

American history-cold war

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



This work is an effort to acknowledge the Korean War. This is not an attempt to provide a history. The purpose of this work is to consider the argument that the Korean War was a natural extension of the Cold War and would not have been fought if relations with the U. S and Russia/China were not cold. Many see the Korean War as a mystery. Some parts of it seem almost immune to study and understanding. Statistics tell some things, and chronological narratives can provide a story upon which to hang data and factual information.

But the problem is simply that people still do not know very much about the war. It was so complex, both in terms of its causes, and of the progress of the fighting, that the usual methods of reporting do not always tell a clear story. It was (and is) a significant part of American history, and within it are located keys to understanding America's highly transitional role in the increasingly complex world events of the time. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 was one of the great sea changes in postwar American history. Like the Trojan horse sent into Troy, President Harry S.

Truman's June 1950 decision to intervene in the Korean crisis laid the nation bare to a bombardment of economic, political, military, and social changes. As it turned out, the Korean mobilization went far beyond preparations for America's first undeclared war; it evolved into the nation's de facto Cold War preparedness program, which came to p nearly forty years. The Korean War, which began with the invasion of the Republic of South Korea in June of 1950, can be more easily understood if we consider it as two, perhaps even three, wars.

The first phase was between the United Nations and the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea. This period can be considered a victory for the United Nations. Surely there is no other word for the successful landing at Inchon in September 1950, the recapture of the South Korean capital of Seoul, and the approach, by Eighth Army on the west and X Corps on the east, to the Yalu. By the middle of November, the forces of the United Nations had scattered the troops of North Korea's army and occupied most of its territory. The goals of the United Nations, to drive the invader from South Korea, had been accomplished.

The second phase, which General of the Army Douglas MacArthur called "an entirely new war," began with the Chinese entry into the conflict. This phase must be considered much less successful. In the light of the goals established for the second stage of the war - to expel the Communist Chinese and to occupy and control the territory of North Korea - the war was a failure. But somewhere during the second year of fighting, around November 1951, the nature of the goals changed again. This change may be sufficient to define a third phase of the war.

The third phase was marked by the decision to take a defensive posture in Korea. After the defeat at the Chosin reservoir and the slow United Nations return to the 38th Parallel military victory seemed to be too great a goal. The war became one of attrition, not unlike World War I. The third phase was one of waiting, patrolling, skirmishing, destroying supplies, and attacking to kill rather than to occupy, and negotiating. If the legitimate purpose of war is to create a more perfect peace, as some have suggested, then phase three of the Korean War was its most important.

Certainly the long-term goals, as well as the short-term reactions, seemed to be more directed at an easing of the Cold War than at victory in Korea. The decision made by President Harry S. Truman and his advisors to enter the war in defense of South Korea was one of major significance. Some historians believe it may have been predetermined by earlier events leading up to the invasion. On the surface, however, the decision looks like a rather abrupt shift in the administration's policy concerning Korea. The reaction gave Korea more importance than it had previously held for Americans.

Later, when Truman authorized General MacArthur to move across the 38th, and seek the occupation of North Korea, that decision did not appear so much out of character. In the final analysis, however, this latter decision introduced a period of military defeat, public concern, and political difficulty. There is much about the fighting during the Korean War that, in an overview, appears paradoxical. The tremendous technological advances made during World War II paid off between 1945 and 1955. Weapon development moved quickly and weapons became more and more complex.

Nevertheless, the Korean War was primarily fought with weapons left over from World War II. To a significant degree it was also fought with the strategies and often with the commanders, of that war. It was war fought in the beginning by untrained and unprepared occupation troops, then by "retreads" (recalled World War II veterans), then by draftees caught up in one of the loosest conscription nets in modern history. Of course, it was a war in which military methodology and expectancy were severely limited.

Finally, we can say that the Korean War verified Clausewitz's understanding that a limited war can be true to its defined goals only as long as it remains

subject to political (civilian) control. The Korean War emphatically marked the end of the post-Second World War era. The Sovietization of Eastern Europe, the Greek civil war, the Czech coup, and the Berlin Airlift, not to mention the “loss” of China to the communists, had all served to erode what had remained of the wartime “Grand Alliance” between the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union that had persisted through the war and to the establishment of the United Nations.

