

KOREAN WAR

A Divided Nation, a Divided World.



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Director's Letter

Greetings, delegates!

Welcome to the United Nations Security Council, 1951 at RGSSMUN VI! My name is Luca Rampersad, and it is a true pleasure to serve as your Chair. A little about me: I am a RGSSMUN alumnus and former club President, having competed from 2018 to 2022. I am now in the third year of my H.B.A. program in International Relations and Political Science at the University of Toronto. I am a researcher at UofT's BRICS and G7 Research Groups and a news contributor at The St. Antony's International Review, the University of Oxford's student international relations journal. I am also the Editor-in-Chief of the Attaché Journal of International Affairs, the University of Toronto's undergraduate academic journal of international relations.

As a staffer, the Security Council was always the one that got away for me — I've written two of the RGSSMUN UNSC background guides, and wasn't able to Chair either — so this is a nice full-circle moment for me! This committee, authored by your fantastic Secretary-General, will challenge and intrigue you. History tells us that the United Nations' first years were the most critical in defining its place in global politics. The Korean War was uniquely momentous and precedent-setting. This committee invites and challenges you to chart a new course for the UNSC, and for the international community, by addressing unanswered questions in the wake of the UN's heavy involvement in Korea. I look forward to seeing how you attempt to handle the political and global security implications of the Korean War, establishing the UNSC's primacy in global governance during a pivotal moment in history!

I want to thank the Secretariat and Ms. Morris for extending me yet another kind invitation to staff at RGSSMUN. I would also like to thank Michelle Wong, your Vice-Chair and one of my best friends, for sharing the day with me. I would be remiss not to mention that your Secretary-General, Ray Jou, authored this background guide on top of their other responsibilities for this conference; as someone who's fairly well-acquainted with what running RGSSMUN entails, that's very impressive and they have my sincere gratitude. And of course, I thank you, delegates, for what I am sure will be a fascinating debate.

I hope your experience at RGSSMUN VI will inspire within you the same passion that carried me through seven years in and around this sport (yes, MUN is a sport, and you can fight me on that). You can reach me at luca.rampersad@gmail.com if you need anything before conference day. I wish you all the very best of luck in your research, and I'll see you in committee!

Cheers,

Luca Rampersad | Chair, UNSC 1951

RGSSMUN VI

Equity message

RGSSMUNVI is dedicated to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment for debates. We understand that specific topics within the wide range of debate cover sensitive issues regarding the real world. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned positions equitably whilst communicating with staff and other representatives and responding to opposing viewpoints that others may voice.

This specific background guide contains, including but not limited to, topics pertaining to violence, fascism, humanitarian crises, human rights and war. We understand that these topics may distress some delegates, and while minimal, they should be only utilized as a point of discussion.

If, at any point in committee, a delegate feels uncomfortable with topics being discussed, the delegate is encouraged to reach out to their Chairs, Crisis Directors, and RGSSMUNVI's equity director.

RGSSMUNVI expects all delegates to conduct themselves in a respectful manner, keeping consideration towards others' boundaries. Debate should be productive, and respectful. At no point in time should delegates feel personally attacked, or unsafe. We want all delegates at RGSSMUNVI to feel safe and comfortable during the committee.

If a delegate breaches the equity terms they may be subjected to disciplinary action, disqualification or further disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the Equity Director.

If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts at any point, please do email the Director of Equity, Jayin Hindocha at equity@rgssmunvi.com, or submit the Equity Form

(<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScRcw5hJ0JzEiNBeMJ9VaCQZwKTwnBmIgArCUcxie9t9QrymA/viewform?usp=dialog>)

Introduction

The UNSC is at one of its most divisive times in history.

Two rival powers, North and South Korea, are once again engaged in a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. What was once contained within a country is now broadcast globally. The United States and Russia, fresh from the Cold War, both took an interest in this conflict and began to influence opposing sides.

