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The Korean War and Seeing the World As the Enemy Sees It

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice.

(#1 July 19, 2012; #2 April 13, 2012; #3, Jan. 19, 2016; #4, Feb. 10, 2016; #5, March 12, 2016).

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Publisher’s Review of I. F. Stone’s *The Hidden History of the Korean War: 1950-1951* (1952)
Bruce Cumings’ Preface to the 1988 Reprint of *The Hidden History.*

Publisher’s Review of **Martin Hart-Landsberg**’s

Korea: 

*Division, Reunification, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2000).

Dick’s Rev. (2017) of Cumings begins with Chapter Six, Air War.

Related Books

SUMMARY: US War Against North Korea

Chossudovsky, “America’s War Against the People of Korea” [http://global-politics.eu/2017/05/25/americas-war-%D0%B0gainst-people-korea-historical-record-war-crimes/](http://global-politics.eu/2017/05/25/americas-war-%D0%B0gainst-people-korea-historical-record-war-crimes/) A chronologically encompassing essay, from the Japanese occupation to the present.

ALL OF THE ABOVE INQUIRIES INTO THE TRUE HISTORY OF KOREA CONTRIBUTE TO CONTROLLING THE NUCLEAR THREAT. Two actions can be highlighted:
Conversion of Armistice to a Peace Treaty Needed: Singapore’s Former Foreign Minister George Yeo.
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OMNI North Korea Newsletter #5

OMNI Friends for Peace and Justice

A central value in creating a peaceful world is *diplomacy.* I taught in the *Fulbright College* at UAF and was daily reminded and reinforced every time I passed the sculpture of Fulbright outside Old Main. Fulbright in *The Price of Empire* is our
political philosopher of empathy, of changing our manner of thinking about world conflicts, from armed force to seeing the world as others see it. But our leaders make no effort to see the world as Kim Jong Un sees it, or as his father and grandfather saw it, despite the ample evidence of their world. Following are reviews of three books that set the record straight. For peace with NK we need leaders and the public who actually know something about Korea's history, if they are to see the US through North Koreans' eyes.

THE KOREAN WAR:
Our journalists are trained to give both sides in a controversy, but when some nation opposes US policy that discipline collapses and the mainstream media (MM) become megaphones for US armed force bias. The manufactured North Korean threat provides a clear example of the Mainstream Media promoting war by giving only the point of view of pro-war-and-violence leaders.


S. Korea: China In On Penalizing North. 4-11-17.
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North Korea Conducts Missile Test. Analysts Say Alaska in Reach of Weapon. 7-5-17
U.S. Warns North Korea, Pressures China. 7-6-17
Trump Discusses N. Korea “Menace.” 7-9-17
Madman. 7-9-17 (cartoon showing Kim Jong Un firing offing off a missile; this day the NADG published 4 personal attacks on Kim, one calling him a “psychopath”).
Meanwhile the US is perfecting its **anti-ballistic missile capacity**; that is, its *first strike* capability (strike the enemy first knowing you can prevent retaliation).

**ABC7 Los Angeles**

**Missile launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base, intercepts test warhead**

Officials at Vandenberg Air Force Base sent up an interceptor to shoot down a simulated warhead in a drill designed to prepare for any North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile strike. (KABC)  
By **Brandi Hitt**, Wednesday, May 31, 2017

**VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE (KABC)** --

Vandenberg has launched test missiles in the past to perfect the military's missile defense system.  
MORE  

**SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

Three books on the Korean War

I. F. Stone’s *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (Monthly Review P, 1952), drawing particularly from *The New York Times*’ reports of the war, accurately called into question the chief and many smaller US assumptions behind the Korean War. But because it was published before many classified documents were available, Stone had to be a Sherlock Holmes historian—searching for subterranean forces and tendencies by lifting up rugs, applying his microscope to a photograph or hair strand, his magnifying glass to all relevant texts including between the lines, examining key figures from infancy on, looking for power struggles, independently connecting to their antecedants the dots of an ongoing event. He asked previously unasked questions, dismantled official explanations, and like Ms. Marple always observed, “Something’s missing.”  
Difficult and risky scholarship.

