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The Korean War

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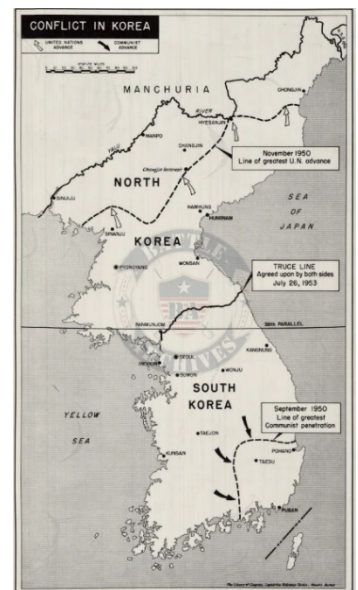
Introduction

The Korean War began on the 25th of June in 1950 and ended on the 27th of July 1953, taking a total of 3 years, 1 month, and 2 days. The war took place on the Korean peninsula (see F.1 for context) between the two major parties of The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea).

After the Second World War (WW2) and the defeat of the Japanese empire, the previously annexed Korean peninsula (by Japan) was in need of reorganizing back into an official country.

Decided by the Soviet Union and the United States of America (USA), the Korean peninsula was to be split along the 38th parallel, and the Soviet Union and the USA each worked to establish a new government for each half. The two halves quickly formed opposing governments: The DPRK, formed by the Soviet Union with a communist system, and the ROK, formed by the USA (with UN supervision) with a democratic system. Over the following years, tensions rose with the DPRK and Soviet Union not wanting one of the USA's allies bordering them, seeing it as a threat to communism in Asia. On the 25th of June 1950, North Korean Troops Invaded the ROK against the advice of Joseph Stalin with the intent of pushing Western influence out of Asia. The DPRK managed to occupy most of the ROK before US troops (supported by the UN) landed in ROK and pushed the DPRK out. US troops began expanding the ROK, pushing the border further north until the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union realized the danger of having a US ally on their border and deployed troops supporting the DPRK, pushing the USA and ROK back to the 38th parallel. This led the war to a stalemate where an armistice was signed, marking the end of the war.

To this current day, no peace treaty has been signed, but an armistice was agreed upon. After the armistice was signed. A series of small conflicts arose, with the largest being the Korean Demilitarized Zone conflict from 1966 to 1969. The situation escalated further in 2013 when the DPRK began rationalizing the use of nuclear weaponry against the ROK, Japan, and the USA. This was deescalated in 2016 when the DPRK and USA began negotiating peace plans. These peace plans



F.1 Korean peninsula 1950 – 1953

culminated in the “Panmunjom Declaration,” which ensured better cooperation between the DPRK and ROK as well as ushering in a new era of peace.

Definition of Key Terms

Annexed

To dissolve a country’s government and absorb it into your own, often referring to the removal of the country as a whole, but this is not always the case.

Armistice

An agreement between two opposing parties at war to initiate the end of the conflict. Often the first step towards a Peace Treaty.

Cairo Conference

The conference attended by the UK, USA, and China began outlining strategies to address the growing threat of the Japanese Empire on the 25th of November 1943.

Communism

A political belief that promotes the idea of all people being equal. Communism stems from Marxism, created by Karl Marx. (Examples include the Soviet Union, Chinese communist party (CCP))

Democracy

A government made up of officials voted for by the people will often favor the use of democracy. (examples: United States of America, Republic of Korea, Netherlands)

DMZ Conflict

Also Known as the Second Korean War, this was a second attempt by the DPRK to destabilize and take over the ROK. This was the largest conflict between the DPRK and ROK following the Korean War.

Korean Peninsula

The peninsula that the DPRK and ROK are both situated on. Sitting to the east of the Yellow Sea and west of southern Japan across the Sea of Japan.

Nuclear Weapons

The most powerful explosive weapons capable of destroying whole cities with one bomb. During the time of the Korean War, there was only the A-Bomb, but a more powerful version, the H-Bomb, was first detonated as a test midway through the war (1/11/1952).

Operation Glory

Part of the armistice allowed for each side of the Korean War to be able to exchange the dead lost in the war.

Panmunjom Declaration

The last agreement between the DPRK and ROK with the goals of improving cooperation between the two countries, officially ending the Korean War, and possibly reuniting Korea into one country.

