

Forum: Historic Security Council

Issue: Addressing the Korean War Crisis Following North Korea's Invasion of the South

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Introduction:

The Korean war is widely considered to be the first major war in the Cold War era, starting on the 25th of June 1950 and ending on the 27th of July 1953. The conflict began when North Korean People's Army (KPA) soldiers, backed by the Soviet Union, first crossed over the infamous 38th Parallel into South Korea. With this, the war quickly escalated into the international theater, with the United States, Soviet Union, China, and the United Nations as a whole becoming key players in the crisis.

The conflict as a whole was at the forefront of critics regarding humanitarian consequences, collective security, foreign intervention, collective security, and the running narrative of East vs West, which was just beginning to gain traction at this time. This report aims to give delegates the necessary information to tackle these aforementioned issues entirely, hopefully setting the stage for meaningful and fruitful debate.

A major note is that seeing as the issue is set in right after the invasion of South Korea, delegates should keep in mind that the timeline only goes up to when Seoul is captured by North Korea; with the UN subsequently establishing the United Nations Command (UNC) on the 7th of July 1950. Therefore, the Inchon Landing conducted by the UNC is yet to happen alongside the lack of Chinese military forces in Korea.

Definition of key terms:

38th Parallel: The heavily guarded line of latitude that defined the border between North and South Korea, it still stands to this day.

Cold War: A period of history which was marked by intense geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, lasting from approximately 1947 to 1991, although the exact end and start point is still being debated by historians.

Collective Security: A cooperative arrangement where multiple states agree to view an act of aggression against any single member as an aggression against all

United Nations Command (UNC): The UN-established and US-managed multinational military force meant to support South Korea during the Korean War

Armistice: Whilst similar in principle to a ceasefire, an armistice is an agreement to stop fighting whilst not formally ending a war.

Proxy War: A type of military conflict where powerful countries support opposing sides with economic and/or military aid without directly fighting the other powerful country

Background:

Division of Korea and Rising Tensions

Immediately after the end of WWII following Japan's surrender in August 1945, Korea was a free nation after over 35 years of oppressive colonial rule. Despite this, like most independent and impressionable newborn nations, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel. It was agreed that the Soviet Union (USSR) occupies the Northern region whilst the United States (USA) occupies the south. The 38th parallel was never meant to be permanent; it was intended as a temporary administrative division similar to Berlin, although Germany's split only occurred in 1949. The figurative wall dividing Korea became permanent as Russo-American relations quickly degraded following the collapse of the "Big Three" alliance. The United Nations persisted efforts to establish a unified government alongside nationwide elections, but in the end all went to naught as disagreements between the two superpowers lead the plans to fall through.

By 1948, two nations had emerged. On the Soviet side, The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) spearheaded by the "immortal deity" Kim Il-Sung, with the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established under Syngman Rhee. Both governments claimed legitimacy over the other, with both leaders being extremely politically repressive.

North Korea's Invasion and the United Nations' Response

The Korean steam kettle finally blew on the 25th of June 1950, as a slew North Korean troops suddenly crossed the 38th parallel unprompted and without any signs of planning by South Korean intelligence, initiating the mass-scale invasion of South Korea. Backed and armed by the USSR, it didn't take long for the DPRK's military to dominate the South's underprepared defensive forces and capture Seoul with great speed. The invasion marks the first Cold War conflict, with nations across the globe stating it as a grave violation of international peace and security.

The United Nations Security Council acted swiftly, adopting resolution 82 and 83. This was largely possible without Soviet VETO due to the fact that at the time, the USSR had initiated their temporary boycott of the council. Both resolutions condemned the invasion and urged Member States to assist South Korea against the aggressive North. Soon after, a United Nations Command was established by the United States under UNSC Resolution 84, formally congregating a military force meant to assist South Korea.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
August 1945	Korea is temporarily divided along the 38th Parallel following Japan's surrender
December 1945	Moscow Conference falls through due to disagreements
1947	The United Nations takes into consideration the issue of the Korean parallel
May 1948	Elections are held in the US controlled southern Korea, supervised by the UN
August 1948	Syngman Rhee becomes the leader of the Republic of Korea
September 1948	The Democratic Republic of Korea soon emerges after, lead by Kim Il-Sung.
1948-1950	Clashes along the 38th parallel occur between South and North Korean forces
March 1950	Kim Il-sung gains the favour of the USSR and China regarding the DPRK's claim over the ROK
25 June 1950	North Korea launches their surprise attack against South Korea, beginning their invasion
27 June 1950	The United Nations adopt Resolution 83 which "strongly recommend" assistance to South Korea

28 June 1950	With South Korean troops heavily overwhelmed, the North Korean army captures the capital Seoul
7 July 1950	United Nations Command is established, although no plans are made for a formal deployment into South Korea

Major parties involved:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea): North Korea commenced the invasion with the objective of unifying Korea under a communist government. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea obtained military and political backing from the Soviet Union, and later from China.

Republic of Korea (South Korea): South Korea, led by President Syngman Rhee, is defending itself against the North Korean invasion. Since the outbreak of hostilities, South Korean forces have suffered significant territorial losses and have relied increasingly on international support. The Republic of Korea seeks military assistance, protection of its sovereignty, and the restoration of its territorial integrity.

United States of America: The United States is recognized as the primary supporter of South Korea, playing a crucial role in facilitating military aid through the United Nations. The US views the invasion as a threat to international security and a challenge to the collective security system set up by the UN.

Soviet Union: The Soviet Union acts as North Korea's main international supporter, offering political support, military assets, and training. Despite the USSR's decision to abstain from Security Council meetings at the beginning of the conflict because of its boycott related to Chinese representation, it continues to be an essential player in the crisis.

United Nations Command (UNC): Established via Resolution 84, the UNC was mainly tasked with the coordination of military forces by multiple Member States to aid South Korea. Despite the fact that they are led by the United States, the Command operates under the authorization of the UN.

People's Republic of China: As of July 7th, 1950, China has not yet engaged in the war, but it continues to be a significant influence in the region. Chinese authorities are attentively observing the developments on the Korean Peninsula, driven by worries

regarding their national security and the potential for foreign troops nearing their borders. The decisions that China takes in the future may greatly affect the outcomes of the conflict.

Relevant UN treaties, resolutions, and reports:

United Nations Security Council Resolution 82 (1950): Condemned North Korea's invasion of South Korea and demanded immediate withdrawal.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 83 (1950): Recommended that UN member states provide military assistance to South Korea.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 84 (1950): Established a unified United Nations Command under US leadership.

Previous attempts to solve the issue:

The Moscow Conference (December 1945): The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met to discuss the future of Korea. They agreed to establish a joint US-Soviet commission to assist in forming a unified provisional Korean government, followed by a proposed four-power trusteeship for up to five years.

United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK) (1948): Established to oversee the elections in Korea, they additionally provided reports on Korean political and social developments before the outbreak of war.

Possible solutions:

Establishing a Ceasefire: Ending fighting between the two nations would effectively end the war, with the possibility of an international monitoring body being established to reduce the chances of conflict.

Preventing Superpower Escalation: Creating measures to ensure powerful nations on both sides of the ideological proxy war spectrum limit their ability to intervene reduces the risk of escalating the conflict into a larger scale.

Promoting Stability: Diplomatic channels can be established in key military chokepoints in order to build trust between the two nations, paving the way to potential peace talks.

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