Issue of Peacekeeping and Reducing the Tension on the Korean Peninsula

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*Peacekeeping:* the maintenance of international peace and security by the deployment of military forces in a particular area

**Overview of an issue:**
Currently, Korea remains to be the only divided nation-state in the world. An offspring of a politically polarized Cold War, the divided Korean peninsula has been the center of global political tension created between the communist and capitalist superpowers for the past seventy years. It is still considered to be one of the most probable places a war will break out.

After the division, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have gradually moved away from each other economically, politically and socially. With open market policies and guidance from western developed nations, South Korea has evolved to become the thirteenth largest economy in the world, while North Korea, in its extreme isolation, lingers at one hundred and twelfth. South Korea remains to be one of the most important allies of the USA and the democratic world while North Korea stays hostile towards the west; South Koreans pursue a liberal, and capitalistic society while the North Koreans live a communist one. Unfortunately, in the midst of rapid developments after the end of the Cold War, both Koreas and the world seem to have forgotten that the two countries were meant to be one. Somehow, the international community has moved on.

During the Cold War, the increasing prevalence of nuclear weapons was becoming a concern, and so in 1968, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was created, to limit the number of countries allowed to develop nuclear weapons. North and South Korea were originally both members of the treaty, but did not ratify the safeguards agreement. In 1986 North Korea began to construct a
five-megawatt nuclear reactor for scientific purposes, along with Soviets. This in itself did not break the NPT, but reflected North Korea's increasing interest in nuclear power, which had its roots in its ‘turning-inwards’ and focus on militarisation since the mid-1960s. Whilst North Korea did sign the NPT, it did not initially ratify the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (the UN organisation in charge of ensuring all countries follow the NPT). The declared quantities of plutonium did not match those initially thought to be held within North Korea’s borders, and when IAEA officials asked to be able to conduct an investigation, they were refused.

**Current Situation**

Currently, there is little to no development on reunification from either side. The little relations that existed between the two have been obliterated by North Korea’s continuous pursuit of its nuclear program.

**Political**

Politically, the two countries could not be more incompatible. North Korea, to this day, is one of the most radically communist states in the world, while South Korea has grown to be one of the world’s leading democracies and a trusted ally of the USA. It is reasonable to believe that the United Nations will only accept a united Korea that is democratic (although maybe less capitalistic), and so the question lies in whether the communist regime of the North will either concede or collapse.

**Kim Jong-Un**

The most definitive fact about the North Korean Supreme Leader is that very little is known about him. From the time he assumed power in December 2011, he has been very interested in consolidating his power; all the pallbearers, who carried Kim Jong-II’s coffin (aka the strongest loyalists of the elder Kim) have disappeared mysteriously or indiscreetly eliminated. Kim seems to be engaged in what is known as the “provocation cycle”: ramping up provocative behavior, such as launching missiles or conducting nuclear tests, followed by charm offensives and offers to
begin a dialogue. His vision of reunification has reportedly been very one-sided towards his own favor, and his offers of bilateral talks have been rejected by South Korea due to his continuous nuclear threats.

**Understanding Kim Jong Un**

**Moon Jae In**
Since the previous president Park Geun Hye has been impeached from her position, the new president of South Korea, Moon Jae-in has been elected in May 2017. In contrast with previous president, Moon is popular among Korean people. He wants keep peace in Korean peninsula before discussing about reunification between these countries.

**Economic**
South Korea’s economy is the fourth largest in Asia. Its economic growth, which transformed the country from being one of the poorest to a high-income country in just one generation, is often shown as a role model for the African countries. Without a doubt, South Korea will have a great financial burden in the case of reunification, similar to how West Germany needed to pay for a lot of what was lacking in the East. But as Chung Chong- Wook, South Korea’s former ambassador to China points out, “The more we do before reunification actually arrives ... the less expensive the reunification will be.”

North Korea’s economic infrastructure is heavily concentrated in urban centers like Pyongyang. Therefore, the loyalists who have the privilege of living in cities suffer less from crisis like famine than the rural population does.

**Social**
The young generation of South Koreans is living through an age of increased social liberalization and social justice movements. It is only recently that discourse on sexual education has reached the mainstream media through means such as TV programs, and LGBTQ rights are getting slowly absorbed by the population. Most are still oblivious to the conditions of the North Korean society, as many are taught in school to simply alienate the North as an impoverished, starving nation.
North Korean society is extremely conservative compared to the rest of the world. Although it seems like all North Koreans are brainwashed into believing incredible fables about their leader, the loyalists inhabiting around Pyongyang are the main ones educated in such a manifesto; many living in poorer rural areas, are skeptical and disloyal, but fearful of the regime.

