

University of Pardubice

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Forgotten War: American Reflections on the Korean War

Hedvika Pohlová

Bachelor Thesis

2019

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Akademický rok: 2017/2018

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE (PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Hedvika Pohlová**  
Osobní číslo: **H16219**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**  
Název tématu: **Forgotten War: americká reflexe korejské války**  
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Studentka se ve své bakalářské práci bude věnovat kulturní reflexi korejské války ve vybraných dílech americké literatury a v jejich filmových adaptacích. V teoretické části osvětlí problematiku vztahu mezi Spojenými státy americkými a Korejským poloostrovem, politikou a společenskou atmosférou poválečných padesátých let v USA a charakterizuje americkou rétoriku a účelovou prezentaci korejského konfliktu veřejnosti.

Praktická část práce pak bude věnovaná třem vybraným literárním/filmovým dílům věnujícím se tématu korejské války. Konkrétně se bude jednat o romány *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1953) a *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) a jejich filmové adaptace. V kontrastu pak bude třetí román *The Martyred* (1964) od autora korejského původu oponující simplifikovanému narativu studené války.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování bakalářské práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

- Wiltz, John E. The Korean War and American Society. In: The Wilson Quarterly (1976-) Vol. 2, No. 3 (Summer, 1978), pp. 127-13.
- Casey, S. Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States. Oxford University Press, 2010.
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- Lentz, Robert J. Korean War filmography : 91 English language features through 2000. McFarland, 2008.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Michal Kleprlík, Ph.D.**  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2018**  
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2019**



prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.  
děkan



Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.  
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2018

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## **Poděkování**

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala Mgr. Michalu Kleprlíkovi, Ph.D. za cenné připomínky a odborné rady, a především trpělivost s jakou poskytoval vedení této bakalářské práce.

## **ANNOTATION**

The presented thesis examines the American cultural reflections on the Korean War in selected novels and their movie adaptations. The first theoretical chapter provides a historical and political context of the Korean War explaining the developments leading to the conflict and then the conflict itself. The second chapter then discusses the American Cold War policy relevant to the Korean War, the politics of the U.S. involvement, and finally the public attitudes toward the conflict. The analytical part that follows explores the depiction of the Korean War in *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* by James A. Michener, *The Manchurian Candidate* by Richard Condon, and *The Martyred* by Richard E. Kim.

## **KEYWORDS**

Korean War, U.S.A., cultural reflection, American literature

## **NÁZEV**

Forgotten War: americká reflexe korejské války

## **ANOTACE**

Předložená práce zkoumá americkou kulturní reflexi korejské války ve vybraných dílech americké literatury a v jejich filmových adaptacích. První kapitola teoretické části se věnuje historickému a politickému kontextu korejské války a osvětluje události vedoucí ke konfliktu a následně konflikt samotný. Druhá teoretická kapitola se zabývá americkou politikou v době studené války, která ovlivnila korejskou válku, politickými okolnostmi americké účasti v konfliktu a nakonec postojem americké veřejnosti ke korejské válce. Následující praktická část se věnuje zobrazení korejské války v *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* od Jamese A. Michenera, v *The Manchurian Candidate* od Richarda Condon a v *The Martyred* od Richarda E. Kima.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

korejská válka, U.S.A., kulturní reflexe, americká literatura

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

DPRK – Democratic People's Republic of Korea

KPA – Korean People's Army

POW – prisoner of war

ROK – Republic of Korea

U.S.A. / U.S. – United States of America / United States

U.S.S.R. – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

UN – United Nations

UNC – United Nations Command

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNTCOK – United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea

## INTRODUCTION

The presented bachelor thesis deals with the Korean War from the American perspective and its cultural representation in three selected novels: *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* by James A. Michener, *The Manchurian Candidate* by Richard Condon, and *The Martyred* by Richard E. Kim. In the case of the first two novels listed, their movie versions are also briefly discussed and compared with the original literary works to determine whether they align with the narrative set by the novels. Richard E. Kim's novel *The Martyred* written originally in English was also adapted for the screen by Korean director Yu Hyeon-mok under the title *Sungyoja*, which is a direct Korean translation of *The Martyred*. Unfortunately, even after contacting the Korean Film Archive, the access to the *Sungyoja* movie was not obtained and, thus, the film version is not examined in this paper.

The title of the thesis features the term *Forgotten War* that was first used as soon as in 1951, the first year of the War, when a U.S. newspaper pointed out the domestic indifference to the War and the men fighting it.<sup>1</sup> At present, the *Forgotten War* nickname refers to the way the Korean War is discussed, or rather neglected, as a part of the American Cold War history and collective national consciousness. The lack of attention that is given to the Korean War was observed even during the process of preliminary research for this thesis as some topics and areas of the Korean conflict were found understudied with a relatively small number of resources available. Therefore, it is expected that the literature analyzed in the practical part will to a certain level support this notion of the Korean War as being forgotten. As one of the novels is written by a Korean American, it is likely to contrast with the works of the two other American authors.

The theoretical part of the thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the historical and political context of the Korean War and is further divided into three subchapters. The first subchapter is dedicated to the situation on the Korean Peninsula prior to 1945. It briefly discusses the isolationist tendencies in Korea and the external pressures of other countries and then provides important information about the Japanese colonial rule over Korea. The next subchapter deals with the liberation of the Korean Peninsula after the end

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Darda, *Empire of Defense: Race and the Cultural Politics of Permanent War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 28.

of World War II that led to the country's division into the Soviet and the U.S. occupational zone. Following the post-war division, the section explains the formation of the two separate Korean states. The last subchapter constitutes a crucial part of the historical overview as it covers the Korean War itself. Essential information about the conflict is provided and the War development and main events are discussed. The subchapter examines the Korean War and its significance in the Cold War era with the focus on the role the U.S. played in the conflict and the way they influenced the course of the War. In the first chapter of the theoretical part, the paper works with the author's knowledge accumulated throughout the course of pursuing a bachelor's degree in Korean studies at the Charles University in Prague. Such is the case mostly in the subchapter 1.1 as this section provides a highly generalized overview of the situation on the Peninsula prior to 1945. For further information on Korean history before 1945, it is recommended to consult Lee and Carter<sup>2</sup>. For insight on modern history, Cumings is more suited.<sup>3</sup>

The second theoretical chapter deals with the American involvement in the Korean War, its political background and the public attitudes to the conflict. In the first subchapter, the U.S. Cold War policies related to the Korean War are discussed. It explains the development of the U.S. approach to the Cold War era until 1950 discussing how the policy militarized and the American interests expanded from Europe to other parts of the world. The next subchapter examines the decisions and motivations behind the American involvement in the conflict and the U.S. operation under the United Nations Command. The last part of the chapter discusses the official rhetoric of the Korean conflict that was used by the U.S. administration and it also briefly covers the domestic anti-communist sentiments including the influence of McCarthyism. Then the text moves on to the public attitudes toward the Korean War. The section quantifies the public support using polls conducted among Americans during the Korean conflict and then compares it to the public opinion regarding the Vietnam War-

Following the theoretical part, the selected novels and their movie adaptations are analyzed. The analyses of the books focus on the way each author depicts the Korean conflict and deals with the topic. The section examines the general narrative and message of the novels

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<sup>2</sup> Carter J. Eckert et al., *Korea: Old and New History* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

regarding the Korean War. In the case of *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, their movie versions are also analyzed with the aim to compare their treatment of the topic of the Korean War with the literary works and determine whether the representation of the conflict and the main narrative remain the same. The results of the three analyses are then compared and discussed in the concluding part of the thesis.

# **1 KOREAN WAR – HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT**

## **1.1 Situation on the Korean Peninsula Before 1945**

Although there were times when the Korean Peninsula was a stable unified and sovereign territory, in the history of the Korean nation, the fight for its independence has always been a paramount and recurring theme.

When Koreans experienced invasions by the Japanese and Manchus in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, a policy of isolation from foreign influences was adopted as a protective measure. The witnessing of Opium Wars<sup>4</sup> and the effect it had on China led to even further strengthening of the isolation policy and Korea became to be known as the Hermit Kingdom<sup>5</sup>. The ruling elite of the country resisted pursuits of modernization and penetration of foreign influences with the aim to conserve the traditional social order and values.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Korea became a target of Western powers' economic interests. Although the first few foreign attempts to open Korea to international trade were not successful, in the 1870s the Japanese took advantage of the changing Korean political climate and situation and successfully pressured Korea into signing the unequal Treaty of Ganghwa Island<sup>6</sup> in 1876 in which the Japanese were granted more rights than Koreans. The 1876 treaty ultimately opened Korea to the world as treaties with other countries followed. Moreover, it paved the way for the Japanese aspirations to influence and dominate Korea.

In the following years, the Korean kingdom was troubled by both the internal political instability and external pressures of the countries competing for the influence over the Peninsula. The powers that were the most prominent in their influence were China, Japan, and later Russia. Domestic political struggles along with clashing interests of the above-mentioned countries gave rise to the First Sino-Japanese War (1894 – 1895) and the Russo-Japanese War

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<sup>4</sup> 19th century wars between the Chinese and the British regarding the import of opium to China. The Chinese lost the wars resulting in the adoption of unequal treaties that among other stipulated that they had to give up Hong Kong.

<sup>5</sup> A term that is at this time used to refer to the North Korean state as well.

<sup>6</sup> Also known as the Japan-Korea Treaty of Amity.

(1904 – 1905) that both ended in the Japanese victory. With rivaling foreign forces eliminated, the Empire of Japan could push forward its plans to subjugate Korea.

As seen from the previous paragraphs, Japan continuously exerted pressure on Korea and strengthened its influence and presence on the Peninsula. In November 1905, the Japanese reinforced their position by coercing Koreans into signing a protectorate treaty resulting in the inevitable loss of the Korean sovereignty. Although Koreans made requests for international support in the matter, they were not heard and the Korean territory was ultimately annexed by the Japanese on August 22, 1910. With the annexation treaty of 1910, Korea officially became a Japanese territory and the nation was under colonial rule until the Japanese surrendered in World War II on August 15, 1945.

The era of the Japanese occupation was a hard time for the Korean nation. Although Korea rapidly modernized and industrialized during that time, it was only to benefit the Japanese empire. The Japanese policy toward Korea was harsh and oppressive and the only time the colonial rule relaxed was when the Japanese needed to address rising nationalism and unrest among Koreans. Ultimately, cultural assimilation and forced Japanization of Koreans was implemented and the Korean identity was suppressed with the aim to be eliminated completely.

The Korean land and people were exploited especially after Japan joined World War II and the Korean Peninsula became an important economic and strategic base. Korea was forced to support Japanese people and warfare with its resources and workforce. During the war, Korean workers were involuntarily moved to provide labor where needed. Some of the Korean men were drafted to fight for the Japanese Empire and women were recruited to work in officially operated brothels for Japanese soldiers<sup>7</sup>.

As a result of the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945, the Korean nation had to cope with oppression and loss of independence. Most Koreans struggled under the Japanese colonial rule, however, some decided to cooperate with the Japanese and such collaborations have always been a bitter and taboo topic in the Korean society. There were also members of the Korean intellectual elite out of which most left the Peninsula soon after the

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<sup>7</sup> Such women are known as Comfort Women.

annexation to fight for Korean independence from abroad. Nonetheless, the opposition to the Japanese occupation was strong both among the Koreans in exile as well as at home. However, the Korean resistance and fight for independence were soon weakened by a rift between the left-leaning and right-leaning Koreans, a clash that continued even after the liberation of the Korean Peninsula and was even more exacerbated by the influence of Soviets on one hand and Americans on the other.

## **1.2 Liberation of Korea and the Division of the Korean Peninsula**

The Japanese colonial rule in Korea ended only after the Japanese Empire surrendered in World War II on August 15, 1945. However, the victory of allies and the liberation from the Japanese did not help Koreans regain their independence as they were not given a chance to decide the future of their own nation. When World War II ended, Korea fell into the hands of superpowers that ultimately determined its fate.

Although Korea was not of much interest to the United States before, after the Japanese capitulation and at the dawn of creating a new post-war world order, Americans had to re-evaluate their approach. Since they recognized the strategic significance the Korean territory had for the U.S.S.R., Korea immediately became a matter of urgent concern. The Americans feared the exclusive Russian control of the Korean Peninsula, however, they also knew that the Red Army would be able to liberate the territory much sooner than the U.S. troops. Thus, they decided to propose a division of the Peninsula into two occupational zones. Colonels C. H. Bonesteel and D. Rusk were assigned to design a geographic line that would divide the Peninsula. As Barry explains, the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was decided upon as it was at the time considered a line that the Soviets might be willing to accept, while it was also a line that could be realistically reached by the U.S. troops had Stalin not agreed to stop there.<sup>8</sup> To the surprise of many, the Soviets accepted the proposal and the two occupational zones were established.

