

The Korean Questions at the United Nations: Special Reference to the Unification Problems of Korean Peninsula*

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I. Introduction

The independence of Korea was first stated formally as the aim of World War II at the Cairo Conference in 1943.⁽¹⁾ In 1945, the USSR and the United States occupied Korea to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops in north and south of the 38th parallel, respectively.⁽²⁾ Under the Moscow Agreement⁽³⁾ of December 1945, the occupying Powers established a Joint Commission to set up a "Provisional Korea Democratic Government." The Joint Commission having been unable to reach agreement, the United States submitted the problem to the United Nations General Assembly in

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(1) *Department of State Bulletin*, IX, 393; *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939~1945*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office 1949. p.202; Soon Sung Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940~1950*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1967, pp.17-21.

(2) Soon Sung Cho, *ibid.*, pp.50-58.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp.102-107.

September 1947.⁽⁴⁾ In doing so, a new chapter was begun in the unhappy story of American postwar policy in Korea.⁽⁵⁾

In retrospect, the failure of the Joint U.S.-Soviet Commission was not surprising because the Commission had tried from the beginning to achieve the impossible.⁽⁶⁾ The aims of the two nations were diametrically opposed. The United States wanted to establish a united and democratic country, whereas the Soviet Union was eager to set up a satellite in Asia. The failure of the Joint Commission is also an example of the insurmountable diplomatic difficulties in an era of bi-polarization.⁽⁷⁾

The General Assembly, on November 14, 1947, created a nine-member temporary commission on Korea to facilitate the establishment of a national government of Korea by duly electing Korean representatives and providing for an early withdrawal of the occupation forces. Czechoslovakia, the Byelorussian SSR, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR did not take its seat on the Commission.⁽⁸⁾

The Commission was not allowed to give access to North Korea, but it observed elections in South Korea, which led to the formation of a government there on August 15, 1948. In September, a separate government came into being in north Korea. In December, the General Assembly declared that the government of the Republic of Korea had been established as a lawful government and the only such government in Korea.⁽⁹⁾ The Assembly recommended the withdrawal of the occupying forces and a seven-member commission to bring about the unification of Korea and

(4) *Everyman's United Nations* XX, (8th edition), New York, 1968, p. 126; *Yearbook of the U.N.*, 1947~48, p. 81; Vandenback and Hogan, *Toward World Order*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1962, p. 129; S.S. Goodspeed, *The Nature and Function of International Organization*, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1959, p. 238.

(5) Soon Sung Cho, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

(6) Benjamin Weems, "Behind the Korean Election," *Far Eastern Survey*, June 23, 1948, p. 144. Weems was then a member of the American staff in the Joint Commission.

(7) Soon Sung Cho, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

(8) *YBUN*, 1947~48, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

(9) *Everyman's United Nations*, XX, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

the integration of all Korea forces.⁽¹⁰⁾

In 1948, as well as in 1949, the USSR had maintained that the General Assembly did not have the right to act on Korea since the matter was covered by the Moscow Agreement and should be dealt with by the allied commission. The establishment of the United Nations Commission on Korea, it was stated, was illegal; the unification of Korea must be left to the Korean people.⁽¹¹⁾

On June 25, 1950, when the North Korean regime unleashed an unprovoked invasion against the Republic of Korea, the United Nations not only helped the Republic of Korea to meet the resultant crisis⁽¹²⁾ but also contributed to solidifying the foundations of the Republic. For the past quarter century the United Nations has been involved in the question of Korean reunification.

The purpose of this article is to examine the matter in which the Korean question handled by the U.N. General Assembly and to analyse the unification issues discussed at the United Nations.

II. The Korean War

On June 25, 1950, both the United States and the United Nations Commission on Korea informed the United Nations that the South Korea had been attacked that morning by North Korean forces. The Security Council called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and called upon North Korea to withdraw its armed forces without delay to the 38th

(10) Resolution 195(III), *Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 9*, 10, pp. 18-21.

(11) *Everyman's United Nations*, XX, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

(12) Security Council rescued Korea from emergence with the following resolution: The Requestment of the Cessation of Hostilities in Korea (S/150) on June 25, 1950; The Creation and Operation of the Unified Command (S/1588) on July 25, 1950; The Relief and Support of the Civilian People of Korea (S/1655) on July 31, 1950. Fernand van Langenhove, *La Crise du Système de Sécurité Collective des Nations Unies, 1946~1957*, La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff, 1958, p. 76.

parallel. Two days later, it recommended that members furnish such assistance to South Korea as might be necessary to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security in the area. The United States announced on that same day that it had ordered its air and sea forces to give cover and support to the troops of the South Korean government and, later, that it had also authorized the use of ground forces.⁽¹³⁾

Fifty-one member states expressed the support for the stand taken by the Council, while five, including the USSR, together with the People's Republic of China, shared the view that the June 27 resolution was illegal, because it had been adopted in the absence of two permanent members of the Council, the People's Republic of China and the USSR. The Soviet Union also declared that the events in Korea were the result of an unprovoked attack by South Korean troops and demanded the cessation of United States intervention.⁽¹⁴⁾

On July 7, the Council, by 7 votes to none, with 3 abstentions (Egypt, India and Yugoslavia) and 1 member absent (USSR), requested all member states providing military forces in pursuance of the Council's resolutions to make them available to a Unified Command under the United States (S/1588). On July 31, the Council also adopted resolution (S/1657) regarding "the relief and support of the civilian population of Korea." It should be noted that passage of such crucial Security Council resolutions were made possible by a Soviet boycott of the Council over the issue of Chinese representation. Had the Soviet Union been present, she would undoubtedly have vetoed them.⁽¹⁵⁾

In response to the June 27 Security Council resolution, sixteen U.N. member states sent troops to Korea, which transformed the conflict into a

(13) *Everyman's United Nations*, XX, *op. cit.*, p. 127; Chong-Ki Choi, "The Korean Questions at the United Nations," *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee*, 3/4, Quartal 1975, pp. 395-406.

