



U.S. Senate (1950)

U.S. Involvement in the Situation in Korea

Executive Summary

One of the hallmark issues of the Cold War has been U.S. and Soviet intervention in countries around the world to establish political, economic, and militaristic dominion to prevent the spread of conflicting ideologies. In light of the mounting tensions in the divided country of Korea, the U.S. Senate must consider how to act on the pre-existing conflicts in the country and the effects these actions will have on the world stage and during the looming midterm elections. The U.S. Senate can do this by choosing to support President Truman's actions or by impeding his advances. This must be done in order to ensure that Korea falls into a pro-U.S. stance, to halt the proliferation of communist countries in Asia, and gain the upper hand in the midterm elections to shape the way the U.S. should move forward.

Historical Background

After the War: Korea Divided

During the Japanese occupation, Korean refugees fled to China and the U.S., where the ideological split began. Koreans in China participated in Soviet-trained and Chinese-dominated guerrillas, where future premier Kim Il-sung became a major in the Red Army. In the U.S., Syngman Rhee adopted the nationalist stance during his studies and formed the Korean Provisional Government against the Japanese. In August 1945, after the Japanese surrender, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea along the 38th parallel into Soviet-occupied and U.S.-occupied zones. The North would go to the Soviet Union, and the South would be occupied by the U.S. for administrative purposes and would leave once general elections took place later on. When the U.N. called for general elections in 1947, the Soviet Union declined to comply and denied access to the U.N. Commission due to differences in what kind of regime should be followed in Korea. Elections took place in South Korea in 1948, when nationalist Syngman Rhee was elected President of the Republic of South Korea. Three months later, the Soviets approved the elections in North Korea, and Kim Il-Sung was elected Premier of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.¹

¹ Wilson Center – Cold War Timeline

Even if the newly formed countries were independent and geographically divided, communism was present in nationalist-dominated South Korea. The communist faction didn't approve of the new regime and caused havoc across the country with the aid provided by the strong military of North Korea, trained by the Soviets with many years of experience in guerrilla warfare during the Chinese Civil War. South Korea, with the help of the U.S., created the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA). Unlike its counterpart in the north, the ROKA had a quarter fewer members and insufficient training. The inner conflicts reigned on for years at the border between the countries, leading to 40,000 Korean deaths.

Stalin and Kim Il-sung: Soviet involvement in North Korea

Kim Il-sung strengthened his control over the Communist Party and over the government with Stalin's help. Once control over the country was achieved, the Soviet Union helped train the Korean People's Army (KPA) until it became as dexterous as the Red Army. The Chinese released from its service hundreds of Korean officials that served to reinforce the KPA and provide military experience. Militaristically, North Korea was better trained, better equipped and larger than their southern counterparts. When the time came in 1949, Kim Il-sung launched an offensive to take over the south and again sought the help of Stalin to launch an attack, which Stalin refused. Stalin was concerned about U.S. involvement in the situation if North Korea attacked. If the U.S. defended South Korea, this would lead to the annihilation of the KPA and a Soviet show of force that could initiate a new global conflict. The response made Kim Il-sung redouble his efforts of strengthening the country's military capabilities for the next year.²

Current Situation

A few days ago, the President and senior members of government were presented with the top-secret document NSC-68 by Paul Nitze, head of Policy Planning at the State Department, characterizing the Cold War as an ideological struggle of global proportions that required our intervention to halt and reverse the spread of communism to satellite countries.³ These two pieces of information come at a time when Asia suffers an ongoing communist advance. A year before, Mao Zedong created the People's Republic of China, which put a quarter of the world population under a communist regime and expelled a pro-U.S. leader from the country; with that, diplomatic relations have ceased. France is fighting communist guerrillas in Vietnam. Japan is preoccupied by reconstruction and economic development. And, Korea is divided, not only geographically, but politically between conflicting ideologies. The potential for a Soviet-backed China intervening in Korean affairs to finally unite the country under a single communist regime is increasing. Domestically, allegations of communist spies and finger-pointing are on the rise, propagating a generalized feeling of insecurity later known as the Red Scare. Democrats demand an increased military spending to secure U.S. operations around the globe, while Republicans are taking the opposing side.

