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Historical Security Council (1949)

The conflict in the Korean Peninsula



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Introduction

The Security Council (SC) is a United Nations (UN) body, which upholds the tasks of securing International Peace and Security. Because of the nature of some of the discussions the Security Council deals with, it is the only UN Body, which can authorize military action and pass binding resolutions to specific member states with armed consequences. The member states of the previous UN Security Council (UNSC) session were: Argentina, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Norway, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the 5 permanent (P5) members: United States of America, United Kingdom of Great Britain, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China and France. The United Nations as a whole was quite new at the time of the conflicts in the Korean Peninsula and it was actually one of the first disputes that was discussed in the UNSC. The UNSC made a great platform for discussion between different member states involved in the conflict, and made the conflict oversee able, understandable and allowed for the other member states present to influence and discuss several matters and their opinions within the conflicts of the Korean Peninsula. The only problem the SC suffered was the harsh use of VETO rights by the P5 nations (especially the Soviet Union) when it came to attempting to solve the problems of the conflicts in the Korean Peninsula. The Security Council's main goal is to achieve peace through the resolutions it passes and thus will only turn to militaristic resolutions if all else fails.

The Korean Peninsula is coastal area, which spreads 1,100 km out of the Asian mainland. The Korean Peninsula shares borders with China to the northwest and the Soviet Union to the northeast. Korea was occupied by Japan from 1910 until the closing of WWII. August 25th 1945, The Soviet Union, in agreement with the United States of America, declared war on Japan, and seized control of the northern portion of Korea (down to the longitude known as the 38th parallel). Subsequently, American forces moved in and seized the remaining southern portion of Korea. Japan soon thereafter surrendered. 'North' Korea was now under rule of the USSR in coalition with China and was to set up a government body to regulate the public masses. The United States was to do the same with 'South'



Korea. Opposing sides recognized neither government. South Korea's population in January of 1949 is 20,500,000 people and that of North Korea at 25,200,000 people. Tensions between the two parties reached an all time high. American held its ground in South Korea to avoid the spread of Communism throughout East Asia and to ensure they would have a position at the table if the question of Export of cheap natural minerals and metals came into play. The South Korean government declared itself independent of the United States Military. The North Korean government did not do the same to the USSR; the Soviet Union aided North Korea build up its military. The South Korean state was capitalist economic system, which was closely based off that of the Americans. North Korea was a clearly communist state, remaining a closely tied with the Soviet Union. The USSR was the main source of Military and political advice to the North who had in the end of 1948, built up a very large military force in compared in manpower to that of the South. The United Nations had not involved itself in the matter of the Korean Peninsula anymore than the sponsoring of the Democratic elections in the newly founded Republic of Korea.



Figure 1 Showing the presence of nations involved in the conflict and which side they supported

Korea and the 38th parallel. Digital image. Shmoop. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.shmoop.com/korean-war/timeline.html>>.

Definition of Key Terms

Coalition

A temporary Alliance between nations to be able to carry out joint action.

Communism

Communism is an economic ideology in which everything is distributed equally and state controlled, “A system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed” (Miriam Webster)

Capitalism

Capitalism is economic ideology where the consumer and producer drive the economy; “every man for themselves” applies.

General Overview

Korea was assigned an American Political advisor duped (POLAD). David E. Mark attained this role from 1946 until 1949. He described multiple times that there were failed attempts at unification of Korea but all of these failed due to the rising tensions between the two states backing either side (the United States in the South and The Soviet Union in the North) failing to come to agreements with each other’s terms and conditions of Korean Unification, these tensions were only further escalated by the start of the Cold War and the relations between the USA and the USSR already being weak.

The Instalment of Democracy & a new leader in South Korea

Korea had been under the rule of Japanese Empire from 1910 to 1945, this meant that the people of Korea had been exposed to the idea that democracy was nominal and ineffective as the Japanese simply did not care for it. During the previous years, Japan had turned into much of a Militaristic Dictatorship, to expect the Koreans accept the new rule and the newly installed democracy was near to impossible.

The American military government that had ruled over South Korea in the years following its seizure from Japan, installed a new man as South Korea’s leading figure, as the American regime and forces were planning to pull out of South Korea and had publicly announced this by 1948. The man who became the new leader through democratic elections, which took place in Seoul on August 15th, 1948, Syngman Rhee, was elected and inaugurated that same day. Now as the new President of South Korea, he promised a crackdown on anything non-democratic and anti-capitalist.