Among century-old rivalries, global mega powers, and the lives of many at risk, time is of the essence. It is up to the delegates to rewrite history, restructure the UNSC, and try to unite a divided world.

August 27, 1950

Letter from Filipov [Stalin] to Soviet Ambassador in Prague, conveying message to CSSR leader Klement Gottwald

[START OF TRANSCRIPT]

Pass Gottwald the following message orally. Put it in writing if he so requests.

“We view the issue of the Soviet Union's withdrawal from the Security Council on 27 June and the events which unfolded afterwards somewhat differently from Comrade Gottwald.

We left the Security Council for four reasons: first, to demonstrate solidarity of the Soviet Union with the new China.

Second, to underscore the foolishness and idiocy of the United States policy of recognizing the Guomindang puppet in the Security Council as the representative of China and not wanting to admit the genuine representative of China to the Security Council; third, to render decisions of the Security Council illegitimate by virtue of the absence of representatives of two great powers; fourth, to give the American government a free hand and give it an opportunity to commit more

foolishness using a majority in the Security Council so that public opinion can see the true face of the American government.

I believe that we have achieved all of these goals.

Following our withdrawal from the Security Council, America became entangled in a military intervention in Korea and is now squandering its military prestige and moral authority. Few honest people can now doubt that America is now acting as an aggressor and tyrant in Korea and that it is not as militarily powerful as it claims to be. In addition, it is clear that the United States of America is presently distracted from Europe in the Far East. Does it not give us an advantage in the global balance of power? It undoubtedly does.

Let us suppose that American government continues to be tied down in the Far East and also pulls China into the struggle for the freedom of Korea and its own independence. What might come of this?

First, America, like any other country, cannot cope with China, a country with such large armed forces at the ready. Thus, America would overextend itself in this struggle. Second, having overextended itself in this matter, America would be incapable of a third world war in the near future.

Therefore, a third world war would be postponed for an indeterminate period, which would provide the time necessary to strengthen socialism in Europe, not to mention that the struggle between America and China would revolutionize the entire Far East. Does all this not give us an advantage from the perspective of the global balance of power? It unquestionably does.

As you can see, the question of whether or not the Soviet Union participates in the Security Council is not as simple as it might appear at first glance.

By virtue of all this, we cannot say that “the democratic camp has no need to leave the Security Council.” Whether we leave or stay depends on the circumstances. We might leave the Security Council again and come back once again, depending on the international situation.

One might ask why we have now returned to the Security Council. We have returned to continue exposing the aggressive policy of the American government and to prevent it from using the flag of the Security Council as a smokescreen for its aggression. Now that America has become aggressively involved in Korea, it will be very easy to achieve this goal while in the Security Council. I think that this is clear and needs no further explanation.

FILIPPOV [Stalin]

27 August 1950

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

Specialized Procedures

The United Nations Security Council was first established in 1945 after the second world war, with the goal of establishing peace and security worldwide. The council consists of 15 member states, with 5 countries in permanent member roles (China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

The Veto

Given to the five permanent member states of the UNSC, veto power allows for the state to prevent a resolution from passing. If any one of the five permanent members votes against a UNSC resolution, the resolution will fail no matter how many other states approve of the paper.

Topic I: Handling the Korean War Conflict

(3 pgs)

“The time has come to cut out once and for all the cancer of imperialist aggression, the malignant growth artificially grown within the bosom of our country by the world communists.”

