



Addressing the Infiltration of North Korean Military in South Korea

Historical Security Council

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Introduction

The conflict in the Korean Peninsula is deeply rooted in the past. Although the Korean War ended in 1953, the conflict is far from being resolved. This conflict has existed since the liberation of the Korean peninsula from Japanese control after the Second World War and the failure to solve it then has led to issues between both sides ever since.

The people in the peninsula share the same cultural background as they had existed as a unified nation for the past 1000 years. This was disrupted by the Japanese annexation of Korea after years of war. In the past century, the Korean Peninsula has suffered from heavy political instability. After the Second World War, the Americans and Soviets came in charge of the peninsula and had to decide what should be done in regard to the area. These two nations had opposing political ideologies and therefore the decision of dividing the peninsula into two countries was taken, as a result, the Soviets occupied the Northern part of the peninsula while the Americans the South. The North became the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a one-party Socialist state and the South became the Republic of Korea governed by military dictatorships and later on democracy.

The issue lies in the original division, this was meant as a temporary solution but due to the irreconcilable political differences, the Korean Peninsula was not reunified which made the division permanent. Nonetheless, this did not please either side as they did not recognize the other side's government as the 'official Korea,' therefore border skirmishes were common especially due to the North's aims to push their ideologies onto the South and their infiltration practices. Despite attempts to achieve peace in the Korean Peninsula over the years, issues have appeared due to the North Korean Government's act of aggression and hostility towards their neighbour the Republic of Korea. These act as a step back in the reconciliation process between the two nations. The South Korean government has felt the threats of North Korea and has involved the international community with their alarm of these hostile actions that have taken place in the form of armed infiltration which threatens their government stability and safety.

Definition of Key Terms

The 38th Parallel

It is the line of latitude 38 degrees North (38° N), in East Asia, which roughly marks the border between North Korea and South Korea. It was set by the U.S. in 1945 as a military boundary three years before these countries were officially established.

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

It is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula dividing it roughly in half around the 38th parallel. It was set by the Armistice Agreement with the supervision of the United Nations to stop any invasions, therefore no one can cross this zone.

Armistice

This is a formal agreement between two countries or groups at war to stop fighting for a particular time, especially to talk about possible peace.

Infiltration

Infiltration is a method of attack that consists of small bodies of agents or individual agents penetrating the enemy's line at weak or unguarded points in order to attack them from the rear, disable any installations, etc. Infiltration also concerns the action of entering or gaining access to an organization surreptitiously, especially in order to acquire secret information or cause damage.

General Overview

History - Korean War

The Korean War began on the 25th of June 1950, when the North Korean People's Army invaded the South by crossing the 38th parallel, this is considered the first military action of the Cold War. The war was a defensive war for South Korea and their allies. This war involved the USA, Japan and other powers due to the United Nations calling for support of South Korea; the USSR and China in defence of North Korea. After two years of negotiations, the adversaries signed an armistice on 27 July 1953; the agreement allowed the war prisoners to stay where they liked, redrew the boundary near the 38th parallel and created a 2-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) which still exists today. The war ended with an armistice agreement but without a peace treaty. As a result of the war, the Republic of Korea suffered 58,127 combat deaths and 175,743 wounded; the US casualties included 33,629 killed in combat and 20,617 killed in non-battle situations, plus 103,284 wounded men. Neither China nor North Korea revealed their casualties.

North Korean infiltration tunnels

Between the 1960s-1980s, North Korea dug tunnels under the DMZ to conduct a surprise invasion of South Korea from underground. The first tunnel was discovered in 1974 by a South Korean Army patrol that witnessed steam rising from the ground and heard underground explosions. Based on intelligence reports, Republic of Korea (ROK) forces searched for more suspected tunnels in the area around Cholwon, near the centre of the DMZ, hiring a Korean mineral firm to conduct the drilling. However, after sixty-nine boreholes, no additional tunnels were found.