While the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were making arrangements and strategic plans regarding the liberation, with the Japanese defeated, the Korean nation was in a state of euphoria envisioning a bright future and longed-for independence. Koreans started politically organizing

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<sup>8</sup> Mark P. Barry, "The U.S. and the 1945 Division of Korea: Mismanaging the 'Big Decisions'," *International Journal on World Peace* 29, no. 4 (2012): 44-49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24543683>.

creating locally governing bodies that took over the colonial administration and in September 1945, they announced the formation of the People's Republic of Korea. However, Korean efforts to become an independent country were fruitless as the decision of the path Korea would take after World War II was not to be made by them. In the southern part of the Peninsula, the Americans outlawed the People's Republic of Korea after their arrival regarding Koreans as pro-Russian and pro-communist. Meanwhile, in the Soviet occupational zone, the governing structure created by Koreans was used as a basis for the future provisional government.<sup>9</sup>

The question of the Korean territory and its independence was brought up several times during World War II. The common view was that Koreans were not ready to form an independent self-governing state and that the superpowers were supposed to guide and prepare Korea for future independence. The final proposition and the agreed steps to be taken in the matter were defined at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945. The foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union agreed on the establishment of the United States-Soviet Joint Commission that would help in the process of the formation of the Provisional Korean Government. Moreover, a four-power trusteeship (the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China) lasting up to five years was suggested.<sup>10</sup>

However, neither the creation of the Provisional Korean Government nor the four-power trusteeship was achieved. As Shin argues in his work on the decision process of the trusteeship in Korea, the trusteeship was to be only an imperfect tool that would allow both countries to have their share of the Peninsula with the international approval and prevent an exclusive dominance of one power. He points out that since the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. prioritized their policy over the welfare of the Korean nation, the trusteeship was impossible from the start as it meant that the two superpowers would have to compromise and agree on the issue completely.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the reality of the post-war situation was different and the American-Soviet communication far from cooperative and willing to compromise. The increasingly hostile relationship of the

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<sup>9</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution: 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 47-57.

<sup>10</sup> "A Decade of American Foreign Policy 1941-1949 - Interim Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Moscow," Yale Law School, accessed April 23, 2019, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/decade19.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade19.asp).

<sup>11</sup> Bok-Ryong Shin, "The Decision Process of the Trusteeship in Korea, 1945-1946: Focusing on the Change of U.S. Ideas," *Pacific Focus* 19, no. 1 (2004). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1976-5118.2004.tb00306.x>.

U.S. and U.S.S.R. hindered efforts to create a unified Korean territory and government and the division of the Peninsula seemed inevitable.

Instead of joining efforts with the other side, the two occupational zones went in its own direction following the lead of the superpowers. In the South, the Americans saw the potential future leader in a nationalist Syngman Rhee that returned to Korea from the exile. He was a perfect candidate for their cause as he spent most of his adult life in the U.S. and was a fierce anti-communist. He was a very active figure in the diplomatic fight for independence and he was a Prime Minister of the Korean government-in-exile established in Shanghai during the Japanese colonial rule. Meanwhile, in the Northern zone, the emerging figure backed up by the Soviets was also a returning Korean Kim Il-sung, a former Communist guerilla fighter against the Japanese in Manchuria. With the right people in the right places, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. could easily influence the development in each respective zone. As a result, their actions materialized the Cold War rhetoric in Korea.

The tensions of the Cold War heightened and neither superpower was willing to give in and share power, which affected the Korean Peninsula greatly. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were not able to agree on the Korean issue and the Joint Commission set up at the Moscow conference was not working properly. As there was no progress and no agreement between the two powers, the U.S. decided to present the issue to the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations took over the matter. Pak's work discussing Korea and the United Nations covers the Korean question in the UN in detail. In November 1947, the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) was established with the aim to oversee general democratic elections on the Korean Peninsula that would lead to an independent government. As the North and the U.S.S.R. opposed the supervised elections and the UNTCOK was denied entry to the zone, the elections were held only in the southern part of the Peninsula on May 10, 1948. Following the elections, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established on August 15, 1948, with Syngman Rhee as the first South Korean president and recognized as the only legitimate government on the Peninsula by the UN. The answer of the North to this development was to hold their own elections and declare the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with Kim Il-sung being the Prime Minister on September 9, 1948.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Chi-Young Pak, *Korea and the United Nations* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 3-11.

### 1.3 Korean War 1950 – 1953

With the establishment of the two separate states on the Korean Peninsula, the Korean issue was not resolved to either side's satisfaction. The tense atmosphere of the Cold War waged between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was omnipresent and heavily influenced the internal affairs of both Korean states. In the South, an oppressive system led by the anti-communist and authoritarian president Syngman Rhee was established, while in the North, a totalitarian socialist state under the leadership of Communist Kim Il-sung emerged. Moreover, both states claimed to have legitimate authority over the Korean Peninsula. Owing first to the fact that the Korean nation was denied self-governance and independence after the liberation and later to the reality of the division and the Cold War, the Korean future was predestined to be unfortunate. As both the international and domestic hostility escalated, a conflict on the Korean Peninsula was imminent.

In the few years following the liberation and the division of the Korean territory into two states, part of the population migrated between the two zones based on ideological sympathies or socio-economic and political status to avoid repressions. On the Peninsula, the two Korean zones were just as polarized as the rest of the post-war world. As Cumings describes, clashes of armies provoked by both sides were frequent along the dividing 38<sup>th</sup> parallel reaching their peak in 1949. Moreover, Communist guerilla fighters were present in the southern zone causing rebellions with the aim to induce a revolution.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee, the leaders of the two Korean states, were both contemplating reunification of the territory. As it was clear that the diplomacy was not an answer anymore, the only possibility was to use force. The two Korean leaders were eager to make a move and start a conflict that would allow taking over the other zone but neither of them had permission nor military support of his allies. However, Kim Il-sung was persistent and after multiple futile attempts to persuade Stalin and after he had won over the support and commitment of Mao Zedong, he finally obtained permission to attack South Korea.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Koreas Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2005), 243-254.

<sup>14</sup> The reasons as to why Stalin changed his mind and decided to give his consent to the offensive are still subject to discussions. However, a great importance in the matter has always been assigned to the 1950 Dean Acheson's, the Secretary of State, speech that excluded Korea from the U.S. defensive perimeter in Asia. Dean Acheson,

With the Soviet approval and material support, the offensive was launched and the DPRK army crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel on June 25, 1950. The initial attack was successful, as the South Korean army was much weaker and ill-equipped and the U.S. withdrew its troops from Korea back in 1949. As Sandler describes, although some had warned about the possibility of the attack, Washington had not attached any significance to such claims. Therefore, both the U.S. administration as well as the South Korean army were unprepared for the North Korean strike. Even the first reports on the full-scale North Korean aggression were regarded as rumors and as one of the common unimportant skirmishes between the DPRK and ROK armies along the border.<sup>15</sup> As a result, North Koreans quickly moved forward through the southern zone of the Korean Peninsula managing to capture the capital Seoul within three days and advancing further south. By the end of August nearly the whole territory of the Peninsula, with the exception of a small area of the Busan Perimeter, was under the control of the North Korean army as depicted on the Korean War stages map in the appendix.

The North Korean aggression that took the Americans by surprise and the rapid advance of the DPRK army forced the U.S. to act quickly. Although the North and the Soviets did not seem to think the Americans would intervene in Korea, the U.S. administration saw the North Korean offensive as a Communist invasion rather than a civil conflict. Truman felt the pressure to support South Korea and show the U.S. commitment to fight Communism and prevent its expansion. At the same time, however, he needed to prevent any possible escalation into a conflict between the superpowers.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, he used the United Nations as a platform through which the U.S. could demonstrate their interests and intervene safely. Edwards follows the development in his *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War*. On the day of the DPRK attack, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held a meeting and agreed on labeling the DPRK as an aggressor calling for the withdrawal of the North Korean forces from the South Korean territory. Since the North Korean leadership did not respect the resolution, at another UNSC meeting two days later, it was proposed that the member states should provide support to the ROK. Finally, on July 7<sup>th</sup>, the United Nations Command was established unifying all forces of

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"Speech on the Far East" (speech, National Press Club, January 12, 1950), accessed May 8, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1950-01-12.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley Sandler, *Korean War: An Interpretative History* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 47-50.

<sup>16</sup> With the same concerns in mind, the U.S.S.R. was not officially involved in the conflict and Stalin did not provide armed support to Kim Il-sung.

the UN member states on the Korean Peninsula under one flag. The U.S. was given control over the unified UN forces and General Douglas MacArthur was appointed as a commander. Due to the U.S.S.R. boycotting the UNSC since January as a reaction to China being represented by the Republic of China<sup>17</sup> instead of the People's Republic of China<sup>18</sup>, the Soviet representative was absent at the meetings and could not veto the resolutions.<sup>19</sup>

With the UNSC resolutions in place, the U.S. could now act as a mere UN executor. Although Truman had authorized the dispatch of the geographically close U.S. forces to Korea soon after the attack, the troops were not able to retaliate and push the North Koreans back. However, they were successful in slowing down the North Korean army and playing for time. While the allied forces were driven further south ultimately fighting to keep control at least over the established Busan Perimeter<sup>20</sup>, more UN soldiers kept disembarking in Busan and MacArthur started planning the surprising Incheon landing.<sup>21</sup> Both the location of the Busan Perimeter and Incheon can be seen on the Korean War stages map in the appendix. The Incheon landing was a decisive UN military action. As Stueck describes, many doubted the feasibility of the landing mainly owing to the geographical and natural conditions. However, the Incheon landing was ultimately approved and carried out on September 15, 1950. The action was successful and on September 28, Seoul was recaptured by the UN forces. The MacArthur's surprise attack along with the North Korean army weakened by the ongoing fights allowed the UN soldiers built up on south break out of the Busan Perimeter and advance to join the landed forces. Eventually, as a result of the Incheon landing, the UN forces recaptured the whole South Korean territory.<sup>22</sup>

With the UN forces approaching the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the triumph of the Incheon landing and the successful counteroffensive made the thought of crossing the pre-war border tempting. Truman decided to take advantage of the situation and attempt to unify the Korean territory. According to Pembroke, the U.S. administration authorized MacArthur to cross the parallel

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<sup>17</sup> Chinese nationalist government that was driven to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil War.

<sup>18</sup> Chinese communist government controlling the Mainland China.

<sup>19</sup> Paul M. Edwards, *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 298-307.

<sup>20</sup> Holding the Busan Perimeter was crucial as Busan was, and still is, the largest port of South Korea and, therefore, was used as the gateway through which supplies and troops arrived.

<sup>21</sup> Carter Malkasian, *The Korean War 1950-1953* (Oxford: Osprey, 2001), 23-24.

<sup>22</sup> William Whitney Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 85-87.

without seeking international approval. However, due to the British urging discussions on the issue, the U.S. had to take the question of crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to the UN. This time, it was decided to use the General Assembly as the Soviet representative was back in the Security Council. The proposal made to the UN by the Americans was rather loose allowing for multiple interpretations, which secured its success. In the U.S., MacArthur was given a free hand regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula unless there would be serious signs of the PRC or U.S.S.R. wanting to intervene. However, MacArthur's eagerness made him ignore the open threats and warnings of China. After he ordered the troops to cross the parallel, the North Korean capital was captured on October 20, 1950, and the UN forces kept pushing north towards the Yalu River bordering with China.<sup>23</sup> The situation is indicated on the Korean War map in the appendix.

As the Chinese warnings were not heard and the UN forces invaded the North Korean territory advancing closer and closer to the Chinese border, the PCR leaders decided to act and deploy Chinese troops to Korea. To avoid the official involvement in the War and prevent any international escalation, the troops were organized under the so-called Chinese People's Volunteers. Although the Chinese volunteers entered North Korea much sooner, their most significant engagement was within their Second Phase Offensive starting on November 25, 1950, when they forced the UN soldiers to retreat from the North Korean territory. Later, they once again captured the South Korean capital.<sup>24</sup> However, as the Chinese soldiers moved further away from the Chinese border, they started to run out of supplies. Moreover, a new commander of the Eighth Army, Lieutenant-General Matthew Ridgway, was appointed and significantly raised the spirit among the US troops. He was a pragmatic man and instead of unwisely pushing for an expansion, his main objective was to defend the UN held territory and weaken the enemy while not losing his men. Under the Ridgway's command, Seoul was taken back on March 14, 1951, and the UN troops arrived at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel where soon, in the mid-July 1951, the fighting reached a stalemate lasting until 1953.<sup>25</sup> Both, the situation after the involvement of the Chinese Volunteers and the stalemate frontline are illustrated on the Korean War map in the appendix.

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Pembroke, *Korea: Where the American Century Began* (Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books, 2018), 72-82.

<sup>24</sup> Malkasian, *The Korean War*, 32-36, 39-40.

<sup>25</sup> Malkasian, *The Korean War*, 38-46.

With the Chinese People's Volunteers joining the Korean War and pushing the UN forces more and more south, the U.S. decision-makers recognized that pressing a complete unification of the Korean Peninsula by military means was dangerous as it might trigger the escalation of the conflict and the involvement of the Soviet Union. However, the strategy of caution and limited war did not align with the UN commander MacArthur's views. As Sandler explains, MacArthur pushed for the expansion of the War to the Chinese territory and, as such move had not been authorized, he criticized Washington for its policy and made provocative statements and self-serving interpretations regarding the U.S. policy. With his rhetoric and actions, not only he was challenging the President, but he was also preventing any possible armistice negotiations. As a result, Truman decided to relieve MacArthur of his command and Ridgway was appointed in his place on April 11, 1951.<sup>26</sup>

Following the stalemate on the Korean Peninsula, the truce negotiations started in July 1951. The negotiations went on and off for the next two years, during which time the battlefield remained nearly the same close to the original border of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. As Matray describes, the first issue to settle was the location of the demarcation line. While the Chinese and North Koreans wanted to adhere to the original 38<sup>th</sup> parallel set in 1945, the U.S. under the United Nations Command (UNC) unreasonably proposed a line much deeper in the northern territory. In the end, the two sides agreed to create a demarcation line based on the current line of contact.<sup>27</sup> With the demarcation line resolved, an agreement was reached on nearly all other matters except for the Prisoners of War (POWs) question. The POW issue prolonged the negotiations for more than a year as the UNC opposed the Communist demands to follow the Geneva Convention and repatriate the POWs insisting on voluntary repatriation. In November 1952, Eisenhower was elected the U.S. President and later took the office. He threatened to escalate the War and even proclaimed the U.S. might use atomic weapons. He also intensified the bombing of the North Korean territory. Meanwhile, as Stalin died on March 5, 1953, the pressure was relieved from the Chinese and North Korean Communists. As both parties were exhausted by the War and wanted to end the conflict, a compromise on the POW issue was

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<sup>26</sup> Sandler, *Korean War*, 135-139.

