



COMMUN XI

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

North-South Korea Armistice Negotiation

Background Guide

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Letter from the Chair

Dear delegates,

It is an honor to have you at COMMUN XI. My name is Sol Shin, and I am your chair for this year's General Assembly Committee on the North/South Korea Armistice Negotiations. I am currently a junior, and this is my third year serving as a member of COMMUN. I have served as a Crisis Staff and a co-chair in the past.

During this General Assembly, you will represent the diverse perspectives and opinions on the North-South Korea relationship in the year 1988. Through this experience, I hope you will gain an in-depth understanding of the complex geopolitical and military presence within the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, I also hope that this experience will give you a better sense of what was happening in the Korean peninsula and how different countries counteracted it. I look forward to seeing you refine your research, writing, and argumentative skills throughout the duration of the conference.

COMMUN wants to ensure that every delegate understands their given role so that each conference runs smoothly. Therefore, **we will require every delegate to write and submit a position paper in order to be considered for awards.** For examples of previous position papers and other resources to aid your research, please visit [COMMUN's Resources Page](#).

If you have any questions, you can reach me at the email address below. I can't wait to get to know you.

Best regards,

Sol Shin,

Chair, North-South Korea Armistice Negotiation

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Introduction

It is the year 1988, and the Seoul Olympics are almost upon us. It is a glorious opportunity for the Republic of Korea, which has overcome significant economic and social challenges before seizing the opportunity to hold the Olympics. However, political and military tensions between the North and the South rise high. Your goal as delegates is to discuss an agreement between the polarized regions of the Korean peninsula.

Important Definitions

Divided state

A country divided into two or more parts with separate governments. However, these divided countries still have a shared history and language that sets them apart from separate countries. In divided countries, the pressure to unite them acts as a source of tension between the prospective governments and arouses distrust and hostility.

38th Parallel

The line that the U.S. and the USSR established at the end of World War II to neutralize the remaining Japanese forces in the Korean Peninsula. It is the northern latitude line that divides the Korean Peninsula in half.

Perestroika

A program created by Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s. It aimed to restructure Soviet economic and political policy by connecting with capitalist countries such as Germany, Japan, and the United States. In the end, it aided the Soviet Union in moving away from its isolated state.

Nordpolitik

A policy created by South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo in 1988. It was a diplomatic program aimed at communist countries such as North Korea, People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. The goal of this program was to reunite the Korean Peninsula and to establish diplomatic connections with communist countries.

Paramount leader

An informal term for the most powerful politician in the People's Republic of China.

History

The Division

During World War II, the Korean peninsula was under Japan's imperial control. To counter years of Japanese oppression, prominent revolutionaries joined forces to create a provisional government based in China. This new provisional government reached out to the vanguard of World War II for aid, namely the United States and the Soviet Union. As a compromise with South Korea, the Cairo Declaration, issued on December 1, 1943, led the United States, Great Britain, and China to promise Korea independence. Furthermore, at the Yalta Conference, held in February 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin agreed to formulate a four-power trusteeship for the Korean Peninsula, with the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China taking part in the agreement. However, the new trusteeship stood on thin ice, as it did not come to a definite conclusion. As a result, unease grew among the participants of the trusteeship, especially between the United States and the Soviet Union.

At the Potsdam Conference, which took place in July 1945, the United States persuaded the Soviet Union to participate in the war against Japan, promising to achieve Korean

independence as outlined by the Cairo Declaration. The Soviet troops occupied the north of the 38th Parallel, and the American troops the south of it, causing the Japanese to surrender in the Korean Peninsula. However, soon after, the Soviet Union began to close off the 38th Parallel. Political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union deeply influenced this decision; both attempted to limit each other's influence on the peninsula by restricting the area they could control.

Now divided geographically, the Korean Peninsula fell into a state of political chaos. In the south, with a large American influence, multiple political parties sprang up with the intention of achieving a common goal: gaining immediate political autonomy. A left-leaning political group, with Lyuh Woon-Hyung as its leader, even declared a national assembly only a day after the liberation from Japan. However, the American military government refused to recognize it as a formal government, asserting that the American military government was the only government in Korea. Furthermore, upon its return from China, the provisional government was forced to declare itself a political party rather than the official governing body.

