## Contents

Chair’s Letter ........................................................................................................................................3
Japanese Occupation and the Division of Korea ...........................................................................5
Tensions Leading Up to the War ........................................................................................................6
The Korean War (1950-53) ...............................................................................................................7
The Koreas Today .................................................................................................................................9
South Korean Politics ..........................................................................................................................9
List of Roles .......................................................................................................................................10
Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Korean Reunification Crisis! My name is Erica Choi, and I am a sophomore majoring in Comparative Literature at Princeton University. I am an active member of the Model United Nations Team here at Princeton; I competed at CMUNNY and NYUMUNC last year, and won best delegate at the latter. I staffed PMUNC as committee director and PICSim, our college MUN conference, as crisis director last year. I spent two weeks this summer teaching Model UN Rules of Procedure to Chinese students in Beijing. At the end of the program, I chaired a MUN conference (Pegasus-NAIMUN) for the students. I will be part of the secretariat for PICSim, serving as the Director of Publications.

In my spare time, I like to do what befits someone of my major: vegetate in bed and read obscure texts. I am fluent in both Korean and English, conversational in Spanish, and I am also starting to learn Latin this year. I was born in Seoul, South Korea, where I lived for the first twelve years of my life. I then moved to Bronxville, a small town in Westchester, N.Y., where I have lived for the past seven years. My paternal grandparents are both North Koreans who migrated down to the South at the beginning of Korean War (1950 – 1953). While I lived in Korea, I never went farther north than the DMZ. However, over time, I became fascinated with the plight of the Korean peninsula. The relationship between North Korea and South Korea is complex, dynamic, and most importantly, tenuous at best. I am incredibly excited to hear you debate a topic that is near and dear to my heart.

A couple of notes about the crisis itself: As noted elsewhere, this crisis committee is set in 2025. However, because making up people and assigning them to a Cabinet position would be a logistical nightmare, I have decided to keep the current Cabinet members. They appear in the “List of Roles” sections. When you are referring to them in committee, please be advised that I have kept their names in Korean style. This means that their family names come first, followed by their given name. For example, Park Guen Hye’s family name is “Park” (박) and her given name is Guen Hye (근혜 ).

Further, please assume that no significant developments have been made with regards to technology, especially with regards to nuclear warfare. You will also find that researching some prime ministers in English to be challenging, so I encourage all of you to research on a more ideological level and explore the different views South Korean politicians hold regarding North Koreans. More importantly, I want you to think about the different scenarios that could happen if something like this happened in
real life. How would China react? The United States? How would South Korea deal with the massive gap in standards of living and create jobs for North Koreans? Your job as the South Korean cabinet would be dealing with all those hurdles to achieve a more peaceful Korea. It is up to you to decide what that Korea will look like. While this committee is titled Korean Reunification, the committee will remain open to any type of political resolution. For instance, the committee may decide to have the two Koreas remain separate or may simply establishing an interim government in the North until a more gradual reunification process can occur. I look forward to hearing your ideas. If you have any questions, please feel free to send me an email at gc6@princeton.edu!

Best regards from Seoul,

Erica Choi
**Introduction**

**Japanese Occupation of Korea and the Division of Korea:**

The Korean Peninsula was colonized by Imperial Japan from 1910 until the latter was driven out after losing World War II in 1945. Soon afterwards, American forces arrived in the southern part of Korea, while the Soviets established a military presence in the north of the peninsula. Seeking to avoid a conflict, U.S. Colonel Dean Rusk proposed to the Soviet Union that the two militaries be separated at the 38th parallel. This created two separate spheres of influence, which eventually led to the division of Korea.

(The original division of Korea)

This point in history may have been the only instance that the Koreans could have established an independent, unified Korea in a gradual and natural manner. Many nationalist leaders – such as Lyuh Woon-Hyung – did strive for a united Korea. However, South Korea stepped away from this view due to pressure from the United States. Furthermore, the U.S. requested that the United Nations support free elections throughout Korea in 1947. This did not occur after the USSR, which opposed any UN involvement, vetoed the resolution.

As a result, two governments in the northern and southern regions of Korea began to consolidate and diverge from one another. The South, in accordance with the UN plan for elections, held a general election on May 10, 1948, with Rhee Syngman becoming the first President of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Meanwhile, Kim Il-Sung came into power as the Prime Minister of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) in September of the same year. Both sides claimed to be the legitimate government of Korea. This arrangement ultimately had disastrous effects on the developments of Korea for the years to come.

