



UNC's Roles and Cooperation for Peace Building in the Korean Peninsula

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The United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea was established in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 84 (S/1588), in an effort to defeat armed attack in the Korean peninsula and restore international peace and security in the area. The UNC Commander is an agent in the Korean War (1950-1953) and a signatory to the Armistice Agreement, withholding the legal status to the implementation of the agreement. The UNC has executed functions such as: defeating North Korea's armed attack, operating UNC-Rear headquarters, controlling and supporting military forces of sending states. The defense function, such as 'defeating North Korea's armed attack' has been transferred to the Combined Forces Command that was activated in 1978.

The UNC today, based on close cooperation with the ROK Government, carries out the UNC Revitalization Program by reviewing the roles and the organization of the UNC, continue implementing the Armistice Agreement, providing a home for international community's support, and empowering the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC). The UNC also focuses its efforts on supporting the implementation of the inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) of September 19, 2018.

The UNC that Contributed to Military Stability in the Korean Peninsula

The standard of inter-Korean military order, ever since the Korean War that began on June 25, 1950, is the Armistice Agreement of July 27, 1953. There were some major setbacks, such as the withdrawal of Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) and KPA (Korea People's Army) representatives from the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), and the withdrawal of KPA-nominated NNSC commissions (Czechoslovakia and Poland) from the NNSC, the UNC implemented the Armistice Agreement through the operations of the UNCMAC and the NNSC and by doing so has maintained the military order in the Korean Peninsula.

The UNC has enabled the Armistice mechanisms of the NNSC and the UNCMAC in many ways. First, the UNC has hosted monthly UNC Member Nations Ambassadors' meetings, UNCMAC Advisory Group Meetings, and Executive Committee Meetings, which all facilitate communication and activities to implement the Armistice Agreement. The UNC, when necessary, also acts as a channel of communication between the United States and the DPRK. Second, the UNC maintains UNC-Rear headquarters in Yokota Airbase, Japan, which allows sending states to utilize the UNC military bases in Japan in the event of a contingency. UNC-Rear hosts a year-round orientation program that allows key military, government officials and politicians to visit the 7 UNC rear bases. Third, as was decided in the UN Security Council, the UNC presents an annual report via the U.S. Government, on the annual status of armistice implementation and supervision. Fourth, the UNC constantly makes various efforts to improve its work, by reassessing missions and reorganizing its structure. Fifth, the UNC has continuously adapted to the changes in the security situation in the peninsula, as can be seen from 30 Supplementary Agreements from the original 1953 Armistice Agreement. Armistice compliance has prevented accidental conflicts and escalation of tension between the two Koreas.

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2018 was a year in which history will hopefully view as the beginning of the long road to Korea's peace and prosperity. It started with the summit meeting between President Moon and Chairman Kim in Panmunjom, and the very first U.S.-DPRK summit, between Chairman Kim and President Trump, followed. Afterward, on September 19, 2018, the two Koreas also established the inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) as a subsequent document to Pyongyang Joint Declaration, which was an outcome of the 2nd inter-Korean Summit between President

Moon and Chairman Kim. The ROK Ministry of National Defense (MND) closely consulted with the UNC in the process during which led up to an inter-Korean agreement on Joint Security Area (JSA) demilitarization, joint remains recovery inside the DMZ, withdrawal of Guard Posts (GPs). Close coordination continues in the current implementation phase.

First, regarding the JSA Demilitarization, the CMA has been implemented through mechanisms such as the 'South-North-UNC trilateral body.' Currently at Panmunjom 35 North Korean and 35 South Korean unarmed personnel secure the respective sides of the JSA. The ROK MND and the UNC, through close consultation, have decided to resume tours in the South side starting 1 May 2019, in order to prepare to allow free movement in the JSA and to facilitate trilateral consultation. In the future, when the 'Rules of Duty and Operation' is approved by all three sides, civilian visitors will be able to enter the opposite side of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). The CMA dictates that the two sides conduct Joint Remains Recovery in the Arrowhead Hill area. There, a road has been constructed that connects Northern and Southern portions of the DMZ, and currently, as a preparatory measure, demining and preliminary remains recovery operations are taking place in the Southern portion. Additionally, the two Koreas withdrew or destroyed 11 Guard Posts in the DMZ.

The ROK MND closely cooperates with the UNC from the planning stage in creating a 'DMZ Peace Trail.' The MND has conducted a site visit and check-up along with UNCMAC Secretary and others. And it has devised various safety measures with the UNC, such as conducting demining, installing protective fences, establishing medical evacuation plans.

Based on my recent experience as UNCMAC Senior Member, I would like to suggest the future missions of UNC, an organization that ensures security, peace, and in extension support sustainable peace building. First, as it has done until now, the UNC must faithfully carry out its role as a stabilizer by supervising armistice compliance and preventing hostile acts. When the Military Armistice Commission restores its functions as agreed upon in the Armistice Agreement, which will be a fundamental start in military trust-building and alleviating tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Maintaining the armistice mechanisms of the MAC and the NNSC will contribute to sustained military stability in a period of transition from armistice to peace.

Second, which is an extension of the first, UNC's active support to the CMA and its implementation is required. The CMA is about preventing hostilities and returning to the original spirit of the Armistice. The UNC plays a critical role in order to realize this, and the relevant authorities should establish a solid working mechanism such as 'MND-KPA-UNC trilateral talks.'

Third, with close coordination with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and in consultation with the ROK, the roles and organizational structure of the UNC should be revisited to enhance efficiency. The UNC was established in accordance with the UNSCR 84 to restore peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and consolidate international support. The ROK is a complying agent of the Armistice Agreement and a firsthand actor of the Korea peace regime. By constructing a seamless coordination system between the UNC and the ROK, the UNC can solidify its status and receive additional support from the international community.

Finally, the UNC should flexibly respond to the changing security environment. The Armistice Agreement dictates, that it will 'remain in effect until expressly be superseded either by mutually acceptable amendments and additions or by provision in an appropriate agreement for a peaceful settlement at a political level between both sides.' Through three Inter-Korean summit meetings in 2018, the Joint Declaration, CMA, Inter-Korean relations experienced a significant progress. Also, the U.S. and DPRK are conducting diplomatic efforts such as talks on denuclearization. In such circumstances, the UNC will be able to facilitate diplomatic efforts for denuclearization and the establishment of a peace regime, by not only faithfully practicing its original roles in maintaining the Armistice system, but also making flexible and strategic decisions.

There is an old proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, you can go alone. If you want to go far, go together." In solving the puzzle of achieving both 'peace through complete denuclearization' and prosperity, efforts of not only the two Koreas, but the international community is required. If we, together with the United Nations Command, continue to stride together along the road to peace, someday we will enjoy sustainable peace in the Korean Peninsula.