
The origin of the Korean Conflict

The Korean conflict originated from the rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union as well as the struggle between the left and right wing forces in domestic arena after Korea's liberation from the Japanese colonial rule back in 1945. At the conclusion of the Korean War in 1950, the nation of Korea (which had been controlled by Japan during the war) was divided into two different sectors. North Korea was administered by the Soviet Union while South Korea was governed by the United States of America. The Soviet Union assisted North Korea in establishing a communist government, led by Kim Il Sung. On the other hand, the United States assisted South Korea in creating a capitalist government.

The conflict in the Korean peninsula was initiated with the establishment of separate governments in 1948; the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The conflict further intensified by the 1950 Korean War. On June 25th of the year 1950, Kim Il Sung attempted to unify Korea under the communist rule. He initiated an invasion of South Korea, with the assistance of the Soviet Union. And the United States, as well as many other nations, came to the assistance of South Korea. In October of 1950, China entered the war as well, along side the North Koreans. Later on, the United States and South Korea were able to drive North Korea back to the 38th parallel. However, after three year war, little progress was made.. The war killed more than 3 million Koreans. But, by the end of it, the countries had returned to their initial states; divided along the 38th parallel. Though both the countries were (and still are) too immersed into the conflict, there have been several attempts to settle it and to establish a peace system between the two Koreas.

The Armistice Agreement of 1953, and the July 4th Joint Communiqué of 1973, and the North-South Basic Agreement of 1992, and the June 15th Joint Declaration of 2000 are all examples of previous attempts to solve the conflict (or, to be specific, try to minimize it's effects). However, without settling the conflict structure, it will be difficult to build a peace system in the Korean peninsula, and ultimately achieve unification.

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ)

Is a regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security. Regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) have been established to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and

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disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. The Treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Juche ideology

The Juche ideology emphasizes North Korea's political, economic, and military self-reliance, and it became the state ideology and sole guiding principle of the government following the rise of a one-party communist state in the country following World War 2. The ideology asserts that the individual is the master of one's destiny and encourages the North Koreans to work as masters of revolution and construction. The DPRK's Juche was improvised after the Korean War for the purpose of cutting off ties with the Soviet Union.

The Korean People's Army (KPA)

The Korean People's Army is the "revolutionary armed wing" of the Worker's Party as stated in Article 46 of the party constitution, with first and foremost loyalties to the party. The Korean People's Army was established on February 8 of 1948. Kim Jong-un the Supreme Commander of the KPA,

38th parallel. 38th parallel is a well known name given to latitude 38° N that in East Asia roughly divides North Korea from South Korea.

Background Information

After Japan's defeat in the second World War, and after the 3-year-long Korean War fought in

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1950, the The Armistice Agreement resettles the 38th parallel as a border between the two divided Koreas: North Korea and South Korea. Where North Korea has a communist rule and South Korea has an anti communist capitalist rule. The Northern part of Korea became known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is ruled by one party only. On the other hand, the Southern part became the Republic of Korea (ROK), that follows a democratic system.

Russia has always sought to advance both eastward and southward scouting for more secure borders and ports/harbors. Thus, the Soviet Union has always sought to maintain a friendly buffer state on the Korean peninsula and to maintain access to multiple ports there. Hence, it's assistance to North Korea during the war. Moreover, the Cold War plays an immense role in the USSR's role during the war. Seeing that the United States had backed the ROK up during the war, the USSR was bound to side along with North Korea. Nevertheless, the USSR surely had much stronger motives (such as the ports). During the war, the USSR provided North Korea's army with advanced training as well as all necessary equipments to prepare for the war.

Moreover, after the Korean War, the United States of America's military remains fully involved in the Korean Peninsula. During the war, the United States assisted the ROK in fighting against the DPRK, the USSR, and the People's Republic of China (PCR). The United States continues to be involved in South Korea, obeying the Mutual Defense Treaty which was signed in 1953, after the war. The agreement requires both the United States and South Korea to provide mutual assistance in the case of when either parties face an external armed attack. Furthermore, the agreement allows the United States to place military forces in South Korea. Thus, the United States had sent approximately 29,000 troops to the peninsula. Further, 1.2 million North Korean troops and 630,000 South Korean troops quarter around the Demilitarized Zone.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United States of America

The end of the Cold War during the 90s had a vast impact of the Korean Peninsula. The United States deployed nuclear weapons on the peninsula. During 1991, an agreement was adopted by both of the Korean governments called "the Declaration of Nuclear-Free Korean Peninsula". In 1992, North Korea concluded the safeguard accords with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). After that, the IAEA launched a nuclear investigation to North Korea. Furthermore, tensions between the United States and North Korea started to become more apparent. Tensions arose because of the issue of the scope and level of the nuclear investigation in the Fall of 1992. Appropriately, the United States carried out the Team Spirit exercise (a joint military operation exercise between South Korea and the US), which was later