Because it was published in Cold War 1952, *The Hidden History* was disregarded by warrior officials and established historians, and it took 40 years
until its reputation began to change. I have a copy of the 1988 reprint by Little, Brown, & Co., Canada, which contains a new Preface by Bruce Cumings and a new Appendix on the question of the war as a surprise. (This reprint is available in UAF’s Mullins Library.) Cumings exalts the book: Stone “cared about truth, he was fearless, he didn’t equate objectivity with silence on the great issues of his day. . . . Hidden History is above all a truthful book, and it remains one of the best accounts of the American role in the Korean War.” “Among its many virtues, Hidden History is a textbook on how to read” (xii-xiii). “It is doubtful that anyone has ever been better” at fitting odd details together” to “demolish the official logic or construct an alternative logic” than Stone, such as his analysis of what happened to the Korean army MacArthur claimed to have destroyed after the Inch’on landing (xv).

Later critical historians enjoyed the declassified documents become available since the publication of Stone’s history, and that evidence corroborated Stone’s history generally and in most cases specifically. Hugh Deane in The Korean War, 1945-1953 (1999) traces the beginning of the war to 1945, blames the US government primarily for the war, and treats the war as a civil war. A third book, Bruce Cumings’ The Korean War: A History (2010) continues what has become a counter-Cold War Korean War critical tradition. Published over 40 years after Stone’s, it corroborates Stone’s narrative and interpretations, now supported by documents unavailable to Stone. (Cumings is highly regarded for his earlier book The Origins of the Korean War, two volumes, 1981-1989, Princeton UP.).

A personal conclusion from the above account: we can perceive two great heroes of scholarly courage in seeking the truth during wartime-- author I. F. Stone and publisher Monthly Review Press.

My belief is that if these books had gained acceptance in governmental, academic, and popular circles, the present extremely dangerous antagonism between NK and the US would never have developed. Truth threatens those who seek to control the world, hence the long dismissal of I. F. Stone.
Matthew Josephson on *The Hidden History of the Korean War*:

"I would nominate this for the Book-of-the-Year if there were such an award given for courage and honesty in writing of the crisis of our time. Here there are no sensational charges, no unfounded accusations. With his fine intelligence Mr. Stone analyzes events and statements, searching always for the motive behind the act, like a good historian-detective."

From the Author's Preface:

"I have tried to write this story as if I were writing a novel, with suspense and with three-dimensionality. In a good novel one does not know all the answers, and I do not know all the answers here. Much about the Korean War is still hidden, and much will long remain hidden. I believe I have succeeded in throwing new light on its origins, on the operations of MacArthur and Dulles, on the weaknesses of Truman and Acheson, on the way the Chinese were provoked to intervene, and on the way the truce talks have been dragged out and the issues muddied by American military men hostile from the first to negotiations. I have tried to bring as much of the hidden story to light as I could in order to put the people of the United States and the United Nations on guard."

From the Publisher's Foreword:

"We commend it to readers as a work of quite extraordinary importance. It is at once a tour de force of research, a brilliant piece of interpretation, and last but not least an exciting story. It is really what its title says it is: *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. If enough Americans will read it, we are convinced that it can become one of those rare documents which, like Zola’s *J’accuse*, play a role in shaping history."

“J. F. Stone’s case is thought provoking and helpful, especially when tensions are being stirred up again on the Korean Peninsula, and manipulated wars are still in style. Perhaps however journalism like that of Stone’s and lessons from the first Korean War are making a second Korean War less likely.” Jay Hauben, 2007 Rev. of *Hidden History*. More by Hauben below.

*The Monthly Review*, 2000 Volume 52, Issue 05 (October) Setting the Record Straight on the Korean War

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**Korea: Division, Reunification, and U.S. Foreign Policy**

https://monthlyreview.org/product/korea/

This historical work, released on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Korean War, overturns the conventional wisdom on Korea.

Official U.S. history portrays the Korean War as a notable example of America’s selfless commitment to democracy. According to Cold War history, South Korea emerged from the conflict to create a prosperous and dynamic economy, while U.S. troops served as the nation’s peacekeepers. This book, in a wide canvass of the historical background, contests those claims.

By careful scrutiny of U.S. policy in Asia and the history of Korean struggles for independence, Hart-Landsberg identifies the true motivations and origins of U.S. aims in Korea, showing how U.S. foreign policy opposed popular movements in the South and actually sought the division of the peninsula. That policy set in motion separate political processes in North and South Korea that resulted in a cultural tragedy for the Korean people and turned the Korean peninsula into a potentially explosive trouble spot.

Hart-Landsberg foresees opportunities for creating a different atmosphere, one capable of ending the long era of separation and hostility imposed by the Cold War.