But with American, British, French, Dutch, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African, Greek, Turkish, Filipino and Thai troops actually engaged in combat with Communist forces, the Cold War seemed obviously to have taken on a new and far more bitter dimension, and indeed, might no longer even merit the term “Cold War”. In the words of one scholar, “Without the Cold War there would have been no Korean War” (McMahon 69). In fact, the entry of China into the conflict in late 1950 unleashed apocalyptic imaginings of a Third World War, particularly amongst Americans.

Even after the Armistice concluding the Korean War, the Cold War would continue for more than four decades. The Korean War marked a pivotal turning point in the global execution of the Cold War. To understand the larger context—the Cold War—is to understand how and why Korea fundamentally altered the political and economic scene in the United States. First, Korea marked the militarization of Harry Truman's containment policy.

Before June 1950, the United States tended to emphasize the economic aspects of containment, during which time it sought to build a strong, free-market—based international order to serve as a bulwark against Soviet communism. Once the war in Korea began, however, the United States

emphasized military rearmament—here and abroad—to resist perceived Soviet aggression. Second, by militarizing containment as it did, the Truman administration globalized it as well.

After Korea, the nation prepared itself ideologically and militarily to resist the Soviets in every corner of the world. Thus, in the final analysis, the Korean mobilization was a mobilization within a mobilization: the nation began arming for the Korean conflict in the short-term while simultaneously mobilizing for the Cold War in the long-term. Division and Cold War came to Korea first and foremost because of the inability of outside powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to devise a unification plan that would protect the interests of both (Wainstock 36).

From the start the two powers regarded internal political configurations as highly unpredictable, so they were disinclined to encourage creation of an indigenous government that crossed zonal boundaries. The best opportunity for the emergence of such a government came in September 1945 with the rise of the KPR, a group that possessed strong linkages with the people's committees at the local level. Had the Americans supported the KPR, thus encouraging the KDP to play coalition rather than class politics, Koreans might have taken the lead in developing a vision of a united, independent country unthreatening to the great powers.

Yet the best opportunity in this case does not represent a good opportunity, since such an outcome would have required extraordinary patience and trust on all sides, ingredients that were far from common at the time. The unexpected invasion ushered in a new and much more dangerous phase of the Cold War, not just in Asia but globally. Certain that the attack could only

have occurred with the backing of the Soviet Union and China - a correct assessment, as now available evidence confirms - and convinced that it heralded a bolder and more aggressive worldwide offensive by the communist powers, the Truman administration responded vigorously.

It immediately dispatched US naval and air forces to Korea in order to stem the North Korean advance and bolster South Korean defences. When that initial intervention proved insufficient, the administration dispatched US combat troops, which became part of an international force owing to the UN's condemnation of the North Korean invasion. 'The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt', declared Truman in a 27 June address to the American people, 'that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will use armed invasion and war' (Malkasian 21).

He also revealed, in that same speech, that he was ordering the US Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, increasing aid to the French in Indo-China, and speeding additional aid to the pro-American Philippine government which was battling the radical Huk insurgency. Behind those four interventions - in Korea, China, Indo-China, and the Philippines - lay the American perception that a unified threat of formidable proportions was being mounted against Western interests by a hostile and newly aggressive world communist movement under the leadership of the Soviet Union and its Chinese junior partner.

The impact of the Cold War on the Korean War is difficult to overstate. Not only did the Korean fighting lead to an intensification and geographical expansion of the Cold War, threaten a wider conflict between the United

States and the communist powers, and foster increased East-West hostility, but it also spurred a huge increase in American defence spending and, more broadly, a militarization and globalization of American foreign policy. Beyond Asia, the conflict in Korea also hastened the strengthening of NATO, the arming of Germany, and the stationing of US troops on European soil.

‘ It was the Korean War and not World War II that made the United States a world military—political power’, diplomat Charles Bohlen has argued. With uncommon unanimity, scholars have affirmed that judgement, identifying the Korean War as a key turning point in the international history of the postwar era. America's ‘ real commitment to contain communism everywhere originated in the events surrounding the Korean War’, contends John Lewis Gaddis. Warren I.

Cohen calls it ‘ a war that would alter the nature of the Soviet—American confrontation, change it from a systemic political competition into an ideologically driven, militarized contest that threatened the very survival of the globe’ (Anthony 42). Yet, as Cohen also notes, ‘ that a civil war in Korea would provide the critical turning point in the postwar Soviet—American relationship, and raise the possibility of world war, seems, in retrospect, nothing short of bizarre’ (Ball 15). Certainly, in the aftermath of World War II, few places appeared less likely to emerge as a focal point of great power competition.