(14) Rosalyn Higgins, *United Nations Peacekeeping 1946~1967, Documents and Commentary*, 2 Asia, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1970, pp. 173-180.

(15) B.C. Koh, "The United Nations and the Politics of Korean Reunifications," *Journal of Korean Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Jan. 1974), p. 39.

struggle between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DRPK) and United Nations forces. This marked a significant milestone in the annals of the U.N. as the first experiment in the use of collective military sanctions against a breach of international peace.

The Korean action may not have been a military victory according to the text books, for the outcome in military terms was by no means conclusive; but the action may be viewed as a political victory for the purpose and principles of the Charter.⁽¹⁶⁾

Meanwhile, on October 7, the General Assembly adopted a resolution 376(v) which recommended that "all appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea", established the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK),⁽¹⁷⁾ which reaffirmed as the objectives of the U.N. in Korea, "the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government of Korea" and recommended that the United Nations forces should not remain in Korea otherwise than for the objectives stated and that all necessary measures be taken to accomplish the economic rehabilitation of Korea.

By the time the Chinese People's Volunteers crossed the Yalu River in October, 1950, rescuing North Korea from the brink of defeat, the Soviet Union had returned to its permanent seat in the Security Council and was able to veto draft a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese forces.⁽¹⁸⁾

In accordance with the experience gained during the early stage of the Korean War, the U.N. General Assembly passed on November 30, 1950, "the Uniting for Peace Resolution."⁽¹⁹⁾ The resolution made it possible for

(16) D.W. Bowett, *United Nations Forces; A Legal Study of United Nations Practice*, London, Stevens and Sons, 1964, p. 58.

(17) *YBUN*, 1950, pp. 280-283.

(18) U.S. Department of State, *The Record on Korean Unification, 1943~1960*, Department of State Publication 7084. *Far Eastern Series 101*, Washington, D.C., 1960, pp. 109-110.

(19) Rosalyn Higgins, *The Development of International Law through the Political Organs of United Nations*, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1963, p.

the General Assembly to obtain authority to recommend that member nations take collective measures including the use of military force, in case the Security Council was unable to fulfill its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in the absence of unanimous agreement its permanent members.

The newly prescribed powers of the General Assembly to make recommendations to members for collective measures were exercised for the first time with conflict. On February 1, 1951, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 498(V) naming the People's Republic of China as an aggressor in Korea.⁽²⁰⁾

On May 18, 1951, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 500(V) concerning the "additional measures to be employed to meet the aggression in Korea," and recommending that every state apply an embargo on the shipment of strategic materials to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and North Korea.⁽²¹⁾

In the meantime, the Korean War had reached a complete stalemate. In June 1951 a series of negotiations for an armistice began, and finally the U.N. and Communist sides managed to agree that wounded and sick prisoners of war would be exchanged at Panmunjom. On April 18, 1953,

227; Juraj Andrassy, "Uniting for Peace Resolution," *American Journal of International Law (AJIL)*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (July 1956), pp. 563-582; Juliana Geran Pilon, "The United States and the United Nations: A Balance Sheet," *Backgrounders*, No. 162 (Jan. 21, 1982), Washington, in Herbert M. Levine, *World Politics Debated*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1983, p. 70. "Uniting for Peace" Resolution has been used eight times. One recent case was in 1980 to respond to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and another was in September of 1981 to condemn South Africa's occupation in Namibia.

(20) Higgins, *United Nations Peacekeeping, 1946~1967*, *op. cit.*, p. 168; Jerome A. Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, Vol. 2, Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1974, pp. 1324-1348; "Statement by Mr. Chou En-lai, Foreign Minister of PRC, on General Assembly's Resolution of Feb. 1, 1951," in Denise Folliot, ed., *Documents in International Law*, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1954, pp. 548-551.

(21) Louis B. Sohn, ed., *Cases on United Nations Law*, London, Stevens and Sons, Ltd., 1959, p. 526.

the General Assembly adopted, with the unanimous support of the 60 member nations, Resolution 705(VI) calling for the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war.⁽²²⁾

When the war came to an inconclusive end on July 27, 1953, it was the Commander-in-Chief of the U.N. Command who signed the Armistice Agreement with the Commanders of the North Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers. Under the provision of Paragraph 60, Article IV of the Armistice Agreement, the military commanders of both sides were called upon to recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three months after the Armistice Agreement was signed and became effective, the convening of a political conference at a higher level between both sides be held by representative, appointed respectively to settle through negotiating the question of the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and the peaceful settlement of the Korean question and other items.⁽²³⁾ The General Assembly subsequently approved the "implementation of Paragraph 60 of the Korean Armistice Agreement" resolution 711(VII),⁽²⁴⁾ and a political conference was convened in Geneva lasting from April 26 to June 15, 1954, but no substantial progress was made.⁽²⁵⁾

The focus of the Geneva conference centered on the unification formula and the withdrawal of foreign troops. The U.N. side maintained that it had the right to supervise an all-Korean election. The Republic of Korea at first asserted that an election should be conducted only in North Korea in consideration of the legitimacy of the Republic, but later accepted the U.N. view. North Korea, in contrast with the Republic of Korea, arranged for elections.

