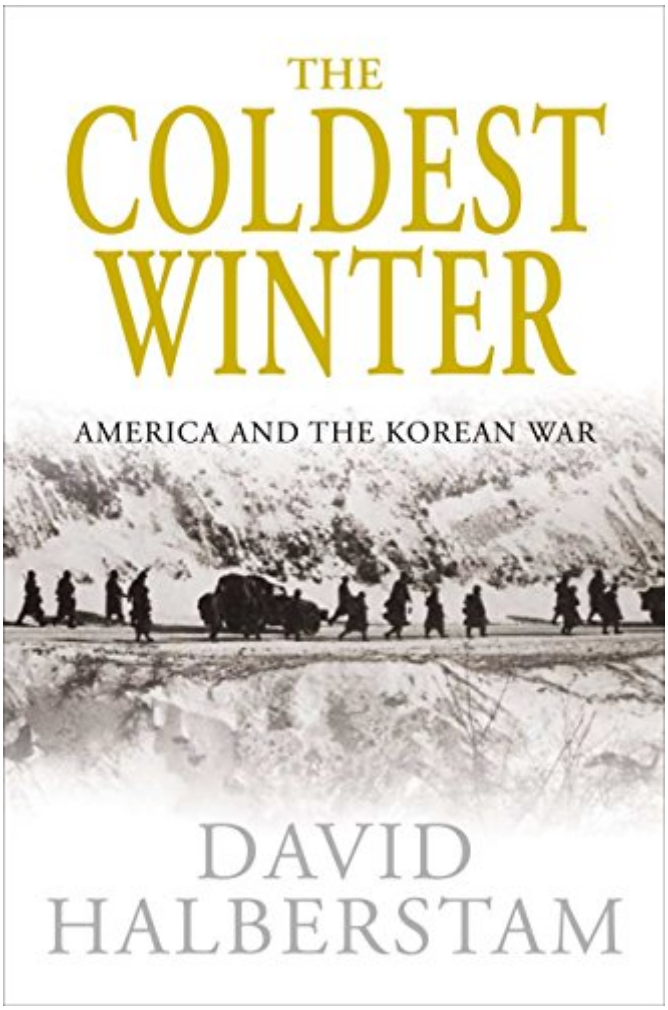
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# The Coldest Winter




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## Synopsis

Up until now, the Korean War has been the black hole of modern American history. The Coldest Winter changes that, giving readers a masterful narrative of the political decisions and miscalculations on both sides. At the heart of the book are the individual stories of the soldiers on the front lines who were left to deal with the consequences of the dangerous misjudgements and competing agendas of powerful men. We meet them, follow them, and see some of the most dreadful battles in history through their eyes. As ever, Halberstam was concerned with the extraordinary courage and resolve of people asked to bear an extraordinary burden. Contemporary history in its most literary and luminescent form, The Coldest Winter provides crucial perspective on the Vietnam War and the events of today.

## Book Information

File Size: 3341 KB

Print Length: 736 pages

Publisher: Macmillan; Reprints edition (October 1, 2008)

Publication Date: October 1, 2008

Language: English

ASIN: B007C15NL6

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #304,442 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #36 inÃ Â Books > History > Military > Korean War > Campaigns #40 inÃ Â Books > History > Asia > Korea > South #51 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Military > Korean War

## Customer Reviews

This is a very well written, fascinating history of a somewhat forgotten period in our history. Halberstam has a wonderful way of including global perspective and individual human experiences and weaves these into a tale so engrossing that I could not put it down. There are so many lessons about courage in the fighting men, the officers and the politicians that pertain to today. Douglas MacArthur has all the ego issues of our 45th president and Harry Truman showed true character in

dealing with him. All the while this tale unfolds, Halberstam connects the reader to the real implications of the political and military leadership problems for the fighting men on the ground it great jeopardy. This is a riveting story, so well told.

