COUNCIL on FOREIGN RELATIONS | CFR Education Global Matters

Korean War in 1950 (UNSC)

Set in September 1950. Five years after World War II, conflict on the Korean Peninsula threatens the fragile post-war order.

Case Overview

Set in September 1950. At the conclusion of World War II, Korea—formerly under Japanese control—was divided at the thirty-eighth parallel into a U.S.-occupied south and a Soviet-occupied north. Although the division was meant to be temporary, by 1948 both countries had declared independence. North Korea became a Soviet-supported communist state; South Korea was supported by the United States. Two years later, North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to bring the entire peninsula under its control. After several weeks of fighting, UN and South Korean forces were defending an area called the Pusan perimeter, in the southernmost portion of the peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur, who was commanding U.S. and allied forces as part of a UN mission, was also making plans for a landing at Inchon, near the South Korean capital of Seoul, in order to surprise North Korean troops and recapture Seoul.

Anticipating the possible success of the Inchon landing, The UN secretary-general has convened the Security Council to discuss the situation in Korea, specifically whether to extend the UN military intervention north of the thirty-eighth parallel in an attempt to unify the Korean Peninsula. Security Council members will have to weigh the risks of such an intervention, and whether intervention offers a better opportunity to form a durable peace than stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would.

Guide

Global Literacy

Global literacy is the ability to understand and engage effectively in today's interconnected world. Today's interdependent global economy and geopolitical landscape connect America's interests more than ever to the actions and interests of other countries and their citizens. To ensure students understand this interconnected world, they need to be globally literate. Learn more about global literacy.

The United Nations is the largest and most prominent international organization. The membership of the UN includes nearly all the world's countries. It was established in 1945, after the end of World War II, by the United States and some four dozen other countries in an effort to build a more peaceful and cooperative postwar world. The United Nations has four main priorities: to keep peace throughout the world, promote fundamental human rights, strengthen international law, and pursue "social progress" and higher standards of living.

One of the most important functions of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. This is primarily the task of the UN Security Council, a decision-making body that comprises fifteen countries. Five of these countries hold permanent seats and ten are elected on a rotating basis. The five permanent members (known as the P5) are the United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The council's main responsibilities are to evaluate threats to international peace and security and to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes. When a peaceful settlement cannot be

reached, the Security Council can impose diplomatic or economic sanctions. The Security Council can even authorize using force to resolve conflicts and prevent new ones. The Security Council has addressed a variety of issues, such as civil wars, terrorism, arms control, and natural disasters.

Despite its prominent position the Security Council's influence is limited. Any action requires the unanimous agreement of the P5. This means that no resolution can be adopted if even one permanent member votes no—or vetoes—the measure. This kind of agreement is often difficult to reach, especially when a permanent member thinks its interests will be jeopardized if the measure passes. Moreover, the United Nations lacks its own military forces and has no enforcement power. In short, the Security Council can only do that to which its member states agree. These factors mean that countries, especially major powers, can bypass the Security Council or ignore its decisions. Nonetheless, the United Nations is the only organization with essentially universal membership, making it an important feature of international affairs.

Resources related to UN:

- "What is the UN Security Council," CFR Education, April 25, 2023.
- "Current Members | United Nations Security Council," United Nations.
- "What Happens When the UN Security Council Can't Agree?," Better World Campaign, October 21, 2023.
- Séverine Autesserre, "The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars," *Foreign Affairs*, December 11, 2018.

The UN System

Since its founding in 1945, the United Nations has grown to include 193 member states. The United Nations has several subsidiary bodies, and a network of offices and programs around the world. The nature of the issues on the UN agenda has evolved over time. The Cold War and its associated conflicts dominated for much of the twentieth century. Hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union held up much UN activity. During the Cold War, the Security Council was often deadlocked, given the veto each country held as a permanent member. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, this dynamic began to change. In the past twenty years, issues including climate change, terrorism, and international migration have shifted the UN focus away from interstate conflict. Increasingly, the focus is on problems that transcend national borders.

Organs

The United Nations is divided into six principal organs or parts: the General Assembly, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Security Council.

The General Assembly deliberates on the widest range of issues, spanning all areas of the United Nations' work. The General Assembly is the only body in which all 193 UN member states are represented, each having one vote. General Assembly resolutions are nonbinding. In other words, they are recommendations.

The Secretariat carries out the institution's day-to-day work. Led by the secretary-general and comprising tens of thousands of staff members from various countries, it staffs UN offices around the world. The Secretariat administers peacekeeping missions and operates communications, financial, and many other functions. As the organization's chief administrative officer, the secretary-general attends sessions of UN bodies, consults with world leaders and others, reports on the work of the United Nations, and acts as a spokesperson.

The United Nations also includes the Economic and Social Council. This body is tasked with coordinating and discussing economic, social, and environmental issues. The United Nations also includes the Trusteeship Council, created to provide international supervision for decolonization and now largely inactive. Another organ of the United Nations is the International

Court of Justice (ICJ), responsible for settling legal disputes between countries.

The Security Council is tasked with identifying and addressing threats to international security. In addition, it makes recommendations to the General Assembly for the appointment of the secretary-general and the admission of new members to the United Nations. Security Council decisions are communicated through resolutions. These are formal texts that outline steps to be taken and the reasoning behind those steps. In the absence of agreement, the body could also issue presidential statements . Presidential statements are similar in content and form to a formal resolution but do not legally bind member states.

Structure

Membership

The United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom make up the permanent members of the council. The remaining ten members are elected by the General Assembly to serve two-year terms. In electing nonpermanent council members, the General Assembly considers two factors. It must consider the "contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization." This stipulation means that aggressive, norm-defying countries tend not to be elected to the council and that countries that contribute significantly to the United Nations (financially or in the form of personnel and equipment) appear more frequently. Second, nonpermanent members must reflect an equitable geographic distribution, meaning members must be elected from each of the major regions of the world.

Presidency

The Security Council presidency is held on a rotating basis by both permanent and nonpermanent member states. The position rotates in English alphabetical order by country name, each country holding office for one month. The president presides over meetings and serves as the Security Council's representative before all other UN organizations. However, the UN secretary-general, not the Security Council president, sets the agenda for council meetings. The president simply approves this agenda.

Subsidiary Organs

Various subsidiary organs exist to support the Security Council's mission and implement its resolutions. These range from committees on sanctions, counterterrorism, and nonproliferation to international criminal tribunals that prosecute those responsible for genocide and war crimes. The council also maintains partnerships or close relationships with a variety of other elements in the UN system, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the International Court of Justice.

Proceedings

Meetings of the Security Council are typically called when a state—even a nonmember (one of the two observer states at the United Nations or other states whose sovereignty is disputed)—brings a dispute to the Security Council's attention. Meetings of the Security Council can also be called when the General Assembly refers a question to the council, or when the secretary-general raises a concern about international peace and security. Once the president decides that a meeting is necessary, they call for a session to address the issue.

Both UN members and nonmembers—the latter if they are parties to a dispute being considered by the Security Council—are invited to participate, though nonmembers do not have a vote in the council's discussions. If a Security Council member is party to the dispute being discussed, it must abstain (in other words, formally refrain) from voting.

Both Security Council members and invited participants can introduce a draft of a resolution—a ruling or recommendation made by a UN body—expressing a Security Council decision. After debating proposals, any member can call for a vote. A resolution needs nine votes to pass. A dissenting vote from any of the five permanent Security Council members can defeat a

resolution, no matter how many affirmative votes it receives. This powerful dissenting vote is known as the veto. Permanent members can use their veto for any reason. Typically, they do so to stop resolutions that threaten their national interests. Security Council members can also abstain from voting. In any case, a resolution passes as long as it receives nine votes and no permanent member exercises a veto. Permanent members sometimes abstain from a vote if they disagree with a resolution but are not sufficiently opposed to veto it.

Powers, Functions, and Tools

If a resolution passes, the Security Council has several powers that it can use to ensure that resolution's implementation. Certain Security Council resolutions are considered legally binding on all UN member states. This means that countries are obligated to comply with the terms of the resolution. This power sets the Security Council apart from other UN organs, which are empowered only to issue recommendations.

The United Nations' founding document, the UN Charter, lays out the tools the Security Council can use to execute its work. These are established in Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the charter. Under Chapter VI, the council can only make recommendations of how parties should resolve a dispute. Under Chapter VII, the council can use more forceful methods. Generally, resolutions under Chapter VII are considered legally binding.

Chapter VI: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

Chapter VI allows the Security Council to seek solutions to disputes by "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means."

Actions taken under Chapter VI include

- referring legal disputes to the International Court of Justice,
- recommending terms for the settlement of conflicts,
- facilitating dispute resolution through a formal arbitration, and
- launching peacekeeping missions.

The recommendations made under Chapter VI are just that—recommendations. They cannot be imposed on the parties concerned without their consent.

Peacekeeping missions can fall under Chapter VI or Chapter VII. In the case of Chapter VI missions, forces are deployed to help maintain a peace agreement, cease-fire, or other such arrangement that has already taken hold between warring parties. Peacekeeping missions under Chapter VI can include unarmed observers, lightly armed troops, or both. Their goal is to prevent new outbreaks of conflict and peacefully resolve disputes that arise. UN personnel tend to be stationed along a boundary line and their role is usually to report infractions of peace agreements rather than to intervene. Chapter VI peacekeeping missions require the consent (or agreement) of the parties involved in the conflict, are considered impartial, and do not use force except in self-defense.

