

Korean Security and the 65 Year Search for Peace

International Conference, Prague,
April 26th-27th, 2018

Conference Proceedings

By George Hays II.,
Milada Polišenská (eds.)



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The papers in the proceedings have undergone language and general editing.

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Foreword from the Editor

From April 26 to April 27, 2018, the conference *Korean Security and the 65 Year Search for Peace* was held at Anglo-American University in Prague. As if designed, as our conference in Prague ended, President Moon and Chairman Kim were announcing the result of their summit in Panmunjom; and the result looked like peace. An academic could not wish for more than such an alignment of stars and fortunes, and a rational person could not wish for more than such a peaceful resolution to 65 years of conflict.

Our conference was the culmination of several years of efforts, richly rewarded in the end by the participation of scholars, diplomats, and actors from around the world coming together to share their professional and personal experiences of the Korean peninsula and its longstanding conflict, at what would prove to be such an opportune time. What follows is the best possible presentation of the content of that gathering. In addition to language editing, certain changes have been made, of which elaboration is necessary.

First and foremost, the decision was made not to present some kind of minutes of the event, but a narrative of sorts that could take the reader from an introduction to the topic, through some historical and conceptual development, and conclude on the threshold of current events. This has meant a reordering of the content of the conference. It also means that the editor has removed the language of presence (e.g. “Thank you for having me” and “Prague is a beautiful city”) from all but the welcoming remarks of the two keynote speakers.

Second, due to the nature of such things, not all participants in the conference have chosen to be a part of this account. While the editor and organizers would have preferred to include in print all who were kind enough to attend and present at the conference, we respect that this is not possible. We are extremely grateful to all who participated.

Along with that gratitude, we hope for further cooperation and collaboration in the near future. As the conference ended, numerous attendees commented on how lucky they felt to find such like-minded individuals, and in such numbers, concerned with the situation on the Korean peninsula and the role of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission there. Already, talk began of another conference for the following spring, hopefully focused on the concrete steps towards peace and an end to the longstanding conflict. We all hope that the Spirit of Panmunjom grows and strengthens, and that such a conference looking back on the concluded Korean conflict is not too far in the future.

George Hays II

July 2018

Welcoming Statement by the President of Anglo-American University

Petr Jan Pajas

Excellencies, Honorabilis, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you here to AAU for the Korean Security and the 65 Years Search for Peace conference.

I have the special honor to welcome His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Moon Seoung-hyun and to thank him and the Korean Embassy in Prague for kindly sponsoring our conference.

We are also honored to have with us today: Her Excellency, the Ambassador of Sweden, Ms. Viktoria Li; His Excellency, the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Dominik Furgler; Ms. Magdalena Moryksiewicz, The First Secretary of the Embassy of Poland; Colonel Misra Tapas Kumar, Defense Attaché of the Embassy of India; former Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and China, Dr. Tomáš Smetánka; as well as Mrs. Jana Chamrová, Director of the Czech-Korean Society.

Let me further cordially welcome our special guests: Mr. Man Seok Kim and Mr. Joo Yong Kim from the Korean National Unification Advisory Council; Prof. Kim Kyuchin from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul; Prof. Stanislaw Pawlak, Justice of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg; Senator of the Czech Parliament Mr. Edvard Outrata; Mrs. Eva Orossová from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs; as well as the other distinguished participants of the Korean negotiations, guests, speakers and panelists of this conference. Welcome to AAU, in this glorious 17th century palace of Thurn and Taxis.

Over these upcoming two days, we shall have an opportunity to look back on those unfortunate years of the 1950s, when the cold war changed into a real one on the Korean peninsula. The panel discussions and presentations will bring us to the tables of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, where plenipotentiaries of Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland negotiated the armistice between the Northern and the Southern zones of Korea; as well as the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission of the same composition but presided over by a representative of India.

Having all these nations represented here, we will be reminded of how difficult it was to stop the conflict, *once it became a military one*, and how easy it may be to find ourselves again close to reopening the war as a *consequence of an accident or a provocative act*.

We will also learn something about how ordinary children, men and women were forced to live, as well as about *different challenges they were and still are facing in the two parts of the divided country*; a country already divided for more than 70 years.

Recalling those past years brings me back remembering the strange excitement I felt as a teen, when following the shifts of the frontline on maps of Korea. First, the front quickly touched the very south, so that it seemed that the war was over, and the South was defeated. Then, as a miracle, the US marines squeezed Northerners in the middle of the peninsula; and the front quickly retreated to the very north. Yet, millions of Chinese soldiers rushed into Korea pushing the UN armies back to the line, where finally the will for ceasefire won over, and the guns stopped firing.

Excuse me for this excursion to my childhood. I just wanted to add a real and still living memory of the conflict, as viewed from a distance by an as yet uneducated teenager. Even many years after, it is hard to understand why it is taking nearly three quarters of a century to make real peace, to forget, to forbear and to start anew.

Let us hope we are now close to such a development. Let us hear from our guests, how *they* assess the present situation, the nuclear threat, as well as the efforts to solve what seems to be insolvable. Let us hope that we shall soon see real peace and security for all the people of Korea. Let us hope that Koreans shall find the strength to recreate the social and economic balance between South and North. However, according to my opinion, this challenge shall be even harder than the restoration of peace.

Prof. Milada Polišenská shall tell us more about what we may expect, as well as what we are going to see on the vernissage of pictures taken in those post-war, frangible armistice and poverty loaded months of difficult life in Korea – now already 65 and more years ago.

Let me conclude by warmly acknowledging the kind support of this conference from our General Partner and Sponsor, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea; and our other Partners, the UN Peace Memorial Hall in Busan, Republic of Korea, the Military Historical Institute in Prague, The Czech-Korean Society in Prague, as well as the Embassy of India. Our Special Thanks also go to The Swedish Armed Forces, and especially to Dr. Jaroslava Kopičková, who saved and donated the photographs of the exhibition. Unfortunately, she could not be with us here today.

Thank you for kind attention, and let me now ask for the introductory words His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Czech Republic, Mr. Moon Seoung-hyun.

**Introductory Remarks by His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
to the Czech Republic**

Moon Seoung-hyun

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me express my deepest gratitude to AAU for organizing this seminar and also giving us the opportunity to reflect on both the past and the current situations of the Korean Peninsula. This seminar is also very timely, because it is being held just one day before the historic Inter-Korean Summit. The two Koreas have held summit talks twice in 2000 and 2007, but this summit is considered truly symbolic as it could actually be the beginning of a process to overcome the armistice regime that has persisted since 1953.

And yet it is this armistice regime that has been in operation to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

As you may know, many Koreans tend to forget the grim reality that, technically, the South and the North are still at war. I myself experienced how the peaceful situation on the Korean Peninsula can be easily disturbed. In March 2010, when North Korea attacked our naval ship “Cheonan” and later that year fired artillery shells at our territorial islands, we Koreans woke up to face the reality that we have been in confrontation with the North for the past decades. At that time, I was working at the Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., as a Political Minister-Counselor, and came to realize how vital the armistice signed in 1953 is as a basis for upholding the basic peace and security on the Peninsula. So I take this opportunity to, on behalf of my government, express my gratefulness to the member countries of the NNSC (Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission) for their distinguished role.

I just mentioned briefly the Inter-Korean Summit. These days, many people ask me about the prospects of that summit. Frankly speaking, I don’t really know. As things have been changing very fast these days, since the beginning of this year, it is pretty difficult to follow and fully analyze the developments regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Even though many unexpected statements were made by the North Korean regime, I am of the view that we need to be cautious, mainly because of the complexity of the issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula, including the issues of North Korea’s denuclearization. At the Inter-Korean Summit, the two Koreas are supposed to discuss topics such as

denuclearization, sustainable peace on the Peninsula and the improved relationship between the South and the North. We hope that this summit will provide a meaningful base for the following summit meeting between the United States and North Korea. The results of both of the summit meetings will have a great impact on the future security landscape of not only the Korean Peninsula, but also the entirety of Northeast Asia.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would also like to express my thanks to the distinguished scholars and speakers participating in today's seminar. I look forward to listening to your views and perspectives.

Thank you again for inviting me to this event.



Introduction of conference. From right: H.E. Ambassador of Korea Moon Seung-hyun, Peter Jan Pajas, MSc., AAU President, Prof. Milada Polišenská, main organizer of conference and exhibition, Peter Bolcha, Ph.D., Vice-president for Research, AAU.



Amb. PhDr. Tomáš Smetánka, Prof. Milada Poliřenská.



Vernissage of the exhibition “Repatriating Prisoners of War in Korea.”
 Opening speech by H.E. Ambassador of Korea Moon Seung-hyun.
 At right, Prof. Milada Poliřenská.

A Forgotten Mission after a “Forgotten War”: the Czechoslovak Delegation to the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea (1953-1954)

Milada Poliřenská

Abstract

The presentation will concentrate on the Czechoslovak delegation to the NNRC, particularly on its establishment, personnel structure, the instructions it received, its relations with China and North Korea on one side and with India and Sweden and Switzerland on the other, and on its contribution to the common task of the commission. Primary attention will be paid to the ideological aspects of the larger context of the situation as well as to the ideological and political approaches of the Czechoslovak delegation in everyday activities. Unlike the delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, the Czechoslovak Repatriation delegation consisted of only about fifty persons. Its operations in Korea lasted only seven months, yet it dealt with an immense amount of humanitarian problems related to the repatriation of dozens of thousands of prisoners of war. Finally, I will argue with an opinion that the two Czechoslovak delegations assigned to Korea raised the prestige of Czechoslovakia and opened a path to Czech participation in the peace missions in Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan nowadays.