² Britannica – The Korean War

³ Willian Stueck – The Korean War

Now that the Soviets have taken action and conflicts across the Korean border are on the rise, it is up to the U.S. Senate to determine the best possible means to facilitate the independence of pro-U.S. countries around the globe and how to halt and retract the spread of communist ideology and Soviet power over the globe. Specifically, the focus is in Korea, so that other Asian countries don't fall to communist regimes, and Mao's ideologies don't extend their influence in the region.

Questions for Discussion

- What incentives and consequential measures does the U.S. Senate have to provide aid to South Korea?
- Should the U.S. Senate use the Constitution's War Powers Clause, found in Article I, Section 8, to allow the President to conduct hostilities in Korea?
- What should the primary goals of the U.S. Senate be regarding communism on U.S. soil and among colleagues?

Protecting the Internal Security of the U.S. from Sabotage and Espionage

Executive Summary

Since the close of the Second World War, the United States and Soviet Union have been waging an international struggle for influence and power with each other in every corner of the world. Dubbed by President Harry S. Truman as a “Cold War,” a reference to the ‘chilly’ relations between the superpowers that developed since their alliance against the Nazis concluded, the struggle is being fought on economic, political, and covert fronts. This last theater of combat has come to dominate the American imagination in recent years, since the conviction of Alger Hiss and, more recently, the damning accusation by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) that the State Department has been infiltrated by hundreds of communist sympathizers and potential Soviet spies.

Senators, your oath of office swears you to defend the United States Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. If, as Sen. McCarthy claims, the reach of Soviet influence in the federal government is far greater than we previously believed, it is incumbent upon you to draft legislation, engage in oversight, and launch investigations to defend our principles, our Constitution, and our country from those who would see them harmed.

Historical Background

The First Red Scare

The ‘First Red Scare’ began decades ago, beginning with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which sent shockwaves across the United States as anxieties of a communist insurrection swept popular culture. Exacerbated by hypernationalism at the time, as well as a series of high-profile labor strikes—such as the Seattle General Strike and the Boston Police Strike—the first red scare had both cultural and political implications.⁴ Culminating in the “Palmer Raids” of late 1919 and early 1920, the Justice Department conducted a series of raids led by the administration of President Woodrow Wilson to weed out and arrest leftists, anarchists, and communists that had immigrated to the United States. The First Red Scare was generally credited with creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust around potential or supposed communists. The hysteria was further ingrained after members of the Wilson Administration claimed a series of anarchist bombings, race riots, and labor strikes were part of a potential communist overthrow of the government.⁵



⁴ <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/> ; https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/First_Red_Scare ; <https://oxfordre.com/amERICANhistory/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-555>

⁵ <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/chicago-race-riot-of-1919> ; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Day_riots_of_1919



The First Red Scare wound to a close after several members of the Wilson Administration, including Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and then-head of the DOJ's General Intelligence Division (GID) and present-day head of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover, made a series of wide-ranging predictions that communist or Bolshevik sympathizers were planning a total overthrow of the U.S. Government on May Day 1920.⁶ After May Day 1920 came and went without occurrence, those who promulgated the constant fear of immigrant insurrection in the U.S. began to wane in influence, with the election of President Warren G. Harding in a landslide victory in 1920 expelling Attorney General Palmer from his post at the DOJ and leading to a decreased focus on anti-labor and anti-communist action by the federal government.⁷

Communists Among Us

Communist anxieties took a long hiatus as a result of the First World War, the Great Depression, and the subsequent Second World War, in which we would find ourselves aligned with the very Bolsheviks that Wilson, Palmer, and Hoover warned the nation of decades earlier.⁸ Following the close of World War II and the descent of—as former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill dubbed it—the ‘Iron Curtain’ across Europe, America and the Soviet Union found themselves as the only two major global powers left on the world stage.⁹ The future relationship between the U.S. and USSR similarly became unclear. The Berlin Blockade of 1948-49 and victory of the Soviet-supported Communist Party of China over the Kuomintang in China last year left little room for belief that the U.S. and USSR could remain partners in peace. The western world began to consider the possibility that the Soviets would attempt to subvert American and western hegemony by covert, as well as overt, means.¹⁰