- Rhee

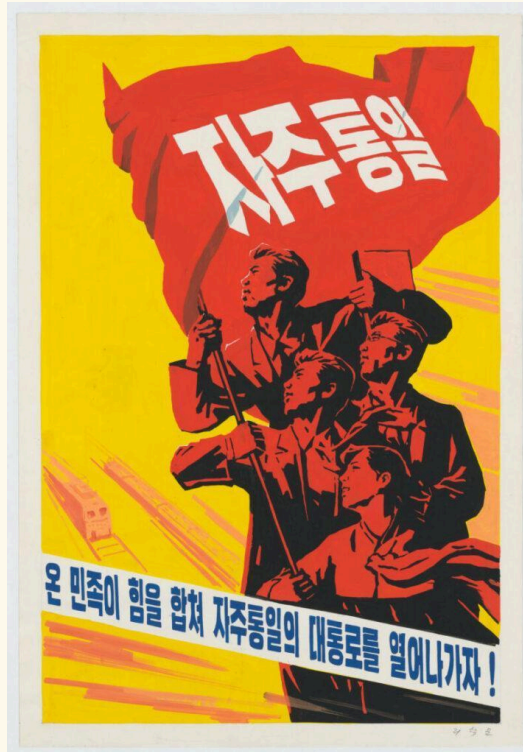
(The President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to President Truman 1)

Conflict Background

Since 1910, a unified Korea has been under Japanese occupation. This all changed at the end of WWII, and with a projected Allied victory in the war, the subject of Korea was brought up during the Yalta Conference of February 1945. The Soviet Union, having a shared border with Korea and wanting more power, decided to go to war with Japan to support a trusteeship system along with the United States. When Japan is defeated, Korea will be split: the United States and the Soviet Union will each hold a trusteeship of one-half of the country, each divided across the 38th parallel. This was all intended to reunite the country after the war... which did not occur.

While negotiations did occur between the Soviet Union and the United States to reunite Korea, their poor relations deteriorating further with the Cold War did not help the situation; no agreement was ever made, and no provisional government was formed. This led to the two sides developing separate governments, with the differing politics of the opposing mega powers evident in the systems. The UN approved and supervised the elections of South Korea in May 1948, which led to the formation of North Korea in September 1948, which the Soviet Union sponsored. Both governments sought to gain back control of both sides of Korea.

The general sentiment at the time was that the North Korean government wanted to “liberate” the South Koreans for a destined unification, and they took the first steps in the direction of war.



North Korean Propaganda Poster

"Self-determined Unification: The [Korean] Minjok shall unite the power to open the grand path toward self-determined unification!"

On June 25, 1950, around 100,000 North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel. This would trigger the start of the official Korean War. The South Korean troops retreat slightly but still maintain their defences.



Photo of the 38th Parallel

Over the next couple of years, there would be a series of exchanges in territory, borders, and troops.

During this conflict, on June 27, 1950, the UNSC adopted Resolution 83, encouraging member states to assist the Republic of Korea. There was little opposition, as the Soviet Union boycotted the UNSC at the time.

On June 28, just the next day, Seoul fell under North Korean control. Even with official UN intervention on the South Korean side, controlled land shrunk dramatically, leaving everything hanging on who controls Pusan's key port. North Korean forces do reach the "Pusan Perimeter," but they are incredibly weak and lacking in supplies.

Seoul was back under South Korean control on September 15, 1950, when a US team called "X Corps," led by U.S. Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond and in partnership with a UN Commander, landed behind enemy lines at Inch'ŏn.

With North Korean troops weakened, UN troops delved into North Korean territory and approached the Yalu River. They are met with fatal resistance from the Chinese People's Volunteers Force (CPVF), and the UN forces are significantly wounded. By December 6, 1950, the U.S. Marines arrived at the port of Hŭngnam to fight their way out but were again met by two Chinese armies, leaving the American forces pushed out of the enemy territory. But, 80,000 Chinese troops were killed or wounded. The CPVF is left unable to fight for months.

However, on January 4, 1951, the tides changed, and Chinese and North Korean forces recaptured Seoul, setting a decisive stage for the meeting of UNSC 1951.



