

**North Korean Diplomacy:  
After the Korean War (1953-1963)**

*By*

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## Foreword

The period from 1953 to 1963 was a crucial phase in North Korean diplomacy, characterized by the country's efforts to navigate a complex geopolitical environment, establish diplomatic relations with a wide range of countries, and uphold its foreign policy principles based on external and domestic constraints. Following the armistice that ended the Korean War in 1953, North Korea found itself in a complex diplomatic landscape, shaped by its conflict with South Korea, historical ties to the Soviet Union, and evolving relationships with other key international players.

The country's diplomatic efforts were guided by the principles outlined in its constitution, emphasizing “independence, peace, and friendship” in its foreign policy. North Korea sought to establish political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic relations with friendly countries based on the principles of complete “equality and independence.” During this period, North Korea's relationship with the Soviet Union and China played a pivotal role in shaping its foreign policy and security strategy.

This Issue Brief titled, “North Korean Diplomacy: After the Korean War (1953-63)” provides an overview of the diplomatic landscape during the specified period, highlighting key events, alliances, and the impact on North Korea's foreign relations. It also touches upon the country's diplomatic principles and practices as outlined in its constitution. While maintaining a balanced friendship between its two giant neighbours – China and Soviet Union, Ms. Ngawang Gamtso Hardy argues that the foreign policy approach of North Korea has not only been guided by ideology and pragmatism but rather by the interplay of historical factors in the post-Korean War era have played a primary role in the formation of foreign policy strategies of North Korea.

Being a buffer zone for the Soviet Union and China, North Korea has remained significant for both its allies because of its geo-strategic implications. This report also studies the theory of ‘alliance and counter balance of power’ within North Korean foreign policy as applied in the context of its approach towards China and Soviet Union during the enduring times of Sino-Soviet conflict.

The period from 1953 to 1963 also witnessed significant developments in inter-Korean relations, as South Korea sustained crucial US military, economic, and political support. The evolving dynamics between North and South Korea, as well as their interactions with other nations, contributed to the complex diplomatic landscape of the Korean Peninsula during this era. Furthermore, North Korea's diplomatic relations extend beyond its immediate neighbours, with the country having diplomatic ties with over 160 states. The diplomatic efforts of North Korea were not limited to its immediate region, as it sought to establish relations with developing countries and joined the Non-Aligned Movement.

The author dwells upon these geo-political compulsions and domestic factors guiding the foreign policy of North Korea in the post-Korean War years and its implications for the region. Given the geo-political rivalry in the Indo-Pacific and the crisis in the Korean peninsula in recent times, this Issue Brief provides a background to the dynamics and nuances of foreign policy strategies of North Korea vis-a-vis other significant players in the region in a constantly changing world.

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# North Korean Diplomacy: After the Korean War (1953-1963)

- Ngawang Gamtso Hardy

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## Introduction

From the “Hermit kingdom” of the Choson dynasty to the globalized era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Korea has been conquered, ruled, and governed by various kingdoms and countries, all of which left a blemished mark on both Korea’s, North and South Korea of today. Since their independence, both Koreas have come a long way in their own rightful sense and have conceptualized themselves as two very different nations. Today, where South Korea is known as one of the major globalized democracies of the world, North Korean foreign policy seems to have chosen the old ways of the undivided Hermit kingdom of Korea. Officially North Korea has diplomatic ties with 164 countries with 24 countries having their embassies in Pyongyang and 47 countries hosting North Korean embassies in their country. Yet, there can be seen little to no interaction of North Korea on a world stage with other countries with China and Russia being an exception. According to Daniel Wertz Oh and Kim In-Sung, “North Korea’s state ideology of *Juche* has emphasized independence in foreign affairs but this has not meant diplomatic or economic isolation.”<sup>1</sup> But it’s hard to argue that directly or indirectly the ideology of *Juche* has been one of the main factors of isolation for North Korea. Along with the ideology of *Juche* there are several other factors that had left North Korea with its foreign relations limited to mainly two states namely, China and Russia.

Japan's surrender after World War II brought a change in the Korean peninsula. The liberation came at the cost of the partition of the Korean peninsula. On July 26, 1945, the United States and the Soviet commanders agreed to divide the Korean Peninsula along the 41st parallel into the Soviet zone of administration in the Northern region and the United States zone of administration to the South of the 41st parallel which later on the night of August 10, Colonels Charles Bonesteel and Dean Rusk with the intentions of including Seoul under the United States administered zone proposed 38th parallel as the line of division to the Soviets. This division of the Korean Peninsula created not only a long-lasting political division but also a division of ideology and people. The Soviet army entered Northern Korea on August 26, 1945, and administered the Northern Region of the Korean Peninsula until late 1948. The Soviet administration of the Northern region of the Korean Peninsula laid the foundation of North Korean and Soviet relations. In the case of China, Sino-Korean relations date centuries back but in particular, talking about North Korea the first diplomatic relation was established on October 6, 1949, and just a year later "Chinese people's volunteers" entered North Korea and intervened in the Korean war supporting North Korea. Chinese and North Korean officials, when toasting the shared trauma of the Korean War, refer to their "blood bonded" alliance, as alongside North Koreans, tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers lost their lives in the Korean War.