The Korean War has had the attribute of being the “Forgotten War” since a long time ago, and almost every study on the war in Korea explains that. To label the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, and particularly the Czechoslovak delegation to this commission, a “Forgotten mission” is, in my opinion, appropriate. I hope this article will help to open this topic and to contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation in Korea after the Armistice Agreement had been signed.

On 10 July, 1951, in Kaesong and later in Panmunjom, difficult and tense negotiations between the United Nations Command and the Korean People’s Army/the Chinese People’s Volunteers started. The repatriation of prisoners of war came on the agenda five months later. It was a very controversial issue. The United Nations Command argued for voluntary repatriation, while the North Korean/Chinese side requested a forced repatriation. The voluntary repatriation meant that the POWs would have the right to decide whether they want to repatriate or to stay in the country on which territory they were imprisoned. The forced repatriation was an unconditional repatriation to the country the POW had fought for. North Korea and China, for a number of reasons, very strongly insisted on forced

repatriation: to increase the populace in a country demographically devastated by a war, to achieve at the same time a potential decrease of the population of South Korea; from a political point of view, it was about the strengthening of the communist camp and decreasing the influence of Americans on Koreans. China wanted to prevent the repatriates of Chinese origin to go to *Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan*. In addition, both North Korea and China planned to deploy the repatriates again to fight against South Korea, though the United Nations Command set a condition of non-participation in the conflict after repatriation. The differences were so unsurmountable that they finally led to a dead end, and the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement was in jeopardy.¹

It was the project of “explanations” presented by India which helped to find a way out of this impasse. Despite good will and the very serious efforts of India, this project was, however, risky to be implemented; and there was a big potential for failure, which finally did happen in part. The POWs had to be transferred from the camps in South Korea and in North Korea to camps in the Demilitarized Zone. Here, in special Explanation Centers, they had to go through so-called explanations and to decide about their repatriation intentions.

Finally, on 8 June, 1953, an Agreement on Repatriation of Prisoners of War was signed in Panmunjom. This was a breakthrough in the long stalemate of one-and-a-half years, and a gate towards the Armistice Agreement signed seven weeks later, on 27 July, 1953.

The Agreement on Repatriation planned the establishment of the NNRC to deal with the repatriation of dozens of thousands of POWs and to face, under tense, dramatic and difficult conditions, tremendous human suffering. It was expected to operate for seven months, which is what actually happened. The NNRC was composed of five neutral states. Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Poland were nominated by the U.N. and North Korea/China respectively. “Neutrality” meant having been a non-participant in the Korean War, not impartiality. The Agreement on Repatriation assigned special responsibilities to India as the chairing country of the NNRC, and the Government of India nominated Lieutenant-General K. S. Thimayya and Mr. B. N. Chakravarty to be Chairman and Alternate to the Chairman, respectively, of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. Both men held the rank of Ambassador of India. Each delegation had to consist of 50 members. India dispatched to Korea about 6,000 soldiers of Custodian Forces under the command of General S.P.P. Thorat.

¹ The literature and edition of primary sources predominantly of U. S. provenance related to this topic are immense, and to list them would go beyond the capacity of this article. The rich bibliography contrasts with the stereotypical nickname of this as “forgotten,” which is no longer true.

The Czechoslovak Government approved their participation in the NNRC quickly,² four days after the Agreement on Repatriation was signed on 12 June. As the Czechoslovak contingent to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission of 384 men was reduced, on Chinese insistence, by 84 men, the extra equipment was used for the repatriation delegation. The first part of the Czechoslovak repatriation delegation left Prague on 18 August, and participated already at the first meeting of the NNRC on 9 September. The other part of the delegation left Prague on 31 August. They travelled by train, via Moscow, to Kaesong in Korea, where the train terminated; and then continued by cars to Panmunjom, not far from Kaesong.

The Czechoslovak delegation to the NNRC was composed of 48 persons. Almost all of them were from various ministries and institutions of government and administration, and several academics were among them. The chairman of the delegation, Ambassador Ladislav Šimovič, and his deputy, chief political adviser of the delegation Pavel Winkler, both holding the rank of colonel, along with five other members, were from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was one woman listed as a member of the delegation, Aurora Edenhofer, but no particulars are known about her. Among the members was also Ladislav Bittman who later became a successful Communist spy who, in September 1968, defected to the West and still lives in the United States.

There were some disagreements and disputes between the two Czechoslovak delegations. The issue was who was subordinate to whom. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that the Head of the Repatriation group had the rank of colonel, though as an ambassador he should have the rank of general; and that therefore the Head of the Supervisory group, Lieutenant General František Bureš, should be subordinate to him. Of course internally, as officially both delegations reported to the Government, both were independent and at equal level. Bureš, on his side, tried to achieve the opposite and argued that while the first group has the military ranks just bestowed, the Supervisory group were “real soldiers,” and therefore were superior. Prague emphasized that the delegations needed to help each other, but Šimovič complained that Bureš refused to provide him necessary assistance. Bureš also tried to push through Czechoslovak ambassador to Beijing František Komzala as political adviser to both groups. Despite a significant role that this dogmatic hardliner played in Czechoslovak relations with China and North Korea, Pavel Winkler was assigned political adviser to the repatriation delegation.

² The archival sources to this issue are in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry of the Czech Republic, 7th Department -Korea (1945-1954), and in the boxes 4, 8 and 9 of the Territorial Department Korea 1945-1959. The text of this article is based primarily on these documents.

The NNRC's work had two phases. The first one consisted of drafting and approving the Rules of Procedures of the Commission and the Rules of the Explanation Process, the so-called Terms of Reference; while in the meantime the camps and the Explanation Centers in the DMZ should have been constructed by each side, and the POWs handed over to Indian Custodian Forces. The second phase was to be the explanation process and the repatriation. The plan was to finish the first phase by 25 September, and the second one by 24 December, allowing thus 90 days for the explanation process.

The advance parties of the Indian and the North Korean/Chinese delegations held a series of talks on several crucial issues in Panmunjom, Pyongyang and Kaesong for one month beginning in the second half of August, 1953. India needed to know how many POWs can be expected to come from the North Korean/Chinese side. The North Korean/Chinese side insisted that lists of Rhee Synman's and Chiang Kai-shek's agents who reportedly infiltrated the camps in South Korea be handed over to them; and later, they requested even full lists of POWs, arguing that they will identify the agents themselves. At the same time, the Korean/Chinese side refused to provide their lists of POWs. The Indian commanders, Thimayya and Thorat, did not want to allow this. The debates about the lists of POWs were very tough. The minutes of these meetings document an open and cooperative attitude of the Indian representatives, which contrasted with the long and sharp statements of General Lee Sang Cho, who was the North Korean representative to the Military Armistice Commission.

The North Korean/Chinese side later gave the minutes to the Czechoslovaks, who were not present at those meetings. Just based on these minutes, the Czechoslovaks commented on the meetings in a way which distorted the meaning of the records, threw an unsympathetic light on the Indian representatives and sided with the North Koreans/Chinese.

According to the Czechoslovak interpretation, the Indians changed their position after they achieved what they wanted, and they tried to persuade the counterparts that it was not in their capacity to discover the agents. The North Koreans and the Chinese were commended for their satisfactory information and reliable guarantees, and ironically, the Commander of Indian Custodian Forces Thorat was criticized for "reacting irritably and abandoning a diplomatic courtesy," which the original record of the meeting does not show.

The Indians were criticized for "having humiliating and confusing requests." Thimayya in particular was a target of Czechoslovak critique for his refusal to submit full lists of the POWs in the southern part of the DMZ to the Korean/Chinese side and for his argument that a mutiny and mass escape of POWs could happen. To Czechoslovaks, Thimayya's answers were "entirely unsatisfactory." The Indians, Thimayya and Thorat, stood firm, however, on

the position that the only way is to hand over the POWs based on the lists which have to be provided by both sides, which is what the North Korean/Chinese side refused to do.

An example of the demagogic argumentation of the North Koreans/Chinese that was difficult for the Indians to unravel was the case of 27 thousand POWs that the South Korean government released before the Armistice Agreement was signed. General Lee Song Cho, in a long and unyielding exposé, claimed that these POWs who were allowed to escape were *de facto* forcibly detained in the South. Thimayya was lost in the plethora of Lee's arguments, and pushed Lee to explain this more clearly; perhaps to demonstrate the absurdity of his arguments. Lee said explicitly, "The UN Command said they have been released, but really they were forcibly released."

The process of explanations also became a major problem. The North Korean/Chinese side rejected the Explanation Center built by the U.N. as being too close to the southern border of the DMZ and offered to build a new center by its own resources. This caused a delay of just five days, but later, the North Korean/Chinese side required an extension of the explanation period for the same number of days; while the U.N. wanted to keep the original deadline. The Swedish delegation to the NNRC proposed to replace those five days by extra work on weekends and extended working hours.

The original intention that the attending explanations would be voluntary was replaced, under the pressure of the North Korean/Chinese side, by compulsory attendance. The Korean/Chinese side was very insistent in this and requested to have direct access to the POWs in the Southern part of the DMZ to expose them to "Explanations" for the period of 90 days. The same was granted to the U.N. side, but the Czechoslovak sources do not provide information on how this was conducted.

