

#### SOUTH KOREA (JUNIOR HIGH)

The North Korean communists hastened the war against the South after setting up their government. Having entered into a secret military treaty with the Soviet Union, they strengthened their own military forces. Just before the June 25 War, the North Korean army included 200,000 soldiers and was equipped with modern Russian planes and tanks. Meanwhile, the South was in a chaotic situation created by the riots and strikes. With the sudden growth of the population and the resulting famine, its economy was suffering greatly. Furthermore, the political situation was very fragile

due to the overabundance of political parties and social constitutions. The armed forces were also in very poor condition. The South Korean army comprised less than 100,000 soldiers whose arms and equipment were also outmoded.

The North Korean communists, while preparing for the war, approached the South under the pretext of a peaceful policy all the while hiding their true intentions to attack. On June 25th 1950, they finally launched the war against the South, attacking from every point along the 38° parallel.\*

\* Kim, Hongsoo. *Korean History: Junior High*. Seoul: Dae Han Textbook Co., 2000, 172.

#### SOUTH KOREA (SENIOR HIGH)

When the overthrow of the South Korean government through social confusion became too difficult, the North Korean communists switched to a stick-and-carrot strategy: seeming to offer peaceful negotiations, they were instead analyzing the right moment of attack and preparing themselves for it. The North insisted on political negotiations between the leaders of the South and the North aiming toward a constitution of a unified government, and openly publicized their policy. By that time the American forces stationed in the South withdrew and announced that the peninsula would be excluded in America's first line of defense in the Far East. Taking advantage of this situation, the North Korean communists prepared themselves for war. Kim Il-sung secretly visited the Soviet Union and was promised the alliance of the Soviets and China in case of war. Finally, at dawn on June 25th, 1950 the North began their southward aggression along the 38° parallel. Taken by surprise by these unexpected attacks, the army of the Republic of Korea (South Korean) fought courageously to defend the liberty of the country. But with the lack of soldiers and equipment, Seoul had to surrender and the South Korean forces were forced to retreat to a battle line south of the Nak-dong river. The armed provocation of the North Korean communists brought the UN Security Council around the table. A decree denounced the North Korean military action as illegal and as a threat to peace, and a decision was made to help

the South. The UN army constituted of the armies of 16 countries—among them the United States, Great Britain and France—joined the South Korean forces in the battle against the North.\*

#### NORTH KOREA (SENIOR HIGH)

Upset by the fast and astonishing growth of the power of the Republic, the American invaders hastened the preparation of an aggressive war in order to destroy it in its infancy. [ . . . ]

The American imperialists furiously carried out the war project in 1950, the 39th year of the Juche calendar.\* The American imperialist called the traitor Sungman Lee to Japan and gave him the order to hurry the war, while frequently sending warmongers to the South in order to survey the preparation of the war. [ . . . ]

The American invaders who had been preparing the war for a long time, alongside their puppets,† finally initiated the war on June 25th of the 39th year of the Juche calendar. That dawn, the enemies unexpectedly attacked the North half of the Republic, and the war clouds hung over the once peaceful country, accompanied by the echoing roar of cannons.

Having passed the 38th parallel, the enemies crawled deeper and deeper into the North half of the Republic. A grave menace drew near our country and our people. His Excellency, the great leader of the Republic, had a crucial decision to make—the invading forces of the enemies had to be eliminated and the threatened fate of our country and our people had to be saved.‡

\* The Juche calendar uses the year of Kim Il-sung's birth as its starting point (1911). It was implemented after the death of the emperor in order to honor him as a great hero, revolutionary figure, and shining example of what the North Koreans "aspire" to become. The calendar was implemented on September 8, 1997, three years after the leader's death. One Juche year equals one year on the Julian calendar.

† Literally, "cat's paws."

‡ *History of the Revolution of our Great Leader Kim Il-sung: High School*. Pyongyang: Textbook Publishing Co., 1999, 125–27.

#### NORTH KOREA (JUNIOR HIGH)

The American invaders who had been preparing the war for a long time, accompanied by their puppets, finally waged the war against the North half of the Republic on June 25th of the 39th year of the Juche calendar (1950). The bastards who crossed the 38th parallel at dawn were stoking the flames of war, jumping around like mad men, yearning to invade the North under any pretext. And so our peaceful homeland was surrounded by the roar of cannons and the clouds of war.

His Excellency, the great leader Kim Il-sung, summoned immediately an emergency council of the Cabinet. The great voice of his Excellency echoed in the room:

" . . . Those bastards are unparalleled in their ignorance. The American bastards were mistaken regarding our Chosun People."<sup>\*</sup>

"The American bastards look down upon Chosun People. As the saying goes wolf-dogs† should be conquered with clubs, we should show to those ignorant invaders what our true color is." [ . . . ]

Actually, the war between our newly founded country and the US—recognized worldwide as the world's most powerful country—was a tremendously unfair conflict. So the people around the world worriedly watched us, wondering how our people would fight against the US.