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Tensions leading up to the war:

The USSR formally withdrew from North Korea in 1948, and US troops did the same in the following year. Meanwhile, tension was rising in both Koreas. Rhee, though an elected president, was not pro-democratic. In April of 1948, there was an uprising in the Jeju Island against the UN-led elections by people who were angry that it seemingly made the partition of Korea official. The South Korean military brutally suppressed the protests, and between 14,000 and 60,000 people, most of whom were civilians, died. A similar incident happened later in Yeosu-Suncheon area. Further, in December of the following year, the South Korean military killed 86 to 88 civilians, many of whom were women or children, because they were suspected of having communist ties; this event is now called the Mungyeong Massacre. The government tried to blame this on the communist government of the North, and actively participated in the cover-up. Meanwhile, the North received weapons from China as well as a promise that the latter would aid the former in case of war in the peninsula in return for its aid during the Chinese Civil War.

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2 Picture retrieved from: https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/Lessons/Unit%2011_Cold%20War/KoreanWar2.jpg
On June 25th 1950, North Korea, backed by the Soviet Union and China, invaded South Korea. The international reaction was immediate: the United Nations Security Council recognized the North Korean invasion as an act of aggression and called for a ceasefire on the same day. Merely two days later, the United Nations called for a UN military offensive against North Korea. Twenty-one countries contributed to the makeup, but 88% of the personnel came from the U.S. However, even with the help from the UN, South Korea was on the brink of extinction within two months. Its government abandoned the capital city of Seoul and retreated to the southern city of Busan (alternative spelling: Pusan).

The tides began to change when General Douglas MacArthur successfully led an amphibious invasion at the Battle of Incheon. After this, the UN military was able to recapture Seoul successfully and cut off the supply lines for North Koreans in South Korea. This ended the streak of successes for the North Korean forces.

The Korean War (1950 – 1953):

To cover the Korean War in detail would be impossible in this background guide; the following should serve as a brief introduction rather than a thorough analysis.

The Korean War has two names. The South Koreans refer to it as 한국전쟁 (literally meaning Korean War) or 6.25 전쟁 (6.25 War after the date of its start). On the other hand, the North Koreans refer to it as 조국해방전쟁 (Fatherland Liberation War), which speak volumes about how the war is received differently on each side of the peninsula.

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This map depicts the situation in the Korean peninsula during the war. During the first years, the North Koreans were incredibly successful and left the U.N.-South Korea bloc little defensive territory. After the Battle of Incheon, the UN military started pushing into the North. The Soviets refused to become directly involved and help the North Koreans. However, when it looked just as though the UN would have all of Korea under its control, China intervened, out of a proclaimed concern that the US was acting aggressively under the guise of the UN in a neighboring country.

Due to Chinese involvement, the war dragged on in a state of stalemate. Fighting occurred mostly around the original 38th parallel. Negotiations began as early as 1951, but disagreements caused the war to drag on for two more years. During this time, little territory exchanged hands, but casualties mounted. On July 27th 1953, all parties finally agreed to sign an armistice. This divided Korea along the 38th parallel again, with a few changes. The most significant is that the city of Kaesung, which once served as the capital of Korea for five hundred years under Goryeo dynasty, now belonged to the North rather than the South. Further, the agreement established the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Although no peace treaty was ever signed, this is considered to be the end of the war. There were operations that allowed the two countries to swap their soldiers afterwards.

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3 Picture retrieved from: http://www.learnkoreanlanguage.com/images/KoreanWarMap.jpg
The Koreas Today:

In the sixty-two years after the war drew to a close, the two Koreas took drastically different paths. Although South Korea initially struggled with democratization and poverty, the country has been incredibly successful in addressing both. It is one of the twenty-four countries in the world that are considered to be fully democratic. The so-called “Miracle on the Han River”, referring to the nation’s rapid industrialization, also made the country and its citizens prosperous. One of the “Asian tiger” economies, it is the world’s eleventh largest economy and fifth largest exporter. It is a member of G20 and the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee.