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called off in the 90s. In protest, North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Afterwards, the the situation worsened and led to a war between the two states. Subsequent, in 1994, the Agreed Framework (Geneva Agreement) was signed. The three major agreements were: North Korea would freeze nuclear facilities, and both states would move towards and motivate full normalization of relations, and the US would provide North Korea with 2 light water and reactors to solve electricity issues. However, the US violated the agreement. The light water reactors were to be fully established by 2003, but the construction was intentionally delayed. Moreover, relations were not normalized. The US continued to give military threats North Korea when it was supposed to instead guarantee that North Korea does not use nuclear weapons against Pyongyang. After the 9/11 incident, the Bush administration made a stronger position on the small country. Bush named North Korea as a part of the “axis of evil” and considered a pre-emptive attack against North Korea. Now, the United States remains involved in the Korean Peninsula and defends the Southern part of Korea, following the the Mutual Defense Treaty which was signed in 1953, after the Korean War of 1950.

Soviet Union

The invasion of South Korea by forces of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950 was one of the defining moments of the Cold War. The USSR provided resources such as arms, food, and financial aid to North Korea. North Korea had sent its troops for advanced training in Russia. Since the Soviet Union was fighting the Cold War against the United States, it was beyond pleased when a communist country, North Korea, attacked a democracy, South Korea. By siding with North Korea, the Soviet Union defeats a democracy that was propagated by the United States. Moreover, the United States was fully aware that since the Soviet Union had supplied all necessary equipments to North Korea in preparation for the war, the was would be a powerful boost for the communist propaganda. Hence, the United States launched an offensive to retake South Korea. Though the Soviets had provided all aid, the had not physically joined the war. Unlike the Americans. After the war, both sides had decided to split Korea. Also, the United States suffered immense losses where the Soviet Union’s losses were negligible and a communist government was legally in power (seeing that Korea was not communist prior to the war). Furthermore, the war led to new allies of the USSR: China and North Korea (all against the United States).

China

Many believe that China played a huge role in favor of the USSR during the Korean War and that the purpose of China participating in the war is to the expand the Chinese Civil War. During the Chinese Civil War, three campaigns occurred. The second campaign was called the Huai Hai. The Huai Hai was a turning point during the civil war, which made the failure Kuomintang (a Chinese political party also known as the KMT) a huge issue at that time. Last on, Joseph Stalin

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(Former General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) had urged Mao Zedong (Former Chairman of the Communist Party of China) not to cross the Changing River to destroy the KMT. If the Communist Party of China obeys the USSR's orders, the Professional Regulation Commission would be another part of East Germany that the USSR would benefit from; a separated China would benefit the USSR. Moreover, it is noteworthy that China owns many more harbors in good conditions than the USSR. Before the Korean War, the entire Korea was occupied by the United States and northeastern China became the forefront of the ongoing battle between capitalism and communism, which gave the USSR the absolute to hold the Chinese harbors. This strategic and detailed goal elaborates as to why the USSR never physically participated in the Korean War. It also justifies the USSR's aid to China during the war: it was hoping that China would fail in the war. However, the victory of the two Chinese campaigns during the Chinese Civil War ensured that China would back North Korea during the war. If the USSR had never provided resources and aid to China, it might've lost North Korea. Furthermore, when the Chinese Volunteer Army had vanquished and conquered Seoul (the capital of South Korea), the USSR ceased providing aid, fearing that it will lose its control over China.

Timeline of Events: 1905

Date:

Description of event: Japan makes Korea a protectorate

August 10, 1945

After the attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrender in the second World War and Russian troops enter Korea

September 1947

The Congress/ Joint Chiefs of Staff decides to leave Korea. In the Soviet Union, the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) is established

November 14, 1947

The UN passes the United States resolution that called for free elections in Korea

May 10, 1948

Korean elections occur

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August 1948

Two governments are created (DPRK and ROK)

January 19, 1949

The Korean Aid Bill does not pass in the House of Representatives

April 4, 1949

The NATO pact is signed

October 2, 1949

Mao Zedong claims the People's Republic of China (PRC)

June 25, 1950

Korean War begins when North Korea crosses the 38th Parallel

June 27, 1950

President Harry Truman sends US Naval and Air support to aid South Korea

August 27, 1950

The United States announces the UN objective of creating a unified, anti-communist Korea

October 25, 1950

The South Korean ROK forces are obliterated by PRC forces at the city of Pukchin in North Korea

November 3, 1950

UN resolution passes, reprimanding North Korea for a "breach of peace"

February 1, 1951

UN oceans PRC for "aggression". Operation "Killer" begins

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March 15, 1951

The US, UN and ROK forces reclaim Seoul

April 22, 1951 and May 15, 1951

Communist offenses fail to reclaim Seoul

May 18, 1951

UN member states start boycotting military goods of the PRC

July 8, 1951

Peace negotiations start at Kaesong

June 1952

Washington sanctions bombing Korean power plants on the river of Yalu

July 19, 1953

Member states of the UN reach an agreement at Panmunjom

July 27, 1953

Korean War ends when a ceasefire agreement is signed (The Armistice Agreement) and the 38th parallel is reset as a borderline between the North and South of Korea. Cold War tensions remain unchanged