"We have to fight firmly against our enemies in order to defend the independence of our country, the freedom and honor of our people. We have to respond to their barbarous invasion by a war of independence. Our People's Army will have to disable the attacks of the enemies and set out immediately a defense combat in order to get rid of the forceful invaders."<sup>‡</sup>

\* The term *Chosun People* comes from the Choson Dynasty, which ruled the peninsula from 1392 to 1910, the year of the Japanese occupation. North Korea's use of the title intends to show their heritage rooted in this deep history. They consider themselves, therefore, the true Koreans.

† "Wolf-dogs" is another name used to refer to Americans in North Korea. It is an insult because of the hybridity of the animal, which is why the adjective "bastard" most often precedes the substantive "Americans."

‡ *History of the Revolution of our Great Leader Kim Il-sung: Junior High*. Pyongyang: Textbook Publishing Co., 2000, 56–58.

## Source #1

When Japan was defeated in 1945 the Allies were faced with the problem of deciding the future of the old Japanese empire. The Korean peninsula had been Japanese since 1910. The Allies (but not Stalin) promised it would become independent after the War. But in 1945 it was partitioned along the 38th parallel with the Japanese forces surrendering to the Red Army in the north and to the Americans in the south.

Plans to unite the two halves failed, so in 1948 both occupation zones were granted their independence. The Republic of Korea (formerly the American zone in the South), led by Syngman Rhee, came into being on 15 August 1948. The Korean People's Democratic Republic (formerly the Soviet zone in the North), led by Kim Il Sung, was founded on 9 September. The Soviet forces left North Korea by the end of 1948. US forces left South Korea by June the following year.

Neither of the two Korean governments was happy with the partition of their country. Both claimed to be the rightful government. The United Nations tried in vain to unify the two Koreas as both sides built up their armed forces. Not surprisingly, there were frequent skirmishes on the frontier between the two Koreas. In 1949, the UN Commission in Korea warned of the danger of civil war.

An uncomfortable peace kept the two sides apart until 4:00 a.m., Sunday, 25 June 1950. A large North Korean army led by Marshal Choe Yong Gun, supported by tanks, crossed the border and rapidly moved south. Its seven divisions easily outnumbered the four poorly equipped South Korean divisions which faced them.†

## Source #2

Originally, the division of Korea into two parts at the 38th parallel was designed as a temporary measure, intended to prevent clashes between Soviet and American troops fighting against the Japanese. Subsequently, the division was meant to designate the zones in which the two sides were responsible for normalization of civilian life and for the preparation of Korea's population for self-government. Despite the temporary nature in which the break-up of Korea was designed, different approaches of the USA and USSR to post-war organization of life in their respective spheres of influence and the beginning of the Cold War and the conflicts between the superpowers that accompanied it led to a long-term change of the Korean peninsula into an area of competition between two ideologies and the forces that lay behind them.

Immediately after Korea's liberation, numerous political parties and social organizations appeared and became active alongside Korea's governing bodies—the so-called People's Committees. In North Korea, the communists were most active, uniting in October 1945 into the Labor Party of Korea. In 1946, many social measures and reforms were passed and carried out in North Korea, including a land reform, the nationalization of industry, transport, communications and banks as well as foreign trade and laws dealing with gender equality. These measures, especially the land redistribution, influenced the people of South Korea where most of the governing was still done by the American military administration. From the very beginning of the administration's activity, Americans committed a series of mistakes that turned the general population's sentiment against them. As a result, an atmosphere of civil protest permeated the South complete with mass demonstrations that were put down by military force.

In 1948 elections to the National Assembly were held in the South and the Republic of Korea was declared with a new constitution and president and Seoul as its capital. In response, elections were held in the North to the Supreme Public Assembly a few months later. These elections were given an air of encompassing all of Korea through the inclusion of several representatives of the population of South Korea. The Supreme Public As-

sembly proclaimed the creation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with its capital in Pyongyang. Shortly thereafter the Soviet Union removed its troops from the territory of North Korea at the request of DPRK's government.

The existence of two Korean states, each of which claimed to be the only lawful government of the whole peninsula, clearly created grounds for conflict between them. The 38th parallel became the site of frequent armed confrontations, which numbered 1,836 in 1949 alone and often included large quantities of troops on both sides.\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Korean War Source Analysis Worksheet

### South Korean sources:

1. What words are used to describe the countries mentioned?
  - a. North Koreans:
  
  
  - b. South Koreans:
  
2. According to the South Korean sources, who is responsible for the start of the Korean War? (Cite evidence from the text)

### North Korean sources:

1. What words are used to describe the countries mentioned?
  - a. North Koreans:
  
  
  - b. South Koreans:
  
  
  - c. United States:
  
3. According to the North Korean sources, who is responsible for the start of the Korean War? (Cite evidence from the text)