Korean unification is one of the most important issues on the international agenda today. Hart-Landsberg’s broad-ranging inquiry develops a perspective that is rarely heard and that merits careful attention. It is a valuable contribution to a debate that should not be delayed. —Noam Chomsky

This challenging and provocative work reveals the significant dark side of U.S. foreign policy toward Korea. —Choice

[Korea] successfully addresses the related realities of Korean and American foreign policy. It is especially important for its account of the early striving for unification. Carefully researched, comprehensive, and well-written, it should be able to dispel some of the lamentable ignorance that blinds Americans to all that is important and attractive on the Korean peninsula. —Science and Society
Hugh Deane has written a concise, political, and engaging history of the Korean war. One reason this book is special is that Deane was in southern Korea during the late 1940s as a reporter, and his experiences there enable him to provide a more immediate and personal perspective on events than one normally finds in histories of the Korean war.

In *The Korean War, 1945-1953*, Deane challenges conventional understandings of the war. Most importantly, he argues that it began in 1945, not 1950; that primary responsibility for the war lies with the U.S. government, which actively and intentionally divided Korea to further its imperialist ambitions; and finally, that the fighting between 1950 and 1953 is best characterized as a civil war rather than an unprovoked invasion of one nation by another.

Although Deane makes little attempt to explain the contemporary relevance of his work, it is an easy task. A peace treaty ending the Korean war has never been signed. Technically, the United States and North Korea remain in a state of war; the United States has rebuffed numerous North Korean attempts to negotiate its end. In fact, the United States and Japan still refuse to recognize North Korea. This continuing state of hostilities (intensified by the ongoing presence of U.S. military personnel in South Korea) has the potential to trigger a new, and potentially nuclear, Korean war. It has also provided useful cover for rightists in Japan to pursue remilitarization and for the military-industrial complex in the United States to sustain high levels of military spending. Finally, this situation, along with the tensions generated by Korea’s division, has also provided justification for the governments of both North and South Korea to distort and limit progressive political and social possibilities on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel.

While the events surrounding the Korean war cannot fully explain all of the above, the taproot of current tensions and struggles does lie in the period between 1945 and 1953. And, because the carefully managed conventional history of the Korean war has helped U.S. policymakers maintain popular support for their foreign policy, it is necessary to challenge that history if we are to build support for a new U.S. policy towards Korea and meaningful solidarity with the Korean people.
Cracks in the conventional history are slowly becoming visible. In September 1999, the U.S. government was finally forced to admit that the U.S. army might have committed an atrocity during the Korean war—specifically, that U.S. soldiers murdered several hundred Korean civilians near Nogun village in late July 1950.

While the U.S. government acknowledges that atrocities were committed during the war, it previously blamed them all on North Korea, not itself or South Korea. However, as Deane shows, the opposite is closer to the truth. For example, the Syngman Rhee regime “ordered a blood bath in the southern regions retaken from the north after Inchon in the fall of 1950… Gregory Henderson [a U.S. official stationed in Seoul] estimated… that probably more than 100,000 were killed without any trial whatsoever when soldiers and the Counter-Intelligence Corps recaptured areas where the left was known to be strong” (96). Deane also highlights the normally overlooked period from October through November 1950, when U.S. and South Korean forces occupied North Korea. The result was a reign of terror. “After reoccupying Pyongyang, the North Koreans claimed that 15,000 people had been massacred there—the bodies filled the courtyard of the main prison and 26 air raid shelters” (101).

The True Start of the Korean War

Deane’s book is divided into five sections (with the middle sections dominating): History That Shapes the Present, The True Start of the Korean War, The 1950 War in the Making, Armies at War, and Armistice and Aftermath. While mainstream accounts of the start of the Korean War normally begin with North Korean forces “invading” South Korea, Deane’s aim in section two is to show that the war started in 1945 as a result of U.S. policy. He therefore begins his analysis with the 1945 arrival of U.S. troops in southern Korea. MORE

https://monthlyreview.org/2000/10/01/setting-the-record-straight-on-the-korean-war/

Martin Hart-Landsberg teaches economics at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of Korea: Division, Reunification and U.S. Foreign Policy (1998) and Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea (1993).

The Hidden History of the Korean War

by I. F. Stone, 364 pages.
The controversial book, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* by I. F. Stone was originally published in 1952 during the Korean War (1950-1953) and republished in 1970 during the Vietnam War (1960-1975). It raised questions about the origin of the Korean War, made a case that the United States government manipulated the United Nations, and gave evidence that the U.S. military and South Korean oligarchy dragged out the war by sabotaging the peace talks.

Publishing such a book in the U.S. during the time of McCarthyism, while the war was still continuing was an act of journalistic courage. . . . This book-length feat of journalism, with over 600 citations for his quotes and materials, is a testament to Stone's search for a way to strengthen his readers to think for themselves, rather than be overwhelmed by official stories and war propaganda.