There was no way how to implement the 90 days of exposure and the compulsory attendance other than to bring to the explanations entire camps collectively. On one hand, this was justified by the high number of POWs. Also, the POWs were extremely scared to come for explanations individually, and they refused to present themselves other than in large groups. It was a tragic fact that those who wanted to repatriate north were under enormous pressure to stay in the south. Not only that, but the North Koreans/Chinese came to the camps in the southern part of the DMZ as so-called "observers" and "translators" and manipulated the POWs. General Thimayya strongly opposed this, saying that this caused "hysteria" among the prisoners, who were also scared to allow their finger prints to be taken. He allowed only translators and observers from the NNRC. The tragic fact is that there were cases of murders and extreme violence in the camps. The space which I have for my presentation does not allow me to go deeper in this, but it should be said that: 1. the facts are

available about the violence happening in the camps in the southern part. There is no information on what happened in the camps in the northern part to the POWs who wanted to repatriate south; 2. the North Korean/Chinese side, with the support of the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegations, exaggerated the numbers of agents and demonized the terrorist network; 3. the Korean/Chinese side and their “friends” labelled most of those who did not want to repatriate north as agents, as terrorists exposing their fellows prisoners to “threatening propaganda, terrorist violence, torture and horrific murders.” The North Koreans/Chinese were very eager to identify them and get them in their hands; 4. the Indian Custodian Forces and the Repatriation Commission investigated the crimes, and insisted on proper investigation; 5. the U.N Command and the Indian, Swedish and Swiss delegates expressed their concern for the families of those who would not repatriate north. These worries were rejected by the North Koreans and the Chinese.

Self-explanatory, however, was one of the many disputes on the Term of Reference, instructions for the conduct of explanations. The Swiss and Swedish delegates very strongly supported the right of POWs not to answer questions that they did not want to answer, and the right of the POWs to ask questions. The North Koreans/Chinese pressured that all answers to all questions be required, and the Czechoslovak Chairman Šimovič indicated the Swiss and Swedish positions as jeopardizing the explanations by allowing insulting and provocative questions. He also accused them of “shamelessly presenting a network of agents and terrorists who seized control of the camps as an organization of spokesmen and trustees of the POWs, regularly elected in accordance with the Geneva Convention on POWs.” Further, Šimovič accused Thimayya of “alibi-ism” and that he “joined the platform of yielding to terrorism and to violence and of giving up responsibility.” We do not know, however, whether Šimovič really made openly these accusations to Thimayya’s face, or whether he just wrote this to the Foreign Ministry in Prague to demonstrate his strong stand.

Later, Šimovič reported to Prague, that “thanks to the impeccable cooperation of the Czechoslovak and Polish side, it was possible to put the situation in the NNRC under their control and achieve a rejection of the Swedish and Swiss proposal³ and to achieve a full success of Czechoslovak and Polish requirements which needed 27 rounds of voting.” Šimovič reported this as a great success of the North Korean/Chinese side and expressed his dissatisfaction with one thing only – that the organs of the Repatriation Commission would be present at the explanations.

Czechoslovak delegate Šimovič had a very strong exposé on November 11. He rejected Thimayya’s complaint about the end of the explanations, and presented again a

³ This, despite the Indian effort to mediate a compromise.

number of accusations - that the NNRC allowed the camps to be ruled by a terrorist government of agents, that the Commission violated the Agreement on the NNRC, he used words such as “ridicule” etc. He indicated the work of the NNRC was a tragic farce and strongly criticized the Swiss and the Swedish delegations. He said that he had no intention to participate at a permanent violation of the Terms of Reference.

In the middle of November, the POWs refused to present themselves for explanations and did not allow the division of the camps for explanations by groups. As individual talks between Thimayya and Lee Song Cho did not bring any solution, Thimayya announced the end of the process. Poland and Czechoslovakia indicated that this was illegal, while Switzerland and Sweden indicated that Thimayyas steps were unobjectionable.

Margaret Gnoinska (2012, p. 303) wrote that “due to the irreconcilable differences between the United Nations Command and the CPV/KPA, the Indians decided to return the POWs to their respective sides, thereby disbanding the NNRC in February 1954.” At the conclusion of its work, the NNRC wrote a final report with which Switzerland and Sweden did not agree, and so they presented their own report. There are many questions related to the NNRC from the national and the international points of view that need to be clarified, and they will be the subject of further research.

In the end of my article, I would like to argue with the opinion that was published several years ago, that “the representation of Czechoslovakia in both commissions is, from international and political points of view, very important, as it heralded the participation of the Czech Republic in peacekeeping units in Kosovo and Iraq and most recently in Afghanistan.” (Švamberk, 2013a, p. 286). I cannot agree with this statement. At first view, there are some similarities: a mission sent to a distant territory devastated by war, with a high level of security and other risks, particularly health risks. These external characteristics cannot, however, disguise the fact that both delegations were sent to Korea at the height of the Cold War, when in Czechoslovakia a strong Stalinist regime was still in power. They were directed and supervised ideologically, politically and strategically as organs of the communist power. They clearly worked for the benefit of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China, based on the doctrine on strengthening and spreading communism by all means in the period of escalation of the Cold War.

The Swiss and Swedish delegates were always called “opponents.” The approach toward them was unfriendly. The Indians were not taken seriously. The North Koreans and the Chinese were “friends” with whom all questions were consulted via the Czechoslovak embassy in Beijing, as the Chinese played the dominant role.

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The Korean War through the Eyes of Czechoslovak Diplomats

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Abstract

The first contacts between Prague and Pyongyang were established in 1947 during the first World Festival of Youth and Students. Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries in the world to recognize the newly created North Korea, on October 19, 1948. Charge d'affaires Emil Hršel submitted the credentials on September 27, 1950. However, after several days, they were evacuated to Sinuiju. Hršel, in his dispatches, mentioned the consequences of the bombing, and the fear of epidemics. Travelling diplomats also succumbed to disease, and the legation staff shrank further. On 19 December, 1950, due to typhoid disease, two diplomats, Karel Reif and Antonín Andryšek, went to Beijing. Hršel was also forced to leave Korea due to a serious heart condition in March. Finally, the diplomats were replaced by army officers. They continued to send dispatches to Prague and informed, not only ideologically about the determination of the Korean people to defeat the Americans, but also about the impact of never ending air raids and on the destroyed rail network, about the first rounds of the peace negotiations, and on the Czechoslovak field hospital established in 1952. Despite a noticeable influence of ideology, cables and dispatches reveal a very realistic image of war, with a lot of details especially in autumn 1950 when the North Koreans retreated to the Chinese frontier.

People think that diplomats have a nice comfortable life with all those receptions and meetings. Maybe they have to talk friendly to ugly people. Of course, the reality is quite different, but diplomatic work is usually not connected with hunger, struggle for life during long marches over mountains in cold weather to a more secure place or being threatened by dangerous infectious diseases. Despite this, Czechoslovak diplomats in North Korea had to go through all these difficulties in North Korea during the Korean War. Their secret messages showed how harsh the situation was during the MacArthur offensive to the Chinese border.

Despite their ideological views, they were able to show the real impact of war on Korean citizens. They showed the horrors of a cruel war, famine and living in foxholes. These cables were secret, but it is clear that they played an important role in Prague's decision to help the DPRK and also helped create a picture of how cruel this war was.

But we need to return a little bit before the war. Official relations between Czechoslovakia and Korea started after the Second World War, in the new political situation with two predominant superpowers. Korea was split, and Czechoslovakia ended up in the communist East bloc.

The first contacts between Prague and Pyongyang were established in 1947 during the first World Festival of Youth and Students. Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries in the world to recognize the newly created North Korea on October 19th, 1948; however, Prague wasn't in a hurry to establish official relations. Pyongyang tried to push Czechoslovakia to open an embassy. They explored all possible options, but without success.

The situation changed after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Prague attempted to support the distant fraternal people's democratic state by setting up a legation there.

Diplomats left Prague on the first day of September, but had to stay in Moscow for a week, because they had no train tickets. During their trip, there was a dramatic turn of events in the war. They arrived in Antung on the border river on September 22nd, after the Incheon landing. Czechoslovak diplomats travelled to Pyongyang in jeeps, but at times they had to jump out and run into the field because American planes were flying over the road. For a whole day, they hid in a small Buddhist temple and then continued on their way in the night.

Shortly after the first meeting with North Korean officials, all members of the Czechoslovak delegation had to run to a shelter near their hotel. They wrote that they experienced air raid alerts eight-ten times a day and three-four times a night.

Charge d'affaires Emil Hršel handed in his credentials on September 27th, when US troops had already liberated Seoul. However, the mission of the Czechoslovak diplomats was thwarted, and, after several days, the North Koreans decided to evacuate them to Sinuiju on October 8th. Five members, including two spouses, left North Korea.

Hršel stayed in Sinuiju with three other members of the legation. Later, he described the catastrophic situation on the front after the Incheon landing, the liberation of Seoul and the landing on the east coast. The best Army units in the south were surrounded, and Pyongyang was directly threatened. In his secret dispatch he was not able to hide his fears, although he wanted to show that the North Korean people hadn't lost their courage, when he wrote: *“The morale of the army is high, although it is possible to see the physical fatigue of some units fighting from the beginning. The whole nation fights very enthusiastically and it is determined to fight for a final victory.”* But he continued: *“The enemy has enormous superiority in the air and on the sea and uses the most barbaric ways of fighting. Industrial plants are mostly destroyed. Because of this, the people hate Americans. If the whole country were occupied,*

the fighting would continue guerrilla-style until liberation. The possibility of surrender is totally out of the question.”

Hršel had legitimate concerns. Pyongyang fell on October 19th, and on the same day the Czechoslovak mission had to move again: *“On October 19th they told us we had to evacuate again. After an all-night drive, we came to Supon (Sup’ung). The biggest hydroelectric power plant in Asia is located there. There was therefore fear that the Americans would bomb it.”*

He sent his last dispatch from Supon on October 22nd, in which he mentions some *“important big support without further specification.”* This secret message was received two days later, before the beginning of the Chinese intervention.

