

# Context to Korea



## BACKGROUND

The Soviet Union declared war on Japan and “liberated” North Korea on the last day of WWII.

In the south, the Americans did the same. Naively, they assumed that Korea would unite as a single country.

Wasting no time, the Soviets established a communist regime in the north.



## BACKGROUND

Under Syngman Rhee, a dictator of a different sort, the US built their own in the South.

It became another Berlin, and the U.S.S.R followed by quickly arming North Korea.

Before the invasion, there had already been many smaller border fights between North and South Koreans.



## BACKGROUND

The Soviets and Americans took a small step back and watched to see what would happen.

The conflict remained once-removed from the direct Soviet-American contest happening in Berlin.



*watching.....*



## HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Americans had to decide how much to get involved when the North invaded. It was a tough call.

Using the issue of “containment” and the “domino theory”, Truman sold the idea of heading to war.

He accused Moscow of starting the crisis at the same time... which was probably correct.



*Keep the soviet dogs out of the south.*



## HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

The question became how close the Soviets were going to decide to play it out. Would they send their own soldiers, and so have Americans and Soviets shooting each other? Would this start a third World War?

Another fear regarded the Chinese. Even though they were less of a concern regarding a nuclear war, they still had a lot of soldiers.



The Soviets eventually decided to stay out of it, and the Chinese ended up involved.



## AMERICAN TACTIC / COST

The involvement of the UN was a huge benefit for the USA. By using the UN, America would look like they were trying to 'keep the peace' as part of an International force.

The Soviets would then risk a war with all the UN nations, that they were officially a part of.



*The UN is sort of like the Jedi. Both keep peace...  
Sometimes.*



## AMERICAN TACTIC / COST

The setup worked. The majority of ground troops were Americans, and they ran combat operations.

The USA still would have gone to war even if the UN hadn't agreed to step in and practice "Collective Security."

However, that would have increased the probability of the Soviets having direct involvement as well.





## AMERICAN TACTIC / COST

They still needed to hold back the spread of Communist and Soviet ideals above everything else.

Already, the communists were attacking French troops in Vietnam, British troops in Malaya and even the elected government in the Philippines.



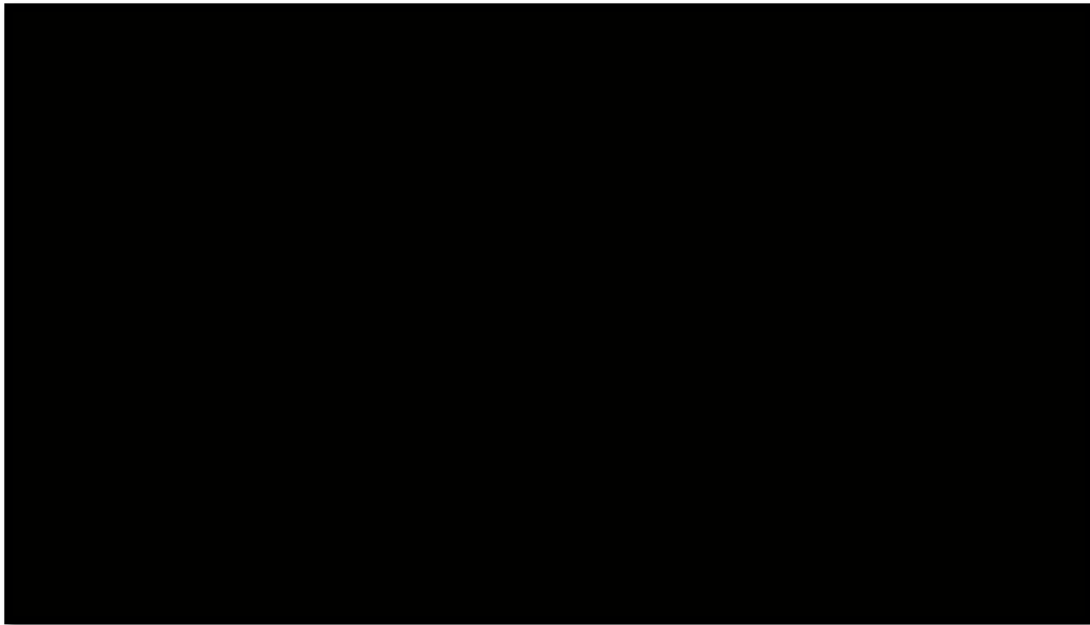
*Containment,  
Containment,  
Containment*