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Review of Cumings’ *The Korean War: a History*

“Carpet-Bombing Falsehoods About a War That’s Little Understood”

North Korea, like Cuba, is a country suspended in time, one that exists off modernity’s grid. It’s a place where the cold war never ended, where the heirloom paranoia is taken down and polished daily.

Korea’s cold war chill is heating up. Four months ago a South Korean warship was sunk, and a South Korean-led international investigative team concluded that North Korea was responsible. Next week the United States and South Korea will begin
large-scale naval exercises off the coasts of the Korean Peninsula and Japan in a show of force.

The world will be watching, and here's a book that American policymakers may hope it won't be reading: Bruce Cumings's "Korean War," a powerful revisionist history of America's intervention in Korea. Beneath its bland title, Mr. Cumings's book is a squirm-inducing assault on America's moral behavior during the Korean War, a conflict that he says is misremembered when it is remembered at all. It's a book that puts the reflexive anti-Americanism of North Korea's leaders into sympathetic historical context.

Mr. Cumings is chairman of the history department at the University of Chicago and the author of “The Origins of the Korean War,” a respected two-volume survey. He mows down a host of myths about the war in his short new book, which is a distillation of his own scholarship and that of many other historians. But he begins by mowing down David Halberstam.

Mr. Cumings, who admires Mr. Halberstam's writing about Vietnam, plucks the wings from "The Coldest Winter," Mr. Halberstam's 2007 book about the Korean War. The book, he argues, makes all the classic mistakes popular American historians tend to make about this little understood war.

Mr. Halberstam’s book is among those that “evince almost no knowledge of Korea or its history” and “barely get past two or three Korean names,” Mr. Cumings writes. “Halberstam mentions the U.S. Military Government from 1945 to 1948, which deeply shaped postwar Korean history — in one sentence,” he adds. “There is absolutely nothing on the atrocious massacres of this war, or the American incendiary bombing campaigns.” Ouch.

Americans need to get past the idea, Mr. Cumings says, that the Korean War was a “discrete, encapsulated” story that began in 1950, when the United States intervened to help push the Communist north out of the south of Korea, and ended in 1953, after the war bogged down in a stalemate. The United States succeeded in containment, establishing the 2.5-mile-wide demilitarized zone that still runs through Korea’s middle, but failed miserably at the war for the north, an attempt at Communist rollback.

Mr. Cumings argues that the Korean War was a civil war with long, tangled historical roots, one in which America had little business meddling. He notes how “appallinglly dirty” the war was. In terms of civilian slaughter, he declares, “our ostensibly democratic ally was the worst offender, contrary to the American image of the North

Let’s quickly remember what’s been going on between these two nuclear-armed nations, as reported in the *NADG*. Recall the headlines at the beginning; here are four more analyzed.


What has that dictatorship done? It is “accelerating its push to acquire a nuclear-armed missile capable of threatening the United States and other nations, and the U.S. regards this as a ‘clear and present danger,’ US. Defense Secretary James Mattis said.” But why? The double-standard here is so egregious it invites commensurate irony, but since Chomsky’s best has failed to stop it, I’ll just speak straightforwardly. The US decimated North Korea (NK, DPRK) during the Korean War, and since then has threatened the country every day, and annually particularly by sharing war maneuvers with South Korea near the borders of NK, including airplanes capable of carrying nuclear bombs. Does nobody in the US know this? Or care? We can threaten and the world knows we can and will bomb because we have already nuclear bombed Japan. And the world knows the US will shock and awe and occupy any country in the world that does not have retaliatory power (Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, and
I’m talking specifically about Iraq. So NK tries to defend itself and is denounced for threatening the threatener!! On the schoolyard that is called defending yourself against the bully.

The US helped other countries from Britain to India build its nuclear bombs. So why are they not helping NK? Why this gargantuan antagonism toward NK? Could it be that leaders of the US fear the people of NK were deeply injured and offended by the shock and awe bombing and torching of the cities and villages of NK, and that if they ever got the bomb they would use it for revenge? But if that is true, then several remedies have been available for many years. First, NK wants a peace treaty that protects them from attack. Second, they would welcome an apology. Third, we could give them reparations for such destruction. And fourth, we could help them convert their nuclear weapons program into nuclear power for the rescue of the country from its dearth of energy.