In the north, a formerly exiled group of Korean Communists was put in governing power by the Soviet army. By September, the Soviets recognized the new Communist government's legislative powers, effectively setting a precedent for the government going forward. Starting in September 1945, the Soviet influence in North Korea had created a government with the common workers at its core. Furthermore, the Soviet Union prevented North Korea from communicating with the United States regarding the conflicts raging in the peninsula. A Communist party differing from that of South Korea was established in the North, further strengthening the political ties between North Korea and the Soviet Union. Kim Il-Sung, who

fought against the Japanese during the Imperialization Period, was elected first secretary of the North Korean Central Bureau of the Communist Party in October 1945.

In December 1945, at the Moscow Conference, the United States and the Soviet Union created a commission to discuss the unification of the Korean Peninsula before ultimately settling on a four-way trusteeship between the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Great Britain. This commission met again in 1946, and the Soviet Union demanded to remove Korean political groups that previously opposed the trusteeship from consultation. However, the United States declined. In November 1947, the United Nations authorized South Korea to hold an election and create a General Assembly with the election under the observation of a UN Temporary Commission. However, the Soviet Union banned the Temporary Commission from entering the northern part of the peninsula. The South held an election, ultimately electing Rhee Syng-Man as its first president. In December of the same year, the UN General Assembly declared that the Republic of Korea, or South Korea, was the only lawful government in the peninsula.

In April 1948, the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea adopted a new constitution, created and ratified by the said assembly of North Korea. Kim Il-Sung was elected premier, and on September 3, the constitution was ratified by the Assembly. Just six days later, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed, and the Soviet Union recognized it as the only lawful government in the peninsula.

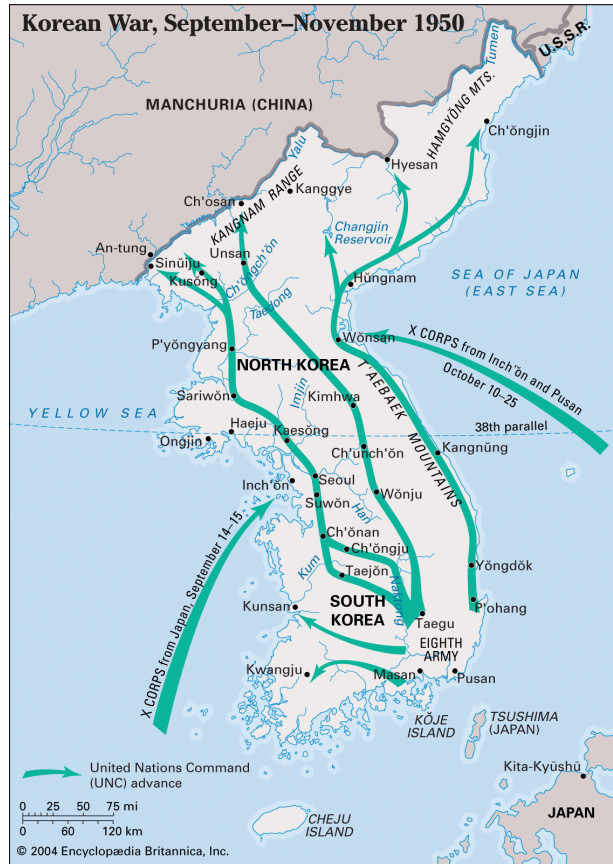
The Korean War

Both the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea established police forces and military troops in the years between 1948 and 1950. Receiving support from

the Soviet Union, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had a more powerful military than the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea was receiving aid from the United States, but it was still in progress of implementing the new military equipment. In 1949, Premier Kim Il-Sung went as far as to press Stalin for a swift war between the North and the South. Finally, in April 1950, Stalin approved the North's invasion of its southern counterpart.