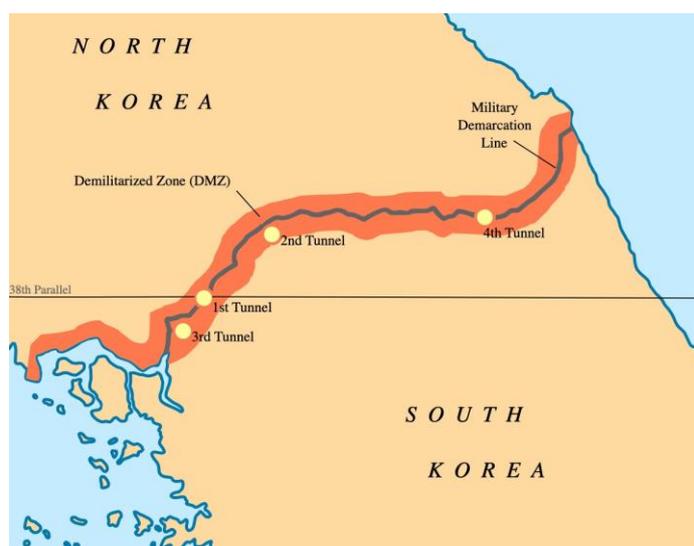


Figure 1: Aggression tunnels on the Korea's border



Because of this, North Korea was accused by the United Nations Command of threatening the Korean Armistice Agreement (1953), and South Korea considered it an act of aggression. North Korea declared it a coal mine although this is unlikely to be the case. Only 4 tunnels were found but it is suspected that there might exist up to 20 more tunnels.

1996 Gangneung submarine infiltration incident

On the 18th of September in 1996, North Korea carried out a mission of espionage on South Korea. Their aim was to spy on the naval installations of the area, carried out by a Sang-O-class submarine with a crew of special operations reconnaissance teams. This failed mission took place 20 kilometres southeast of Gangneung. After this South Korea issued a manhunt that lasted for 49 days (18 Sept-5 Nov). Out of the 25 North Korean infiltrators 1 was captured, another one was suspected to have made it back to North Korea and the rest were killed. The infiltrators had been wearing an imitation of South Korean-style military uniforms. From the captured crew member, South Korea was able to learn about the intentions and plans of the military operation. North Korea tried at first to deny responsibility but on the 29th of December of that year, they issued an official statement expressing deep regret and, after this, the South Korean government returned the cremated remains of the infiltrators.

In light of this event, the South Korean government expressed their concern over this threat to peace and security on and around the Korean peninsula. North Korea's dispatch of armed agents using a military submarine was an act of military provocation to the Republic of Korea, as well as a serious violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement. In particular, the Government of the Republic of Korea became concerned that this incident is part of the consistent policy of military provocation that North Korea has put into practice against the Republic of Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

1998 Sokcho submarine incident

This submarine incident took place on 22 June 1998, offshore of the South Korean city of Sokcho. In this case, a North Korean Yugo-class submarine was discovered by South Korean fishermen in South Korean waters as the submarine became entangled in their fishing nets. The Korean Central News Agency admitted that the submarine had been lost in a training accident. After the recovery of the submarine, the evidence suggested that an espionage mission had been carried out by the crew and the logbooks found showed that it had infiltrated South Korean waters on several previous occasions.

12 July 1998

Infiltration into the territory of the Republic of Korea by (at least) one-armed agent of the DPRK. The Republic of Korea found the body of an agent of the DPRK on the 12th of July 1998 on a beach near Tonghae (90 kilometres south of the DMZ). The agent's body was found carrying equipment typically used for infiltration by North Korean agents. This was seen by the South Korean government as a violation of the 1953 Armistice Agreement and the 1992 Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North. After this, the Republic of Korea urged North Korea to renounce all acts of military provocation and to acknowledge their responsibility including a public apology and punishment of those responsible, along with the promise that such acts will not be repeated in the future.



1998 Yeosu submersible incident

This was a naval skirmish that occurred on the southern coast of South Korea between December 17th and 18th, 1998. A North Korean semi-submersible naval vessel was sighted by South Korean forces near the city of Yeosu. Only 1 out of the 4 suspected crew members' bodies was recovered after the sinking of the submersible. The North Korean government denied sending the vessel or knowing anything about its origins, and accused the South to be crafting an anti-communist campaign against the North. This incident helped increase tensions between the two governments.