Fabulous and through history of the Korean War and the reasons the USA got involved. Biographys of the military personnel and civilians who shaped policy during this era. History of China, Korea, Japan and USSR and how this territory was fought over for centuries. The egos and temperments of political and military leaders of yesteryear match those of today and the price paid is in the blood of the Army and Marine servicemen who fought in this "Police Action". And we still (2015) have thousands of troops there. Very detailed and well organized.

This well written book is for anyone who would like insight into this war and the personalities involved. Most of all, I think it’s about the lessons not learned.

Anyone interested in how great men can deceive themselves and great countries can do the same will find this a remarkably useful book>halberstam has a magisterial ability to interview,learn,synthesize and bring alive. This book is especially helpful in our current Korean dilemma

Realizing that so many other books cover the battle experience of the U.S. military in Korea, David Halberstam’s "The Coldest Winter" purposely tackles the forces of politics and ego that made the war possible in the first place. The result reveals the hubris that ended up costing 37,000 U.S. lives, an unthinkable number that pales in comparison to the 1.5 million deaths in total for all combatants.Most of us think of Korea as a limited hot war within the larger context of the cold war between communist vs. capitalist powers. It certainly was that--and more. By reading this book, you’ll see how the Korean War was a proxy for political gamesmanship on several levels between a variety of powerful interests. The post World War II dynamic of east vs. west (i.e., communists vs. the U.S. and its allies) is merely the foundation for a number of subplots within each camp. For example, Halberstam explains the leadership cults that formed very different totalitarian agendas in North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. The race to consolidate power within these regimes helps to explain their leaders’ appetites for war and aggression.Politics are equally to blame for a number of shameful choices by U.S. leaders as well. Halberstam explains how the dynamics of two-party politics fostered ideological extremes during the post World War II era, a time during

which the republicans desperately sought to regain influence in the wake of the democrats' 20-year stronghold on the White House. The threat of communism fueled not only paranoia, but the "substance" on which political bona-fides were based. Halberstam suggests that U.S. involvement in Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba were shaped by political on rivalry on Capitol Hill. The ruthless but inexorable need to appear "tough" apparently guided many leaders who feared losing their power and influence by appearing otherwise.A direct consequence of the late 1940s political dynamic was U.S. policy toward China. Thanks to his larger-than-life persona, General Douglas Macarthur was the de facto architect of that policy, despite constitutional provisions that would otherwise limit the military's influence on civilian policy making. Halberstam explains how MacArthur's personal agenda set up the U.S. military to fail dismally in Korea during the winter of 1950-51. This aspect of the book reveals how politics work between the military and its civilian leadership, and also within the leadership ranks of the military itself.A lot of text is devoted to mini-biographies of political leaders who shaped the events leading up to the Korean War. This makes for sluggish reading at times, but I dare you to not be fascinated by some of these digressions. Finally, about 25 percent of the book is devoted to recounting the experience of U.S. ground forces in pivotal battles such as Unsan, the Naktong, Chosin reservoir, and Chipyongni. Based on Halberstam's interviews with survivors, these first-hand accounts become all the more poignant when we understand the larger political agenda that wasted and scarred so many lives.

The Coldest Winter - Halberstam. I would look at the other reviews of this book. It is a good book in terms of research and the audible book is a good in terms of production, especially the reader. The problem it is the wrong title. It is should have been the "The Fall of General MacArthur". A great deal of the book was spent criticizing GEN MacArthur and LTG Almond. Did they deserve for their errors? Sure. However, the author spent pages and pages revisiting his criticism, or hate. In short, he beat that horse time and time again. Overall, I am told the scholarship is acceptable, not perfect. It is the delivery I have a problem and the lack of counterpoint and counter-counterpoint. I feel that the author allowed the political aspect to influence his talent. The author provided good context for the war and the background for the various leaders. He used the personal stories of some of the combatants he interviewed which many readers like for the human touch .... however remember someone in a fox hole does not have the view of the whole battlefield or what a division commander knows. Thus, a good book but do not take it as dogma. It is not the definitive book on the Korea war and not on the first year of the war.

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