Occupied and ruled by Japan as a colony ever since 1910, Korea factored into wartime councils merely as yet another minor and obscure territory whose future disposition fell on the Allies' already overburdened shoulders. At the Potsdam Conference, the Americans and Soviets agreed to share

occupation responsibilities there by temporarily dividing the country at the 38th parallel; they also agreed to work towards the establishment of an independent, unified Korea at the earliest practicable time.

In December 1945, at a foreign ministers' meeting in Moscow, the Soviets accepted a US proposal for the establishment of a joint Soviet—American commission to prepare for the election of a provisional Korean government as a first step toward full independence. But that plan soon fell victim to larger Cold War tensions that militated against any meaningful cooperation, or compromise, between Moscow and Washington. By 1948, the occupation divisions had instead hardened. In the north, a pro—Soviet regime under the leadership of the former antijapanese fighter Kim took on all the trappings of an independent regime.

So, too, did its counterpart in the south: a proAmerican regime headed by the virulently anti—communist Syngman Rhee, a Korean nationalist of long standing. Each side regularly rattled sabres at the other; neither North nor South Koreans could accept a permanent division of their homeland. In 1948, the Truman administration, seeking to extricate itself gracefully from its Korean commitment, began withdrawing US military forces from the peninsula. American defence planners believed not only that US military personnel had become overextended worldwide, necessitating this pullback, but that Korea, in fact, possessed minimal strategic worth.

The North Korean invasion two years later brought a different calculus to the fore. Although it might have lacked great intrinsic strategic value, Korea stood as a potent symbol, especially in view of America's role as midwife and protector of the Seoul regime. Further, the North Korean attack, sanctioned

and backed by the Soviet Union and China, threatened America's credibility as a regional and global power every bit as much as it threatened the survival of the South Korean government. To Truman, Acheson, and other senior decision-makers, the stakes at risk in Korea appeared enormous.

Consequently, without any dissenting voices being raised, the president quickly authorized US military intervention. ' If the United Nations yields to the force of aggression', Truman declared publicly on 30 November, ' no nation will be safe or secure. If aggression is successful in Korea, we can expect it to spread throughout Asia and Europe to this hemisphere. We are fighting in Korea for our own national security and survival' (Roe 90) That statement came right after the entry of Chinese Communist ' volunteer' forces into the fray, a development that changed the character of the Korean conflict - and, arguably, the Cold War as well.

Truman and his military advisers grew overconfident after MacArthur turned the tide of battle in September 1950 by outflanking the North Koreans with his legendary Inchon landing. The UN forces under his command crossed into North Korean territory on 7 October; by 25 October, some advance units reached the Yalu River, along the North Korean—Chinese border. As they inched closer to Chinese territory, Mao informed Stalin that he had decided to send Chinese troops across the Yalu.

' The reason', he explained, ' is that if we allow the United States to occupy all of Korea and Korean revolutionary strength suffers a fundamental defeat, then the Americans will run more rampant to the detriment of the entire East. ' Mao, too, saw broad regional and global implications in the Korean outcome. MacArthur, who had so cavalierly underestimated the Chinese

military threat and whose forces were almost completely driven out of North Korea by the end of November, informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff: ' We face an entirely new war' (Paige 12).

The world faced an entirely new Cold War by that time as well, one whose boundaries reached well beyond Europe. The emergence of Mao's regime in China, the Sino—Soviet alliance, Soviet and Chinese support for North Korean adventurism, the intervention of US and UN forces in Korea, the subsequent entry of Chinese troops, the presence of communist elements within Southeast Asia's nationalist movements - all ensured that the Cold War would remain a commanding presence in postwar Asia for a long time to come.

The Korean War itself dragged on inconclusively until July 1953, when the warring parties signed an armistice that achieved little more than an exchange of prisoners—of—war and a return to the status quo ante bellum. The 38th parallel remained an ominous line of division - not just between North and South Korea, but between the Eastern and Western blocs. With the Korean conflict, the Cold War became increasingly global in scope. In the decade that followed the onset of the Korean fighting, few corners of the world managed to escape the ensnaring web of superpower rivalry, competition, and conflict.