The so-called Chinese People's Volunteers attacked on October 25th. Because Americans answered with waves of air raids, the Czechoslovak diplomats had to move once again. *“The order to evacuate came on the morning of November 2nd, as the enemy troops began to attack Supon. They were at a distance of 14 km and there was imminent danger that they would enter the town. That time we were transported to Chinese territory. Our trip through Manchuria lasted six and a half days. We were staying in stables, various abandoned buildings and rooms that looked like a local jail. Naturally, we slept only on bare ground. and on November 8th, we were taken to Korean territory again, to Manpo.”*

The words from the summary report could not fully describe how horrible their trip and situation in Manpo were. Charge d’affaires Emil Hršel mentioned all the horrors and the effectiveness of the bombing campaign in an earlier cable, sent to Prague on November 18th:

We were urgently evacuated from the place from where we sent the last message. After several days of wandering around in the Manchurian mountains, we worked our way back to Korea. We were assigned a small, unfurnished house.

Telegraphic connection with you was not possible. Before we could obtain the most basic provisions, this place was nearly razed to the ground during the fourth day of terrorist air raids. Our house burned down.

The bomb shelter was totally inadequate and was also destroyed. We were only saved because I was urgently requested by the Korean translator between the first and second bombing waves, when there was already general confusion and fire everywhere, so we ran over to the good shelter at the Soviet Embassy. We saved most of our things, particularly documents and archive material. We were assigned one of the unburned houses; there is no shelter in it and there are air strikes without warning

on a daily basis. We are living at the lowest level and can say that we suffer unspeakable cold, and a lack of food and warm clothing.

Most alarming was the conclusion, where he openly wrote that the Czechoslovak diplomats were in danger of dying:

I will try to go to Beijing as soon as possible, at least to get the minimum of supplies for us because, under the present circumstances, we will hardly survive the upcoming winter. The situation at the front has improved greatly, but the American terrorist raids have increased at the rear of the Korean front. This has increased the misery of the population, and any help from our side will be necessary. Tell our families that we are alive. Please send the unsent packages for Reif and Andřýsek to their families. At this time, it is not possible to send anything. Acknowledge receipt.”

Hršel’s cable caused an uproar in Prague. It was sent by a man who spent six years in concentration camps, and therefore, he was used to all types of hardship. A senior pre-war Communist, who led the Communist Youth Union and the Czechoslovak Association of Friends of the Soviet Union, he had been arrested on September 20, 1939 during the *Zerschlagung der Rest-Tschechei*, the name of the raids on Czech patriots, and sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. After the war, he served as the head of the II. Provincial Security Department at the Ministry of the Interior, and had been in diplomatic service since 1948. The hand-typed message on the cable confirmed that the ministry took the cable seriously: “*On 22 November, after an investigation by comrade Šterblová in the office of comrade minister London, 89, it was confirmed that the text was sent by encryption to the local leadership for acknowledgement.*”

Hršel also proposed moving the legation to China, where it could operate more effectively:

Despite all efforts at the Korean State Department, information on domestic Korean and international events is not possible to obtain. Additionally, there is no electricity or water. We are limited here to utter inactivity. Inform immediately, if, due to the extreme situation, it would be possible to apply to the authorities for [legation] relocation to the Chinese territory, where, based on past experience, it could better fulfil its mission.

In another cable, on November 22nd, he reiterated that any activity in Korea is almost impossible:

Lately, I have been unable to contact you because I am in a place with no post office, telegram office or any other way of making contact with you. In the last few days, local state officials arranged for a telegram to Beijing. However, our reports would have little value with these terms. We do not get any information, newspapers are not published and responsible state, Party and military officials are not available. You cannot drive anywhere during the day because traffic is constantly monitored by US aircraft. At night, there is frequent army traffic on the bad roads, so travel is impossible. Therefore, I must be satisfied with the little I can occasionally glean from others, and from my own experiences, but we have no thorough way to process this information

Yet another cable was sent on November 22nd through Beijing, this one described the plights faced by civilians under the constant US air raids:

The winter is terrible in the northern areas of the country. The Americans are apparently determined to bomb and burn down all cities and villages, if only to deny the Chinese flow and deployment of troops on North Korean territory, and to create an unbearable situation for the local population. This is why the bombing of all locations, even remote dwellings, is rampant. The population is then subjected to hunger and exposed to cold; and, just to the north, the winter is even tougher.

In addition, it is necessary to highlight a political fact: At night, after the burning down and complete destruction of their lodging, we observed the mood of the people. They cursed, but they didn't snivel. We were surprised to see mothers with their children keeping warm by the fires of the remains of their homes, but not lamenting. The next day, they dug holes next to their destroyed homes, brought grass and straw, searched for pieces of metal and unburned building materials, and began to build new dwellings. In our opinion, they were not really dwellings, just holes. The commitment and enthusiasm of the people to fight until the Americans are forced out of the country are so great, that with this they will overcome all the horrors of today.

Hršel, therefore, requested help for the distressed Korean people:

It is my opinion, that further and constant help from your side is necessary for the Korean people. Save them from death from cold and hunger at any cost. We put forth for your consideration, that some of our counties could take individual ruined North Korean cities under patronage, and collect sustenance and linen, as well as worn and old clothes amongst our population, and send it here as quickly as possible. It is an idea that, through your own discretion and decision, could be implemented very quickly. I have yet to speak with anyone here about it.

At that time, Czechoslovakia began sending aid to Korea. Maybe this cable had some influence on the Czechoslovak decision. At the request of Kim Il Sung, Prague sent underwear. By the end of 1950, 100 000 seized Wehrmacht winter coats, 31,000 pairs of army boots, and 10,000 blankets and medical supplies were also sent to Korea. Up until the armistice, Prague had sent goods worth more than one billion crowns from various sources, mostly industrial products like locomotives, tooling machines, beams, trucks, small generators and motorcycles; but also two million pencils, 27 million buttons and 237,000 toothbrushes. Of all the Eastern European countries, Czechoslovakia contributed the most to rebuild war-torn Korea.

Hršel also reported on the effect the deployment of the Chinese People's Volunteers at the front had had; that it had brought about another turning point in the war:

The Chinese are fighting well. The organization of supplies is very good. I cannot disclose details, but if necessary, I could send a personal encryption. The Chinese army has shown how it has politically and professionally grown, and how it has improved its command structure. The army operates at a high level in all respects. Chinese volunteers hold the Korean front. The centre of the front is now 80-100 km from the border. The Americans are not able to carry out serious manoeuvres in the northern mountains. According to local military units, it would not be difficult to advance to Pyongyang, but it would not then be possible to guarantee coverage of the centre of the front, therefore, it would not be tactically effective. For larger operations, the Americans would need almost half a million troops.

Another cable from the same day provided more details:

The Americans withdrew their forces from the central and eastern sections of the front when it shifted into the North Korean mountains. They suffered heavy losses, especially in battles with the Chinese Volunteers. In the western sector, they continue to try to penetrate north to Sinuiju. Their forces here were significantly decimated as well, including an English brigade deployed here. Therefore, they cannot count this among their successes. The front was held at the perimeter of Anju and Sinanju.

Although MacArthur feared a Chinese intervention after the first clashes with Chinese troops, he was convinced that the major air raids had stopped them. He thus decided to stick to his original plan to finish the war by the end of the year 1953. In an interview with the UP Agency on November 24th, the first day of another offensive, he said his famous sentence, "I want to make good on my promise, that they will be having their Christmas dinner at home."

General MacArthur did not expect strong resistance from North Korean and Chinese forces, but the Chinese counteroffensive began on November 25th, striking the ROK II Corps at the Chongchon River. On November 29th, after the American Infantry Division was defeated and the right flank of the 8th Army was exposed, they retreated to the defensive line at Pyongyang. The main attack of the Chinese People's Volunteers was launched already on November 27th.

From Beijing, Ambassador Weiskopf informed Prague about the retreat and of the frantic negotiations over the Chinese Volunteers on November 28th:

The local representatives of Western States are engaged in a flurry of activity, apparently to ascertain if the Chinese government is at all willing to accept a compromise ... the Swedish ambassador suggests that Sweden is willing to act as a non-involved neutral party in drafting a compromise situation in Korea. A representative of British Minister Hutchinson asks to speak with an authoritative representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, preferably Zhou Enlai. Vice-minister Chang Han Fu told me that China's position remains unchanged, and that the premise of a peaceful resolution to the Korean conflict is the removal of foreign forces from Korea.

Weiskopf sent more information on December 1st and 2nd, wherein he described a briefing with Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai:

In a four-hour meeting, Zhou En-lai gave a picture of the situation as it appears to him:

Primo: MacArthur's offensive went bankrupt. He made the same mistake twice. 'He un-clasped his heavily-armed hands and left his breast unprotected. We struck him in the chest. The Americans now have ten divisions in Korea; they could throw in another five. Even if they throw in another ten, it won't save them.'

According to Weiskopf, Beijing was not counting on a peaceful resolution:

Secundo: There are two options at the moment. Either the Americans withdraw more or less voluntarily from the 38th Parallel, or the Korean Liberation Army or the Chinese Volunteers will push them into the sea. The first option is seen as the minimum. As to the question if a third diplomatic solution is viable, he answered, 'Probably not.' When the Americans retreat under pressure, they won't be able to repeat the history of August, when they stabilized the front around Daejeon and Busan. Naturally, we cannot count on coming to a quick end. 'The Americans need to get it strongly several times across the mouth before their head starts to clear.'

Weiskopf also wrote that Zhou was not ruling out the possibility that Americans would decide to bomb cities in Manchuria:

Sexto: When asked if the People's Government anticipated the possibility of the war expanding to include mass American raids on Manchurian cities and factories, he replied yes. 'It is possible that the wounds they would suffer, and the wounds the Americans suffer in Korea, would not bring reason to their crazy adventures. We are ready for it, not only in Manchuria, but also elsewhere. We are taking steps to defend ourselves effectively enough that the Americans will lose the desire to continue.

Another cable, sent from there through Beijing, outlined the achievements, above all, the liberation of Pyongyang. Weiskopf mentioned key points from Kim Il Sung's speech:

Tertio: Now the path to victory has been opened, though it is important to remember the victims, not to think that all has been won.

