

Who Is to Blame for the Korean Conflict? (July 11, 1950)

Abstract

Though this article in *Neue Zeit*, an East German newspaper, insists that the blame for the Korean War lay on the South Korean side, historians generally agree that Stalin's "green light" of Kim Il-Sung's proposed invasion of South Korea, given in January 1950, was ultimately responsible for the outbreak of the war. Historians give two principal reasons why Stalin may have decided to endorse the war. First, on January 12, 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech that indicated that the U.S. might not defend South Korea in the case of an attack; Stalin gave the green light to Kim Il Sung's proposal in late January, indicating that U.S. foreign policy played a substantial role in Stalin's decision. Second, the Soviets signed a Friendship Treaty with China in February of the same year; Stalin was therefore sure that China would materially support North Korea's campaign. The treaty also indicated that if either the Soviet Union or China was involved in a war in Asia, the Soviets would be allowed to continue to share the use of Lüshun (Port Arthur) and the China Eastern Railway (CER), key points in China that were both of critical importance to the Soviet Union since they allowed them access to the Pacific Ocean. Their involvement in the Korean War allowed the Soviets continued use of both the port and the railway.

Source

Revelations from Kim I Sek and "Combat" – Preparations Were Made Well in Advance

Kim I Sek, minister of the interior in the government of Syngman Rhee until early 1950 and therefore someone particularly familiar with operations in the South Korean camp, issued statements on events leading up to the Korean War on Seoul Central Broadcasting Station. These incontrovertibly establish which side was to blame for the outbreak of open warfare in Korea.

As Kim I Sek reports, there were already plans to stage a major attack against the People's Republic of Korea as early as mid-1949, on July 15, 1949 to be precise. It was only the unreliability of the South Korean population toward his regime, made manifest in exceptionally strong partisan activity, that prevented Syngman Rhee (and his allies) from striking out at the time. The offensive, which involved Kim I Sek in his role as minister of the interior, was not abandoned, but merely postponed until a more propitious time.

That this date had to be set in agreement with the U.S. commander in Japan, General MacArthur, became clear when South Korean President Syngman Rhee was summoned to American military headquarters in Tokyo in the spring of 1950 and, upon his return, June 25, 1950 was designated as the date of the attack on North Korea. Kim I Sek also played his deliberate role in preparations for the new attack plans.

These revelations by the former South Korean interior minister have been confirmed and supplemented by reports in the Parisian newspaper *Combat* about the fact that industrial mobilization in the USA had already begun several months earlier. This entailed the transition from peacetime to wartime production with its characteristic side effects, i.e., a marked reduction of production for civilian needs, a noticeable shortage of iron and steel, substantial price increases for heavy industry products and the recommissioning of inoperative facilities for the production of synthetic rubber. At the same time, there was a significant increase in the import of so-called strategic raw materials (uranium) and industrial products required to equip the army from the countries of the British Empire to the US.

Opposition by the US and its supporters to recognizing the legitimate right of the People's Republic of

China to the Chinese seat on the UN Security Council takes on special significance in this context.

Had the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union participated in the negotiations of the Security Council, the Security Council "resolution," inspired and forced through by the US, and which now endangers world peace, would never have been adopted. The resolution, which, incidentally, is legally invalid, has provided Truman and MacArthur with a bogus justification for their attack on Korea and the misuse of the United Nations. The refusal to recognize the People's Republic of China as a member of the UN Security Council thus emerges as a further preparatory measure by the US for its military ambitions in Korea.

Source of original German text: "Die Schuld Am Koreakonflikt," *Neue Zeit*, vol. 6, no. 158, July 11, 1950.

Translation: Pam Selwyn

Recommended Citation: Who Is to Blame for the Korean Conflict? (July 11, 1950), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-5219>> [April 28, 2024].