But oh! U.S. War Secretary Mattis will reply to all of this, NK started the Korean War and we only entered the war to defend the freedom of SK, and NK’s threatening behavior since then has required our shock and awe military buildup in SK and in Japan and especially Okinawa. But Secretary Mattis have you read Bruce Cumings' The Korean War? “…the Korean War was a civil war with long, tangled historical roots, one in which America had little business meddling”; the US committed “saturation bombing of Korea’s north” (from the New York Times review http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/22/books/22book.html). No US citizen should say or think anything about NK until he or she has read this book and Cumings’ 2-vol. The Origins of the Korean War.
April 10, 2017. “Navy Carrier En Route to Korea.” “A U.S. Navy strike group [the US has 10 groups, each carrier accompanied by at least 2 guided missile destroyers and a guided-missile cruiser and attending ships: no other country has even one carrier group] was ordered toward the Korean Peninsula...as a prudent measure to maintain readiness and presence in the western Pacific,’ the spokesman for U.S. Pacific command said.” (More “presence” needed when Okinawa is an immense land, sea, and air US military base, and back-up Guam is a smaller replica? And note the “Pacific command.” The US has covered the planet with “commands” to surveil and potentially bomb every inch of the planet if unruly toward US policy: Central Command/centcom, Africa Command/africom, etc.)

April 26, 2017. “Military Maneuvers.” Page 1A photo of US submarine with this caption: “The nuclear submarine USS Michigan docks...at the port of Busan, South Korea. The submarine’s arrival coincided with maneuvers involving U.S. and South Korean vessels in the Yellow Sea and Japanese-U.S. naval exercises in the Sea of Japan. (That is, west, south, and east of N. Korea.) Meanwhile, North Korea staged long-range artillery drills marking the 85th anniversary of its military’s founding.” (On my desk I have over a dozen clips from the newspaper of US opposition to NK during April alone.)

May 5, 2017. “N. Korea Sanctions Get House Backing.” P. 4A. “The Republican-led house...overwhelmingly voted to impose new sanctions on North Korea, targeting its shipping industry and use of slave labor.” Note “overwhelmingly”: the vote was bipartisan, 419-1, by the Republican/Democrat War Party. (The dissenter was Thomas Massie, R-Ky,) The astonishing thing about this bill and vote was its emphasis upon NK “slave labor,” which turns out to be not slave labor but NK citizens working abroad. Perhaps all impoverished countries “export” labor seeking better wages to send home to their families, such as Mexico to US and back. The Philippines exports the largest number of their citizens, to the Emirates for example. Calling this common practice “slave labor” on the part of NK is just another instance of US double standards and double speak, and of enemies of NK casting that nation in the worst possible way.

While one may be Lilliputian, the other certainly is Brobingnagian, with a record of actually using nuclear bombs on two cities and threatening to use it a dozen times. (And let’s remember international law and keep it up front in our minds. Not only is an attack on another country without first being attacked a war crime, threatening attack is also in violation of the UN Charter, a treaty, which the US promulgated and signed into US law, and our nuclear threatenings place us among the lawless. The UN Charter reads in article 2(4): “All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of [armed] force.”)

One way to read Bruce Cumings’ *The Korean War: A History* is to start in the middle with chapter six, which perhaps more than any other part of Korean history helps us understand its
present ruler, Kim Jong Un’s behavior toward the US. Chapter 6 connects us to his memory of his grandfather and the Korean War, and to his father who ruled afterward, and reminds us too of what we never knew or have forgotten about that war.

Chapter Six

A film, perhaps a more recent novel might begin a specific event and expand outward (how many novels or histories begin comprehensively, how many with close-up, dramatic incident, each chapter assembling the concluding whole?). Cumings might have opened with Chapter 6, the Air War. As in the Vietnam War, the US controlled the skies. Annihilation of the enemy was possible.

Given the extremely dangerous situation in 2017, that would have been a useful structure. The young dictator, Kim Jong Un, is often dismissed as childish, paranoid, unstable. But once one sees his country through the experiences of his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, a different young dictator emerges, for that is the grandson’s vision.

In chapter 6, Cumings describes the brutal decimation of NK by US air war. Decimate: to destroy a great number or proportion of. “What hardly any Americans know or remember…is that we carpet-bombed the North for three years with next to no concern for civilian casualties. . . .The air assaults ranged from the widespread and continual use of firebombing to threats to use nuclear and chemical weapons, finally to the destruction of huge North Korean dams in the last stages of the war” (149).

One raid on Pyongyang, July 11, 1952, “involved 1,254 air sorties by day and 54 B-20 assaults by night, the prelude to bombing thirty other cities and industrial objectives. . . .Highly concentrated incendiary bombs were followed up with delayed demolition explosives” (152).