Quarto: The retreating enemy must not be given even a moment's rest, so it cannot rebuild its defensive line and reorganize its forces.

This showed that Kim still believed in a total victory, one in which Pyongyang would rule over all of Korea.

The turning point in the war was also reflected in the cables sent by Czechoslovak diplomats, although the legation was being constantly relocated, from Sinuiju to Sup'ung, and finally to Manpo.

A message from December 15th, probably sent by Hršel, outlined the direction of the next advance:

I point out that the conquest of Chinampo [Nampo] prevented major US air operations, opening the western route for military operations against Seoul. The Americans could build a defensive line 30km from where they are currently being confronted in Seoul. Seoul needs quick evacuation. However, there are still weak points on the eastern coast, which must be promptly eliminated. The motto is that no single enemy soldier shall live in Korea. This means that the goal of the currently launched offensive is to remove the enemy from all of Korea.

Other cables also mentioned the continuous problems caused by the UN air force, since the Soviet Union refused to provide air cover for the advancing Chinese volunteers:

Where we live, they destroy every road, and drop bombs constantly around the roads so that repairs are impossible, and so the constant transport of Chinese Volunteers would be threatened. However, more new troops and volunteers are going to the front, and they repair the roads with unbelievable speed, so the connection with the front is not interrupted. He adds, though, that for the restoration of the infrastructure there is 'an unconditional need for people to work on rebuilding the shattered facilities and the most important routes and communication lines for the military.'

In the conclusion, the envoy relays the problems they face in their own work: “*Despite the extreme difficulties in maintaining normal working conditions, I will keep you informed as often as possible.*”

Hršel returned to the consequences of the bombings and scorched earth tactics in his summary report on the developments from January 4th, stating that

the sustenance and living situation in the North Korean districts has been very hard. Towns and villages are largely destroyed. People are living in holes dug out of the ruins of buildings. Many people live in the mountains, in various caves and primitive huts. Clothing is inadequate. Moreover, the winter up north is severe. There is a real danger that many people will die and there will be an outbreak of an epidemic in the spring.

The fear of epidemics was not exaggerated. Travelling diplomats also succumbed to disease, and the legation staff shrank further. On 19 XII.1950, due to typhoid disease, Karel Reif (Assistant Secretary) and Antonín Andryšek went to Beijing. They did not return to the DPRK.

Hršel mentioned their departure in his political review of the situation in North Korea. Living conditions were horrible, as Hršel noted:

The lack of food is painfully obvious. The government is taking all kinds of measures to deal with this difficult time. The situation is worse in areas liberated from the American occupiers. These [soldiers] also not only massacred progressive citizens, but torched their houses and destroyed their basic necessities on his retreat. Americans themselves boasted of how, when they left the city of Hamhung, all that was left was a pile of ashes. The local people live very modestly. A few spoonfuls of rice three times a day, hot water, and an unimaginable low level of housing – that's today's standard of living.

Hršel cautiously admitted in his report that, for many, the hasty retreat to the Chinese border invoked defeatism: *“Never, even in the most serious situation, has a rapid strategic retreat in Korea caused the mood of the people to decline to a level of panic, nor hopelessness. However, it is clear that there is a certain sense of fatigue amongst the troops, and unease amongst the population.”*

The envoy, though, immediately identified the culprits, reactionary elements in the society with the typical anti-communist ideology behind them, who attempted to undermine the determination of the masses:

The broad masses fully stand behind their current government and make all sacrifices to reach victory. There were also certain factions, which sought to promote a defeatist mood. Even when the Chinese Volunteers advanced across the Korean front, they tried to spread distrust amongst the population, and asked, for example, the question: Why didn't the Chinese come sooner before the whole country was a pile of rubble? However, these reactionary attempts were made in vain, and the Korean people today are united and enthusiastically dedicated to all casualties in the pursuit of an early victory. These are not mere agit. phrases, but is the actual present state of things. Naturally, when the People's Army strategically retreated to the Manchurian border, there was a tendency amongst the people and the army towards fatigue, fear, and sometimes, even defeatism. However, these relatively weak sentiments were overcome through the joint efforts of the Party and the government. Today's internal political situation can be characterized as the fight of a completely united people. The considerable leeway he gave them shows that these were not just sporadic, marginal views.

The envoy Hršel's report also showed the desperate situation in the provision of basic needs, including food:

Even the mobilization of resources has yet to bear fruit. The government is already receiving specific special gifts and early taxes (of allocated land reform) from the peasants, a lot of rice which is the staple food for civilians and troops....The Worker's Party and the government are now leading a broad campaign to increase production, especially for the basic necessities, and the restoration of communications and roads. People work during the day and the night, despite the primitive tools, and perform a lot of work under completely different working conditions than, for example, we have.

Hršel again mentioned the problems the US Air Force was causing the advancing North Korean and Chinese troops, as well as issues with missing equipment and inadequate training, as the North Korean elite units were wiped out at Nakdong River. The cable shows he was frank; one only needs to skip the opening phrases with the promise of an early victory, and the praises of a united and determined people:

The people and, of course, mostly the military steadfastly believe in a complete victory. The new military units have been trained in quiet areas, and politically educated, so today's army is on a higher, more politically conscious level. You cannot speak about the subordination of today's military units in comparison with those who fought at the beginning of the war, and whom the attackers drove south. Of course, the technical proficiency of the army is still weak. Methods to supply the front are still very primitive, mainly because of poor roads, not fit for larger motorized transports. Apart from that, roads here are also destroyed and are constantly patrolled by US aircraft.

Although the front had stabilized, the situation at the legation remained difficult, and Hršel was not able to handle everything himself. Therefore, Emil Pánovec was sent from Beijing to help him, and he posted this message to Prague immediately: *“By the decision of the Czechoslovak embassy in Peking, I was sent to Korea to assist comrade Ambassador132 E. Hršel on February 13, 1951, and I remained there until April 23.”*

In a cable from March, Pánovec described the extraordinary difficulties facing the mission's activities due to the ongoing US bombings:

Overall, the possibilities to work were very limited, as was to be expected with the daily air raids and repeated alarms. At that time, while I was in Korea, Mampo was bombed twice; the first time, on March 2, 1951 at 2:00 in the afternoon, the American planes dropped 260 bombs. Luckily, due to bad weather, some of the bombs landed on a place that had already been bombed, and the greater part of the bombs fell on a nearby mountain, about 500 meters in aerial distance. The second bombing came at the end of March, when the Americans destroyed the bridge over the Yalu River linking the Chinese territory with Korea. A report about this was sent to Prague. Apart from this bombing, there were several jet airplane raids which dropped a few bombs, but to no effect. It was therefore necessary to prepare for the possible air raids at 10:00 in the morning, making it impossible to complete any unfinished writing work. Work was also limited at night because of numerous alarms and airstrikes, sometimes up to eight times a night.

On March 6th, while Pánovec was still posted there, E. Hršel was forced to leave Korea due to a serious heart condition. Shortly thereafter, the driver Kolář was also recalled due to illness. The embassy in Beijing had to send additional staff to help, so both Legler and Rotter each spent six months there.

Even later, after peace talks began in the summer of 1951, there was not only continued fighting at the front, but also raids. The Americans took advantage of their control of the air space. The Soviet interceptors took off from Manchurian airfields, operating mostly in the so-called 'MiG alley' along the Yalu River. The North Korean capital was bombed on the anniversary of the liberation from Japan. On August 18th, this telegram from Legler was sent from Beijing:

August 14, ceremonial meeting, anniversary of the liberation. Kim Il Sung appeared with heads of embassies. Still no official translation of conversation. Unofficial report says he has a chance to beat Americans, also in the air. Remains unclear if truce still wanted. Brutal raid before celebrations. Over 100 fortresses at Pyongyang targeted by 200 planes. At least 500 dead, 1200 wounded. People's Democracies exhibition and showpieces destroyed.

There were also raids at Maram Mountain Peak (Marambong), to where the embassy had been moved in June 1951, because the village was only 25 km from Pyongyang, and there was no need to maintain the embassies near the border with China since the People's Army and People's Volunteers controlled most of the North Korean territory.

"September 11, 1951 at 9:15 pm, two shrapnel bombs recently used by the Americans were dropped from an enemy plane. They landed about 160 meters from the house that serves as the seat for the Czechoslovak legation. These are new kinds of bombs that explode 10m above the ground," wrote Legler in his detailed report sent to Prague on September 25th, 1951. Fortunately, the damage was minimum:

The explosion was pretty strong because all the bombs exploded at the same time, and our houses are located in the valley. At that time, there was an employee of the legation, Pizinger, and a Chinese cook at the house. When he heard the planes, he went outside, and at that moment, the air pressure of the explosion threw him violently to the ground, where he hit his head on one of the wooden slats used for siding and roofing. Otherwise, the air pressure in our house broke some wooden shutters in one room, and some plaster fell. It should be noted that all ended well.

Another raid was carried out two months later, noted a report dated November 17th:
"On November 9, 1951 at 9:30 in the morning, another bomb was dropped by a British type

enemy plane about 150 meters from where our embassy is located. A heavy calibre bomb fell on the slope on the opposite side of the legation house. The detonation blew out two window panes and a pile of ceiling plaster fell.”

Although the damage was again minimal, the cable indicated that raids at that time were very common in North Korea:

Bombs dropped unexpectedly because enemy planes frequently flew overhead, often as a group. That is why, also at that moment, we stood in front of the house and watched how the group of planes shot at a target on a nearby road. The embassy notes with interest that the closest bomb shrapnel landed less than two meters away from us, and many of them went past us and fell on the Hungarian embassy, 30 meters from our main office. They also found a bomb seal there. It should be noted that, again, everything ended happily and without major damage.

