

**CHAPTER 12**  
**Section Summary**  
**SECTION 2 THE KOREAN WAR**

Since the Russian Revolution, the Soviets had tried to export communism around the world, sure that it would reach worldwide influence. Events in China in 1949 seemed to prove them right.

Chinese Nationalist leader **Jiang Jieshi** (known as Chiang Kai-shek in the United States) and communist leader **Mao Zedong** had been allies against Japan during World War II, but once the war ended, they became enemies. The United States supported Jiang, while the Soviet Union aided Mao. In 1949, Mao’s communists took over the Chinese mainland, calling their government the People’s Republic of China.

From there, the conflict over communism moved to Korea. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union had split Korea into two nations divided by the **38th parallel** of latitude. On June 25, 1950, about 90,000 North Korean troops armed with Soviet weapons crossed the 38th parallel to attack South Korea.

President Truman sent American troops to join South Korean and United Nations forces. Under the World War II hero General **Douglas MacArthur**, they attacked the port city of Inchon in September 1950. By October, they drove the North Koreans back north.

Truman worried what China might do if the war continued, but MacArthur told him China would not intervene and he continued to push northward. Then, on November 26, 1950, around 300,000 Chinese soldiers attacked. Truman did not want the United States to enter into a major war that would involve huge numbers of troops and maybe even atomic weapons, but MacArthur distrusted Truman’s policy of a **“limited war.”** When MacArthur sent a letter to Congress condemning the policy, Truman fired him.

By the spring of 1951, the war settled into a stalemate. To achieve a cease-fire in 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower, now President, hinted he might use nuclear weapons.

No side won the Korean War, and the two Koreas remain divided today. But two things did change: Truman’s use of American forces enlarged the power of the presidency, and a new alliance called the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** was formed to prevent the spread of communism. It was the Asian version of NATO.

**Review Questions**

1. What is the significance of the 38th parallel?

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2. What was President Eisenhower’s role in the cease-fire that ended the Korean War?

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**READING CHECK**

What did China do that MacArthur insisted would not happen?

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**VOCABULARY STRATEGY**

What does the word *intervene* mean in the underlined sentence? Look at the context clues in the sentence to help you figure out what the word means. Circle the words that could help you learn what *intervene* means.

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**READING SKILL**

**Categorize** What idea and event led directly to Truman’s firing of MacArthur?

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