

Reconsideration of the Korean War

KAMIYA Fuji

In 1966, I published *Chosen Senso* (Korean War), a paperback volume from Chuokoronsha, in which I wanted to stress three points. First, the significance of the Korean War in modern history; in other words, the Korean War shaped the basic international political relations of the Cold War. Second, the Korean War was an invasion of South Korea, perpetrated by Kim Il-Sung, who was attempting to unify the people through armed force. I was actually the first to point this out in Japan. Third, the Korean War decisively influenced Japan's postwar course, by affecting the contents of the 1951 Peace Treaty and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, and by creating the "Special Demands," but most important of all, by acting as the decisive impetus behind Japan's decision to rearm, which was an enormous national undertaking aimed at re-establishing an institution (armed forces) which had been disbanded just a few years earlier. However, the fact that rearmament was initiated on the orders of GHQ, and proceeded without any debate among the Japanese people, resulted in a "negative" legacy.

My view that the Korean War was an invasion of the South by the North came under much criticism in contemporary academia and commentary by so-called "liberal culturalists." Today, my views are the norm, but in late 1960s Japan, the "myth" that socialism was a force for peace, which was in turn a good (as opposed to evil), was deeply imbedded in the psychological mood of intellectuals. Any insistence that the Korean War was an invasion by the North of the South was therefore not acceptable.

The liberal culturalists were opposed to the American intervention in Korea, but if the Americans had not intervened, the situation in Japan and East Asia would undoubtedly be much different than what it is today.

On the other hand, the Japanese public's perception of the Korean War changed from what it was before World War Two, and a view of Korea which was close to nihilism was dominant for a while after the Korean War. The minds of the Japanese people had "frozen" with respect to Korea, as the Japanese dealt in their own minds with the shock of Japan's own defeat in World War Two and the emotional burden of Japan's colonial rule. The Korean War was seen as a "fire on

the opposite river bank,” and the Japanese only embraced the economic effects, i.e. the “Special Demands.” Opposition to rearmament grew when the National Police Reserve was created, but the general public virtually did not recognize nor share a perception of crisis that Japan’s national security was deeply affected by the armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

Finally, a word on the issues which await further research on the Korean War. In order to maintain objectivity, Korean War research in Japan, including my own, heretofore tended to analyze the war from the viewpoint of international politics or power politics, rather than the role of ideology. However, considering that wars in the post-World War Two period have been greatly influenced by ideology, the “revolutionary war” aspect of the Korean War, i.e. its forcing of the Korean people to choose a social system, and other ideological factors of the war should be the focus of future research.

My Experience in the Korean War and its Legacy

Paik Sun Yup

56 years have passed since the outbreak of the Korean War.

The communist North Korean Army attacked at once from the 38th Parallel at daybreak on June 25, 1950, after having secured an overwhelming military superiority through careful prewar planning. Thus did North Korea commence its surprise invasion of South Korea.

After American ground forces and United Nations forces were committed, however, upon the strong proposal of General Douglas MacArthur, the war did not develop as North Korea’s Kim Il-Sung desired it. Within two months of the opening of the war, the North Korean forces were decimated.

In August 1950, as fierce battles were raging around the Pusan Perimeter, General Walker, the commander of U.S. Eighth Army, successfully defended the Naktong River, using firefighting tactics. Around the same time, the ROK 1st Division, which I commanded, won a huge victory north of Taegu, at Tabu-dong (nicknamed the Bowling Alley). This was the first joint U.S.-ROK operation, and we successfully threw back a concentrated attack by four North Korean divisions.

Thereafter, even as General MacArthur successfully pulled off the counterlanding at Inchon, the ROK 1st Division repeatedly counterattacked and advanced northwards, and was the first military unit to enter Pyongyang. In November 1950, however, the Chinese Army intervened, and the Korean War faced a new situation.

The Chinese Army carried out six offensives over the next two-and-a-half years, which resulted in close and bitter fighting, and repeated advances and retreats by both sides. During that time, in July 1951, the ceasefire negotiations began. I was appointed as the Korean representative to the first ceasefire talks, and for three months keenly experienced firsthand the propaganda of the communists, as I faced off with them across the negotiating table.