(22) *YBUN*, 1953, pp. 113-114. Adopted at 427th plenary meeting, April 18, 1953.

(23) Higgins, *United Nations Peacekeeping*, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-310.

(24) *YBUN*, 1953, pp. 127-128.

(25) Goodspeed, *The Nature and Function of International Organization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-262.

The primary responsibility for the Korean problem, after the close of the Geneva conference on Korea, automatically reverted to the United Nations, where it has been pending since 1947.⁽²⁶⁾

III. U.N. Debates on the Korean Question

The United Nations General Assembly has reaffirmed, at each session since 1947, that "the objectives of the United Nations in Korea are to bring about, by peaceful means, the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea under a representative form of government, and the full restoration of international peace and security in the area."⁽²⁷⁾ The Soviet Union and other Communist states have termed the resolution an action to "impose an unrealistic, one-sided resolution of the General Assembly."

As long as the Western bloc maintained a majority power in the United Nations and the United States continued to fully exercise its influence over a majority of the member states, the Republic of Korea was able to have its representative attend the General Assembly as an observer and explain the Korean position to the member nations. Beginning with the 15th General Assembly session, mass admission of the newly emerging Afro-Asian countries, which changed the balance of power between West and East, has forced the matter of the Korean question to enter a new phase.

The United Nations has continuously reaffirmed its objectives in Korea and maintained its physical presence in South Korea through UNCURK, thus making the Korean question a perennial issue in the General Assembly. Until 1972, the Republic of Korea, thanks to the support of its allies led

(26) Chong-Ki Choi, "The United Nations and Korea," *The Korean Journal of International Studies (KJIS)*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Oct. 1970), p. 31.

(27) U.N., Annual Report of the Secretary General on the Work of the Organization, 16 June 1957~15 June 1958, *GAOR*: 13th Sess., Supp. No. 1 (A/3844), 1958, p. 26; *GAOR*, 14th Sess., No. 1 (A/4132), 1959, p. 27.

by the United States, had its way. Resolutions favoring the ROK position invariable carried. A modification of South Korea's long-standing policy toward the United Nations annual debate on the Korean question was introduced in 1969. For two decades, the Korean question had been put on the agenda of each regular session of the United Nations General Assembly for "automatic" annual debate. But debates in the past yielded no tangible progress toward achieving Korean unification.

The decisive blow to the ROK came in October 1971 when the United States failed to prevent the expulsion of the Nationalist Chinese government from the United Nations. From the ROK's perspective, Beijing's entry into the United Nations posed a serious threat. The changing reality of United Nations politics was indeed a source of great concern and worry for the leaders of South Korea, and in order to avoid tedious debates concerning the Korean question, the ROK government, in close consultation with the United States, suspended its policy of automatic annual debate and decided to raise the issue during General Assembly debate only when the need might arise in a given session.⁽²⁸⁾ In fact, such a policy modification by the ROK did not prevent the Communist nations from bringing up resolutions concerning the "withdrawal of foreign troops" from Korea and the abolition of UNCURK.

By 1971 the Government of the ROK had reason to believe that only a new policy could eliminate the risk of a defect at the 26th United Nations General Assembly. After a series of consultations with the Korean War Allies who supported its stand, the Government adopted a new tactic to prevent the Korean question from being taken up at the 26th General Assembly session. The policy, in effect, was an attempt to postpone the issue for one year and to maintain the status quo. Justifications for the postponement of the Korean question at the United Nations were

(28) *United Nations Review (UNR)*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jan. 1961), pp. 32-33.

(29) *The Chungang Ilbo*, Sep. 27, 1969; Nov. 26, 1969. *The Dong-A Ilbo*, Dec. 3, 1963.

based upon the South-North Korean Red Cross Societies Talks which began in August, 1971.⁽³⁰⁾ The new strategy carried the day when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for a postponement of the Korean debate. The same exercise was repeated at the 27th General Assembly session to postpone the Korean debate for still another year.⁽³¹⁾

In 1973, for the first time in its 25-year history, the DPRK established full diplomatic relations with several western European nations, notably the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. Other countries with which North Korea established diplomatic relations in that same year were Argentina, Iran, Togo, Dahomey, Gambia and Mauritius. On May 17, 1973, the World Health Organization(WHO), one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, decided to admit North Korea as a member, brushing aside the plea of the representative from the Republic that dual representation for Korea might endanger the Korean dialogues and bring about the permanent division of Korea. As a result of its membership in the World Health Organization, North Korea obtained the status of permanent observer at the United Nations, and set up its observer mission in Geneva and New York.

In the Republic of Korea's new unification policy, which is commonly called the June 23, 1973 Declaration, President Park Chung Hee emphatically declared that the realization of the peaceful unification of the country was the "ultimate objective" of the ROK, and assured the people that he would "continue to exert unswerving effort" to achieve this ultimate objective. Park called on North Korea; 1) to accept the principle of non-interference and non-aggression against each other in order to maintain peace in Korea, and 2) to continue the South-North Dialogue based on the

(30) United Nations, *ORGA*, Twenty-sixth Sess., General Committee, 193 meetings, 1971, pp.72-75. The Red Cross Talks were intended to arrange reunion of families and relatives separated between North and South.

(31) Youngnok Koo, "Rationales of Korea's Foreign Policy," *Shin Dong-A*, August 1973, p.61.

