

# 30. UNIFICATION?—A NORTH/SOUTH KOREA NEGOTIATION SIMULATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** 9-12

**AUTHOR:** Todd Decker

**SUBJECT:** International Relations, Global Studies

**Time required:** 5-7 class periods

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Gain a basic understanding of contemporary history of the Koreans.
2. Attain an understanding of the complex issues surrounding Korean unification.
3. Investigate options for resolving unification issues.
4. Critically consider and debate issues of concern in unification.
5. Create solutions and compromises for unification issues.

## **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Reference materials on the Koreans
- Internet access
- Handout 1: The Two Koreas
- Handout 2: Preparing for Negotiating
- Handout 3: Points to Negotiate
- Handout 4: Resolution forms
- Negotiator name/title tents

## **PROCEDURE:**

*Note:* It is assumed that prior to beginning this lesson students have been instructed in, and hold a basic knowledge of, Korean history prior to the partitioning of north and south.

### Basic History (1 class period)

As part of instruction in the modern history of the Koreans and inter-Korean relations, students should read Handout 1, The Two Koreas. After ample instruction and once the teacher is convinced that students hold a basic knowledge of modern Korean political history, the teacher should then divide the class into two delegations, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea).

### Delegation Research (1 or 2 class periods).

Once the delegations have been assigned, the teacher should then require each side to research their own negotiating history as well as their position on a number of key issues. This activity is best facilitated through the use of Handout 2, Preparing for Negotiating, a worksheet to be completed using reference materials and Internet research sites.

### Committee Assignments (1 class period)

Following delegation research time, the teacher (or delegation members) should then divide the delegation members equally into the following negotiating committees:

- Political/governmental issues

- Military/national security issues
- Economic issues

After these committees have been assigned, each committee should choose a chairperson. The chair should then lead the group in outlining their positions on the questions provided by the teacher on Handout 3, Points to Negotiate.

#### Negotiating Sessions (1–2 class periods)

Following adequate research and preparation time, the committees should be sent to the negotiation with the corresponding group from the other country. Each student should have a name tent with his or her name and governmental position (e.g., Presidential economic adviser, Chief of staff of the Army) listed. The committees should discuss each issue in the order listed. Both sides should have a delegation member who is taking notes on what is being said. Before moving to the next question, a resolution must be reached for the current issue. Each resolution must be written down on the form provided in Handout 4 and signed by all present in the negotiations. If an issue reaches a deadlock, the teacher should step in as an independent mediator and attempt to find common ground.

*Note:* It is critical that the teacher remind students they are to act the part in the negotiating. Students should protect their nation's interests and ideals while still allowing for compromise.

#### Closing Session (1 class period)

After a resolution has been created for each of the Points to Negotiate, representatives from each negotiating session should jointly read their resolutions to the class. The teacher should conduct a discussion following each resolution on its feasibility, accuracy, and effectiveness.

**Handout 1**  
**THE TWO KOREAS**  
**A Brief History by Todd Decker**

In 1910, Japan colonized Korea. Until the end of World War II, the Japanese dominated all aspects of Korean life. Following Japan's surrender at the conclusion of World War II, the 1945 agreement reached by the Allied nations at the Potsdam Conference made the thirty-eighth parallel the border between a northern zone of the Korean peninsula occupied by the Soviet Union and a southern zone controlled by the United States. Each side was supposed to conduct unified elections to create a single Korean government. This single unified government was never created. The temporary division became permanent when each side established separate governments. In the North, elections were never held. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was created on May 1, 1948, when Kim Il Sung was proclaimed as president shortly after the United States occupied the South and held elections for a national assembly. This assembly created a republican constitution and chose Rhee Syngman as president. The Republic of Korea (South Korea) was proclaimed on August 15 and was soon after recognized by the United Nations as the sole legal government of Korea.

In 1950, the North was hoping to unify the Koreas under a single communist government. It launched an invasion into the South in late June. Soon after, the United Nations Security Council condemned the attack and passed a resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of North Korean forces. U.S. President Harry Truman ordered U.S. forces to enforce the U.N. order. The British and numerous other nations soon followed suit. U.S. General Douglas MacArthur was named U.N. forces commander and led the U.N. coalition force to Korea.

The 1950 invasion by northern forces had completely surprised the South, and the North quickly took the South's capital, Seoul. By early August 1950, South Korean troops were forced back to a small corner of the peninsula around the city of Pusan. They held their ground against a stronger North Korean force until September 15, when General MacArthur carried out a risky amphibious assault, landing behind communist lines at the port of Inchon (near Seoul). The Inchon landing set the stage for U.N. forces to quickly push the North Korean army north of the thirty-eighth parallel. By late October, U.N. forces controlled much of North Korea including territory very close to the Chinese border. Communist forces launched a counteroffensive with the aid of several hundred thousand Chinese soldiers. U.N. troops were again pushed south of the thirty-eighth parallel. U.N. forces had crossed the parallel again by the time truce talks began in July 1951. Cease-fire negotiations continued for over two years until a cease-fire was signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. No peace treaty has ever been signed between the North and South, leaving them technically in a state of war. The United States stepped up military aid soon after, strengthening South Korea's armed forces to over 600,000 men. After the cease-fire both nations reinforced their already heavily militarized border and essentially began their own cold war. Propaganda, espionage, and an arms race (all the elements of the U.S./Soviet cold war) were carried out between the two Koreas.

In the years after the cease-fire agreement, the North withdrew from almost all international contacts. It was unquestionably a totalitarian dictatorship under the supreme power of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung. Kim enforced the ideology of *juche* (self-reliance) onto his people.