Indeed, the principal international flashpoints of the 1950s and 1960s - Iran, Guatemala, Indo—China, the Taiwan Strait, Suez, Lebanon, Indonesia, Cuba, the Congo - lay well beyond the Cold War's original boundaries. Only Berlin, whose contested status triggered Soviet-American crises in 1958 and again in 1961-2, belongs to the set of immediate post—World War II disputes that

precipitated the East-West breach in the first place. From the standpoint of the great power struggle, the grounds for defending South Korea were strong.

It was believed that if the North Korean aggression succeeded, Indo-China would be almost certain to fall under Communist control, with the aid of whatever Chinese forces were necessary. The snowballing effect of Communist triumphs might make Thailand and Burma relatively easy conquests. Since Indo-China is strategically the key to all South East Asia, the stubborn communist guerrilla movement in Malaya might be expected to gain momentum, with aid from the north, and gun-running to the Huks in the Philippines would not be too difficult.

Both in the Philippines and Japan, also, the psychology of Red success would operate powerfully. In the end it might be difficult to hold Japan, especially since she cannot exist, apart from American doles, in the absence of trade with China and South East Asia. As in every crisis of the Cold War, the image of the falling dominoes was allowed free rein. Thus far the Truman Doctrine had been enforced in Europe, but it had been a dismal failure in East Asia. If now the tremendous triumph of communism in China were capped by further Red gains in Asia the effect on Europe might be decisive.

In the United States, too, the result might well be decisive politically for the Truman Administration. Its foes were already making capital bitterly about the non-enforcement of the Doctrine in China. If it collapsed in Asia there would be a mighty outcry indeed. A stage in the Cold War had come which seemed to compel a defense of the Doctrine in Asia. These considerations were sufficient to induce resolute action in Korea, without going to the

defense of the United Nations. Up to this time enforcement of the United Nations Charter had not been a compelling motive in Washington.

The UN was brushed aside in Greece, and independent action taken to defeat the Communist guerrillas. In Indonesia the United States had brought strong moral pressure to bear on the Netherlands in the Security Council, but no troops and planes were sent to fight the Dutch when they defied a UN cease fire order. Nor did the United States mobilize the UN to save the infant Israeli Republic when five Arab states invaded Palestine in 1948 to overturn by force the partition plan adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Defiance of the United Nations could not have been more flagrant, but the United States moved no troops and planes to save the victims of Hitler's hate who had gathered in Israel, and who appeared to be on the point of being destroyed by the armies of UN members converging on them from all sides. In the end Israel was saved by her own heroic fighting, with arms obtained largely from communist Czechoslovakia. The United States gave no armed support to Israel as the ward of UN. The Koreans did not ask for the division of their country, even temporarily.

They also organized a government which was broadly representative and quite capable of governing the country. But neither the U. S. S. R. nor the U. S. A. would permit this government to function. Each insisted on creating a government for half the country in its own image. In this attempt the Soviets succeeded, but the United States brought a twenty-year emigre back to Korea and permitted him to build himself up into a lifetime despot capable of inviting the American people in their own capital to join him in self destruction.

Division having resulted and hardened, two successive attempts to unite Korea by force were made, but the outcome was a great power war which nearly destroyed Korea and did not significantly alter the division of the country. On the contrary, the division was hardened and South Korea was left an overpopulated, undernourished, unviable country, existing only on the military dole of the United States and under a police state government which was a standing invitation to revolution - Red or otherwise.

To highlight the argument, it is necessary to review the years 1945 through 1948. There can be no more striking reflection of Korea's dependence on others than the decision to divide the peninsula into occupation zones in 1945. Koreans had no input in the decision because they had no recognized government or armed forces to defend their interests. They had been swallowed up in the Japanese empire early in the century and were now being freed from that status because of Japan's defeat in a war in which Koreans had contributed more to the losing than to the winning side.

Prospects for the peaceful unification of Korea from August 1945 onward were between slim and nil. The first step toward June 25, 1950, had been taken by the great powers—alone. Koreans in 1945 were deeply split among themselves—between close collaborators with the Japanese and underground dissenters; between landowners and peasants; between businessmen and factory workers; between police and civilians. These divisions had festered beneath the surface before 1945, as the Japanese used the strategy of divide and conquer to ease the task of ruling Korea.

The collaborationist issue aside, many of the disputes were foreshadowed in the divisions among exiled independence groups. After liberation from Japan

they burst into the open on the peninsula itself. Their existence eliminated any chance for a united indigenous resistance to the country's partition by outsiders. Yet the particular form the divisions took and the ultimate outcome of the resulting conflicts were deeply influenced, indeed often determined, by the foreign presence.