Pittsburgh Press on the Communist Recapture of Seoul

Main Military Forces:

For North Korea:

- Soviet Union (~500,000 people)
 - Soviet Union's Army (~100,000 people)
 - PVO Troops (~70,000 people)
 - Medical Units from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania
- Chinese Troops (~900,000 people)
 - CPVF Ninth Army Group
- North Korean (~200,000 people)
 - Troops

For South Korea:

- United States Military (~500,000 people)
 - Navy

- Air Force
- United Nations Troops (~1,000 people)
 - Army
 - Air Force
- Australia (~4,000 people)
 - Royal Australian Air Force - 77 Squadron
 - Royal Australian Navy (RAN)
- South Korean (~100,000 people)
 - Troops

Current situation

The Chinese and North Korean forces just recaptured Seoul once again, a significant setback for South Korean and United Nations forces. Armies on both sides have faced devastating casualties from local civilians and troops, resulting in immense losses for global forces. Most UN military actions seem to be spearheaded by the United States. While they have gained much more control in global action, this opened the door to criticism when the plans go awry and criticism of the UNSC when an international organization seems controlled by a nation. Many people count on the UNSC to resolve this conflict quickly while maintaining fragile global relations.

Guiding questions:

1. Diplomatic Solutions

What diplomatic measures can the international community take to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and how can dialogue between North and South Korea be effectively facilitated to lead to sustainable peace?

2. Humanitarian Concerns

How can the UN and its member states address the humanitarian needs of civilians affected by the Korean War, including issues related to refugees, human rights violations, and the provision of essential services?

3. Role of Major Powers

What role should significant powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia, play in

resolving the Korean conflict, and how can their interests be balanced to foster a cooperative rather than confrontational approach to peace-building efforts?

Topic II: Internal Conflicts and Cold War Aftershocks

"If we let Korea down, the Soviet[s] will keep right on going and swallow up one [place] after another." - Truman, 1950

"It is clear that the United States of America is presently distracted from Europe in the Far East. Does it not give us an advantage in the global balance of power? It undoubtedly does. - Stalin, 1950

The Korean War was represented as a direct parallel to the Cold War by media, with many Western newspapers framing it as so: a win against the South Koreans is a win against the Soviet Union:



San Francisco Chronicle on Korean War (See "Reds Checked")



The Korean Times on Korean War (See "Opposes Employment of Reds")

This has led to stark parallels and consequences tying the two conflicts together-- for better or for worse.

History of the Cold War

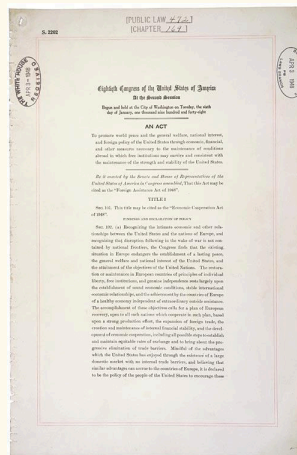
The Cold War, emerging after the Second World War, represents a period of geopolitical tension primarily between the United States and its allies (representing democratic capitalism) and the Soviet Union and its satellite states (advocating for Communist ideologies). The seeds of this conflict were sown during the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences, where differing visions for post-war Europe began to surface. The ideological divide was further exacerbated by events such as the Berlin Blockade in 1948, the formation of NATO in 1949, and the subsequent Soviet efforts to spread communism globally. The years following 1945 marked an arms race, a series of proxy wars, and a pervasive fear of the spread of Communism, embodied in doctrines such as Containment and the Truman Doctrine. This ideological contest has shaped international relations and laid the groundwork for various regional conflicts, most notably in Asia.

Aftershocks of the Cold War

The Cold War's ramifications are far-reaching and multifaceted, encompassing various political, economic, and strategic dimensions.

Following World War II, the political landscape saw accelerated decolonization movements influenced by the superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The competition between these two ideologies has resulted in increased militarization of nations and instigated conflicts through interventions and support for various regimes deemed sympathetic to their perspectives.

Economically, the Cold War has generated a competitive dynamic that has redefined global trade and development patterns. The Marshall Plan, aimed at European recovery, contrasts sharply with the Soviet Union's economic strategies in Eastern Europe, such as Comecon, which sought to establish a parallel economy.