After the Korean War, China and the Soviets both continued their assistance to North Korea in economic, scientific, military, and other fields. According to Byung-Joon Ahn, "First, it is important to note that the Soviet Union has been concerned for the sake of its regional and even global interests with checking Chinese, Japanese, and American power in Asia. As part of this strategy, it has been one of the Soviet's aims to keep the Korean peninsula from coming under the domination of these major powers."<sup>iii</sup> After the death of Stalin, the conflict between

China and the Soviet Union was more visible and upfront. North Korea being caught in between these two rifted nations demonstrated very skilful diplomacy and conducted its foreign policy in such a way that it never went against either China or the Soviet Union at any given point in time and instead maintained friendly relations with both the nations at all time and continued receiving favours in form of aids from both the nations. At one time in the late 1950s and early 1960s, both China and the Soviets went out of their way in their attempt to influence North Korea. This paper will further discuss how North Korea maintained a balanced friendship between these two conflicted nations and why it was important for China and the Soviets to influence North Korea and in what ways it attempted to do so. This paper also provides a background analysis of how historical analysis and primary research are essential in studying current foreign policy. The paper develops a theory of non-alliance and the theory of counterbalance of power. Further, the paper provides two hypotheses and tests them.

(H1) Historical events or factors play a primary role in the formation of principles in Foreign Policy.

(H2) Ideology or Pragmatism situates the locus standi of a country's foreign policy approach.

## **During the Korean War: 1950-1953**

In 1950, five years after the end of World War II and the liberation of the Korean Peninsula, North Korea or officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK was preparing for a new war. A war to invade its neighbors in the South and a war of reunification in their words. Already engaged in a cold war with America by this time Stalin had refused Kim II Sung several times on his requests to invade South Korea. In April 1950 Kim II Sung again begged for a chance to unify Korea, promising that the campaign would

be over in three days. Stalin gave his permission, provided that the Chinese agreed to support the North Korean action.<sup>iii</sup> Mao, at the time, was greatly in need of Soviet military and economic aid, didn't take too long to think, and soon enough agreed to the plan. China and the Soviets talked out and made negotiations regarding their role and involvement in the war. The Soviet advisory to the Korean People's Army (KPA, the North Korean Army) drew the attack plan, and soon after South Korean peace was disturbed like a bolt from the blue. The North Korean attack so alarmed Washington that President Truman abruptly reversed the meticulously considered policy recently formulated by both the Department of State and Department of Defense that had placed Korea outside the American defense perimeter, and instead committed U.S. armed forces to the defense of South Korea.<sup>iv</sup> Korean war, where the Soviets assisted through its supply of arms and aircraft, and at the same time China got involved in the Korean war by sending their army to fight the war.

No war is started in a blink of an eye, there are always big and small socio-political elements weaving intricate circumstances that are many a times unavoidable. The Korean War had its own set of such elements that shaped the Korean War. After the withdrawal of the USSR and the United States of America, Korea was left divided with two different ideologies where at one end gorilla fighter, trained under Chinese military ethics and promoted by USSR, Kim Il-Sung came to power and on the other end Princeton educated and backed by the United States, Rhee Syngman came into being. The game of throne between the two was evident with increased spies and violence near the border at an alarming rate. Spies from each side were being caught on a daily basis and executed. At the dawn of 25<sup>th</sup> June 1950, the North Korean army stormed South in an attempt to unify Korea by force. This act of aggression with met with strong backlash from South Korea and eventually from the United States and United nations correlation army.



At 4 am on June 25th, 1950 the armies of North Korea stormed across the 38th parallel opening to crush the south in one overwhelming offensive. 135,000 North Korean besieged, South Korean border patrol. At outposts all along the border, South Koreans, and their American military advisors were overrun and caught completely off guard. Initially the US had deprived South Korea of weapons and ammunition. In a fear that the South Koreans might invade the north and start a war as threaten by the South Korean leader at the time, Syngman Rhee. This restraint from the US led to South Korea defenceless against the communist tanks and heavy artillery. Hence the capital of South Korea which lies 30 miles from the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was captured by North Korean army in two days. Sensing public outrage in America, President Harry S. Truman immediately called for US air and sea strikes against North Korean targets. Truman called on the United Nations, to lead a police action against North Korea.

United States forces was the backbone of the operation, but around this time the US military was dangerously weak as its budget was 1/10 what it had been in 1945 and combat troops in the far east were few and far. Douglas MacArthur the commander-in-chief of Far East Forces became the face of America to the Asian world. The first brigade to reach the front was tasked force Smith and were soon trapped behind the enemy and had to fight their way out. It quickly became clear that this was no police action and rather a full-fledged war that wasn't going to be an easy one. Sensing the size of aggression in next few weeks, the troops from the US. eighth army arrived from Japan. But this was getting overwhelming for the United Nations correlation army to control and by July 20<sup>th</sup> they were cornered in southern most of South Korea, Busan. By September McArthur formulated a plan to capture Inchon which was a strategically important port and was close to capital Seoul (25 miles) and Gimpo Airfield (16 miles). McArthur, created a special tenth core to carry out the operation divisions from the Army Marines and Navy

were pulled from the action around Busan to leave the charge. In the morning of September 15<sup>th</sup>, the attack was planned in 2 segment synchronized, with the high tides of morning and night as the shore was shallow during low tides.

After taking over Inchon with more than 300 North Korean casualties and 20 injured American troops, the troop marched towards Seoul and soon by September 24th UN troops held the high ground around the capital, Seoul. On September 29th, 1950, dignitaries flew into Gimpo and made their way to Seoul for a celebration. A parade was held to display that their police action was succeeding. Then it was time to take the control over the border and South Korean divisions, led the charge reaching the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel on October 1st. Here the South Korean soldiers didn't stop at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and kept moving north and the American forces were purged at the parallel anxiously waiting for orders to follow suit. It was tough decision for UN as stepping on North Korean soil would mean overstepping the mandates of a police action. Around the same time there were information of Chinese troops moving to North Korea in large numbers from Manchuria. The troops reached Pyongyang within ten days of crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and UN resolution was renewed and on October 24th, General MacArthur ordered his men to march straight to the Yalu river and aimed of total victory. But just over the horizon, squatting silently in the hills were hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers. On October 25th, 1950, the silent fears of the United Nations were confirmed. The Chinese that had been quietly lurking between the UN forces on the Yalu river made their presence known with an ambush. Initial intel suggested around 50,000 to 70,000 Chinese troops but on ground there were more than 250,000<sup>v</sup> troops in those mountains. The shared number of Chinese troops along with harsh winters of North made it difficult for the UN troops to eventually withdraw at 38<sup>th</sup> parallel where the Demilitarised zone lies today.