And how does Kim Jong Un possibly perceive the US populace, its bomber pilots, its media? “…oceans of [napalm] were dropped on Korea silently or without notice in America.” General Ridgway “wanted bigger and better napalm bombs. . . ’to wipe out all life in tactical locality’” (153). Published articles discussed the USAF love of its “wonder weapon,” the hideous napalm. And the US “also considered using atomic weapons several times,” particularly during “early April 1951” (156).

“In the end the scale of urban destruction quite exceeded that in Germany and Japan” (159).

All who can at least consider the role of empathy in preventing aggression should read this chapter. If, instead of threatening NK with nuclear extinction, we saw him and the Korean people through the narrative, photos, and films of the cities of Wonsan or Pyongyang, and all the cities, towns, and villages bombed and burned to the ground during the Korean War, we would understand our human similarities and be more capable of thinking of cooperation instead of war.
The remaining chapters, like chapter 6, assemble the narrative and the facts to further confirm the history summarized in chapter 1.

Introduction and Chapter One

Cumings begins his book conventionally with an Introduction and follows with the overview of Chapter One, "The Course of the War." In his Introduction, Cumings states the purpose of his book is "to uncover truths that most Americans do not know. . truths sometimes as shocking as they are unpalatable to American self-esteem" (xv). Particularly important is the long existence as a nation and culture of Korea, "with well-recognized national boundaries since the tenth century." But by 1910 Japan had made it a colony, an occupation of replacement of Korean by Japanese political and religious traditions, seen by Koreans as theft of its sovereignty and culture. This explains the depth of Korean/Japanese enmity to this day. The end of WWII and defeat of the Japanese did not restore a unified Korea longed for by many Koreans.

Rather, the US occupied the southern half 1945-48 and established a Christian, Western sympathizer, and brutal dictator, Syngman Rhee, as president. To North Koreans and to SK allies, the Korean War was a continuation of an eighty years’ war. And in 1949 SK made "small assaults across the [38th] parallel" and occupied some territory north of the parallel. Both Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee sought support for invasion of the other from their allies. Rhee is quoted as saying "he would attack even if ‘it brought on a general war’. . but it is no different from his threats to march north made many times before" (7). After feints on both sides during 1949 and early 1950, on June 25, 1950, the NK army drove across the parallel toward Seoul (see also pp. 5-10, and chapter 5, esp. 139--) as two SK divisions collapsed. Westerners also know little about the Korean War itself; for example, that it was an "appallingly dirty" war "with a sordid history of civilian slaughters" and that our ally South Korea was "the worst offender" (xviii).

Of the many ways one might begin a history of an event, Cumings chooses to give his historical summary of the war in chapter one. Because it’s a densely packed narrative and analysis of the NK drive almost to the tip of S. Korea, the US/SK counterattack northward into NK, and the Chinese counter-counter-attack, during 1950-52, I will select only a few passages to emphasize.

As J. William Fulbright observed about a widespread US perception of the USSR during the so-called Cold War, "to many Americans the Soviets remain an abstraction—an evil abstraction embodying a feared and alien ideology" (The Price of Empire 230)--, we also during both the Korean and Vietnam Wars “did not know the enemy, we lacked ‘empathy’… we were blind prisoners of our own assumptions. In Korea we still are” (3).

We heard and still hear of NK cruelty before, during, and after the war. Cumings cites equal or worse US and S. Korean atrocities. The NK incursion beginning June 25, 1950 through collapsing SK divisions, MacArthur described as “one of the most offensive acts of
international lawlessness of historic record.’” When China intervened, MacArthur “ordered that a wasteland be created between the war front and the Yalu River border, destroying from the air every ‘installation, factory, city, and village’” (29).

On p. 35, Cumings provides figures of total casualties in the 3 years of the war: ‘more than 4 million. . .at least 2 million were civilians.” Over a million SK casualties. NK casualties “2 million, including 1 million civilians, and about 520,000 soldiers.” “An estimated 900,000 Chinese soldiers lost their lives in combat.” And a US court ruled it had not been a war, “since Congress never declared one to exist,” as the Constitution requires.

Cumings’ conclusion: “The point to remember is that this was a civil war” that did not solve the “extraordinary tensions generated by colonialism [Japanese occupation], national division [imposed following WWII], and foreign intervention. The tragedy was that the war solved nothing; only the status quo ante was restored, only a cease fire held the peace” (35). The first chapter glimpses the whole; its narrative and topics are examined in the following 8 chapters.

Chapter Two, “The Party of Memory”: Japanese occupation of Korea, the insurgency, Kim II Sung, Stalin.