The South's political climate after the cease-fire was turbulent. Rhee was forced to resign in 1960 because of widespread discontent with his dictatorial leadership style. Yun Po Sun was elected as his successor but was unable to stabilize the nation politically. General Park Chung Hee seized power in 1961 and initiated a series of reforms to stimulate the nation's economy. Park was assassinated in October 1979 by the head of the Korean

Central Intelligence Agency. The country began liberalizing as the new president Choi Kyu Hah freed imprisoned dissidents. One of the released political prisoners was opposition leader Kim Dae-jung. His release sparked antigovernment demonstrations and later riots, which were ended with brutal military and police suppression. One of the most notorious demonstrations and eventual suppressions was the 1980 Kwangju uprising. Koreans view 1987 as the end of authoritarian rule and the beginning of democratization when Roh Tae-woo became president. A financial crisis would strike the South in 1997 causing a series of bankruptcies and a rapid devaluation of South Korea's currency. The following political instability would lift former dissident Kim Dae Jung to become the South Korean president.

The year 1994 began with mounting tensions over international inspection of North Korea's nuclear programs. The death of the Great Leader (Kim Il Sung) in July added to the tension. Kim's son, Kim Jong Il (later called Dear Leader) assumed power. The nuclear inspection negotiations continued for almost a year, but finally reached an agreement when the South agreed to provide the North with a nuclear reactor in exchange for the North abandoning its atomic weapons program.

A devastating famine struck the North following devastating crop failures after two successive years of floods followed by severe droughts in 1997 and 1998. International relief programs were able to save some, but by 1998 the North's food distribution program had shut down. It is estimated that two to three million people starved to death during this time, and countless others suffered from malnutrition after being forced to survive on tree bark and wild plants. The starvation finally began to wane in late 1999. Despite the shocking famine, North Korea has continued to remain one of the last communist regimes.

An international outrage was provoked in September 1998 when North Korea launched a test missile over Japan. Although the North Koreans claimed it was just a scientific probe, Japan was understandably alarmed. This incident raised many questions about whether the North was reentering the nuclear arms race. In a conciliatory gesture, the North allowed U.S. inspection of a suspected nuclear development site in 1999 in exchange for increased food aid and agricultural assistance.

Despite the close proximity of northern and southern troops and weaponry, major incidents of open aggression have been rare. Exceptions occurred twice in a six-month period during 1998 and 1999 in which the South hit one North Korean ship and sank two others that were in South Korean waters. The greatest easing of tension in the forty-seven years since the cease-fire was with the summit in June 2000 when South Korea's president Kim Dae Jung, met with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang. The summit was the first time ever that leaders of the two countries had met. Together they signed a hopeful agreement that outlined vague plans for unification and peace. The agreement also included provisions for reunions of separated families, an opening of communication between the leaders, and plans for a later summit in Seoul.

For additional information see:

<http://infoplease.lycos.com/ipa/A0107686.html>

<http://infoplease.lycos.com/ipa/A0107690.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>

**Handout 2**  
**PREPARING FOR NEGOTIATING**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Conduct research using reference books, current periodicals, and Internet sites to answer the following questions in as much detail as possible. Remember that you are required to ACCURATELY represent your nation during negotiations, so it is essential for you to know your nation's position.

1. What type of government does your nation have and how is power distributed?

---

---

---

2. If you were to list the three major concerns your nation has surrounding unification, what would they be and why?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What is the economic situation of each of the Koreas?

North—

---

---

South—

---

---

4. What is the current military strength of each of the Koreas?

North—

---

---

South—

---

---

5. How has your nation acted in past negotiations?

---

---

---

6. How has your nation followed through on its promises in past negotiations?

---

---

---

7. What have been the major sticking points or most contentious issues in past negotiations?

---

---

---

8. Has your nation done anything in the past that could possibly interfere with the current negotiations or prevent an agreement on unification from being reached?

---

---

---

9. On what issues is your nation most easily able to compromise? Why?

---

---

---

---

10. On what issues is your nation least able to compromise? Why?

---

---

---

---

11. Ideally, what would unified Korea look like economically, politically, and militarily if your country had its way on all issues surrounding unification?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Handout 3**

#### **POINTS TO NEGOTIATE**

##### **Committee: Political/Governmental Issues**

1. What will the governmental structure of a unified Korea consist of?
2. What role will the current presidents and high officials play in a unified Korea?
3. What will be done to address the concerns of the people in unifying the Koreas?
4. How will neighboring nations and allies be involved in unification?
5. What is the time line to be used in implementing each of the above?

##### **Committee: Military/National Security Issues**

1. Who/what will lead the unified armed forces of Korea?
2. What role will the current military officials play in a unified Korean armed force?
3. What will be the safest way to integrate the forces of North and South?
4. What will happen to the United States military presence that currently exists in the South?
5. What is the time line to be used in implementing each of the above?

##### **Committee: Economic Issues**

1. What type of economic system will the unified Koreas follow? (e.g., capitalism, communism)
2. How will the rich South assist the economically undeveloped North?
3. Who will pay for the economic development of the North?
4. How will the state-owned industries of the North be merged with the privately owned industries of the South?
5. What is the time line to be used in implementing each of the above?



**Handout 4**  
**RESOLUTION**

**Created by the negotiating committee on (circle one):**

Political/governmental issues - Military/national security issues - Economic issues

**On the issue/question of:**

**We the members of these delegations agree to commit our nations to the following resolution:**

Signed,

North Korean Delegation

South Korean Delegation