North Korea is a different story altogether. It is difficult to say with certainty what the quality of life for an average North Korean is. Its economy is one of the most closed economies in the world, being tightly regulated by the government. In 2013, North Korea had an estimated nominal GDP of 15.4 billion USD compared to its southern counterpart’s 1.3 trillion USD. Perhaps nothing can juxtapose the two countries more clearly than the following earth observatory photo from NASA:

(South Korean Politics:

You, the delegates, will make up the South Korean cabinet. Therefore, it is certainly in your best interest to become acquainted with the major parties there. The latest elections for the National Assembly

North Korea is a different story altogether. It is difficult to say with certainty

4 Picture retrieved from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Seoul_at_night_from_63_building.jpg

5 The two Koreas at night. The sole bright spot in the North belongs to its capital city, Pyongyang)

South Korean Politics:

You, the delegates, will make up the South Korean cabinet. Therefore, it is certainly in your best interest to become acquainted with the major parties there. The latest elections for the National Assembly

were held three years ago, in 2012. The two main parties are Saenuri – to which President Park belongs - and Democratic United (DUP). In this election, which had a voter turnout of 54.3%, the Saenuri Party was slightly more successful. It won 152 seats as opposed to DUP’s 127. In terms of percentage, Saenuri holds 43.3% and DUP has 37.9%. While Saenuri remains as the largest party, it has faced a recent decline in favorability. The recent elections saw a decrease in the member of seats held by Saenuri and a significant increase for DUP. Saenuri is the “conservative party”; however, by American standards, it would be considered relatively centrist.

It is important to remember that most politicians use reunification rhetoric. Both parties nominally support it. However, this does not mean that all Koreans actually support reunification. The detachment that young people feel towards North Korea has been well-documented. Studies by Seoul National University show that more than half of the South’s youth may not desire reunification.

Even politicians who claim that they desire reunification may be saying it out of *de rigueur*. This is especially true of the less conservative party members. It is almost universally accepted that reunification will negatively impact South Korean economy, like it did West Germany’s. There is disagreement over what the degree of this impact would be like.

In this committee, I want you to focus your attention on the military and the economy. You will need to respond quickly to the North Korean military movements, as well as the longer goal of building an economic relationship between the two Koreas. As a result, it is a good idea to consider understand the stances of both major parties on these two issues.

**List of Roles**

**Park Geun-hye (President):** President Park Geun Hye presides over the Korean Cabinet. Therefore, as your chair, I will assume her position. Park, the first woman to be elected as the Korean president, is the daughter of the controversial ex-President Park Chung-hee. She has stated on different occasions that she will not stand for North Korean threats, and that she will coordinate with China, the U.S., and the UN in dealing with North Korea. Like her father, however, she believes that it is her duty to work towards the goal of reunification. She considers reunification to be an ethnic wish that unites the Korean peninsula.

**Hwang Kyo-ahn (Prime Minister):** Prime Minister Hwang, a devout Christian, started his career as a prosecutor. He has previously served as Minister of Justice. He has stated that the Korean War was a direct result of
North Korean aggression, and that while there are no more battles, the stability of the Korean peninsula remains fragile. He has called for increasing awareness of national security and strengthening the military forces. Further, he has emphasized that North Korea needs to act as a responsible member of global society. While he claims to support reunification, North Korean government officials have criticized him as being against reunification, and disapproved of his becoming Prime Minister.

**Choi Kyoung-Hwan (Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Strategy and Finance):** Minister Choi is a strong supporter of President Park. As Minister of Strategy and Finance, he facilitated a 40 billion USD economic stimulus package to help Korea’s economy during the global recession. Korea’s central bank also cut interest rates under his leadership. This policy of market revitalization, dubbed Choinomics, did not have the expected success and is generally considered a failure. With regards to North Korea, Choi has previously stated that he will support global investment in the country so long as it gives up its nuclear weapons.

**Hwang Woo-yeo (Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Education):** The chairman of Saenuri Party, which President Park belongs to, Minister Hwang deals with the Korean educational system. In Korea, education is seen as the most important factor in determining someone’s success, and people exhibit incredible passion towards it. He believes that Korean Reunification will be a force that strengthens the Koreas. He wants North Korean defectors to play an active role in working towards this goal.

