



In the period post 1945, world events were dictated by fear: either of capitalism, or ~~single~~ ^{communism}. America's perception of communism as an expansionist, imperialist ideology significantly contributed to establishing a bipolar world order with several points of crisis between 1948 and 1989. One very notable crisis that precipitated ~~because of~~ ^{and was} worsened due to American fear of communism was the Korean War, 1950-53. Here, the North Korean ~~invasion~~ ^{invasion} of the South was the cumulative effective of communist expansion in the Asian region, and the US's fear of this guaranteed the conflict would be an intense and prolonged one. Underlying the reasons for America's fear is the concept of national interest and it ~~is~~ ^{is} because of this fear of communism was very important in ^{the} Korea ^{war} developing.



The proclamation of the Truman Doctrine of containment underlies the US's fear of communism and must ~~be~~ ^{this idea} must be established before looking specifically at Korea. Urged on by Senator Vandenberg (chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), President Truman pledged to support the Greeks and Turkish resist communist takeover. Announced to Congress on 12th March 1947 was the Truman Doctrine - a concept of economic, political, and where necessary, ~~to~~ military assistance to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation." Inherent in this was the need for the US to oppose any of Stalin's moves to expand the communist empire. It is here that concept of national interest takes over. With ~~the~~ increasing numbers of countries turning to communism, the ~~area~~

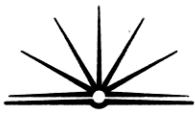


with which the US could develop economic and military links with diminished. This was not in the national interest of the US. Furthermore, communist countries would not be politically subservient to the US. Again, this opposed the national interest. Precipitating from this was the fear of communism, that it would displace capitalism and America's pre-existing positions of influence. This theory directly applies to the development of the Korean War.

With the declaration of the People's Republic of China on 1st October 1949, a new communist threat had emerged in the previously capitalist inclined Asian region. The new China, led by Mao Tse-Tung, was bitterly anti-American and his rise to power was a



devastating blow to US foreign policy. During the Chinese 'civil war', the US had supported the Nationalist Gen Chiang Kai-shek, providing \$2 billion in aid, and a small air force and navy. This defeat was also a defeat of containment, and this perpetuated the fear. The Asian sphere was definitely one the US wished to exert influence over and the emergence of a communist China, combined with the existing presence of Stalin's Soviet Union was a very dangerous development indeed. Thus with the advent of the Korean War, it is little wonder that the US moved to support Rhee's South Korea. Containment could not be allowed to fail against, as this would harm America's "national objectives". Objectives which aimed to extend US influence, and this could only occur if communism was



Suppressed. Fear of another containment failure with China looming ominously dictated American actions towards Korea.

The division of Korea along the 38th parallel signalled a tangible threat to the national interest of the US, and increased their fear of communism. With the Soviets gaining interim control over the North, they quickly moved to install a communist regime under Kim Il Sung. This move meant that the North had now, in effect, become another satellite state of the USSR. Previously, Soviet influence was apparent only in Eastern Europe, but this event pointed to communist expansionism. When the Soviets refused UNO observers to enter the North in November 1949 for free elections to take



place, US fears were ~~sub~~ ^{justified}. The North had now been aligned to the USSR, and this set a chill of fear amongst Truman and his observers. The expansion had to be opposed, even if this meant military intervention. This indeed would be the case. Clearly, ~~through~~ the installation of Il Sung demonstrates the importance of American fear of communism in the ensuing Korea War.

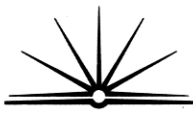
Subsequently, when the North invaded South Korea on the ~~25th~~ 25th June, 1950, the crisis well and truly 'developed' and American fear of communism continued to dictate what events would precipitate. Immediately following the invasion, the US placed immense political pressure on the UN to take drastic military action, which resulted in the dispatch



of a 15 country force, under the UN banner but primarily staffed by the US military, to support the ~~so~~ South. This intervention prevented North Korean forces from enveloping the entire peninsula, with UN forces managing to hold out in Pusan on the southern tip. Consequently, the war was not over swiftly, and continued to rage for another three years. Again, if we look at the driving force behind this, US national interest emerges. Expansion by the communist North had to be resisted at all costs to ensure the area still could be influenced by the US, and its economic ties with nations increased. Thus once again, national interest incorporating fear of communism, dictated this crisis.

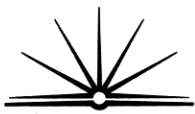


Quite significant in gauging the importance of US fear of communism were the developing links between the USSR and China, and the USSR and North Korea. Signed in 1950 was a Sino-Soviet Treaty on Friendship, ~~Assistance~~^{Alliance}, and Mutual Assistance. This entrenched military, political, and economic links between the two nations. Naturally, the US viewed this as a very negative development in their foreign policy. Such treaties between communist countries encapsulated their worst fears as it signalled the USSR and another country would be pursuing parallel foreign policies opposing the US. Similarly, the provision of 80% of all arms, tanks and other hardware to the North Korean effort by the Soviets was another signalled of a detrimental alliance against the US. Resulting from

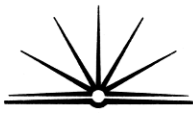


this, the US increased its provisions to South Korean forces as well as bolstering their own. Increasing Communist ties perpetuated American fear and this contributed to the crisis developing, and worsening.

A noteworthy aspect of the Korean crisis was the very plausible nuclear threat, and this again can be traced back to American fear of communism. Throughout the conflict, Gen. MacArthur advocated for the use of 30-50 nuclear bombs to be used against China in attempt to "isolate the battlefields." He saw Chinese intervention in the war in November 1950, as a very serious threat to US prospects of victory. Even more significantly, US leaders saw Chinese



intervention on the Yalu River with 200 000 troops as very dangerous militarily and politically. Arising out of this was a shift in US military planning, towards strategic arms. Under proposals from the hawkish NSC-68 of 1950, the US moved to acquire the hydrogen bomb in 1952, and increase its atomic arsenal to 750 between 1950-51. Now in terms of the Korean crisis, we see that this dramatic shift in strategic ideology resulted from a fear of communism; that of China's involvement. By pursuing a course of nuclear belligerence both in threatening to us then, and expanding nuclear assets, the US sparked an arms race with the USSR that would develop the Korea War into one possibly of



nuclear exchange. From this, it can be concluded that America's fear of communism led to the development of this crisis. A threat to its national interest was made, and this was responded to in the most dangerous of ways.

Clearly, the Korean War stands as a crisis developed by America's fear of communism. The US did not want Korea to be another failure of ~~communist~~ containment, or its "national interests." National interest accounts for the fear of communism and because of this Korea proved to be a highly potent conflict. Such fear would also entrench the Cold War from this point on, and trigger many other crises to follow.