

The causes and outcomes of the korean war research paper example

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



- Introduction

The Korean Peninsula can be considered as a region that can rival China and Japan in terms of its culture, tradition and history. Its geographic location makes it an ideal place for commerce and a clear access to the Chinese and Russian regions. However, the once powerful and united region had been tormented by constant conflict and strife that had successfully divided the Peninsula into two separate states in the Second World War. Studies have emphasized that there is more to the war that meets the eye and as the war continues to ravage the Peninsula, it is essential to understand as to why the war came to be. This interstate conflict had been triggered by the Soviet expansion and the growth of communism, which resulted in an unstable neutrality agreement between the two Koreas.

- Causes of the Korean War

The conflict between the two Koreas can be considered as a consequence to America's attempt of deterrence to stop the Soviet Union from expansion and the impact of Soviet Union's alliance with the Korean communists. Deterrence, according to Quackenbush (2011) pertains to the use of states of threats or compromises to stop the onset of a threat. Deterrence can be done directly or indirectly, depending on the crisis as a means to restore peace and steady relations with both states. In the conflict, deterrence is seen in the actions of the United States as a means to deter Soviet expansion in the region. According to Chang-il (2010) and Heo (2001), the US was thinking of ensuring that the Soviets would be amenable to a compromise and divide the region. The 38th parallel was created within the Peninsula to serve as a neutral ground to facilitate the Japanese surrender

and to ensure that Korea would be held up into a multi-national trusteeship that would divide the peninsula into two. Once the divide is finalized, the occupations would influence these Koreas into different and conflicting political, economic and social values. Considering America's stance over Soviet containment, it is also an example of structural deterrence theory. Under this type of deterrence, if two states are equal in strength and influence, they are both going to be deterred as one cannot act easily unless one accidentally declares war. In the crisis, the United States hoped to ensure that a compromise would ensure that the balance of power between them and the Soviets would be retained if they agreed to share the Korean Peninsula.

However, by the time the Soviets and the Americans were ready to take over their respective territories, they had found themselves assaulted by defiant Koreans. Deterrence became impossible considering that alliances came into play. Walt (2013) explains that alliances are either established against threats or as a means to establish partnerships. Alliances created under threat can either serve as a counter force to an equally powered threat (balance) or an ally to counter the growth of another state (bandwagon). In terms of partnerships, alliances opens up the channels between parties in order to share growth and success. In the case of the conflict, the Soviet Union utilized their Korean communists brothers headed by Kim Il-sung to impose the communist system to the North and granted them the power to take over. America had tried to reorganize talks once more in the Four-Power meetings in Washington in 1947 after the failure to agree on the terms for Korea's independence and unification in support of the South

Koreans. The Soviets rejected the proposal of elections in Korea between the two zones and eventually, the debate continued on September 16, 1947 when the United Nations took the issue to the General Assembly. The UN adopted on November 14, 1947 the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to discuss Korea's future. The US had tried to get its position of getting democracy back in the Koreas in place, however, with the Soviets boycotting the talks, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established on August 15, 1945 under the leadership of Syngman Rhee as its first president. On the other hand, the Soviets worked on establishing their base in North Korea and created their own government under the North Korean People's Council. On August 25, 1948, a new constitution was created in North Korea before their first elections as the Democratic Republic of Korea under Kim Il-sung as its first premier. The UN did not recognize the North and recognized the South on December 1948 .

With the separation finalized, tensions between the two Koreas continued to escalate as it became visible that the North had deeply embraced the communist ideology making unification impossible. According to Richmond (2010) and Wit (2002), Kim Il-sung and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin had been working on the removal of American troops from the 38th parallel and discussed how they can dominate against the South. Stalin had provided the North navy ships and planes to counter the South and even permitted Kim Il-Sung to attack on March 7, 1949. The South, on the other hand, stated that the US has left them completely helpless from the North as the troops were removed on June 1949. The US also did not see the necessity on providing the South aid or allow them to buy weaponry. The Soviets had provided 22

divisions of infantry and train its soldiers while introducing them to modern warfare in some drills alongside Communist China and battles outside the region. Chinese Premier Mao Zedong had also discussed partnerships with the North to discuss the attack on the South. As the North finds itself well-armed for attack with the support of Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin, it invaded the South on June 25, 1950 and triggered the conflict between the two countries. It was clear throughout the conflict that North Korea had the military advantage over the South thanks to the bandwagoning of the Soviet Union, China and North Korea. Chang-II (2010) stated that North Korea amassed 198,380 soldiers with almost 242 tanks, 176 self-propelled guns and armored carriers while South Korea only had 105,752 given the impacts of the guerrilla conflict to its military. The South also relied heavily to the US, who had only entered the conflict under the banner of the United Nations.

- Outcome of the Korean War

The war had only ended with a neutrality agreement through an armistice as both sides realized that the issue is too complex to be resolved with just a military war. Neutrality, according to Sadri (1997), stresses the use of the laws of neutrality in the case of a war or in peace time, ensures that parties accept unwritten or written rules that would prevent them from engaging with potential belligerents. With an armistice agreement signed between the two Koreas in July 27, 1953 to return the borders of the 38th parallel, both countries have met in several conflicts that had further triggered military engagements between each other. According to Felician (2011), North Korea had tried since 1953 to break the status quo between them and the South to trespass the lines outlining their territories. As the years progressed, the

South had slowly begun to progress as a highly-industrialized nation and became one of the largest economies in the globe. On the other hand, however, the North became one of the most isolated and secretive communist states left in existence with only the Soviet Union and later, China as its allies. Kim Il-Sung and his son Kim Jong-Il became a deity to the North Koreans, and communism had greatly embedded itself to the country's ideals. Sadly, the North also became one of the poorest economies in the globe with detestable living conditions for its people. The incapable economy of the North can be attributed to its heavy expenses for its military power unlike the South that only uses 2.7% on its military. The North had earned scrutiny from the international community after the revelation of its nuclear program that had begun in the 1950s as discoveries of tests held throughout the country in 2006 and 2009 proved that the North has intentions to turn the tides to their favor and break the status quo. As far as the United States, and the Soviet Union are concerned, Isserman (2009) indicated that the US-Soviet relations have thawed after the Korean War and the Cold War moved to the "Third World" countries instead of focusing on Europe. The US saw the war as a sign that they can prevent Communism from spreading. It has also showed America's limits on foreign operations due to the losses incurred in the conflict.

- Conclusion

Currently, the Korean War remains as one of the most serious issues plaguing regional and international affairs as its resolution has yet to be reached. Looking at its history, it showcases that the conflict is more than a rift between the two Koreas. The conflict became possible because of the

fear of the Americans over the possible dominion of the Soviet Union in the region and contain their expansion. Seeing the plot behind America's proposal of dividing the Peninsula, the Soviets ensured that their Korean allies would be prepared and prevent the talks from occurring. America tried to stop the Soviets action, but they did not support their allies. With an armistice signed between these two states, it is a question as to whether or not unifying both of them would still be possible given North Korea's current status.

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