



President Truman's Dismissal of General MacArthur: A Case Study in Bureaucratic Politics

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President Harry Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur from Korea in 1951 occurred as a result of bureaucratic politics. For forty years, historians have portrayed this decision as a straight-forward conflict between two strong-willed individuals. In reality, the President's decision was a result of a breakdown in communication due to misconceptions, inadequate third party advice, and partisan politics.' The decision to dismiss General MacArthur will be analyzed using Graham T. Allison's Governmental Politics Paradigm. The model views government decisions as products of "compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal power. Using the bureaucratic politics paradigm. This work will examine the President's decision by presenting players' positions, perceptions, motivations, preferences, the compromises and actions which resulted in General MacArthur's dismissal. First, the background of the controversy. On June 25, 1950, the Korean People's Army of North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea. In the first phase of the war, American forces under General Douglas MacArthur, deployed from Japan, to reinforce the small South Korean Army. Initially, the allies were driven back .

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