In view of the harsh conditions, Prague finally decided to send soldier Rudolf Babka to North Korea, who started work as chargé d'affaire ad interim on March 13th 1952.

It wasn't only the diplomats who experienced war close at hand. The same year, 1952, a mobile surgical field hospital was sent to Korea with 29 doctors and medics led by Doctor Josef Barták. They left Prague on March 22nd and arrived in Sogam with tents and ten trucks on April 17th.

The Czechoslovak field surgical hospital was attached to the 56th North Korean field hospital. Czechoslovak medics and doctors treated not only wounded soldiers sent from the front, but also civilians. They performed surgery on limbs and the chest and abdominal areas. They also treated skin burns from napalm.

Doctor Barták described the horrid situation in his report:

The hospital facilities were established in several villages. The capacity is about 2000 beds, located individually in houses or native homes, where the wounded lie on a heated floor. The vast majority of patients are chronically ill and wounded.

Foxholes for our staff are not finished yet. The biggest problem is with the storage of medical material, the warehouses were prepared, but they are not spacious enough. Transport of medical material is complicated because of bad roads; there are also recurrent flyovers of enemy planes and bomb raids. Because of this, transport takes place at night with frequent interruptions. The material is mostly unloaded by Korean comrades, who, despite warnings, handle materials very badly in an effort to speed up the uploading. We haven't

started to provide medical care yet, because we have only spent the second night here. Hygienic conditions are rather dismal. There are many infectious diseases.

Chargé d'affaires Babka also mentioned the harsh situation:

The conditions were very bad. Operating rooms were unsatisfactory. There was only one surgical room and one X-ray room in the whole hospital.

The building of foxholes (for our staff) began only after the arrival of our doctors to Korea and they were completed on July 10th. (Until this time) Our doctors and staff were forced to live in light Korean homes. These buildings did not provide any basic anti-aircraft protection. Hostile air force planes are constantly in the air space over our hospital. They focus their interest on a 3 km distant main road and on the town of Sukčon, 40 km away. There was no direct bombing of our hospital, although the nearby area was bombed very often.

In his report, Babka added how many people were treated:

Our group is responsible for the whole surgical department. Our doctors and medics cared for 450 wounded and surgically ill. Each doctor has about 70 patients, which is a lot. Recently, the number of wounded rose by 400 after the bombing of Pyongyang. Our doctors' work was as hard as in a field hospital on the frontline; our surgeons treated and operated wounds, which were suffered some time ago and very often unprofessionally treated.

They carried out 196 surgeries (during May and June 1952). The number of patients had risen to 600 – 650 in October, after the next American offensive started.

The first group of doctors and medical staff was replaced in March 1953. The second group was led by Doctor Bedřich Placák. In his book, *Memories of a Doctor* he described the journey there:

Our voyage led through Sinuiju and Anju to Sogam. ... The towns I named, there were only the areas, where towns used to be before the war. A thick layer of dust and ash covered bizarre ruins, scary lonely remnants of walls, uprooted trees, wrecks of cars and armoured vehicles. Gloomy greyness intensified the hopelessness of the totally destroyed and buried towns, that have been bustling with life before the war (Placák, 1997).

The North Korean command decided to move the hospital from Sogam to Onsari village near Huichon, 120 km from the Chinese border, because of fear of a possible US offensive.

Transport was very complicated. At first they had to move from Sogam to a place where a railway station used to be. They waited for Korean trucks, but they never arrived. They had to use the last four Czechoslovak Praga RN trucks. Despite the superhuman efforts of the whole staff and 200 lightly wounded, they were able to move only half of their equipment. *“The train did not come,”* added the doctor. Next day they moved the rest of the material and equipment, and, finally, they loaded it on a train during the following night.

Placák faced the same situation as his predecessor. Their facilities weren't prepared and the group had to build twenty houses, each for 50 patients, and the other buildings for the surgery, X-ray, pharmacy and warehouses for other equipment and also houses for the medical staff. At the same time, they had to treat the wounded:

We still had no hospital room, but the first transport arrived with the wounded. At night. No announcement. The wounded people were unloaded out of the cars and laid on the bare ground. The injuries weren't so bad, but the wounded were on the way for several days and their overall condition was serious. All our medical staff worked all night long in the sparse illumination of flashlights.

Placák also noted his first visit to the capital: *“My first visit to Pyongyang was a horrible experience. Was it a dead town? No. Life was only camouflaged and hidden. People were crawling under the ground like moles. Life went on under and between piles of debris.”*

Signs of the destruction and raids were reported by the Czechoslovak members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) after the war. *“There were 38 badly damaged barracks in Pyongyang, otherwise it was a plain; there was nothing, just a meeting hall one hundred meters underground, where the Central Committee met with Kim Il Sung,”* said radio operator Vladimír Vlček. He served in Korea in the years 1954-55.

Jaromír Švamberk described his visit to Pyongyang at the same time, saying, *“The city was destroyed in a manner which clearly showed who had air power superiority and who controlled the airspace. Ruins, junkyards, lonely towering chimneys. The destruction was truly thorough.”*

Of course Placák and NNSC members wrote or told their experiences many years after the war, and they came to Korea at a time, when all Czechoslovak people accepted the image of a cruel war spread by communist media. But the reality was much worse than they were ever able to imagine.

The mosaic of all this information helped to create Czechoslovakia's viewpoint on North Korea and the Korean War. Of course, we were part of the East or Soviet Block, so we

were under communist propaganda and people believed South Korea and the USA jointly attacked the DPRK. But people supported North Korea not only because of this propaganda; they understood the plight of the North Korean people. Bomb raids did not destroy Czechoslovakia as much as Germany, but people knew the impact of bombing very well. Many of them had to work in the Third Reich as part of total war.

The sources of information were not just the statements of North Korean officials. Among other sources were leftist supporters of the DPRK in the West and our own sources. The cables were secret, but during the war dozens of people, diplomats and medical staff visited North Korea, and they spoke of what they'd seen there. A doctor from the first group, Bohumil Eiselt, wrote a book about his experience entitled *The Diamond Mountains*. And, after the war, all members of the NNSC and the NNRC made thousands of pictures, hundreds of them on slides. A film crew created three documentary movies... so Czechoslovak citizens could see the impact of this war. Many reports were ideologically biased, but the core was clear –people suffering under bomb raids. Of course, in the time of communism the people believed that it was the South and the USA that started the war. But the way the war was waged was crucial for creating an opinion.

Bomb raids and napalm were effective weapons to stop the human waves of Chinese People's Volunteers, but on the other side, using them helped create a bad image of the American soldiers, especially the pilots, as cruel imperialistic mercenaries with no mercy. This way of waging war has led to a loss in Vietnam, because people demonstrated against this war throughout the world, and especially in the US.

Now, with the war in Syria and hybrid wars, it is very important to consider every step one takes, to create a good image; because if the western world wants to win its fight for democracy, it shouldn't forget that dropping bombs is not conducive to making friends. Few people in my generation condoned the Vietnam War. Many despised America because of it, but we still loved American literature and especially rock music.

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Changes of the Czechoslovak Delegation in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission

Prokop Tomek

Abstract

For forty years, the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have sent their employees to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission on the Korean peninsula. For the first short period, this very numerous missions had a rather military nature. The NNSC inspection groups really carried out a check of arms and troops at many points of both parts of the peninsula. This joint diplomatic and military nature changed in 1956 to a diplomatic mission, and significantly reduced in quantity. The commission did not have significant real power. Nevertheless, its existence undoubtedly helped to keep the fragile armistice on the Korean Peninsula since 1953. The development of the Czechoslovak delegation has been researched only in small scope.

The initial period (1953-1956) of Czechoslovak participation on the NNSC has been well described. The following four decades, however, remain essentially a grey spot. The preliminary agreement about the participation of Czechoslovakia on the proposed Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission was made in April 1952. The Czechoslovak side did not envisage its participation as the peaceful mission of a neutral state, in a generally understood sense. The main goal of the mission was to help ensure the North Korean and the Chinese Communists' interests. Czechoslovak policy and propaganda, together with the Moscow line, unconditionally presented the conflict, in apparent discord with reality, as an aggression against the DPRK. Therefore, the Czechoslovak delegation's activities were to perform a combat role on the Korean peninsula, in the frame of the long-term anti-imperialistic struggle. The mission would also bring valuable experiences for the Czechoslovak people's army for similar missions in the future. The mission was well equipped, with a huge amount of supplies and weapons. The Czechoslovaks expected a hostile reception in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, and they didn't create material troubles for their North Korean comrades

The first group was dissolved in June 1952 and assembled again in April 1953 because of the postponing of the armistice agreement. The planned number of members was 384 people. Only six were employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the assignment of military ranks. The mission owned 102 cars and 25 motorcycles, appropriate spare parts and

supplies, and mobile connecting equipment. Each member was armed with a pistol and a submachine gun. Additional armament consisted of five light machine guns and 600 hand grenades. The Polish group had a similar size, but for example the Swiss group consisted of only eighty persons, equipped with basic necessities and armed with pistols. Eventually, however, 300 people left Czechoslovakia. As a result of the well-known reduction of inspection groups, the size of the Czechoslovak delegation rapidly decreased. After two years, there were 72 persons. In 1956, there were only 17; in 1957, 12; and finally, in the 1960s, 8 persons.

Since the beginning, both delegates of Poland and Czechoslovakia maintained daily contacts and coordination with the army representatives of the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers. The sending of inspection groups was intended not to disrupt KPA and PVA interests. In fact, the declared neutrality was violated.

