

The korean war



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ The Korean War: An International History” is, perhaps, the first book to comprehensively outline the Korean War in an international perspective. William Stueck examined the newly availed materials from different countries in addition to the UN archives about the details of the diplomatic aspect of the conflict. He also broadly assesses the role of the Korea during the Cold War. Stueck believes that due to its timing, the course it took as well as its outcome, the war could be effectively regarded as the Third World War. He also cites the role of the contribution of the United Nations and the United States during the war. The involvement of China in 1950 brought about a real threat of an outbreak of full blown World War. However, the American adventurism was subsequently curbed almost three years later by NATO and neutrals. While acknowledging the destructiveness of the Korean War, the author believes that, perhaps, it prevented the occurrence of a potentially more brutal war in Europe (National Archives). This paper outlines the main points raised in the book. But first, a brief biography of the author is given.

William Stueck

The author of the book, William Stueck is a Distinguished Research Professor of History at the University of Georgia. He has studied the Cold War from a US perspective for more than thirty years. He has also written “ Rethinking the Korean War”. It took him fifteen years to write this book. His works, especially touching on US- Korea relations, were hailed even during the Cold War. He is currently doing research and writing about this relation. He was awarded the Stuart Bernath Lectureship Prize in 1986 and Senior Fulbright Scholar prize in 1995.

As a historian specializing in US- Korea relations for more than thirty years, Stueck is, perhaps, the best candidate to write about the Korean War. The fact that he was active during the Cold War itself, gives him credence. Therefore, he can be regarded as one of the most qualified persons to give a factual account of the events of the Korean War. In addition, this work was not rushed as it took him some fifteen years to research and write. This book, thus, should be trusted. < style=" text-align: justify;" align=" center">

Book Review

William Stueck pulls no punches right from the start as he declares that the Korean War was a substitute for World War Three. He also argues that the United Nations was never a US tool, and that Soviet leader at the time, Joseph Stalin, had the motivation to hurt the US/China relations, to put an end to communism and also to hurt the US. Lastly, he asserts that the Korean War had far reaching security implications such as defense expenditures, economic alliances and treaties among regional and economic blocs (Stueck, pg. 3-9).

At the end of the World War II, the Russian and U S forces were still occupying Korea. However, the tension was always there as the relations between the countries deteriorated. In addition, both of them were heavy-handed in their approach. While Russia tried to reform the region, the Southern part was politically volatile. On the other hand, the US turned to the UN to instigate elections in the region but the Northern part declined to participate. However, there were improvements in the Southern part in 1950 after Syngman Rhee was suppressed. During that year, China, the USA and Russia were under simmering tensions to attack each other, with the early

<https://assignbuster.com/the-korean-war-essay-samples-2/>

indications being that the battle will be confined to Korea only. The US, in particular, saw it fit to bide its time before involving itself in the war. The slowdown in the war would later be taken up by Russia after the Inchon landing (Stueck, pg. 10 - 166).

A quick sequence of military events in Korea effectively overwhelmed all the diplomatic processes. Each combatant had its own intention in the war with all of them having varying mindsets as the war progressed. Joseph Stalin found himself in Truman's position much earlier than he had expected. By this time, his ally had already been vanquished. However, reuniting the North and the South Korea, taking into consideration positions of both the US and China, was not going to be an easy task. The year 1951 came with some positives; the Ridgway's offensives that boosted the confidence of Army battlefield, Japanese peace treaty, re-armament in Germany and NATO's birth. Japan's economic recovery and the implementation of the Marshall Plan also occurred this year (Stueck, pg. 204-267).

The peace talks pitted the UN on one side and China on the other. The UN wanted only Korean issues to be discussed during the negotiations. In some instances, the communists broke off negotiations to force the US to respect its treaty with Japan. The NATO settlement coupled with a series of unsuccessful offensives demoralized the Russians very much. Due to the standoff, the peace talks dragged on and on. Off the table, each nation was enhancing its military might; China never ceased training its fighters, the US re-armed Europe while Russia blamed the USA. These events would later take a dramatic turn (268-307).

The death of Joseph Stalin, the increasing cost burden of the armies advancing into the interiors of Korea and the Little Switch Operation forced the US, Russia and China to opt for negotiations so that a ceasefire could be reached. To make matters worse, Russia was also experiencing problems with its satellites. The aftermath of the war brought different fortunes to the main protagonists in the war; King Il Sung and Rhee became puppets of China and US respectively, MacArthur was summoned a few months later, Truman established a voluntary repatriation while Mao died a miserable death along with his soldiers. The hostilities among the battling countries however did not cease. The importance of the UN had been realized (308-348).

Conclusion

William Stueck is a research expert of US diplomatic process, especially, during the Cold War. He has studied the Cold War for more than three decades. In addition, it took him fifteen years to write this book. At the time of writing, he used information from seven countries, the UN archives as well as personal visits to Korea to analyze the facts. All these point to the belief that his account is more or less factual. As a result, his work gives almost an accurate true account of the War (University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc). Due to his expertise in this subject, he is the person in the best of positions to write about the Korean War. Therefore, this book can be trusted to be giving the exact picture of how the war was fought and its implications.