South-North Joint Communiqué in order to see some concrete results at an early date.

The President also declared that the ROK would "not be opposed" to becoming a member of the United Nations and other international organizations together with North Korea, if North Korea wishes.⁽³²⁾ This, he hastened to stress, did "not signify our recognition of North Korea as a state." Additionally, Park said the ROK would open its doors to any country, regardless of ideology.

North Korea, branded President Park's proposal for simultaneous participation in the United Nations as a mischievous manoeuvre signifying South Korea's advocacy of the two Koreas.⁽³³⁾ In rejecting Park's proposal, North Korea's Kim Il Sung put forward a counter-proposal in a speech at a mass meeting welcoming the visit of Gustav Husak, General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party to Pyongyang. Reviving his earlier proposal for a confederation, Kim proposed that the two halves of Korea form a "Confederal State of Koryo" as a transitional step to reunification. Kim opposed the idea to enter the United Nations separately on the grounds that, "if the North and the South want to enter the United Nations before unification, they should enter as one state at least under the name of the Confederal Republic of Koryo."⁽³⁴⁾ He also reiterated Pyongyang's previous proposal for a multifaceted intercourse between the two Koreas and for the convening of a "great national assembly" of people representing all walks of life in the two sides.

The Republic of Korea rejected the idea of forming a confederation arguing that the proposed confederative system was a device with which North Korea was hoping to engineer the "national liberation" of the South. South Korea also claimed that a confederal system was not a fitting model

(32) President Park Chung-Hee's Special Statement Regarding Foreign Policy for Peace and Unification, Seoul, Korea Information Service, Inc., 1973, pp. 29-34.

(33) *The People's Korea*, Pyongyang, June 27, 1973.

(34) *Ibid.*, and *The New York Times*, June 24, 1973; *Tongil Sinbo* (Pyongyang), June 29, 1973.

for the South and the North which have different ideologies and socio-economic systems.⁽³⁵⁾ North Korea then escalated its attacks on South Korea, accusing Seoul of plotting to perpetuate the division of Korea. Since then, although the dialogue has not been completely suspended, it has entered a very unproductive stage.

At the 28th United Nations General Assembly in the fall of 1973, a compromise to avoid a vote on the two rival draft resolutions on Korea was reached. The General Assembly agreement urged both South and North Korea to continue their dialogue to expedite the peaceful reunification of Korea. The only substantive decision in the consensus was dissolution of the U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.⁽³⁶⁾ It is important to note that the way in which the accord was reached signified the inevitable dependency of both North and South Korea on the major powers regarding the Korean question.

Dissolution of UNCURK (First Committee)

G.A. Session	Year	Favor	Oppose	Abst.	Abs.	Member States	%		
							Favor	Oppose	Abs. & Abst.
22	1967	24	60	29	9	122	19.6	49.1	31.1
23	1968	27	68	27	4	126	21.4	53.9	24.3
24	1969	30	65	27	4	126	23.5	51.4	24.6
25	1970	32	64	25	5	127	25.2	50.4	24.4
26	1971	68	25	22	15	131	51.9	19.0	28.2

In 1974, the 29th General Assembly session urged continuation of the South-North talks and called on the Security Council to consider dissolution of the United Nations Command. The vote was 61 for, 43 against, and 31

(35) The proposal for forming a Confederation of North and South Korea was first made by Kim Il Sung on August 15, 1960. *Rodong Sinmun*, August 16, 1960; *The New York Times*, August 15, 1960; Pyong-choon Hahm, "Federalism: A Means for National Reunification of Korea," *The Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Dec. 1970), p. 352; Byung-Chul Koh, *The Foreign Policy of North Korea*, New York, Praeger, 1969, p. 134.

(36) *Korea Newsreview*, December 1, 1973, p. 6; Chong-Ki Choi, "The Korean Questions at the United Nations," *op. cit.*, p. 402.

abstaining. The present position of the government of the Republic of Korea appears to be that the Korean question should not be used as a means for confrontation and that the issue should be dealt with by the Koreans themselves in their own forums. The General Assembly at the same time rejected a pro-North Korean resolution by a vote of 48 to 48. The General Assembly's recommendation on the Korean question, however, has so far failed to have any effect on the Security Council's action.

In any event, both North and South Korea anticipated another diplomatic showdown at the 30th U.N. General Assembly on the Korean question, and exerted their efforts to gain diplomatic support at the United Nations debate. Kim Il Sung of North Korea, visited the PRC in April, 1975, and travelled to five countries, including Rumania, Algeria, Mauritius, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia from May 21 to June 10, 1975. The purpose of Kim's trip was to receive support from North Korea's allies on the Korean question during the U.N. General Assembly's consideration of its bid for a United Nations resolution calling for the withdrawal of the United Nations forces presence in South Korea. Furthermore, riding on the wave of Communist success in Indochina, and taking advantage of its psychological impact on some pro-West Southeast Asian countries, North Korea appeared determined to attempt a full-scale diplomatic assault at the 30th United Nations General Assembly session, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops from South Korea.⁽³⁷⁾

The United States, by agreement with South Korea, formally offered on June 27, 1975 to dissolve the U.N. Command in Korea next January 1 and replace it with U.S. and South Korean officers as parties to the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement, providing that the Chinese and North Koreans consented.⁽³⁸⁾ The offer, in a letter to the U.N. Security Council, was aimed at heading off any demand from the next fall's General Assembly

(37) *The Asahi Shimbun*, June 12, 1975; May 30, 1975; *The Mainichi Shimbun*, June 12, 1975; June 13, 1975; *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 8, 1975.