Major Parties Involved

Republic of Korea (ROK)

The ROK also known as South Korea constitutes the Southern Part of the Korean Peninsula below the 38th parallel. They have been the victim and denouncers of North Korean infiltration in their territory and act with support of the United Nations and the United States. As the most influenced country by the issue, they have suffered casualties from it and threats to the safety of their nation. Tensions are high between the ROK and the DPRK. In the past South Korea had not been very concerned with working on conciliation with the North, however under president Kim South Korea adopted the Sunshine Policy, a foreign policy concerning their interactions with the North that aims for reconciliation and as a result the InterKorean Summits took place.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

The DPRK is the main instigator of this issue. Their government avoids international intervention and cooperation. They are isolated, impoverished and have declared their neighbour South Korea their enemy. North Korea is known for their violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning its nuclear development and use of weapons threatening international security.

United States of America

They played a big role in the development of the Korean War. The United States became involved with the Republic of Korea due to their fear of the spread of communism after the Second World War and so they promoted and encouraged a democracy. In 1949 after the separation of the two nations in the Korean Peninsula the US established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea. Since then, they set on protecting the area from the hostile North with military and economic assistance together with defence in the international community, especially in the United Nations. The US is the main voice for the South in the Security Council. Overall the US and South Korea share a history of cooperation based on their shared values and interests.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)/Russian Federation

They were a major influence in the Korean War. The Russians occupied the northern part of the peninsula after World War II and they promoted and encouraged the adoption of a communist form of government, therefore Stalin appointed the dictatorship rule of Kim Il-sung whose line has lasted up until today. Their military and international support have been fuelled by their intentions to spread communism. They have consistently rejected the cases made by the United States against North Korea in the Security Council. The Russian government has had great economic interests in the area and thinks that sanctions on North Korea are counterproductive and not a solution to the conflict.



People's Republic of China

China is the main trading partner of North Korea and they have supported North Korea with military support especially during the Korean War. They do so due to the fact that they are a fellow communist state and have shown international support. China functions as a link between North Korea and the international community, and in cases, China is responsible for the lack of cooperation on the North Korean side, nonetheless, this allegation is denied by the Chinese government. Nowadays their relationship is more superficial and many of their interactions are concerned with traditions and commemoration of events. The Chinese government currently has diplomatic relations with South Korea. China is North Korea's primary ally and China generally agrees and supports North Korea in international issues.

United Nations

The United Nations has been working for the reconciliation of both areas and trying to secure peace, additionally from fighting for the human rights of Northern Korean people, they are generally concerned with the ruling of North Korea. They have served as a medium for conflict resolution between the two nations, often trying to ensure that the Armistice signed is followed and not ignored. Creator of the Demilitarized Zone and overseer of the whole conflict. They have been involved in major issues concerning North Korea imposing sanctions.

Timeline of Key Events

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| 23 June 1950 | North Korean invasion and beginning of the Korean War. |
| 28 July 1953 | Armistice was signed putting an end to the Korean War, although some think that it's still being fought today. |
| 15 August 1954 | The Korean peninsula is divided by the 38th parallel by the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War as they defeated Japan. |
| 16 February 1958 | South Korean plane going to Seoul is hijacked by North Korean agents. |
| 17 May 1966 | North Korean armed agent located in the city of Jinju. |
| 12 April 1967 | North Korean troops crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) leading to an armed engagement with South Korean troops. |
| 10 June 1967 | 5 North Korean armed infiltrators found and killed in South Korean territory. |
| January 1968 | 31 North Korean infiltrators disguised as South Korean soldiers and civilians attempted the assassination of President Park and other government officials. |
| October 1968 | 130 sea-borne commandos infiltrated the Ulchin and Samchok areas on the eastern coast of South Korea. |



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| March 1969 | 6 North Korean infiltrators in the coastal area of Chumunjin killed a South Korean policeman. |
| November 1974 | First North Korean infiltration tunnel was discovered by South Korean agents. |
| October 1978 | Third infiltration tunnel was found 44 kilometers from Seoul. |
| 17 September 1991 | North Korea and South Korea are both admitted to the United Nations. |
| 18 September 1996 | Gangneung submarine infiltration incident. |
| 22 June 1998 | Sokcho submarine incident. |
| 12 July 1998 | Infiltration into the territory of the Republic of Korea by (at least) one-armed agent of the DPRK. |
| December 1998 | Yeosu submersible incident. |

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Demilitarized Zone created by the United Nations.