**Choi Yang-hee (Minister of Science, ICT, and Future Planning):** Minister Choi is a scholar at heart, who also teaches as a professor at Seoul National University. In the past, he has invited North Korea to participate in ITU events in Korea. At the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), he has stated that atomic energy has been a huge force in Korean development, and emphasized that South Korea does everything to create a safe environment. Further, he has called for denuclearization of North Korea.

**Yun Byung-see (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yun has stated that building trust between the two Koreas is one of his primary duties. He has stated that he is ready to help Korea as soon as North Korea denuclearizes. He has also called it “inexcusable” that North Korea has refused arranging meetings between families that were separated during the war. North Korea has criticized Minister Yun of “being too dependent on foreign powers.”
Kim Jongdeok (Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism): The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism pursues policies in such fields as culture, art, sports, tourism, religion, media and promotional advertising to create a “life of culture.” A large part of his ministry deals with the settlement and education of North Korean defectors. If the Koreas do reunify, Kim will have a large task working towards educating both Koreans of their differences and settling a large number of North Koreans pouring into the South.

Hong Yong-pyo (Minister of Unification): Minister Hong has called “unification on the Korean peninsula” a “long-cherished desire common to all Korean people.” His ministry seeks to build a solid foundation for a unification era, and believes that unification will happen before long. Most Korean politicians, especially conservatives, use rhetoric related to reunification; his strong wording is therefore not surprising, but may be misleading. A recent study by Seoul National University found that only barely over half (55.9%) of South Koreans believe that reunification is in the South’s best interest.

Han Minkoo (Minister of National Defense): Minister Han has stated that if North Korea acts aggressively towards the South, his military will ensure that the North suffers immediate retribution. He has been criticized as being the U.S.’s puppet with regards to his policies.

Lee Byung-ho (Director of National Intelligence Service): Director Lee is the head of the National Intelligence Service (국가정보원). His agency is responsible for the collection, coordination, and distribution on the nation’s strategy and security, as well as investigation into any national threats. The agency does not reveal the number of employees or its annual budget. Director Lee is usually not a member of the Cabinet, but since this is a time in which national security is threatened, we have invited him to join us.

Lee Ki-Kweon (Minister of Employment and Labor): Prime Minister Lee has described his job as “creating a fair and rewarding workplace, a reliable workplace covered by the social safety net and a safe and pleasant workplace.” If the Koreas reunify, the burden on his shoulders will be heavy. Currently, the South Korean unemployment rate is only about 3.2%. But in the event of a reunification, he will be responsible for creating a massive number of jobs for North Koreans, most of whom lack desirable work skills.

Yoo Il-ho (Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport): His ministry is devoted to “residential stability, balanced territorial development, facilitation of public transport
and sufficient SOC, for the solid foundation of citizens’ lives and a strong national economy.”

Further, he is responsible for normalizing the housing market and providing housing benefits to tenants with low income. Therefore, if the Koreas reunify, he will have to plan construction of housing for North Koreans both in the North and the South. He has to be cognizant that he will have to provide many housing benefits.

**Yoon Seong Kyu (Minister of Environment):**

Minister Yoon is responsible for cultivating sustainable development. Thus, he takes care of the quality of the water and land, and legal restrictions over environmental contamination. His ministry will have to deal with environmental consequences when North Korea industrializes.

**Chong Jong-Sup (Minister of Government Administration and Home Affairs):**

Minister Cho’s main task is encouraging interdepartmental collaboration, delivering citizen-centric public services and making local administration and finance more reliable and transparent. He has also been the driving force behind signing a contract with the North for “DMZ Reunification Train,” which allows civilians to venture into the Demilitarized Zone with the goal of raising awareness.

**Moon Hyung-pyo (Minister of Health and Welfare):**

His ministry is responsible for providing medical services as well as drafting policies regarding children, the elderly (especially those without caretakers), those with disability, and others who require government assistance. His ministry will also bear a large burden trying to provide healthcare to the North Korean public, and deal with budgeting issues coming from such a large goal.

**Kim Hee-jung (Minister of Gender Equality and Family):**

Her ministry is relatively controversial, and many feel that this ministry does not do the task it promises of building support systems with families with children and instead wastes taxpayers’ money. While the English name is “Ministry of Gender Equality,” in Korean it is “Ministry of Women and Family.” Her ministry will have a task of helping North Korean families with regards to education and health.