(38) Original Tabulation.

that U.S. troops in South Korea under the U.N. flag be withdrawn. Such a request barely failed to be adopted in the previous year. The U.S. and South Korean governments had argued that the status of the Agreement would be questionable if U.N. Command, officered by the U.S., the party to the Agreement, was dissolved without arrangements for a successor party. If the U.N. Command in Korea was dissolved, none of the U.S. troops in South Korea would fly the U.N. flag and the United States could argue that all 42,000 of them were entitled to stay there under a bilateral agreement.

The General Assembly, in 1975, adopted two resolutions which expressed different approaches to the problem. The first, (A/3390:A) whose original sponsors included the United States and Japan and which was endorsed by South Korea, was adopted by 59 votes to 51, with 29 abstentions, it asked "all the parties directly concerned" to negotiate on arrangements to replace the Armistice Agreement "so that the United Nations Command may be dissolved concurrently with arrangements for maintaining the Armistice Agreement."⁽³⁹⁾ The second resolution, (A/3390:B) whose support included China and the Soviet Union and which was favoured by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was adopted by 54 votes to 43, with 42 abstentions. It called upon "the real parties to the Armistice Agreement" to replace the Korean military Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement "in the context of the dissolution of the United Nations Command and the withdrawal of the foreign troops stationed in South Korea under the flag of the United Nations."⁽⁴⁰⁾

In a letter dated August 10, 1976, the representatives of Algeria and 23 other countries to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/31/192) requested the inclusion of an item entitled "Removal of the danger of war and maintenance and consolidation of peace in Korea and

(39) *Official Records of the General Assembly*, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/9030), p. 24, item 41. 2409th Plenary Meeting, 18 November 1975.

(40) *Ibid.*

acceleration of independent and peaceful reunification of Korea" among the agenda of the General Assembly. For counter proposals, the representatives of Belgium and other 18 Western countries on August 20, 1976, submitted draft resolution (A/31/194) on "the need for constructive dialogue and negotiation towards a peaceful settlement of the Korean problem and the reunification of Korea."⁽⁴¹⁾

The communist side withdrew their draft resolution which was requested by North Korea and the Western side also withdrew their draft resolution.⁽⁴²⁾ Thenceforth, the Korean question has not been debated at the General Assembly as an official item since 1976.

But the representatives of Communist countries have delivered addresses at each session of the General Assembly since 1976 to 1983, supporting the "North Korea's legitimate aspiration to bring about the peaceful reunification of its homeland, for which it is absolutely necessary that interference in its internal affairs should cease and that the U.S. forces of intervention should withdraw from the southern part of the Korean peninsula and must be solved by peaceful means."⁽⁴³⁾

IV. Problems of Admission for Membership

The Republic of Korea applied for United Nations membership on January 19, 1949 and the North Korean regime followed suit on February 10, the same year. The United Nations Security Council voted on April 8, 1949, 9 to 2 to recommend the Republic of Korea's admission, but the Soviet Union vetoed it.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The Security Council at the same time voted down, 2 to 8 North Korea's application for admission.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Nevertheless, the

(41) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. R.O.K., *Korea Diplomacy Thirty Years*, (Korean), Seoul, 1978, p.202.

(42) *Ibid.*

(43) Compiled by the ORGA of the 31st to 38th.

(44) U.N., *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, Vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p.169, para. 9, footnote 5.

(45) *Ibid.*, p.171, para. 16.

ROK's application for membership was endorsed by the 4th United Nations General Assembly on December 22, 1949, in a resolution advising the Security Council to approve the Republic of Korea's admission into the world body.⁽⁴⁶⁾ But to date, the ROK has not been granted membership in the U.N. North Korea also submitted application for membership on January 5, 1952, (S/12468), which has not been considered yet.

South Korea's basic position on national unification and its overwhelming concern for security and peace was intensively elaborated in President Park's Declaration for Peace and Unification made on June 23, 1973. Point five of that Declaration says that "South Korea shall not object to its admittance into the United Nations together with North Korea, provided that it does not cause hindrance to national unification. Even before its admittance into the United Nations, South Korea shall not be opposed to North Korea also being invited at the same time into the United Nations General Assembly deliberation of the Korean question." This Declaration indicates clearly that the ROK's policies toward the United Nations have been modified drastically in order to meet the changed international environment.⁽⁴⁷⁾

On the other side, North Korea has rejected the proposal on the grounds that it would perpetuate the division of Korea, and Kim Il Sung has made the following counter-proposal: North Korea would not enter the United Nations separately, and that if the South and the North want to enter the United Nations before unification, they should enter as one state at least under the name of the Confederal Republic of Koryo.⁽⁴⁸⁾

These are the basic differences in their attitudes toward the United Nations. Almost every year the two opposing parties have been arguing their positions in the world forum and deliberation intensified since the

(46) *Ibid.*, p.171, para. 17.

(47) Jae-Seung Woo, "Korea and the United Nations," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. V, No. 4 (1974), p.10.

(48) *Rodong Shinmun*, June 24, 1973; *The Korea Times*, June 24, 1973; *The New York Times*, June 24, 1973.

North Korea began directly participating in the discussions following the 28th session in 1973. Issues in the disputes have been procedural and legal as well as substantive and political.

