

USFK Commander's Reading List

South Korea

1. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies* by Michael Breen; St. Martin's Griffin; 1st edition (January 17, 2004) (Recommended by Ronney Miller, 8A Historian)

Excerpt from inside flap "...In *The Koreans*, Michael Breen provides an in-depth portrait of the country and its people. An early overview of the nature and values of the Korean people provides the background for a more detailed examination of the complex history of the country, in particular its division into the Communist north and pro-Western south."

2. *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* by Don Oberdorfer; Basic Books; Rev. & upd. edition (February 5, 2002) (Recommended by Maj Gen Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...A new edition of the definitive overview of contemporary Korean history, updated with new material to account for recent, dramatic events. Don Oberdorfer has written a gripping narrative history of Korea's travails and triumphs over the past three decades. *The Two Koreas* places the tensions between North and South within a historical context, with a special emphasis on the involvement of outside powers."

3. *Korea: A Walk Through the Land of Miracles* by Simon Winchester; Harper Perennial (May 31, 2005) (Recommended by CPT Naslanic, Deputy Speechwriter)

Excerpt from inside flap "...In the late 1980s, *New York Times* bestselling author Simon Winchester set out on foot to discover the Republic of Korea -- from its southern tip to the North Korean border -- in order to set the record straight about this enigmatic and elusive land. Fascinating for its vivid presentation of historical and geographic detail, *Korea* is that rare book that actually defines a nation and its people. Winchester's gift for capturing engaging characters in true, compelling stories provides us with a treasury of enchanting and informed insight on the culture, language, history, and politics of this little-known corner of Asia. With a new introduction by the author, *Korea* is a beautiful journey through a mysterious country and a memorable addition to the many adventures of Simon Winchester."

4. *Korea's Place in the Sun* by Bruce Cumings; W. W. Norton; Updated edition (September 19, 2005) (Recommended by LTC Frazier, Speechwriter)

Excerpt from inside flap "...Bruce Cumings traces the growth of Korea from a string of competing walled city-states to its present dual nationhood. He examines the ways in which Korean culture has been influenced by Japan and China, and the ways in which it has subtly influenced its more powerful neighbors. Cumings also considers the recent changes in the South, where authoritarianism is giving way to democracy, and in the North, which Cumings depicts as a "socialist corporatist" state more like a neo-Confucian kingdom than a Stalinist regime. *Korea's Place in the Sun* does much to help Western readers understand the complexities of Korea's past and present."

5. *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* by Peter Duus; Stanford University Press, 1995 (Recommended by Dr. Lewis Bernstein, USFK Historian)

Excerpt from inside flap "...What forces were behind Japan's emergence as the first non-Western colonial power at the turn of the twentieth century? Peter Duus brings a new perspective to Meiji expansionism in this pathbreaking study of Japan's acquisition of Korea, the largest of its colonial possessions. He shows how Japan's drive for empire was part of a larger goal to become the economic, diplomatic, and strategic equal of the Western countries who had imposed a humiliating treaty settlement on the country in the 1850s. Duus maintains that two separate but interlinked processes, one political/military and the other economic, propelled Japan's imperialism. Every attempt at increasing Japanese political influence licensed new opportunities for trade, and each new push for Japanese economic interests buttressed, and sometimes justified, further political advances. The sword was the servant of the abacus, the abacus the agent of the sword."

North Korea

6. *The Aquariums of Pyongyang* by Kang, Chol-Hwan; Basic Books (August 24, 2005) (Recommended by Wells)

Excerpt from inside flap "...North Korea is today one of the last bastions of hard-line Communism. Its leaders have kept a tight grasp on their one-party regime, quashing any nascent opposition movements and sending all suspected dissidents to its brutal concentration camps for "re-education." Kang Chol-hwan is the first survivor of one of these camps to escape and tell his story to the world, documenting the extreme conditions in these gulags and providing a personal insight into life in North Korea. Part horror story, part historical document, part memoir, part political tract, this record of one man's suffering gives eyewitness proof to an ongoing sorrowful chapter of modern history."

7. *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves* by B.R. Myers; Melville House (January 26, 2010) (Recommended by Wells)

Excerpt from inside flap "...Here B.R. Myers, a North Korea analyst and a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*, presents the first full-length study of the North Korean worldview. Drawing on extensive research into the regime's domestic propaganda, including films, romance novels and other artifacts of the personality cult, Myers analyzes each of the country's official myths in turn—from the notion of Koreans' unique moral purity, to the myth of an America quaking in terror of "the Iron General." In a concise but groundbreaking historical section, Myers also traces the origins of this official culture back to the Japanese fascist thought in which North Korea's first ideologues were schooled. What emerges is a regime completely unlike the West's perception of it. This is neither a bastion of Stalinism nor a Confucian patriarchy, but a paranoid nationalist, "military-first" state on the far right of the ideological spectrum."

