

A map of Korea, 1952. The 38th parallel divides the peninsula in two, and after World War II, U.S. forces occupied the territory south of the line and the Soviet Union held the territory to the north.

LC Geography and Map Division

The admiral, however, did not have enough men to march on the Korean capital and impose a treaty on the king, so the Americans and their ships withdrew.

The Navy now enlisted the support of the Chinese, who encouraged the royal head of the subordinate kingdom to work with the Americans. Finally, on 22 May 1882, in sight of the U.S. screw sloop *Swatara*, Commodore Shufeldt and Korean officials signed a treaty that provided for peace, friendship and an exchange of diplomats. The agreement also granted the United States most-favored-nation treatment with special trading rights on the peninsula. The Koreans hoped this unique relationship with the United States would help fend off their more demanding neighbors, particularly the Japanese.

This proved an illusion, however, because the American interest in Korea faded even as the focus of the Chinese, Japanese and Russians sharpened. The Imperial Japanese Navy's sound thrashing of the Chinese fleet in the naval Battle of the Yalu in 1894, during the Sino-Japanese War, ended Beijing's domination of Korea. Russian designs on the kingdom met the same fate as a result of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. That conflict, fought partly on the Korean peninsula, was capped by the Japanese destruction of a Russian fleet in the Strait of Tsushima

