

Forum: (Historical) Security Council

Issue: Responding to the Korean War (June, 1950)

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IMPORTANT

The Historical Security Council runs by the same rules and structures as the Security Council, albeit with one significant difference. It is moved to the past. In the Historical Security Council, delegates relive, influence, and potentially alter the outcome of critical historical events. Therefore, delegates represent countries that existed tens of years ago. This way, they can delve deeply into their exciting histories.

This Historical Security Council will be set in 1950. The session assumes that events after the date are roughly predictable. The overall goal of the discussion and resolution is prevention, deterrence, and peace - how to prevent the Korean War from escalating, and what measures to take for innocent civilians caught in the crossfire; however, delegates are not strictly prohibited from discussing the aftermaths of the war.

*The permanent members of this council will be **the United States, Soviet Union (Russia during Topic 1), United Kingdom, Republic of China, and Republic of France.***

Introduction:

Until 1945, the entire Korean Peninsula was under Japanese imperial rule, submitting to a cruel and horrific regime under the name of Emperor Hirohito. After Japan's defeat in World War II, the country was divided into two zones of occupation: the Soviet-backed North and the American-backed South. The division led to separate governments being formed in both regions, with the Communist Kim Il-sung taking power in the North and the anti-Communist Syngman Rhee in the South. Tensions between North and South Korea rose quickly, with both sides attempting to take control of the entire peninsula.

In 1949, the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from North Korea, leaving it vulnerable to a potential South Korean attack. Border skirmishes and other hostilities between the two Koreas escalated, leading to an increase in military preparedness on both sides. In an effort to unify the country under the Communist regime in the North, North Korean troops invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, resulting in the beginning of the Korean War.

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **38th Parallel:** The line of latitude that divided North and South Korea before and during the war. This line was drawn by the US and USSR, without any involvement from the South Korea parties.
2. **Pusan Perimeter:** In the early stages of the war, UN forces were pushed back to the southeastern tip of the Korean Peninsula, known as the Pusan Perimeter, where they successfully held off North Korean attacks until the Inchon Landing.
3. **MAS*H:** Acronym for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, these units provided critical medical support during the war. The term became popularized through the book, movie, and television series of the same name.
4. **POW:** Prisoner of War. Many soldiers from both sides were captured during the war, and the issue of POWs became a contentious aspect of the armistice negotiations.
5. **Kim Il-sung:** He was the founding leader of North Korea. Backed by the soviet union, his influence was
6. **Syngman Rhee:** He was the first president of South Korea. Together with his anti-communist stance and backing from the USA, he played a significant role in the early days of the war.
7. **UN Resolution 82:** The United Nations Security Council resolution passed in 1950, which called for member states to provide military assistance to South Korea in response to the North Korean invasion.
8. **Stalemate:** A state where both parties are not making any significant gains while warfare continues
9. **Limited War:** Participating nations do not make full use of the potential resources and weapons they have available (usually nuclear weapons) and are not intending to totally defeat the enemy.
10. **Proxy war:** Groups or countries fighting on behalf of a larger nation without the actual nation actively participating in the war.

Background Information

In a broader sense, the Korean war was one of the most prominent conflicts in the early stages of the cold war. It was representative of the forces of communism and capitalism clashing against each other. The war was the first time the two superpowers had a “proxy war” in a third country. The “proxy war” or “limited war” strategy, was seen in different nations after the Korean war such as in Vietnam.

The state of Korea

After the surrender of the Japanese empire on September 2, 1945, the long Japanese occupation of Korea (1910 - 1945) had ended. During this period, Korean culture, heritage, language and identity was largely suppressed, and nationalistic sentiments rose amongst the people of Korea. After prolonged periods of abuse and oppression from external powers, people sought peace and reunification of the people.