In July 1952, as Chief of Staff of the Army, I conducted intensive and concentrated training of the divisions under my command while the fighting front was stalemated. In December of that year, I met President-elect Eisenhower while he was visiting Korea and emphasized the need to strengthen and reorganize the Korean Army. Eisenhower agreed. By the end of 1953, the Army was expanded and strengthened by 10 divisions, to a total of 20 divisions.

In February 1954, I became the first commander of the First ROK Army, and established its headquarters. During the next 45 months, the First ROK Army evolved into an effective combined-arms fighting force, due to the efforts of the Korean Army itself as well as the active support given by the American Army.

In May 1957, I was reappointed Chief of Staff and accelerated the modernization of the Army. In order to facilitate this effort, I visited the U.S. Defense Department in May 1958, where President Eisenhower promised that the U.S. would actively support us.

In February 1959, I was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and for the next 15 months, or until I left the armed forces in May 1960, I worked at establishing a joint U.S.-ROK operations system.

Until immediately before the outbreak of war, the ROK forces consisted of a relatively light army centered around its eight infantry divisions, plus a few naval and air units. During the war, these were greatly reinforced, and came to total 600,000 men. In addition, after the ceasefire agreement, the ROK forces acquired modern and heavy armaments, including M-46 and M-48 tanks, 155 mm. howitzers, DD-class destroyers and F-86 fighters. The ROK forces expanded and were

strengthened qualitatively as well as quantitatively. During the course of the war, the ROK forces gained combat experience, not only in small unit actions but also involving large units, and in joint operations with the Americans as well. The ROK began training and producing officers more systematically, and sent its officers to the various service schools of the U.S. after the war, which led to an even greater improvement of the training and education of its officers.

46 years have elapsed since I left the armed forces. During that time, the ROK forces have continuously grown and developed. Every time I look back on the Korean War, I feel a deep gratification and affection for those brave Americans and men of the United Nations forces who gave their precious lives for the Republic of Korea and its people, and for the families of these men, who endured those ultimate sacrifices. I therefore also would like to urge that the ROK-U.S. alliance, which began with the Korean War and was underwritten in blood, should be allowed to develop into an even more mature stage, and should be strengthened even further. I am certain that this will lead to the general stability of the entire Far Eastern region.

The Korean War and Japan: Dilemmas of Identity and Security

SHOJI Junichiro

The Korean War resolved the two dilemmas of identity and security that Japan had been grappling with since the beginning of the modern age. The identity problem, as evidenced by such phrases as “escape Asia, join Europe” and “Asia-ism,” is a conflict over whether Japan is an Asian country or a “Western” country. China’s participation in the Korean War divided East Asia, with the greater part of the region, including China and North Korea, becoming part of the Socialist camp. As a result, Japan became effectively separated from East Asia. Moreover, the multilateral Treaty of San Francisco had placed Japan in the democratic camp, which is primarily centered in Europe and America. This relationship extended to the economic sphere as well, with Japan’s commercial structure shifting, under the name of “Japan-U.S. economic cooperation,” from a prewar focus on East Asia to one

centering on the United States and Southeast Asia. This move formed the foundation for its later rapid economic growth.

Regarding the security problem, the Korean Peninsula had long been a region of vital importance for Japan, as shown by the "line of interest" designated by Aritomo Yamagata (politician, 1838 to 1922). The U.S. military intervention in the Korean War and the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty made the U.S. responsible for security in East Asia, including Japan. As a result, the security issues concerning the Korean Peninsula were, in a sense, resolved for Japan. Similarly, in a change from the prewar years, neither the government nor people of Japan felt much of a sense of urgency about the Korean War, regarding it as just a "fire on the far side of the river." While the resulting low level of military armament made economic growth possible, the trade-off was the continued existence of U.S. military bases.

Moreover, Japan's contribution as a base for the U.S. to fight the Korean War and the rearmament of Japan under U.S. guidance served to reconfirm Japan's importance in the U.S. strategy for East Asia, transforming Japan from an "enemy nation" into an "allied nation" and laying the foundation for the Japan-U.S. alliance. In addition to Japan's contribution to the U.S. military bases, the support given by Japan in response to U.S. demands in terms of both "hardware," i.e. materiel and bases, as well as "software," i.e. manpower and information, has been seen as significantly affecting the outcome of the Korean War. Ironically, these areas are a legacy of the former "Imperial Japan."

