



Question 3

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- “Truman was slow to react to the threat of communism, but when he did, he overreacted.” Assess the validity of this statement.

Thesis

- The statement is for-the-most-part valid. Truman did little to prevent the spread of communism other than the Marshall Plan until he send troops to Korea during the Korean War.

- After WWII, many European Countries were in shambles. The U.S. saw a continent ravaged by war looking for strong leadership and aid. This is the perfect opportunity for Communist leaders to take over.
- So, the U.S. adopted the policy Containment, not trying to eliminate communism across the globe, but to prevent it from spreading.

The Marshall Plan

- In the aftermath of WWII, Western Europe lay devastated. The war had ruined crop fields and destroyed infrastructure, leaving most of Europe in dire need. On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall announced the European Recovery Program (Aka the Marshall Plan). To avoid antagonizing the Soviet Union, Marshall announced that the purpose of sending aid to Western Europe was completely humanitarian, and even offered aid to the communist states in the east. Congress approved Truman's request of \$17 billion over four years to be sent to Great Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium.

- However, the Marshall Plan wasn't enough to stop the threat of communism everywhere. Czech, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, China, and North Korea became communist.

The Korean War

- The failure to hold free elections throughout the Korean Peninsula in 1948 deepened the division between the two sides; the North established a communist government, while the South became a democracy. The 38th parallel increasingly became a political border between the two Korean states. Although reunification negotiations continued in the months preceding the war, tension intensified. Skirmishes at the 38th Parallel went on. The situation escalated into open warfare when North Korean forces invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950.

- In 1950, at the United Nations Security Council, The United States and other countries passed a Security Council resolution authorizing military intervention in Korea.
- The US provided 88% of the 341,000 international soldiers which aided South Korean forces in repelling the invasion

- After sustaining major casualties the first two months, the U.N. forces pushed the border past the 38th parallel (the original location). But when the Chinese joined (and the Soviets supplied enemy forces) the North Koreans, they pushed the border back to the 38th parallel.
- The fighting ended on 27 July 1953, when the armistice agreement was signed. The agreement restored the border between the Koreas near the 38th Parallel and created the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a 2.5-mile (4.0 km)-wide fortified buffer zone between the two Korean nations. Minor incidents still continue today.

Conclusion

- While Truman and the US reacted slowly to the threat of communism, it is debatable whether or not War in Korea was an overreaction .