Chapter VII: Maintaining or Enforcing Peace

Chapter VII addresses "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression."

Actions taken under Chapter VII include

- severing diplomatic relations;
- imposing economic sanctions, travel bans, and financial or diplomatic restrictions;
- creating international tribunals, such as those for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia;
- establishing or modifying peace enforcement or peace-building missions; and

calling for military intervention, either by multinational forces (organized, e.g., by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]) or by regional organizations (such as the African Union).

Unlike Security Council resolutions issued under Chapter VI, those adopted under Chapter VII are binding. Two examples of Chapter VII resolutions are Resolution 1695, which in 2006 imposed sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear program. Likewise, resolution 1973 in 2011 established the legal basis for military intervention in the Libyan civil war.

One of the most frequently used tools under Chapter VII is the imposition of sanctions. Sanctions are restrictions on a country, organization, or individual, typically limiting the target's ability to travel, trade, or access financial resources. They can be used to discourage certain future actions, such as building nuclear weapons, to pressure a party to act, or to punish it for violating international rules. Sanctions can target entire sectors of a country's economy. Generally, the Security Council pursues targeted sanctions—sometimes called smart sanctions—against certain industries, businesses, or individuals. These can include arms embargoes, travel restrictions, or financial asset freezes.

Sanctions have become a popular tool because they offer a way to intervene in an issue without the risks and costs associated with using military force. However, sanctions have raised some concerns as well. Critics have argued that even highly targeted sanctions can have unintended consequences, especially on already vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the Security Council lacks a concrete method of enforcing its sanctions. Instead, it must rely on individual countries to enact them. If sanctions are weakly enforced, the target could possibly work around them, avoiding their effects and potentially discrediting the value of sanctions in the future.

If nonmilitary options, such as sanctions, fail to resolve a dispute, the Security Council can authorize a peace enforcement mission. Unlike Chapter VI peacekeeping missions, Chapter VII enforcement missions do not require the consent of the parties involved. Chapter VII enforcement missions are authorized to "take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security." The personnel involved can include heavily armed troops and can use force in situations other than self-defense. Chapter VII peace enforcement missions can take different forms. Sometimes they are undertaken by UN peacekeeping forces and operate under UN command. In other instances they can be led by a coalition of member states authorized to do so by a Security Council resolution.

The line between Chapter VI and Chapter VII missions is not always clear. A Security Council resolution does not need to explicitly refer to the chapter it is invoking. A mission's mandate—or description of its mission—can change over time to adjust to changing circumstances; a mission established under Chapter VI can be expanded to also fall under Chapter VII if the situation evolves and requires a more robust intervention.

Current Issues

The Security Council was able to greatly expand its activities at the end of the Cold War. Without the United States and the Soviet Union in direct opposition, the number of vetoes declined significantly. The council was able to take action on a greater range of issues, including civil conflicts and humanitarian crises. During the 1990s, the Security Council authorized more peacekeeping missions than it had in the previous forty years combined. It authorized UN-led missions such as those in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The Security Council also authorized coalition operations such as the 1990 Gulf War. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, international terrorism also came to the forefront of the council's agenda.

The Security Council has also broadened its view of international security in recent years, adopting resolutions on issues such as HIV/AIDS, the protection of women and children in humanitarian crises, and climate change. In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a series of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to promote global economic development, environmental protection, and social well-being. The SDGs emphasize the interconnected nature of global challenges and the need for cooperation across governments and institutions. Accordingly, the Security Council has paid increasing attention to the ways in which social, economic, and environmental factors influence the maintenance of peace and security.

Despite this increased activity, the Security Council continues to face significant challenges. The United Nations greatly expanded its peacekeeping efforts after the Cold War. But peacekeeping missions have faced criticism for being underfunded,

for being limited in scope, and for abuses committed by peacekeepers themselves. In some cases, such as in Rwanda in 1994, peacekeepers have been accused of failing to prevent genocide. Those failures led many countries to argue for a new understanding of peacekeeping and foreign intervention. In 2005, UN member countries adopted the responsibility to protect (R2P) doctrine. This doctrine establishes that countries have a responsibility to intervene in cases of genocide or crimes against humanity that a national government cannot or will not stop. This remains a nonbinding norm, and its applicability in specific situations is often disputed. Moreover, conflicting interests among the security council's veto-wielding permanent members often curtail the possibility of approving a robust intervention.

In recent years, renewed tension among the United States, China, and Russia has emerged as an obstacle to Security Council action. Observers and Security Council members themselves have sharply criticized the council's inability to take action on the Syrian civil war. This inability to take action is in spite of multiple reports of war crimes and an estimated death toll of at least five hundred thousand people. Russia, an ally of Syria's government, has vetoed several resolutions aimed at stabilizing the conflict and alleviating the growing humanitarian crisis, arguing that any such resolution would be a violation of Syria's sovereignty. Vetoes have increased in the last decade, with Russia and the United States casting the majority of them.

These challenges have led many UN members, including the United States, to call for changes to the Security Council. Many observers argue that the council's composition, which allots the five permanent seats to the winners of World War II (the United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom), does not reflect the power structure of today's world. They argue instead for extending permanent membership to more countries and adjusting the regional distribution of permanent membership. These reforms could help better represent large and growing populations in Africa and South America. Another source of criticism has been the P5's veto, which, critics assert, undermines the council's ability to take action. In recent years, a growing number of UN member states—including France, a permanent member—have supported calls for P5 members to voluntarily refrain from using their veto power in situations involving mass atrocities. Other member states have suggested that the veto power be removed altogether.

Reform is controversial and complicated. Any reform of the Security Council would likely require an amendment to the UN Charter that is approved and ratified by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly and then a vote in the Security Council. Permanent members of the Security Council would retain their usual right to veto. Given this, any reform of the UN Security Council that is not supported, or at least tolerated, by the P5 is unachievable, and garnering such support or tolerance will almost certainly prove impossible.

Case Notes

Fuel a lively classroom discussion with simulations that put your students in the shoes of either the National Security Council or the UN Security Council.

CFR Education simulations can be run for several days or weeks and include background readings, videos, and assignments to help students understand the situation and their roles.

Instructions

How to Run a CFR Simulation Role-Play

The Issue

On June 25, 1950, Soviet Union–backed North Korea invaded U.S.-backed South Korea. North Korea sent its forces across the agreed boundary at the thirty-eighth parallel in an attempt to bring the entire peninsula under its control. When UN Secretary-General Trygve Halvdan Lie received the news, he reportedly replied, "This is war against the United Nations." At the United States' request, he convened the UN Security Council the next day. The council quickly passed Resolution 82. This resolution called for the "immediate cessation of hostilities" on the peninsula. Two days later, the council passed Resolution 83, which

authorized the use of force to “repel the armed attack.”

After several weeks of fighting, UN and South Korean forces were defending an area called the Pusan perimeter, a zone of southeastern South Korea around the Port of Pusan, against North Korea’s southward advance. General Douglas MacArthur, an American commanding U.S. and allied forces as part of the UN mission, was also making plans for a landing at Inchon, near the South Korean capital, Seoul.

A successful Inchon landing would mean the prospect of swiftly liberating South Korea. The Security Council faced a weighty related decision. Should the United Nations simply call for the restoration of the prewar status quo, pushing North Korea’s military back to the thirty-eighth parallel? Or should UN forces advance into North Korea and try to unify the peninsula?

A UN move into North Korea would bring the risk of war with China, the Soviet Union, or both. At the same time, it would carry the possibility of a peaceful and unified peninsula. Merely restoring the status quo would reduce the risk of war among global powers. It would also preserve the hostile North Korean leadership and leave the peninsula divided. This could serve as an open wound, and potential battleground, in the intensifying Cold War.

DECISION POINT—*Set in 1950.*

The UN secretary-general has convened the Security Council to discuss the situation in Korea, specifically whether to extend the UN military intervention north of the thirty-eighth parallel in an attempt to unify the Korean Peninsula. The secretary-general has made clear that this decision depends on the success of the Inchon landing and victory in South Korea. Security Council members will need to consider a few critical questions. First, what is at stake in the conflict? Is it just a Korean national issue fueled by north-south rivalry, each side seeking to lead a unified nation, or could the conflict become a major flash point in the Cold War? Second, what are the chances of Soviet or Chinese intervention if UN forces invade North Korea? Finally, does reunifying Korea offer a better prospect of a durable peace than stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would?

Background

Slightly smaller than the United Kingdom, the Korean Peninsula juts southward from China between the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan. The peninsula’s northern edge shares a long border with China and a short one with Russia. East of the peninsula is a shared maritime boundary with Japan.

For much of the early twentieth century, Korea was a protectorate of Japan. Japan had seized control of the peninsula—which had been ruled for centuries by the Joseon dynasty—in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). Japan maintained its control despite challenges from Russia and frequent domestic uprisings. Japan’s grip on the peninsula was tight politically, economically, and culturally. Japanese authorities outlawed social and political organizations. They also banned the teaching of the Korean language, and forced the population to speak Japanese and adopt Japanese names. Japan did industrialize the peninsula, building highways, railroads, and factories. However, much of this effort was gradually directed toward military use by an increasingly aggressive imperial Japan.

By the late 1930s, Japan was well into its campaign of conquest throughout East Asia. In 1931, it invaded and seized Manchuria, a resource-rich region in northeast China, and renamed it Manchukuo. It followed up in 1937 with a full-scale invasion of China, starting the Second Sino-Japanese War. In 1936 and 1937, Japan formalized its friendship with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy by signing the Anti-Comintern Pact. This created the alliance that would come to be known as the Axis powers.