India Joined the Korean War in 1953 under the UN peacekeeping mission and was dispatched to the Korean Peninsula for the protection and repatriation of prisoners of war. India took a neutral stand in the war and assisted medical and otherwise to war prisoners and fellow soldiers.<sup>vi</sup>

### **After the Korean War: 1953 – 1957**

At the time of the election of 170 members of the Workers Party of Korea Central Committee leadership in 1956, about 2/3 of these 71 elected officials had pro-soviet orientations, and only about 1/5 of those elected officials had pro-china orientation. It was quite clear that in the initial years, the Soviets had a larger influence and impact in the region as compared to China which wasn't surprising as it was administered by the Soviets in its early days of liberation and the Soviet propaganda of Soviet-style communism was at peak during those days. The advisors of the pro-soviet orientations collectively at this time had more influence than their Chinese counterparts. Even at the end of the Korean war after Chinese intervention, the North Korean army had only Soviet advisors or consultants. "The Korean peninsula served as a front line for these Communist powers to deter U.S. and Japanese influence. For example, when the thirty-year treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the PRC was signed in February 1950, both sides agreed to render military and other assistance in case either of them should be attacked by Japan or by any of its allied states. Stalin was reluctant to sign this treaty, fearing that Mao would become another Tito; he did sign it, however, perhaps to keep the PRC under the Soviet sphere of influence."<sup>vii</sup> Till this period the Sino-Soviet were not sour yet and they had their agreements and the Soviets still offered aid and assistance to China. The North Korean State consistently recognized the USSR as the Pre-eminent state of the international socialist committee at the time. In 1953 the symbolic significant fifth

anniversary of the North Korean Army formation, the North Korean leaders, explicitly described the Army as inspired by the Soviet military science and experience. On the other hand, the same leaders also acknowledged some contributions from the red Chinese as the state that sacrificed its Sons and Daughters' blood for the proletarian internationalism communist struggle. The hypothesis that **(H1)** Historical events or factors play a primary role in the formation of principles in Foreign Policy stands to be true in the case of North Korean foreign policy.

The personal historic events such as Kim Il-sung knowing that he came to power through the Soviets yet at the same time his days in Manchurian hinder land both created a dilemma of his devotion and loyalty. On the state level the fact that North Korea was initially administered by the Soviet Union in its early days and its support of aircraft and pilots in the Korean War created this historic bond between North Korea and the Soviets yet at the same time the sacrifice of the Chinese soldiers in the Korean war could also not be ignored so these historic bonds of North Korea with China and the Soviet both created a dilemma for the Foreign policymakers of North Korea and Kim Il-Sung himself. Due to these events, the North Korean foreign policy remained indifferent to both China and the Soviet Union and played a careful act in balancing these states. This careful act of balancing between China and the Soviet Union gave rise to the theory of non-alliance. The theory of non-alliance in international relations can be explained as the theory where a state chooses not to join an alliance with any of its two or more friendly states that are in conflict. Alliances form a central role in international relations as it is an important part of foreign policy and its statecraft therefore a states' decision and action of non-alliance also play an important role in defining its foreign policy and the statecraft. Alliances are generally formed between two or more states to counter a common threat or challenge. Quite often weak states enter into alliance

alliances to defend themselves from external threats. In the 1950s and 1960s North Korea did not have its military might like today and it was considerably a weaker state in a lot of sense such as economy, military and technology. The Theory of non- alliance suggest that though North Korea was a weaker state and was threatened by its neighbors like Japan and South Korea had an alliance with the imperialist United States of America it still chose to not enter into an alliance with neither China nor Soviet Union as it did not want to offend or to lose either of it. The theory derives from a state not entering into an alliance for its own short-term or long-term benefits.

### **Land Reforms, Trade, and Economy:**

In the aftermath of the Korean War, North Korea continued the process of collecting their farms to ensure these farms would go tighter and tighter under state control. North Korea collectivized its farm from 1953 to 1957 and during that period the state imitates the Soviet-style land reforms and this is referred to as the guiding compass by Kim Il-sung for agriculture policy in North Korea. The agricultural policy matured as the first five-year economic plan for North Korean industries and North Korean institutions. Until 1958 the Soviet Union served as the template for North Korea's Economic and other major policies. Soviet continued to provide substantial economic assistance to North Korea throughout the early 1950s-1956, 1957, and 1958. In 1953 the Soviet Union gave an aid package of a billion rubles to North Korea which was used between 1954-1956. The Soviet Union also forgave some of North Korea's debt to the Soviet Union. In 1956 Moscow and the other Soviet East European satellites all came together to give more aid to North Korea. Here this gesture by the other socialist state was more due to a sense of solidarity that exemplifies the principles of proletarian internationalism in its purest and most raw form. North Korean trade was dominated by the Soviet based partnership during this period. The

Soviet Union had a greater trade advantage of more than a fraction. The Korean War not only had a humanitarian cost but also an economic cost on the people of North Korea. Post War North Korea needed its socialist allies more than ever. In 1954-56 during its three-year economic plan, North Korea received sizable grants from China, Soviet, and other Soviet Union Eastern European satellite states. After 1956 with some success from the three-year economic plan the foreign aid as state revenue reduced from 33% to 5%.