## AMERICAN TACTIC / COST

The cost for the Americans was 25,000 dead, and 115,000 wounded.

The cost for Truman was support, as well as popularity, when he fired General MacArthur.



## LIMITED WAR

MacArthur wanted to make the war one of complete liberation by pushing onward into China.

It made military sense, because the Chinese could now jump over the border and then get to safety, attacking at whim with relative impunity.

Chinese planes would do the same, and American fighters were forbidden to chase them beyond the border of North Korea or Manchuria.



# LIMITED WAR

MacArthur only saw that it made sense militarily to push the attack the whole way.

Politically, however, it was really stupid.

Truman knew that an attack on China's mainland would bring almost a billion people into the conflict. America would be overwhelmed by raw numbers.



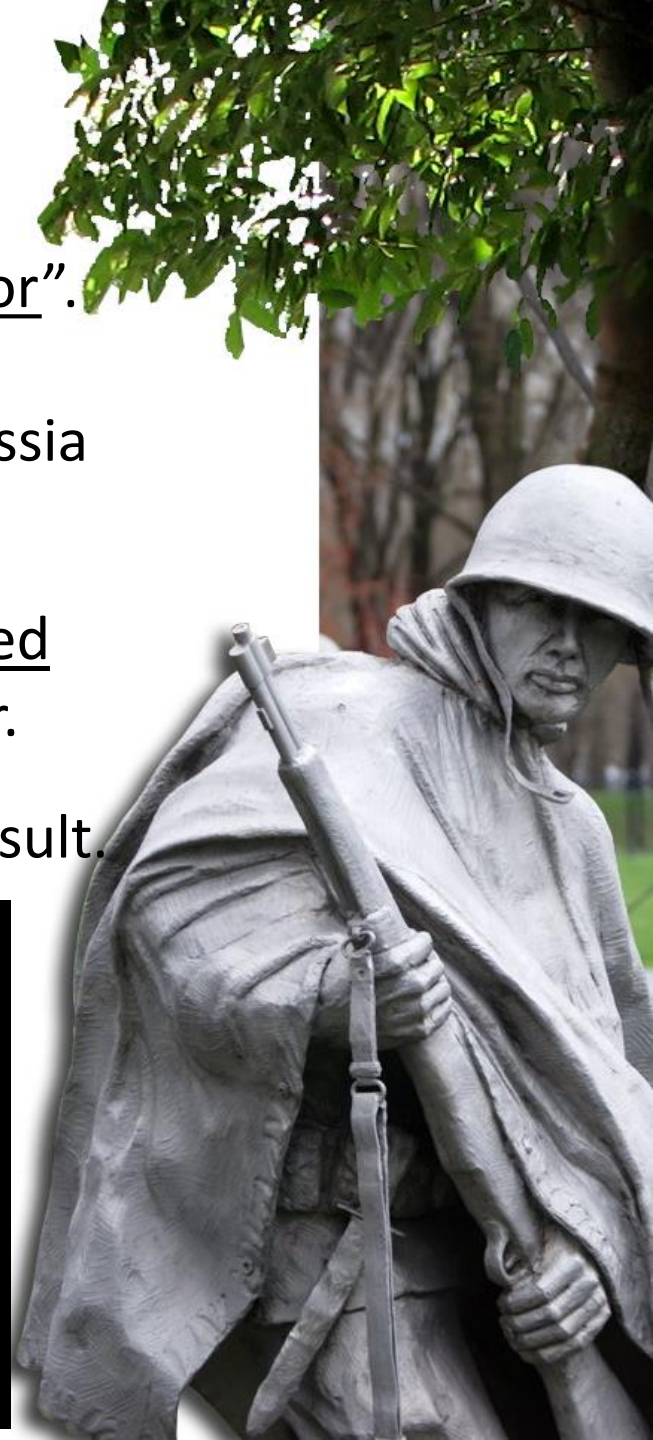
# LIMITED WAR

The US would be on its own, since the UN would not to back it, if they were the “aggressor”.