Until the end of the 1950's there were no difficulties for the Republic of Korea on the deliberation of the Korean question. The Republic of Korea was recognized by the world forum to be the only lawful government having effective control and jurisdiction over Korea.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The changed situations in the world forum in the early part of 1960's was manipulated by North Korea and its camp, and their arguments for inviting both parties, the South as well as the North, for the deliberation on the Korean question have begun to mobilize the sympathy of new-comers and non-aligned powers in the United Nations. The problem of competence and authority of the United Nations toward Korean unification still remains unsettled although North Korea obtained observer status in the General Assembly in 1973. Even though North Korea is represented as an observer at the United Nations and is making every effort to enter the specialized agencies of the U.N. separately (WHO, UPU, UNCTAD, and UNESCO, etc.), and seeks to conclude bilateral diplomatic ties with countries that maintain diplomatic ties with South Korea, North Korea is vehemently opposed to the dual membership in the United Nations proposed by President Park in his Seven Point Declaration for Peace and Unification on June 23, 1973.

The Republic of Korea believes that dual membership in the United Nations would not become a hindrance to national unification. If South and North so agree, they can be united any time they wish in spite of separate memberships in the U.N. Dual membership is not meant to freeze the division of the status quo. What the Republic of Korea really aims at is to bring North Korea into the world forum and to keep it within the bounds of international law, thus hoping that peace can be maintained on the Korean peninsula.

(49) UNGA Resolution 195 (III), December 12, 1948.

North Korea's rationale in rejecting dual membership is that this course of action would perpetuate the national division and signify formal acceptance of a divided nation. North Korea's allegations are:

(1) If North and South Korea enter the United Nations separately, Korea will be recognized as two states internationally and the division of Korea will be fixed indefinitely; (2) If Korea is forcibly split into two states, it will create permanent tension and increase the likelihood of war; (3) South Korea is not entitled to enter the United Nations because the South Korean regime is a bogus regime and South Korea is nothing but a colony and military base of a foreign country; (4) Simultaneous admission is a scheme to camouflage the imperialist's old method of colonial domination of "divide and rule"; (5) North Korea's entry into the specialized agencies of the U.N. is for the purpose of technical and practical cooperation among all countries; (6) The German case is different from the Korean case; (7) The question of admission of every country to the U.N. should not be regarded as a means of solving the internal affairs of a nation.⁽⁵⁰⁾

In addition to her repeated applications for U.N. membership in the past, North Korea has recently secured status of the permanent observer in the U.N. along with the South.⁽⁵¹⁾ By seeking and achieving representative status in many of the specialized agencies of the U.N. where the South already has representatives, the North is *de facto* recognizing and accepting the idea of dual representation although at the same time she is publicly insisting that if the South and the North want to enter the United Nations before unification, they should enter as one state or at least under the name of the Confederal Republic of Koryo.⁽⁵²⁾ They publicly reject dual membership on the grounds that this course of action would perpetuate national division of Korean peninsula. This contradiction indicates their arbitrary

(50) *The Journal of Korean Affairs*, Vol. III, No. 4 (Jan. 1974), pp. 69-74.

(51) U.N., *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, Vol. 1, 1955, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-171.

(52) *The New York Times*, June 24, 1973.

contention of division and signifies formal acceptance of divided nation.

How does North Korea justify its entry into World Health Organization (WHO) and a series of bilateral diplomatic ties with countries having relations with South Korea? North Korea explains that "such diplomatic activity will serve to strengthen international support for North Korean policy without entailing a commitment to the idea of two Koreas."⁽⁵³⁾ They further say that the specialized agencies of the U.N. are non-political. Apparently, this is a contradiction of their objection to mutual admittance into the United Nations.

V. Conclusion

The present Korean environment requires the introduction of new policies which will break through the vicious circle of tensions created by mental blocks and psychological barriers, which are intrinsically derived from the ideological conflict and have thus far prevented either party from correctly perceiving the other and from acting on this insight.

South Korea has charged that, "North Korea has never changed its strategic objective of communizing South Korea," and that "their demand (to remove the UNC) is designed to bring about a military vacuum in the Republic of Korea." The South also claimed that the dissolution of the UNC would eliminate a principal party from the Armistice Agreement and virtually invalidate it. Therefore, continuous operation of the United Nations Command in Korea was seen as essential and vital to national security.⁽⁵⁴⁾

The announced proposal to the 30th General Assembly by the Republic of Korea and the United States to dissolve the U.N. Command is regarded as a compromise proposal which would satisfy North Korean demands for

(53) *The Journal of Korean Affairs*, Vol. III, No. 4 (Jan. 1974), pp. 69-78.

(54) See the text of speech made by the chief U.N. delegate at the 28th session of the General Assembly, *The Korea Times*, November 16, 1973.

the dissolution of the U.N. Command while at the same time replacing it with a successor party, that is U.S. forces, capable of preserving the Armistice Agreement. From North Korea's point of view, the United Nations forum provides a convenient place to condemn "the U.S. imperialists'" activities in Korea before the sympathetic audience of the Third World. This position also enables them to enhance their international status and helps to promote their policy of engaging in economic and scientific-technical exchanges which are badly needed by their ailing economy. In addition, the presence of the United Nations Command in Korea is a convenient target for their domestic propaganda activities, allowing them to maintain a revolutionary air and consolidate national unity by picturing the South as "occupied" by foreign troops, thus challenging the authority and even the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea. This is why Pyongyang proposed to conclude a peace agreement directly with the United States.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Kim Il Sung's speech at his reception in Beijing on April 18, 1975, emphasized that "if the revolution of the people occurred in South Korea, North Korea would strongly support such a revolution and we can get the territory of reunification and lose the military demarcation line."⁽⁵⁶⁾

Both Seoul and Pyongyang are now concentrating their all-out efforts on diplomatic competition in the international arena, and a South-North showdown at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly seems inevitable.

