



Research Report

General Assembly 4

Promoting an end to the DMZ in the
Korean Peninsula

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Introduction

Until August 15th 1945, the Korean Peninsula was a united country. After the second World War at the Potsdam convention, the nation was divided into a northern and southern region alongside the 38th northern parallel, also known as the demilitarised zone (DMZ). During the Korean war which started in 1950 the border shifted immensely. Once the conflict was resolved by a cease fire the border returned to the DMZ. Important to note is that it was a cease fire the nations decided upon and not a full peace treaty; the fighting may have ended in 1953 but the Korean War is officially still ongoing.

At the Potsdam convention it was decided to create a mandate situation on the peninsula until the country returned to a stable state where they could form their own government. Stalin and Truman took the wheel and spun it another way. They granted the United States custody of the south, and the USSR of the north. Quickly the occupying countries implemented their economic and political system, and appointed presidents. The divide between North- and South Korea grew until the nations were polar opposites. The border that runs between them is the most heavily guarded in the world, even in today's day and age. As the humanitarian and political crisis worsens to the north the need for migration is rapidly increasing on the Korean peninsula. Border conflicts and the ongoing cease fire have forced the prosperous South Korea to remain a war economy, and the north to invest in military force instead of supporting their citizens. The need for an open border between the north and the south has never been greater than as of now.

Definition of Key Terms

Capitalism / Communism

Capitalism is an economic system of a free market where the supply and demand determine the produce. Communism is a political system which entails an economic model of a controlled market where the government decides what quantity of each product is produced.

Cease fire

A temporary suspension of fighting in an armed conflict. It is an agreement between the opposing parties to stop fighting during a war. It is oftentimes used as a way to find a lasting agreement to make an end to the conflict. Another word for a cease fire is a truce. The Korean peninsula has been in an active cease fire since 1953.

DMZ

Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) is a border 250 km long and 4 km wide separating South Korea and North Korea. It is meant to be a demilitarised zone where military activity and presence is very limited but instead is an example of one the most protected borders in the world.

Totalitarian regime / democratic regime

Totalitarianism is a political regime which entails no political opponents and prosecution of any on a law basis; usually it is run by a dictatorship. A dictatorship is a personalised regime of a single person which is idealised on a God-like level. Totalitarianism also calls for a full mobilisation of all citizens with an active process of celebrating and praising the regime as silence and or inactivity is interpreted as protest and is prosecuted. Democratic regime of free speech and political competition, the government is controlled by the public's opinion.

United Nations

The United Nations (or the UN) is an Inter-Governmental Organisation that includes all states and determines what is considered a state or not. It is a platform for states to discuss international issues and create solutions in the form of resolutions.

General Overview

The Korean peninsula is no stranger to foreign intruders. Throughout history, countries like China and Japan have fought over the territory. After various wars and conflicts, the Korean Empire was declared in 1897. In 1910, Japan annexed the region with the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty. This treaty was not officially recognised by the Koreans, but the Japanese insisted on the legality of the treaty until 1965. In 1945 the Japanese were defeated by the allied forces. During the 35 years, the Japanese were in charge of the region. They had completely oppressed Korean culture. The Korean language was banned, the currency was abolished and the economy was left in ruins. During the Second World War, the Allied forces decided Korea was too unstable to continue on their own. A solution was created, but was simply far from thought out. Being occupied with the division of Germany and the rising tension in Israel, the division of the Korean Peninsula was not on anyone's priority list. At the Cairo Convention on the 22nd of August 1943, the United States, the United Kingdom and China agreed Korea should become a stable and independent country after years of oppression and occupation. However, after the war ended the country was divided between the Soviets and the Americans. The Provincial Government of Korea was ignored as the US believed them to be communists. The division would end once the Allied forces found an adequate government for the entire peninsula. An

agreement of the sort never came. Both the North and the South got new presidents who never recognised the DMZ as a permanent or legitimate border; a territorial conflict was bound to break out.

First Korean War (1950-1953)

In 1950 the North invaded the South. The North saw victory as they occupied nearly the entire peninsula. Once nearly all of Korea had been annexed by the North, the United States and United Nations blue helmets were brought to Korea to support the South in their conflict. It was the first time in history the UN army was put to use.

Korean War

1950. 6. 25: Outbreak of the Korean War



1950. 8-9: Nakdonggang River Defense Line and Operation Chromite



1950. 10-12: Advance to the North of South Korean and UN forces



1953. 7. 27: The Truce



Institute for Military History, Ministry of National Defence (2013)

A truce was established in 1953, once again dividing the country through the middle on roughly the 38th northern parallel. This is precisely when the Demilitarised Zone was established with the main purpose to prevent future invasions and serve as a buffer zone between the nations. A peace agreement was never reached, making the Korean war a frozen conflict.