### **The Shift of Ideology:**

During this period in the year, 1955 one can see a shift in the governance and policy of North Korea with the introduction of the Juche ideology by Kim il-sung as the future of North Korea and shift from a posture of dependence to a posture of self-reliant. But the fact remains that North Korea would not reject any assistance from China or the Soviet Union. In 1955, Kim Il-sung gave a speech on eliminating dogmatism and establishing Juche as the state ideology. He started his speech by saying, "Today I want to address a few remarks to you on the shortcomings in our Party's ideological work and on how to eliminate them in the future".<sup>viii</sup> In his speech, Kim Il-sung feisty criticized party members for ignoring Korean history. He urges the listeners to think about ideas or ways to apply Marxism and Leninism ideas to the North Korean context. Kim Il-sung believed that North Korea had matured enough where the state can have its own identity of daily life and practice and not copy others' way of life. Here is an emphasis on ideology and revolution that is unique to North Korea and at the same time he acknowledges the success of Soviet and Chinese ideology. He mentions, "What is Juche in our Party's ideological work? What are we doing? We are not engaged in any other country's revolution, but precisely in the Korean revolution. This, the Korean revolution, constitutes Juche in the ideological work of our Party. Therefore, all

ideological work must be subordinated to the interests of the Korean revolution. When we study the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the history of the Chinese revolution, or the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, it is all to correctly carry out our revolution."<sup>ix</sup> Today many scholars believe that North Korea's extreme focus and emphasis on Juche ideology is one of the reasons for its economic downfall. Ian Rinehart explains this in his paper by saying, "Juche-inspired policies severely limited North Korea's economic growth by allocating scarce resources to unproductive industries for the sake of self-reliance."<sup>x</sup> North Korea witnessed the conflict between China and the Soviets which was due to various reasons but after the death of Stalin in 1953 the rift between China and the Soviets grew larger and became more visible. So, nevertheless, it was Kim Il-Sung's perfect timing to shift towards self-reliance as its unique ideology where it avoided the dilemma of choosing from either Soviet form ideology or the Chinese form of ideology.

## **The Conflict: Red China and Soviet Union**

North Korea witnessed a conflict between China and the Soviet Union. There were several reasons behind the conflict such as the Soviet domination of the Comintern (Communist International- a group of communist parties across the globe) and the Chinese communist divergence from it as early as the 1920s. Significance of the geographic factors of Red China and Soviet sharing a huge border ( 4000 miles) and any friction along the border predated the emergence of communism by many centuries. Some Russian traditions and some Chinese traditions from vantage point history have historically remained reconcilable. But the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 was the turning point of the Sino-Soviet relations. In the aftermath of Stalin's death in 1953. The four main issues raised at the 20th Congress were as:

- Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin.
- Russian premier Khrushchev called for the USSR's peaceful transaction of communism (harmonious coexistence).
- Khrushchev calls for consolation to build up socialism.
- Resist the competence of the party leaders.

The resolution of the 20th Congress clearly shows Khrushchev's de-Stalin. Soon after the 20th Congress Beijing and Moscow metaphorically horns over the correctness of the resolutions. Beijing wanted to limit Anti-Stalin attacks to Stalin alone because there was a possibility that Mao would also fall under, alongside Stalin as with industrialization and collectivization Mao had emulated Joseph Stalin. In short, Beijing did not want the Soviet's new anti-Stalinism to turn into a Chinese reputation for Maoist policy. The Chinese objection also had the intention of trying to turn Beijing into the new philosophical heartland of Communism. Another reason would be that after the death of Stalin, Mao had started to consider himself as the philosophical elder Statesman of Marxism and Leninism and he disagreed with Khrushchev's philosophy of harmonious co-existence.

Pyongyang remained silent about Stalin for some time during this whole episode. In 1956, the topic of the so-called personality cult that disgusted Khrushchev came up in the party meeting. In that meeting, the Kim Il-sung defenders said North Korea never had a personality cult and that the government had always ruled by collective consultation among all the party elites but during this time some of the early evidence of personality cult about Kim Il-sung was quietly removed like the massive Kim Il-sung portrait was removed from the dais, songs that flattered Kim Il-sung also felt silent during this time, delegates from the party would refrain from praising Kim il-sung. The Workers Party of Korea formally adopted a policy of collective leadership. North Korea remained poised to embrace the concept of collective leadership to



show their support towards Khrushchev and his party but North Korea never formally denounced Stalin and in this way, North Korea was able to play catch with the Chinese communist party as well. Some theories suggested that Kim Il-sung never formally denounce Stalin because he knew that he came to power through the Soviet during the Stalin period and also since his days in Manchurian hinterland he lived as a devout Stalinist and wanted to refrain from at least publicly denouncing his philosophical inspiration. Later in 1957, Kim Il-sung participated in the Moscow conference (International gathering of socialist parties) and took notes of distinction in the worldview that existed between Mao and Khrushchev. At the time the philosophical difference between China and the Soviet Union remained mysterious to the capitalist and progressive western powers. In his remark at the conference, Kim Il-sung avoided controversial ideas that might alienate anyone in the conference. He simply signed the Moscow declaration, an act of formal extension of his obligation at the meeting. Throughout the years Kim played a balanced role between China and the Soviets and continued gaining their assistance. North Korea could not afford to upset either one at this point due to its requirement of aid for economic growth, Military, and Industrialisation from both China and the Soviet Union.

