Dividing Korea

- Prior to World War II : Japan seized control of the Korean Peninsula. Rule was harsh and the Koreans hoped for independence.
- As world War II came to an end Soviet soldiers accepted surrender of Japanese soldiers north of the 38th parallel. American forces did the same south of the 38th parallel.
    - The result was the division of Korea into two zones.
    - The northern zone was Soviet occupied
    - The southern zone was American occupied.

- Soon a Pro-American government was formed in South Korea and a Communist regime was established in North Korea.
- South Korea was led by President Syngman Rhee
- American and Soviet forces withdrew from both zones in 1948 and 1949.

The Invasion of South Korea

Each of these countries had goals of unifying Korea under their respective governments.

- In June of 1950 forces from North Korea crossed the 38th parallel to unify Korea under communist control by force. The invasion was a complete surprise.
- Containment had recently failed with the fall of China to communism, now it seemed as if another major setback was to occur.
- Truman feared that "no response" would result in a third world war.

Truman Responds (Police Action)

- Truman ordered American air and naval forces to support the South Koreans
- He would later send ground forces as well
- He did not go to Congress for a declaration of war.
- Truman requested that the U.N. support a resolution calling upon member nations to help defend South Korea.
- The U.N. supported the resolution because the Soviets were not present (remember they were boycotting the U.N. because it had failed to recognize Mao Zedongs government as the legitimate government of China.
- Eventually 16 U.N. member nations committed troops to the defense of South Korea. U.S. troops constituted 80% of the U.N. force.
- General Douglas MacArthur was placed in charge of the United Nations Command.