Reaching a consensus with four delegations divided into two equally strong voices was very difficult. The Czechoslovak and Polish delegations were instructed by the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai in Beijing on August 26 and 27, 1954. They were assigned, surprisingly, to keep the NNSC at work as long as possible. Their task was to improve relations with the Swedish and Swiss delegations and the atmosphere of the negotiations with the UN forces representatives. In September 1954, the first (!) Joint Report of all four delegations on the rotation of troops and the exchange of material was successfully reached. Notable is the fact that Czechoslovak members of the control groups could keep normal daily contact with US soldiers and visit the US Army bases. At the same time, a huge anti-American propaganda wave took place in Czechoslovakia.

The delegation recorded relatively few disciplinary incidents. Paradoxically, the first commander of the Czechoslovak delegation, Divisional General František Bureš, became the most troublesome element. This longtime soldier and former Nazi regime prisoner considered himself as a direct representative of the Czechoslovak government in Korea. He seldom took part in the NNSC meetings and left all negotiations on the diplomatic staff. He was also uncritically taking over and promoting the unsustainable views and demands of the representatives of the Chinese and the Korean representatives. Bures organized expensive trips and hunts. The Korean people gave him a nickname: "Lord and Ruler of both Koreas." He was compromised by huge shopping at American military stores, being photographed together with the Americans, and letting them host. The case was later negotiated by the political bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Bureš was punished as a party member. He lost his command and was ultimately sent to the army reserve.

Dr. Oldřich Chýle, an experienced diplomat recently given the rank of general, was named the fourth Czechoslovak representative in September 1956. At the start of his stay fronting the Czechoslovak representation of the NNSC, its character half military and half diplomatic was changed definitively to diplomatic in nature. In the history of Czechoslovak participation in the NNSC, and a total of 14 heads, ten were Czechs and four were Slovaks. Only three were diplomats. The professional competence for performing the task was doubtful. Only a few had the sufficient language skills. Most of them knew only Russian. Many of them were meritorious soldiers with a remarkable war past.

After three years of existence, the NNSC limited its activities to studying weekly written reports of movements of arms and soldiers to and out of both parts of the peninsula. Nevertheless, the commission continued its work.

The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over the organizational care of the delegation after April 1, 1957. Staff was selected from both the Ministry of Defence and the MFA employees. The period of individual stay was set at one year, with the possibility of prolongation.

The connection of the Czechoslovak delegation to the world and home existed almost exclusively through the DPRK's territory. Although both delegations were formally allied countries, the DPRK had showed ill-concealed distrust to them. The DPRK firmly concealed its weaknesses. For example, in the autumn of 1958, an epidemic of the black death spread in North Korea. The Koreans had not informed the diplomats about it, and the diplomats found out about it only by chance and quickly ordered vaccine from Prague. The KPA also concealed illegal land minefields in the Demilitarized Zone. At the end of 1958, such an illegal landmine seriously wounded a member of the Polish delegation. During the 1950s and the 1960s, the delegation suffered through very poor accommodation, with faulty wiring, dampness, and fire hazards.

Representatives of the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegations asked in vain for the possibility of calling a helicopter in case of necessary medical need. The Swiss and Swedish delegations could use such services from UN forces. So the members of both the delegations had to hope that nothing serious would happen to them. At the end of 1963, Oldřich Chýle achieved the end of his incredible seven year mission in the NNSC. His successor, Major General Václav Tauš, arrived to Korea for the second time, disregarding his serious health problems. Almost immediately upon his arrival, he suffered a heart attack. There was no ECG available at the Guesong Hospital, and the doctor of Czechoslovak embassy in Pyongyang refused a transfer to the Seoul Hospital! Tauš returned to Czechoslovakia in May 1964, and died the next year in November after another heart attack at the age of 55.

Life in complete isolation, on very little territory, significantly affected the psychological condition of the little group of diplomats and soldiers. Rare cultural events organized in North Korea could not bring some rest. Their content was full of ideology and military propaganda.

The work of the delegation had a significant impact on the Soviet-Chinese controversy in 1963. The reports of the Czechoslovak delegates from the 1960s appear less ideologically burdened and more credible. This period also reinforced the importance of the delegation for the Soviet Union. The head of the delegation kept in close contact with the Soviet embassy in Pchongjang.

There was a permanently high number of KPA provocations against UN forces. Many such clashes ended with a number of casualties, mostly on the side of the RoK and the UN forces. The KPA and the CPV representatives tried to use the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegations to put forward accusation against the UN forces, and Czechoslovak delegates started carefully to refuse to serve such ends. Notable is the admission of Czechoslovak diplomats in the 1960s that similar practices had been common in the past. Before the Soviet-Chinese controversy, Czechoslovaks agreed quietly with such behavior in the past because: "DPRK policy kept the line and coordinated with the USSR's peaceful foreign policy."

Czechoslovaks appreciated good relations with their Polish colleagues. The real attitude to their Polish colleagues was quite warm, except some reservations about the views of some heads of the Polish delegation. There was only a noticeable period cooling of relations during 1968. The Polish delegation allegedly unreservedly supported the unrealistic proposals of the North Korean side and criticized the political developments in Czechoslovakia. Members of the Polish delegation in those months could keep in contact with Czechoslovak colleagues only with the permission of the head of the delegation.

Czechoslovak representation in the NNSC gradually became a kind of substitute diplomatic mission to the Republic of Korea. Czechoslovak diplomats wrote regular reports for the MFA in Prague on the state of South Korea's foreign policy, the military, domestic and economic situation.

The exceptional position of the NNSC was confirmed after the events following the well-known USS Pueblo incident on 23 January, 1968. The Czechoslovak and the Polish delegations played a positive role in the attempts to mediate unofficial contacts between both sides on the board of the NNSC.

A directive on the activities of the Czechoslovak delegation at the NNSC of 20 June, 1974, shows its role in the 1970s. Besides the main original task, it fulfilled an intelligence

function. The new directives emphasized the coordination of the Czechoslovak embassy in Pyongyang and the cooperation of the Polish delegation. The conclusion stated: “NNSC is an asset for peace in the area. It helps to comply the ceasefire agreement, while respecting both the interests and opinions of the KPA/Peoples Volunteers Army and especially the interests of the CSSR and the community of socialist states.”

The main reason for the end of the Czechoslovak presence in the NNSC was the gradual convergence of Czechoslovakia with the Republic of Korea in the 1980s on the basis of economic interests. The first signals can be found in 1987, but until 1990 these relations were set only on unofficial business and cultural exchange. During the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a proposal for the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the Republic of Korea.

In 1992, the DPRK called Czechoslovakia and Poland to stop sending new Delegation Chairs to the NNSC. Both countries rejected the request. Although the DPRK recognized the Czech Republic on January 1, 1993, it didn't grant the right of the representative of the Czech Army to act as a delegate to the NNSC. The Czech flag was pulled from the flagpole in Pchamundzom on April 3, 1993. Since then, their place has remained unoccupied.

It is questionable whether the Czechoslovak (Czech) participation in the NNSC has ended. It happened almost exactly forty years after the establishment of the NNSC. With Czechoslovak participation, the NNSC met over 2200 times. The delegation was formed by approximately one thousand soldiers and diplomats from Czechoslovakia.

Conclusion

The initial, and only secret, intention to help the KPA and the Peoples Volunteers Army win the conflict in Korea was changed after the cooling of the PRC's relations with the USSR in the 1960s. For the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovaks together with the Polish delegation became a valuable tool in an otherwise closed region. It was a limited tool for attempts to influence a dangerous environment. The development of the attitudes of the Czechoslovak soldiers and diplomats in the delegation is also interesting. While most of the time these attitudes reflected official policy, in the latter half of the 1960s, the view of the Czechoslovak representatives was more realistic. Normalization in Czechoslovakia also meant a renewal of loyalty to the DPRK, even if the ideological distance lasted. The fall of the Communist Bloc in Europe and the convergence of Czechoslovakia with the Republic of Korea led to the growth of the DPRK's mistrust, and then the lack of interest of both sides for the continuation of the Czechoslovak (Czech) presence.

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Under Chinese Command: Czechoslovakia in the NNSC, Year One

Tomáš Smetánka

Abstract

Right after the establishment of the NNSC, the Swiss and the Swedish members noticed the approach of their Czechoslovak and Polish partners distinctly differ from their idea of how the Commission should work, which led both their countries to seriously consider the rationale of the continuation of the NNSC. Documents from Czech archives reveal the tight day-to-day coordination of the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegates with the Chinese military command during the first year of the NNSC operation.

The ancient Greek saying of “*Nothing is more permanent than the temporary*” fits perfectly to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), created 65 years ago. The instrument established by the Korean Armistice Agreement of 27 July, 1953, was supposed to be used until a peaceful settlement of the Korean question, envisaged by the Agreement to come out from a political conference to be held within three months after the armistice. There is an obvious delay of over six decades, throughout which the temporary mechanism has been in operation.

Has the NNSC been so successful that it survived its sell-by date by so many years? I would stay safe, stating the truce has been holding, and the NNSC has been there as a constituent part of the arrangement that has prevented a new major outbreak of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. To what extent the NNSC can be credited for the preservation of the status quo is better left unanswered.

With all due respect to the people who spent part of their lives serving in the Demilitarised Zone that straddles the 38th parallel, the NNSC’s role has been largely symbolic for most of the time. And in the very first months, when its presence truly mattered, the Commission failed to fulfil its primary function, i.e. supervising the compliance with obligations of the truce by both sides. The reason of the failure was mainly due to the fact that the Czechoslovak and Polish members of the NNSC, however informally, were subject to Chinese command. They followed its instructions, actually preventing the Commission from uncovering, registering and describing the real situation. They were not primarily motivated to perform a fair and unbiased observation, but to serve the interests of their North Korean and Chinese Communist fellows.