### **After the Korean War: 1958 – 1959**

The two years of 1958 and 1959 was the period when one can see a shift of North Korea's foreign policy from Soviet leaning to Chinese leaning. China's people's commune (established during the Great Leap Forward) formerly mixed with red China's criticism of Khrushchev's policy stated during the 20th Congress. In February 1958 Zhou Enlai visited North Korea upon his arrival. He said that China and Korea are friendly States united by Blood. The diplomatic friendliness of Zhou's visit became symbolized by the Sino-Korean joint statement on February 19, 1958. The statement read in part as this idea that these two

people have both undertaken a protected and long struggle against aggression and that the two Nations had shared a traditional friendship through the blood of best Sons and Daughters of both states. Zhou Enlai concluded his speech at the session of the Supreme People's Assembly by declaring that "per their international duty the Chinese people will if necessary continue as in the past to fight along with the Korean people in defense of the interests of the peoples of Korea and China, and we solemnly remind the American ruling clique that now the time has come to draw clear conclusions. Zhou Enlai ended his speech with the following words, "There is no force which can break the great and eternal friendship of the peoples of our countries".<sup>xi</sup> In 1958 Kim Il-sung visited Beijing and there in the Beijing rally, Kim Il-sung gloriously spoke of how Korean people treasured their friendship with the Chinese especially in times of Chinese aid. Through a joint statement, they promised to have friendly cooperation with each other and these States resolved to support solidarity of international socialist ideals supported by the Soviets. In that same year of 1958 the Sino - Korean friendship society first emerged in Beijing and the society existed to encourage friendship, solidarity, and cultural relations between the Chinese and Korean people. So, in late 1958, North Korea maintained some pro-soviet stands yet was growing closer to China.

### **Land reforms:**

The people's commune differs from the execution of the agricultural collective farms that are found in the agricultural zone in a typical socialist State. The people's commune is intended to represent large rural organizations and these people's commune will self-contain the necessity of political, economic, and social governance. The Chinese claim that they exist as a concept that creatively interprets the Marxist and Leninist concept of an empowering socialist class. The Chinese firmly believe that their two development models of the great leap

Forward and the People's Commune will bring about a final triumph of internationalizing socialism and not the Soviet development policies. North Korea very heartedly embraced the new development ideas of China and applied them in the North Korean context. The North Korean leaders thought that the Chinese model would be effective for post-war North Korea therefore by 1958 North Korea began "the flying horse movement" in an agriculture Collective program, which resembles China's Great Leap Forward because it essentially, completely and unprecedentedly exploited human labour on a truly massive scale. Kim Il-sung encouraged people to rush forward like a flying horses for the sake of fulfilling the Five-Year Plan.

Later in 1958, the North Korean government began merging agricultural cooperative farms into a bigger combination of cooperative farms. These new combinations of cooperative farms were made in an attempt to resemble the people's commune of China. So, the leader of the village people's committee in North Korea now had an additional title as leader of a newly combined collection of farms and this step was presumably taken to save North Korean leadership the time of analyzing new candidates for local office. This new title led to gross incompetence among individuals who couldn't handle two responsibilities. Unaware of the ground facts Kim Il-sung toured the countryside in North Korea and China which made him convinced that the Chinese model is very efficient. China claimed that they can rapidly realize the dream of the socialist economic world through people's commune and the great leap forward and Kim Il-sung endorsed this claim which is why North Korea and China's agriculture policy had the purpose of broadly rejecting the Soviets model of development in Asia. In 1957 speech in Poland Khrushchev spoke of his distaste for the notion of people's commune. Soon after, North Korea supposedly took a resting period from the flying horse movement. North Korean bureaucrats tried to develop the economy in ways that may not offend the Soviet Union.

## **Trade and Economy:**

In 1958 the two countries China and North Korea signed a long-term credit agreement through this agreement showing the warm friendship between these two states. China extended a credit line to North Korea, North Korea then spent some of this money on textile mills and into paperback plants. North Korea would repay this Credit in 1961 and the state also had to send some products of these mills and plants to China. In the same agreement, North Korea and China promised to collaborate on the hydroelectric power plant on the Yalu River. They also have a formal trade agreement which paved the way for a more systematic and intense exchange of resources and Products between two states. In the late 1950s, North Korea and China signed several agreements for the sake of scientific and Technical cooperation. According to these agreements, the Chinese state will help North Korea to cultivate a native silk industry. The Tumen River on the North Korean and China border serves as a place of collaboration and joint research venture in the Pacific Ocean and the Yellow Sea serves as a host for joint fishing expeditions. As North Korea signed several economic and even cultural cooperative agreements with China at the same time it did not fail to sign its fair share of deals with the Soviet Union as well. In 1959, both North Korea and the Soviet Union agreed to a series of financial aid packages to North Korea and they also agreed on programs of technical assistance to North Korea. In technical assistance, the Soviets agreed to construct an atomic research reactor and several laboratories. This agreement had its significance for North Korea as this came after Moscow canceled the Sino-Soviet atomic agreement of 1957. North Korea embraced the technical advice of Soviet and manufacturing assistance and this event solidified the relationship between the Soviet Union and North Korea.

## **After the Korean War: 1959 – 1963**

Around the late 1950s, it seems that North Korea was inclined more toward China but that was soon changed in the early 1960s when the Soviets re-engaged with North Korea. As the 1960s began, North Korea officially adopted neutral stands. In this aggressive form of neutrality, North Korea tried to maximize the potential for economic aid and diplomatic encouragement from the hands of these two massive communist superpowers. But in the early 1960s, North Koreans increasingly gravitated to become more and more pro-China in their philosophical leanings.