Hostilities would overflow into Europe, and Russia would certainly get involved.

It would no longer be a “client war” or a “limited war.” It would become a direct and full-out war.

And nuclear Armageddon was likely the end result.



# CONTAINMENT – IN & OUT

A direct Soviet response to NATO, was the Warsaw Pact.

It divided the whole world on all levels, which were politically, ideologically, economically, and militarily.

For the Soviets, the pact was slightly relaxing of control they had over countries in their own area of influence.



# CONTAINMENT – IN & OUT

Instead of “subjugation” status, it allowed them “partner” status.

The only question was, “how far does that status go?” Did it give those states the right to make their own decisions?

Actions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia by Khrushchev, proved that the status didn’t go far at all.



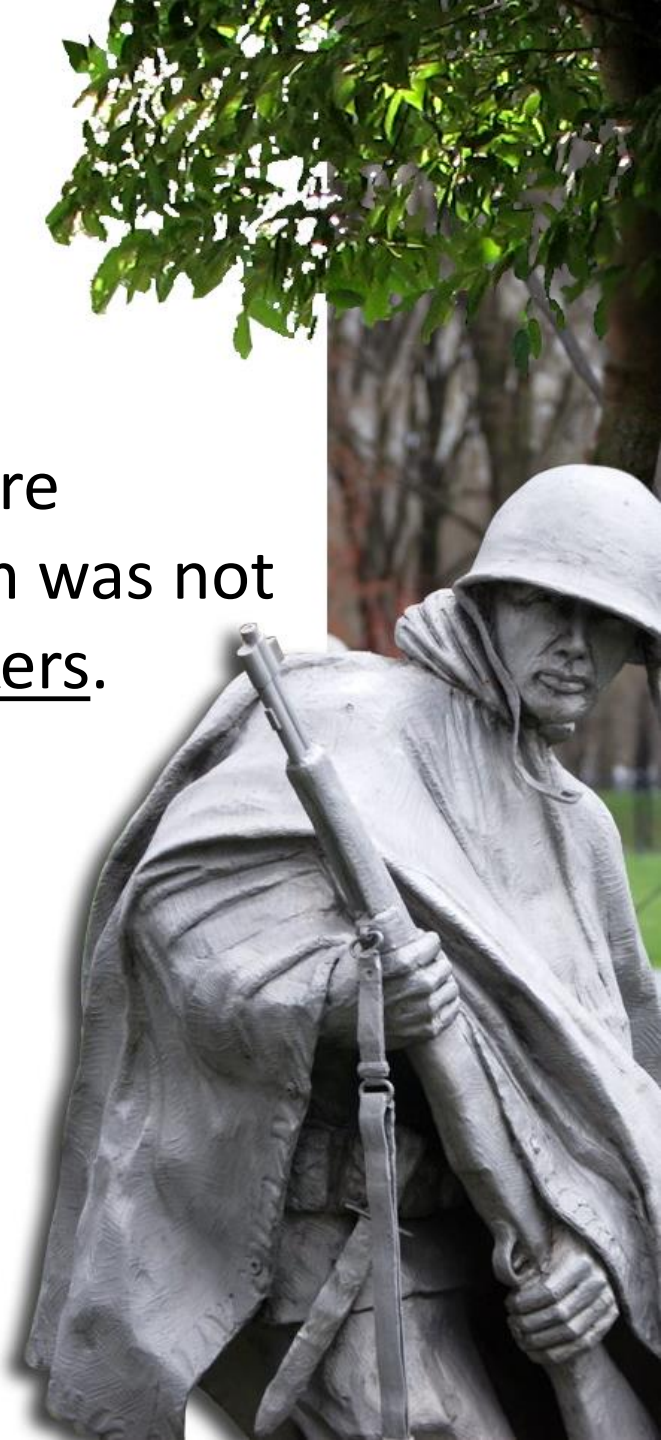
*Bull = USSR  
Gal = Hungary  
Man = USA etc.*