Recently, North Korea proposed that South Korea and United States join in three-way talks aimed at reunifying the long-divided Korean peninsula, but South Korea opposed the proposal.

The South Korean Minister of Unification Sohn Jae Shik said that before peace negotiations could begin, North Korea must admit responsibility and apologize for the bombing in Rangoon, Burma, on October 9 that

(55) *The New York Times*, March 25 and 26, 1974; Chong-Ki Choi, "The Korean Questions at the United Nations," *op. cit.*, pp. 395-406.

(56) *Rodong Shinmun*, April 19, 1975; *The Korea Times*, April 19, 1975.

killed 21 persons, including top aides to South Korea's President Chun Doo Hwan.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Pyongyang claimed that the agenda for the triangular meeting should include the conclusion of a peace agreement with the United States and the bilateral declaration of a non-aggression between the two Koreas. North Korea also insisted on the convening of a "grand national conference" aimed at creating the so-called federal states.

Beijing backs tripartite talks⁽⁵⁸⁾ and Japan hopes 6-nation conference on the Korean issue, to include Japan, China and the Soviet Union.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The United States opposed the tripartite talks involving Washington, Seoul and Pyongyang. The Korean issue should be solved primarily through direct talks between the South and the North, U.S. Ambassador to Korea Richard L. Walker disclosed on January 11, 1984.⁽⁶⁰⁾ And U.S. President Ronald Reagan has proposed a four-way conference adding China to the three parties.⁽⁶¹⁾

This time there was a different stage for the first time, the North said South Korean authorities could take part on an equal footing in tripartite talks with North Korea and the United States. In the past, North Korea had insisted it would deal only with the United States and not its "lackeys" in the South.

Under dialogue formulas confirmed by both Seoul and Pyongyang authorities in their Joint Communiqué background in 1972, various proposals and efforts have been made to pave the way for the national task but resulted in vain, largely because of North Korea's dogmatic posture.

(57) *International Herald Tribune*, January 12, 1984; *The Korea Times*, January 12, 1984. President Jimmy Carter proposed on July 1, 1979, at Seoul, three-way talks with North and South Korea and the U.S. but, North Korea refused this proposal.

(58) *The Korea Times*, January 13, 1984; *The Seikai Shyuho*, Feb. 21, 1984, p. 10; Takubo Tadae, "North Korea's Peace Offensive" (Japanese), *The Seikai Shyuho*, Feb. 28, 1984, pp. 22-25.

(59) *The Korea Times*, January 13, 1984.

(60) *The Korea Times*, January 12, 1984.

(61) *The Korea Times*, January 13, 1984.

As matter of fact, a multiparties parley, including foreign powers directly concerned with the Korean question, would also be desirable in light of the overriding international factors which led to the territorial division and the Korean War and, what is more, the prevailing international situation involving the Korean peninsula.

The latest North Korean proposal, appears to be nothing but a well-calculated plot to edge Pyongyang out of its isolation in the world community. The bid for three-way talks, before it was publicly proposed, was initially suggested on October 8, last year, the very eve of the Rangoon bombing, and was repeated on December 3, the same day that North Korean armed agents attempted to infiltrate Tadaepo, near Pusan. Such timing clearly testifies to the irresponsibility and subversive intent of the North Korean overture which does not serve the cause of progress. North Korea made it clear on January 20, 1984, that its earlier proposal for tripartite peace talks on the Korean question, was primarily aimed at seeking direct contact with the United States and forcing the withdrawal of American troops.⁽⁶²⁾

The South Korean government rejected the plan for three-way talks in the letter of February 13, 1984 delivered at Panmunjom which Prime Minister Chin Iee Chong sent to his northern counterpart, Kang Song San. The North Korean proposal sought to conclude a peace treaty with the United States excluding South Korea, and then to negotiate with South Korea to renounce hostilities for a peaceful unifications of their divided land.⁽⁶³⁾ In response to the so-called three-way talks proposed by the North, Premier Chin in his letter once again clarified the Seoul position calling for a meeting between the highest authorities of South and North Korea, along with ministerial level talks between them but North Korea

(62) *The Rodong Shinmun* (North Korean Workers Party paper), January 20, 1984; Tokyo (AFP), January 21, 1984; *The Korea Times*, January 22, 1984.

(63) *The International Herald Tribuns*, Feb. 15, 1984.

rejected Seoul proposal for dialogue.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The North Korea's position not to talk with Chun's government was made clear by Kim Il Sung's statement which was broadcasted over Pyongyang Radio on January 10, 1984.⁽⁶⁵⁾

South Korea has gradually come to accept a step-by-step approach to national unification, placing high priority on eliminating the dangers of war, whereas North Korea has adhered to a radical approach to national reunification with an emphasis on the solution of military and political problems first and foremost. These contending theories would seem to indicate that the process of unification will be an extended one, if it is to take place at all.