In June 1960, the world communist Workers Party conference was held which allowed the other Communist States and parties to see the Sino-Soviet dispute in full ugliness and seriousness as Khrushchev compared Mao to Stalin and characterized Mao as an irrelevant issue of the modern world. When that happened, the Chinese delegation yelled and stated that Khrushchev had only initiated this meeting to diminish the Prestige and Majesty of China. In the same meeting, Khrushchev gave a warning to his audience about the potential horrors of nuclear war and he contended that it may lead to mutually assured destruction. The meeting ended up having two fractions, one fraction that is totally in support of Khrushchev's notion of Harmonious coexistence with the democratic West and the other supportive of China's militaristic posture. The North Korean delegation does not explicitly support Khrushchev's harmonious coexistence but rather denounce American imperialism and South Korea's right to exist. Despite this, the representatives try to maintain North Korea's official neutrality on the Sino-Soviet conflict by saying that the Soviet exists as the world leader in the communist fellowship of nations.

As the relationship between China and the Soviet Union continues to go down south, especially after the conference North Korea still made every effort to preserve the line of non-alignment. In 1960 China had seen the fragile nature of North Korea's neutrality and that it was subject to pressure, influence, and change. China's statement intensifies a charm offensive approach toward North Korea to hope to pull North Korea closer to within China's diplomatic orbit. To do so China offered a huge and large amount for development aids. The approach also included high-ranking Chinese Diplomat visiting North Korea who spoke of China and the UN as inseparable Partners in the future of the world. The Soviet Union being aware of the Chinese tac-tricks began its counter-charm offensive by finalizing Plan for Khrushchev's visit to North Korea in 1960. Though the trip did not happen as Khrushchev realized it's hopeless to try and pursue the North Korean Statesmen to completely endure the Soviet Union International Communist policy. North Korea was left empty-handed when Khrushchev cancelled his visit so as a part of apology the Soviet forgave dollar 200 million debt of North Korea. All these acts of influence from China and the Soviet Union were carried out to gain North Korea's support in the 1960 Moscow Conference. The table below shows interaction between North Korea- China and North Korea-Soviet in 1958 and 1959 leading to 1960 Moscow Conference.

## SOVIET UNION-NORTH KOREA INTERACTIONS

<i>Date</i>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Event</b>
<i>20, February 1958</i>	Journal of Soviet Ambassador to DPRK, amb. Puzanov	Puzanov and Nam Il discuss the reference to the two Koreas in the recent Statement of the USSR, the issue of the South Korean aircraft that has overflowed into DPRK, and the PRC delegation's visit to the DPRK.
<i>22, February 1958</i>	Journal of Soviet Ambassador to DPRK, amb. Puzanov	At the 40th anniversary of the USSR Armed Forces meeting, Kim Il Sung shares impressions of the visit of the PRC delegation and discusses the South Korean aircraft that overflow DPRK in February 16 and students who renounced the DPRK citizenship.
<i>17, May 1958</i>	Journal of Soviet Ambassador to DPRK, amb. Puzanov	Nam Il learns that the Soviet government will receive a North Korean delegation to study the "use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes" while informing Puzanov of arrangements for representatives of the DPRK to attend party congresses in Eastern Europe.

<p>28, <i>May</i> 1958</p>	<p>Journal of Soviet Ambassador to DPRK, amb. Puzanov</p>	<p>Military Attaché A. A. D'yakonov held a reception for a military delegation going to the Soviet Union at the invitation of Marshal of the Soviet Union Malinovsky. Kim Il Sung spoke very warmly about the Soviet Army, the liberator of the Korean people from Japanese occupation, and cordially thanked the CPSU CC and Marshal of the Soviet Union Malinovsky for the opportunity afforded the DPRK military delegation to become familiar with the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union.</p>
<p>1959</p>	<p>RGANI Fond 1, Opis 3, Delo 3, Listi 159-161</p>	<p>A schedule for discussion points pertaining to international affairs. North Korea requests for more weapons faster, economic assistance, and the negotiation of the release of Korean prisoners in Japan.</p>



## CHINA-NORTH KOREA INTERACTIONS

Date	Source	Event
08, January 1958	PRC FMA 109-00828-01, 4-7. Translated by Jeffrey Wang and Charles Kraus.	Zhou Enlai discusses the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Volunteers from North Korea with Ambassador Pavel Yudin and North Korea's views on the security situation on the Korean Peninsula.
19, February 1958	AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 14, Delo 6, Listy 32-60. Translated by Gary Goldberg.	Zhou Enlai gives a speech regarding the positions expressed in the joint Statement of the DPRK and PRC governments and confirms the friendship of the two states on his visit to DPRK
11, April 1958	PRC FMA 109-01301-09, 145.	Qiao Guanhua reports that the Korean Workers' Party will not send a delegation to the 7th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.
05, August 1958	PRC FMA 204-00315-04, 57-67. Translated by Jeffrey Wang and Charles Kraus.	A report on the quantity and types of industrial equipment being provided to North Korea by China, as well as the types of factories being constructed in North Korea with Chinese assistance.

22, November 1958	Record of Conversation from the Premier's [Zhou Enlai] Reception of the [North] Korean Government Delegation at Xihuating	Zhou Enlai and Kim Il Sung discuss the economic situation, electricity production, agricultural production, cooperativization, and the military in North Korea, as well as the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Army from the DPRK.
02, October 1958	Memorandum of conversation of comrade Mao Zedong, at a meeting with six delegates of the socialist countries.	Mao discusses their shared goal of defeating imperialism, primarily through peaceful methods. He stresses widespread Marxist reeducation of the Chinese people and increased Chinese industrial and agricultural production as means for improvement.

