



# **The Korean Peninsula Issues in the United Nations**

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# The Korean Peninsula Issues In the United Nations

- I. History of the Korean Peninsula Issues in the United Nations
- II. The Current Discussion: DPRK Issues
  - Nuclear and other WMD Issues
  - Human Rights Issues
  - Humanitarian Issues
- III. The Road to Peace: Future Prospects

# 1945 -1950: The Birth of the Two Koreas



1945

- Independence and Partition of Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel

1948

- UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) oversees 1948 general elections in the South
- General Assembly resolution 195 (II) acknowledges the legitimacy of the ROK Government
- North Korea announces the establishment of the “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”



# 1950-53: The Korean War



**1950**

- The Security Council authorizes a unified command to fight the armed attack from North Korea and to use the UN Flag (UNSC resolution 84 of 7 July 1950)



## 1951-53: The Korean War and the General Assembly



- “The Korean Question” was brought to the GA when the Security Council got deadlocked due to the Soviet veto (“Uniting for Peace” resolution 377A, 3 November 1950)



- GA creates the UN Commission for the Unification and rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) (7 October 1950)

# 1954-1975 Diplomatic Battle Between the Two Koreas



## 1954-1975

- Under the agenda item “The Korean Question,” UNCURK’s report was submitted and discussed annually in the GA
- A GA resolution submitted by the ROK and allies was adopted every year; DPRK and its supporters began submitting their own resolution in 1961, which was consistently voted down until 1974



# 1954-1975 Diplomatic Battle between the Two Koreas

1975



- Contradictory resolutions on Korea from both sides are adopted, demonstrating the pointlessness of the debate and removing the issue from GA agenda from 1976

# 1976-91: Road to UN Membership for Both Koreas



- ROK makes admission to the UN a priority diplomatic goal
- DPRK started to join int'l organizations (WHO, NAM, IAEA) but ROK was winning the diplomatic competition (diplomatic ties with 152 countries compared to 121 for the DPRK as of 1991)

1991

- With the end of the Cold War, the two Koreas were admitted to the United Nations



# 1991-2015: Current Discussion #1: Nuclear and Missile Issues



- The DPRK back on the agenda of the UNSC with the first nuclear crisis in 1993
- UNSC resolutions on DPRK :
  - 825 : DPRK's noncompliance with the IAEA Safeguards obligations
  - 1695: LRBM launches on 5 July 2006
  - 1718: First nuclear test on 15 Oct 2006
  - 1874: Second nuclear test on 25 May 2009
  - 2078: LRBM launches on 12 Dec 2012
  - 2094: Third nuclear test on 12 Feb 2013

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion #1: Nuclear and Missile Issues



- DPRK is subject to one of the most comprehensive sanctions regimes:
  - Arms embargo
  - Inspection/seizure of prohibited items
  - Luxury goods ban
  - Financial services/assets ban
  - Travel ban and assets freeze on designated persons and entities
- Seizure of *Chong Chon Gang* and *Mudubong* by Panama (2013) and Mexico (2014)

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion in the UN

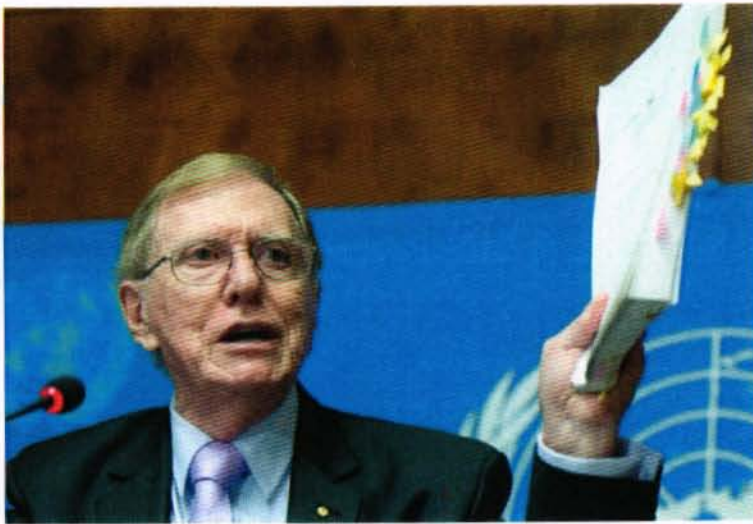
## #2: DPRK Human Rights



- Human Rights Council's annual resolution on DPRK human rights since 2003
- GA's annual resolution since 2005
- A Special Rapporteur on DPRK human rights was established in 2005 by the HRC

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion in the UN

## #2: DPRK Human Rights



- The Commission of Inquiry's report on Human Rights in the DPRK (Feb 2014) took the issue to a new dimension:
  - “Crimes against humanity”
  - Recommendation of ICC referral
- UN General Assembly encourages Security Council to consider COI recommendations, including the Council's debate on DPRK human rights situations (resolution 69/188, Dec 2012)

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion in the UN

## #2: DPRK Human Rights



- In April 2014, a group of Security Council members host an 'Arria' meeting
- Security Council's first-ever debate on DPRK human rights (December 22, 2014)
  - DPRK human rights situation adopted as formal agenda of UNSC

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion in the UN

## #3: Humanitarian Assistance



- “DPRK is a highly food insecure country, with a population made increasingly vulnerable by continued reliance upon unreliable food supplies” (OCHA)
- UNDP, UNFPA, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO have a presence in Pyongyang with aid program
- Total humanitarian funding by the UN:
  - 2012: 118 million USD (ROK: 8M)
  - 2013: 63 million USD (ROK: 12M)
  - 2014: 48 million USD (ROK:13M)