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, Japan saw an opportunity to seize European colonies and grow its empire. At the same time, however, it faced growing economic sanctions from the United States and its Western allies, which were worried about Japan’s expansion. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese carried out a surprise military strike on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The attack was intended to avoid an extended conflict by debilitating the U.S. fleet. Instead it brought the United States into World War II.

During the war, Japan brutally exploited Korea's people and drafted more than 240,000 men into the military as both soldiers and civilian employees. More than 5 million men and women were conscripted to work in war-related industries under dangerous conditions. In addition, some 670,000 were forcibly brought to Japan. Hundreds of thousands died. The most notorious abuse, though, involved the so-called comfort women. Up to two hundred thousand Korean women were kidnapped to serve as sex slaves in military brothels, or comfort stations, for Japanese soldiers. To this day, Japan contests its responsibility for the treatment of these women.

As World War II ground on, the developments that would shape Korea's postwar trajectory began to unfold. On November 27, 1943, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China's Nationalist Party, met in Cairo, Egypt. These allies decided that after Japan's surrender, the country would be stripped of the territories it had acquired since beginning its expansionist campaign in the late nineteenth century—including Korea, which the allies acknowledged had been a victim of Japanese aggression. The resulting declaration noted that the allies, "mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent."

By early 1945, the war in the Pacific was entering its final phase. At the Yalta Conference in Crimea, in the Soviet Union, in February, Roosevelt and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin agreed to establish an international trusteeship for Korea following Japanese surrender. This agreement, though, was only a general framework. The precise arrangements for governing a postwar Korea were not finalized.

The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945. Shortly thereafter, Soviet forces invaded Korea and Manchuria. U.S. military leaders feared that if the Soviet Union ended up occupying Korea in the course of the conflict, it would never cede control. This concern spurred the U.S. government to finalize a formula for administering the peninsula. U.S. officials hurriedly proposed the thirty-eighth parallel as a demarcation line between U.S. and Soviet forces, cutting the peninsula almost in half. This line was intended as a temporary operational boundary that would prevent confusion among military forces operating in Korea.

The order came down on August 17, 1945, two days after Japan's surrender ended World War II. (Japan had surrendered days after the United States dropped two atomic bombs—the only ones ever used in combat—on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, devastating the two cities and killing some 170,000 people.) The Soviet Union would accept the Japanese surrender of weapons and troops and take control of the territory north of the thirty-eighth parallel. South of the parallel, these tasks would fall to the United States.

Temporary peace was thus brought to the Korean Peninsula after the war. The political and economic situation remained complex and unstable. U.S. troops landed in Korea on September 8, 1945, following the Soviet troops, who had arrived the previous month. Because Korea had been a Japanese colony since 1910, no Korean government was in place to reclaim authority. The political scene was fragmented as various leaders jostled for power. One of these was Kim Il-sung, a military leader with close connections to the Soviet Union, who would become the first leader of North Korea. Other contenders were ultranationalists oriented more toward the West. This camp included Syngman Rhee, who had earned a doctorate at Princeton University and, with U.S. backing, would become the first leader of South Korea.

Korea's economy, meanwhile, was suffering. When the Japanese departed after World War II, many companies were left without managers, capital, and other resources. This led to unemployment and shortages of vital goods. The peninsula's division at the thirty-eighth parallel did not help. Korea's heavy industry and energy production were concentrated in the north. This left the south's primarily agrarian economy dependent on the north for electricity transmission and transport of other essentials. This, along with the return of millions of Koreans from elsewhere in the region, caused significant social unrest and protests against the U.S. military government in the south.

At first, the United States and the Soviet Union shared a vision for a united, independent Korea. The foreign ministers of the World War II allies, meeting in December 1945 in Moscow, agreed that Korea would have a five-year trusteeship. Attempts to fulfill this vision stumbled. A joint U.S.-Soviet commission met occasionally in 1946 and 1947 but was unable to establish a Korean government because the United States and Soviet Union disagreed on who should participate.

Meanwhile, the division on the peninsula remained stark. The south was disorganized, afflicted by economic instability, political differences among Koreans, and uncertain U.S. policy. In the north, by contrast, the Soviet Union smartly

consolidated control, creating both administrative bodies and a North Korean Workers' Party that united various left-wing groups. At the same time, Soviet-encouraged land reform—which redistributed land from Japanese and Korean landowners to poor farmers—drove thousands of former landowners and Japanese collaborators into the southern part of the peninsula.

The issue was brought before the UN General Assembly in September 1947. World leaders had established the United Nations just two years earlier. It was created with their collective hopes of preventing a third world war. The Korea issue was an early test of the organization's ability to manage decolonization efforts and great power disputes of the postwar era.

In the General Assembly, the United States continued to advance the vision of a united, independent peninsula. In November 1947, the General Assembly adopted UN General Assembly Resolution 112, which asserted "that the national independence of Korea should be re-established and all occupying forces then withdrawn at the earliest possible date." To facilitate this plan, the resolution created the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to pave the way for elections for a national assembly. This assembly was to set up a government that would assume full administrative responsibilities and work with the United States and Soviet Union to clear Korea of occupying troops. The commission was also charged with observing and reporting threats to and violations of the boundary at the thirty-eighth parallel.

Despite the commission, the Korean Peninsula moved no closer to unified governance. Instead, politics continued to evolve separately on either side of the thirty-eighth parallel. Rhee, by now an influential, U.S.-backed nationalist leader, favored independence as soon as possible—even though a declaration of independence would have effect only in the south, as long as the United States and the Soviet Union remained at loggerheads. In a UN-supervised election in May 1948 for a constitutional assembly in the south, Rhee came out in front. Under his leadership, the assembly adopted a constitution outlining a presidential system of government. The Republic of Korea (ROK), which remains the official name of South Korea, was proclaimed on August 15, 1948. Rhee took office in Seoul as its first president.

North of the thirty-eighth parallel, the Soviet Union refused to admit the UNTCOK. Four days after the proclamation of the Republic of Korea, authorities in the north cut power transmission to the south, reinforcing the peninsula's division. Less than a month later, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the official name of North Korea, was born, and its capital established as Pyongyang. Its first leader, Kim Il-sung, claimed jurisdiction over the entire peninsula. By the end of 1948, he had solidified control over the north's administrative structures, military forces, and Communist Party. In December, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 195, recognizing the ROK as the "lawful" Korean government. But the Soviet Union again disagreed, recognizing the DPRK instead.

The United States kept military forces in South Korea until 1949, but its support for Rhee's government was half-hearted. The South Korean government established its own army in September 1948. However, a rebellion by some army units the following month, and a purge thereafter, left the force weak. By 1950, it had fewer than one hundred thousand soldiers and lacked advanced equipment such as tanks, heavy weapons, and combat aircraft.

The contrast with North Korea was stark. Although the Soviet Union had withdrawn its forces in late 1948, focusing instead on increasing its control in Eastern Europe, it continued to provide training and arms to North Korean forces. With this assistance, by mid-1950, Pyongyang had built up a force of 150,000 to 200,000 troops. The North Korean People's Army had fearsome Soviet weapons, including tanks and fighter planes, at its disposal.

Fueled by his military might and ambitions to control the entire peninsula, Kim Il-sung sought Stalin's support for an invasion of the south. At first, Stalin resisted. In the spring of 1950, however, he relented and approved Kim's plan. Kim also sought support—at Stalin's encouragement—from Chinese leader Mao Zedong, who had recently emerged victorious in the Chinese civil war and successfully pushed nationalist forces offshore to Taiwan. Early on the morning of June 25, 1950, North Korean soldiers crossed the thirty-eighth parallel. The Korean War began. The main offensive was aimed at the South Korean capital, Seoul, which fell in only three days.

The United States immediately brought the matter to the attention of the UN Security Council. The Council met the next day. UN Secretary-General Lie began the meeting with a report from the UNTCOK. The report claimed that the situation was "assuming the character of full-scale warfare" and he urged Security Council members to take action. U.S. representative Ernest A. Gross then introduced a draft resolution stating that the invasion was a breach of the peace in violation of the UN Charter. This resolution, Resolution 82, passed with a vote of nine to zero, with one abstention. Resolution 83, passed two days later, called on UN member states to provide "such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary." The Soviet

Union, as a permanent member of the Security Council, could have vetoed these resolutions. However, the country had been boycotting Security Council meetings since January, after the defeat of its proposal to replace the nationalist Chinese delegation holding a permanent seat with a delegation from Mao's Communist China.

Within days of the passage of Resolution 83, naval units and aircraft supplied by several nations, as well as the first major formations of U.S. troops, were making their way to South Korea.

On July 7, the Security Council adopted Resolution 84. It called for a unified UN command and put the United States in charge of all military operations to assist the South Koreans. Under MacArthur's command, the UN mission initially struggled. The disorganized, ill-equipped South Korean army was no match for the invading North Koreans. U.S. personnel, still recovering from World War II, had to contend with equipment shortages, refugees fleeing the fighting, and even a lack of water.

By the end of the summer, about two months after the war began, more than 80,000 U.S. troops were in Korea. They were fighting alongside some 90,000 South Korean troops and a 1,600-man British contingent. These allied forces held only the Pusan perimeter in southeastern South Korea—North Korean soldiers had overrun the rest of the peninsula.