Peace Treaty

An agreement between two hostile parties (often countries) with the intent of ending the conflict or war.

Sino-Korean Border

The northern border of the DPRK with China spans 1352 kilometers.

Yalu River

The river is commonly used to mark the Sino-Korean Border.

38th parallel

This is a parallel sitting 38° degrees north of the equator. This was the line used to separate the Korean Peninsula into North and South Korea.

General Overview

Build up to the war

The root causes of the Korean War began at the end of WW2 and the fall of the Japanese Empire. The Korean Peninsula had previously been annexed by the Japanese during their occupation of East Asia, and it was decided at the Cairo conference in 1943 that Korea was to become an independent country by the USA, United Kingdom (UK), and China. The USA and the Soviet Union

began to work together to form a united Korea, but with conflicting political opinions, this attempt failed.

In an attempt to still form a new Korea, the UN, USA, and Soviet Union decided to split Korea along the 38th parallel, dividing it into two separate countries. The Soviet Union was given the northern half of the peninsula, where they formed the DPRK with a communist government similar to their own. They placed Kim Il-Sum as the first president, who had previously served as an officer in the Soviet Russian army leading the war effort against Japan. Kim Il-Sum was trained and placed under strict control by the Soviet Union, making the DPRK a semi-independent extension of the Soviet Union. In the southern half of Korea, the USA organized a democratic government and held a general election that was supervised by the UN, where Syngman Rhee was elected as the first Prime Minister (PM). This American-made government gave the ROK a strong alliance with the USA.

In the year prior to the war, the DPRK began to see the ROK as an inferior country and believed they had a superior military power. Kim Il-Sum, later in 1950, personally traveled to Moscow to convince Stalin that a war effort against the ROK would be beneficial to the Soviet Union and asked for support in the future war. Stalin denied this request, seeing no benefit in annexing the ROK, and requested that the DPRK not commit to a war. After multiple requests to the Soviet Union, the DPRK declared war against the ROK on the 25th of June 1950 with no support from the Soviet Union.

Korean War

The war officially began on the dawn of the 25th of June 1950 with Operation Pukpong, where the DPRK deployed troops along the 38th parallel and began an invasion of the ROK. The DPRK's campaign was at first very successful as they managed to take occupation of a large portion of ROK, including the capital city, Seoul. After the USA and UN Security Council recognized the rising threat of DPRK, they quickly moved to intervene and supply the ROK with military support. This American intervention quickly changed the tide of the war to favor the side of the ROK, which was pushing the DPRK back past the 38th parallel. Following the expulsion of the DPRK from the ROK, General MacArthur worked to restore the government and reinstated Syngman Rhee as the prime minister. Following this, General MacArthur receives a directive informing him of the primary objective to annex the DPRK and form a unified country on the Korean peninsula under Syngman Rhee's government.

By the 30th of September, the USA was warned by China that they would be prepared to intervene and support the DPRK if the US were to cross the 38th parallel. Prepared to deal with the consequences of Chinese intervention, the US and ROKs pushed the DPRK past the 38th Parallel on the 1st of October. The war effort moved quickly, and DPRK's capital, Pyongyang, was soon occupied,

preventing North Korean leaders from escaping to China. By the end of the month, US forces had nearly reached the Sino Korean Border. With the US drawing closer and General MacArthur stating that he deemed it necessary for the war effort to draw past the Sino-Korean border to destroy any depots supporting the DPRK, the Chinese government made multiple attempts to contact the US government and inform them that if they were to pass Yalu River, China would deploy troops and intervene.

President Truman and General MacArthur both believed China's warnings to a bluff as invading North Korea without the Soviet's Air support would be a suicide mission. On the 15th of October, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) crossed the Yalu River, beginning the Chinese intervention. These did not yet have air support from the Soviet Union. They were heavily camouflaged, traveling only under the cover of darkness, which allowed them to avoid detection from the US until the Soviet Union chose to provide their Air Support on the 27th of October.