European Recovery Act/Marshall Plan (1948)

These differing economic models further entrenched divisions, influencing how nations develop and respond to crises, as many countries assess their positions within this ideological vacuum.

Cold War dynamics have also significantly altered how conflicts are handled internationally. The principle of mutual assured destruction has deterred nuclear confrontation between superpowers.

Yet, it has also fostered a culture of proxy wars where local conflicts, such as those in Korea and Vietnam, become battlegrounds for Cold War ideologies. Military aid, intervention, and diplomatic maneuvers are often crafted not solely for humanitarian outcomes but as part of a larger strategy to influence global power structures.

How does this relate to the Korean War?

The Korean War serves as a stark embodiment of the Cold War tensions, as it highlighted the battleground where ideological differences were materialized through direct conflict. The invasion of South Korea by the North, supported by Soviet and Chinese Communism, evoked a vigorous response from the United Nations, led by the United States. This situation has raised questions about the legitimacy of intervention in sovereign nations and illustrated how local conflicts can escalate into broader confrontations due to superpower involvement. The Korean War has established precedents for international intervention, shaping subsequent military and foreign policy responses, including the doctrine of collective security.

The Cold War gave the United States and the Soviet Union the keys to the world of nuclear technology, dramatically affecting how both parties interact with conflict. In 1951, the United States considered the utilization of nuclear weapons to win the Korean War. Although many allied nations disagree with this action, it is clear that the United States has a significant influence over all offensive actions taken by the UN in the Korean War and may push for nuclear weapons to become involved.

"The President wants to make it certain that there is no misinterpretation of his answers and questions at his press conference today about the use of the atom bomb. Naturally, there has been consideration of this subject since the outbreak of the hostilities in Korea, just as there is consideration of the use of all military weapons whenever our forces are in combat.

Consideration of the use of any weapon is always implicit in the very possession of that weapon."

Press Statement of the White House, 1950

Global Stances

The international response to the Korean War became polarized, reflecting the broader Cold War divisions.

On a political level, countries aligned with the West—a coalition including the United States, the United Kingdom, and various members of NATO—viewed the conflict as an essential front in the battle against Communism. They framed their involvement as a necessary measure for preserving freedom and democracy. Conversely, nations aligned with the Eastern bloc supported North Korea's actions, interpreting them as legitimate struggles against imperialism and colonialism. They raised calls for solidarity with the oppressed.

Civilian perspectives on the Korean War vary significantly based on regional and ideological affiliations. In Western nations, public opinion has generally leaned toward supporting military involvement as a deterrent against Communist aggression, albeit tempered by war fatigue from World War II. In contrast, in countries sympathetic to Communism, there is often a significant sentiment of support for North Korea, depicted as a valiant resistance against Western imperialism. Public discourse in various nations continues to grapple with the moral and ethical implications of involvement in what many view through the lens of Cold War proxy dynamics.

In conclusion, the Korean War is a critical period through which one can observe the complexities and repercussions of Cold War conflicts. The intricacies of geopolitical tensions, national interests, and ideological struggles inform our strategies, policies, and collective responses in an increasingly divided and contested global landscape.

Guiding Questions:

1. Solving Polarization of Global Powers:

How can the UNSC ameliorate growing global polarization? Should the UN be responsible for this growing trend?

2. Resolving Cold War Aftershocks:

How can a second Cold War be prevented? What should be the United States and the Soviet Union's role in the Korean War? Should megapower states be allowed to lead the charge on global issues? How can the UNSC deal with normalized military tactics such as arms races and nuclear weaponry that started during the cold war?

3. Subduing Global Outrage:

What measures can be put into place to reduce civilian outrage? How can the UNSC balance necessary political actions with opposing public opinion?

Topic III: Restructuring the UNSC

“If the United Nations yields to the forces of aggression, no nation will be safe or secure. If aggression is successful in Korea, we can expect it to spread throughout Asia and Europe to this hemisphere.” - Statement from the White House, 1950

The United Nations has not been immune to criticism for many years since its inception. However, this situation has sparked a couple of naysayers about how it has been handling the conflict.