To reverse the turn of events, MacArthur was planning a risky landing of forces at Inchon, an area on the west coast of South Korea near Seoul. He aimed to cut off enemy supply lines behind the North Korean troops, which had advanced farther south. The aim was to divide the enemy forces and break their hold on Seoul, enabling South Korea's government to eventually regain control. The Inchon landing would be an amphibious assault: troops would arrive by sea and proceed onto land. This plan echoed the D-Day landings on the beaches of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944. Those assaults were costly but spectacularly successful and turned the tide against Nazi Germany in the European theater of World War II.

Should the Inchon landing succeed, the liberation of South Korea would be at hand. With that could come an opportunity to unify the peninsula. This was something the United Nations had envisioned since the surrender of Japan. But realizing this opportunity would require invading North Korea, which could bring UN member states—particularly the United States and the Soviet Union—in conflict with one another.

Role of the UN Security Council

Little consensus could be found in the UN Security Council by late summer 1950. Until that point nearly every resolution on the issue had passed unanimously. However, the Soviet representative's return to the council in August 1950 and his assumption of the council presidency in the same month brought the council into a new stage of conflict.

On the one hand were those—above all the United States—who saw intervention above the thirty-eighth parallel to be necessary and imperative to repel Communist aggression. Members of this camp, including the United Kingdom and the Republic of China, interpreted Resolution 83 as an authorization of any and all action that would unify the two countries and reestablish peace on the peninsula. These nations called for a UN resolution authorizing an intervention above the thirty-eighth parallel with the goal of defeating North Korea and holding UN-supervised elections on the peninsula. This view pleased MacArthur. In mid-July, just weeks after the war began, MacArthur told other military leaders, "I intend to destroy and not to drive back the North Korean forces. I may need to occupy all of North Korea." If this was not possible, the United States and its allies advocated for a resolution that condemned North Korea for continued defiance of the United Nations and called on all states to refrain from assisting the invaders.

The Soviet Union and its allies were starkly opposed to UN intervention of any nature, let alone above the thirty-eighth parallel. The Soviet representative called the intervention illegitimate, asserting that the Korean War was a civil war and that the United Nations had no right to intervene. More importantly, he maintained that the UN Security Council was becoming a U.S. puppet, arguing that "the United Nations was allowing itself to become the tool of reactionary American ruling classes to suppress national liberation movements in Asia." Accordingly, the Soviet Union called for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign troops. iIt proposed that once peace was established, Korea should hold a joint north-south election for a national assembly and establish an interim government under observation from a UN committee.

Between these two poles were countries that called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Many had supported the United States initially, but were now wary that the powerful permanent member was wielding too much influence in "shaping the agenda" at the United Nations and would drag the United Nations into a third world war. Others, including France, faced domestic political opposition to the war or were embroiled in their own conflicts abroad. India, a nonpermanent member at the time of the invasion, argued that "every attempt should be made at peaceful settlement before United Nations troops crossed the Parallel." These governments were staunchly opposed to military operations in North Korea. This was primarily because of the risk of drawing the Soviet Union or Communist China into the conflict. They proposed a variety of policies focused on mediation and negotiation, including cease-fires, the creation of a neutral buffer zone at the thirty-eighth parallel, and multilateral peace talks.

During this time, much of the disagreement at the council revolved around the role of the United States in the conflict. By the fall of 1950, many UN member states had expressed displeasure at the United States' apparent monopolization of the UN Command in South Korea. Many of the United States' allies were extremely cautious of involving Communist China, and repeatedly warned U.S. representatives that "the United Nations was concerned only with the question of Korea, and that it should not under any circumstances become embroiled in the quarrel of the two Chinas." Security Council members also wanted to emphasize the collective nature of UN action, reportedly requesting changes to resolutions to reduce the number of references to the United States.

At the time of North Korea's attack on South Korea, nearly every member of the Security Council shared the view that the invasion was a breach of international peace and security. Many member states had supported Resolutions 82 and 83 with a view to reestablishing the prewar status quo. These member states saw any conflict on the peninsula as incompatible with UN policy toward Korea. As the liberation of South Korea neared, however, members were split on what steps to take next. One thing was certain: any decision made by the Security Council would be enormously consequential for the course of the war.

Preparation and Role-Play

Fuel a lively classroom discussion with simulations that put your students in the shoes of either the National Security Council or the UN Security Council.

CFR Education simulations can be run for several days or weeks and include background readings, videos, and assignments to help students understand the situation and their roles.

Instructions

Video: How to Run a CFR Simulation Role-Play

Roles Overview

Print these custom placards for use during your simulation. If you need to edit them, make a copy to your Google Drive.

Roles

Permanent Member

There are five permanent UN Security Council members, known as the P5: the United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Permanent members wield veto power, meaning they can block a resolution simply by voting "no." P5 representatives are responsible for attending meetings, presenting motions, making statements, and voting on behalf of their government, using a veto when necessary.

A P5 country's representative's goals are to

- promote their government's interests and values at the United Nations, specifically by drafting and negotiating Security Council documents;
- liaise and consult with other member states, nonmember states, UN staff, and other interested parties on behalf of their government; and
- analyze how policy options will affect the interests, reputation, and relationships of their country.

Issues for Consideration

- How does the situation presented in this case threaten your country's national security? How does it threaten international security?
- What national interests are at stake in this crisis? How should they be prioritized?
- What is the nature of the relationship between your country and the United States?
- What is the nature of the relationships between your country and both the Soviet Union and Communist China?
- What is your country's relationship with other parties relevant to this case?
- What are the costs, benefits, and risks that accompany each policy option open to the UN Security Council?
- Are there any policy options that you absolutely do not support? If this policy option came to a vote, would you use a veto? Why or why not?
- How has your country's veto usage changed over time? What issues does your country tend to use a veto on?
- Have other permanent members used vetoes on votes regarding this issue? What kind of policy options or resolutions have they vetoed? How should this influence your negotiation strategy within the Council?
- What are the trade-offs raised by the potential policy options in this case?
- What are the positions and interests of other countries and organizations that have a stake in the Korean peninsula? How, if at all, might they affect the current situation?

Nonpermanent Member

Ten nonpermanent members—two-thirds of the council—are elected by the UN General Assembly to serve two-year terms. The representatives of nonpermanent members are responsible for attending meetings, presenting motions, making statements, and voting on behalf of their government. Because nonpermanent members are elected to represent one of five regional groups, they are often expected, but not required, to consult with other nonpermanent members of their regional group to ensure they are putting forward a unified policy.

A nonpermanent member country's representative's goals are to

- promote their government's interests and values at the United Nations, specifically by drafting and negotiating Security Council documents;
- liaise and consult with other member states, nonmember states, UN staff, and other interested parties on behalf of their government; and
- analyze how policy options will affect the interests, reputation, and relationships of their country.

Issues for Consideration

- How does the situation presented in this case threaten your country's national security? How does it threaten international security?
- What national interests are at stake in this crisis?
- What is the nature of the relationship between your country and the United States?
- What is the nature of the relationships between your country and both the Soviet Union and Communist China?

- What is your country's relationship with other parties relevant to this case?
- Have permanent members used vetoes on votes regarding this issue? What kind of policy options or resolutions have they vetoed? How should this influence your negotiation strategy within the Council?
- What are the costs, benefits, and risks that accompany each policy option open to the UN Security Council?
- What are the trade-offs raised by the potential policy options in this case?
- What are the positions and interests of other countries and organizations that have a stake in the Korean Peninsula? How, if at all, might they affect the current situation?

UN Secretary-General

As the United Nations' chief administrative officer, the secretary-general attends sessions of UN bodies, consults with world leaders and other interested parties, issues reports on the work of the United Nations, and acts as a spokesperson for the organization. The secretary-general is the face of the UN system. Within the UN Security Council, the secretary-general represents the UN Secretariat and assists the council president by preparing agendas for meetings, maintaining the speakers list, and overseeing routine tasks such as the distribution of documents and the logistics for council meetings.

The Secretary-General's goals are to

-promote the maintenance of international peace and security by bringing relevant matters to the attention of the UN Security Council,
- build trust as an honest broker among the participants, and
- represent the interests of the UN Secretariat at the UN Security Council by making statements and setting meeting agendas.

Issues for Consideration

- How does the situation presented in this case threaten global security?
- What role should the United Nations play in resolving this crisis? What are the benefits and costs of unilateral versus multilateral responses?
- What are the costs, benefits, and risks that accompany each policy option open to the UN Security Council?
- What are the trade-offs raised by the potential policy options in this case?
- What are the positions and interests of UN Security Council member states and other organizations that have a stake in the Korean peninsula? How, if at all, might they affect the current situation?

Guide to the Memorandum

Your assignment prior to the role-play is to prepare a set of prepared clauses for a potential Security Council resolution. These clauses, along with those of other students, will form the basis of the discussion in the role-play.

You should bring

- two to three preambular clauses that describe the issue at hand, consider the international context, and outline previous agreements and existing organizations; and
- three to four operative clauses that present responses to the situation.

Each operative clause should present a complete proposal. Make sure that your proposed solutions are within the powers of the Security Council and are practical. Your operative clauses might be designed to work in concert (perhaps economic sanctions,

mediation, and a peacekeeping force) or might be a set of alternatives from which you hope one will be adopted (perhaps three peacekeeping proposals that differ in their details).

