

Press Release: February 19, 2019
Airing on PBS stations nationwide
Monday, April 29, 2019 at 9 p.m. ET (Check local listings.)

Press Contact: Olivia Wong, WETA
owong@weta.org / 703.998.2086

**PBS DOCUMENTARY “KOREA: THE NEVER-ENDING WAR”
SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON A GEOPOLITICAL HOT SPOT,
PREMIERES APRIL 29, 2019 ON PBS**

— *Two-Hour Film Presents Materials Never Before Shown on American Television and Confronts the “Forgotten War” Perception of an Important Turning Point in World History* —

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sharon Percy Rockefeller, president and CEO of WETA Washington, D.C., today announced that ***KOREA: The Never-Ending War***, a new two-hour documentary about the Korean War, will premiere on **Monday, April 29, 2019, 9–11 p.m. ET** (check local listings) on PBS stations. The film, written and produced by **John Maggio** and narrated by Korean-American actor **John Cho**, brings to light a new look at the history of the Korean War, an event that still reverberates to this day. The program will also be broadcast at a later date via the American Forces Network to American service men and women and civilians at U.S. Department of Defense locations around the world.

KOREA: The Never-Ending War is about a conflict that people worldwide have long underestimated, misunderstood and misrepresented, yet is still today instantly relevant. The film encompasses the present and past of the conflict, from today’s leaders and events — including U.S. President Donald Trump and Supreme Leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) Kim Jong Un — to historic personalities and moments of the past, such as the following individuals:

- Joseph Stalin, Premier of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.);
- Harry S. Truman, President of the United States of America;
- Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, People’s Republic of China;
- Kim Il Sung, Supreme Leader of North Korea;
- and Syngman Rhee, the first and the last Head of State of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and then President of South Korea.

“The political realities at the center of today’s current conflict mirror those faced in 1950. It’s a delicate and dangerous political chess game with the threat of nuclear war hanging over the entire world,” said Maggio. “The Korean War was largely forgotten in this country, falling in the shadow of WWII and Vietnam, but the lessons of that war are never more important. This war is not officially over, and my hope is this film, told from the perspective of the men and women who fought and survived it, will shed new light on how we arrived here.”

“This series will share with public television audiences a new understanding of the conflict, illuminating why the Korean peninsula continues to play a critical role in geopolitics today,” said Rockefeller. “The timely PBS broadcast reminds us how this history continues to shape our present world.”

As the documentary details, the Korean War was a gigantic global event: 24 nations took part in the struggle that lasted three full years, June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. It displayed the outsized egos of enormous historical personalities and marked the lives and deaths of millions of anonymous people — historians estimate four million died. The film provides multiple views of the war — on the ground and in the trenches, from ordinary citizens and soldiers caught in the

crossfire, to the political and military leaders who pulled the strings and controlled the fate of the war from far away, featuring key battles and turning points before the war, during the war, and the war's aftermath, leading to the present day.

The Korean War forced the U.S. into becoming the world's policeman, with a large standing army, huge defense budget, military bases around the world, and all but routinely intervening in far-off conflicts. The film documents how the conflict on the Korean peninsula continued post 1953, with a brazen attack by the North on South Korea's Presidential Blue House in 1968; the North's seizure of the U.S.S. Pueblo, holding the crew hostage for 11 months; the downing of KAL Flight 858 in 1987, right before the first Olympics held in South Korea; and the events that triggered North Korea's nuclear program, while, at the same time, South Korea's economic expansion. The film demonstrates how the consequences of the war's stalemate have led to today, where Kim Jong Un is developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, American war ships have been deployed near the Korean peninsula, a controversial anti-missile system was installed in South Korea — and the tense relations continue for all parties, despite recent diplomatic efforts.

“The experience of the Korean War has had a long-lasting impact on America's role in the world today,” said Jeff Bieber, executive producer for WETA. “It was the first war fought by the United Nations, it was the first and only war to pit Communist superpowers in direct battle against anti-Communist superpowers, and it was the first time an American President sent troops into full-scale combat without a vote by Congress. All of this has ongoing consequences for our present and our future. The more we understand the ongoing challenges in Korea, the better we can chart our future with eyes wide open.”