While comparing the two tables one will notice the difference in the topic discussed during these interactions. In interaction with Soviet Union, there is no mention of idealism whereas in interaction with the Chinese, the importance of socialism has been a major part of discussions. The conference was not significant because of what happened but because of what didn't happen. Mao and Kim both were absent from the conference; perhaps the North Korean leadership felt uncomfortable with the prospect of other parties trying to pull Kim Il-sung into the Chinese orbit or the Socialist Soviet orbit or, perhaps this absence implied a strong Fellowship between these two men (Mao and Kim). As a result of equal dominance, the two countries began a quiet but intense campaign of trying to surpass each other in terms of diplomatic influence. The hypothesis that ideology or Pragmatism situates the locus standi of a country's foreign policy approach stands

true to the Chinese foreign policy and its beliefs. But It would not be completely correct to state that ideology was the main factor driving the Chinese foreign policy through it was the main element of their foreign policy. It is more like the Chinese wanted to stand in equal power with the Soviet Union as a socialist power and wanted to propagate their idea of socialism which was different from Khrushchev's idea of socialism.

The theory that applies here in China's and the Soviet's attempt to influence North Korea and take it into their own orbit and North Korea navigating through their policy is the theory of counterbalance of power. Both nations started to offer financial or other non-monetary forms of encouragement to other socialist states which as a result gave birth to a bilateral agreement with North Korea in 1960, through these bilateral agreements the Soviets offered scientific and technical assistance for the sake of expanding North Korean steel production and It also promoted North Korea's ability to seed oils. North Korea at this time didn't have much raw material and was dependent on other countries for Petrol. So, there was not much possibility that North Korea could specialize in oil production but it seemed that the Soviets just wanted to be economically relevant to North Korea. North Korea in their attempt to balance the power never completely entered either of these states' orbit. The general balance of power theory in international relations suggests that states may secure their survival by preventing any one state from gaining enough military power to dominate all others. If one state becomes much stronger, the theory predicts that it will encourage weaker states to unite in a defensive coalition. In the case of the counterbalance of power theory developed in this paper with the dominance of the Soviets in the region and the rising economy and military of China. North Korea played in between them in order to maintain the struggle for power by these two states and took advantage of the conflict by gaining numerous favors from each of them in order to increase its own economic growth and military strength.

It is the Treaty of Amity that formalizes North Korea's friendship with other communist states. That treaty symbolizes profoundly serious and sincere relations between sister states for the sake of these aims: The Soviet Union and China signed friendship cooperation and mutual assistance treaties with North Korea in July 1961. Kim il-sung himself traveled to the Soviet Union to sign the first friendship treaty thereafter immediately going to China to sign another Treaty of friendship. Shen Zihua states that "Kim Il Sung supports you (China), but he can't sin against the Soviet Union. The most obvious is the signing of the Sino-DPRK Treaty with the Soviet Union. Kim Il Sung decided to sign the Soviet Union first. He always felt that no matter what, the Soviet Union was nominally the head of the socialist camp at that time."<sup>xii</sup> The comparison of these documents, the DPRK-PRC (People's Republic of China) treaty and the DPRK-USSR treaty resembles each other in four different ways.

1. Both Treaty emphasizes on the significance of Mutual defensive assistance.  
DPR- USSR agreement article 1: Each of the two states would assist and support one another in the event of an enemy attack from either state or in the event of any enemy attack from a correlation of states.  
DPRK-PRC agreement article 2: It states essentially the same thing with a slide difference in language that each side would immediately help the other side.
2. The treaty emphasizes economic friendship, cultural friendship, and Independence of the participating States.  
DPRK-USSR agreement article 4 and DPRK-PRC agreement article 5: They both have the same substance.
3. The Friendship treaty affirmed the neutrality of the Korean regime in the ongoing feud between China and the Soviets.

DPRK-USSR agreement article 2 and DPRK-PRC agreement article 3: A party to this contract could not enter an alliance or correlation that would injure the other party.

4. The treaties had language that showed that the Soviet and Chinese architects of these treaties understood the significance of the attempts to resolve the issue in the Korean peninsula.

DPRK-USSR agreement article 5 and DPRK-PRC agreement article 6: These articles in both the treaties agree on a need for the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. And that this reunification could only happen for the sake of benefiting the Korean people and promoting harmony in the Far East.

This similar test reveals the Deep Sensitivity of both the Soviets and China in attempting to secure a sense of solidarity with Kim Il-sung's regime. Though the treaties had their similarities they also had very noticeable difference such as:

1. The Preamble of both treaties significantly differ even if the Preamble seemed to superficially resemble each other.

The DPRK-USSR friendship treaty spoke of a concept of socialist internationalism but this notion of Socialists internationalism was dependent on peace and Security in the far east. It had a reference to the values of the United Nations notion of harmonious coexistence.

The DPRK-PRC treaty had zero references to the United Nations. It simply spoke of China and North Korea strengthening their fraternal relations to not only protect each other but also help the peace of Asia and as well as the peace of the world.

2. The treaty with China had no reference to a specific time frame.

The DPRK-PRC Treaty: The treaty will remain in force till the Contracting party agrees on amendment or termination.

The DPRK-USSR treaty had a validity period of 10 years. And if either party does not announce a desire to amend or terminate the treaty one year before the completion of 10 years, then the treaty will automatically extend for five years. This was related to *qui tacet consentire videtur* (silent as consent).

The moment the DPRK signed the treaty with PRC and USSR, both the countries asked DPRK to give an explicit statement of support for the other party. After a few days after signing the treaty, Kim Il-sung had a rally in which he described both the USSR and China as great neighbors and the closest fraternal countries of North Korea. During this time there was a decrease in Soviet aid to the People's Republic of China and North Korean statesmen witnessed this reduction of Soviet Aid to China. So, they decided to remain as neutral as possible and not upset the Soviets but at the same time, they try not to upset China as well. Kim Il-sung in his fourth-party Congress speech made no secret of the nation's firm non-alignment and independent foreign policy. Kim believed that the success of socialist policies in the Soviet Union would favor the fortune of the entire international Socialist Community. Kim also denounced the American imperialist responsible for the Rogue regime of the southern half. It was kind of wishing well for the other person (Khrushchev) yet completely detaching oneself and not endorsing it. In the following year, North Korea and the Soviets did not exchange high-level diplomatic exchanges as they did in 1961 whereas 10 member delegations from China's National People's Congress visited North Korea in April 1962.