<sup>27</sup> James Irving Matray, *Korea Divided: The 38th Parallel and the Demilitarized Zone* (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House, 2005), 90-96.

reached and the establishment of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was agreed. Finally, the armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953.<sup>28</sup>

The Korean War that ended in the armistice in 1953 left the two Korean states technically still at war. The conflict was a materialization of the Cold War polarization of the world and the Korean Peninsula became a battleground for the U.S. operating under the UN flag and Soviet and Chinese Communists. After the initial aggression of North Korea, the UN forces intervened and in three months reached its original objective to push the North Korean army out of the South Korean territory. Instead of stopping the conflict there, however, the American eagerness to show its superiority resulted in a three-year-long war that took many lives and destroyed the Korean territory. Sadly, the War did not lead to the unification of the Peninsula. In fact, the border between South and North Korea remained nearly the same and the conflict only confirmed and deepened the division of the Korean nation.

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<sup>28</sup> Malkasian, *The Korean War*, 71, 82-87.

## **2 AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT – COLD WAR CONTEXT, KOREAN WAR POLICY, OFFICIAL RHETORIC, AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES**

### **2.1 U.S. Cold War Policy until 1950**

After World War II ended, and to some extent even before that when the superpowers discussed the future of the post-war world, a new war took shape in the hands of the Western powers (the U.S. in particular) and the U.S.S.R. A clash of interests and a fight for dominance all around the world characterized the post-war period known as the Cold War. It was an international conflict during which both sides strived to expand their influence and ideologies while avoiding its escalation into a direct military confrontation, hence the term “cold”. However, in some regions, this cold war turned hot indeed and the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. dueled in their proxy wars. Still, the main battlefield of the two countries remained political and diplomatic. The U.S. worried about the Communist ideology and Soviet influence spreading throughout the world damaged by World War II that was at that time more vulnerable than ever. Therefore, the American decision-makers adopted a strategy of containment that was to stop and prevent the expansion of Communism.

The first U.S. post-war president Harry S. Truman was determined to fight the Soviet power and not to make any concessions. Early during his presidency, the foundation of the containment policy and stance toward the U.S.S.R. was defined by the American charge d'affaires in Moscow George Kennan. In his Long Telegram sent to Washington in 1946, he offered his analysis of the Soviet post-war mindset and characteristics of their approach to the bipolarized new world-order. He also suggested the appropriate steps that should be taken when countering the Soviets. Kennan referred to the Soviet issue as the greatest task the U.S. diplomacy had to face up until then. He stated that the Soviets did not consider the coexistence of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as attainable and that their goal was to destroy capitalist societies. He argued that displaying a determination and strong resistance would make the Soviets retreat. Furthermore, Kennan emphasized that the success or fail of the Communist expansion was

determined by the overall health of the society it targeted describing the ideology as a “malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue”.<sup>29</sup>

The containment policy aiming to stop the Soviet expansion was officially given form with the Truman Doctrine. As Foner describes, in 1947, Britain announced that it could no longer support the Greek government in its fight against Communist guerilla fighters in a local civil war. Moreover, the halt in assistance also applied to the neighboring Turkey that was pressured by the Soviets interested in the Turkish Straits. With its withdrawal, Britain urged the Americans to take over its role and provide aid for the governments in question. The alarmed Truman administration then set on a mission to gain both congressional and popular support in the matter. When Truman addressed the issue in Congress on March 12, 1947, he stressed the moral obligation of the U.S. to help weaker nations whose freedom was threatened by Communism. As such, in his speech later known as the Truman Doctrine, he extended the U.S. commitment to fight Communism from Greece and Turkey specifically to any other part of the world (although at that time the primary Cold War concern was Europe).<sup>30</sup> With the support of Congress, Truman Doctrine officially announced the era of the containment policy and the assistance provided to the Greek and Turkish governments set a precedent for future American interventions aiming to combat Communist influence in the post-war world.

Building on the approach defined by Kennan and complementing the Truman Doctrine was the Marshall Plan. As Truman Doctrine was inherently about containing Communism, the Marshall Plan regarded more to spreading capitalism. It addressed the European economic instability and broken security that the Americans believed, as argued by Kennan before, made the European countries vulnerable and susceptible to fall to the Communist ideology. As McNeese explains, the Marshall plan, officially called the European Recovery Program, was a proposed solution to the economic problems plaguing Europe that was drained by World War II. The plan first announced by the Secretary of State George Marshall in his speech in 1947 was officially approved by Congress in April 1948 and guaranteed financial and material assistance to the European states that had applied for it. The offer had been made to the U.S.S.R.

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<sup>29</sup> “Telegram of George Kennan to George Marshall from February 22, 1946” (Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers.), accessed May 1, 2019, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 953-954.

and its satellite states as well, however, out of fear of their economy being controlled by the U.S., the Soviets refused and prevented other Eastern Bloc countries from applying. In the end, seventeen countries participated and received the aid under the Marshall Plan.<sup>31</sup> The revival and stabilization of the European economy, the U.S. policy-makers believed, would minimize the influence of Communism, spread capitalist values, and strengthen the American significance as it tied the participating states to the U.S. economy. Such presuppositions proved to be true to a great extent and the Marshall Plan marked the start of a deeper ideological and economic division between the Western and Eastern countries.

In the first few years of the Cold War, the U.S. focused their attention almost solely on the situation in Europe using non-military means to contain Soviet influence. However, the development in 1949 and 1950 made them reevaluate their existing approach. In 1949, the Soviets successfully detonated their first atomic bomb, which caused uneasiness among the Americans. Although they knew the U.S.S.R. was working on the bomb, no one suspected the Soviets would be able to complete it in such a short time. Moreover, the Chinese civil war that resumed after the liberation from the Japanese ended in the victory of the Chinese Communists led by Mao Zedong who seized control over Mainland China. As a result, the Chinese nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek supported by the U.S. administration were forced to retreat to Taiwan.<sup>32</sup> The Soviet possession of the atomic bomb and the Chinese mainland being controlled by a Communist government made the U.S. administration question the existing Cold War policy and its effectiveness.

As a result of the above-mentioned events, a new concept of the Cold War policy was introduced in the National Security Council's document NSC-68 in 1950. According to Ojserkis, the NSC-68 called for extensive defense spending and military build-up that would deter and, if needed, defeat the Soviets. In fact, the document proposed the current defense budget should be nearly tripled. Although the Truman administration was at first reluctant considering the costs, the NSC-68 was swiftly approved after the North Korean Communist

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<sup>31</sup> Tim McNeese, *The Cold War and Postwar America, 1946-1963* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2010), 24-25.

<sup>32</sup> Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 102-105.

aggression.<sup>33</sup> With the NSC-68 in place, the Cold War diplomacy ultimately militarized. Moreover, fearing the domino effect after the ideological loss in China, the Cold War battlefield expanded and the decision to intervene in the Korean War globalized the conflict.

## **2.2 Politics of the American Involvement in the Korean War**

It was the Korean territory where the Cold War rhetoric first turned into a full-scale military conflict of interests between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Although the two superpowers did not fight each other directly, their influence changed what might have been considered a civil clash in its essence into a prototypical Cold War proxy war. In the U.S., the Korean War helped launch a new military Cold War policy and set a precedent for the later American involvement in Asia and other parts of the world. In the end, even though the North Korean attack was repelled, the Americans did not achieve to unify the Korean Peninsula under a politically-friendly government, which was regarded as a defeat as it did not support the U.S. self-proclaimed superiority.

After the creation of the Republic of Korea in 1948, the U.S. kept supporting the local allied government. However, the US administration was not content with the situation in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. Although he initially had the American backing, Syngman Rhee was an authoritarian leader turning the republic into a police state and suppressing opposition. Moreover, he was keen to unify the Korean territory even if force had to be used. Therefore, after they withdrew their troops from the Peninsula, the Americans had to balance the provided support. On one hand, they wanted to strengthen the legitimacy of the South Korean state, while, on the other, they had to keep Rhee without the means that would enable him to attempt a forced unification. Furthermore, after World War II, the U.S. administration cut the defense budget and concentrated the resources on the American vital interests, meaning primarily Europe. Such an approach was officially underscored by the Secretary of State Dean Acheson who excluded Korea from the Asian defensive perimeter, which demonstrated its little strategic importance.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Raymond P. Ojserkis, *Beginnings of the Cold War Arms Race: The Truman Administration and the US Arms Build-up* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 64-78.

<sup>34</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 27-30.

When the DPRK attacked the South Korean territory in June 1950, the attitude of the U.S. decision-makers fundamentally changed. As Gaddis describes, the Communist aggression suddenly made Korea one of the vital interests. The Americans remembered well what the Munich decisions and the policy of appeasement had caused and they were determined not to repeat the same mistakes.<sup>35</sup> The Truman administration saw the aggression as a test of the American credibility and commitment to fight Communism, which, if failed, would cause the domino effect of other countries falling to it. Therefore, they concluded, it was necessary to show the U.S. and UN strength and determination to intervene. Although there were concerns about the extent to which the Soviets were involved and whether it could be a Soviet strategy to weaken the American presence elsewhere, inaction was not thought to be an option.<sup>36</sup>

Even though the U.S. were heavily involved in the Korean conflict and were one of the decisive powers that determined the course of the war, their involvement was framed within the UN Command. In fact, Truman committed military forces and intervened in Korea without a congressional authorization using the UN platform instead. As Blomstedt states, the administration justified such an action by the President's post of the UN commander-in-chief and historical precedent. Moreover, the demonstrated political and public support made Truman feel safe about the decision to bypass Congress.<sup>37</sup> Using the UN organization, the U.S. lowered the possibility of an escalation of the Korean conflict and reduced its commitment. Moreover, the international action carried out under the UN increased the legitimacy of this new platform. Another decision that was later controversial was the UN advance north across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. When the DPRK invaded South Korea, the U.S. and UN involvement was first referred to as being only a defensive response to the attack with the aim to restore the previous status quo. In fact, the UN intervention was described as a "police action" against the aggressor. However, when the UN forces recaptured South Korea and reached the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the decision was made to cross the border in an attempt to unify Korea under the ROK government. The Truman administration, as well as General MacArthur, was eager to take advantage of the UN forces

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<sup>35</sup> John Lewis. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 107.

<sup>36</sup> Gary R. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 18-19.

<sup>37</sup> Larry Blomstedt, *Truman, Congress, and Korea: The Politics of America's First Undeclared War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky., 2016), 31-37.

superiority. It was concluded that limiting the fighting to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel would be perceived as a weakness and that the aggression had to be punished.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, as Craig and Logevall explain, any indecisiveness and lack of determination could influence the upcoming elections. The Republicans had already blamed the administration for being soft on Communism, practicing appeasement and abandoning the Asian continent. Therefore, inaction at such time would be an open invitation to further criticism.<sup>39</sup>

After the Chinese offensive, the decision to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel proved as a miscalculation. At that time, the Truman administration saw clearly that there was not much to do except limit the War to avoid an escalation of the conflict. Still, some voices and most prominently MacArthur, a publicly loved figure, pushed for extensive commitment in Korea and beyond. However, Truman did not succumb to such pressures fearing further Chinese involvement, or worse, the intervention of the U.S.S.R. that at that time already possessed atomic weapons. As a result, the limited objective of defending the original South Korean territory was set and the Korean battlefield ultimately stabilized along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel allowing for negotiations to begin<sup>40</sup>

Apart from the Truman administration, the successive leader of the U.S. Dwight D. Eisenhower also had to deal with the Korean issue. It was actually the Korean War that helped Eisenhower win the elections. As a part of his presidential campaign, he promised he would go to Korea and make every effort to resolve the by then unpopular Korean problem.<sup>41</sup> After he was elected, Eisenhower did indeed visit the Korean Peninsula and adopted a strategy corresponding to his general New Look policy that used the atomic threat to deter Communism while relieving the pressure on the U.S. economy. As the armistice negotiations reached a dead end on the matter of the POW repatriation, Eisenhower wanted to coerce the Chinese and North Koreans into accepting the U.S. conditions and signing the armistice under the threat of a nuclear attack. However, the situation calmed down after the death of Stalin and the armistice was signed without any further escalation.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 108-110.

<sup>39</sup> Craig et al., *America's Cold War*, 118-119.

<sup>40</sup> Craig et al., *America's Cold War*, 119-120.

<sup>41</sup> Blomstedt, *Truman, Congress, and Korea*, 214,215,219.

<sup>42</sup> Pembroke, *Where the American Century Began*, 167-169.

### 2.3 Korean War Rhetoric and Public Attitudes

The Korean War was the first American proxy war of the Cold War era, which meant there was no precedent that the U.S. could learn from. Faced with the Korean crisis, the Truman administration needed to justify the U.S. and UN involvement in the eyes of the public. At that time, getting public approval for the intervention was fairly easy as the American society was generally repulsed by Communism and held dear the traditional ideals of liberty. However, as the War dragged on and the vision of a total victory and unified country freed by America kept vanishing, the support for the Korean conflict dropped significantly. During the Korean War, the U.S. society had to come to terms with a loss of idealism that was substituted by a realistic approach to the conflict reshaping what a victory in the Cold War era meant.