While the intensification of the Cold War caused by the outbreak of the Korean War resolved these dilemmas and also helped to promote a magnanimous peace for the defeated nation of Japan, it also led to an entirely new problem. This was the fact that the basic decisions for the nation, regarding the type of peace which defined the way in which Japan would return to international society, the Japan-U.S. security issues including the stationing of U.S. forces in Japan, and rearmament, were mainly guided by the United States in response to the sudden outbreak of the Korean War. As a result, Japan never had an opportunity to engage in serious debate like Germany. In particular, a national consensus concerning security issues could not be reached, since extreme pacifism was spreading at that time, with the result that the issues became politicized into an ideological confrontation in a "domestic Cold War." The effects of that confrontation still reverberating today.

The Impact of the Korean War on China : Strategy, Defense and Nuclear Bombs

Zhang Xiaoming

The Korean War was the first regional armed conflict in which China (PRC) got involved shortly after her founding in October of 1949. The Korean War had a great and far-reaching impact upon China in various fields. This paper is focusing on the Korean War's impact on China's strategy reorientation, defense modernization and the decision to make nuclear bombs.

After the end of the civil war and the founding of the PRC in 1949, the most important strategic goals of the Chinese government were economic reconstruction and national unification (liberation of Taiwan). But the outbreak of the Korean War, especially China's decision to enter the war, led to the strategic reorientation of the newly-founded PRC, by investing a lot of manpower and resources in the war, and postponing the liberation of Taiwan. In addition, the Chinese leadership also readjusted its foreign policy, by strengthening Sino-Soviet alliance and getting involved into the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean War also initiated and moved the process of Chinese defense modernization. The Chinese learnt a great deal about a high-tech war from the Korean War and it therefore led to the Chinese defense modernization with a great help from the Soviet Union. During the war, China imported a great deal and various types of weapons and military equipments from the Soviet Union. The Chinese air force and navy were created during the war. The young Chinese air force even started to enter the air battles over the Korean Peninsula in later December of 1950, just about two months after the Chinese People's Volunteers crossed the Yalu River.

During the Korean War, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations threatened to use nuclear bombs against the Chinese and the North Korean troops on the Korean Peninsula, and the Chinese leadership might be impressed by the American nuclear threats. The American nuclear threat in the 1954-1955 Taiwan

Strait Crisis enforced the Chinese concerns about nuclear weapons. In Spring 1955, the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee made the final decision to make nuclear bombs. The Chinese successfully tested its first nuclear bomb in October 1964. At the same time the Chinese strategic missile program was proceeding on.

The Korean War's Impact on Russian Policy towards the Korean Peninsula

Vasily V. Mikheev

More than half a century passed from the end of the Korean War, however it still determines the political situation on the Korea Peninsula and influences upon North East Asia security situation. There still exists a divided Nation on the Korean peninsula. There still exists an orthodox political and economic regime in North Korea, which isolates North Korean people from the rest of the World. Politicians and diplomats from the nations engaged in the "6-way talks process" – when working out national policies towards the North Korean nuclear crisis – still have to take into account the results of the Korean War and, every time, have to return back to the deepest roots of the nuclear crisis that lay in the history of the Korean War.

Proceeding from the importance of the Korean War for global and regional security, including Russia security interests, this paper will focus on three main issues:

- The Korean War through the prism of the Stalin's theory of "The Three Circles of Defense".
- The influence of the Korean War on Russian military doctrine and strategic thinking towards Korea.

- The Korean War and the North Korea nuclear crisis.

The main point is that it is not the Korean War itself but deep political transformations in the Post-Stalin Russia and changes in the global balance of power between the former USSR and the USA that influenced upon Russian military doctrine in the post-Korean War times.

The second point is that the solution of the North Korean nuclear crisis could be found through the prism of how the Korean War impacts on the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. As it is argued in the paper, firstly, North Korea is playing nuclear gambling in order to provide for the security of the regime of the Kim' family. Secondly, there is no normal Peace Regime on the Korean Peninsula after the end of the Korean War. Thirdly, the closed and non-market character of North Korea impedes its participation in regional security cooperation.