In writing each of your operative clauses, consider the following points:

- Who: Who is acting, and for whose benefit?
- What: What is the response specifically?
- When: When will it be implemented? Is there a deadline, a time frame, or recurrence?
- Where: Where will it be implemented specifically?
- Why: Why is this solution effective?
- How: How will this solution be implemented? If countries must support the response, how will they be persuaded to do so?
- Funding: How will the response be funded?

If your operative clauses start to get long and messy, use subsidiary clauses!

The goal should be to create clauses that include all the information necessary for putting the plan into action. It can be helpful to imagine an official tasked with carrying out the resolution and asking whether they have all the information they need to implement it.

Guide to the Role-Play

- There is no right or wrong way to participate in a role-play, but the better prepared you are, the more likely you will be able to advance a position effectively, and the more you and your peers will get out of the experience.
- Be patient during the role-play. Do not hold back from sharing your perspective, but be sure to give others a chance to do the same.
- Where there are competing interests, make the judgment calls that you would make if you were a government official, as informed by your earlier consideration of potential trade-offs. Ensure that the consequences of various decisions are carefully weighed.

Round	Timing	Objectives	Procedural Notes
One: Public Meeting	2 to 3 minutes per participant	1. Receive a five-minute briefing from the secretary-general on the issue to be discussed. 2. Present opening statements. 3. Crystalize the central questions of debate.	During opening statements, the president of the UN Security Council will recognize country representatives in the order in which they request to speak, and no representative may speak again if others have not yet spoken. Following opening statements, country representatives are free to openly debate the statements made, evaluating the various positions on their merits.
Two: Informal Meeting	30 to 60 minutes	1. Debate each participant's proposed clauses. 2. Edit, add, or drop proposed clauses and combine them into one or more draft resolutions. 3. Draft a presidential statement using proposed clauses and/or new material if no draft resolution appears acceptable to the group.	The president will recognize country representatives in the order in which they request to speak. Representatives should limit their statements to one minute each, but if time allows the president may permit them to speak longer. The president may also invite any participant to speak as they deem it appropriate. Any participant may motion for a ten- to fifteen-minute break, during which representatives can move freely and work on their draft resolutions individually or in small groups.
Three: Public Meeting	30 to 60 minutes	1. Hear summaries of any draft resolutions as well as arguments for and against adoption. 2. Vote on draft resolutions in order of submission. 3. Attempt to adopt a presidential statement by consensus if no resolutions are proposed or passed.	The president will call first on the draft resolution's main author(s) and then on other countries that wish to make arguments for or against the resolution. To be adopted, Security Council resolutions must receive at least nine votes in favor and no dissenting votes (vetoes) from any of the five permanent members. A state may abstain, often to indicate ambivalence or mild disapproval (in contrast to strong opposition). According to the charter, abstentions are mandatory if the state is a party to the dispute in question. Abstentions by permanent members do not count as vetoes; the resolution will pass if it receives the necessary nine votes.

Wrap-up

Fuel a lively classroom discussion with simulations that put your students in the shoes of either the National Security Council or the UN Security Council.

CFR Education simulations can be run for several days or weeks and include background readings, videos, and assignments to help students understand the situation and their roles.

Instructions

Role-Play How-To Video

The Debrief

If time permits, you will participate in a debrief following the UN Security Council's final vote.

Be active in this debrief. The role-play might seem to be the most challenging part of the experience, but the debrief is equally important. It will reinforce what you learned during the role-play exercise and refine your analytical skills. It will also force you to step out of your role and to view the case from a personal perspective. You will have the opportunity to discuss any challenges you encountered as you worked through the discussion with your peers and how you felt about the UN Security Council vote.

The debrief will close with a reflection on the complexities and challenges of multilateral negotiations. This should help clarify your understanding of what you learned and answer any lingering questions. This exercise will also assist you in completing your final assignment, the policy review memo.

What Actually Happened

In September 1950, the National Security Council issued Report 81/1, entitled "United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea," which outlined the council's official recommendation on the question of whether to invade North Korea. It concluded that "the United Nations forces have a legal basis for conducting operations north of the 38th parallel" and that

the UN Commander should be authorized to conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations in pursuance of a roll-back, north of the 38th parallel for the purpose of destroying the North Korean forces, provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea.

On September 15, UN forces landed at Inchon, backed by naval and air bombardment. The landing was an extraordinary success. It stunned the North Korean forces and forced them into withdrawal. By the end of September, South Korean and UN troops had recaptured Seoul and officially restored the South Korean government under Syngman Rhee. On October 1, General Douglas MacArthur officially demanded North Korea's surrender. Receiving no reply, he authorized South Korean forces to advance across the border. UN forces followed closely behind once they received authorization. This authorization came on October 7, with a UN General Assembly resolution calling on UN forces to take "all appropriate steps . . . to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea."

Within the first few weeks of their attack, UN forces moved rapidly northward. Facing little resistance from the retreating North Korean soldiers, UN and South Korean forces advanced swiftly and captured Pyongyang on October 19. But things did not continue as smoothly. On October 25, Chinese forces began operations against South Korean forces. It would be more than a month before the United States acknowledged that China was mounting a full-scale intervention in Korea. By then, UN forces were being pushed south, their gains since crossing the thirty-eighth parallel quickly reversed. Seoul fell for the second time in January 1951. Three months later, Truman fired MacArthur.

After a series of bloody attacks and counterattacks, UN and Chinese forces met at the thirty-eighth parallel in a stalemate in the spring of 1951. For the next two years of fighting, they only made moderate gains and losses of ground around the parallel. On

July 27, 1953, China, North Korea, and the UN Command signed an armistice, bringing an end to the fighting. Though the agreement was meant to establish a ceasefire "until a final peaceful settlement is achieved," no settlement was ever agreed on. To this day, the two Koreas are still officially at war, and the thirty-eighth parallel has become the most heavily militarized border in the world.

The effects of the war were acutely felt on the peninsula, where more than two million were killed—as many as 70 percent of them civilians. The United States dropped more explosives on North Korea during the three-year conflict than in the entire Pacific theater during World War II. As a result of bombing, an estimated 85 percent of buildings in the country were destroyed.

What did the decision mean?

Though largely forgotten by—or unknown to— many in the West, the Korean War's effects have shaped geopolitics and reverberated through history. The war cemented alliances and rivalries that endure today, ushered in policies that would characterize many years of the Cold War, and finalized the thirty-eighth parallel as an enduring dividing line on the Korean Peninsula.

Solidification of Alliances and Rivalries

The Soviet Union and China continued to economically and politically support North Korea throughout the Cold War, as the United States did South Korea. Two months after the armistice was signed in 1953, the latter pair cemented their alliance with the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea, establishing a powerful military alliance underwritten by American nuclear weapons.

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these relationships are still largely in place today. Today, South Korea hosts over twenty thousand American troops, and North Korea maintains relatively close, though sometimes fraught, relationships with Russia and China.

Cold War Policies

The Korean conflict heralded many of the hallmarks of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. One of those was the concept of limited war—a war in which limited resources, forces, and tactics are used in service of goals significantly short of total destruction of the enemy. Because the United States and the Soviet Union were both wary of triggering a general—and quite possibly nuclear—war, they became involved in limited proxy conflicts during the Cold War. The Korean War would be followed by similar conflicts in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Hand in hand with this policy was the doctrine of containment, which advocated for "containing" the spread of communism within national borders (and which had served as Truman's primary rationale for entering the Korean War). In many ways, the Korean War became a blueprint for how the Cold War would be fought.

An Enduring Division

Perhaps the most significant legacy of the Korean War is the enduring division of the Korean Peninsula. Since its establishment as an arbitrary administrative boundary in 1945, the thirty-eighth parallel has remained the dividing line between North and South Korea.

Since the armistice was declared, relations between North and South Korea have ranged from conciliatory to combative. Particularly in the last few decades, the peninsula has seen a few near brushes with war. In 2006, after years of development, North Korea ratcheted up the tension by testing its first nuclear weapon. (South Korea remains under the U.S. nuclear umbrella , meaning that the United States has pledged to defend South Korea from any nuclear attack). According to scholar Bruce Cumings, North Korea's generals "are still fighting the war. For them it has never ended."

Was it a good idea?

Many accounts of the Korean War frame the decision to cross the thirty-eighth parallel as a mistake. Bruce Riedel of the Brookings Institution calls it "by far the worst military debacle the U.S. armed forces suffered in the entire twentieth century" and a "catastrophic intelligence failure . . . that cost the lives of thousands of Americans." Similarly, historian Warren Cohen writes that the Truman administration, "in its moment of triumph . . . succumbed to one of the most treacherous temptations confronting any victor, the temptation to expand war aims."

Journalist and U.S.-China relations scholar John Pomfret argues that the United States' biggest mistake was in underestimating the potential for Chinese involvement; he reports that General Matthew Ridgeway, who had led operations in Europe during World War II, noted that General MacArthur "'simply closed his ears' to the growing presence of Chinese troops in Korea." Similarly, scholar Robert Farley argues that "the initial Chinese victories in late fall of 1950 resulted from a colossal intelligence failure on the part of the United States. These failures ran the gamut from political, to strategic, to operational, to tactical. . . . The United States also misunderstood the complex relationship between Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang, treating the group as unitary actor without appreciating the serious political differences between the countries."