# POLAND

Poland found a way to get a little freedom...and get away with it.

Moscow probably acted more gently here because the movement toward freedom was not led by the government, but by the workers.





# POLAND

This made it easier to make quick adjustments by not using military force, or getting rid of a leader.

Instead, the Soviets added a new leader in Gomulka. He found a middle ground for new freedoms and kept all the tanks out.



# HUNGARY - BACKGROUND

The emphasis of the realities of Cold War politics are shown in the terrible and violently-brutal story of Hungary's revolt.

Hungary wanted freedom from Communist control desperately.

Listening to Radio free Europe, they heard American Promise to help people who wanted freedom.



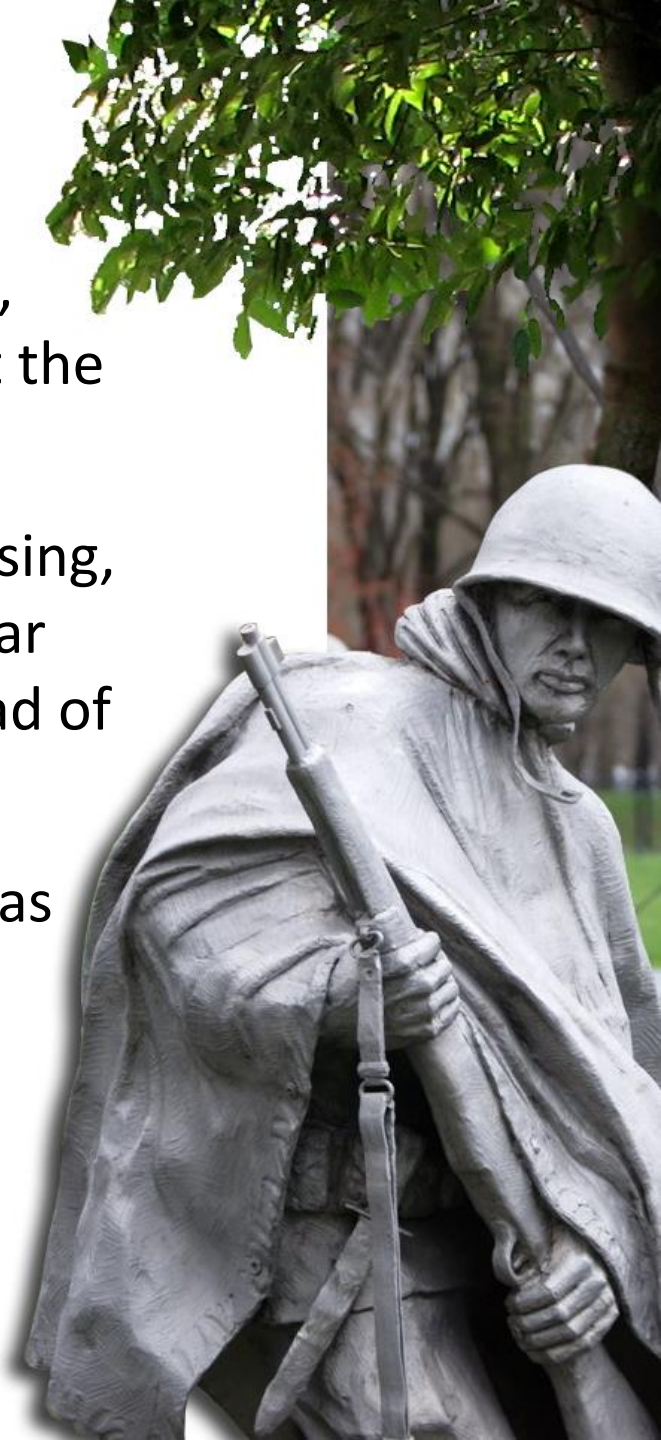
# HUNGARY - BACKGROUND

They took all those promises literally. If they hadn't, they never would have started a revolt, for they knew they never had a chance against the whole Soviet army.

It became clear to Khrushchev, during the uprising, that his understanding of deStalinization was far apart from the understanding other nations had of it.



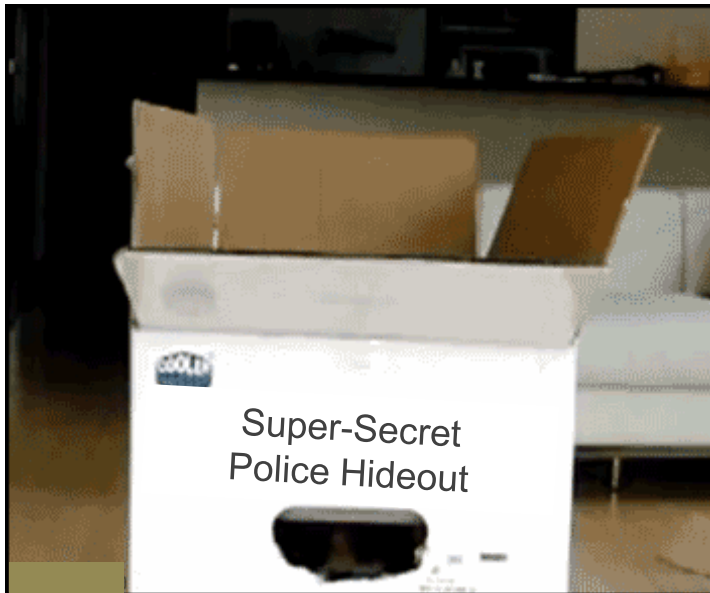
He decided it was time to use the stick this time, and not the carrot.



# HUNGARY - HOW

The head of the communist party was Imre Nagy, and he began to introduce some reforms:

- Less police surveillance
- More available consumer goods
- The withdrawing from collective farms for peasants



# HUNGARY - HOW

Moscow hated the last one, so they got rid of him and put in a hardliner - Gero.

Freedoms were gone, and repression began again.

People began protesting in the streets, encouraged by Poland, and American promises on the radio.

As a result, police fired on the crowds.



# HUNGARY - HOW

The army, Hungarian troops, went to the side of the protestors when the masses came out.

For the moment, the Soviets had lost all their control over Hungary.



*They'll be back...*



## HUNGARY - HOW

The Soviets quickly brought back Nagy, hoping he would become a middle-road guy like Gomulka. He didn't want to.

In fact, Nagy took it further, telling Hungary to become neutral, and no longer be part of any Soviet pact.



# HUNGARY - HOW

Khrushchev knew that if Hungary got that, then the rest would demand that as well. There was no way he would let that happen.

Soviets retreated to think things over, and to think about what they felt the USA would do. The Hungarians believed they won.

Suddenly, two days later, there's a war going on in Egypt between Israel, France, Britain and all the Arab nations.





## HUNGARY - HOW

The world's attention was drawn over there. The Soviets drove into Hungary a few days later with tanks and troops.

The Hungarians fought bravely, but they had no chance of winning. 3000 of them died and 200,000 fled for the West.