The fear of Stalin's influence in domestic affairs began to make its way back into the popular culture, perhaps first brought to Western powers' attention by the Kellogg-Taschereau Commission in Canada in 1946, in which a Canadian spy-ring was discovered passing off weapon and radar secrets to the Soviets.¹¹ The newly permanent House Committee on Un-American Activities, or HUAC, has taken the lead stateside on snuffing out communist influence. In 1948, they heard testimony from Elizabeth Bentley, a turned Soviet spy who confessed her espionage to Congress and made a number of accusations about other government officials, including Harry Dexter White, a senior Treasury Department bureaucrat who has vehemently denied such allegations.¹² HUAC also subpoenaed Whittaker Chambers, a senior

⁶ <https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-palmer-raids>

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1920> ; <https://constitutingamerica.org/warren-g-harding-twenty-ninth-president-of-the-united-states-guest-essay-is-t-juliette-turner/>

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Allied-Powers-international-alliance>

⁹ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/churchill-delivers-iron-curtain-speech>

¹⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Berlin-blockade> ; <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>

¹¹ <https://cha-shc.ca/uploads/5c38afba549c7.pdf>

¹² <http://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/elizabeth-bentley> ; <https://www.history.com/news/pearl-harbor-soviet-spy-harry-dexter-white>

editor at the *New York Times*, who detailed his Soviet espionage and added more accusations to Bentley's pile.¹³

These accusations of infiltration came to a head in the case of Alger Hiss, one of the men named in the Chambers testimony before HUAC.¹⁴ Doubts about his testimony, spearheaded by California Congressman Richard Nixon, led to further investigation that began to poke holes in Hiss' story. This led to a libel suit in which Chambers eventually produced high-level State Department documents that he alleged Hiss provided to him in 1938. Hiss was eventually taken down for perjury before a grand jury and has since been imprisoned. The hailstorm of media attention around this event, however, has every corner of the government paranoid that a 'Second Red Scare' is unfolding before our very eyes.

Most recently, the fear of communists at high levels of the government manifested itself after the loss of China to communist forces late last year. Truman and his administration has argued that the events in China were beyond the control of the U.S. Nevertheless, many in the China lobby in congress felt that the U.S. gave up the fight and was apathetic in countering the communists in a strategically important country. Senator McCarthy has even argued that communists within the State Department sabotaged U.S. efforts in China and helped it go red.

Current Situation

Senator McCarthy's List

Senator Joseph McCarthy has taken the spotlight of communist purgation from his counterparts in the House, using his Chairmanship of the Senate Government Operations Committee to launch wide-ranging investigations into potential communist sympathizers in the U.S. government. Recent legislation like President Truman's Executive Order 9835 and California's Leveraging Act both establish political-loyalty review boards, which has led to thousands of expulsions and resignations from government since their inception.

Senator McCarthy has now taken his accusations to new heights, however, with new claims that Soviet influencers now permeate every level of government, are omnipresent in the bureaucracy and are ready to topple America the moment the USSR decides to invade. In a speech just a few months ago, Senator McCarthy presented a list of those he believed had communist affiliations within the U.S. State Department and may have contributed to the loss of China to communist forces. Despite having little to no evidence for many of these instances, the media attention of the nation has been fixated on this list ever since. Now, Senator McCarthy has charged the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) with protecting the United States from espionage and sabotage in its many permutations.¹⁵ Headed by Senator Pat McCarran (D-Nevada), the subcommittee is hard at work to sniff out the so-called "Fifth Amendment Communists" who McCarthy alleges will subvert and lie in order to protect the truth about their true allegiances.¹⁶