Fighting continued with China and the DPRK slowly pushing the USA out of North Korea and back to the 38th parallel, continuing for the next six months along the 38th parallel. The separate forces kept pushing against each other, regularly gaining land and then losing it again. On April 11th, General McArthur was relieved of his duties as supreme commander in Korea for the reasons of crossing the 38th parallel with the mistaken belief that China would not enter the war, stating that the use of nuclear weapons should be his decision and other generals, not the president's. He finally saw that the only honorable outcome of the war would be the complete destruction of the DPRK. The war continued with neither of the sides making any ground, and resources became scarce for soldiers, with many dying of starvation. By 1953, the US's public opinion of President Truman began to diminish as there was no clear sight of the end of the war. Soon, President Eisenhower was elected, and his administration began to roll back on US support, working towards a peace treaty being established.

Armistice and Attempted Treaties

Following the election of the Eisenhower administration, off-and-on negotiations for an armistice began, which were a struggle and lasted till 1954. The negotiations began to make progress after the death of Stalin and the withdrawal of the Soviets' support to China. With China unable to continue fighting the war without the Soviet Union's support, they began to cooperate more with the negotiating. On the 27th of July 1953, the DPRK and UN signed an armistice agreement marking the unofficial end of the war – "unofficial" due to the fact that no official peace treaty had been agreed on. Notably, the President of the ROK, Syngman Rhee, refused to sign the treaty, and the DPRK still claimed they won the war. The armistice created the Korean Demilitarized Zone

(DMZ) along the 38th parallel and began Operation Glory, which allowed the combatants to be able to exchange the casualties lost in the war.

Over the next 70 years, not much work was put into forming a peace treaty to officially end the war due to the conflicting interests and mistrust between the two countries. The closest thing to a peace treaty was the Panmunjom Declaration, signed on the 27th of April 2018. This declaration had the goal of improving cooperation between the two countries with the hopes of working towards an official treaty to end the Korean War and one day reunite the Korean peninsula.

Aftermath

Following the armistice, there were still high tensions between the two countries. The DPRK had regular small advances into the DMZ, but none of these escalated very far due to a lack of disposable resources in North Korea and China's unwillingness to help contribute to another war. The largest of these outbreaks was the Korean DMZ in 1966 to 1969, also known as the Second Korean War, where the DPRK attempted another advance on the ROK but ultimately failed when the ROK received support from the US again.

The results of the war left the DPRK severely weakened. The Soviet Union deemed it pointless to demand repayment of debts, first delaying the payments and later canceling them as a whole. China also chose to cancel repayments but demanded trade between the countries. Kim Il-Sum's dictatorship continued after the war and developed a cult-like following for the Kim Dynasty. Present-day DPRK takes a military-first policy, has the 4th largest active army, and is in possession of nuclear weapons. The UN and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have made inquiries into Human Rights violations in 2014 and are continuing to watch over the DPRK.

The ROK had a very different outcome from the war. With USA's support, they were able to reestablish the country and rebuild its industry. There was, however, a growing disdain for America with the large amounts of US soldiers posted in the ROK. This anti-American attitude began to disappear in the 1980s, and the ROK is currently a very strong US ally.

Further on in the 21st century, the DPRK launched multiple attacks on the ROK the first was a torpedo attack on an ROK navy vessel that sank the vessel and killed 46 sailors. Following this attack, fired artillery over Yeonpyeong Island, killing four people and wounding 30. 2 of the people lost in the attack were notably civilians. The ROK did little to combat these attacks, fearing escalation to another Korean War, with the most repercussions the DPRK received were more UN sanctions. Three years after these attacks, the DPRK claimed the Armistice was invalid as the ROK had never officially signed it. 2 days later, they renounced the armistice and stated, "It is not restrained by the

North-South Declaration on non-aggression.” A month later, the DPRK said it was entering a state of war, but no aggression was made towards any country. In 2016, the DPRK began reverting its actions by approaching the US about restarting formal peace talks. 2 years later, the ROK and DPRK signed the Panmunjom Declaration, which did not end the war but has led the stepping stones to do so by further bettering relations between the two countries and working towards reuniting Korea as one country.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
29 th of August 1910	Korea was annexed by the Japanese Empire
22-26 th of November 1943	Cairo Conference where allied powers decided to reestablish Korea as a country after Japan had annexed it.
2 nd of September 1945	WW2 ends and Japanese Empire is defeated
7 th of September 1945	General MacArthur announces US military control of southern Korea
20 th of July 1948	Syngman Rhee was elected the First President of ROK
15 th of August 1948	The First ROK government was established
9 th of September 1948	DPRK was founded and Kim Il-Sum was placed in power
25 th of June 1950	DPRK invades ROK
25 th of June 1950	The UN security Council (SC) condemns the DPRK's actions
27 th of June 1950	Seoul is evacuated
27 th of June 1950	UN SC publishes resolution 83 recommending member states support the ROK
5 th of July 1950	US troops enter ROK supporting them in the war effort
27 th of September 1950	US forces reach the 38 th parallel
30 th of September 1950	China warns it will intervene if US troops cross the 38 th parallel
1 st of October 1950	US and ROK troops cross the 38 th parallel