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean army invaded South Korea, crossing past the 38th Parallel. Despite international disputes regarding North Korea's true intentions in starting the war, it is historically accurate that they had instigated the war with an invasion. South Korea was utterly unprepared for the attacks,¹ leaving Seoul, its capital, vulnerable. On the following day, the UN issued a condemnation of North Korea's invasion. Thus began the war between the North and the South. President Harry Truman of the United States ordered American forces in Japan to send aid to South Korea, also urging the UN to take military action against North Korea. However, Seoul fell to North Korean forces on June 28, and the North Korean army swiftly made its way down the Korean peninsula until the South Korean forces were cornered around Busain, the southeasternmost corner of the peninsula.

¹ Note that there exist multiple conflicting descriptions of South Korea's military status at the time.



On September 15, 1950, the tables turned after joint forces, consisting of South Korean troops and the UN army, successfully made a landing in Incheon. Located just west of Seoul, Incheon was an incredibly vital coastal city for trade and transportation. After seizing the 38th Parallel, President Truman authorized the joint troops to advance into North Korea. This decision was met with a setback: China had decided to intervene. Already in an unstable relationship with the United States, China was leaning more to the side of the Soviet Union. It saw the United States' involvement in the Korean War as a threat to its sovereignty. It feared the unified Korean peninsula under American influence would employ hostile military tactics on the Korea-China border. The joint forces of China and North Korea retook Seoul in January 1951, and in February, the UN General Assembly formally labeled China as an oppressor. After retreating

² Korean War, June-August 1950, illustration, Britannica, accessed December 27, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Inchon-landing>.

from Seoul, the joint UN forces welcomed troops from Britain, Turkey, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Colombia, Thailand, Ethiopia, and the Philippines to battle the communists.

In July 1951, peace negotiations started between the UN and the communist commanders. For both the UN and the communists, Koreans were not a factor in considering possible outcomes; the UN's decision was mostly managed by the United States, whereas China managed the communists'. Three issues presented themselves as main setbacks: troops' withdrawal, boundaries, and prisoners of war. China demanded that all foreign troops be removed from the peninsula, but the United States refused. The communists wanted the 38th Parallel to be the border between North Korea and South Korea, but the United States refused once again. To make matters more complex, among the communist prisoners the UN held captive, a significant percentage did not want to return to their respective countries.

The Korean War ended with an armistice signed on July 27, 1953, with the UN getting most of what it had initially demanded. The casualties both Koreas had endured were devastating. A few million people had died, injured, or went missing in the war, most of them being Koreans. More families had been separated. Indiscriminate aerial bombing authorized by the joint forces had terrorized and massacred the general public. Both countries suffered a staggering economic loss, as numerous factories had been destroyed during the war.

For North Korea, the war had provided an excuse for Kim Il-Sung to purge his political rivals and to consolidate his power. Kim thus created a strong, what-would-be patriarchal political reign in North Korea. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Kim later removed any remaining Soviet influence and established his own faction, the Partisan Group, as the domineering party.

For South Korea, President Rhee Syng-Man had earned a bad reputation by abandoning Seoul at the beginning of the war. He still remained president, but public dissent was growing against him. Military power grew, creating a basis for the array of military regimes that would come later. Vilification of communists became more widespread.

~1988

In the years between the war and the Seoul Olympics, North Korea flourished economically due to the socioeconomic support from the Soviet Union and China. Thus, North Korea defined itself as an economic superior to South Korea, creating a mission to help the poor in the South. The South, on the other hand, took a longer time to recover from the devastation of the Korean War, thus being extremely wary of North Korea. The plethora of covert operatives (spies) running rampant in the peninsula contributed to the tension between the two.