The ideological division of the world after World War II was reflected in domestic affairs as well. The anti-communist sentiments were high among Americans. As Foner describes, since Communists were the greatest enemy, the number one feature of any patriot was being a strong anti-communist. In fact, American society was cultivated to perceive any sympathy for Communist ideas as treason. Disgust with Communism contributed to the popularity of Republican Senator Joseph R. McCarthy who embarked on a mission to uncover Soviet spies and subversives in the U.S. At the time of the Korean War, his practice of charging people of cooperation with the enemy without proper evidence, later called McCarthyism, reached its peak.<sup>43</sup> In the 1950s, the fear spread by McCarthy undeniably shaped American society as well as the political scene of the decade. However, even before his campaign, strong anti-communist sentiments were intrinsic to the U.S. society that was trying to define its position in the post-war world.

The official rhetoric of the Korean War mirrored the general public and political moods. As Casey discusses, however, the Truman administration was reluctant to use the scare tactic and wanted to avoid extreme language. As the President himself instructed, the first coverage of the North Korean attack should not sound alarmist. First, the administration was worried about the escalation of the conflict that a poor wording and extreme language might trigger. Second, the U.S. policy-makers were not ready for an over-commitment and did not want to

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<sup>43</sup> Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 971-977.

spark national calls for an all-out war against the Communist oppressors that would put pressure on the administration. Casey also argues that the War was not portrayed in black-and-white terms and lacked a moral dimension until at least mid-1951<sup>44</sup>, however, such claims do not seem to be accurate when confronted with the official statements.

Although the language used might not have been as strong as on the side of the Republicans, the Korean War presentation was naturally framed within the Cold War context. The Truman's radio and television address on the situation in Korea from September 1950<sup>45</sup> confirms such argument when reviewed (all the quotations that follow are taken from the 1950 address and the speech can be found in the appendix). The ideological polarization of the world is emphasized when the Korean conflict is described as a "struggle between freedom and tyranny." Moreover, throughout the speech, a strong intention to differentiate between "us" and "them" representing good and evil is evident. The U.S. and UN are portrayed as those "engaged once more in the age-old struggle for human liberty" "defending with their lives the cause of freedom in the world." Meanwhile, the enemy is vaguely represented and North Korea is not directly called out as being responsible for the War suggesting its enslavement to the Soviet oppression. The enemy here is the more general "Communist imperialism" that launched a "brutal attack on the small Republic of Korea" and that "preaches peace but practices aggression." A moral dimension to the conflict is indeed present. Truman appeals to the traditional American values of freedom. In fact, throughout the speech, he uses the words free, freedom, or liberty 35 times. He highlights the common goal stating that "It is your liberty and mine which is involved." His speech stresses the moral obligation and responsibility the U.S. has as "our country has been called upon . . . to maintain peace and justice among nations" referring to the American involvement as being a "supreme duty." When Truman's later public speeches, particularly the April 1951 radio report<sup>46</sup>, are studied, the above-mention features are still present. The distinct aspect, however, is the obvious effort made to justify the sacrifices

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<sup>44</sup> Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States; 1950-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 357-367.

<sup>45</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea" (address, Broadcast from the White House, September 1, 1950), accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=861&st=&st1=>.

<sup>46</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Radio Report to the American People on Korea and on U.S. Policy in the Far East" (address, Broadcast from the White House, April 11, 1951), accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=290&st=&st1=>.

made by Americans and the decision to limit the war objectives to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel after the Chinese offensive.<sup>47</sup>

When the conflict broke out and the U.S. administration decided to intervene, 78% of Americans supported the decision according to a Gallup poll<sup>48</sup>. It is obvious that such huge support was induced by the general atmosphere in the U.S. Cold War society. Moreover, Mueller says that Americans were expecting the conflict would be short, which also influenced their support.<sup>49</sup> However, the approval rate of the U.S. involvement in the conflict dropped to only 38% in January 1951 after the Chinese joined the War and drove the UN forces south. After that, the support for the War remained rather constant fluctuating according to the then-current developments until the armistice was signed.<sup>50</sup> According to Mueller, the public opinion reflected, among other things, the society's sacrifices, which is supported by the fact that the drop in the approval for the Korean War coincided with the rising casualty rates.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Americans were asked to accept the sacrifices<sup>52</sup> while not being given the satisfaction of a total victory, which definitely contributed to the War's unpopularity.

A comparison of the Korean War and the Vietnam War public support offers interesting results. Mueller's analysis of the two Cold War conflicts shows that their initial approval rate was very similar.<sup>53</sup> While the public support for the involvement in the Vietnam War ultimately did drop below the lowest approval rate of the Korean conflict (the Korean War and the Vietnam

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<sup>47</sup> The official rhetoric is demonstrated on the statements of the Truman administration only as at the time of the Eisenhower's inauguration, the official rhetoric of the conflict was already defined. Moreover, the widely available Eisenhower's speeches concerning the Korean conflict include only the election campaign pledge and the armistice signing statement both of which are not relevant when examining the official stance on the War before its resolve.

<sup>48</sup> "The Gallup Brain: Americans and the Korean War," Gallup.com, accessed May 10, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/7741/gallup-brain-americans-korean-war.aspx>.

<sup>49</sup> John E. Mueller, "Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Vietnam," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 2 (1971): 361, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1954454>.

<sup>50</sup> Gallup.com, "Americans and the Korean War."

<sup>51</sup> Mueller, "Popular Support", 365-367.

<sup>52</sup> Even though the intervention was carried out under the UN Command, given the American interests in the Korean War, the U.S. were the most involved country out of the UN member states. Based on the data from Ross, it was calculated that the American troops constituted 90% of the UN Command forces (South Korean forces excluded from the calculation). The final number of the American casualties including wounded, missing and dead in captivity reached 137,652. Ross Gregory, *Almanacs of American Life: Cold War America, 1946 to 1990* (New York: Facts on File, 2003), 269-270.

<sup>53</sup> Mueller, "Popular Support", 365-367.

War lowest being 37%<sup>54</sup> and 29%<sup>55</sup> respectively), the two conflicts did not differ in public support as significantly as might be expected. Hamby argues that although the unpopularity levels for both wars were similar, the opposition was fundamentally different and in the case of the Vietnam conflict much more vocal. In Korea, the criticism came from the right-wing supporters disapproving of the no-win policy and lack of determination of the U.S. administration. The opposition to the Vietnam War, however, came from the Left questioning the morality of the U.S. involvement.<sup>56</sup> Hamby's words explain the distinction clearly: "Korean War protesters waved the American flag; Vietnam protesters frequently burned it."<sup>57</sup> The leftist peace movement and opposition to the American involvement in Vietnam that publicly gathered and denounced the U.S. foreign policy was a force to which an equivalent did not exist at the time of the Korean War. As a result, the Korean War was never perceived as controversial or unpopular as the Vietnam War.

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<sup>54</sup> "The Gallup Brain: Americans and the Korean War," Gallup.com, accessed May 10, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/7741/gallup-brain-americans-korean-war.aspx>.

<sup>55</sup> Tom Rosentiel, "Polling Wars: Hawks vs. Doves," Pew Research Center, accessed May 10, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2009/11/23/polling-wars-hawks-vs-doves/>.

<sup>56</sup> Alonzo L. Hamby, "Public Opinion: Korea and Vietnam," *The Wilson Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 138-141, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40255464>.

<sup>57</sup> Hamby, "Public Opinion", 138.

### 3 CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE CONFLICT – DEPICTION IN SELECTED NOVELS AND THEIR FILM ADAPTATIONS

#### 3.1 The Bridges at Toko-Ri (James A. Michener, 1953)

The Bridges at Toko-Ri is a 1953 Korean War short story by James A. Michener capturing everyday life of the U.S. Navy pilots and their dangerous mission to bomb the Toko-Ri bridges, while simultaneously following the main character's internal struggle to understand the meaning of the War. According to Belletto, The Bridges at Toko-Ri is an example of a subgenre of Korean War novels framed within the U.S.-communists rivalry focusing on the phenomenon of jet warfare.<sup>58</sup> The overall narrative of the book and its sentiments regarding the Korean War are highly ambiguous shifting between futility, pragmatism and greater-good approach. The story wrestles with the depiction of the War just as the main character, Harry Brubaker, wrestles with himself and his fears. The conflicting message of the book can be demonstrated when the popular reviews of the book in the Goodreads database are studied. While some of the Goodreads users perceive the Michener's novella to be an anti-war book reflecting the absurdity of the War, others see it as a heroic story with propagandistic features.<sup>59</sup> Even scholars do not seem to agree on the subject. While the Cambridge Companion to War Writing describes the narrative as jingoistic<sup>60</sup>, others, such as Hogg<sup>61</sup>, do not draw the same conclusion. After reading the entire book thoroughly, however, the pragmatic approach to the War seems to be winning. More than anything else, the story represents the sad reality that has to be faced and within that reality, each character has to operate with as much dignity as possible while carrying their own emotional baggage. This seems to be embodied in what Admiral Tarrant says to Brubaker when trying to explain the purpose of a military job in Korea: "All throughout history free men have

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<sup>58</sup> Steven Belletto, "The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel," *American Literature* 87, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 61, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2865187>.

<sup>59</sup> "The Bridges at Toko-ri by James A. Michener," Goodreads, accessed May 20, 2019, [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/787184.The\\_Bridges\\_at\\_Toko\\_ri#other\\_reviews](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/787184.The_Bridges_at_Toko_ri#other_reviews).

<sup>60</sup> Catherine Mary MacLoughlin, *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 228.

<sup>61</sup> Gordon E. Hogg, "Bridges at Toko-Ri, The," in *Encyclopedia of War & American Society*, ed. Peter Karsten (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006).

had to fight the wrong war in the wrong place. But that's the one they're stuck with."<sup>62</sup> From the quote, it is evident that Admiral's words fail to explain the meaning of the War, however, for the men fighting it and their families, those words have to be sufficient to justify risking their lives. At least, it seems that both Brubaker and his wife give in and accept such reasoning, even though it does not erase all their doubts and fears. This is where the story does not age well. The pragmatic representation of the Korean War as being a fact that has to be faced without providing any answers that would clarify its meaning is not sufficient for today's readers.

The struggle of the narrative ending in reconciliation is mirrored in the mind of the main character. Harry Brubaker is a 29-year-old civilian lawyer from Denver. At home he is a loving husband and father of two, however, in the War, he is one of the best pilots the Navy has. Drafted against his will to Korea so soon after he had served in World War II, he is bitter and resentful of the War that he perceives as futile and unnecessary. He does not understand the War and, more importantly, does not understand why it is him who has to bear the burden, which is exemplified below.

He remembered the men he had known in Colorado. Some hated their wives but they stayed home. Others hated their jobs, but they stayed on those jobs. Some of them, he recalled, had always wanted to travel, some had loved airplanes, others were always picking a fight and some good Catholics like Mike Forney hated communism so much they could taste it. Others were poor and needed navy pay. But all of them stayed home.<sup>63</sup>

As Rollins accurately observes, the doubts of the main character are the central theme intertwining the entire story.<sup>64</sup> Brubaker has to fight his doubts and fears that are intensified when he is assigned a risky mission to bomb the Toko-Ri bridges. Ultimately, the mission proves fatal for him, which is no surprise as the foreshadowing is heavy throughout the book. However, by the end, he reaches some kind of perverse acceptance of his fate. To help Brubaker understand his purpose and direct him toward this acceptance, the sulky character of Admiral Tarrant is present. He takes a special liking in Brubaker as he reminds him of his own son who died in action and, thus, provides Brubaker with somewhat fatherly guidance on his journey to

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<sup>62</sup> James A. Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (New York: Random House USA, 2015), 21.

<sup>63</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 55.

<sup>64</sup> Peter C. Rollins, *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 82.

death. Tarrant's views on the War combine pragmatism and conservative patriotism. Lentz labels Tarrant the "political mouthpiece" of the story<sup>65</sup>, which is partly true as some of his lines essentially copy the official rhetoric as analyzed in the theoretical part. He reinforces the domino theory and believes in the moral obligation of the U.S. to stand up for freedom. However, Tarrant is neither an unquestioning believer. He criticizes the decisions made in the War and wishes for a more sensible world where there is no place for wars.

Although the story is not exactly pro-war in its message, Michener's advocacy for domestic recognition and appreciation is clear and straightforward. As Rollins states, novels like *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* at its time reflected the mixed responses of the American public and its reluctance to support the Korean War and its limited objectives.<sup>66</sup> Such observations seem to be true given the domestic context of the later stages of the Korean War. The novella is set in 1952 and, as discussed in the theoretical part of this paper, by that time, the Korean War was an unpopular issue among Americans. However, the discontentment was not vocal and the War was not discussed publicly nor did it disrupt the society as much as later the Vietnam War did. More than the negative popular opinion on the War, Michener criticizes the ignorance with which the Korean War topic was treated at home. Throughout the book, the U.S. public is indirectly shamed for not recognizing what the men fighting in the War have to sacrifice. While Americans carry on their lives at home as if nothing is happening, men fight and put their lives on the line for their country. Moreover, Michener demonstrates the profound effect it can have on the soldiers and their families. The main character himself comments on the public disinterest for the War: "It would be easier to take if people back home were helping. But in Denver nobody even knew there was a war except my wife. Nobody supports this war."<sup>67</sup>

Similar sentiments are expressed when Brubaker's wife Nancy appears in the story and reunites with him during a brief shore leave in Japan. Overcome with worry, she says to her husband: "What eats my heart away is that back home there is no war. . . In all America nobody gives a damn."<sup>68</sup> Apart from a worried wife and mother, however, Nancy also appears to be a representation of the American public. Only when she visits her husband does she realize what

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<sup>65</sup> Robert J. Lentz, *Korean War Filmography: 91 English Language Features through 2000* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 68.

<sup>66</sup> Rollins, *The Columbia Companion*, 85.