Chapter Three, “The Party of Forgetting”: US ignorance of Korea including notable writers like Roth and Halberstam; the Korean War is best forgotten.

Chapter Four, “Culture of Repression”: US ignorance, Cold War, McCarthyism.

Chapter Five, “38 Degrees of Separation: A Forgotten Occupation”: US division of Korea, occupation of the South, Truman Doctrine, US anticommunism, the better road not taken. US embraces Syngman Rhee, the Korean War.

Chapter Six, “‘The Most Disproportionate Result’: The Air War.”


Chapter Eight, “A ‘Forgotten War’ That Remade the United States and the Cold War”: US transformed into national imperial “security” state—hundreds of bases abroad surrounding Russia and China, large standing Army, population under constant surveillance.

Chapter Nine, “Requiem: History in the Temper of Reconciliation”: the many perspectives of the war, attempts at reconciliation, truth commissions, “imagine now what the enemy thinks,” but the NK/SK/USA and the NK/Japan wars continue.

MISC BOOKS RELATED TO KOREAN WAR

Book drawn from Cumings 2-vol. history, *The Origins of the Korean War.* Cumings is chair of the history department at the U. of Chicago. --D

--Lee, Chang-rae. *The Surrendered.* Novel, KW’s personal costs, harrowing account of lives upended by the war.

--Millett, Alan. *The War for Korea, 1945-1950.* UPKs, Redefines the initial phase of the war in Asian terms, and reveals how both internal forces and international pressures converged to create the Korean War.

--Stone, Oliver and Peter Kuznick. *The Untold History of the United States.* Gallery, 2012. The title is misleading, because the book is a history of generally familiar facts and stories. What gives the book its power is the authors’ frequent highlighting of actions or statements that significantly determined the direction of the US. For example, regarding the Korean War:

What was important about President Truman’s handling of the US Congress in engaging the US military response to the N. Korean invasion of the South? “Truman. . . opted to bypass congressional authorization, setting the precedent for future wars” (237).

Did the delusory “domino metaphor” begin then? Truman: “If aggression is successful in Korea, we can expect it to spread throughout Asia and Europe to this hemisphere.” (240)

Why do the N. Koreans, not only the leaders but the people, dislike the US so fiercely? “Almost every major city in North Korea was burned to the ground.” (244).

According the William Blum and others, after WWII the US invaded or intervened in some 50 countries illegally and unnecessarily. Did those imperial aggressions arise from the Korean War? “The Korean War paved the way for the dramatic remilitarization of U.S. society” (246). And much more similar. Dick
--Wills, Gary.  *Bomb Power.* Briefly challenges official explanation of cause of the war. Book’s main thesis is the influence of possession of nuclear power in increasing US presidential power.

**US WAR CRIMES AGAINST NORTH KOREA**

See the books discussed above.

The following text by Michel Chossudovsky was presented in Seoul, South Korea in the context of the Korea Armistice Day Commemoration, 27 July 2013

**A Message for Peace. Towards a Peace Agreement and the Withdrawal of US Troops from Korea**

**Introduction**

Armistice Day, 27 July 1953 is day of Remembrance for the People of Korea.

It is a landmark date in the historical struggle for national reunification and sovereignty.

I am privileged to have this opportunity of participating in the 60th anniversary commemoration of Armistice Day on July 27, 2013.

I am much indebted to the “Anti-War, Peace Actualized, People Action” movement for this opportunity to contribute to the debate on peace and reunification.

An armistice is an agreement by the warring parties to stop fighting. It does signify the end of war.

**What underlies the 1953 Armistice Agreement is that one of the warring parties, namely the US has consistently threatened to wage war on the DPRK for the last 60 years.**

The US has on countless occasions violated the Armistice Agreement. It has remained on a war footing. Casually ignored by the Western media and the international community, the US has actively deployed nuclear weapons targeted at North Korea for more than half a century in violation of article 13b) of the Armistice agreement.

The armistice remains in force. The US is still at war with Korea. It is not a peace treaty, a peace agreement was never signed.

The US has used the Armistice agreement to justify the presence of 37,000 American troops on Korean soil under a bogus United Nations mandate, as well as establish an environment of continuous and ongoing military threats. This situation of “latent warfare” has lasted for the last 60 years. It is important to
emphasize that this US garrison in South Korea is the only U.S. military presence based permanently on the Asian continent.

Our objective in this venue is to call for a far-reaching peace treaty, which will not only render the armistice agreement signed on July 27, 1953 null and void, but will also lay the foundations for the speedy withdrawal of US troops from Korea as well as lay the foundations for the reunification of the Korean nation.