Nagy was found, arrested and shot.

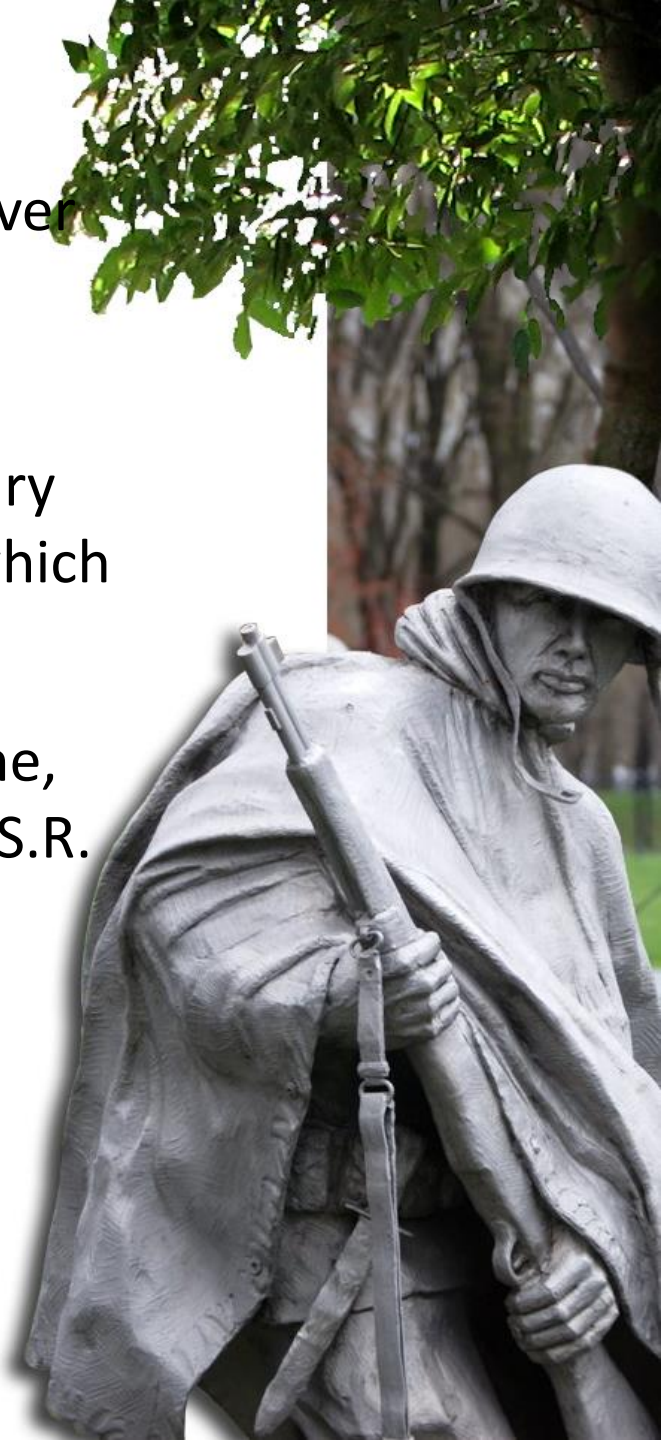


## WHERE'S AMERICA?

All the Americans did was protest. Hungary never forgave the USA for breaking their promises to help.

However...America had never promised Hungary anything directly, it was just over the radio... which is a big difference.

Hungary became a direct Soviet-controlled zone, right by the U.S.S.R. Unlike Korea, it was not somewhere far removed from both powers.



# WHERE'S AMERICA?

Unlike Korea...it didn't have American troops there. Unlike Korea...it didn't have once-removed soldiers fighting there.

The USA would have to enter Soviet held territory and attack the Soviet troops directly.

There was no way America would take that chance and risk World War III.

However, in the 1980's under Reagan, the USA would help the Hungarians get free.



Video:

The Hungarian Uprising