Meanwhile, the Soviets continued to work in the spirit of Harmonious coexistence and began direct talks with America on the normalization of relations. The Cuban Missile Crisis arguably reminded North Korea of

the Korean War. In the North Korea school of thought the Soviets' willingness to stop marching Southward after the 38th Parallel had permanently caused the unnatural division of the peninsula. The Soviets had never militarily intervened to save Pyongyang but China did so for North Korea. It became clear after the Cuban Missile Crisis that the Soviets did not deserve Pyongyang's trust. North Korea pursued independent development through the North Korean socialist brand, the National identity of Juche. After the fall of Khrushchev in 1964, North Korea tried to rebuild its relationship with the Soviets mainly for aid but North Korea would always remain inclined to China's notion of favouring the national struggle of socialist parties around the world.

## **Conclusion**

Soon after the Korean war, a struggle for a new balance of power could be seen emerging in Asia. By this time Soviet was already a superpower and dealing with its cold war with the US meanwhile China was making its presence and establishing relations within Asia and especially amongst the socialist communities. Both China and the Soviet wanted to have an influence and be relevant to North Korea because of its geographical situation where North Korea served as a buffer zone for both Soviet and China from the Imperialist west alliance like Japan and South Korea. Another reason for their attempts to be relevant to North Korea is to have North Korea which is also a socialist state to have under their umbrella or satellite their ideas of socialism. "The Soviet Union has a keen interest in Korea being a truly democratic and independent country, friendly to the Soviet Union so that in the future it will not become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union."<sup>xiii</sup> After the death of Stalin, Khrushchev as the new leader of the Soviet Union started its approach of Stalin and brought about a new policy of coexistence with the imperialist west in the 20th congress meeting. This served as fuel to sour and deteriorate things further in Sino-Soviet

relations. Beijing also emphasizes the evils of imperialism and the necessity of direct and forceful revolutionary policies.

The power struggle between these two states amid their conflict gave rise to the theory of counter balance of power and the theory of alliance within North Korean foreign policy. And these socialist policies are meant to support socialist movements across the globe. In contrast to China, North Korea initially adopted a stand that was fairly in favor of Moscow's policy of coexistence. According to the surviving documents, evidence from the media, and official state pronouncements from 1956-1959 everyone important in the North Korean government praised the peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union. The worker's party of Korea's congress of 1956 met and unanimously approved Khrushchev's 20th congress policy.

China's people's communes which were established during the great leap forward formally agreed with Red China's criticism of Khrushchev's policy of coexistence with the west stated during the 20th congress. Several statements such as the Sino-North Korean statement of February 1958, Sino-North Korean long term credit, agreements on a scientific and technical corporation, 5 year-long cultural agreement and North Korea's attempt to copy the great leap forward policy of China concludes the point that while Khrushchev was busy mending its relations with the west and working on its new philosophy of communism of coexistence China took this opportunity to strengthen its relations with North Korea and undermine the Soviet influence in the region. This was soon realized by the Soviets around the early 1960s and began to re-engage intensively with North Korea and signed its own set of Friendship treaty and cooperation with North Korea. Though North Korea never opposed the Soviet, one could notice the inclination towards China in the difference in language used in the friendship treaty signed between North Korea-China and North Korea-Soviet. Treaty



with China had no reference to the time frame whereas the validity period of the treaty with the Soviet Union was valid for a period of 10 years. Treaty with China had no reference to the United Nations whereas the treaty with the Soviets had some reference to UN values. The differences were minor yet had a role in defining the relationship between these countries.

Through the years North Korea's inclination towards China grew and although trying to maintain a neutral ground in most of their foreign policy over those years but one could still noticeably see the difference in terms of their levels of diplomatic engagement with China in comparison to their level of diplomatic engagement with the Soviet Union. The policy decisions of the Workers Party of Korea after 1958 made it clear that North Korea would no longer exist as this state which is completely or nearly completely different from the Soviet policies. As Sino-Soviet difference became deeper North Korea became more and more independent in socio-economic and political initiatives. This Independence came from North Korea's creative interpretation of Marxism and Leninism according to North Korea's needs. North Korea and China both had some hectic issues in the execution of the socialist Revolution, they both desired authoritarians and harsh socio-economic policies for the sake of rapid economic self-sufficiency, but both countries hoped for financial support from the USSR in this hope of Rapid development. The shared anti-American attitude between China and North Korea kept these two states bound with each other in sympathy and solidarity.

With the continued extensive and overwhelming assistance from both, China and the Soviets signed that North Korea was an important and key alliance for both China and the Soviets. Scholars also argue that there is a geographic threat as well as an advantage for China and the Soviets in terms of North Korea. The North Korean policies after the

Korean war from 1950 to 1963 is the policy of opportunistic and self-searching and self-development. It was during this period when North Korea found its self-identity in the Juche system. And it was also during this period when North Korea received a fair share of financial aid as well as technical assistance from both China and the Soviets and most importantly it is during this period when one can see a shift in the attitude of North Korea from neutral and non-alignment to openly taking sides and sharing its opinions. After the war phase, North Korea has truly been in the phase of its ideological development that we see today in North Korea.

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<sup>viii</sup> Kim Il Sung: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 582-606

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