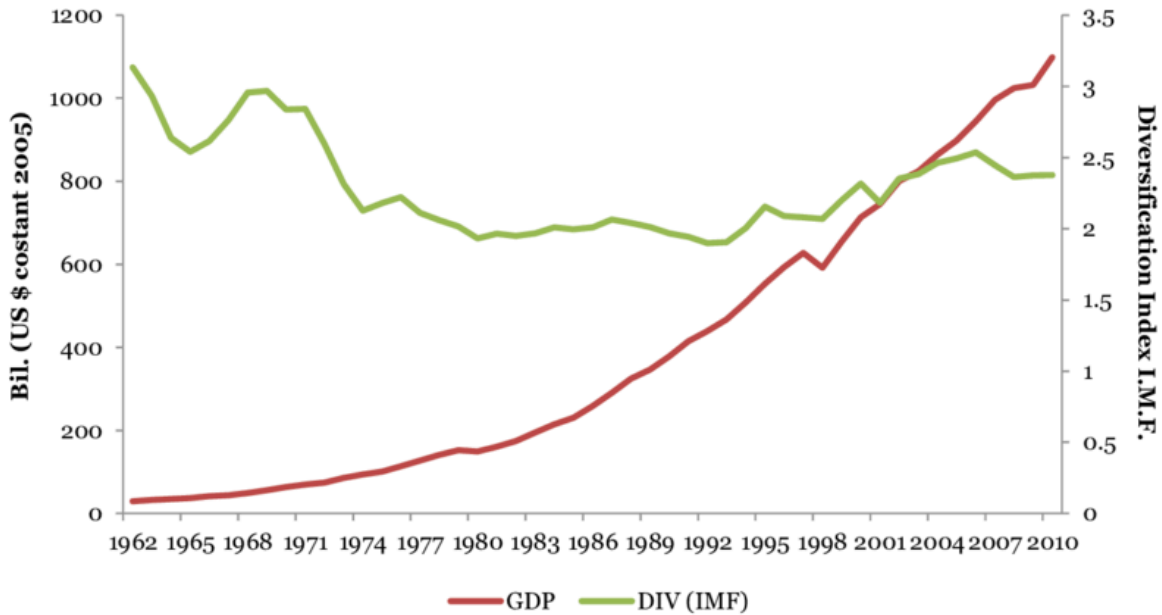
The Korean DMZ conflict (1966-1969)

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In the ceasefire of 1950 it was agreed either parties were allowed to possess nuclear weapons. However, the United States wished to have a nuclear basis set up to the South. They abolished article 13 of the treaty and went on with their nuclear expansion on the peninsula. As a response the North expanded in the nuclear field themselves. This resulted in tensions within the already tense relationship of the nations, which ended with North Korean forces entering the South once again in 1966. The main goal was to ambush South Korean and American settlements around the DMZ. No large-scale battles were fought during this period and after 3 years the military disputes at the border decreased.

Modern day Korea

In the world of today, the contrasts between North and South Korea could not be more striking. Despite having been a poor nation, the economy of South Korea has seen economic massive growth, making the country the 10th biggest economy by GDP worldwide. With a vibrant culture filled with K-pop, modern cities and a capitalist system, South Korea has found their place on the world stage.



The situation to the North however is quite different. As the country has nearly no trading partners besides Russia and China, the DPRK is the 135th economy in regards to GDP. The communist totalitarian regime of the Kim family has made all immigration illegal and near impossible. Any North Korean citizen who attempts to cross the DMZ is brought to a labour camp or shot on sight. Industrialisation is far from developed and the country has been in a state of famine since 1994. All western media and news have been banned, just like the internet. The citizens of North Korea are struggling as the strict laws of the supreme leaders make life on the northern end of the peninsula more restricted each day.

Opening up the DMZ

Opening up the border between the strikingly contrasting nations could ensure a variety of developments. The trading options for both nations would increase, making the South accessible by land, and granting the North access to the blooming industry of the South. It would also allow the people of Korea interaction, creating opportunities for ancient Korean culture to be preserved

and honoured. The demilitarisation could benefit the economic situation, as more money can be invested into the development of the nations instead of the army and military forces at the border. The opening up of the DMZ would allow the Korean nations to resolve the ongoing conflict and to reunite the peninsula after all.

However, the nations would need to see benefits in doing so. South Korea has nearly no economic benefit to be gained from the North. To open up the DMZ would only be favourable to decrease the politician tensions. The North wishes to keep their citizens loyal to the Kim dynasty, and censure all South Korean influences. The only benefit they would want to achieve from resolving conflict is economic growth.