Communism Ascendant

¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Whittaker-Chambers>

¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alger-Hiss>

¹⁵ http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/bc/senate_1952/index.html

¹⁶ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/lasvegas-mccarran/>

Communism has proven to be a forward ideology to expel from American society. As Congress works diligently to rid the government of Soviet sympathizers, other aspects of American life face their own struggles, like the emergence of a Hollywood Blacklist, an employment blacklist of confirmed and suspected communist sympathizers in the entertainment industry. HUAC has heard testimonies from a number of Disney executives and the up-and-coming President of the American Screen Actors Guild (SAG), a gentleman by the name of Ronald Reagan. Each has testified to the pervading influence of communism and communist tactics in their industry, and Americans across the country are increasingly wary of the actors, screenwriters, directors, and artists who have brought such joy to our TV sets for so many years.

With rapidly escalating tensions in the Korean peninsula between the communist-backed North and U.S.-backed South, the ‘Cold War’ is showing its potential for real sparks. As violence seems imminent again in East Asia, our diplomatic and military services must stay free of Soviet influence. The U.S. Senate must protect America from potential communist subversion and begin to figure out how to defend itself from this shadowy, unknown enemy.

Potential Solutions

Legislative Action

The arsenal of policy-making powers available to the Senate is vast; any number of new laws could circumscribe the ability of Soviet sympathizers to undercut American stability at home and abroad. The failure of the Mundt-Ferguson Communist Registration Bill—which would have required all card-carrying members of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) to formally register themselves with the Department of Justice—has given a number of the more hawkish Senators an idea of the limits of their legislative ability. With that said, a faction of Senators hope to revive portions of this bill into a more palatable, marketable piece of legislation. Specifically, several Senators hope to revive the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB), conceptualized in Mundt-Ferguson, and pass it into law. This Board, in theory, would be empowered to investigate instances of suspected communist subversion or, more broadly, any attempts by Americans to promote “totalitarian dictatorships” at home or abroad. Critics assail the proposal, claiming that it is anti-immigrant and comes dangerously close to being outright unconstitutional. While this latter nuance is a question for the Courts, the idea remains popular amongst a small, but growing cadre of Senators.

The U.S. Senate is also discussing some form of direct action against the CPUSA itself. A number of sitting Senators, including a number of liberal Democrats, have entertained the idea of outright abolition of the Communist Party USA, criminalizing membership in the party and attempting to stamp it out of existence outright. Critics, including the leader of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) J. Edgar Hoover, argue that this proposal would merely drive the CPUSA into hiding, forcing its activities underground and pushing it closer to outright organized criminal activity. Despite this notable opposition outside Congress, the idea remains popular under the Capitol Dome, and will likely be a major topic of discussion in this coming session of Congress.

Respecting the Limits of the First Branch

Senators would be wise to remember that even their redoubtable power has its limits. The judicial branch, that pesky consortium of beard-stroking, punctilious, detached empty robes, once again threatens to inhibit Senatorial lawmaking. Though clearly it is us Senators who, empowered by popular mandate, are best-equipped to understand the people's interest, the Supreme Court of the United States could strike down our legislation if it proves overly vague or overzealous in its anti-Communist Crusade. Cautioning the boundaries laid out in the Bill of Rights and respecting the ostensible wisdom of our Courts could save a great deal of time and headache down the road.

Terms to Know

- McCarthyism
- NSC-68
- Alger Hiss
- Bolshevism
- Izdeliye 501
- HUAC
- OSS
- Executive Order 9835
- Levering Act
- Alien Registration Act
- Palmer Raids
- SISS

Questions for Discussion

- How can the Senate, through the SISS or some other organ, discover the truth about communist influence in the State Department and other government agencies?
- What is to be made of the lack of evidence behind Sen. McCarthy's claims? Is the Senate justified in blacklisting, firing, or otherwise damaging the reputations of potentially innocent men based merely on speculation that they have communist sympathies?
- How can the Senate push to legislate against Soviet espionage without running up against constitutional barriers?