The division by the 38th parallel

Following the liberation of the peninsula, it was separated into two separate occupation zones across the 38th parallel, the north by the Soviet Union and the south by the United States. Crucially, Koreans had no say in the division of Korea by the 38th parallel, it was arbitrarily decided by the Allies after they had won World War 2. This was meant to be temporary, but as the cold war intensified, the border grew to be permanent. This permanent border eventually led to the establishment of two different governments within the same Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was led by Kim Il-sung, with support from the Soviet Union, establishing a communist regime. The Republic of Korea (South Korea) was led by Syngman Rhee, supported by the United States, forming a capitalist and anti-communist government.

Current Situation

The period building up to the Korean War can be characterized by the efforts of the ROK government to suppress left-wing guerillas near the 38th parallel in the South and Kim Il-sung's simultaneous efforts to coerce Russia into enabling him to re-unify the Korean Peninsula under the Communist DPRK. In March 1949, Kim traveled to Moscow to try and convince Joseph Stalin to provide materiel and training to enable the Korean People's Army to cross the 38th parallel and invade the South. Although initially skeptical, several developments in late 1949-early 1950 changed Stalin's opinion; in particular, the Soviet's first successful detonation of a nuclear device, as well as the Maoist victory and the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War. In light of these developments, Stalin sought a closer relationship between Moscow and the burgeoning Communist states in Asia, culminating in the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. These developments allowed Stalin to endorse Kim's mission to unify the Korean Peninsula under the banner of the DPRK, with the stipulation that Mao's People's Liberation Army come to the aid of the North Korean forces if necessary.

The Korean War can be viewed as a direct consequence of the broader Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War refers to the ideological and geopolitical rivalry between these two superpowers, characterized by a struggle for influence and control on a global scale. Both superpowers saw Korea as a strategic location and sought to extend their influence in the region. The United States, driven by its containment policy, aimed to prevent the spread of communism and protect its interests in East Asia. Conversely, the Soviet Union saw an opportunity to expand its communist sphere of influence. The division of Korea into two separate states, North and South, with contrasting political systems, exacerbated the existing tensions. The establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) under communist rule and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) with a capitalist system further deepened the ideological divide.

As a result, the Korean Peninsula became a focal point of the larger Cold War conflict. The involvement of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Korean War was driven by their desire to maintain their respective spheres of influence and prevent the other from gaining an advantage. Neither superpower could afford to leave the Korean War to chance. The United States feared that the spread of communism in Korea would have a domino effect, leading to the fall of other countries in the region. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, saw an opportunity to weaken American influence and expand its own power.

The current situation of the Korean War in 1950 is a result of the highly polarized and volatile situation created by the involvement of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Korean Peninsula. The broader context of the Cold War and the strategic importance of Korea to both superpowers made it imperative for them to be actively involved in the conflict and prevent the other side from gaining an advantage.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

North Korea

North Korea, known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, viewed the war as a struggle that was necessary for the liberation of the peninsula against western imperialism. They believed that all the actions that were committed were necessary to defend their own socialist system and reunification under Kim Il Sung's regime. North Korea actively promoted communist ideology and sought to establish close ties with other communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and China. In the years leading up to the Korean War, North Korea engaged in provocations against South Korea, conducting border skirmishes and

supporting guerrilla activities in the South. They sought to weaken the government in the South and inspire uprisings against the pro-Western regime led by Syngman Rhee.

South Korea

South Korea, known as the Republic of Korea, was the opposite of the north. South Korea's position was to establish a stable, capitalist, and anti-communist government in the whole of Korea under the leadership of President Syngman Rhee. They often emphasised their commitment to democracy and alignment to western powers. South Korea wished to defend their national sovereignty and grow their military and economy to safeguard their national identity and independence.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union viewed North Korea as a communist ally who was a strategic foothold in Asia to advance its interests and expand communism's influence on the Korean Peninsula. The Soviet Union played a key role in establishing the North Korean government under Kim Il-sung and provided economic, military, and ideological assistance to solidify the regime. They saw North Korea as a valuable ally in their global rivalry with the United States and sought to counterbalance American influence in the region.