That the exiled groups during the Japanese period had looked to outsiders for assistance—Nationalist China and the United States in the case of the Right, the Soviet Union and Communist China in the case of the Left—and that one of the outsiders on each side now occupied half of Korea greatly magnified the problem. The trusteeship issue represented an extreme case, since it was totally created by the outsiders. Although the Soviets were able to keep the Korean Left in line on trusteeship, the Americans never persuaded the indigenous Right to support it—or even to exercise restraint in attacking it.

Ultimately the United States gave in to Syngman Rhee and abandoned trusteeship, but only because, by September 1947, he represented the best hope for keeping South Korea out of Communist hands, an important U. S. objective in its own right. By the end of 1948, two indigenous governments existed on the peninsula, one exercising authority above the thirty-eighth parallel, one below it, one leftist in orientation and aligned with the Soviet Union, the other rightist and aligned with the United States.

It is impossible to imagine this result without the Soviet-American agreement of 1945. If the situation in Korea at the end of 1948 cannot be grasped without reference to the foreign presence since 1945, it is also fair to say that the picture is incomplete without mention of the civil conflict that had waxed and waned below the thirty-eighth parallel since the fall of 1946. The

unrest began in September with strikes and riots by workers in several cities and soon spread to the countryside, where landlords became frequent objects of attack.

Hundreds of civilians and police died in the turmoil. The Left lost heavily in the violence, and for the next year, while unrest was widespread at the village level, it appears not to have been as well coordinated as before. The violence picked up greatly during 1948, with the biggest revolt against government authority beginning in April on Cheju Island. By the end of the year, guerrillas operated extensively on the mainland, so much so that the United States decided to postpone withdrawal of the last of its combat troops from the South.

Six of South Korea's eight provinces eventually saw substantial guerrilla activity, which peaked in the fall of 1949 and subsided in the spring of 1950 as a result of strong counteraction by ROK forces. Violence in the South from late 1946 to mid-1950 brought death to some one hundred thousand Koreans. If the Americans were instrumental in suppressing the activity, the Soviets played an integral role in fostering it.

Although the general strike in South Korea of September 1946 appears to have begun at the initiative of the Korean Communist Party below the thirty-eighth parallel, the Soviets soon took an active part, giving advice, which the southern rebels often solicited, encouragement, and considerable financial aid. The Soviets also pushed successfully for the merger of the three leftist parties in the two zones and participated in the training and infiltration of North Korean agents and guerrillas into the South.

The unrest in South Korea grew in part out of local conditions, but neither its origins nor its course can be understood without devoting heavy attention to activities originating in the North or to actions heavily influenced by the Soviet and American presence on the peninsula. The local, national, and international forces blended together in a manner that would have made the actual course of events largely unrecognizable with the elimination of any of the three (Stueck 44). On June 25, 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea.

The invasion was less important in actual strategic terms than in what it symbolized: a confirmation of the aggressive nature of Soviet communism. President Truman attached this symbolism immediately to the war. In his statement issued on June 27 the president declared: "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" (Lowe 120). In response he ordered the Seventh Fleet to protect Formosa, sought U. S. condemnation of the North's aggression, and eventually committed U. S.

military forces under the auspices of the United Nations to fight the Korean War. The cold war had suddenly turned into a hot war. But it was a hot war of a peculiar kind. In fact, it was the new face of war in the postwar world. The Korean War was a proxy war fought in Korea but symbolizing the worldwide struggle between the free world and the communist world. If the North Korean invasion symbolized communists' intentions to dominate the world, the U. S. response symbolized the resolve of the United States to resist Soviet domination. It was a critical moment. Metaphysical symbolism replaced tangible objectives as the focal point of war.

Such a transcendental transformation had its roots in the original request of economic aid to Greece and Turkey, but it was to have consequences that would reach to the rice paddies of Vietnam. The anticommunism rhetoric was now pervasive and complete. Politicians and people interpreted the meaning of each of these three sets of events - the Hiss conviction and the other charges of domestic communist activities, the invasion of South Korea by the North, and the Chinese intervention into that war - by the standards of that rhetoric and at the same time used these events as proof that the rhetoric was correct in the first place.

It was a classic tautology. Understanding and proving arose simultaneously and led to action. And action confirmed the understanding and proof. The Korean War was the linchpin of these final proofs. John Lewis Gaddis (1983) remarked that the widely shared but erroneous impression that the invasion of South Korea was the first military step in the Soviet Union's plan to conquer the world had three important consequences: (1) the transformation of NATO from " a traditional mutual defense alliance into a[n] integrated military structure" that led to the appointment of a U.