In 1965, during addresses commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the liberation, both North and South Korea emphasized their division instead of a joint intention to unite the peninsula. However, in 1972, some of the anxiety was alleviated with a joint statement between the North and the South, outlining the potential requirements for a complete unification. Unfortunately, the excitement soon perished as the conversation came to an end. A continuous array of battles and spies kept both countries on edge. For example, in 1983, during an event in Burma (now Myanmar), a North Korean spy tried to assassinate President Park Jung-Hee of South Korea. Despite failing, multiple South Korean officials as well as some Burmese government figures perished, raising tensions in the peninsula. Despite this, there was a similar movement to reconcile the peninsula in 1985, when the fortieth year anniversary celebration of the liberation was held to reunite separated families from the Korean War.

In the years between 1953 and 1988, the Republic of Korea had undergone a drastic economic improvement, becoming the host of the 1988 Summer Olympics in an effective manner. However, it is important to note that violent student riots were taking place in South Korea during the time of the Olympics, making it vulnerable to criticisms from across the world. The United States of America influenced South Korea greatly in the years after the division. By 1988, the two countries had created an agreement promising to supply each other with military supplies, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship. Their relationship had evened throughout the years, with South Korea experiencing rapid economic growth, enabling them to be on equal footing with one another.

In 1987, just a year before the Seoul Olympics, two North Korean operatives bombed a Korean Air flight heading to Myanmar to sabotage South Korea's status as the Olympic host. All 115 passengers died, and one of the operatives committed suicide while being arrested. The event aroused hatred for North Korea in the South, and countries across the globe ostracized North Korea as a terrorist country.

North Korea had already decided to boycott the previous Olympics. It wanted a cohost status along with South Korea, but it was vetoed by the International Olympic Committee; although the IOC made some concessions to meet North Korea's demands, it still boycotted the Seoul Olympics. The desperation instigated by the fall of the Soviet Union contributed; North Korea mainly relied on supplies from the Soviet Union and China for economic growth, so it faced heavy consequences from the lack thereof.

On July 7, 1988, President Roh Tae-Woo of South Korea declared the July 7th Declaration, or *Nordpolitik*, stating that South Korea saw North Korea as part of the same

community working together towards a shared goal. He emphasized that the Korean Peninsula should interact with each other cordially.

South Korea had a majority of the world's democratic countries supporting its democracy, including the United States. It was able to receive support from the UN. To its supporters, South Korea was seen more as a victim to North Korea rather than being the oppressor. Its rapid economic growth had even enabled South Korea to host the 1988 Summer Olympics. On the other hand, North Korea had been labelled a terrorist country from its attacks on South Korean democracy, such as the bombing at Myanmar. However, North Korea had China and the Soviet Union supporting its communist regime. Both countries had established their sociopolitical status in the international community. It is important to note that the Soviet Union had begun its decline by 1988; North Korea, which had been leaning heavily on its support, began to rely more on China instead. North Korea's economic growth had slowed considerably compared to South Korea. The United States, the Soviet Union, and China were three major factors in determining the division of the Korean peninsula. Divided by political ideologies, they contributed heavily to the economic and political development in both Koreas. Thus, they were able to influence the Korean peninsula heavily when it came to armistice negotiations.

Problem Statements:

- The Korean Peninsula relying on other countries (e.g. the United States, as it did in the 1940s) to negotiate an armistice may cause the peninsula to be swayed often by outside political considerations even after reaching peace. Is this avoidable?

- The North and the South have undergone significantly different economic developments over the past 40 years. How will they reconcile their differences?
- How would the armistice negotiations change the power dynamics of democracy and communism within the Korean Peninsula?

ROLES:

Republic of Korea (South Korea)

Roh Tae-Woo, President of South Korea

Born in 1932 in modern-day South Korea, President Roh was in the military with Chun Do-Hwan, a military president and Roh's predecessor. Prior to being elected president, he served as an advocate for communications between the North and the South. Roh was also the head of the Seoul Olympics committee. He was elected president in 1988 with a vote percentage of 36%. The division of two other major presidential candidates, Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, played a significant role in Roh's election, which explains the low voter turnout. By creating *Nordpolitik*, Roh created a basis for peace negotiations between the North and the South.