<sup>67</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 44.

military life is about and just how dangerous it is. Back home, she was clueless as her husband did not want her to carry his burden with him. Michener draws a parallel between a wife protected by her husband and a nation self-protected from the horrors of the War. He then, through the words of Tarrant, warns of the danger of denial: “Perhaps. If we refuse to acknowledge what we’re involved in, terrible consequences sometimes follow.”<sup>69</sup>

Using relatable characters, Michener humanizes the War. Brubaker is not the typical hero one might expect in a war novel. He is doubting, he is fearful, he does not want to be the one to risk his life for others. However, he comes to accept his fate, does the job he is assigned and finally dies in a sewage ditch for his country and all the ignorant Americans back home. Like that, Michener challenges the conventional ideas of heroism and stresses how important it is to acknowledge the sacrifices of men like Brubaker. As Lentz states, in his book, Michener does not promote the Korean War, but rather advocates for the support of the men fighting it.<sup>70</sup> Once again in the words of Tarrant that close the Bridges at Toko-Ri story: “Why is America lucky enough to have such men? . . . Where did we get such men?”<sup>71</sup> In *The Bridges of Toko-Ri*, Michener humanizes the War on more levels. Although his 83-page-long novella lacks combat action, it includes long descriptions of the military routine and operation of the carrier ships. As Michener depicts the launching and landing jets, he describes the various actions that all have to be carried out by men. On the carrier, everyone has a purpose and only together the manpower creates a well-working and powerful force. Michener often mentions the human work as if he wanted to suggest that what makes all the machinery and artillery effective are the people operating it, which is evident in the following quote: “So in the age of flight, in the jet age of incredible speed, these men pushed and pulled and slipped upon the icy deck and ordered the heavy planes with their bare hands.”<sup>72</sup>

The 1954 film adaptation of *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* directed by Mark Robson<sup>73</sup> follows the book fairly closely. Nonetheless, the overall message of the movie is much more heroic in its presentation of the War and the military. Although no satisfactory answers to the Brubaker’s doubts are given just as in the book, the movie presents the War with greater confidence in its

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<sup>69</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 40.

<sup>70</sup> Lentz, *Korean War Filmography*, 66.

<sup>71</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 83.

<sup>72</sup> Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, 6.

<sup>73</sup> *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, dir. Mark Robson (United States: Paramount Pictures Corp., 1954), DVD.

justification that Michener does. The first indication of this approach comes immediately after the opening credits when a dedication accompanied by heroic music appears calling the movie a tribute to the U.S. Navy. It is important to state, however, that the screen version does not give the impression of propaganda in its negative sense. The movie still questions the War's meaning and the main character does not show support for the War. Moreover, even Admiral Tarrant who is one of the most approving characters using the official rhetoric clichés retains his critical approach to military aspects of the War. The greater glorification of the War throughout the movie is, however, evident and achieved mainly by the underdevelopment of the characters. The characters in Robson's movie are less complex and more straightforward than those in the Michener's novella. Brubaker does not seem to be as torn as in the book and, although his fears are skillfully expressed in the movie, his internal struggle is not as strong. Similarly, the film version of his wife Nancy does not demonstrate that profound level of desperation and sadness as depicted by Michener. In the movie, she is much more easily convinced about the importance of her husband's involvement in the War. Moreover, the movie sometimes includes unnecessary nearly-religious replications of the less important parts of the book and omits some of the more significant events that include those that go deeper into the characters' psyche explaining their motives. As a result, the movie's flat characters and their shallow emotions much more strongly endorse the War itself and its unquestionable importance within the bigger picture of the Cold War, while the Michener's book advocates for the acknowledgment of the War rather in regard to the sacrifices made by those fighting it.

### **3.2 The Manchurian Candidate (Richard Condon, 1959)**

The Manchurian Candidate by Richard Condon from 1959 features a story of a brainwashed American unit returning from the Korean War. Specially conditioned by the Chinese under Soviet supervision, one of the soldiers, Raymond Shaw, becomes a Communist weapon implanted into the American society ultimately programmed to infiltrate the U.S. government and carry out assassinations. The story takes an ironic twist when it is uncovered that Raymond's American operator, through whom he receives orders from Communists, is his own mother who on the outside preaches anti-communism. Moreover, she is the one that shapes her husband's political image into a Communist hunter resembling the real-life figure of Senator McCarthy. Condon uses the Korean War as a background to capture the American Cold War

mentality and comment on the domestic situation. In his review of the movie version, Dyer describes it as “neither satire nor suspense thriller nor science fiction fantasy nor identity-puzzle nor allegory but something of all five”<sup>74</sup>, which is true for both the movie and the book. In fact, Condon’s story in its original literary form is even much more layered and complex than the later Frankenheimer’s movie. Condon’s work is a satire and a psychological study at the same time and as such can be examined from multiple angles. While some scholars focus on the satirical element and Cold War context and politics, which is also the subject of the analysis presented here, others explore themes of a dysfunctional family and personal tragedy<sup>75</sup>, gender roles and a Freudian analysis of the characters<sup>76</sup>, or the depiction of brainwashing and its possibilities<sup>77</sup>. The most comprehensive work covering all the important themes present in the story is probably the 2006 study by Jacobson and Gonzalez<sup>78</sup> that also extensively covers the historical and political context of the time.

The adaptation of a controversial and speculative topic of brainwashing in the central plotline does not seem to be driven by Condon’s paranoia or fear as throughout the story the topic is presented satirically using dark-humor and irony. However, in the 1950s when the book was published, the threat of mind manipulation by the enemy seemed real for many Americans and Condon’s book explores and exploits such fears. According to Dunne, the brainwashing scare was associated with the Korean War and the Communist camps for war prisoners (POWs) where supposedly the American POWs were in large subjected to brainwashing. Such believes provided an explanation for the imprisoned soldiers’ collaboration with the enemy during which the captured American soldiers often denounced their country of origin. The fear of brainwashing was further intensified after the end of the Korean War when 23 American POWs had refused to come back home and demonstrated their wishes to reside in China and Russia. That someone would voluntarily choose totalitarian Communist ideology over democracy and

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<sup>74</sup> Peter John Dyer, "The Manchurian Candidate," *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1962-1963, <https://cinfiles.bampfa.berkeley.edu/cinfiles/DocDetail?docId=44811>.

<sup>75</sup> Joy McEntee, "Melodrama and Tragedy in The Manchurian Candidate (1962)," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2015): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43799038>.

<sup>76</sup> Tony Jackson, "The Manchurian Candidate and the Gender of the Cold War," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2000): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43796919>.

<sup>77</sup> Matthew W. Dunne, *A Cold War State of Mind: Brainwashing and Postwar American Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

<sup>78</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson and Gaspar González, *What Have They Built You to Do?: The Manchurian Candidate and Cold War America* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 2006).

capitalism was incomprehensible for Americans, which strengthened their conviction that brainwashing was real and was used in the enemy POW camps. However, American society also blamed the whole generation of young soldiers who were allegedly too weak, which made them susceptible to the Communist mind control techniques.<sup>79</sup> Condon works with the theme of weak men as well and Raymond Shaw chosen to become the Communist assassin is a prime example that contrasts with the character of Ben Marco who is, owing to his strong personality, able to break the mechanism and free his mind, ultimately helping Raymond to do the same. Raymond is a timid resentful unlovable man that brings to life the phrase of being dead inside. In the book, he is described as impossible to like and branded by a Chinese doctor as having a cancer of the psyche, which makes him a perfect brainwashing target. However, it is important to note that Raymond Shaw is the product of his cold-hearted and controlling mother's upbringing and more generally of the environment. As the Chinese doctor in the book quotes Andrew Salter, an American psychologist: "The human fish swim about at the bottom of the great ocean of atmosphere and they develop psychic injuries as they collide with one another. Most mortal of all are the wounds gotten from the parent fish."<sup>80</sup> This suggests that conditioning of the mind and character is naturally present in people's lives and that it should not be the enemy's brainwashing one should primarily fear. In fact, it is a dysfunctional family that bears dysfunctional children, it is a dysfunctional society that bears dysfunctional individuals, and it is a dysfunctional state that bears dysfunctional citizens.

In his novel, Condon depicts all of the above-mentioned dysfunctional entities and most of the time puts them within the Cold War frame. He is very specific when addressing the American domestic political situation of the 1950s and the period of the Red Scare and McCarthyism. According to Jacobson and Gonzalez, the book presents the first real satire of McCarthy.<sup>81</sup> In the novel, McCarthy is represented by Senator John Iselin, Raymond's stepfather. Condon obviously mocks the Senator as he is depicted to be a drunk, simple-minded man of low-intelligence emasculated by his wife. The association between Iselin and McCarthy is not a subtle one, contrarily, Condon almost exactly replicates McCarthy's claims about Communists in the State Department. Just as in the case of McCarthy, Iselin keeps changing

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<sup>79</sup> Dunne, *A Cold War State of Mind*, 81-115.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate* (London: Orion Books, 2013), 48.

<sup>81</sup> Jacobson et al., *What Have They Built You to Do?*, 52.

the numbers according to Raymond's mother's direction. The absurdity of McCarthyism, in the book called *Iselinism*, is illustrated when the final proclaimed number of Communists in the State Department is settled based on the 57 varieties of Heinz products:

She [Raymond's mother] settled on fifty-seven, not only because Johnny would be able to remember it but because all of the jerks could remember it, too, as it could be linked so easily with the fifty-seven varieties of canned food that had been advertised so well and so steadily for so many years.<sup>82</sup>

The repressive nature of McCarthy's witch-hunt for subversives is evident in the way it treats and silences its opposition. Condon's story demonstrates this on the case of Senator Jordan who is a fierce critic of *Iselinism*. As a result, he is accused of being a Communist and *Iselin* proposes he should be executed. However, the official way fails and Raymond's mother, who in fact is a part of a Communist plot, orders Raymond to assassinate Jordan using a pistol with a symbolic silencer. Exposing the barbaric practices of *Iselinism*/McCarthyism, the novel poses an important question of whether the greater threat is external or internal. In the movie version Senator Johnson articulates it as follows: "I think, if John *Iselin* were a paid Soviet agent, he could not do more to harm this country than he's doing now."<sup>83</sup>

Throughout the book, Condon seems to suggest that both, Communist infiltration into the U.S. society, including the political sphere, and demagogic opportunistic Americans hungry for power, are at least equally dangerous. In fact, he uses a paradoxical plot twist when it is uncovered that the Communist threat and the radical domestic anti-communism are represented by a single character. Raymond's mother, Eleanor *Iselin*, appears to be the embodiment of the ultimate evil. She portrays the fifth column supposedly present in the U.S. hiding behind the *Iselinism* persecuting alleged Communist subversives. She is an ambitious manipulative and ruthless woman using everything and everyone to her advantage. As demonstrated close to the end of the story, she yearns only for her own power using both Communists and anti-Communists to climb a figurative ladder to the top. Following the journey of Raymond's mother, it appears that no ideology is as dangerous as the people using it to their benefit. Depicting the corrupt and manipulative practices of *Iselin*-like opportunists, Condon points out the perverse culture of American politics and shames the society that willingly accepts it. As

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<sup>82</sup> Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate*, 148-149.

<sup>83</sup> *The Manchurian Candidate*, dir. John Frankenheimer (United States: United Artists Corp., 1962), DVD, 01:28:29.

the novel comments: “Anyone strong who knew how to maneuver could have all the power and glory that the richest and most naïve democracy in the world could bestow.”<sup>84</sup>

In his examination of *The Manchurian Candidate*, Rogin denies the mockery present in the novel and argues that the story “aims to reawaken a lethargic nation to the Communist menace”<sup>85</sup> Rogin’s opinion is, however, in minority and as seen in the previous paragraphs, this paper also contradicts his viewpoint. In *The Manchurian Candidate*, Condon uses satire to mock the U.S. Cold War mentality, the corrupt domestic political environment, and to a certain extent the American society and its passivity that allowed such developments. Most of Condon’s criticism is aimed at the radical political right represented by McCarthyism. This paper argues that the portrayal of brainwashed individuals in the U.S. society and high politics is not meant as a warning of the Communist menace as Rogin believes. Rather it presumes the novel suggests that the extreme anti-communist rhetoric, and more generally any extremism, is, in the end, the thing that makes the country weak and vulnerable to threats. Iselinism/McCarthyism produces repressions, hampers the freedom of speech and applies the presumption of guilt by association, which makes it un-American in its very essence. As a result, the American democratic consciousness is weakened allowing for the enemy to infiltrate the country and the highest stratum of the U.S. politics without being noticed. Ultimately, the politics of Iselinims/McCarthyism implemented in the name of the state security is what cripples the security. Still, even in his satire, Condon does not appear to take sides and remains in some way neutral when depicting the American Cold War mentality. Although he criticizes, he does not moralize. Condon avoids simplified good versus evil labels and a black-and-white narrative, which might have been what lead Rogin to his conclusion. Moreover, when Rogin conducted his analysis of the novel (1988), he was presumably still to a certain extent influenced by the Cold War climate, which might have affected his review. Considering the very atmosphere of the Cold War and its profound influence on all aspects of life of the period, it is reasonable to assume that the satirical feature and Condon’s cynical views are bound to be more evident as time passes. Since the today’s society does not live in the fear of Communist subversion anymore and the mind control and brainwashing as depicted in the novel were proved to be a

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<sup>84</sup> Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate*, 76.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Paul Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 252.

myth, *The Manchurian Candidate* can be interpreted more objectively and Condon's satirical remarks identified more easily.