3 rd of October 1950	China Attempts to warn the US they will intervene. The US however chose to ignore these warnings
19 th of October 1950	Pyongyang is captured by US forces
25 th of October 1950	US Forces begin to near the Sino Korean Border
1 st of November 1950	China intervenes and the first conflict between Chinese, and America troops occurs
11 th of December 1950	A cease fire was presented by the UN
4 th of January 1951	Seoul was Capture for a second time
14 th of March 1951	Seoul is liberated
11 th of April 1951	General MacArthur is relieved of his duty as supreme commander in Korea
10 th of July 1951	The armistice negotiations begin
20 th of January 1953	Eisenhower Administration takes office
5 th of March 1953	Stalin Dies
27 th of July 1953	The Armistice is Signed
2 nd of November 1966	Korean DMZ conflict begins
18 th of October 1969	Korean DMZ conflict ends
April 1975	Kim Il Sung Requested China to invade ROK, but was refused
18 th of August 1978	Korean Axe Murder Incident
26 th of March 2010	North Koren torpedo s sink a ROK navy vessel
23 rd of November 2010	DPRK fire artillery at Yeonpyeong Island
11 th of March 2013	DPRK receives UN sanctions
13 th of March 2013	DPRK declares the end of the armistice
30 th of March 2013	DPRK states it entering a state of War
2016	DPRK approaches the US about formal Peace talks
27 th of April 2018	DPRK and ROK officially announce they will begin to talk for a peace treaty to end the conflict with the Panmunjom Declaration being signed.

Major Parties Involved

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

This is the country in the northern half of the Korean peninsula, first formed by the Soviet Union at the end of WW2 and shared the same communist beliefs as the Soviet Union. First, it was led by Kim Il-Sum, whose family still rule the country today.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is the democratic half of the Korean Peninsula, formed by the Americans during the time of the Korean War. Syngman Rhee was the first president.

Korean People's Army

Also known as the KPA, this is the DPRK's army formed on the 8th of February 1948 and led the war effort for the DPRK in the Korean War. The KPA is still the DPRK's Formal Army.

People's Republic of China

Also referred to as just China. The People's Republic of China is the only land neighboring country to the Korean Peninsula bordering the DPRK in the North. They have strong ties with the Soviet Union and DPRK.

People's Volunteer Army

Also known as the PVA, this is China's leading army that helped support the DPRK in the Korean War.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union, or USSR, was the predecessor to the Russian Federation. The Soviet Union had a communist government and was led by Joseph Stalin During the time of the Korean War.

United Nations

The global political institution that works to have peace and security and develop better relations across the world. First founded on October 24th, 1945.

United States of America

One of the founding members of the UN, the USA, is a Democratic country that has often supported other democratic countries with the intent to reduce imperialism, fascism, and communism.

Possible Solutions

The Primary objective would be to officially end the war and form a peace treaty. Each country taking part in this war may need some form of reparations. Both North and South Korea could repay the countries that supported them in the war. The DPRK might also pay reparations to the ROK for initiating the war, but in a similar vein, the same can be applied to the ROK and the USA for the damages they caused in North Korea.

Further things that can be done is the demilitarization of one or both of the countries as a whole, similar to how Japan was demilitarized at the end of World War Two. This might not extend to a full demilitarization, but possibly only a partial demilitarization is possible, restricting the country's military. The creation of a second DMZ zone could also be formed similar to the one that the armistice created. The use of nuclear weapons was also a threat during the war, so the denuclearization of both the DPRK and the ROK could be a possible step to help end the conflict and tensions between the two countries.

A final solution could be the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, but this would be challenging due to the conflicting political beliefs of the two countries and may escalate to a civil war.

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