Other scholars, however, are more sympathetic to the decision's historical context. Scott A. Snyder of the Council on Foreign Relations argues that "it would have been difficult to imagine that any commander . . . would have made the decision to simply halt in the face of what looked like an open field up to the China and North Korea border." Historian William Stueck also defends the decision, arguing that by the time the threat of Chinese intervention became credible, the decision to advance had already gained too much momentum: "to delay action would have disappointed expectations in the United States in the midst of a congressional election campaign, would have compromised a clear military advantage, and would have constituted an apparent loss of nerve in the face of Communist pressure tactics."

In sum, scholars debate whether the decision to cross the thirty-eighth parallel represents a failure to assess intelligence and understand Chinese and Soviet motivations or a calculated decision to consolidate victory and demonstrate commitment to broader foreign policy goals. But the legacy of the war remains certain: the lasting division between North and South Korea has remained a critical foreign policy challenge to this day.

Reflecting on the Experience

The following questions are proposed to guide the discussion in the debrief. This is not an exhaustive list and may vary depending on how your role-play exercise unfolded. If your class or group does not hold a debrief, these questions will nonetheless help you reflect on the role-play and write your written reflection:

- Which issues received adequate attention during the role-play? Which, if any, received excessive attention or were left unresolved?
- Did the group consider long-term strategic concerns, or was it able to focus only on the immediate issue and the short-term implications of policy options?
- Did time constraints affect the discussion and influence the drafting process?
- What techniques did you use to convince others that your policy position was the best option? What were successful strategies employed by others?
- What were the most significant challenges to your position? Did any make you rethink or adjust your position?
- Did your points cause anyone else to change their arguments or position?
- What political, economic, and other issues arose that you had not previously considered?
- How did the simulation change your perspective on multilateral negotiations?
- If you could go back, what would you have done differently in presenting and advocating your point of view?

Written Reflection

The written reflection is your final assignment in the simulation. In the debrief discussion after the role-play, you and your peers went beyond the role you played and thought about the issue from a variety of perspectives. Now that the UN Security Council meeting and debrief are behind you, you can consider whether you personally support your recommended policy given the subsequent discussion. Shedding your institutional role and writing from a personal point of view, you will craft a policy review memo that outlines and reflects on the policy options discussed, incorporating and critiquing the UN Security Council's decision where appropriate.

No matter which role you played originally, take into account all that you have learned. Your instructor or facilitator will want to see if and how your understanding of the issue and of the policymaking process has evolved from that expressed in your position memo.

More details about the written reflection are available under Student Resources.

Student Resources

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Instructions How-To Video

Reading List

Country Resources:

Essential facts about your country

- CIA World Factbook
- BBC Country Profiles

Information about your country's foreign policy

- Blue Book | The United Nations Office at Geneva

Essential Resources

Note: since this is a historical role-play, you should only use and reference documents and information from before the fall of 1950.

- "The Korean War Case Study," YouTube video, 5:20, posted by CFR Education, June 18, 2019.
- "War is Declared by North Koreans; Fighting on Border," *New York Times*, June 25, 1950.
- "What is the UN Security Council?," YouTube video, 1:06, posted by CNN, April 28, 2017.
- United Nations Security Council, Resolution 83, Resolution of June 27, 1950.
- Statement by the President Truman on Korea, June 27, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953.
- John A. Giles, "City South of Seoul is Overrun By Invaders, Pentagon Asserts," *The Evening Star*, July 1, 1950.
- United Nations Security Council, Resolution 84, Resolution of July 7, 1950.

- Letter from Kim Il Sung to Soviet Government, July 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, APRF, Fond 3, Opis 65, Delo 826, Listy 108-109.
- Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea, July 19, 1950, in Public Papers, Harry S. Truman 1945-1953.
- Richard J. H. Johnson, "Division of Korea Started in 1945 As Part of War Plan to Beat Japan," *New York Times*, June 26, 1950.
- Richard J. H. Johnston, "South Koreans Ask All-Country Rule," *New York Times*, September 2, 1950.
- YOUTUBE PLAYLIST

Additional Resources

- Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea, July 19, 1950, in Public Papers, Harry S. Truman 1945-1953.
- "Korean War Begins - 1950," YouTube video, 2:44, posted by AP, June 25, 2017.
- "First Films from the Korean War (1950)," YouTube video, 3:04, posted by British Pathé, April 13, 2014.
- Ciphered telegram, Shtykov to Stalin on the Political Mood in North Korea, July 01, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 346, Listy 105-107 and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, Listy 107-110.
- Intelligence Estimate Prepared by the Estimates Group, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State, June 25, 1950, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Korea, Volume VII*, ed. John P. Glennon (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), Document 82.
- Intelligence Memorandum No. 302 and 304, July 8, 1950, CIA Analysis of the North Korean Invasion.
- The President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to President Truman, July 19, 1950, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Korea, Volume VI*I, ed. John P. Glennon (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), Document 326.

How to Conduct Research and Use Sources

Research and Preparation

- Draw on the case notes, additional case materials, and your own research to familiarize yourself with
  - the goals of the UN Security Council in general and of this Council meeting in particular;
  - the national interests at stake in the case for the country you're representing and their importance to national security;
  - the aspects of the case most relevant to your country;
  - the elements that a comprehensive UN Security Council resolution on the case should contain; and
  - the major debates or conflicts likely to occur during the role-play. You need not resolve these yourself, of course, but you will want to anticipate them in order to articulate and defend your position in the UN Security Council deliberation.
- Set goals for your research. Know which questions you seek to answer and refer back to the case notes, additional readings, and research leads as needed.
- Make a list of questions that you feel are not fully answered by the given materials. What do you need to research in greater depth? Can your peers help you understand these subjects?
- Using the case materials, additional readings, and discussions with your peers, weigh the relative importance of the interests at stake in the case. Determine where trade-offs might be required and think through the potential consequences of several different policy options.
- Conduct your research from the perspective of your assigned role, rather than the particular perspective of the person who currently inhabits that role. Make sure to consider the full range of country positions and foreign interests, whether diplomatic, military, economic, environmental, moral, or otherwise. This will help you strengthen your policy position and anticipate and prepare for debates in the role-play.

- Consider what questions or challenges the secretary-general or other UN Security Council members might raise regarding the options you propose and have responses ready.

Sources

- Consult a wide range of sources to gain a full perspective on the issues raised in the case and on policy options. Seek out sources that you may not normally use, such as publications from the region(s) under discussion, unclassified and declassified government documents, and specialized policy reports and journals.
- Remember: Wikipedia is not a reliable source, but it can be a reasonable starting point. The citations at the bottom of each entry often contain useful resources.
- Just as policymakers tackle issues that are controversial and subject to multiple interpretations, so will you in your preparation for the writing assignments and role-play. For this reason, evaluate your sources carefully. Always ask yourself:
    - When was the information produced? Is it still relevant and accurate?
    - Who is writing or speaking and why? Does the author or speaker have a particular motivation or affiliation that you should take into account?
    - Where is the information published? Determine the political leanings of journals, magazines, and newspapers by reading several articles published by each one.
    - Who is the intended audience?
    - Does the author provide sufficient evidence for their analysis or opinion? Does the author cite reliable and impartial sources?
    - Does the information appear one-sided? Does it consider multiple points of view?
    - Is the language measured or inflammatory? Do any of the points appear exaggerated?
- Take note of and cite your sources correctly. This is important not just for reasons of academic integrity, but so that you can revisit them as needed.
- Ask your teacher which style they prefer you use when citing sources, such as Modern Language Association (MLA), Chicago Manual of Style, or Associated Press (AP).

How to Write a UN Resolution

What is a UN resolution?

A UN resolution is a formal expression of the opinion or will of a UN body. Resolutions follow a common, relatively strict format and are published online once approved. They are written and approved (or rejected) in a complex process. They typically go through several drafts, and multiple countries are typically involved, though a single country may write a draft resolution on its own and seek a direct vote. You will navigate an abbreviated version of this collaborative process in your role-play.

A Security Council resolution has three sections:

- header
- preambular clauses
- operative clauses

The entire resolution is one long sentence; individual items are separated by semicolons and commas. The header gives the date, an alphabetical list of countries that have contributed to the document (sponsors), and the name of the issuing body (in this case, the Security Council). This body serves as the subject of the sentence.

Preambular clauses provide a framework through which to view the issue by outlining past action on the subject (usually in treaties, conventions, and previous resolutions) and explaining the purpose of or need for a resolution. Preambular clauses are unnumbered, begin with adjectives or verbs, and end with commas. Common preambular words include

- alarmed by
- considering
- convinced
- emphasizing
- guided by
- having adopted
- keeping in mind
- mindful of
- (re)affirming
- recognizing
- taking note/noting
- underscoring

An example of an existing preambular clause is

- *Underlining* that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Operative clauses state the opinion of the organ and the actions to be taken. Unlike preambular clauses, operative clauses are sequentially numbered and follow a logical progression, each clause calling for a specific action. Operative clauses begin with italicized verbs, sometimes modified by adverbs, and end with semicolons (with the exception of the last clause). Common operative words include

- authorizes
- calls for
- condemns
- decides
- emphasizes
- (re)affirms
- recommends
- reiterates
- requests
- stresses
- supports
- urges

The last operative clause in a Security Council resolution is almost always "*Decides* to remain seized of the matter." In line with Article 12 of the UN Charter, this language keeps the issue under the Security Council's authority and prevents the General Assembly from taking its own action. An example existing operative clause is

- *Urges* all States that have either not signed or not ratified the Treaty, particularly the eight remaining Annex 2 States, to do so without further delay.

Click here to see a full example of a UN Security Council resolution.

