

Document Analysis: The Korean War

Document A

Dear brothers and sisters!

Great danger threatens our motherland and its people. What is needed to liquidate this menace? In this war which is being waged against the Syngman Rhee clique, the Korean people must defend the Korean Democratic People's Republic and its constitution, they must liquidate the unpatriotic fascist puppet regime of Syngman Rhee which has been established in the southern part of the republic; they must liberate the southern part of our motherland from the domination of the Syngman Rhee clique and they must restore the peoples' committees there - the real organs of power. Under the banner of the Korean Democratic People's Republic we must complete the unification of the motherland and create a single, independent, democratic state. The war which we are forced to wage is a just war for the unification and independence of the motherland and for freedom and democracy.

-Broadcast of Kim Il Sung to the nations, June 26, 1950

Document B

I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support. The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the order of the Security Council. Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa [Taiwan]...I am calling on the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland...A return to the rule of force in international affairs would have far-reaching effects. The United States will continue to uphold the rule of law.

-Statement by U.S. President Truman, June 27, 1950

Questions

- 1a. What is the message of Document A? (Be certain to include quotes from Doc. A to back up your answer)
- b. Which phrases emphasize that it is a piece of propaganda?
2. How do Documents A and B differ in the explanation they give of June 25, 1950?
3. What are the value and limitations of using Documents A and B as evidence of why the Korean War started?