The paper presents Russian view on "the road map" for the Korean settlement in connection with the lessons of the Korean War.

The Korean War and the United States: The Mixed Legacy

Allan R. Millett

The impact of the Korean War on the United States varies widely by policy, and institution. It is easy to exaggerate the war's impact. The safest generalization is that the war accelerated developments rooted in World War II and the first five years of the Cold War. One also has to be careful over which foreign intervention in the Korean War had the greatest causal influence: the Chinese intervention is more important than the North Korean invasion. The war's greatest impact was upon national security and defense policy. It had the least impact on American politics, economic development, and culture. Because the war occurred simultaneously with continuing shifts in American politics, it is easy to misjudge its influence.

At the level of the national experience, the war had limited effect on domestic politics, economic trends, and cultural patterns. Paranoid anti-Communism had already been set in motion by revelations on Soviet spying, the extent of pro-Soviet

"fellow traveling" in the 1930s and the 1940s, and the detonation of the first Soviet atomic device. Senator Joseph McCarthy began his witch-hunt six months before June 25, 1950. The Truman administration had already lost its popularity on domestic issues; the issue of racial integration had already split the Democratic party with the presidential election of 1948. The Congressional elections of 1950 were a referendum on domestic reform, race and federal "Fair Deal" activism; the Democratic losses of Congressional seats were not war-related. On the economic front, the war-related increase in federal spending (fiscal policy) had limited influence on the general pattern of economic growth, fueled by World War II savings, unleashed demand for housing and household durable goods, favorable advantages in international trade, and agricultural productivity. The decade 1940-1950 saw the most dramatic shift in household income in American history; one-third of all American families joined the economically secure middle class. Certainly, defense contracts for procurement assisted selected portions of heavy industry, especially the aerospace industry, but defense dollars had limited influence on shipbuilding and the automotive industry. In terms of cultural impact, the war deepened the ideological competition among elite conservatives and liberals on the nature of the Communist challenge, but did not enter the popular imagination in the forms of best-selling novels, feature films, tv series, and magazine journalism. It may have encouraged some awareness that Koreans were not Japanese or Chinese.

Of course, the war had significant impact on American national security policy. Its major impact came in destroying the White House-Congressional alliance to keep defense spending at one-third of the annual federal budget or \$11-13 billion; the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that the forces required to execute the existing war plans was treble that paltry amount. (Annex 1, NSC 68, April 1950). The fiscal "breakout" is the Second Supplement to the FY 1951 defense budget, passed in December 1950, which set the pattern of increased defense spending of the 1950s. It is well to remember that even the Eisenhower defense budgets (FY 1953-FY 1961), though averaging around \$40 billion, consumed only about 6 percent of Gross Domestic Product after a brief surge to 13 percent GDP. Roughly one-third of the defense budgets, FY1951-FY1953, went to direct war-related expenses.

At the policy level, the Korean War contributed to the Eisenhower administration's "New Look" or "Security with Solvency," embodied in NSC 168 (1953). In broad terms, the growth of the American economy would continue to

determine fiscal and monetary policies, growth rates, inflation, trade balances, deficits, and taxes took precedence over security issues. This was hardly a new concern except during World War II. Even though forward, collective defense had become more directly linked to deterrence concepts since 1950, the fact remained that non-nuclear forces (especially ground forces) were expensive. During the Eisenhower years, the active duty armed forces dropped by a million members to save money, most of it redirected into new weapons systems procurement, usually dual capable to use non-nuclear or tactical nuclear ordnance. It is well to remember, however, that the Eisenhower budgets accelerated the procurement of three different strategic bombers, ICBM development, and the investment in nuclear-powered submarines capable of firing nuclear weapons. To fill the needs for active duty forces to build forward deployed conventional forces, the new administration encouraged the development of local forces through alliance systems. For NATO, this meant the creation of the Bundeswehr, for Korea and Japan a bilateral mutual security pact, and a coalition in Southern and Southeast Asia anchored on Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan. The Baghdad Pact attempted the same approach with Iran linked to the United States (not a METO member) by bilateral agreements. Except for the three divisions deployed in Korea and Okinawa, American air and naval forces played the principal role.