The 1962 movie version of Condon's story directed by John Frankenheimer<sup>86</sup> stirred controversy and, according to Lentz, was damned and praised by the critics at the same time.<sup>87</sup> In his movie, Frankenheimer focuses mainly on the brainwashing conspiracy that is a central theme of the movie. His adaptation of the story moves more in the direction of a bizarre cynical sci-fi thriller. The depiction of the Iselins' rise to power and their corrupt ways are not as deeply explored as in the book. The nature of Iselinism/McCarthyism is mocked but the limited length of the video medium does not allow for any extensive development of this side of the story as the book does. Therefore, *The Manchurian Candidate* in film loses much of its political aspect in comparison with Condon's novel. That is not to say that the political satire is not present, however. With the need to economize on some of the Condon's original mockery, the movie seems to be even more neutral and objective in its depiction of the Cold War politics and society. As it was stated before, the original story is notably multilayered, which again could not be achieved in the movie due to time limitations and the need to focus on the features supporting the movie's central plotline within the given length. However, it was not the only time that limited Frankenheimer and the content of the movie. Some of the original topics and depictions as presented in the book were omitted simply because they were too controversial or taboo such as incest and heroin addiction of Raymond's mother. According to Murray, even the ending of the movie that is slightly different than the one in the book was altered because of conventions and the fact that the Condon's ending would not be morally acceptable for the audience.<sup>88</sup> In the book, Ben Marco breaks the mechanism through which Raymond is controlled by the Communists and takes upon himself the responsibility to eliminate the threat. Using the enemy's technique of brainwashing, Marco gives Raymond orders to kill the Iselins and then directs Raymond to shoot himself. The theater audience is, on the other hand, given a more acceptable ending as in the movie, Raymond is ultimately able to break out of the Communist control himself killing his mother, stepfather, and then committing suicide in the name of justice. The movie, therefore, indicated that the Communist mechanism was faulty and

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<sup>86</sup> *The Manchurian Candidate*, dir. John Frankenheimer.

<sup>87</sup> Lentz, *Korean War Filmography*, 208-210.

<sup>88</sup> Murray Pomerance and R. Barton Palmer, *A Little Solitaire: John Frankenheimer and American Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 41-44.

that it could be broken by the power of will, which restored hope and generated satisfaction among the viewers.

### **3.3 The Martyred (Richard E. Kim, 1964)**

Richard E. Kim is a Korean American writer born in 1932 in Korea. He experienced the Japanese occupation and after the 1945 division of the Peninsula escaped with his family to South Korea. During the Korean War, he served in the South Korean army and after the War ended, he immigrated to the U.S. His first and most acclaimed novel *The Martyred* was published in 1964.<sup>89</sup> The story of *The Martyred* is set in the first year of the Korean War in Pyongyang when the city was held by the UN forces. The protagonist and the narrator of the story, Captain Lee, is instructed to investigate the murder of North Korean Christian ministers by the Communist kidnapers. Twelve dead ministers are declared martyrs and surviving Reverend Shin voluntarily makes a false confession admitting to betraying the group. However, the truth is different and the traitors were among the now pronounced martyrs while Shin was spared because he had the courage to stand up to the murderers. The martyrdom of the twelve quickly transforms its significance first from the subject of propaganda to the revival of North Korean Christianity and finally to upholding hope and alleviating the suffering of people. Ultimately, the novel transcends its storyline and allows for exploring larger philosophical questions.

According to Steve Belletto, Kim's *The Martyred* represents the second phase of Korean War writing that is produced mostly by Americans of Korean descent. He argues that for such authors the Korean War was a "central trauma of the twentieth century"<sup>90</sup> Based on Belletto's classification, the second phase writers are those who challenge the simplified Cold War narrative and frame. *The Martyred* opens with a seemingly Cold War theme of the ministers proclaimed martyrs as they died at the hands of the Reds becoming a symbol used for propaganda purposes. As the storyline evolves, however, Belletto argues that the novel systematically dismantles this kind of Cold War narrative typical for the first phase authors writing from the American point of view.<sup>91</sup> In her analysis of *The Martyred*, Park opposes

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<sup>89</sup> Richard E. Kim, *The Martyred* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

<sup>90</sup> Belletto, *The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel*, 61.

<sup>91</sup> Belletto, *The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel*, 62-64.

Belletto and classifies the novel rather as the first phase writing meaning it retains the Cold War framing. Park's argument to support her statement is that *The Martyred* narrative "ultimately does not challenge superpower designs."<sup>92</sup> This paper generally agrees with the identification as the second phase novel as seen in the Belletto's classification. However, to support the statement, the exact argument Park presents in her opposition is used. In his novel, Kim, indeed, does not challenge the superpower designs. Rather, he abandons such designs completely. As described in the previous chapter, he transforms the theme of the controversial martyrdom from a political issue to a philosophical subject, which in itself is even greater symbolic statement proving that his work should not be read in the Cold War logic frame. Kim's characters in *The Martyred* are all Koreans and the story is presented from a Korean viewpoint. Throughout the novel, there are only a few barely significant references to the U.S. involvement. Similarly, there are no Soviets present. As the time setting of the novel includes the events of the Chinese offensive, the Chinese are sometimes mentioned but still very marginally. When the Korean War is addressed in *The Martyred*, it is depicted in terms of a civil conflict, which further supports the claim that the novel does not work within the Cold War frame. The depiction of the War as a conflict between Koreans is evident in the following quote from a letter written to Lee by his friend describing a hand-to-hand combat between South and North Korean soldiers:

The trouble was that it was pitch-black night and we all spoke Korean. Devil only knew which side we were killing. Everyone was shouting in the same language, 'Who are you? Who are you?' For a while the bewilderment was simply staggering. Then something – panic, terror, you name it – snapped, and everyone was killing everyone else.<sup>93</sup>

The story narrated in *The Martyred* not only shifts from the Cold War polarization, it ultimately transcends the Korean War itself and deals with internal issues of the characters, nation, and humankind. This analysis suggests that in Kim's *The Martyred*, there are two significant levels to the story. The first one is the philosophical level that is general and common to all people and that addresses the misery of human existence, faith, and hope. The second perspective focuses on the particularity of the Korean national consciousness and the historical legacy that burdens Koreans. Exploring the themes that are common to all human beings, Kim

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<sup>92</sup> Josephine Nock-Hee Park, "'A Strange Form of Love': The Global Asian American Subject in Richard E. Kims *The Martyred*," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 214, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/vergstudglobasia.3.1.0213>.

<sup>93</sup> Kim, *The Martyred*, 24.

examines the concepts of truth, faith, hope, and religion. He studies their significance and poses questions such as how to use those concepts, whether they are beneficial and if so, in what way and when. Using the characters of the novel, Kim illustrates that there are no easy answers to complex moral questions and ethical choices. Each of the characters offers a different perspective on those dilemmas and every single view on the issues depicted in the book seems at least partly valid, which makes the novel's narrative versatile and relevant to a number of issues. In *The Martyred*, Kim offers a deep meditation on the above-mentioned concepts while simultaneously exploring the greater question of the meaning of life. His characters generally do not manage to find a conclusive answer, however, they all create an individual purpose for their existence and adhere to it. A very coherent and detailed analysis of the characters and their motivations is provided by Stephen Joyce in his paper on Eastern and Western Existentialism in *The Martyred*.<sup>94</sup>

The novel uses its main plotline of the Christian ministers deceptively presented to the people as martyrs and Reverend Shin's voluntary role of a Judas to explore the concept of truth and whether it is not overvalued. Opposing to Captain Lee who sees truth as superior above anything else as "truth cannot be bribed"<sup>95</sup>, Reverend Shin decides to lie about the martyrs and himself suggesting that although everyone seems to want to know the truth, the reality is different when the truth does not comply with people's expectations and desires. As the novel reveals, Shin himself lost his faith in God a long time ago but continues to actively preach the illusion as he does not want others to have their reality shattered and experience the futility of life. When his son died, he, for the first time, revealed his truth to his wife denying the existence of the afterlife, which led to his wife's loss of hope and ultimately her death. As he experienced how easily the truth can break a man's spirit, he sees a greater good in deception and the construction of an illusion that gives people hope instead. The illusion can ultimately become a reassuring reality to some. As Lee's friend explains: "Do you understand that a fairy tale can be an integral part of our lives? Then it ceases to be a fairy tale."<sup>96</sup> Following the same reasoning, Shin's actions are determined by the belief that people find strength in the illusion

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<sup>94</sup> Stephen Joyce, "Facing the Whirlwind: Eastern and Western Existentialism in Richard E. Kim's *The Martyred*," *The Human: Journal of Literature & Culture*, no. 3 (June 2014): <http://humanjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/thehumanno3.pdf>.

<sup>95</sup> Kim, *The Martyred*, 50.

<sup>96</sup> Kim, *The Martyred*, 142.

of religion for they desperately seek hope and faith especially in times of tragedy. In the end Shin appears to be the real martyr as he sacrificed his reputation, innocence, and integrity so that others would have the strength to go on. One of the emotionally strongest parts of the book demonstrates Shin's motives when Shin talks to Captain Lee:

“All my life I have searched for God, Captain,” he whispered, “but I found only man with all his sufferings . . . and death, inexorable death!”

“And after death?”

“Nothing!” he whispered. “Nothing!”

“Help me! Help me love my people, my poor suffering people . . . We must show them light, tell them there will be a glorious welcome waiting for them, assure them they will triumph in the eternal Kingdom of God!”

“To give them the illusion of hope?”

“Yes, yes! Because they are men. Despair is the disease of those weary of life, life here and now full of meaningless sufferings. We must fight despair, we must destroy it and not let the sickness of despair corrupt the life of a man and reduce him to a mere scarecrow.”<sup>97</sup>

Faced with the realities and suffering of the people, Shin, aware that he has the power to lead them through the crisis, reawakes the Christian consciousness using the twelve martyrs and instigates forgiveness posing as a Judas with the aim to generate faith and hope. Ultimately, Shin does not serve God but the people. Similarly, in the novel, Shin's church does not give the feeling of being a house of God but rather the place of the people. In fact, the one theme that *The Martyred* seems to conclusively endorse with complete certainty is the importance of humanity and solidarity.

The already mentioned second level of Kim's story focuses on the Korean nation and the legacy and burden of history. When following this layer of the story, Kim really reflects on the Korean War and more generally on history from the Korean point of view. In *The Martyred*, he focuses on the consequences of the conflict and rather than the fighting, he vividly describes the destroyed city of Pyongyang and the misery of the affected population. However, to a certain extent, he is able to achieve a detachment from the story. Therefore, he does not bend the reality nor history with the aim to gain sympathy or recognition. Kim does not omit uncomfortable facts nor does he glorify any. Perhaps this detachment might have been caused by his immigration to the United States where he had been residing for ten years by the time the novel was published. From a broad perspective, the Korean War depicted in the *Martyred*

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<sup>97</sup> Kim, *The Martyred*, 160.

can be seen as having a representative function of the suffering of the Korean people while the religious faith stands for the national spirit of Koreans. As seen in the theoretical part, over the last hundred years, Koreans had to cope with the Japanese colonization and oppression only to be once again denied independence after the liberation. The division of the Korean nation followed resulting in the experience of the Korean War. This historical legacy had a profound influence on the identity of the Korean nation and brought about a concept unique to Korean consciousness that Koreans refer to as Han. Richard Kim himself explains Han as a collective feeling of doom that is associated with a range of negative emotions such as resentment, sense of loss, feeling of being an unfair victim, or fatalistic resignation.<sup>98</sup> Kim, however, refuses to accept the sense of Han. As he discusses in the Preface to his novel *Lost Names*: “Han—I realized—had made Koreans pliant before foreign powers and domination, subservient to foreign interests, and obsessed, masochistically and degradingly, with a petty, private, and baser instinct for only one’s survival.”<sup>99</sup> Kim sees the prevailing Han as a burden that weakens Koreans making them pity their fate, wallow in despair and passively surrender instead of pushing them to fight for their future. Rather, Kim advocates for coming to terms with history, moving past it and leaving its burden behind. He ends the *Lost Names* Preface with a quote from Hölderlin’s *The Death of Empedocles* with which he also begins *The Martyred* novel:

“And openly I pledged my heart to the grave and suffering land, and often in the consecrated night, I promised to love her faithfully until death, unafraid, with her heavy burden of fatality, and never to despise a single one of her enigmas. Thus did I join myself to her with a mortal cord.”<sup>100</sup>

This is the message that resonates with Kim and that can be observed in his writing. In *The Martyred* specifically, the main character and narrator at the same time ends the story reconciled and “with a wondrous lightness of heart”<sup>101</sup> The excerpt from the Hölderlin’s drama is also used in Camus’ *The Rebel* who, as Heinz Insu Fenkl mentions in his Introduction to *The Martyred*, was a great inspiration for Kim’s life philosophy and his writing.<sup>102</sup> In fact, Kim dedicates *The Martyred* to Albert Camus disclosing that thanks to his wisdom he managed to overcome the

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<sup>98</sup> Richard E. Kim, Preface to *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*, by Richard E. Kim (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), xiii-xiv.

<sup>99</sup> Kim, Preface to *Lost Names*, xv.

<sup>100</sup> Kim, Preface to *Lost Names*, xxiii.

<sup>101</sup> Kim, *The Martyred*, 199.

<sup>102</sup> Heinz Insu Fenkl, Introduction to *The Martyred*, by Richard E. Kim (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), xxv-xxviii.

nihilism of the Korean War. The influence of Camus and parallels between his work and Kim's story studies for example Galloway.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> David D. Galloway, "The Love Stance: Richard E. Kim's *The Martyred*," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 7, no. 2 (1964): doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.1964.10689834>.