Presidential Candidate Kim Yong-Sam

Born in 1927 in modern-day South Korea, Kim Young-Sam was one of the two major presidential candidates who ran against President Roh. Kim was considered an elite, as he graduated from Seoul University, the most prestigious college in the nation. He was a conservative who participated in the creation of South Korea's conservative party. Kim strongly advocated for democracy in South Korea against President Chun Do-Hwan's military regime,

even getting banned from South Korea's political scene in the process. Kim sought to mend the relationship between the North and the South.

Presidential Candidate Kim Dae-Jung

Born in 1926 in modern-day South Korea, Kim Dae-Jung was one of the two major presidential candidates who ran against President Roh. He was a liberal who opposed President Chun's military regime, but he was arrested in 1961 when he tried to run for a government position. However, he was elected Congressman representing the liberal party in 1963. He sought to seek peace with North Korea, as later in his life, he was recognized for his attempts to reconcile the North and the South.

Presidential Candidate Kim Jong-Pil

Born in 1926 in modern-day South Korea, Kim Jong-Pil was a major figure in a military coup d'etat led by Former President Park Jung-Hee, a right-hand man of President Park. Kim was notorious for brutally torturing citizens to consolidate President Park's military regime. He was a conservative who contributed to the creation of South Korea's conservative party, along with Roh Tae-Woo and Kim Young-Sam. Kim supported Kim Young-Sam's firm approaches to the North-South relationship.

Congressman Lee Hae-Chan

Born in 1952 in rural South Korea to a comparatively wealthy family, Lee Hae-Chan was a young politician who rose to power in South Korea's liberal party. Graduating from Seoul University and considered an elite, he was at the center of student protests during President Park

and President Chun's military regime. Lee was imprisoned for a year as a result, eventually becoming a liberal Congressman in his later years. Lee advocated for peace between the North and the South.

Prime Minister Kang Young-Hoon

Born in 1921 in modern-day South Korea, Kang Young-Hoon served in World War II as a college student. He moved south before the Korean War broke out. There, he served as a member of the army and the head of the Korea Military Academy. Former President Park Jung-Hee imprisoned him during his coup d'état, as Kang refused to let his students participate in it. In late 1988, Kang was credited with organizing a summit between the North and the South to establish a better relationship.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)

Supreme Leader Kim Il-Sung

Born in 1912 in modern-day North Korea, Kim Il-Sung spent his early years in communist China. Afterwards, he trained as a spy in the Soviet Union before returning to North Korea with the Red Army. Kim initiated the Korean War, and he purged his political enemies to consolidate his dictatorship in North Korea. However, with the decline of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, Kim was faced with the sudden deprivation of economic and political support as well as battling his own health issues. Amidst the tension, Kim sought peace with the South by holding a summit meeting with it.

Leader Kim Jong-Il

The firstborn son of Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il was born in 1941 in the Soviet Union (although North Korea claimed he was born within its borders). During the Korean War, Kim was placed in the relative safety of Manchuria, located in northeastern China. He was already considered the heir to Kim Il-Sung in the mid-1970s, when he helped his father purge his political enemies. Kim was officially named Kim Il-Sung's heir in 1980, further consolidating the Kim dynasty in North Korea. Kim initially perceived North Korea as being culturally superior to South Korea; however, in the late 1980s, his tone shifted towards being defensive instead of patronizing.

Prime Minister Yon Hyong-Muk

Born in 1931, Yon Hyong-Muk was the most powerful man in North Korea next to the Kim family. He served as a military officer in the Government Escort Bureau of the Supreme Command Headquarters under Kim Jong-Un when the Korean War broke out. Afterwards, he studied abroad in the Czech Republic, majoring in mechanical engineering. Upon Yon's return to North Korea, he became the overseer of defense manufacturing. Yon sought to establish a peaceful relationship with South Korea, as he was credited with organizing a summit between the North and the South to establish a better relationship.

