

Korean civil war as part of the cold war

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



Korean Civil War as Part of the Cold War On June 25 1950 North Korea invaded an unsuspecting South Korea. The South Korean army was pushed back to the southern edge of Korea until the United Nations armed with sixteen countries came into the war and pushed them right back close to China. After that, the South Koreans and U. N forces were pushed back to the 38th parallel where a cease fire happened on July 27 1953 and has held to this day. During this war, China and the Soviets both backed the Communist North Korean Government led by Kim Il-Sung, while the United States and the United Nations both backed the South Korean Democratic Government led by Syngman Rhee. Was the Korean War just a Civil War, or an episode in the Cold War? The Korean War can be seen as an episode of the Cold War, although it started as a civil war, it continued as a conflict between the United States and Russia. This essay will talk about Domestic affairs which led to the start of the civil War, how the war turned into a National conflict, what role Russia and the USA played and, how the Cold War influence affected today's Korea. The Korean Civil war did not start as part of the Cold war, but as a domestic affair with the intent of unifying Korea under one single government led by Kim Il-Sung's Communist party. When Korea was freed from Japan, both the Americans and the Russians went to occupy Korea. They met in the middle and decided to split Korea into two separate nations, North and South Korea. A different government was set up in each nation with a Communist government in the north and a Democratic government in the south. Tensions were high and neither dictator wanted to stay on their own side of the 38th parallel. This caused a lot of border skirmishes and 10 000 North and South Korean Soldiers died before the war

had even begun. Kim Il-Sung and Park Hun-young believed that it was impossible to unite their fatherland by peaceful means. (Bok-ryong 137) This caused Kim to look for violent alternatives such as Guerilla warfare which did not succeed. He resorted to a full scale attack on June 25th 1950 which started the Korean Civil war. With the two sides of this civil war backed by Cold War countries, this had the makings of a chapter in the cold war. Although the war started as an internal war, it quickly turned into a national conflict when America introduced foreign aid. Foreign aid began with the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine stated that the United States would support " free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." This was mainly put in place to help countries resisting Communist control. This was used before with Greece and Turkey to assist them, which tied them to the west. The Americans used this argument when they approached the United Nations to help South Korea. President Harry Truman said " If we let Korea down the Soviet[s] will keep right on going and swallow up one [place] after another. " (Truman) By this statement, Truman meant that if they let Korea fall to Russian communism, the Russians would keep expanding their communist ideas across Eastern Europe. Also, In April 1950, a National Security Council report known as NSC-68 had recommended that the United States use military force to " contain" Communist expansionism anywhere it seemed to be occurring, " regardless of the intrinsic, strategic, or economic value of the lands in question. (History. com) America's involvement pushed the North Koreans up to China's doorstep when they decided to intervene, sending 180 000 troops into the fight to aid the Communist side. With America's involvement, it

stopped the country from turning into a Communist nation, yet it also turned the war into a national conflict. Truman's statement proves the Americans intervened to stop the spread of communism through-out all of Korea, solidifying this as a chapter of the Cold War. Russia pre-meditated the first attack and also profited from the Korean Civil War. Both Rhee Syng-man and Kim Il-Sung wanted to unify Korea and attack the other and they both asked permission from their parent state. The U. S denied the request, but Kim Il-sung stayed in Moscow from March 30 to April 25, 1950 and discussed the Korean War with Joseph Stalin (Bok-ryong 139). Stalin didn't just give permission for them to attack; he also provided them with tanks, ammunition and other supplies. From the eyes of Stalin, " the conquest of South Korea would have enabled him to widen the buffer zone along his eastern frontier and to acquire political leverage against Japan or, perhaps, a springboard for an attack against Japan. In this way, the Soviet Union could test the Americans' commitment to this area, as well as U. S. capabilities" (Bok-ryong 140). By seeing how the Americans reacted, it allowed the Soviets to see if they would be able to expand their Communist views with little American involvement. If the Americans did not step in, Stalin would have started taking over places on the eastern front and the spread of communism would be in full tilt. Also, the Soviets used the war for economic gain. They sold the North Koreans a sum of 138, 065, 500 rubles (4574593. 24 US Dollars) of war commodities (Bok-ryong 141) such as Gold and Silver. The Russians pre-meditated the war by giving permission to attack with the intent of spreading Communism and assessing U. S resistance When the Americans got involved aiding South Korea, primarily to stop the spread of Communism,

it made the War a proxy war between Communism and Capitalism. On July 27 1953 a cease fire was signed between North and South Korea. A cease fire is a state of peace agreed to between opponents so they can discuss peace terms. To this day the cease fire remains but the War is still on because a peace treaty has not been signed. Troops are still lined up on the 38th parallel, ready to resume fighting. The Armistice took 158 meetings spread over two years and 17 days but they finally came to an agreement which;

1. Suspended open hostilities;
2. Withdrew all military forces and equipment from a 4, 000-meter-wide zone, establishing the Demilitarized Zone as a buffer between the forces;
3. Prevented both sides from entering the air, ground, or sea areas under control of the other;
4. Arranged release and repatriation of prisoners of war and displaced persons; and
5. Established the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and other agencies to discuss any violations and to ensure adherence to the truce terms (Korean War Armistice Agreement).

With this treaty, the fighting stopped but there was still a lot of tension between the two sides. Over the past 50 years there have been a few incidents, but there have also been a few periods of peace between the two nations. " In 1996 South Korea did a massive search operation and found a North Korean submarine aground in South Korean waters. Eleven crew members were found shot dead in apparent suicide and 13 were killed by South Korean forces" (BBC). In 2000, because of South Korea's new president Kim Dae-jung, North and South Korean relations improved: " Border liaison offices re-open at truce village of Panmunjom. South Korea gave amnesty to more than 3, 500 prisoners, and One hundred North Koreans met their relatives in the South in a highly-charged, emotional

reunion. Because of these efforts Kim Dae-jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize" (BBC). Although relations between North and South Korea may be improved, relations between North Korea and the rest of the world are not as good. Because of the instability left by the split of Korea many countries fear North Korea with atomic weapons. North Korea is able to hit U. S mainland using their ballistic missiles. Because of the Cold War, today's North Korea is one of the most dangerous places to be. The Korean War was a chapter in the Cold War as a proxy war between Communism and Capitalism. Both sides were backed by the two countries fighting the Cold War so when the civil war broke out it instantly became a proxy war. The Americans joined in to stop the Russians and Chinese from spreading communism all through Eastern Europe. As President Harry Truman said " If we let Korea down the Soviet[s] will keep right on going and swallow up one [place] after another" (Truman). Russia pre-meditated this war by giving them the go ahead to invade, but also by selling the North Koreans war supplies. The main gain for the Soviet Union was that they " could test the Americans' commitment to this area, as well as U. S. capabilities" (Bok-ryong 140). Because of the Cold War North Korea is a large threat of nuclear attacks because of the instability left by the American and Russian involvement. Overall The Korean War can be seen as an episode of the Cold War, although it started as a civil war, it continued as a conflict between United States and Russia. It continues today as a war between Communism in the north and Democracy in the south.