Syngman Rhee



Syngman Rhee was a Korean citizen who fled in 1904. Rhee was in heavy opposition of the Korean regime that was in place at the time. In 1904 he fled to the United States. While in the United States he attended the University of George Washington, Harvard and Princeton. When he returned to Korea in 1910, he was totally opposed to Japanese regime, which was ruling over Korea at the time. After leading his own little revolt he fled once again, this time to Hawaii in 1912, lots of Koreans at the time had done the same. In 1919, still living in Hawaii, he was appointed the President of the Korean government in exile. Although his power did not reach to any more than all the Koreans in Hawaii, but this period did allow him to build strong connections with some of the top American politicians. In 1946, a year after the seizure of Korea by the USSR and the US, Rhee returned to his home country, now dubbed South Korea; Rhee soon became chairman of the former government in South Korea and the Liberals Party. On the 15th of August, 1948 South Korea became the Republic of Korea and Rhee was democratically elected as its President.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), led by Joseph Stalin was a communist state. In 1945, in agreement with the United States and the United Nations seized control of Korea above the 38th Parallel. At the time the USSR had started working in close relations with their neighbour sister communist state of the Soviet China. The USSR had imagined the future for Korea to be Communist and unified, making both above and under the 38th parallel a Soviet Korea. Tensions between the United States and The Soviet Union were high since the outbreak of the Cold War.

The United States of America (USA/US)

The United States of America was democratic nation, which was strongly capitalist. Its President at the time was Harry Truman. In 1945, American forces backed by United Nations members seized control of the Southern half of the Korean Peninsula (South of the 38th Parallel) from the Japanese. The United States saw Korea's future to be capitalist, although they were for unification of the two Korea's the United States still wanted to make sure that they had a place at the table when it came splitting the natural resource collection and export of the Korean Peninsula's rich natural reserves.

Timeline of Events



Date	Description
29 th August 1910	Japanese Empire seizes control of the Korean Peninsula after defeating the Russian Empire in the Sino-Japanese war.
1917 – 1922	Russian Empire falls and civil war breaks out. 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is created and led by a one party government. This party was the Bolsheviks who were led by Joseph Stalin.
August 15 th 1945	<p>Japan surrenders to the United States and the other Allied forces, marking the end of World War 2. One of the consequences of losing the war is; Japan was forced to forfeit Korea to the Allied forces.</p> <p>USUSSR commission on Korea is created to discuss what will happen to the future of Korea.</p>
6 th September	USUSSR commission on Korea is dismembered as coming to a consensus over Korea seems near to impossible with Cold War tensions escalating and neither side being able to come to agreement over course of action or unification of Korea as a whole.
10 th May 1948	The United Nations sponsors the democratic elections taking place in South Korea.
15 th August 1948	South Korea is renamed 'Republic of Korea' with Syngman Rhee as its President. The United States publicly announce the removal of their military government and the systematic removal of their troops from South Korea to be done early 1949.
9 th September 1949	North Korea is renamed the 'People's Republic of Korea'. Kim Il Sun is appointed as its Divine leader.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

None are present so far on the subject of Korea, the occupation of Korea by Japan or anything of this nature.

Possible Solutions

The conflicts in the Korean Peninsula stem from both sides, two super powers each backing a single side and not willing to work together mainly because of political tensions which both nations are dealing with in different parts of the world. The United States placed themselves in the Southern half of the Peninsula. The USSR in the North. The most effective solution to the problem would be if both parties came together and tried to work with each other and create compromises which both sides could sustain and thus creating one unified Korea, this however has been proven difficult in the past since the fight for and against communism is so heavily indented in both sides' political agenda.

If achievement of total unity in Korea seems to difficult to manage, the possibility to make both nations into a form of provinces ruled over by a type of Federal government with equal representation could be attempted. To do so changes are required and compromises will need to be made by both sides however these compromises would not need to be as big as those that would have to be implemented in order to install total unification.

If both the US and USSR pull out of the region and remove all support, it would cause a power vacuum and would leave Korea to have to fend for itself, possibly forcing the North and South to work together. This would leave the nation venerable to foreign invasion however if there were such a case, it would promote unification and working together of both sides even more.

Alternately another solution to the problem could be a creation of a central military force for all of Korea. This means that no one half possess its own military structure and therefore has no commanding authority or threat ability over the other. The lack of UN involvement is another point that could be addressed. The UN being newly born straight after the end of the Second World War could play a key role in the de-escalation of the matter in the Korean Peninsula. The UN holds the right to make resolutions in the Security Council in which they can call upon nations to slow down the production of arms or processes that could potentially lead to the creation of arms. If the United Nations Security Council calls upon both nations and their allied nations (The USA and the USSR) to reduce their arms creation rate it could cause a de-escalation in political tensions in the region and maybe dig future channels for more discussions on peaceful resolutions in the Korean Peninsula.

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