# 1991-2015: Current Discussion in the UN

## #3: Humanitarian Assistance



- Recent allocation of 6.3 million USD from UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to respond to the draught in Hwanghae province (Aug 2015)



- Joint flood assessment mission (FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, IFRC) to Rason City (Sept 2015)

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #1: continuing challenges

### I. DPRK nuclear/missile issues

- Prospects for DPRK's denuclearization remain bleak: the Six-Party Talks have not convened since 2008
- Has DPRK ever been willing to give up nuclear weapons through negotiations?
- Past "moments of truth": DPRK repeatedly backed away from taking the verifiable, irreversible step
  - 1992: Refusal to allow IAEA inspectors to Yongbyon
  - 2002: Disclosure of UEP during James Kelly's visit
  - 2008: Refusal to allow IAEA inspectors, and breakdown of Six-Party Talks



# The road to peace: future prospects

## #1: continuing challenges

- The international community should make it more difficult for DPRK to develop WMD, forcing it to reconsider its policy
  - Security Council sanctions resolutions
  - Trigger mechanism (UNSCR 2087, 2094)
- Two-track approach by the ROK: sanctions and dialogue
- ROK-US Joint Summit Statement on North Korea (Oct 16, 2015)

“If North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technology or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including further significant measures by the UN Security Council. .... We will continue to strengthen our coordination .... To bring North Korea ... back to credible and meaningful talks as soon as possible.”

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #1: continuing challenges



- The case of Iran: similarities, differences, lessons learnt
  - Sanctions can be effective
  - Diplomatic negotiations can bring results
  - Need for phased lifting of sanctions that are predicated on compliance measures

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #1: continuing challenges

### **II. Human rights situation and DPRK regime's dilemma**

- Serious human rights violations reflect the instability of the regime and its dilemma that it can only rule through coercion
  - The regime fears that openness and economic reform will risk disillusioning North Korean people
- This dilemma leads DPRK regime to constantly resort to WMD development and totalitarian coercion to sustain itself
  - All three problems (WMD, human rights violations, humanitarian crises) are inherently linked to DPRK's governance problem

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #2: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Cooperation



- ROK policy of trust-building process on the Korean Peninsula, such as Dresden Declaration: Agenda for Humanity, Co-prosperity, Integration
- Recently, after DPRK's DMZ provocation, August 25 Inter-Korean Accord set the stage for dialogue and exchanges

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #2: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Cooperation



- 20<sup>th</sup> Reunion of separated families (October 20-26, 2015)
  - First family reunion took place in Aug 2000
  - 19 rounds of face-to-face and 7 rounds of video reunions
  - Engaged more than 22,000 out of 130,000 who have requested participation

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #2: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Cooperation

### ▪ **History of Inter-Korean Cooperation**

#### I. **Gaesong Industrial Complex**

- Aug 2000: Project launched through agreement between Hyundai Asan Corp and North Korea
- Dec 2007: Construction completed
- April 2013: DPRK unilaterally suspends operations for 5 months

#### II. **Family Reunions**

- June 2000: Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il meet in Pyongyang, agree to begin family reunions
- Since 2000, 19 rounds of face-to-face reunions and 7 rounds of video reunions

#### III. **Mt. Kumgang tourism**

- Oct 1998: Hyundai Asan and North Korea's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee (APPC) sign agreement on tourism project
- July 2008: South Korean tourist killed by DPRK soldier, tours suspended
- 2010: DPRK seizes all assets by the South and expels workers

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #2: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Cooperation



- When the right moment arrives, opportunities may open up for UN's more active role
  - The Secretary-General as a mediator to facilitate inter-Korean reconciliation
- Proposals, such as DMZ World Eco-Peace Park

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #2: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Cooperation

### ▪ **UN Secretary-General's efforts in the past:**

#### **Trygve Lie (1<sup>st</sup> Secretary-General, Norway, 1946-1952)**

- Played important role in establishing UNTCOK, UNCURK, UNKRA

#### **Kurt Waldheim (4<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General, Austria, 1972-1981)**

- Tried to open channel of communication between North and South Korea
- Visited Pyongyang in May 1979 and 1981

#### **Boutros Boutros-Gali (6<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General, Egypt, 1992-1996)**

- United Nations deal with first nuclear crisis under his tenure
- Visited Pyongyang in December 1993

#### **Kofi Annan (7<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General, Ghana, 1997-2006)**

- Endorsed the four-party talks

#### **Ban Ki-moon (8<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General, Korea, 2007-)**

- Dispatched Special Envoy Lynn Pascoe to Pyongyang in 2010
- DPRK canceled SG Ban's scheduled visit to Gaesong Complex in May 2015



# The road to peace: future prospects

## #3: A Unified Korea and the UN

- “A unified Korea will be the fundamental solution to the North Korean nuclear and human rights issues, and will close the final chapter on the history of the Cold War.”
  - President Park Geun-Hye, at 2015 Seoul Defense Dialogue —
- Merger of UN membership: possible and with precedent
  - Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic (1973) → Federal Republic of Germany (1990)
  - Yemen (1947) and Democratic Yemen (1967) → Yemen (1990)
  - Tanganyika (1961) and Zanzibar (1963) → Tanzania (1964)

# The road to peace: future prospects

## #3: A Unified Korea and the UN



- Reunification will be the final chapter of Korea's journey toward nation-building, and will usher in a new era of hope, peace and growth
- Put together, a unified Korea will be 19<sup>th</sup> in population, 13<sup>th</sup> in GDP, and 13<sup>th</sup> in UN contributions among UN membership

Thank You