

Political Science
G. R. Boynton's New Media and Politics

University of Iowa

12-6-2010

Korea War

Andrew Ewing* Kaitlin Davies†

*University of Iowa, andrew-ewing@uiowa.edu
†University of Iowa, kaitlin-davies@uiowa.edu

Copyright ©2010 Andrew Ewing, Kaitlin Davies.

This paper is posted at Iowa Research Online.
http://ir.uiowa.edu/polisci_nmp/198

Korea War

Analysis of the conflicts in Afghanistan in May of this year showed that there wasn't significant international communication on the two violent attacks. However, this week's attack by North Korea on its neighbor South Korea has gained a considerable international following and has resulted in more than 3,000 tweets from 11/29/10 – 12/1/10. It is now up to over 4,000 in four days but we have only documented the first two days. What are the differences in each search? Both are international conflicts but why has the Korean attack attracted a larger following on Twitter?

There are several differences in the two searches; first, the volume of the search for Korea War yielded 1500 more tweets than the search on the attacks in Afghanistan, also the Korea War search is primarily tweeted in English. English is the most common language in the world but the amount of tweets in our search was quite striking. The content of the Korea War search focused primarily on the possibility of a war that the United States would get involved in, there were also a lot of tweets about the effects another war would have on the world and a lot about striving for peace.

Procedure:

Archivist was used to collect the data, and the search ran from November 29, 2010 to December 1, 2010. The key terms that were searched were "Korea War" which had 3,338 results. To look at the content of the Tweets we took a sample of 126 Tweets and put them in relevant categories; effects on economy, effect on world, possibility of war, who's to blame, and want for peace.

Answer:

The majority of the tweets involving the conflict in Korea discussed the possibility of another war between North and South Korea. These included news links about the situation, and also opinions on the possibility of war. Several of these tweets discussed the war games South Korea and the United States are engaging in, and how that means there is an increased chance in US involvement. There were also several tweets pleading for a resolution between the two countries in order to keep peace. Many people put the blame of the conflict on North Korea. There was also a large discussion on the effect the conflict has on the world. One example is a

tweet discussing the probability that a war in Korea would lead to another draft in the US to aid in troop support. There was also discussion on the conflict affecting tourism in the Koreas. One tweet was one of concern about the presence of the news media in Korea and how it might actually provoke war. There was not much discussion on how the conflict in Korea will affect the economy, however there was one tweet about how US involvement might affect the economic relationship with China.

At first glance one might think the searches between Korea War and Afghanistan are very similar but they are quite different. The both focus on problems in countries other than the United States but they are in countries that we are familiar with, whether that history is good or bad. We have occupied parts of Afghanistan for about 10 years but many feel we should no longer be there, that may be why people don't pay as much attention to attacks that occur there. On the other hand we have been very adamant in stopping the nuclear weapons that North Korea possesses and many people may feel that they are a larger threat and we could get pulled into another war. We think people comment on what may be the larger threat at the time and the history between us and North Korea seems to point to action on our part. Also, the content of the tweets says a lot about people's opinions of the situations the attacks in Afghanistan were primarily about the surprise of the attacks and reactions to the chaos and violence, or lack of security while the tweets about Korea were mainly of the possibility of war and the hopes and prayers for peace.