United States of America

The United States provided economic and military support to South Korea as they deemed it as a crucial bulwark against the spread of communism into other Asian countries. The U.S.'s stance involved promoting democracy and capitalism in South Korea and supporting President Syngman Rhee's government as the legitimate authority for the southern half of the peninsula. Their commitment to South Korea set the stage for their involvement in the Korean War when North Korea invaded the South in 1950.

China

China provided economic and military assistance to North Korea and expressed solidarity with their goal of reunifying the Korean Peninsula under a communist government. China viewed the division of Korea as an unnatural outcome of foreign intervention and supported North Korea's position that they were the legitimate government for the entire peninsula.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN had tried to address this issue before it escalated further, but the disputes between the USA and the Soviet Union made this difficult. Some significant events are as follows

- **The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK)** - On 14 November 1947, the commission was established via the passing of UN General Assembly Resolution 112. The mandate was to "supervise free and open elections, assist in the withdrawal of the occupying forces, and guide the new political entity to full independence." The mandate was not able to be realised in the North. The Soviet and North Korean governments refused to recognize the commission; the Soviets argued that the commission would break the 1945 Moscow Accords. The Soviets also argued that it violated Articles 32 and 107 of the UN Charter. Article 32 requires that both sides of the dispute be consulted, but Korean representatives from North and South Korea were never invited to address the UN. Also, Article 107 denied jurisdiction to the UN over postwar settlement issues.
- **1948 South Korean Election** - In May 1948, South Korea held its first national elections, and Syngman Rhee was elected as the first President of the Republic of Korea. The United States and several other countries recognized the Republic of Korea as the legitimate government of South Korea. The Soviet Union and North Korea dismissed the election as illegitimate, further deepening the division between the two Koreas.
- **Soviet Union's Withdrawal from the UN Security Council** - In protest of the UN's refusal to recognize the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union boycotted the Security Council in 1950. This allowed the Security Council to pass Resolution 82, authorising collective military action to repel the North Korean invasion of South Korea.
- **Resolution 82** - This resolution was adopted in June 25, 1950 and it called for the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of North Korean forces. This same resolution also allowed for collective military action against North Korea by the UN.

Possible Solutions

This section is slightly different due to the special procedure of the Historical Security Council committee. The goal of this committee is to reach a diplomatic resolution following the events detailed in this report. Delegates are to assume the stances of their countries *at the time of 1950*. The progression of this committee does not need to be historically accurate- the goal is not to do exactly what countries did before, but to be creative and develop alternative solutions.

One possible solution can be to create legal documents and resolutions that find common ground between the two opposing sides, namely the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, but in a larger scope, the US and the Soviet Union. As discussed before, the previous UN documents have always been one-sided and favored just one side of the conflict, which prevented the war's termination at an earlier time. However, suppose international and legal documents are created to include and support all sides of the war while also has the main goals of ensuring peace and providing applicable resolutions. In that case, the conflict can end once and for all. Moreover, amending pre-existing documents and using the pre-existing resolutions as a guide and basis for future resolutions and international documents can also help to terminate the war faster. As stated before, these resolutions contain many applicable and adaptable points; however, they should be improved to be admissible by the two opposing sides.

Another alternative to solve the issue can be to arrange a meeting/conference in a DMZ where representatives from the KPA, Soviet Union, PVA, the US, and the UNC would discuss solutions to end the war by compromising. The conference could be supervised by an observer from a neutral country such as Denmark or Sweden to ensure a peaceful environment in which no representative feels threatened by the other. The representatives may discuss topics such as solutions to the war and the protection of civilians in the conflict areas, which is also a significant aspect of the issue.

Another possible solution could focus on the repatriation of prisoners of war. It is important to develop a method or strategy to ensure war prisoners return to their own countries. This can be developed through the establishment of an UN-affiliated organization where individuals from neutral countries that have not taken a side in the Korean War could volunteer and collect data on the exact number of MIA persons as well as the exact numbers reported by the opposition side to ensure a safe transition and transfer of those who have been a war prisoner during the time of the war.

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