Opening up the border would also put the nations at risk of another conflict or continuation of the Korean War. With the North possessing nuclear weapons, this is a risk the South isn't willing to take, and no nation in the world is willing to support.

Timeline of Key Events

1894-1895 The First China-Japan war A war between the Qing dynasty and the Japanese emperor about influential claims on Korea.

1897 The Korean Empire The Korean empire was declared and stood until the annexation of the Japanese in 1910.

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1910-1945 Japanese annexation Between 1910 and 1945 the Korean peninsula was under Japanese rule.

22nd of August 1943 Cairo Convention The US, UK and China agreed Korea should be a united independent country after WWII.

9th of September 1948 The establishment of North Korea The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) also known as North Korea was established and Kim Il-sung was elected as the first president.

1950-1953 The First Korean War

27th of July 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement The Korean Armistice Agreement is a treaty signed by the military representatives of the USA, China, North Korea and South Korea. The treaty forces Korea to remain in a cease fire until a further agreement is reached.

1966-1969 The Korean DMZ conflict

Stakeholders

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)

DPRK is a totalitarian communist regime that is a direct side in the DMZ conflict. It is crucial to work together with the DPRK on the demilitarisation of the border and create a new policy for border crossing as the current policies in place result in civilian deaths and torture conducted by the said DPRK government.

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Republic of Korea (South Korea)

The Republic of Korea is a democratic capitalistic state on the other side of the DMZ conflict. The state is crucial to work with on the demilitarisation of borders. The Republic of Korea has already been seen making efforts towards the peaceful unification of states however, it does view the Korean peninsula as fully under the control of the Republic of Korea with a rebellious state.

United Social Soviet Republics (USSR) / Russian Federation (Russia)

USSR played a crucial role in the historic conflict as it was one of the hegemonic states of the region dictating a proxy war on the Korean peninsula supporting the DPRK. The early totalitarian communist regime was also established with strong support from the USSR both financially and militarily. The successor of the USSR - Russia still plays a crucial role in the conflict today as it strategically maintains a strong influence in the region keeping close diplomatic and military relationships with DPRK remaining one of the only allies of the regime.

United States of America (USA)

The USA is a crucial actor historically and modernly in the DMZ conflict. The USA help its proxy war against its biggest competitor for global dominance at the time - the USSR, in the Korean Peninsula. Supporting South Korea militarily back then, the US played a crucial role in the development of South Korea after the establishment of the militarised border. The US was one of the biggest foreign investors in Korean capitalist development which contributed to South Korean rise both economically and politically. The US stays a close ally to today's South Korea

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and is highly interested in the demilitarisation of the border as North Korean nuclear arsenal poses a security threat to the United States.

Japan

Japan is generally involved in the region's politics as North Korea's nuclear program poses a direct threat to Japan's sovereignty and security. It is a key ally of South Korea in the region a state that is highly interested in the demilitarisation of the border between North and South Korea.

China

China remains the closest ally to North Korea economically and militarily. As China also seeks the place of a global hegemonic power it is interested in the stability of the region while maintaining DPRK as a buffer between China and South Korea for the United States. China globally often plays the role of a mediator between two conflicting parties.

IGOs

The United Nations has been involved in the Korean War providing peacekeepers and humanitarian aid. In the modern day, the UN has been involved in imposing economic sanctions on the DPRK. Multiple UN agencies are working on enforcing stability in the region and demilitarising the border.

Possible Solutions

- **Peace treaty negotiations** - encouraging diplomatic relations and direct talks between two rival states. Using neutral states such as Switzerland would ensure the occurrence of discussion between states with a bystander present; the states would have a place to discuss their positional differences in a non - non-threatening environment.
- **Gradual demilitarisation** - as the border has a high militarisation level from both sides, a physical presence of troops and military equipment already withholds the process of solving the dispute. The gradual demilitarisation of the border would give a better opportunity for mutual cooperation and the eventual end of the Korean War.
- **Confidence-building measures** - improving the relationship between the cultures and building up the trust of the people in each other with their vastly different cultures. Implementing confidence-building measures can help improve the mindset of people from hostile to welcoming in hopes of influencing the regimes into cooperation.
- **Family reunification programs** - families get separated both historically after the war and modernly as someone might cross the border and leave their family behind. A reunification of said families would help with the interconnectedness of North and South Korea culturally and psychologically for the population.
- **Student exchange** - exchanging students via schools and universities could help the interconnectedness of the states. The younger generation is going to grow up with a picture of a “rival” state from personal experience which can help motivate them to change the system and unite/connect the Korea peninsula.

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