## CONCLUSION

The presented bachelor thesis and its theoretical and analytical part aimed to examine the Korean War and its reflections in the American cultural consciousness. The Korean conflict had a profound effect on the Korean Peninsula and the Korean nation, however, in the U.S. the War remains a forgotten affair, in spite of the heavy American involvement. As indicated in the introduction, the lack of attention given to the conflict was experienced even during the preliminary research into the topic. As the paper reaches its conclusion, the Forgotten War label seems to hold true.

As already mentioned when analyzing the three novels, Belletto divides the Korean War writing of American and Korean-American writers into two phases. The first phase writers seem to frame the narrative of their novels in the Cold War logic only. On the other hand, the second phase writers who are mostly Korean Americans challenge the Cold War frame and reflect on the conflict from a Korean perspective.<sup>104</sup> The results of the three analyses conducted in this paper, support Belletto's classification. Both novels written by American authors, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, work with the subject of the Korean War through the Cold War lens and feature solely American perspective. As Belletto says, "The relevance of Korea has been so diminished that it is only legible in terms of the Cold War."<sup>105</sup> The U.S. centric view is demonstrated by the fact that neither in *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* nor *The Manchurian Candidate* there are no important Korean characters present and the depiction of The Korean War is rather generic.

Although *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* works with the theme of war, the Korean War in the Michener's novella could be easily substituted by a different unpopular conflict such as the Vietnam War and the domestic ignorance could be replaced by vocal disapproval of it. The substitution of the Korean War would not result in a different narrative and the internal struggle of the main character would be preserved. *The Manchurian Candidate* is even less concerned with the Korean War. In the novel, the Korean conflict and a hot war more generally served only as an insignificant background that was used to depict the domestic situation and satirically reflect on the American Cold War society and the paranoia that surrounded the era of

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<sup>104</sup> Belletto, *The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel*, 61.

<sup>105</sup> Belletto, *The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel*, 59.

McCarthyism. In *The Manchurian Candidate*, the role of the Korean War is greatly reduced, while the significance of the Cold War frame is maximized.

In contrast to the two above-discussed novels, *The Martyred* by Richard E. Kim is focused on the importance of the Korean War to Koreans and also the Korean diaspora in the U.S. Unlike Michener and Condon, Kim's *The Martyred* abandons the Cold War logic soon after the novel opens with supposedly a Cold War theme and shifts from the simplified Cold War narrative toward complex and profound topics. The Korean War makes Kim explore the meaning of human existence and the futility of life, which demonstrates the deep effect the conflict had on Koreans. Moreover, the viewpoint changes completely and the novel features a Korean perspective only. Only Korean characters are present and throughout the story, Kim paints a picture of the devastated country and the people affected by the War. Using *The Martyred* story, Kim reflects on the historical legacy and Korean national sense of tragedy encapsulated in the Han sentiment.

The portrayal of the Korean War as a generic conflict and its Cold War framing used by the American authors reinforces the validity of the Forgotten War label. However, the insignificance of the Korean conflict in their writing is only a demonstration of the larger memory loss in the American national consciousness. There are numerous reasons as to why the Korean War is the American Forgotten War. First, the Korean conflict happened very soon after the end of World War II, which significantly diminished its significance. Moreover, when the time for reflections on the Korean War came, the U.S. was involved in yet another hot war in Vietnam. Even though both wars were almost equally unpopular, the Vietnam War opposition was much more vocal and publicly engaged, which made the conflict deeply engraved in the American memory. Another significant factor could be the fact that the U.S. involvement in the Korean War was called a police action only and as the U.S. operated under the UN Command, war was never officially declared by Congress. Finally, the Korean War might have been forgotten deliberately as the objectives of the War had to be limited and the stalemate and armistice was not a welcomed result. However, as seen in Richard E. Kim's novel *The Martyred*, the Korean War had a profound effect on American writers of Korean origin who reflect on the subject and their works in the English language partially revive the memory.

## RESUMÉ

Vypracovaná bakalářská práce se zabývá reflexí korejské války v americkém kulturním povědomí, a to ve třech reprezentativních literárních dílech, která pracují s tematikou korejského konfliktu. Konkrétně se jedná o dva romány amerických spisovatelů, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* od Jamese A. Michenera a *The Manchurian Candidate* od Richarda Condon, a jedno dílo amerického autora korejského původu, *The Martyred* od Richarda E. Kima. V případě prvních dvou románů práce také stručně představuje jejich filmové adaptace a zkoumá, zda se narativ filmové podoby shoduje s originální literární verzí. Práce je tradičně rozdělena na část teoretickou a část praktickou. Teoretická část se skládá ze dvou hlavních kapitol, které mají za cíl uvést čtenáře do problematiky a osvětlit historický a politický kontext korejské války a americkou roli v konfliktu. Po teoretické části pak následuje praktická analýza výše zmíněných literárních děl.

První kapitola teoretické části práce se zaměřuje na historický přehled a s ním související politický kontext Korejské války. Její první podkapitola se zabývá situací na Korejském poloostrově před rokem 1945. Nejprve je zmíněna korejská politika izolace, která skončila v roce 1876 nerovnoprávnou Kanhwaskou smlouvou s Japonskem a následným otevřením Koreje západnímu světu. Dále se podkapitola věnuje především japonským snahám podrobit si Koreu, které vyústily v protektorát a následnou anexi Koreje Japonskem v roce 1910. Nakonec stručně popisuje období japonské koloniální nadvlády až do roku 1945. V dalším podkapitole je přiblíženo období od konce druhé světové války, kdy byla Korea osvobozena Američany a Rudou armádou a rozdělena na dvě vojenské okupační zóny. Práce dále vysvětluje vznik dvou samostatných korejských států, Korejské republiky a Korejské lidově demokratické republiky, a důvody stupňujícího se napětí na Korejském poloostrově. Poslední a klíčová část první teoretické kapitoly se věnuje samotné Korejské válce, která se odehrávala mezi lety 1950 – 1953. Konflikt je představen v širší perspektivě a kontextu studené války. Pozornost je zaměřena také na americkou roli v konfliktu a americká rozhodnutí, která korejskou válku ovlivnila.

Druhá kapitola teoretické části se věnuje americké domácí situaci v období studené války a korejského konfliktu. Nejprve je představena koncepce mezinárodní politiky směřovaná na zadržování komunismu a minimalizaci sovětského vlivu v poválečném období do roku 1950.

Podkapitola popisuje postupnou militarizaci americké politiky studené války a zároveň rozšíření amerických zájmů z Evropy do dalších částí světa. Následující sekce se pak věnuje klíčovým americkým rozhodnutím v korejské válce a důvodům, které tato rozhodnutí ovlivnily. Popsáno je také zapojení Organizace spojených národů, pod kterými Američané ve válce vystupovali. Poslední podkapitola se zabývá oficiální prezentací korejského konfliktu americké veřejnosti a obsahuje krátkou analýzu projevu prezidenta Trumana z roku 1950. Zmíněna je také tuzemská protikomunistická atmosféra ovlivněná politikou strachu senátora McCarthyho. Závěrečná část popisuje postoj americké veřejnosti ke korejské válce, který srovnává s válkou ve Vietnamu a poukazuje na téměř stejnou míru opozice, která se však lišila intenzitou svého projevu.

Američtí historici často nazývají korejskou válku termínem *Forgotten War*, tedy zapomenutá válka. Toto pojmenování odráží určité opomíjení korejského konfliktu a jeho významu Američany. Se znalostí historického a politického kontextu, jak je představen v teoretické části práce, je možné učit několik pravděpodobných důvodů, které vedly k tomuto kolektivnímu zapomnění korejské války. Prvním z nich je vypuknutí konfliktu příliš brzy po skončení druhé světové války a zároveň následující americké zapojení ve Vietnamu, které zastínilo korejskou válku. Truman navíc korejský konflikt původně označil pouze jako policejní akci a místo vyhlášení války se Američané zaštitili působením pod OSN. Korejská válka mohla být také v národní paměti potlačena záměrně vzhledem k ukončení konfliktu příměřím a nedosažení totálního vítězství. Právě toto zapomnění korejské války se odráží i v literárních dílech amerických autorů, jak ukázala analýza amerických literárních děl.

Základem praktické části práce je analýza literárních děl a jejich případných filmových adaptací. Jako první je analyzovaná kniha *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* od Jamese A. Michenera z roku 1953. Michener pojednává o letcích amerického námořnictva a jejich nebezpečné misi s cílem zničit mosty používané nepřítelem jako klíčová zásobovací cesta. Hlavní hrdina, Harry Brubaker, vnitřně bojuje se svým strachem a neschopností porozumět smyslu války. Dílo není konzistentní ve svém postoji k válce a v příběhu se prolíná několik náhledů na konflikt. I přes určitou rozporuplnost však převládá pragmatický přístup. Korejská válka jako taková však není pro porozumění příliš důležitým faktorem. V díle má především reprezentativní funkci a může být nahrazena jiným nepopulárním konfliktem studené války. Hlavním poselstvím příběhu je potřeba domácí podpory vojáků bojujících za vlast a docenění jejich obětí. I přes zdůrazňování

důležitosti domácí podpory však není dílo propagandistické a zaměřuje se spíše na zlidštění války obecně. Oproti tomu filmová verze z roku 1954 režírovaná Markem Robsonem zobrazuje válku s větší jistotou v její opodstatnění a usiluje o hrdinštější vykreslení příběhu.

Dalším analyzovaným dílem je *The Manchurian Candidate* od spisovatele Richarda Condon z roku 1959. Condonův román ve svém příběhu ještě více potlačuje funkci korejské války než Michener. Condon používá korejský konflikt pouze k počátečnímu vytvoření zápletky, když znázorňuje únos a vymývání mozků amerických vojáků komunistickým nepřítelem během korejské války. Zbytek příběhu však už s tématem korejské války nepracuje vůbec a věnuje se domácí politické situaci ovlivněné studenou válkou. Condonův román je především satirou na McCarthyismus a politiku obecně a zároveň na americkou společnost, která tuto politiku pasivně přijímá. Korejská válka tedy v díle slouží pouze jako nevýznamný prostředek vázaný na větší kontext studené války. Filmová verze Condonova románu z roku 1962 režírovaná Johnem Frankenheimerem si zachovává satirický element, avšak vzhledem k časovému omezení filmového formátu ztrácí velkou část politické kritiky, která je přítomná v Condonově díle.

S výše zmíněnými dvěma díly pak kontrastuje román amerického spisovatele korejského původu Richarda E. Kima z roku 1964. Jeho kniha *The Martyred* je uchopena z výhradně korejského pohledu a jde tak proti nastavenému zobrazení korejské války vymezené pouze kontextem studené války. Román pojednává o severokorejských kněžích, kteří byli zavražděni komunisty a posléze prohlášeni za mučedníky, kteří se ani tváří v tvář smrti nezřekli své víry a o jednom z přeživších, který se sám přiznává ke zradě. Toto přiznání je však lživé stejně jako mučednictví zavražděných a slouží jako způsob, jak dodat lidem potřebnou naději a víru v krizi. Kim ve svém románu rozjímá nad existenciálními tématy a morálními otázkami, což poukazuje právě na hloubku, s jakou je Korejci a korejskou diasporou válka reflektována. Přestože nevyobrazuje válku jako ozbrojený konflikt, Kim poukazuje na ničivý vliv, který korejská válka měla na Koreu a Korejce jako takové a na historické břímě národa, se kterým se těžce vyrovnává.

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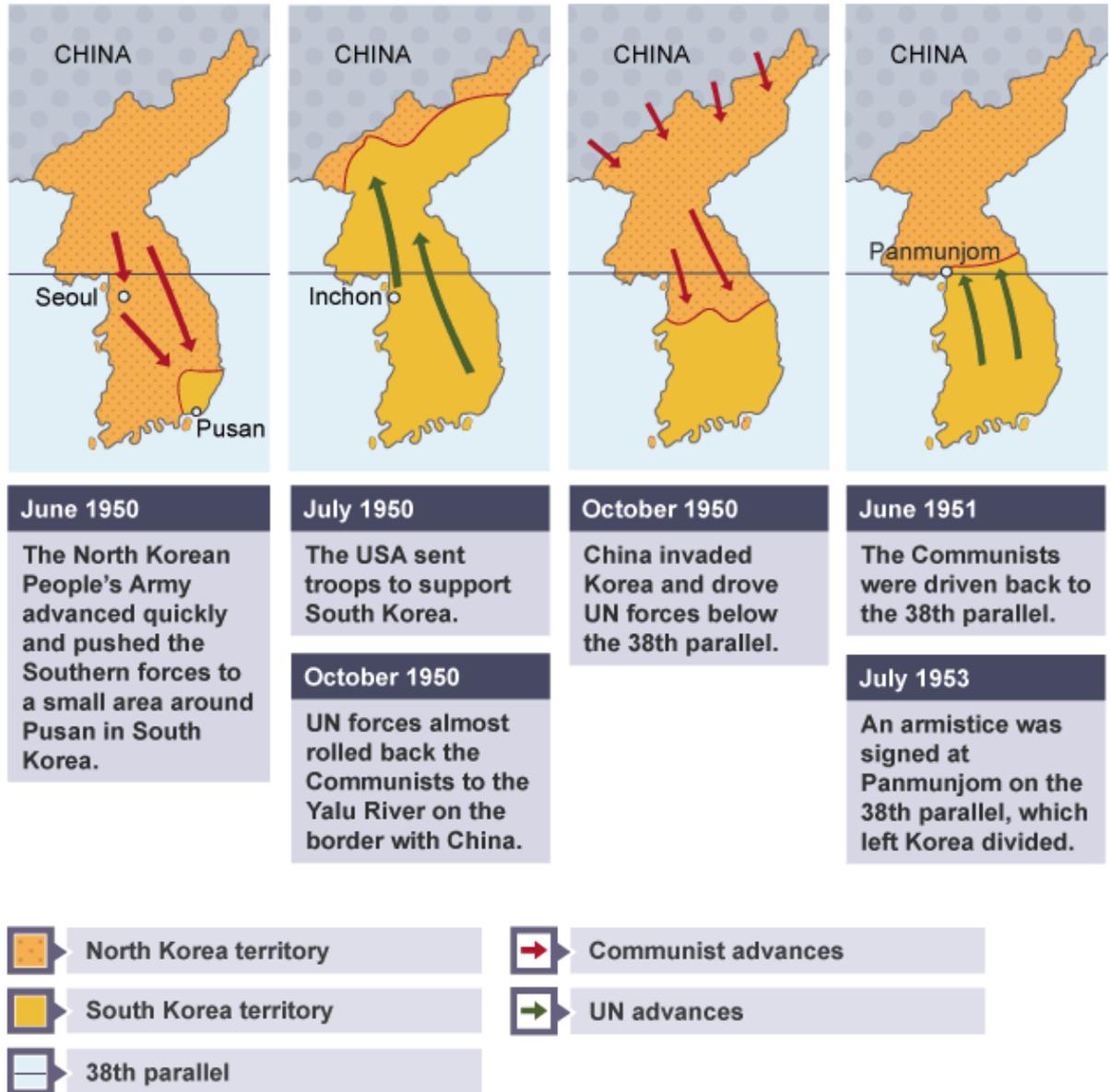
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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – *The Korean War in Phases Map*

Appendix B – *Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea*

**Appendix A – The Korean War in Phases Map<sup>106</sup>**



<sup>106</sup> "The Korean War - BBC Bitesize," BBC News, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zqqd6yc/revision/3>.

