

Truman versus MacArthur

BACKGROUND:

- *General MacArthur led the UN forces in Korea. At first, he had major success and pushed North Korean troops north past the 38th parallel.*
- *In response to UN troops crossing the 38th parallel, China sent troops to help the North Koreans. With Chinese help, the North Koreans pushed the UN troops back south.*
- *For a long time, the war remained a stalemate at the 38th parallel.*
- *Tensions mounted between President Truman and General MacArthur: MacArthur wanted to push past the 38th parallel and even invade mainland China. Truman wanted to use diplomacy and avoid a major war with China.*
- *MacArthur tried to go over Truman's head by using the media to get public support, and Truman fired him for insubordination on April 11, 1951.*

The central historical question for today is:

How did Americans respond to President Truman's decision to fire General MacArthur?

Cuban Missile Crisis

BACKGROUND:

- *In 1959, Cuba became a Communist country, led by Fidel Castro. This development brought the Cold War close to home because Cuba is 90 miles off the coast of Florida.*
- *John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1960 and oversaw two major events that involved Cuba: 1) the Bay of Pigs invasion; 2) the Cuban Missile Crisis.*
- *The Bay of Pigs invasion was intended to overthrow the Castro regime, but was an utter failure and exposed publicly the United States' aims in Cuba*
- *In response to the Bay of Pigs, Castro moved to strengthen ties with the Soviet Union.*

As you read the documents, ask:

- According to these documents, what deal did the U.S. strike with the U.S.S.R.?
- Why was this deal kept secret?
- Who seems more scared or on the defensive in this documents?
- What does this event show you about how people felt during the Cold War?

The central historical question for today is:

How did American politicians navigate the treacherous waters of Cold War diplomacy?

The Korean War

BACKGROUND:

- *Korean War was the first hot war of the Cold War: 1950-1953.*
- *During Second World War, the Allies decided to divide Korea at the 38th parallel. The North was under the trusteeship of the Soviet Union, the South under the trusteeship of the Americans. Two different countries developed: the North became a communist country, the South a non-communist, democratic country.*
- *Both sides wanted to re-unify the country under their own rule.*
- *In 1950, after a number of small skirmishes at the border, war broke out between North and South Korea. The US backed and fought with the South, and China fought with a backed the North.*
- *Initially, American and United Nations forces pushed deep into North Korea; however, China entered the war and pushed the Americans backed into the South.*
- *After three years, the two sides fought to a stalemate and kept the country divided at the 38th parallel.*

As you read the documents, ask:

- *According to each textbook, how did the Korean War start?*
- *Which of these textbooks do you find more trustworthy? Why?*
- *Where else would you look in order to figure out how the Korean War started?*
- *Which textbook comes from North Korea? Which comes from South Korea?*

The central historical question for today is:

Today we are going to look at two different textbook accounts of the start of the Korean War and try to figure out where they come from, and which one offers the most trustworthy account.

Guatemala

BACKGROUND:

- *As we've learned, the Cold War started heating up after WWII.*
- *The United States passed policies—the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine—to prevent the spread of Communism in Europe. We've also learned that the United States sent troops to Korea to fight Communist North Korea.*
- *Throughout the Cold War, the United States also engaged in covert (or underground/hidden) action.*
- *Today, we're going to look at what happened in Guatemala.*

As you read the documents, ask:

- Why did the United States get involved in Guatemala?
- What are some differences between Textbook A and Textbook B? What details appear in only one of the textbooks and not the other?
- How do the details affect the overall story?
- Why do you think one textbook found these details important to include but the other did not?
- What more do you want to know about what happened in Guatemala?

The central historical question for today is:

How does this event help you understand the United States' behavior during the Cold War and what does it tell you about America's foreign relations problems today?