

An article published a while ago, but relevant today.

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"We slipped a note...under the door into the Pentagon and said, 'Look, let us go up there...and burn down five of the biggest towns in North Korea — and they're not very big — and that ought to stop it.' Well, the answer to that was four or five screams — 'You'll kill a lot of noncombatants!' — and 'It's too horrible!' Yet over a period of three years or so...we burned down every town in North Korea and South Korea, too....Now, over a period of three years this is palatable, but to kill a few people to stop this from happening — a lot of people can't stomach it."— *Former U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay*

"Chiang Kai-Shek and Rhee...feared that peace would be the end of them. Dulles feared that peace would fatally interfere with the plan to rebuild the old Axis powers for a new anti-Soviet crusade...the dominant trend in American political, economic and military thinking was fear of peace. General Van Fleet summed it all up in speaking to a visiting Filipino delegation in January, 1952: 'Korea has been a blessing. There had to be a Korea either here or someplace in the world.' In this simple-minded confession lies the key to the hidden history of the Korean War." — *I. F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War* (New York: *Monthly Review Press*, 1952)

At the conclusion of World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States occupied previously undivided Korea in order to expel the defeated Japanese who had ruled the entire Peninsula for decades. A temporary demarcation line separating the Russian and U.S. forces was created approximately along the 38th parallel. This line was not intended to create two separate countries. But as the Cold War deepened, both powers insisted that re-unification of North and South be carried out according to their own ideological bias. The U.S. supported an extremely repressive ruler in the South, Syngman Rhee, while the North was led by Kim Il Sung, a fiercely independent man greatly vilified by the West. The two sides increasingly clashed across the parallel for several years. The North Korean government claimed that in 1949 alone, the South Korean army and/or police committed over 2600 armed incursions into the North. Subsequently, documents have suggested that, at a minimum, there were a number

of attacks by South Korean forces into the North, and that many, if not all, of the attacks on the South had been reprisals. Syngman Rhee's public pronouncements throughout 1949 and early 1950 consistently spoke of his desire to order his forces to attack the North. Whatever happened on June 25, 1950 remains unclear, but the fighting on that day is considered by some scholars to have been no more than the escalation of an ongoing civil war provoked by the Cold War.



Pyongyang City, Capital of North Korea, 1953
after Relentless Bombing by U.S. During War
PHOTO: Korean War Museum

Long before the Korean War broke out in June 1950, there was another civil guerrilla war being waged within parts of the South between Koreans aligning themselves with their American occupiers, and those desiring clear independence from outsiders. Repression by Rhee's security forces against perceived dissenters with the protection of the U.S. presence was systematically brutal. The success of the revolution in next door China in 1949 greatly increased U.S. anxieties and contributed to firm support of the tyrannical, but anti-Communist Rhee. .

The United Nations was not a neutral organization in 1950 any more than it is in 2000. The Security Council's June 27 resolution to defend South Korea was reached with little accurate information and it was clear there was no interest in acquiring such information. The United States exerted great pressure on the other members. The Soviet Union was absent due to its boycott of the UN over refusal to seat Communist China in place of Taiwan. Yugoslavia's request that North Korea be invited to present its perspective was dismissed out of hand. Token military forces from sixteen other countries took part in one way or another which technically enabled the war to be fought by "United Nations" forces. But it was to be an "American" show, a fact finalized on July 7 with a UN Resolution that, in effect, made the United Nations' forces subject to U.S. General Douglas MacArthur without making MacArthur subject to the UN.

The brutal war that developed was fought in defense of the Syngman Rhee regime, not for the benefit of an undivided Peninsula benefitting all Koreans. It continued ruthlessly until an armistice ending the hot war was signed on July 27, 1953. To this date there has been no peace treaty signed, even though talks technically continue at Panmunjom on the northern side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Officially the U.S. is still at war with North Korea.



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