

Korean and vietnam war comparison assignment

[History](#)



The Korean and Vietnam war are very similar in that both were the US's attempt to fight communism by waging war in a distant third world country. Both wars were unpopular in the US and both led to a lack of victory. In fact, remarkable similarities exist between the Korean War and the Vietnam War; from the US support of a dictatorial and corrupt anti-communist regime to its conception of communism as a monolithic entity, under which all communist nations were necessarily allies, rather than individuals to be dealt with separately.

However, though those parallels, Vietnam era policy-makers did not apply the lessons of the Korean War to the Vietnam War. Rather, they did not seem to recognize those lessons as lessons at all, and repeated in the Vietnam War many of their previous mistakes. The decision to engage in war in Vietnam and Korea had its ideological root in the Truman Doctrine which found clear expression in MacNamara's so called "Domino Theory". America reasoned that if first Korea and then Vietnam fell to communists, many other nations in proximity would be at risk.

The US refused to have a policy of appeasement which had allowed Hitler to fortify Germany leading to WWII. In both Vietnam and Korea, America fought the forces of communism to keep nations free from Soviet control. This was the goal throughout the presidential administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Both of these wars were fought for the same reason. Many similarities exist between the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The main reason America fought each of these wars was to keep independent nations from succumbing to communist control. If America allowed soviets to take Korea and Vietnam, other parts of Asia would be at stake.

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Each case demonstrates a battle between democracy and communism. As one Vietnam veteran said, “ the Korean and Vietnam Wars were fought against an ideology, not an individual you can point your finger at. ” Ho Chi Minh began as a nationalist fighter and only turned to communism in order to support his aims. Another similarity between Vietnam and Korea is that each of these nations became split between the communist north and democratic south. North Korea and North Vietnam were connected to communist China and received supplies, ammunition, and support from them. South Korea and South Vietnam on the other hand, favored democracy.

The United States gave weapons, supplies, and military advisors to South Korea and South Vietnam, which soon led to troops actually fighting in each of these wars. Another common characteristic is that both wars ended in negotiations. Neither side won out right like they did in World War II. In Korea, a cease-fire was called and a demilitarized zone was made between the two hostile borders. In Vietnam, under the Paris peace treaty, both sides agreed to a cease fire and America agreed to pull out all military personnel, while North Vietnam agreed to release all American POWs.

Although communist North Vietnam quickly violated this treaty and attacked South Vietnam after the US pulled out, both the Korean and Vietnam wars ended in some concessions for both sides. This demonstrates the cold war stale mate between the Soviet Union and the United States. Each side feared the other but neither side achieved a decisive victory. Another factor, although often overlooked, is that both leaders of the democratic countries

were Christians. Both Dien Bien Phu of South Vietnam and Syngman Rhee of South Korea followed Christ.

Perhaps this did not have a great impact on the countries while at war, but it has certainly had a huge impact now. Korea is now a hub of Christianity. Nearly 25% of it's population professes to be Christian and it sends out more missionaries per capita than any other country. Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho in South Korea has the largest Christian church in the world. In contrast to South Korea where Christianity flourishes, Christians in Vietnam are relatively few in number. They have had to deal with an oppressive communist government which outlawed Christianity altogether.

However, Christians are gaining support in Vietnam due to a less oppressive government. The Vietnam and Korean wars also differ in many aspects. The fundamental difference between the two wars was in the outcome. The United States and other democratic nations protected South Korea from the communists, while it lost to them in South Vietnam. Much of this had to do with the way in which each of these wars were fought. In Korea, communists tried to defeat the US with sheer numbers. North Korea could not defend themselves effectively, so China sent more than a million troops.

General Douglas MacArthur wanted to expand the war into China. Each side fought most of their battles on open ground. This gave America the strategic advantage because of its superior air power and more technologically advanced weapons. Battles tended to be quick and fierce, resulting in an effective campaign for the Americans that drove the communists back to the original line of division. Vietnam on the other hand, resorted to guerilla

warfare given its smaller fighting force and environment. The Vietnamese had previously built some underground tunnels in their resistance movements against the Japanese and then the French.

They expanded on this network of tunnels and made a huge network stretching more than 250 kilometers. Most of these tunnels were invincible from American air attacks and were sometimes built right under US military stations. For months, Americans could not figure out how enemy fire came right into their camp. Finally, when the military realized the problem, they went into the network of tunnels, but often got lost, ambushed or ran into booby traps. Another reason why America lost Vietnam and not Korea, was that the Vietnamese turned the war into a "people's war".