The experience of the Korean War had an uneven impact on the American armed forces. All of the services accepted the need for guidance on POW behavior, known as the "code of conduct." All were affected by military manpower reforms that tried to standardize the draft and reserve policy: the Universal Military Service and Training Act (1951) and the Reserve Acts of 1952 and 1955. The individual services had separate Korean-related developments. Although the U.S. Army spent the 1950s focused on its NATO mission, it developed helicopters for tactical mobility and, finally, for fire support. The Air Force paid more attention to offensive tactical aviation even though it, too, procured aircraft (the "Century Series") for war with Russia. Naval aviation and surface combatants refined their power projection capabilities. The naval services, the Navy and the Marine Corps, resurrected their amphibious partnership, reassured of a Fleet Marine Force of three divisions and aircraft wings by the Douglas-Mansfield Act (1952).

Although much is made of the influence of the Korean War on the decision not to intervene in Indochina in 1954, the success of the reform of the Korean army

(cited by Generals Collins and Van Fleet on reports on Indochina) made it more likely that the United States would become the sponsor of the Republic of Vietnam armed forces in the 1950s and thus start the road to greater and greater commitments in Southeast Asia.

In summary, the Korean War did not influence American life writ large but had a significant impact on defense policy when added to other Cold War concerns.

The Korean War and Great Britain

Michael F. Hopkins

On 25 June 1950 North Korea attacked South Korea and thereby precipitated the worse crisis since the Second World War. Given Soviet backing for the North Koreans while the South Koreans were supported by the United States, this was a major international crisis. It was also the first time in history that the two major protagonists possessed nuclear weapons. Chinese intervention in October-November compounded the global risks. The British joined the Americans in resisting the attack from the very beginning and remained committed right through to the armistice of July 1953. This paper aims to assess British involvement.

In the first place, it seeks to understand British thinking about Korea from 1945 to 1950. Britain had no economic interests there, any emotional or symbolic attachment to the country, and, more importantly, did not regard Korea as strategically significant, even though it had vital interests in other parts of Asia. When India gained independence in 1947 there were still British interests in Hong Kong and, after 1948, British forces were engaged in a war with communist insurgents in Malaya. In addition, Britain had a role on the Far Eastern Commission that had the task of reaching a peace settlement with Japan. The British also had responsibility for defence of Australia and New Zealand – at least until the conclusion of the ANZUS Pact in 1951.

The second, and main, part of the paper explains the major facets of British involvement and identifies key ingredients in British thinking. It considers their initial diplomatic and military commitment after 25 June 1950, despite their prior

view of the country's low strategic importance. It charts and explains the vital phases of decision: the sending of ground troops; crossing the 38th parallel; the response to Chinese intervention; problems over General MacArthur; pursuit of negotiations; the issue of POWs; and the armistice. The analysis reveals a broad pattern of the British following the American lead but also of differences and disagreements, particularly over China and aspects of the conduct of the air campaign.

The third part of the paper seeks to assess the impact and meaning of the Korean commitment on Britain. At one level, it clearly bolstered the country's international standing, since it was in the vanguard of action in the United Nations and in the military operations (its forces were greater in number than those of any other country, save South Korea and the United States). It also seemed to many to have deepened the Anglo-American special relationship. Once more, Britain and America were wartime allies. This was true but, unlike the Second World War, the alliance was hugely unequal. American pressure also led to increases in defence programmes among all the Western powers. So great was the strain that the new Conservative government of Winston Churchill decided in November 1951 to reduce the burden. The Americans also pressed for a further measure of Western defence, German rearmament, which the British had previously considered and rejected. London now accepted it. The remainder of the war saw unsuccessful efforts to find a workable scheme.

The Korean War revealed the limits of power in the nuclear era. The Americans adopted a limited war strategy, rather than risk the prospect of expanding hostilities to China and the Soviet Union. The limits of power were even more evident to the British. They played an important, if small, part in the combat; they were significant players at the UN; they held confidential talks with the Americans and thereby influenced policy. But the war demonstrated how restricted was that influence. On crucial questions the British had to give way: troops were sent, despite initial reluctance; their arrival was hastened; rearmament was expanded; a UN resolution condemning China was supported.