

## **Why Did the US Start the Korean War?**

The United States started the Korean war on June 25, 1950, 60 years ago, by instigating the south Korean army to launch an all-out armed invasion against north Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea). The Korean war (June 1950-July 1953) was the fiercest after the end of World War II.

Why, then, did the US start the Korean war?

First, it started the war to realize its strategy for world supremacy.

In view of the geopolitical position of the Korean peninsula as a point of military importance in its advancing into the Asian continent, it availed itself of the end of WW II to set foot in south Korea in the guise of "liberator" in September 1945. While completely subordinating south Korea politically, economically and militarily by rigging up a pro-US regime, it revealed the plan to attack north Korea, saying that the scope of its occupation should be expanded into the whole of Korea. MacArthur, commander of the US forces in the Far East, said that he always recognized Korea as a military outpost of unlimited value. On the US part, the Korean peninsula was not only a point of strategic importance from which to deal military strikes to any region in the Far East, but "a bridge leading to the continent" and a "dagger" with which to cut off Asia, a "morsel."

After WW II, the US regarded Korea as a front where capitalism confronts socialism and an important politico-military battlesite between the East and the West. In 1946 US President Truman defined Korea as an "ideological battleground" upon which all the successes of the US in Asia might depend. And he demanded that US troops be stationed in south Korea for long time enough to carry out their task and adequate personnel and funds be secured.

Having mapped out in this way a Korea policy with the main emphasis on dominating the whole of Korea the US applied political and diplomatic methods to implement this policy, and then opted for military invasion, i.e. war.

Second, the outbreak of the Korean war was related with the catastrophic economic crisis the US was faced with.

After World War II, a peaceful atmosphere prevailed in the US for a certain period; this resulted in low arms sales in the munitions industry, increasing unemployment and a vicious

cycle of the economy as a whole.

The economic crisis that started in the autumn of 1948 grew worse in 1949: the industrial output decreased by 15 % as compared with the previous year; prices slumped; investments in the manufacture of machines and equipment decreased sharply; and some 4 600 companies went bankrupt in the first half of the year. As a result, the unemployed increased to 6 million, and 13 million people were expected to be fired in 1950. The profits of the monopolies, which amounted to 36.6 billion dollars in September 1948, dropped to 28.4 billion dollars in March 1949. The monopolies asked the government for a new, big needle for injecting a new life to the economy.

This request drove the US to the militarization of the economy and the expansion of armaments and this spilled over to the outbreak of the Korean war. The British magazine *Economist* commented that the US needed an occasion for overcoming the crisis and could not but fabricate a war.

Third, the Korean war was related with the crisis the Syngman Rhee regime in south Korea faced.

The crisis of the Syngman Rhee regime cobbled together by the US was characterized by the economic catastrophe, anti-government struggle of the people, surging spirit of peaceful reunification and the ruling machinery on the verge of ruin.

The political and economic crisis which surfaced in 1949, reached extreme in May 1950.

Owing to the US colonial enslavement policy and war preparations for 5 years, the number of enterprises was reduced by 36 % in the first half of 1949 as against that in 1939. The rural economy was also destroyed; the crop yield showed a drop of 5 million *sok* of grain as compared with that of the days before the liberation of the country. And owing to the inflations and skyrocketing prices, the people's living further deteriorated.

Meanwhile, with the spirit of the people for an independent and peaceful reunification of the country mounting high, anti-Syngman Rhee forces appeared in the "National Assembly," including the group that demanded south-north negotiations, and some right-wingers joined hands with them. The Syngman Rhee regime was as perilous as a light exposed to wind.

American book, *An Untold History of Modern Korea*, said as follows:

It would be most reasonable to figure that war was the last resort of crazy Syngman Rhee. As the last game the Syngman Rhee government drove the country into a civil war, unable to keep itself steady in the face of economic destruction, domestic unrest, harassment by the hostile National Assembly since his defeat in May (out of the 210 seats he barely managed to get 48 in

the election to the National Assembly held on May 10, 1950) and then the people's leanings towards the peace statement of the north.

It is an obvious historical fact that the US attempted through the Korean war to secure a point of strategic importance for realizing its world supremacy and saved itself and its stooge.