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World Geography

Why Two Koreas?



Split North and South Korea

- Japan occupied Korea during World War II.
- After end of WW II (1945), the Soviet Union occupied the north part of the country; the U.S. occupied the south.
- The 2 sides could not agree on unification, so 2 separate governments were formed.

Korean War

- Both Koreas claimed to be the legitimate government.
- In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, with the intent to unify them as one single communist country.

Korean War

- The U.S. fought on S. Korea's side.
- China fought on N. Korea's side.



Korean War Ends

- Fought to a stalemate. Fighting ended in 1953 with almost the same border.
- Armistice signed. No peace treaty. Technically still at war.
- Both still claim to be legitimate government of Korea.

DMZ

- DMZ = Demilitarized Zone.
- Thousands of soldiers, rockets and other armaments still line both sides of the border.
- The U.S. still stations about 30,000 soldiers in the DMZ today.



Relations with the U.S.

- South Korea is an ally of the U.S.
- North Korea began to try to develop nuclear weapons in the 1990s, in violation of the Nuclear test ban treaty.
- Has tested several weapons and missiles in the last 10 years.



The Koreas in 2018.

- South Korea hosted the Winter Olympics. Joint N. & S. Korean team.
- Both sides pledged to sign treaty ending the war.
- President Trump met with the leader of N. Korea in June, hoping N. Korea would denuclearize. N. Korea has continued their nuke program.