S. supreme commander of NATO and the stationing of U. S. troops in Europe; (2) the rearming of West Germany and the signing of a peace treaty with Japan, thus making alliances with old enemies to fight a new enemy; and (3) the approval of National Security Memorandum No. 68, better known as NSC-68 (32). Perhaps the only issue on which the United States and China had significant common interests concerns the Korean peninsula. Washington and Beijing had a strong interest in preventing North Korean acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Not only would a nuclear-armed North Korea make a North-South war far more dangerous, but it might also encourage South Korean and Japanese acquisition of nuclear weapons and cause a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia. Thus, at times Beijing has applied economic pressure on North Korean rulers, assisting U. S. efforts to compel Pyongyang to curtail its nuclear program. Indeed, Chinese policy toward nuclear proliferation into North Korea was one Chinese policy that consistently drew praise from Washington for having “ concerns similar” to America's and for playing “ an important cooperative role” and providing “ critical cooperation” in U. S.

efforts to freeze North Korea's nuclear program. China has also been supportive of U. S. efforts to bring about North Korean participation in the four-party peace talks involving the two Koreas, China, and the United States (Guttman 59). The United States and China also shared an interest in preventing economic and political instability in North Korea from leading to war between the two Koreas. China has contributed to this common objective of a “ soft” rather than a “ crash landing” of the North Korean government by encouraging Pyongyang to open its economy to foreign trade and investment and by supplying it with subsidized energy resources.

As the North Korean economy rapidly deteriorated, Beijing supplied Pyongyang with emergency food and clothing supplies. Since then, Beijing has continued to provide North Korea with food, consumer goods, and energy assistance. But even U. S. -China relations on this relatively cooperative issue had tensions. Whereas Washington's policy toward North Korea was primarily focused on preventing nuclear proliferation, Beijing's policy attached equal weight to its vital interest in preserving its significant

influence in a border state located at the intersection of all of the great powers.

Moreover, Beijing had even greater interest than Washington in preventing war on the Korean peninsula, insofar as it would be waged on China's border and could spill over into Chinese territory. U. S. -China friction results from Washington's frustration when Chinese caution inhibits Beijing from applying greater pressure on the North Korean leadership. Thus far, U. S. -China common interests in regional stability have prevailed, but should the U. S. -North Korean agreement collapse, U. S. -China tension over North Korea could intensify.

The nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula was, in part, a holdover from the Cold War. It stemmed, ultimately, from the division of the country and the threat to the status quo posed by the Communist regime in the north - the same set of circumstances that had led to war in 1950. The same dictator - Kim Il-sung-who had launched the attack in 1950 was in power and threatening to acquire nuclear weapons in 1994. The problem of North Korean nuclear weapons produced a political alignment in the region that demonstrated the differences between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras in yet another way.

In 1950 the United States and Japan were allied with South Korea against North Korea, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China (Buzo 89). Korea has common borders with both Russia and China. All four powers participated, directly or indirectly, in the Korean War of the 1950s. The Korean War was extension of the conflict in and the Cold War, at least in American eyes. North Korea, China, and later Vietnam were seen in <https://assignbuster.com/american-history-cold-war/>

Washington as part of a single Communist bloc, all allies and instruments of Moscow. A scenario suggests that the Soviet Union, North Korea, and Communist China conspired to begin a war in Asia.

The North Korean invasion of South Korea was the opening move in a Communist offensive for worldwide domination. However, while it is fairly certain that Premier Mao Tsetung and Stalin were both aware of North Korea's decision to invade, there is less evidence that the nations involved were acting under the aegis of international communism. In fact, failure to understand the difference between national and international communism is a significant part of the inability of the United Nations to comprehend the depth of the problem it faced.

The actual element of conspiracy, if there was one, may have been in the willingness of major political powers to use small and vulnerable nations in the Cold War. That is, the Korean War simply have been a convenient battleground for one more clash between nations who did not have the courage to take on each other openly. Works Cited Anthony, Farrar-Hockley. "The China Factor in the Korean War". In *The Korean War in History* ed. James Cotton and Ian Neary. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1989. Ball, S. J. *The Cold War: An International History, 1947-1991*. Arnold: London, 1998.

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