Since its formation in 1945, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has faced significant scrutiny regarding its capacity to manage international conflicts and uphold peace. With the onset of the Korean War in June 1950, the UNSC held an emergency session, resulting in a resolution that authorized military action against North Korea. While the initial response was praised for its expediency, subsequent developments in the conflict have sparked widespread debate over the UNSC's decision-making processes and effectiveness. Criticism has emanated from various quarters, ranging from member states to academic circles, questioning the efficacy and impartiality of the Council in addressing the war's complex dynamics.

The Korean War has highlighted several deficiencies in the UNSC's handling of international disputes.

Critics argue that the UNSC was overly reliant on military intervention, neglecting diplomatic avenues that could have offered peaceful resolutions. The rapid decision to authorize a military response overshadowed efforts to negotiate a ceasefire or engage North Korean leadership in discussions. This lack of comprehensive diplomatic engagement is seen as a failure of the UNSC to explore all possible avenues for peace before escalating to armed conflict.

The Korean War has exacerbated the division between the Eastern and Western blocs during the Cold War, raising concerns about the UNSC's impartiality. The involvement of the United States

and the Soviet Union in supporting opposing sides of the conflict has prompted accusations that the UNSC is more a tool of great power politics than an impartial mediator. Critics contend that this polarization has led to stalemate and further conflict rather than effective peacekeeping or conflict resolution efforts.

The UNSC's authorization of military action has resulted in severe humanitarian crises, with millions displaced and significant civilian casualties. Critics emphasize that the allegations of war crimes and the suffering of civilians in both North and South Korea reflect a gross oversight by the UNSC. The Council is seen as complicit by not implementing robust humanitarian measures or monitoring the impacts of military operations on the civilian population, which raises serious ethical questions regarding its responsibility to protect human rights during armed conflict.

Global Stances

Political stances on the Korean War and the UNSC's actions vary significantly globally. In Western nations, there is widespread support for the military intervention framed as necessary to contain communism. Conversely, many nations in the Eastern bloc view the UNSC's actions as an imperialistic maneuver by Western powers and a failure to respect sovereign rights. Additionally, newly independent states in Asia and Africa are increasingly critical of the UNSC for what they perceive as domination by Western interests, calling for reforms to enhance equity and representation in international decision-making processes. Multilateral discussions have emerged, proposing an expansion of the UNSC's permanent membership to include nations that reflect the present-day geopolitical landscape.

Public opinion on the Korean War has varied widely among global civilian populations. In the United States and allied nations, there is a notable degree of support for military intervention, framed as a necessary step to fend off the spread of communism. However, in Europe and other regions, protests have emerged against the UNSC's military focus, highlighting concerns over the loss of life and the lack of peaceful alternatives. Many citizens are increasingly vocal about

prioritizing human rights and humanitarian considerations over military strategies. Grassroots movements calling for peace negotiations are gaining traction, emphasizing the importance of diplomatic solutions in achieving lasting peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

In conclusion, as the Korean War continues, the UNSC must address the multitude of criticisms levelled against its handling of this conflict. The Council's effectiveness and credibility depend on its willingness to learn from these critiques and adapt its peacekeeping and conflict resolution approaches in a rapidly changing global landscape.

Guiding Questions:

1. Ameliorating Lack of Comprehensive Diplomatic Engagement:
How can the UNSC amend their internal structures to encourage diplomatic solutions to problems?
2. Utilization of the UNSC for Political Gain:
How can measures be implemented to prevent nations from using UNSC resources from pushing political agendas? What can be done to make the UNSC as close to unbiased as possible when dealing with global relations? Is it possible to have an unbiased UNSC?
3. Relieving Humanitarian Consequences of Military Engagement:
How should the UNSC and allied countries prevent the civilian consequences of conflict? Should barriers be created to prevent military engagement? What should the UN's role be in global military conflicts as a whole?

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