Armistice Day in a Broader Historical Perspective

MORE  http://global-politics.eu/2017/05/25/americas-war-%D0%B0gainst-people-korea-historical-record-war-crimes/

Conversion of the Korean War Armistice to peace treaty.

US-N. Korea peace treaty needed: George Yeo

Singapore's former foreign minister George Yeo speaking at the Jeju Forum on June 2, 2017

Pact must be signed to ease tensions but talks would be tough, says ex-foreign minister

Chang May Choon  South Korea Correspondent In Jeju

Dialogue and a peace treaty between the US and North Korea are needed to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula, said Singapore’s former foreign minister George Yeo at a forum in South Korea.

He noted that negotiations, should they get off the ground, would be tough. North Korea has made major technological breakthroughs in intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) development and reached a position that the US - the North’s greatest perceived enemy - might find hard to accept.

Racing to complete its ICBM programme, North Korea has conducted over 30 missile tests since early last year and driven the Trump administration to consider military options for a "maximum pressure and engagement" policy.

At a discussion yesterday at the Jeju Forum, held at the popular tourist destination, Mr Yeo said: "I never believed they would give up their nuclear card. It's the only card they have... the only way to get US attention is to develop ICBM."
A US-North Korea peace pact must be signed so as to ease tensions, he said. The two sides technically remain at war as the 1950-53 Korean War, in which Washington supported Seoul, ended in an armistice. The US, which has troops stationed in the South, will not talk to the North unless it abandons nuclear weapons first.

Mr Yeo was Singapore's top diplomat and trade minister from 1998 to 2008, when South Korea pursued the North-friendly "Sunshine Policy" under liberal presidents Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun. In 2008, Mr Yeo became the first Singapore foreign minister to visit Pyongyang.

Just last month, South Koreans elected another liberal president, Mr Moon Jae In, who promises to improve inter-Korea relations after a decade of frosty ties due to the conservatives' hardline policy.

THEIR ONLY CARD

I never believed they would give up their nuclear card. It's the only card they have... the only way to get US attention is to develop ICBM.

MR GEORGE YEO, on North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile development.

In a video message to the Jeju Forum, Mr Moon said his administration will work with the international community to "bring North Korea out to dialogue through persuasion and pressure". MORE http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/us-n-korea-peace-treaty-needed-george-yeo

CONTROLLING TRUMP

We must stop Trump's nuclear war before it begins

Lilyanne Daigle, Global Zero  7-6-17
via mail.salsalabs.net

Dick --

Did you see the news? North Korea successfully tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM for short), capable of reaching parts of the US -- just in time for Fourth of July.
The nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula is rapidly becoming a flashpoint for nuclear war -- and only people power can extinguish the flame. **Join us in Washington, DC September 25th for an historical act of civil disobedience to raise the alarm and fight for our future.**

This latest North Korea missile test is a big deal -- one that requires strategic calculus on the part of our current administration about how to best respond to this new threat. But rather than seeking council on the best way to move forward, Trump took to Twitter, asking “Does this guy have anything better to do with his life?”

From using “Twitter diplomacy” to threatening incendiary military action against North Korea, Trump’s inexperience and hot-headedness makes this precarious situation all the more volatile.

If we’re serious about averting nuclear war, **we need to take away Trump’s absolute and sole access to our nation’s nuclear arsenal -- and only Congress has that power.** That’s why Global Zero is organizing mass civil disobedience in Washington, DC on September 25th. It’s time for Congress to wake up and shield us from Trump’s unilateral power to spark nuclear war.

We know progress is made possible by mass numbers of concerned citizens who use their bodies to defend what’s right and fight for a future free of fear, hatred, and violence. **Will you join me in participating in civil disobedience -- taking a principled stand that may involve arrest -- to stop our nation from igniting nuclear war?**

In my lifetime, the threat of nuclear war has never felt so real. We’ve got a reckless and impulsive President armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons and edging us closer to war -- it’s more important now than ever that we take a stand for the world we want to see. **If you agree, then tell me you’ll take action with us on September 25th.**

In solidarity,
Lillyanne Daigle

PS: Can’t come to DC but still want to help? [Chip in $75 to fuel our fight against nuclear war.](https://www.globalzero.org/donate)

Global Zero is the international movement for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
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LARGER CONTEXTS
ABOLITION MOVEMENT
OMNI Nuclear Abolition Newsletters
Sleight, Global Zero: Abolish All Weapons

END NORTH KOREA NEWSLETTER #6

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Dick Bennett

Blog: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/OMNIPeaceDept
j.dick.bennett@gmail.com
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703