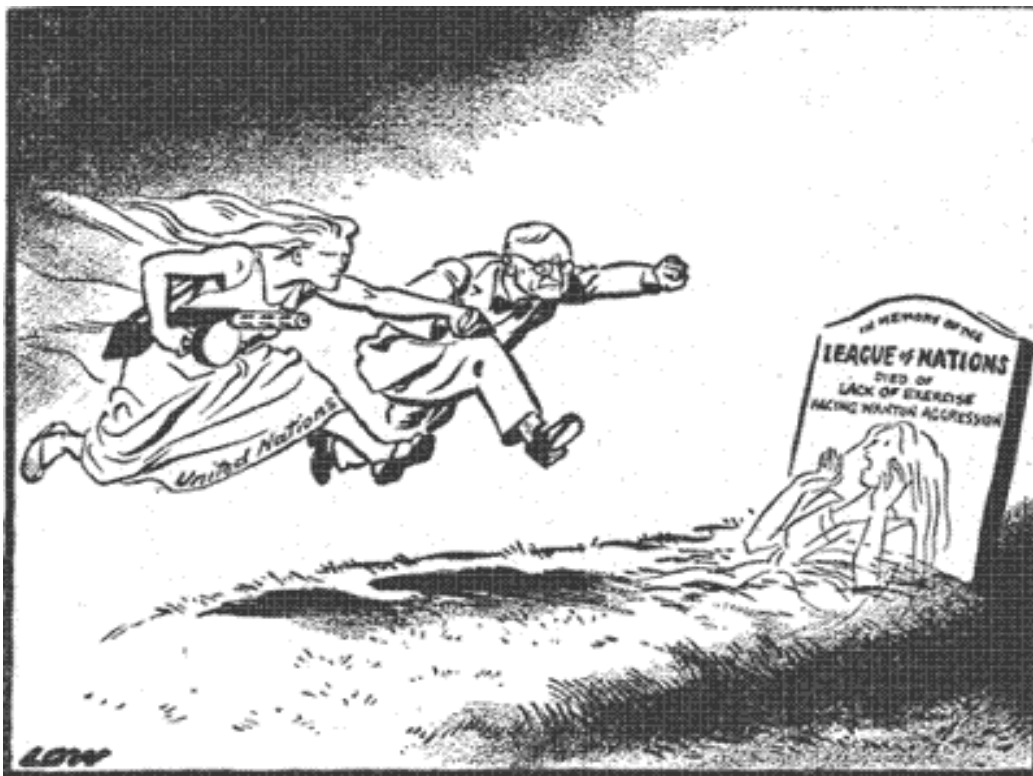
## Source analysis

Use your knowledge of the facts to decide whether Sources A and B agree or disagree about America's involvement in the Korean War?

### Source A

"Of the 16 countries contributing forces, the USA provided 50 per cent of land forces, 93 per cent of air forces, 86 per cent of naval forces. The UN gave the USA unlimited authority to direct military operations. US president Truman, not the UN, appointed General MacArthur as commander-in-chief of UN forces. MacArthur reported to the US President and took orders from him. The war threatened to become one between the USA and China. The USA even considered using nuclear weapons against China." James Mason with Angela Leonard, *Modern World History to GCSE* (2001)

### Source B



'History doesn't repeat itself' - by David Low

This drawing by the British cartoonist David Low, published in the *Daily Herald* on 30 June 1950, shows Truman and the United Nations rushing to Korea's aid.

When you have completed your answer, compare it to the answer on the next page.

### ***Source analysis - answer***

**Source A** stresses the leading role played by the Americans. It infers that the Korean War was an American war against communism.

**Source B** shows the war as military action by the United Nations (carrying the gun), helped by Truman.