8. North of the DMZ by Andrei Lankov; McFarland & Company (April 24, 2007)
(Recommended by Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...This book describes that difficult but determined existence and the world that the North Koreans have created for themselves in the face of oppression. Many features of this world are unique and even bizarre. But they have been created by the citizens to reflect their own ideas and values, in sharp contrast to the world forced upon them by a totalitarian system. Opening chapters introduce the political system and the extent to which it permeates citizens' daily lives, from the personal status badges they wear to the nationalized distribution of the food they eat. Chapters discussing the schools, the economic system, and family life dispel the myth of the workers' paradise that North Korea attempts to perpetuate. In these chapters the intricacies of daily life in a totalitarian dictatorship are seen through the eyes of defectors whose anecdotes constitute an important portion of the material. The closing chapter treats at length the significant changes that have taken place in North Korea over the last decade, concluding that these changes will lead to the quiet but inevitable death of North Korean Stalinism."

9. Over the Line: North Korea's Negotiating Strategy by Chuck Downs; AEI Press; 1st edition (November 1998) (Recommended by Miller)

Excerpt from review "...Over the Line is the first book to set out the record of North Korea's international negotiating posture during the armistice. James Munhang Lee and Chuck Downs draw important conclusions from the North's manipulation of international talks and caution policy makers to be alert to the regime's negotiating tactics. As a guide to negotiating with North Korea, Over the Line will provide policy makers with important background on how to deal with the rogue regime; in the event that the situation improves, the book will become essential reading for those who will deal with North Korea's emerging economic enterprises. The authors discuss examples of armed hostility initiated by the North, each of which became the subject of negotiations between the Pyongyang government and the UN Command, Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC). Using unpublished accounts from the UN Command, Over the Line brings together for the first time the full record of these negotiations, describes the motives and objectives, and assesses negotiating tactics."

10. Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea by Barbara Demick; Spiegel & Grau; Reprint edition (September 21, 2010) (Recommended by Bernstein)

Excerpt from inside flap "...A remarkable view into North Korea, as seen through the lives of six ordinary citizens. Nothing to Envy follows the lives of six North Koreans over fifteen years—a chaotic period that saw the death of Kim Il-sung, the unchallenged rise to power of his son Kim Jong-Il, and the devastation of a far-ranging famine that killed one-fifth of the population. Taking us into a landscape most of us have never before seen, award-winning journalist Barbara Demick brings to life what it means to be living under the most repressive totalitarian regime today—an Orwellian world that is by choice not connected to the Internet, in which radio and television dials are welded to the one government station, and where displays of affection are punished; a police state where informants are rewarded and where an offhand remark can send a person to the gulag for life. Demick takes us deep inside the country, beyond the reach of government censors. Through meticulous and sensitive reporting, we see her six subjects—average North Korean citizens—fall in love, raise families, nurture ambitions, and struggle for survival."

Korean War

11. *From Pusan to Panmunjom* by GEN (Ret.) Paik Sun-yup; Potomac Books Inc.; Reprint edition (November 1, 1999) (Recommended by Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...*From Pusan to Panmunjom* is the candid and revealing wartime memoir of the soldier who, at the age of thirty-two, became South Korea's first four-star general. It brings an unprecedented perspective to a cataclysmic war."

12. *A Short History of the Korean War* by James L. Stokesbury; Harper Perennial (January 30, 1990) (Recommended by Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...As pungent and concise as his short histories of both world wars, Stokesbury's survey of "the half war" takes a broad view and seems to leave nothing out but the details. The first third covers the North Korean invasion of June 1950, the Pusan perimeter crisis, MacArthur's master stroke at Inchon and the intervention by Chinese forces that November. At this point, other popular histories of the war reach the three-quarter mark, ending often with a cursory summary of the comparatively undramatic three-and-a-half years required to bring the war to its ambiguous conclusion on July 27, 1953. Stokesbury renders the latter period as interesting as the operational fireworks of the first six months: the Truman-MacArthur controversy; the political limitations on U.S. air power; the need for the Americans to fight the war as cheaply as possible, due to NATO commitments; the prolonged negotiations at Panmunjom over the prisoner-exchange issue; and the effect of the war on the home front. Whether the United States could have/should have stayed out of the war in the first place comes under discussion: "no" on both counts, according to the author."

13. *The Coldest Winter: America in the Korean War* by David Halberstam; Hyperion; Reprint edition (September 16, 2008) (Recommended by Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...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 misjudgments 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."