October 1966

Korean DMZ conflict begins

January 1968

North Korean troops attempt to murder South Korean President Park Chungy-Hee

August 1974

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Another assassination attempt of President Park Chung-Hee by North Korean soldier in Seoul

April 1996

North Korea sends thousands of military troops into the DMZ as it announces it will no longer adhere to the armistice of 1953

June 1999

Battle of Yeonpyeong occurs

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

United Nations Security Council Resolution 82, 25 June 1950 (S/RES/82)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 83, 27 June 1950 (S/RES/83)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 84, 7 June 1950 (S/RES/84)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 702, 8 August 1991 (S/RES/702)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 825, 11 May 1993 (S/RES/825)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1695, 15 July 2006 (S/RES/1695)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718, 14 October 2006 (S/RES/1718)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874, 12 June 2009 (S/RES/1874)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1985, 10 June 2001 (S/RES/1985)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2087, 22 January 2013 (S/RES/2087)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2207, 4 March 2015 (S/RES/2207)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2270, 2 March 2016 (S/RES/2270)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2321, 30 November 2016 (S/RES/2321)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2345, 23 March 2017 (S/RES/2345)

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United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375, 11 September 2017 (S/RES/2375)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2397, 22 December 2017 (S/RES/2397)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Although the Armistice agreement of 1953 had put an end to the Korean War, it has merely returned both South Korea and North Korea to their original states before the war, resolving no issues at all. No peace treaty was ever signed however, the frozen ceasefire agreement has been effective for the past 64 years. However, with the US military troops still found in South Korea and North Korea's powerful anti-US propaganda, the situation has not changed. North Korea is known to be the most isolated country in the world. North Korean civilians suffer from their destroyed economy. According to the UN, over a third of the population is malnourished (the country is in need of medical care). South Korea has elected a new president, after a certain period of domestic turbulence; Moon Jae-in, in May of 2017. Moon is working and trying to create a reconciliation with North Korea. He is also trying to make an approach to the US, however, more distant. However, Moon is trying to prevent South Korea from being a political hostage of an international issue. Moreover, the United Nations has presented a comprehensive method for any future cooperation within the span of the next 5 years with North Korea. The UN seeks to work with the Kim government to ensure the country's development goals and to help aid its social and economic progress. Furthermore, during August of 2017, the Security Council passed a resolution to create the toughest sanctions on North Korea so far. The resolution foists an exporting ban coal, iron, lead and seafood causing the country to lose around \$1 billion per annum. Another solution that was previously attempted was the Six-Party Talks. It consists of Japan, PRC, DPRK, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. It was established in 2003 to allow discussion between the member states. The Six-Party talk was able to reach breakthroughs in the year 2005, as North Korea has agreed to abandon its nuclear program and return to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, the Six-Party Talks is considered rather useless seeing that all agreements were broken due to the variation of methods and processes of verification and a deeply censured rocket launch initiated by North Korea. However, Pyongyang, capital of North Korea, had announced that it does not want to be apart of the SPT anymore whilst many other member states have called upon North Korea to follow its denuclearization pledge of 2005. Moreover, DPRK had caused many of the member states to defy one another. DPRK had various talks with the member states, wanting a high price for halting its nuclear program which is: bilateral talks with the US and to initiate another peace treaty in place of the Armistice agreement of 1953. However, if that is done then South Korea must recognize a second Korean state in its constitution and the US would have no reason to place its military troops in South Korea (which renders it weak in the Asian Pacific area).

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Possible Solutions

Although the conflict has been subsistent for a long period of time, there might be a few solutions that could minimize its negative effects on local and global scale. It is important to reaffirm and emphasize on a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula, seeing how that poses as a threat to the ROK and its allies as well as many other countries since DPRK has always been isolated and not restricted to man agreements or negotiations. Moreover, it is also important for the international community to further condemn DPRKs fourth and fifth nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches and to emphasize on their effects on the global community. Member states of the UN should call once again upon DPRK to comply with its obligations under all of the UN security council resolutions especially regarding its nuclear crisis such as: the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks in September of 2005, NPT, and the IAEA Safeguards Agreements. Furthermore, it is important for all participating states to recall upon previous Security Council resolutions such as: Resolution 2270 and Resolution 2321, in order to present a united determination on behalf of the international community. Furthermore, it is important to reinstall inter-parliamentary dialogues between previous members of the Six-Party Talk but however, along with other participating member states seeing that they could establish in-group policing between the six parties. Finally, the UN must focus on its efforts on re-establishing its plans to aid North Korea's economy (providing health care and resources), which could act as a step towards improving and encouraging its economy to resuscitate.

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