**Bloc Positions**

**North Korea**
The reclusive “hermit nation” which is dynastically ruled by the Kim family and continues to develop nuclear weapons despite international condemnation and law. Although not completely closed off to the idea of reunification, it is crucial to North Korea that the reunification isn’t absorption of the North by the South. Kim Jong-Un would not want his regime to become irrelevant, and want to keep a high position of power in a united Korea. He also wants to get rid of foreign military presence in the peninsula, especially that of the USA.

**NATO nations & Allies of the USA (including South Korea)**
Under the Obama administration, the USA has kept a policy of “strategic patience” which involves isolating the DPRK until it reaches the limit of self-sustenance, its NATO allies and South Korea have done the same. Now, the new president is solving the problems in a very different way. It is unclear how the new change in American leadership will affect this attitude. Nonetheless, these countries have strongly emphasized that North Korea needs to give up its nuclear program before any substantive diplomatic relations are restored.

**China, Russia**
While these countries are at least moderate supporters of the DPRK, their willingness to shield North Korea from international pressure has been steadily decreasing. However, it remains to be true that the Korean peninsula is an extremely strategic position to spread influence in the Asian region. Therefore, these countries do not want a reunification that will allow the USA and its allies to dominate the
whole peninsula. They prefer either a reunification that will neutralize the pro-Americanism of South Korea, or one that will allow for their influence to exist in the region to counterbalance that of the USA. If neither can be achieved, they would rather the two Koreas stay separated.

USA
The U.S. fought alongside South Korea in the Korean War against the U.S.S.R. indirectly through North Korea. The U.S. has been one of the most vocal opponents of the North Korean nuclear program and has threatened military action and a nuclear response should the DPRK fire first. President Trump has condemned recent actions by North Korea. He actively got engaged in the war of words with Kim Jong-un threatening to use options other than negotiations. His behaviour has caused North Korea to perceive his statements as declaration of war. Any further actions or comments are threatening escalation of the current situation. USA has recently passed financial sanctions blacklisting North Korean banks and individuals. The general foreign policy of the country focuses not only on deterrence and de-escalation, but USA is also likely to take more drastic measures.

China
North Korea’s strongest ally and trading partner. The majority of the DPRK’s trade is with China, exchanging iron ore for needed electronics and food aid. China supports North Korea. Its position towards North Korea is heavily influenced by the desire to balance US’s power in the region. China is likely to veto increased military presence of the USA and will want to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

Russia
Russia, similar to China, was not pleased with President Trump’s comments. The spokesperson of the Kremlin said that parties need “to exercise restraint and to avoid any steps that would only worsen the situation.” Therefore, Russia is likely to ally itself with China in trying to find a diplomatic solution.

United Kingdom
As an American ally and fellow nuclear power, Britain supports the United States. This commitment is serious: UK has reportedly been contingency planning in case of a war on the Peninsula. UK’s Defence Secretary at the Conservative Party conference has stated that the UK would be prepared to use its nuclear weapons and expressed support for the efforts made by the US.

**France**

France has voiced concerns as to the comments by President Trump and similar to Russia and China is going to want de-escalation of the conflict. However, these have been comments by President Macron and at the same time France has been supportive of the efforts by the USA to contain North Korea.

**South Korea**

The southern part of the Korean peninsula came under the influence of the United States, leading to capitalistic and democratic practices after WW2. The nation is wary of their aggressive neighbors to the north. All men must serve in the Korean Army for at least two years. Furthermore, North Korea and South Korea are still technically at war with one another following the 1953 cease fire agreement which did not formally end the hostilities of the Korean War. In the past ten years there have been several small skirmishes that have taken place between the two nations.

**Japan**

A regional ally of South Korea and the United States. There have been many concerns surrounding the DPRK’s nuclear program as several of their missiles have landed in Japan’s exclusive economic zones (areas that are not technically part of Japan but are internationally recognized as falling under Japanese control). With a small army and navy, Japan would find it difficult to recover from an attack from North Korea, who despises Japan as a result of mistreatment dating back to Japan’s imperial days of the early 20th century.

**International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA)**
The IAEA is the world’s regulatory non-governmental organization (composed of a multi-national coalition) that oversees the world’s nuclear arsenal. As per the terms of the NPT (see “Historical Background” above), the IAEA sends monitors to countries with nuclear capabilities to ensure that no weapons are being developed. IAEA monitors have been expelled from North Korea after discovering that the DPRK had removed metal caps on the reactors that prevent them from being turned on.

**Past UN / International Involvement**

The United Nations has stayed largely uninvolved in the work towards Korean reunification. In 2007, when an inter-Korea summit was arranged for the second time, the UN General Assembly strongly advocated this occasion, passing resolution to show support for economic and political cooperation between the two countries. The ex-secretary general of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, a South Korean himself, voiced optimism that the inter-Korean peace process will contribute to peace and security, not just on the Peninsula, but in the region and beyond. Unfortunately, the General Assembly has not had an occasion to congratulate the two Koreas ever since. Most of these documents were proven to be ineffective, as the DPRK seemed not bothered by various condemnations and sanctions given by the United Nations. Although the UN has passed several resolutions, they have failed to adequately halt the North Korean nuclear program.