14. *This Kind of War* by T. R. Fehrenbach; Potomac Books Inc.; 50th Anniversary edition (March 2001) (Recommended by Wells & Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...The lessons that Colonel Fehrenbach identifies still resonate. Severe peacetime budget cuts after World War II left the U.S. military a shadow of its former self. The terrible lesson of Korea was that to send into action troops trained for nothing but "serving a hitch" in some quiet billet was an almost criminal act. Throwing these ill-trained and poorly equipped troops into the heat of battle resulted in the war's early routs. The United States was simply unprepared for war. As we enter a new century with Americans and North Koreans continuing to face each other across the 38th parallel, we would do well to remember the price we paid during the Korean War."

15. Ship of Miracles by Bill Gilbert; Triumph Books (IL); First edition. (October 1, 2000) (Recommended by Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...When Captain Leonard La Rue spied from his twelve-man merchant ship, the Meredith Victory, the throng of Korean refugees on the docks of a city in flames, he didn't hesitate to do what others would consider impossible. In December of 1950, La Rue and his skeleton crew rescued fourteen thousand Korean refugees from the hands of the rapidly-approaching Chinese army in the city of Hungnam. Through the night and next day, a seemingly endless succession of refugees boarded the Meredith, their will to live and strong spirit steeling them against the bitter cold and incredibly crowded conditions. Standing shoulder to shoulder for three days the refugees and crew stoically endured as La Rue steered the ship through sea battle, a thirty-mile web of sea mines, and enemy shelling."

Regional

16. Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953 by Shu Guang Zhang; University Press Of Kansas (December 1, 1995) (Recommended by Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...This is the first English-language military history of what the People's Republic of China called the "War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea." Based upon a vast array of recently available Chinese sources, it provides a revealing new look at the far-reaching influence of Mao Zedong's political and military thought on China's conduct of the war. As Shu Guang Zhang reminds us, many observers in 1950 thought it foolhardy for this young and underdeveloped communist nation to engage in yet another war. Coming so soon after its costly civil war with the Nationalists, the Korean crisis presented China with the uninviting prospect of fighting a technologically superior (and nuclear-armed) opponent on foreign terrain."

17. Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War by Sergei Goncharov; Stanford University Press (February 1, 1995) (Recommended by Miller)

Excerpt from inside flap "...The authors use major new documentary sources, including cables and letters between Mao Zedong and Stalin, to tell for the first time the inside story of the creation of the Sino-Soviet alliance and the origins of the Korean War."

18. Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy by Gregg Brazinsky; University of North Carolina Press, 2007 (Recommended by Bernstein)

Dr. Bernstein's Summary: Examines state-to-state relations and the social and cultural interactions between Americans and South Koreans. He shows how Koreans adapted, resisted, and transformed American influence and promoted socioeconomic change that suited their own aspirations. He argues that Koreans' capacity to tailor American institutions and ideas to their own purposes was the most important factor in the making of a democratic South Korea.

19. The Partition of Korea after World War II: A Global History by Jongsoo James Lee; Palgrave Macmillan; First Edition (May 15, 2007) (Recommended by Bernstein)

Excerpt from inside flap "...Sixty years after Korea's partition into South Korea and North Korea, a full understanding of how this partition occurred is still wanting. Based on a careful examination of sources in Russian, English and Korean, including new archival evidence from Moscow, this book seeks to provide this understanding. Taking into account not only the policies of the Soviet Union and the United States but also the roles played by the Koreans themselves, Jongsoo Lee untangles the complex dynamics of the Korean partition, placing this partition in the context of modern world history and the emerging Cold War. Comparing Korea with Germany, Austria, Finland and elsewhere after World War II, Lee suggests possible alternative outcomes to Korean partition, thus shedding light on Korea's present predicament as she faces the challenges of reunification.

20. The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers by Richard McGregor; Harper; 1 Edition. (2010) (Recommended by Bryan Port, Deputy J5)

Excerpt from inside flap"... In *The Party*, Richard McGregor delves deeply into China's inner sanctum for the first time, showing how the Communist Party controls the government, courts, media, and military, and how it keeps all corruption accusations against its members in-house. The Party's decisions have a global impact, yet the CPC remains a deeply secretive body, hostile to the law, unaccountable to anyone or anything other than its own internal tribunals. It is the world's only geopolitical rival of the United States, and is steadfastly poised to think the worst of the West. In this provocative and illuminating account, Richard McGregor offers a captivating portrait of China's Communist Party, its grip on power and control over China, and its future.

Current Events

21. Investigation Report on the Sinking of ROK Ship "Cheonan", Published by the Multinational Civilian-Military Joint Investigation Group, 20 May 10 (Recommended by Wells)
22. The New Korea Strategic Digest, Published by the PAO, UNC/CFC/USFK, Oct 10 (Recommended by the Speechwriter Shop)
23. Korea Defense White Paper 2010, Published by the ROK Ministry of National Defense, Dec 10 (Recommended by the Speechwriter Shop)