This zone was set in order to “prevent the occurrence of incidents which might lead to a resumption of hostilities” and the armistice in which it was determined consisted of:

1. suspended open hostilities;
2. withdrew all military forces and equipment from a 4,000-meter-wide zone, establishing the DMZ as a buffer between the forces;
3. prevented both sides from entering the air, ground, or sea areas under control of the other;
4. arranged release and repatriation of prisoners of war and displaced persons; 5. established the Military Armistice Commission (MAC).

1992 Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North.

This agreement which came into effect on the 19th of February of 1992 was made with the hope of the peaceful coexistence of the two countries and the wishing for the eventual unification of the divided land. Some relevant points made in this agreement are:

- Article 2: the two sides shall not interfere in each other’s internal affairs.
- Article 4: the two sides shall not attempt any actions of sabotage or subversion against each other.
- Article 9: the two sides shall not use force against each other and shall not undertake armed aggression against each other.

S/1996/847

The aims of this resolution on the Military Provocation of North Korea Towards the Republic of Korea adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea on the 23rd of September of 1996, were to respond to the infiltration of armed commandos of the DPRK by submarine into the Republic of Korea. In this resolution, they aimed to:



- Strengthen national defence.
- Uncover North Korean agents covertly operating in the Republic of Korea.
- Call upon the international community to pay attention to this serious issue of the threat of North Korea in international peace and stability.

National Security Council of the Republic of Korea resolution 1998-1

This resolution adopted on the 15th of July of 1998 was a response to the recent acts of infiltration carried out by the North Korean government as they are considered serious acts of provocation and a breach of the Armistice Agreement and the South-North Basic Agreement. In this resolution the Republic of Korea wants:

- North Korea to cease all hostilities.
- North Korea to acknowledge their acts of infiltration.
- The Republic of Korea will strengthen their military readiness (maritime and coastal; cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America; and strengthen their defence in rural areas).
- And the government of the Republic of Korea will continue to try to improve inter-Korean relations and materialize peace, reconciliation and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula.

Sunshine Policy 1998

ROK's foreign policy towards North Korea aims to reconcile and improve the cooperation in the Korean Peninsula. The administration worked under three principles: "no toleration of North Korean armed provocations, no South Korean efforts to undermine or absorb the North, and active ROK attempts to promote reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas." The results of this policy was an improvement in economic relations, the fostering of reunions between the families that were separated during the Korean War, etc. The Sunshine Policy was put to an end in 2008.

Panmunjom Declaration on Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: A/72/109-S/2018/820

In 2018 the two leaders declared that there would be no more war between the two nations. In this declaration, the two sides aimed to solve their differences and improve inter-Korean relations by fully implementing all existing inter-Korean declarations and agreements adopted thus far, and to cease hostile acts against each other, amongst other things.

Possible Solutions

When coming up with solutions the most important thing is to make sure that both sides agree and will follow this ruling as 'ultimate ruling' especially with fragile topics. The main issue resolutions face is that of not being followed by the more unpredictable North Korean government, and so it is also important to be careful with the imposition of sanctions as those can be incentives for more conflict in North Korea, which prove to be harmful to their people. It is also difficult to find any solutions as long as the Government of North Korea rejects the accusations of infiltration. Solutions to this issue should concern:

- Aim for reconciliation. Whilst the reunification of the Korean Peninsula is an unlikely option, cross-recognition of North Korea's and South Korea's respective



sovereignty would help to reduce the hostilities and animosity between both countries and, as a result, reduce military tensions and incidents.

- Establishment of committees or oversight bodies to prevent the infiltration from happening. Monitoring would help discourage infiltration and would offer transparency and accountability into the issue.
- Talks and cooperation between countries aided by international bodies. Dialogue between the two nations should be encouraged in order to find long-term solutions. This kind of policy is strongly promoted by the Republic of Korea.
- Better use of the DMZ.
- Sanctions: these have been implemented on North Korea concerning other issues. Sanctions are shown to be of preference to the international community due to their peaceful nature and are easy to implement. However, they do not fully tackle the issue at hand which concerns inter-Korean relations, so sanctions may just put an additional strain on North Korea's people which is not of international interest due to human rights concerns.

Appendix/Appendices

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