In order to make the initial step toward peaceful unification this vicious circle must be reversed by generating a process of threat-reduction. Reduction of tension and a capacity for violence is hence the primary need to be fulfilled. At the next stage, both sides will have to open communications and negotiation for resolving their mutual hostilities. Communications will become an essential element in the bargaining process between both actors in the conflict.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Realistically considering the existing differences in the social, political and ideological systems of both sides, the peaceful reunification of Korea is possible only when a durable peace has been established on the peninsula, and not the other way around as is persistently claimed by the North. Peace cannot be achieved without the unfailing will and determination of both parties to pursue it. Reducing tensions through dialogue, constant reaffirmation of faith in the dialogues and legitimization of the existing peace system are some of the more realistic and most essential patterns of approach to conflict-resolution. This fact was stressed in the United Nations consensus statement which called for a continuation of the dialogue and

(64) *The Rodong Shinmun*, Feb. 14, 1984; *The Korea Times*, Feb. 16, 1984.

(65) *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 11, 1984.

(66) Yong-pil Rhee, "The Gradual Search for the Sequential Steps toward Korean Unification," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (1975), p. 47.

a widening of exchanges and cooperation between the South and the North.

Both South and North Korea must remember the spirit and principles of the July 4, 1972 Joint Communiqué which they signed. Peace must be maintained on the Korean peninsula by all means. And the South and the North should neither interfere with the other's internal affairs nor commit aggression against the other, thus allowing for the peaceful coexistence between both systems. This reduction of tension and hostilities is the initial step toward the promotion of mutual relations, peaceful coexistence, and the unification of Korea.

Voting Results on Korean Question at the U.N. General Assembly.

G.A. session	Year	Agenda	Favor	Op- pose	Abst.	Ab- sence	No. of Mem- bers
2	1947	Resolution on Korean general election	43	0	6	8	57
3	1948	Recognition of R.O.K.	48	6	1	3	58
4	1949	Korean question	48	6	3	2	59
5	1950	Korean question	47	5	7	1	60
6	1951	Korean question	51	5	2	2	60
7	1952	Korean question	54	5	1	0	60
8	1953	Korean question	55	0	5	0	60
9	1954	Resolution on Unification method	50	5	4	1	60
10	1955	Korean question	44	0	11	5	60
11	1956	Unification method	57	6	9	6	80
12	1957	Unification method	54	9	16	3	82
13	1958	Resolution on Unification	54	9	17	2	82
14	1959	Korean question	59	9	17	2	82
15	1961	Conditional Invitation to both North and South Korea	59	14	23	3	99
16	1961	" "	63	18	19	4	104
17	1962	Invitation to South Korea	71	9	19	11	110
17	1962	Plenary meeting of G.A.	63	11	26	11	110
18	1963	Invitation to South Korea	65	11	24	11	111
19	1964	No discussion					
20	1965	Invitation to South Korea (Political Committee)	62	12	29	14	117
20	1965	Plenary meeting of G.A.	61	13	34	9	117
21	1966	1) Invitation to both South and North Korea (Pol. Com.)	34	53	20	15	122

G.A. session	Year	Agenda	Favor	Op- pose	Abst.	Ab- sence	No. of Mem- bers
		2) Invitation to South Korea if North Korea accept the fu- nction of the U.N.(Pol. Com.)	63	24	21	15	122
		3) Invitation to South Korea (Pol. Com.)	66	19	24	13	122
		4) Disolution on UNCURK and Withdrawal of U.N. force (Pol. Com.)	21	61	25	15	122
		Resolution of Western power at Plenary Meeting	67	19	32	44	122
22	1967	Invitation to South Korea					
23	1968	Invitation to South Korea	67	28	28	3	126
		Discretion Presentation Method	71	25	20	10	126
24	1969	1) Invitation to South Korea (Pol. Com.)	65	31	26	4	126
		2) Invitation to both North and South (Pol. Com.)	40	55	27	4	126
		3) Western Resolution of Korean unification(Pol. Com.)	71	29	22	4	126
		4) Withdrawal of Foreign forces (Pol. Com.)	29	61	32	4	126
		5) Dissolution of UNCURK (Pol. Com.)	30	65	27	4	126
		Western Resolution of Korean question(Plenary Meeting)	70	26	21	9	126
25	1970	Invitation to South Korea	63	37	19	8	127
		Invitation to North and South Korea without any condition	40	54	25	8	127
		Withdrawal of Foreign Forces (Pol. Com.)	32	60	30	5	127
		Dissolution of UNCURK (Pol. Com.)	32	64	26	5	127
		Resolution of Korean question	69	30	23	5	127
26	1971	Postponement of discussion for one year (General Com.)	13	9	2	1	25
		1) Postponement of discussion on withdrawal of Foreign Forces (Plenary Meeting)	68	28	22	12	130
		2) Postponement of discussion on Dissolution of UNCURK	68	25	22	15	130
		3) Report of UNCUR	70	21	23	16	130
27	1972	Postponement of Dissussion on Korean question(General Com.)	16	7	1	1	25
		Postponement of Discussion on Korean question(Plenary Meeting)	70	35	21	6	132
28	1973	Dissolution of UNCURK	Unanimous				

G.A. session	Year	Agenda	Favor	Op- pose	Abst.	Ab- sence	No. of Mem- bers
29	1974	Resumption of Dialogue between North and South Korea (Pol. Com.)	61	42	32	7	138
		Withdrawal of all Foreign Forces and Dissolution of UNC (Pol. Com.)	48	48	38	4	138
		Western Resolution of Korean question (Plenary Meeting)	61	43	31	3	138
30	1975	Western Resolution (Pol. Com.)	59	51	29	3	142
		Communist side Resolution (Pol. Com.)	51	38	50	3	142
		Western Resolution (Plenary Meeting)	59	51	29	3	143
		Communist side Resolution (Plenary Meeting)	54	43	42	4	143