**UN Resolutions Concerning North Korea**

In response to the continuation of their nuclear program and the subsequent testing’s, the United Nations Security Council has passed several resolutions condemning North Korea and enacting sanctions against the government and its supporters. Some of the most significant ones are as follows:

**S/RES/825(1993)** - Urged North Korea to reconsider its withdrawal from the NPT and to oblige by their international obligations.

**S/RES/1695(2006)** - Condemned North Korea’s 2006 launch of ballistic missiles and imposed sanctions. This resolution banned all UN states from selling materials of
technology for missiles or WMD to North Korea. It also called on North Korea to rejoin the Six-Party Talks.

**S/RES/1718(2006)** - Expressed further concern over North Korea’s 2006 nuclear test, imposed more sanctions, and set up the Sanctions Committee. In addition, a panel of experts was created to issue annual reports to support the Committee. The resolution imposed a complete asset and travel ban to anyone involved in the nuclear program. They also banned sales of several pieces of military technology to North Korea. They further banned UN states from selling “luxury goods” to the DPRK. The Sanctions Committee’s goal is to oversee the relevant sanctions measures related to North Korea.

**S/RES/1874(2009)** - Expressed concern over North Korea’s 2009 nuclear test and extended sanctions to concern all arms material and related financial transactions, training, services, and manufacturing or maintained procedures. In this resolution, they also created a Panel of Experts to help support the Sanctions Committee to make smarter and more efficient sanctions.

**S/RES/2087(2013)** - Condemned North Korea’s 2012 satellite launch and added further sanctions.

**S/RES/2094(2013)** - Imposed sanctions after North Korea’s 2013 nuclear test. It also increased the power of other nations to enforce the sanctions placed by the Sanctions Committee.

**S/RES/2270(2016)** - Imposed Sanctions after North Korea’s 2016 nuclear and ballistic missile test. The sanctions included inspection of all passing cargo to and from North Korea, prohibiting trade of all weapons within the country and additional restrictions against importing luxury goods. In addition, certain North Korean diplomats were expelled from the UN under suspicion of illicit activities.

**S/RES/2321(2016)** - Condemned the September 9th, 2016 nuclear test and imposed further sanctions that prohibits North Korea from supplying, selling, or transferring coal, iron, and iron ore and for states to buy it from North Korea.
Possible Solutions and Controversies from the Presidency (suggestions):

Solution 1: Another Nuclear Deal
One of the main obstacles stopping South Korea and the international community from engaging with North Korea on any diplomatic level is North Korea’s continued nuclear development. Therefore, the UNSC could create a goal and a timeline to establish a nuclear deal, similar to the one with Iran, with North Korea. There are two important things to consider in this case. Firstly, the USA and the international community need to stop antagonizing North Korea as an “axis of evil”. This is shown to be possible when looking at the miraculous improvement of relations between Iran and the USA. Secondly, it is important to note that the DPRK is not harmed as much from the imposed sanctions as was Iran, due to its lack of export resources and industries. Therefore, it may be wise to consider giving some positive aid as part of the deal rather than simply lifting the sanctions.

Solution 2: Furthering sanctions and “strategic patience”.
It is undeniable that the DPRK is an unstable and unsustainable country. With Kim Jong Un politically alienating Russia, and China showing weakened enthusiasm for the DPRK’s radical actions, it is possible that the country is almost at its breaking point. There are two desirable outcomes to which supporters of continued political and economic pressure point: Kim Jong-Un, fearing a collapse of his regime, may give in to the pressure and open up the country economically and make political concessions, or the already impoverished population of the country may rise up against the government, unable to survive under complete economic isolation.

Solution 3: Removal of international presence from the region.
The one of the biggest propaganda that Kim’s regime use to antagonize the South is by labeling them as the “puppet of the USA”. It is possible that the DPRK’s dislike towards the South may be much less than its dislike towards the USA. It is also possible that the North’s continued investment in the nuclear technology is only because it feels threatened by the presence of superpowers near its land. If all the occupying powers, who happen to be members of the UNSC, agree to step out of
the peninsula, that has been for so long a battleground of a proxy war, the DPRK may be more willing to talk to the South.

**Questions related to the topic:**
1. Does the committee that includes nations that have originally separated the peninsula, have a moral obligation to reunify Korea?
2. How does the situation in Korea differ from other countries like Germany that have succeeded at reunifying?
3. To what extent is your country involved in the peninsula? In the region? (Militarily, economically, politically...etc.)
4. How will the reunification of Korea impact the geopolitical environment of the region? The world?
5. How far away in the future does your country think reunification can practically occur? What are the steps the committee can take right now?
6. How can the committee encourage non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials, and discourage the proliferation of these things, despite North Korean intentions?