Through extensive archival materials and interviews with those who speak from personal experience, including American and South Korean veterans who fought in the war along with civilians caught in the conflict, ***KOREA: The Never-Ending War*** tells the story of how the world we live in today was shaped by this conflict. The series presents the expertise and insights of historians, scholars, journalists and authors including **Victor Cha**, Senior Advisor and Korea Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), who also served in the George W. Bush administration; and **Sue Mi Terry**, Senior Fellow, Korea Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

KOREA: The Never-Ending War will be accompanied by an interactive website and educational initiative designed to engage teachers and students through multiple platforms, including [PBS LearningMedia](#). For more information about ***KOREA: The Never-Ending War*** visit www.pbs.org/koreanwar. Viewers are encouraged to join the conversation on social media using the hashtag **#KoreanWarPBS** on Facebook and Twitter.

KOREA: The Never-Ending War is a production of WETA Washington, D.C., KBS and ZED, in association with ARK Media and the BBC. Executive Producers: WETA: Jeff Bieber, Dalton Delan; ZED: Manuel Catteau; BBC: Mandy Chang and Jo Lapping; and KBS: Jeong Joong Kim. Producers: John Maggio and Tom Denison. Writer: John Maggio. Funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and by PBS.

An electronic press kit for ***KOREA: The Never-Ending War***, including downloadable photos for promotional use, is available at www.pressroom.pbs.org.

###

WETA Washington, D.C., is one of the largest producing stations of new content for public television in the United States. Other WETA productions and co-productions include *PBS NewsHour*, *Washington Week*, *The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize*, *The Italian Americans*, and documentaries by filmmaker Ken Burns and scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The WETA studios and administrative offices are located in Arlington, Virginia. Sharon Percy Rockefeller is president and CEO. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at www.weta.org.

KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) has long been a leader in the development of the broadcasting culture of the nation. As the key public service broadcaster of Korea, KBS has undertaken initiatives at technological turning points while providing a communication channel for diverse views. In the multi-channel digital broadcasting environment, a number of broadcasting channels are available, making the social role of public broadcasting ever more important. With the digitalization of terrestrial television and the changes in the digital media environment, KBS strives to connect with the audience through the production of audience oriented, high-quality public services. KBS initiated the country's first radio broadcasting service in 1927 and commenced Korea's first television broadcasting service in 1961. First broadcasting HD programs in 2001, KBS completed the transfer to digital broadcasting in 2012. KBS headquarters are located in the Yoido district of Seoul. There are 18 regional stations and 11 overseas bureaus as well as eight subsidiary companies such as KBS Media, which manages the local and global marketing of KBS content. More information is available at english.kbs.co.kr/index.html.

ZED is a French leading independent producer and distributor specialized in every major genres of factual documentaries such as History, Investigation, Natural History or Sciences. The company has been on the international scene since its creation, through major co-productions, pre-sales and sales, representing catalogs for over 40 of the best producers over the world. More information is available at www.zed.fr/en/.

Ark Media has been one of leading production houses in the U.S. for over two decades, creating non-fiction series, theatrical documentaries, and one-off television specials on a wide variety of subjects. Ark films have been honored with four national prime time Emmy Awards, an Academy Award nomination, the DuPont Columbia baton, three George H. Foster Peabody Awards, among other awards and accolades. John Maggio is a principal producer and director at Ark Media. Maggio's films have been honored with the National Emmy Award and Writers Guild Award, multiple nominations for News and Documentary Emmy Awards, and have premiered in competition at the Sundance Film Festival. His 2017 film *The Newspaperman: The Life And Times Of Ben Bradlee* (HBO) was nominated for the 2018 PGA Award for best documentary feature. His most recent film *Panic* (HBO), a reexamination of the 2008 Financial Crisis featuring Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the other major players involved, premiered in December 2018. More information about Ark Media is available at www.ark-media.net.

PBS, with nearly 350 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches nearly 100 million people through television and nearly 28 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS' premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a new 24/7 channel, online at pbskids.org, via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at pbs.org/pressroom or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).