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Published on H-War (July, 2006)

Allan R. Millett begins his two-volume study of the Korean War immediately following the surrender of Japanese forces in 1945. The subsequent collapse of their empire created a political vacuum throughout the western Pacific. None of the former European colonial powers, numerous governments in exile, or any resistance movement was prepared to act in September 1945 (p.11). Thus, "the politics of postwar Korea should be understood within this crisis of legitimacy and succession, which affected all of Asia. Wars of post-colonial succession and social revolution became the rule, not the exception" (p. 12). Subsequently, there were actually two "revolutionary" movements trying to succeed to power (p. 14).

Following his introduction, Millett continues with a thorough review of Korean history from 1919 to 1945. Detailing the struggle for liberation under Japanese hegemony, the author delves into the origin of the major political groups and the leading personalities of said organizations. With the start of the Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent Pacific War in 1941, the "fragmentation of Korean society and the polarization of its independence factions" was accomplished (p. 36). In August 1945, as the Japanese surrender loomed, several Korean groups began to emerge from the shadows. Yo Un-hyong quickly formed the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence in Seoul on August 15, 1945 (p. 45). This was followed on September 6 by the creation of the Korean People's Republic. A week later the Republic published a political platform. Calling for the "elimination of all vestiges of Japanese colonialism" and the nationalization of all major businesses, the document declared all property held by Japanese collaborators subject to confiscation (p. 47). Accompanying the creation of the Republic was the emergence of the Korean Democratic Party and Syngman Rhee. Millett argues that these Korean politicians were "patriotic nationalists who wanted to build a new Korea that rejected the traditionalism of the Chosun dynasty and the corrupting influence of Japanese colonialism" (p. 48).

Comparing the two major powers interests in Korea, Millett notes that the Russians, who considered the Koreans as a conquered people, "re-
turned with a vengeance" (pp. 48-49). The Soviet occupation was described as extreme and horrible. With Soviet sponsorship, the Communist Party was organized in Pyongyang under Kim Il-sung's leadership. This indicated that his group and not the southern communists would control events (p. 51). Meanwhile, the Americans, who considered Korea of limited strategic importance, "except as a potential (if limited) site for operations related to the bombing of the Japanese home islands," seemingly ignored the peninsula within the bigger problem of Japan (p. 53). Indeed, no policy was even formulated toward an independent Korea. Nominally under Gen. Douglas MacArthur's command, the south was placed under the direct command of Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge. According to Millett, "Hodge received more precise guidance from Washington, endorsed by MacArthur, that made it clear that his reform program in Korea should essentially follow the same broad lines as MacArthur's in Japan. It did not deal with the fact that the Koreans did not see themselves like the Japanese did--a defeated society struggling to preserve its cultural identity and economic future through a mix of limited reform and cosmetic compliance" (p. 60).

The four power struggle over the question of the future of Korea and a trusteeship format led to a crisis not only amongst the major powers but within Korea itself. "In the autumn of 1945 the trusteeship idea appealed to almost no one outside of the State Department" (p. 67). Out of this struggle evolved the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission on Korea. Neither power was willing to concede their position; in the north the Soviets continued to construct a socialist state, while in the south Hodge continued to govern through the military government. By the beginning of 1947, with the Cold War emerging, the issue of Korea was becoming less and less important in relation to the reconstruction of Europe (p. 92). Regardless, within the two Koreas, each power was building "security establishments," but in the south "the rivalry between the Korean National Police and the Kore- an Constabulary, the formation of secret political societies within both forces, and the reluctance of the U.S. Army and Department of State to commit money and advisers to a force that they did not fully trust" led to less development of such forces, especially when compared to the monolithic political structure in the north (p. 103).

When the U.S. government realized that an impasse had developed between itself and the USSR, it determined to turn the problem of Korea over to the United Nations. After some maneuvering, the United Nations voted to conduct elections on March 31, 1948. Millett argues that "before the arrival of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea [UNTCOK] in Seoul in January 1948 and the Republic of Korea's independence day on August 15, 1948, the creation of two antagonist Korean states became an irreversible certainty. War between the two Koreas also became inevitable, with or without the intervention of allies. Indeed, the war that ravaged all Korea from 1950 to 1953 began in April 1948 as a classic people's war, the Phase II insurgency in Mao Zedong's formulation. The elections sponsored and observed by UNTCOK in the American zone in May 1948 became a casus belli as well as a fig leaf for the liquidation of the military government and the eventual withdrawal of all U.S. Army units" (p. 135).

Ultimately, the United States "adopted a policy of disengagement that made a larger war a certainty" (p. 135). Millett asserts that the Korean War "began on April 3, 1948, on Cheju-do with widespread, orchestrated attacks by Communist-led partisans against the civil government" (p. 142). At the same time, a concerted build up in the north was under way in anticipation of invading the south. The CIA reported "that the withdrawal of all American combat units from Korea 'would probably in time be followed by an invasion, timed to coincide with Communist-led South Korean revolts'" (p. 187). Millett provides very interesting information as to the north's plans, the tim-
ing of implementation, and the Soviet role in the invasion. By the end of 1949, border clashes had become routine.

Citing limited funding by Congress that reflected a domestic desire to balance the budget and a low priority given to Korea, the author then discusses the Korean Military Assistance Group and American attempts to build a Republican army in the south. Even in the spring of 1950, the US rejected the growing intelligence and expressed fears of the south concerning an imminent invasion.

*The War for Korea* is an excellent study of a neglected period; the time before American military forces became involved in a land war in Asia. In addition to utilizing traditional sources, Millett references the numerous papers of American officers who served in the U.S. Army Forces in Korea and the U.S. Military Government in Korea as well as collected papers from various American officers who served in the Korean Military Advisory Group during 1946-50. Such documents have been used only sparingly, if at all. As a result, this volume can be considered as "plowing new fields"; the promised second volume is greatly anticipated. Finally, this work provides an excellent historical study in nation-building which could be of great use in the coming years in the Middle East.

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