The Chinese mainly fought the US in Korea without much popular support from the people. In Vietnam, however, everyone joined the war effort. One motto of the communist Vietnamese was, "If the truck is struck, tear down the walls of your house." Americans had no way of telling between neutral civilians and Viet Cong supporters. This is one of the main reasons why America could not defeat the Viet Cong. The difference in the fighting methods of The desertion rate for the Korean War (1950 ??? 1953) was 22.5 per 1,000 Vietnam war (1954 ??? 1975) 1966 the rate was 14.7 per 1,000 and in 1970 desertion rate got as high as 52.3 per 1,000. | Months of combat Korea - 37 Vietnam - 101 Battle Deaths Korea - 33,629 Vietnam - 47,321 Other Deaths Korea - 20,617 Vietnam - 10,700 Wounds Korea - 103,284 Vietnam - 153,303 Total Casualties Korea - 157,530 Vietnam - 211,324 Battle deaths per month Korea - 909 Vietnam - 469 Other deaths per month Korea - 557 Vietnam - 106 Wounds per month Korea - 2,791 Vietnam

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- 1, 518 Total per month Korea - 4, 257 Vietnam - 2, 092 | *These statistics are based on the 1954 Department of Defense data base and the 37 month breakdowns reflect information based on the period of hostilities between June 25, 1950 and July 26, 1953 when the Armistice was signed. Certainly there ARE. They were both “policing actions”, designed to contain (either North Korea and North Vietnam), but not invade or occupy. The Korean War involved nations “policing” North Korea from the United Nations. The Vietnam War did not have the U. N. ‘s involvement. In both conflicts, American military powers considered the use of the atomic bomb, but thankfully did not do so. The Vietnam War had this stretch of land called the “DMZ”, but the Korean War did not have that during the conflict, but did AFTER the ceasefire. In the Korean War, the North Koreans had the help of the Chinese, and Russian (MIG pilots).

In the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese also had the help of the Chinese, and Russians (supplies, SAM missiles, communications). During the Korean War, the American public thought of it as a distant war, not involving large number of troops. In the Vietnam War, the American public started to turn against the war for political and social reasons. Lastly, the Korean War was more like the Second World War in terms of military forces fighting. Tanks, infantry, air support, large units, and tactics. The war in Vietnam was mostly a guerilla war, using small units for “Search and Destroy” operations.

Both wars had the involvement of North/South local populations either fighting with or for the Communist forces. Korea and Vietnam had similar beginnings as far as revolutions are concerned. Korea had been occupied by Japan and Vietnam had been occupied by France. The United States and <https://assignbuster.com/korean-and-vietnam-war-comparison-assignment/>

other U. N. nations put millions of dollars into both wars, but pretty much came out empty handed. At first it seemed as though America would win both wars but those opinions changed after years and years of fighting proved that not enough was being done to successfully rid Asian countries of communism.

At first Truman just had sea and air support but it soon turned into a war with the U. S. ' s total involvement. A similar situation took place in Vietnam. In the beginning the U. N. sent support to France but soon got actively involved in the war once the support was not enough anymore. Korea, just like Vietnam was split between a Northern Communist enemy and a Southern Republic ally of the U. S. In both events the U. S. government was forced into signing peace treaties because of the severe U. S. losses from fighting. Both Vietnam and Korea were supported by China and the Soviet Union.

By the beginning of the Korean War, China was already on its way to becoming a nuclear power. U. S. government officials faced problems with this. They needed to fight | The Chinese and Soviets took advantage of this in both situations. was going to bomb and what they could bomb. Several attempts to “ wipe out” the enemy were made during both wars but the U. The fall of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and the containment of it have proved this. As in how the Vietnamese had cities underground and the Koreans had the advantage of knowing the terrain and weather patterns of certain areas.

And the communist peoples of Korea and Vietnam gave heart, mind, and soul to prove it. would bomb a whole area and the soldiers would go underground into their “ underground cities” and wait and then come up and fight again. troops faced the North Vietnamese Army (N. This allowed the communist to basically decide where the U. There are many similarities and differences between the political mood surrounding the Vietnam War, as well as the life styles, tactics and equipment used by the American riflemen in the years 1965 and 1969.

Most of the American troops stationed in Vietnam in 1965 were member of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). These specialized advisors were charged with the training of the South Vietnamese (ARVN) in the use of modern weapons and tactics in an effort to stop communist aggression from the north. However, by late 1965 it was becoming clear that ARVN, now called the “ ruff-puffs” by Americans, was ineffective and corrupt. At one point in 1965, President Johnson promised Ho Chi Minh “ unconditional discussions. Meanwhile, the US sent more troops to Vietnam in which American forces would only try to maintain those areas already under Saigon control. Johnson hoped a sustained US military presence would make Ho Chi Minh more willing to negotiate. Opposed to this strategy, General Westmoreland called for more American troops and advocated “ taking the battle to the enemy. ” By June of 1965, around 75, 000 American troops were in In 1965 Westmoreland began to implement a search and destroy strategy in wh Korean and Vietnam Wars The Korean War was fought for about three years in the early 1950’s and is sometimes referred to as the Forgotten War.

It is often viewed as a struggle of Communism vs. Democracy. This war was fought in the shadow of the Cold War and the fear of the spread of Communism was a major factor for the U. S. joining in. Vietnam was also a struggle over the spread of Communism in which the North Vietnamese communist forces attempted to take over the entire country and the U. S. and South Vietnamese tried to stop them. With the Fall of Saigon in 1975, a southern stronghold, the North Vietnamese took over the country and formed the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.