How to Write a Presidential Statement

If the Security Council is unable to come to agreement on a resolution, another option is to issue a presidential statement.

What is a presidential statement?

A presidential statement is made by the president of the Security Council on behalf of the council. It is adopted at a formal council meeting, issued as an official document, and published. No formal vote is taken on a presidential statement; instead, it is adopted by consensus (the agreement of all members, though some may abstain). Member states have the option of voicing opposition to the statement, which is then recorded in the document. Often released when the council cannot reach consensus on a resolution or is prevented from passing one by a permanent member's veto, presidential statements are similar in content and tone to resolutions but tend to be less specific. They are not legally binding.

All presidential statements generally follow the same loose structure, which is more flexible and relaxed than that of a UN resolution:

1. Overview: an overview of the meeting or informal session that gave rise to the statement in question.
2. Body: five to fifteen paragraphs, each beginning with "The Security Council," reflecting the consensus opinion of council members and sometimes providing an overview of past actions on the subject. A presidential statement is often used to reaffirm the council's support for ongoing UN missions and initiatives or to provide progress reports on these initiatives.
3. Signature: the signature of the president of the Security Council.

Click here to see a full example of a UN Security Council presidential statement.

How to Prepare for Role-Play

Role-play Guidelines

1. Stay in your role at all times. (Keep in mind that your role refers to the perspective and duties of the country or position you represent, and not the specific person currently holding that role.)
2. Follow the general protocol for speaking.
    1. Signaling to Speak
        1. The president of the UN Security Council will administer the meeting and should decide on a speaking order. Wait to be called on by the president.
        2. If you would like to speak out of turn, signal to the president, perhaps by raising a hand or a placard, and wait until the president calls on you.
    2. Form of Speech
        1. All UN Security Council members can be addressed as Mr./Madam/Mx. Ambassador or simply Ambassador [last name]. Before you begin the role-play, share which title you would like to use, and make sure to respect the title your fellow UN Security Council members choose to use as well.
        2. Do not exceed predetermined time limits. If you exceed these limits, the president will cut you off.
        3. Frame your comments with a purpose and stay on topic.
    3. Listening
        1. Take notes while others are speaking.
        2. Refrain from whispering or conducting side conversations.
        3. Applause and booing are not appropriate. Your words will be the most effective tool to indicate agreement or disagreement.

How to Write a Written Reflection

Guidelines

- **Subject (one short paragraph):** Offer a brief statement about the significance of the issue as it relates to global politics and international organizations. Provide just enough information about the crisis so the reader can understand the purpose and importance of your memo. Be sure to include an initial statement of whether you agree or disagree with the UN Security Council's decision.
- **Options and analysis (one paragraph per option):** Present and analyze the options that were discussed during the debate, deliberation, and/or debrief. Discuss their drawbacks, benefits, and resource needs. Be sure to acknowledge any weaknesses or disadvantages of the proposed options.
- **Recommendation and justification (several paragraphs):** Identify and explain your preferred policy option or options in more detail. Here, you can explain why you personally favor one or more of the recommendations that you initially presented or the UN Security Council voted on, or different options entirely. If you choose to support the options you presented in your position memo, make sure to justify why you feel yours is still the best position.
- **Reflection (one to two paragraphs):** Discuss how your position and the final UN Security Council decision are similar; if they are not, discuss how they are different. Use this section to give your thoughts on what the UN Security Council should have included in its resolution or presidential statement and what you would have done differently. Remember, this is from your point of view; you are no longer advocating on behalf of a country or a UN agency.

Click here to see a full example of a written reflection.

Korean War in 1950 (UNSC)

Educator Simulation Guide

Global Literacy

Global literacy is the ability to understand and engage effectively in today's interconnected world. Today's interdependent global economy and geopolitical landscape connect America's interests more than ever to the actions and interests of other countries and their citizens. To ensure students understand this interconnected world, they need to be globally literate. Learn more about global literacy.

Case Overview

Set in September 1950. At the conclusion of World War II, Korea—formerly under Japanese control—was divided at the thirty-eighth parallel into a U.S.-occupied south and a Soviet-occupied north. Although the division was meant to be temporary, by 1948 both countries had declared independence. North Korea became a Soviet-supported communist state; South Korea was supported by the United States. Two years later, North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to bring the entire peninsula under its control. After several weeks of fighting, UN and South Korean forces were defending an area called the Pusan perimeter, in the southernmost portion of the peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur, who was commanding U.S. and allied forces as part of a UN mission, was also making plans for a landing at Inchon, near the South Korean capital of Seoul, in order to surprise North Korean troops and recapture Seoul.

Anticipating the possible success of the Inchon landing, The UN secretary-general has convened the Security Council to discuss the situation in Korea, specifically whether to extend the UN military intervention north of the thirty-eighth parallel in an attempt to unify the Korean Peninsula. Security Council members will have to weigh the risks of such an intervention, and whether intervention offers a better opportunity to form a durable peace than stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would.

Decision Point

The UN secretary-general has convened the Security Council to discuss the situation in Korea, specifically whether to extend the UN military intervention north of the thirty-eighth parallel in an attempt to unify the Korean Peninsula. The secretary-general has made clear that this decision depends on the success of the Inchon landing and victory in South Korea. Security Council members will need to consider a few critical questions. First, what is at stake in the conflict? Is it just a Korean national issue fueled by north-south rivalry, each side seeking to lead a unified nation, or could the conflict become a major flash point in the Cold War? Second, what are the chances of Soviet or Chinese intervention if UN forces invade North Korea? Finally, does reunifying Korea offer a better prospect of a durable peace than stopping at the thirty-eighth parallel would?

Learning Goals

CFR Education extended simulations use a variety of pedagogical tools to create an effective, meaningful, and memorable learning experience for students that builds their global literacy. Students will develop crucial skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students will complete authentic assessments that feel relevant: instead of five-

paragraph essays and book reports, students will write policy memos and participate in a role-play of a meeting of a foreign policy–making body. There are no right or wrong answers in actual policy deliberations, and there are none here, either; students will walk away from this experience with an appreciation for the complexity of policy questions.

In this simulation, students will learn about the UN Security Council, as well as meeting these learning outcomes specific to this simulation:

- Students will understand the factors that led to the Korean War and what led to the UN Security Council approving military intervention.
- Students will consider key disagreements within the UN Security Council, particularly regarding the role of the United States and the appropriate response to the war.
- Students will evaluate the options available to the UN Security Council related to intervention above the thirty-eighth parallel.

Concepts and Issues

Concepts

- Alliances
- Dispute resolution
- Interests versus values
- U.S. military options
- Civil war
- Great power rivalry
- Balance of power
- International law

Issues

- U.S. support for democratic governance
- Costs, benefits, and risks of military interventions
- U.S. interests in East Asia
- The UN Security Council and the U.S. role at the United Nations
- Early flash points in the Cold War
- Security and diplomacy in Northeast Asia
- Chinese and Soviet support of North Korea

Policy Options: Educator's Guide

Little consensus could be found in the UN Security Council by late summer 1950. Until that point nearly every resolution on the issue had passed unanimously. However, the Soviet representative's return to the council in August 1950 and his assumption of the council presidency in the same month brought the council into a new stage of conflict.

On the one hand were those—above all the United States—who saw intervention above the thirty-eighth parallel to be necessary and imperative to repel Communist aggression. Members of this camp, including the United Kingdom and the Republic of China, interpreted Resolution 83 as an authorization of any and all action that would unify the two countries and reestablish peace on the peninsula. These nations called for a UN resolution authorizing an intervention above the thirty-eighth parallel with the goal of defeating North Korea and holding UN-supervised elections on the peninsula. This view pleased MacArthur. In mid-July, just weeks after the war began, MacArthur told other military leaders, "I intend to destroy and not to

drive back the North Korean forces. I may need to occupy all of North Korea." If this was not possible, the United States and its allies advocated for a resolution that condemned North Korea for continued defiance of the United Nations and called on all states to refrain from assisting the invaders.

The Soviet Union and its allies were starkly opposed to UN intervention of any nature, let alone above the thirty-eighth parallel. The Soviet representative called the intervention illegitimate, asserting that the Korean War was a civil war and that the United Nations had no right to intervene. More importantly, he maintained that the UN Security Council was becoming a U.S. puppet, arguing that "the United Nations was allowing itself to become the tool of reactionary American ruling classes to suppress national liberation movements in Asia." Accordingly, the Soviet Union called for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign troops. It proposed that once peace was established, Korea should hold a joint north-south election for a national assembly and establish an interim government under observation from a UN committee.

Between these two poles were countries that called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Many had supported the United States initially, but were now wary that the powerful permanent member was wielding too much influence in "shaping the agenda" at the United Nations and would drag the United Nations into a third world war. Others, including France, faced domestic political opposition to the war or were embroiled in their own conflicts abroad. India, a nonpermanent member at the time of the invasion, argued that "every attempt should be made at peaceful settlement before United Nations troops crossed the Parallel." These governments were staunchly opposed to military operations in North Korea. This was primarily because of the risk of drawing the Soviet Union or Communist China into the conflict. They proposed a variety of policies focused on mediation and negotiation, including cease-fires, the creation of a neutral buffer zone at the thirty-eighth parallel, and multilateral peace talks.