**Appendix B** – *Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea*<sup>107</sup>

My fellow citizens:

Tonight I want to talk to you about Korea, about why we are there, and what our objectives are.

As I talk with you, thousands of families in this land of ours have a son, or a brother, or a husband fighting in Korea. I know that your thoughts and hopes are constantly with them. So are mine.

These men of ours are engaged once more in the age-old struggle for human liberty. Our men, and the men of other free nations, are defending with their lives the cause of freedom in the world. They are fighting for the proposition that peace shall be the law of this earth.

We must and shall support them with every ounce of our strength and with all our hearts. We shall put aside all else for this supreme duty. No cause has even been more just or more important.

For the first time in all history, men of many nations are fighting under a single banner to uphold the rule of law in the world. This is an inspiring fact.

If the rule of law is not upheld we can look forward only to the horror of another war and ultimate chaos. For our part, we do not intend to let that happen.

Two months ago Communist imperialism turned from the familiar tactics of infiltration and subversion to a brutal attack on the small Republic of Korea. When that happened, the free and peace-loving nations of the world faced two possible courses.

One course would have been to limit our action to diplomatic protests, while the Communist aggressors went ahead and swallowed up their victim. That would have been the course of appeasement. If the history of the 1930's teaches us anything, it is that appeasement of dictators is the sure road to world war. If aggression were allowed to succeed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere.

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<sup>107</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea" (address, Broadcast from the White House, September 1, 1950), accessed May 25, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=861&st=&st1=>.

The other course is the one which the free world chose. The United Nations made its historic decision to meet military aggression with armed force. The effects of that decision will be felt far beyond Korea. The firm action taken by the United Nations is our best hope of achieving world peace.

It is your liberty and mine which is involved. What is at stake is the free way of life--the right to worship as we please, the right to express our opinions, the right to raise our children in our own way, the right to choose our jobs, the right to plan our future and to live without fear. All these are bound up in the present action of the United Nations to put down aggression in Korea.

We cannot hope to maintain our own freedom if freedom elsewhere is wiped out. That is why the American people are united in support of our part in this task.

During the last 5 years we have worked day in and day out to achieve a just and lasting peace. We have given every possible proof of our desire to live at peace with all nations. We have worked for liberty and self-government for people the world over. Most nations have joined with us in this effort, but the Soviet Union and the nations it controls have unceasingly hampered all efforts to achieve a just peace.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly violated its pledges of international cooperation. It has destroyed the independence of its neighbors. It has sought to disrupt those countries it could not dominate. It has built up tremendous armed forces far beyond the needs of its own defense.

Communist imperialism preaches peace but practices aggression.

In these circumstances, the free nations have been compelled to take measures to protect themselves against the aggressive designs of the Communists.

The United Nations was able to act as it did in Korea because the free nations in the years since World War II have created a common determination to work together for peace and freedom.

Every American can be justly proud of the role that our country has played in bringing this about.

We have taken the lead in step after step to create unity and strength among the free nations. The record of these steps is impressive. Let me recall some of them to you.

In 1945 we helped to bring the United Nations into existence at San Francisco.

In 1946 the United States gave its full support to the successful action taken by the United Nations to protect Iran against Communist invasion.

In 1947 we began our military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, which has helped those countries to keep their independence against Communist attacks and threats.

Also in 1947, by the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, we joined with the other American nations to guarantee the safety of the Western Hemisphere.

In 1948 the Marshall plan checked the danger of Communist subversion in Europe; and, since that time, it has brought the free nations more closely together in a strong economic framework.

The Berlin airlift, in 1948 and 1949, defeated the Soviet effort to drive the free nations out of the democratic outpost of western Berlin.

The North Atlantic Treaty, in 1949, served notice that the nations of the North Atlantic community would stand together to preserve their freedom.

Today, in 1950, we are going ahead with an enlarged program for military aid to strengthen the common defense of the free nations.

Step by step, these achievements in the struggle between freedom and Communist imperialism have brought the free nations closer together.

When the Communist movement turned to open, armed aggression in Korea, the response of the free nations was immediate.

Fifty-three of the 59 members of the United Nations joined in meeting the challenge. Thirty have pledged concrete aid to the United Nations to put down this aggression.

Thus far the brunt of the fighting has fallen upon the armed forces of the Republic of Korea and the United States. In addition, naval forces from Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand have been and are now in action under the United Nations command. Fighting planes from Australia, Canada, and Great Britain have joined the operation.

Ground forces have been offered by Thailand, the Philippines, Turkey, Australia, France, and other countries. Some British troops have landed in Korea and more are on their way. Just before I started to speak here tonight, I was handed a message received by the Department of State which said: "The Greek Government telegraphed the Secretary General of the United Nations this afternoon that it is prepared to dispatch ground troops to Korea immediately." This is

welcome news. All of these troops will serve under the flag of the United Nations and under the United Nations commander, General MacArthur.

Our own men, with their gallant Korean comrades, have held the breach. In less than 8 weeks, five divisions of United States troops have moved into combat, some from bases more than 6,000 miles away. More men are on the way. Fighting in difficult country, under every kind of hardship, American troops have held back overwhelming numbers of the Communist invaders. Our naval and air forces have been carrying the attack to the military bases and supply lines of the aggressors.

Our men have fought with grim gallantry. All of us, especially those of us who are old soldiers, know how worthy they are of a place on that long and honored roll of those who created and preserved liberty for our country.

The soldiers of the Republic of Korea have been fighting fiercely for their own freedom.

The determination of the South Koreans to maintain their independence is shown not only by the valor of their soldiers in the battleline, but also by countless supporting activities of the whole population. They are giving every possible assistance to the United Nations forces.

These United Nations troops are still outnumbered. But their hard and valiant fight is bringing results. We hold a firm base of about 3,500 square miles. For weeks the enemy has been hammering, now at one spot, now at another, sometimes at many points at once. He has been beaten back each time with heavy loss.

The enemy is spending his strength recklessly in desperate attacks. We believe the invasion has reached its peak. The task remaining is to crush it. Our men are confident, the United Nations command is confident, that it will be crushed. The power to do this is being gathered in Korea.

Right now the battle in Korea is the frontline in the struggle between freedom and tyranny. But the fighting there is part of a larger struggle to build a world in which a just and lasting peace can be maintained.

That is why we in the United States must increase our own defensive strength over and above the forces we need in Korea. That is why we must continue to work with the other free nations to increase our combined strength.

The Congress is now acting on my request to increase our program of arms aid to other free countries. These nations are greatly increasing their own efforts. Our aid is not a substitute, but is an addition to what they themselves do.

In Western Europe alone there are over 200 million people. Next to ours, their industry is the world's greatest workshop. They are joining with us to develop collective forces for mutual defense--our defense as well as theirs.

The Armed Forces of the United States are a key element in the strength of the free world. In view of the threats of aggression which now face us, we shall have to increase these forces and we shall have to maintain larger forces for a long time to come.

We have had about one and a half million men and women on active duty in our Army, Navy, and Air Force. Our present plans call for increasing this number to close to 3 million, and further increases may be required.

In addition to increasing the size of our Armed Forces, we must step up sharply the production of guns, tanks, planes, and other military equipment. We shall also have to increase our stockpile of essential materials, and to expand our industrial capacity to produce military supplies.

We have the ability and the resources to meet the demands which confront us. Our industry and agriculture have never been stronger or more productive. We will use as much of this economic strength as is needed to defend ourselves and establish peace.

Hitler and the Japanese generals miscalculated badly, 10 years ago, when they thought we would not be able to use our economic power effectively to defeat aggression.

Let would-be aggressors make no such mistake today.

We now have over 62 million men and women employed--more than we have ever had before. Our farmers are producing over 20 percent more than they were in 1940. The productive capacity of our manufacturing industry is 60 percent greater than it was 10 years ago, when the Axis dictators threatened the world.

We must now divert a large share of this productive power to defense purposes. To do this will require hard work and sacrifice by all of us. I know all of us are prepared to do whatever is

necessary in the cause of peace and freedom. We have never yet failed to give all that is needed in that cause, and we never will fail in it.

In order to increase our defense effort rapidly enough to meet the danger that we face, we shall have to make many changes in our way of living and working here at home. We shall have to give up many things we enjoy. We shall have to work harder and longer. To prevent runaway inflation and runaway prices, we shall have to impose certain restrictions upon ourselves.

The Congress has today completed action on legislation to enable us to channel the necessary effort to defense production, to increase our productive capacity, and to hold down inflation.

After this legislation is signed I intend to talk to you again, to explain what your Government proposes to do, and how each citizen can play his part in this national effort.

As we move forward to arm ourselves more quickly in the days ahead, and as we strive with the United Nations for victory in Korea, we must keep clearly in mind what we believe in and what we are trying to do. We also want the rest of the world to understand clearly our aims and our hopes.

First: We believe in the United Nations. When we ratified its charter, we pledged ourselves to seek peace and security through this world organization. We kept our word when we went to the support of the United Nations in Korea 2 months ago. We shall never go back on that pledge.

Second: We believe the Koreans have a right to be free, independent, and united-as they want to be. Under the direction and guidance of the United Nations, we, with others, will do our part to help them enjoy that right. The United States has no other aim in Korea.

Third: We do not want the fighting in Korea to expand into a general war. It will not spread unless Communist imperialism draws other armies and governments into the fight of the aggressors against the United Nations.

Fourth: We hope in particular that the people of China will not be misled or forced into fighting against the United Nations and against the American people, who have always been and still are their friends. Only the Communist imperialism, which has already started to dismember China, could gain from China's involvement in the war. The Communist imperialists are the only ones who can gain if China moves into this fight.

Fifth: We do not want Formosa or any part of Asia for ourselves. We believe that the future of Formosa, like that of every other territory in dispute, should be settled peacefully. We believe that it should be settled by international action, and not by the decision of the United States or any other state alone. The mission of the 7th Fleet is to keep Formosa out of the conflict. Our purpose is peace, not conquest.

Sixth: We believe in freedom for all the nations of the Far East. That is one of the reasons why we are fighting under the United Nations for the freedom of Korea. We helped the Philippines become independent and we have supported the national aspirations to independence of other Asian countries. Russia has never voluntarily given up any territory it has acquired in the Far East; it has never given independence to any people who have fallen under its control. We not only want freedom for the peoples of Asia, but we also want to help them to secure for themselves better health, more food, better clothes and homes, and the chance to live their own lives in peace. The things we want for the people of Asia are the same things we want for the people of the rest of the world.

Seventh: We do not believe in aggressive or preventive war. Such war is the weapon of dictators, not of free democratic countries like the United States. We are arming only for the defense against aggression. Even though Communist imperialism does not believe in peace, it can be discouraged from new aggression if we and other free peoples are strong, determined, and united.

Eighth: We want peace and we shall achieve it. Our men are fighting for peace today in Korea. We are working for peace constantly in the United Nations and in all the capitals of the world. Our workers, our farmers, our businessmen, all our vast resources, are helping now to create the strength which will make peace secure.

We want peace not only for its own sake but because we want all the peoples of the world, including ourselves, to be free to devote their full energies to making their lives richer and happier. We shall give what help we can to make this universal human wish come true.

We invite all the nations of the world, without exception, to join with us in this great work.

The events in Korea have shown us again all the misery and horrors of war. The North Koreans have learned that the penalties of armed conflict fall as heavily on those who act as tools for the

Communist dictatorship as they do on its victims. There will be no profit for any people who follow the Communist dictatorship down its dark and bloody path.

Against the futile and tragic course of dictatorship, we uphold, for all people, the way of freedom--the way of mutual cooperation and international peace. We assert that mankind can find progress and advancement along the path of peace. At this critical hour in the history of the world, our country has been called upon to give of its leadership, its efforts, and its resources to maintain peace and justice among nations. We have responded to that call. We will not fail.

The task which has fallen upon our beloved country is a great one. In carrying it out, we ask God to purge us of all selfishness and meanness, and to give us strength and courage for the days ahead. We pray God to give us strength, ability, and wisdom for the great task we face.