State Council Minister Kang Sung-San

Born in 1931 in modern-day North Korea, Kang Sung-San was known for his position as a diplomat. He was a relative of the Kim family. He earned Kim Jong-Il's trust by reviving the declining North Korean economy. In 1984, he took a radical step and urged the North Korean government to communicate and exchange goods with capitalist countries, such as the United

States. Kang also drew on China's economic system to propose the Joint Venture Act, an act designed to attract capitalist countries. He was open to diplomatic exchanges with South Korea.

Minister of the People's Armed Forces Oh Jin-Woo

Appointed as the fifth Minister of the People's Armed Forces in 1976, Oh Jin-Woo was directly and indirectly involved in North Korea's attempted assassination of South Korean President Park Jung-Hee in 1983. Combined with his military background, Oh was a source of threat for the South Korean military. Initially, he was a bigger supporter of Kim Il-Sung, but after realizing Kim's ambitions to train Kim Jong-Il as his heir, Oh became a firm follower of Kim Jong-Il.

United States of America

President Ronald Reagan

Born in 1911 in Illinois, Reagan was the 40th president of the United States. He was a conservative who was highly against communism. It was Reagan who responded to the onset of the Korean War, providing South Korea with troops and artillery. Reagan was also a major contributor to the fall of the Soviet Union, aggravating North Korea's socioeconomic problems as a result. Reagan also dissuaded Former President Chun Doo-Hwan of South Korea from using military force to stop student protesters, hinting at a stable relationship he established between the two countries.

Vice President George H. W. Bush

Born in 1924 in Milton, Massachusetts, Conservative George H. W. Bush was the vice president to President Ronald Reagan. He was from a politically prominent family, with his father serving as a Connecticut senator. Before serving as vice president, Bush was a Texan senator himself. Bush sought to restabilize democracy within South Korea, but he also attempted to continue reconciliation with North Korea in attempts to reunite the peninsula.

Secretary of State George Shultz

Born in 1920 in New York City, New York, George Shultz was appointed Secretary of State by President Reagan in 1982. Shultz was highly concerned with North Korea's growing military presence, placing North Korea in the list of terrorist countries. He was especially concerned with the tension between North Korea and South Korea, considering military actions to prevent the tension from growing. During the decline of the Soviet Union, Shultz was responsible for responding to the rise of the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Deputy Undersecretary of State Charles Kartman

Charles Kartman, along with George Shultz, was one of the nation's leading experts on Asian politics. He served as the Special Envoy for the Korean Peace Process and the Deputy Undersecretary of State under the Reagan administration. Kartman disagreed with Bush's attempts at reconciling with North Korea, emphasizing instead that neutralizing its military forces should be their top priority. Through this, Kartman claimed, the United States would be able to prevent a second Korean War from breaking out.

National Security Advisor Donald Gregg

Born in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, Donald Gregg joined the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951 immediately after graduating from Williams College. He served as special assistant to the U.S. Ambassador in Korea from 1973 to 1975, and he was decorated by the South Korean government in 1975. During Reagan's presidency, Gregg served as the national security advisor to Vice President Bush as one of the U.S. government's top Asia experts. He sought to continue a peaceful relationship with South Korea while maintaining sympathy for North Korea, as Gregg advocated for reconciliation through consistent conversations.

Soviet Union

General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev

Born in 1931 in Privolnoye, Stavropol, Mikhail Gorbachev was the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He joined the *Komsomol*, or Young Communist League, in 1946 and proved to be a valuable member. In 1952, Gorbachev joined the Communist Party. He held a number of positions in the *Komsomol* and the Communist Party before becoming first secretary of the regional party committee in 1970. In an attempt to revive the Soviet Union's faltering economy, Gorbachev sought to cooperate with South Korea, which had undergone a major economic development. On the other hand, he maintained a lukewarm relationship with North Korea, which saw his *perestroika* policies as a betrayal of communism.

Head of State Andrei Gromyko

Born in 1909 in present-day Belarus, Andrei Gromyko was the Soviet Union's head of state. He studied agricultural economics in his youth before becoming a politician. Joseph Stalin appointed Gromyko chief of the U.S. division of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in

1939, inciting Gromyko's lifelong loyalty to Stalin. Gromyko was involved in many major foreign affairs, such as serving as foreign minister from 1957 to 1985. Even after Gromyko became head of state in 1985, he still served as an advocate for foreign policies. Gromyko was a supporter of North Korea during the Korean War, partially due to his strong opinions about the United States. He also held South Korea accountable for instigating the war by attacking the North Korean troops first.

Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov

Born in 1929 in present-day Ukraine, Nikolai Ryzhkov was the premier of the Soviet Union. He joined the Communist Party in 1956, and he was appointed first deputy minister of heavy and transport machine building, given his mechanic background. Ryzhkov steadily rose in the ranks of the Communist Party before becoming premier. During his time in office, the Soviet Union experienced an economic crisis that led to its decline. Ryzhkov was a supporter of Gorbachev's *perestroika* policies. In the fall of the Cold War, Ryzhkov was open to establishing diplomatic connections with democratic countries, such as South Korea and the United States.

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze

Born in 1928 in present-day Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze was foreign minister of the Soviet Union. Of Georgian descent, he became a *Komsomol* member and rose steadily in position. In 1972, Shevardnadze became first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. He quickly caught Gorbachev's attention, being appointed minister of foreign affairs after Gromyko. Shevardnadze was known for advocating for Gorbachev's

perestroika policies. He was a supporter of American democracy, also being open to establishing connections with South Korea.

People's Republic of China

Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping

Born in 1904 in Guang'an, Sichuan province, Deng Xiaoping was China's paramount leader from 1978 through 1997. During his early life, Deng studied in a French-language school that later enabled him to study abroad in France. There, Deng developed an interest in Marxism. He was a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and served as deputy prime minister before rising to the acme of political power. Thanks to Deng's policies, China experienced significant economic development. Deng never met any South Korean leaders during his regime, but he maintained a close relationship with North Korea, supporting it economically. However, he also took an interest in connecting diplomatically with South Korea.

Mayor Jiang Zemin

Born in 1926 in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, Jiang Zemin studied in Shanghai Jiao Tong University before receiving technical training in the Soviet Union. In 1980, Jiang became vice minister of the state commission on imports and exports. Two years later, he was appointed member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party as well as serving as mayor of Shanghai. Jiang Zemin was particularly interested in South Korea's rapid economic development and sought to establish a genial relationship. Meanwhile, Jiang's policies towards North Korea took a standstill, as he focused more on establishing connections with South Korea.

General Secretary Zhao Ziyang

Born in 1919 in Hua, Henan province, Zhao Ziyang served as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. He joined the Young Communist League in 1932 and became a member of the Chinese Communist Party in 1938. Zhao was purged in 1967 during the Cultural Revolution, but he later re-entered the political scene and made significant agricultural and economic advances. This caught the attention of Deng Xiaoping, who later stood against Zhao in China's rising tensions about democracy. As Zhao was an advocate for China's democratization, he also took an interest in South Korea's democratic government.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen

Born in 1928 in Shanghai, Qian Qichen served as a diplomat and deputy minister of foreign affairs of China. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1942 before studying abroad in the Soviet Union. In 1955, Qian started working as China's diplomat in the Soviet Union. Appointed as China's Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1988, Qian attempted to connect with both North and South Korea. South Korea welcomed Qian's diplomatic policies, whereas North Korea turned a cold shoulder to his ideas.

Premier Li Peng

Born in 1928 in Chengdu, Sichuan province, Li Peng was appointed the Premier of China in 1988. His father was executed by the *Kuomintang*, or the Nationalist Party, in 1930. Li went to the communists' military base at Yan'an in 1941 and served there. He studied abroad in the Soviet Union before returning to China and rising through the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. In April 1988, Li was chosen to succeed Zhao Ziyang as premier after Zhao was appointed

General Secretary. Li was open to establishing an economic connection with North Korea as well as addressing the pollution of the Yellow Sea (which lies between China and the Korean Peninsula). Meanwhile, Li recognized North Korea's rapid military development as a concern; he felt it was an issue North Korea and its allies should address.

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