During this time, much of the disagreement at the council revolved around the role of the United States in the conflict. By the fall of 1950, many UN member states had expressed displeasure at the United States' apparent monopolization of the UN Command in South Korea. Many of the United States' allies were extremely cautious of involving Communist China, and repeatedly warned U.S. representatives that "the United Nations was concerned only with the question of Korea, and that it should not under any circumstances become embroiled in the quarrel of the two Chinas." Security Council members also wanted to emphasize the collective nature of UN action, reportedly requesting changes to resolutions to reduce the number of references to the United States.

At the time of North Korea's attack on South Korea, nearly every member of the Security Council shared the view that the invasion was a breach of international peace and security. Many member states had supported Resolutions 82 and 83 with a view to reestablishing the prewar status quo. These member states saw any conflict on the peninsula as incompatible with UN policy toward Korea. As the liberation of South Korea neared, however, members were split on what steps to take next. One thing was certain: any decision made by the Security Council would be enormously consequential for the course of the war.

Running the Simulation

CFR Education extended simulations are project-based learning activities. Project-based learning (PBL) leads to better learning outcomes and improves skills, and is more fun than traditional instructional methods. The website that students will navigate throughout the simulation is divided into several parts:

In the **UNSC Guide**, students will learn about the UN Security Council, the body they will be simulating. Included are details on its history, how it works, who its major players are, and more. There is also a video interview with experts who have served on the body.

In the **Case Notes**, students dive into the actual situation they will be trying to solve in their simulation. At the beginning is a clear decision point: the question that students will debate during the role-play. This is followed by detailed background material and a discussion of the role that the United Nations plays.

Preparation and Role-Play includes details on the various roles students could take on, guidelines for the draft resolution clauses they will write, as well as an outline of how the discussion will flow during the role-play.

The **Wrap-Up** is an important part of the project and includes reflection questions and guidelines for reflecting in a class discussion and in a second memorandum. For historical cases, this section also includes a short description of how the decision point was addressed by policymakers in real life.

The simulation also includes **Student Resources**, which include a reading list to support research, additional directions and exemplars for writing assignments, and other tips students may find helpful.

Once students have read the simulation and prepared their draft clauses, here is how we recommend structuring the role-play:

Round	Timing	Objectives	Procedural Notes
One: Public Meeting	2 to 3 minutes per participant	1. Receive a five-minute briefing from the secretary-general on the issue to be discussed. 2. Present opening statements. 3. Crystalize the central questions of debate.	During opening statements, the president of the UN Security Council will recognize country representatives in the order in which they request to speak, and no representative may speak again if others have not yet spoken. Following opening statements, country representatives are free to openly debate the statements made, evaluating the various positions on their merits.
Two: Informal Meeting	30 to 60 minutes	1. Debate each participant's proposed clauses. 2. Edit, add, or drop proposed clauses and combine them into one or more draft resolutions. 3. Draft a presidential statement using proposed clauses and/or new material if no draft resolution appears acceptable to the group.	The president will recognize country representatives in the order in which they request to speak. Representatives should limit their statements to one minute each, but if time allows the president may permit them to speak longer. The president may also invite any participant to speak as they deem it appropriate. Any participant may motion for a ten- to fifteen-minute break, during which representatives can move freely and work on their draft resolutions individually or in small groups.
Three: Public Meeting	30 to 60 minutes	1. Hear summaries of any draft resolutions as well as arguments for and against adoption. 2. Vote on draft resolutions in order of submission. 3. Attempt to adopt a presidential statement by consensus if no resolutions are proposed or passed.	The president will call first on the draft resolution's main author(s) and then on other countries that wish to make arguments for or against the resolution. To be adopted, Security Council resolutions must receive at least nine votes in favor and no dissenting votes (vetoes) from any of the five permanent members. A state may abstain, often to indicate ambivalence or mild disapproval (in contrast to strong opposition). According to the charter, abstentions are mandatory if the state is a party to the dispute in question. Abstentions by permanent members do not count as vetoes; the resolution will pass if it receives the necessary nine votes.

Tips for the President of the UN Security Council

In Round 1, you will chair a formal session. Make absolutely sure that every country gives their opening statement before any country is allowed to speak a second time. You will also have to use your judgment about when to move into the more informal meeting of Round 2. Give enough time for students to flesh out their positions and to identify potential allies, but do not wait too long—the most productive negotiations happen in informal meetings, so you want to save time for those in Round 2.

In Round 2, you will call on speakers one at a time. The time limits on speeches are a little looser, so pay close attention to make sure everyone is included and no one dominates. Deciding whether to grant a break for negotiations is a matter of balance. Negotiations can be advanced in small-group discussions, but it is also important for the whole body to be updated on what goes on during the breaks. You will want to strike a balance between breaks for negotiating, and informal meeting time for giving updates and rounding up support for resolutions. It is often helpful to set a deadline for the end of Round 2 to encourage negotiators to come to agreements in a timely manner.

In Round 3, completed draft resolutions will be presented, discussed, and voted on. Before starting, make sure you are clear on the order in which the resolutions were submitted and who is sponsoring each one. When it comes time to vote, it will be helpful to remind everyone of the unique voting rules of the Security Council. If none of the resolutions passes, you can allow further debate and attempt to vote again, or you can move on and guide the council through debate on a presidential statement.

Use your judgment about which process is more likely to be successful.

Tips for Online Classes

We suggest conducting the role-play in three rounds and that three-round structure is a helpful way to approach chunking the role-play for online learning as well. You can conduct each round synchronously or asynchronously.

In round one, participants present their positions.

- In a synchronous meeting, you can go through opening statements using videoconferencing software, allowing for live clarifying questions.
- However, this is probably the easiest round to conduct asynchronously. You could disseminate positions in writing by having participants share their position memos or write a summary for the purpose of the role-play. You could also have participants record a video of themselves delivering their opening statement and disseminate it for all to watch.

In round two, participants debate the various policy options.

- In a synchronous setting, you can simply run a full-class discussion for round two. If you need more structure or want to prod reticent participants, consider starting by randomly assigning students to breakout rooms, assigning each breakout room one policy option. After working through pros and cons, representatives from each breakout room can share out to kick off the general discussion.
- In an asynchronous setting, consider a discussion forum, with a thread for each policy option.

In round three, debate begins to coalesce around the draft resolutions that have substantial support.

- This round can be approached similarly to round two. In this round, organize breakout rooms or threads around each draft resolution.

Flashpoints

This case offers no suggested flashpoints.

Case Assessment

1. When and why was the Korean Peninsula divided at the thirty-eighth parallel? Who divided the peninsula, and for what purpose?
2. In what ways did North and South Korea develop differently, politically and economically, after division? What factors influenced each state's post–World War II trajectory toward independence?
3. What was the nature of the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States in 1950? How might this affect the Soviet Union's reaction to a U.S.-backed invasion of North Korea?
4. What interests did the People's Republic of China (mainland China) have at stake in the Korean Peninsula in 1950? How might China view U.S. intervention over the thirty-eighth parallel?
5. What was the role of the United Nations in the first months of the Korean War? What was the institution's response to North Korea's invasion of South Korea, and why?

UNSC Assessment

1. What are the six organs of the United Nations system? What are their responsibilities?

2. How is the UN Security Council structured? How are Security Council decisions made?
3. What are the two categories of tools that the UN Security Council has at its disposal to implement its decisions, and what are the range of specific tools available in each?
4. What is the difference between a Chapter VI peacekeeping mission and a Chapter VII peace enforcement mission?
5. What are the main challenges and limitations that the UN Security Council faces as it carries out its work? What solutions have been proposed to address these challenges?

Writing Assignments

Each CFR Education extended simulation involves writing assignments that help students think through policy options and reflect on their learning experience.

In UNSC cases, there are two types of writing assignments.

- Before the role-play, everyone writes draft clauses for a Security Council resolution.
- As part of the wrap-up, everyone writes a written reflection.

Simulations have instructions for written assignments (found under the Student Facing Simulation), rubrics, and samples for each of these writing exercises.

Samples:

- UN example resolution
- UN example presidential statement

Rubric

Below are sample rubrics for your use in assessing the writing students will do as part of this extended simulation.

These are single-point rubrics. Jennifer Gonzalez, who writes the blog Cult of Pedagogy, has a great explainer, but the bottom line is that single-point rubrics are relatively easy for students to digest but still have all the advantages of giving structure to instructors' feedback.

UN Security Council Draft Clauses Rubric

CONCERNS	CRITERIA	ADVANCED
What needs improvement	*What is expected*	*What is excellent*
	Purpose • There are two to three preambular and three to four operative clauses • Clauses are properly formatted and styled	
	Preambular clauses • Accurately identify relevant prior agreements and existing organizations	
	Operative clauses • Are practical and within the UN Security Council's powers • Address who • Address what • Address when • Address where • Address why • Address how • Address funding	

UN Security Council Written Reflection Rubric

CONCERNS	CRITERIA	ADVANCED
What needs improvement	*What is expected*	*What is excellent*
	Subject paragraph • Is brief • Places the issue in the larger context of U.S. foreign policy • Clearly states whether the writer agrees or disagrees with the president's decision	
	Options and Analysis paragraph • Discusses each option that came up during the role-play in discrete paragraphs • Weighs the advantages and disadvantages of each option • If options from the position memo are discussed, those options contain additional analysis	
	Recommendation and Justification paragraph • Makes a clear recommendation based on the writer's personal position • Supports the recommendation effectively	
	Reflection paragraph or paragraphs • Reflects on and critiques the Security Council's decision • Is written from a personal point of view, not that of the assigned role	

Downloadable rubrics are available here:

- UNSC draft clauses rubric
- UNSC written reflection rubric