This is not a new assertion. It is almost as old as the Commission itself. General Lacey, US Senior Member of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) stated in his letter of 15 April, 1954, to the NNSC that

Since the Czech and Polish members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission have subscribed to and supported the views of the Senior Member, Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers, Military Armistice Commission, before making proper investigations of violations to the Armistice Agreement, as requested by the Senior Member of the United Nations Command, Military Armistice Commission, it appears clear that the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission has been paralyzed to such a degree that it cannot carry out its pledged obligations as outlined under the terms of the Armistice Agreement. (Lacey, 1954).

The Swedish and Swiss members of the NNSC were less explicit, mentioning “*the non-cooperation of their Czechoslovak and Polish colleagues*” in their letter of 4 May, 1954, and asserting that “*under the present circumstances, the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission will not be in a position to operate as was probably intended by the signatories of the armistice agreement.*” (Mohn, & Gross, 1954).

The report of the State Council of the Swiss Confederation, submitted to the Swiss Federal Assembly regarding the work of the Swiss delegates, dated 26 April, 1955, maintains that

from the very beginning, the intentions of both sides of conflict differed widely. UN wanted a control as thorough as possible, whereas North Korea and China were constantly striving to limit all supervision to a minimum. (...) The Polish and Czechoslovak delegates required widening and strengthening the control in South Korea, going to a certain extent beyond the scope set in the Armistice Agreement. The Swiss and Swedish delegates agreed to the requirements in order to provide an objective and thorough control. (Schweizerische Bundesrat, 1955, p.730).

However, they soon found out the control in the north was much more limited, and when they tried to balance the conditions in the north with those in the south, “*any such request was adamantly opposed by the Czechoslovaks and Poles.*”(Schweizerische Bundesrat, 1955, p.731).

These statements are not new, and it would not have been worth bringing them up here, had it not been for other, rather unknown texts from the other side that complement them, explain them, and corroborate them.

Researching the NNSC history in the archives of the Czech Foreign Ministry recently, I came across files containing records of some fifty meetings of the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegates with their Chinese and North-Korean comrades that took place between September 1953 and June 1954. Although the records are far from complete, they offer a very informative insight into the way the two NNSC members operated, and based on that, I don't hesitate to say what the title of my paper implies: they were indeed under the Chinese command.

In the first year of the NNSC, between August 1953 and June 1954 to be exact, there were about 100 secret coordination meetings of the four parties, i.e. roughly two meetings a week, which probably corresponds to the number of NNSC meetings.

All the records were classified secret or top secret. The information shared among the Communist allies was deemed so sensitive that it might have been life-threatening. A Czechoslovak officer, distraught by the news of his fiancée back at home, attempted suicide and received an emergency treatment at an American medical facility. A report on the case reflects the utmost concern and fear he might change sides and talk: *“He had been informed about all the secret consultations and the investigation by the mobile inspection groups in North Korea. (...) The Chinese delegation members were extremely concerned and recommended his transport even if he should not survive, or preventing him to talk by other means.”* (Report, 1 December 1953).

The name of the unfortunate officer is found in the records regarding a rare dispatch of a mobile inspection team to the North Korean airfield in Uiju in October 1953. It seems the fatal information Lt. Col. Vajda possessed was due to his participation in the Chinese – North Korean – Czechoslovak – Polish meetings before the inspection, and in conducting the inspection on the spot.

A typical four-party coordination meeting was opened by a Chinese officer who explained the situation, presented the view of the Chinese command, outlined the strategy and instructed the Czechoslovak and Polish comrades what line to take in the next day's session of the NNSC, which might have been followed by a couple of questions or comments by the NNSC members. One example out of many can be illustrated by a quote or two from the conference about the dispatch of an inspection to Uiju, requested by the US member of the MAC. Comrade Bi Ti Lun says:

We want to prepare the whole matter well, so first, we have to explore the situation on the spot properly. (...) It will be better for us, if the group leaves not now, but later. According to the agreement, (...) the departure of a mobile inspection group must not

be delayed. (...) Before we dispatch this mobile group (...), we will fight the American MAC member. In the meantime, we will do all preparatory works. We need to gain time. (...) We still can wage a battle with the Swedes and the Swiss whether to dispatch the group at all. Our aim is to refute their accusation and claim there is no reason for the group to be dispatched. If they insist and quote the Armistice Agreement, we may argue with them and win some time. On the other hand, we must not give a pretext to an accusation that we keep delaying the departure of the group without reason. (...) In the battle we're going to wage with the Swedes and the Swiss in the NNSC meeting tomorrow, we have two aims: 1) Refute the accusation and refuse the need to make the inspection, 2) Delay the dispatch of the group for a certain period. (NNSC, 1953, 12 October).

I hope you noticed it well, the attitude expressed by the language: *“the battle we're going to wage with the Swedes and the Swiss in the NNSC.”* Not you, the NNSC members, but we, the comrades. No cooperation, but battle.

Despite the agreed-upon procrastination, the inspection of the Uiju airfield probably did not pass exactly as the Chinese command would have wished, which was reflected in the follow-up meeting. The Czech delegate, however, was not afraid to put part of the blame on the Chinese and Korean friends, saying:

There were 20 days for the airfield in Uiju to be prepared. I think your side did little during that period. (...) We learned about the request for dispatching the group in the morning of the 12 October (...) The group arrived in the afternoon of the 14 October. There were more than 46 hours to prepare the airfield. It would have been feasible to empty the whole place, leave there the bombed-out planes only with a couple of people to take the inspectors from place to place. It didn't happen. That's why it has been a difficult situation for us in the Commission today. (NNSC, 1953, 19 October).

Bi Ti Lun, the Chinese officer, accepted the reproach, saying: *“This incident is a good lesson for us and we are grateful for your criticism. Please keep criticising us, so that we can cooperate even better.”* (NNSC, 1953, 19 October).

However, the records of the meetings do not reveal many cases of such criticism. They rather expose an attitude of loyal submission to the Chinese comrades. A rather amusing case in point: General Bureš, Head of the Czechoslovak delegation, asked: *“Members of our inspection team in the south have been receiving a growing number of invitations to social events recently. How shall we treat them?”*

He learned that *“it is necessary that each invitation is accepted by the Czechoslovak and Polish comrades together, or rejected together.”* (NNSC, 20 October 1953).

When the difference between the scope of inspections in the south and in the north grew more and more obvious, becoming also a more divisive issue within the NNSC, it was occasionally discussed in the secret meetings. The Chinese and North Koreans insisted in keeping the asymmetry, claiming that:

we have to proceed in the way that would not allow the enemy to learn about the speed and scope of our construction, because it is our state secret. DPRK is an independent and sovereign state. South Korea is a puppet government, an American colony, and that’s why the Americans can allow widening the scope of inspection in South Korea. The post-war construction in the DPRK focuses mainly on the construction of factories, directly related to national defence. The imperialists nowadays do help South Korea, but their assistance is not connected to the national defence, it is not industrial plants that are imported, but consumer goods. That’s why they can submit documents on the imports, so that they can boast about their assistance to South Korea. (...) Whereas in our case, goods and industrial plants are imported from the Soviet Union and the countries of people’s democracy and we cannot allow the enemy to learn what we import. (NNSC, 15 February 1954).

After this explanation, the Polish delegate concluded that the inspection groups had been too eager in the south, having created a number of precedents that might be exploited by the other side that would require reciprocity in the north. That was considered unacceptable and by March 1954, the rhetoric culminated: *“the NNSC has to be turned into a fighting instrument against the enemy, we’ll jointly decide in what way we’ll hit the enemy, we agree how to carry on the fight against the Swedes and the Swiss...”* (NNSC, 1954, 1 March).

It was the time when the UN Command and the Swedish and Swiss members of the NNSC started considering in earnest the viability and the rationale of continuing the NNSC operation. On 15 April 1954, the governments of Switzerland and Sweden submitted memoranda, stating they will have to reconsider their continued participation in the work of the Commission. The Swiss memorandum requested the two parties of the Korean conflict *“to examine, whether an end should not be put to the activity of the NNSC”* (Aide-mémoire of 15 April 1954).

The memoranda had an immediate impact. At the first secret meeting after their delivery to Beijing (and Washington), the Chinese officer informed the NNSC members that the instruction is to *“not give any pretext to the Swedes and the Swiss to any provocation, (...)”*

not limit spot checks, make no obstacles to inspections” and “create a situation in which all activity will be totally smooth.” (NNSC, 1954, 22 April). In the following weeks, a change of tactics in the NNSC was discussed, one that would lead to better understanding and friendlier relations with the Swedish and Swiss members, but not in a way that might imply that a revision of former positions takes place. The belligerent style survived: *“Americans are the main object of our attack. The Swedes and Swiss, we’ll assault them from the flank,”* (NNSC, 1954, 1 June) as the Chinese commanding officer put it.

A year since the armistice, serious misgivings about the NNSC had been expressed, Sweden and Switzerland were on their way out, and it may be assumed that the Chinese and North-Korean leadership felt they would hardly disprove their responsibility, were the mechanism of the armistice to collapse. The matter was beyond the power of the generals in the field and required an intervention on a higher level and a strategic guidance from the top. Premier Zhou Enlai invited the generals who were normally meeting in Panmunjeom to a conference held on 26-27 August 1954, in Beijing.

The Chinese Prime Minister delivered a keynote speech, expressing the will to lessen the tension and improve the situation in Korea by withdrawing two corps of the Chinese People’s Volunteers, to be reciprocated by the withdrawal of two to four U.S. divisions as well as Canadian and Turkish troops. He then praised the work of the NNSC, insisted it should not be disrupted, but admitted that even if the NNSC was dissolved, it would be possible to maintain the truce. He urged that it was necessary *“to do our utmost to keep the Commission, so that the responsibility [for its dissolution] rests with the Americans. Peoples of all countries have to blame the Americans.”* (Report, 1954, 26 August). One can understand it as a message that for the Chinese and North-Koreans – at least from now on – the NNSC was more important with regard to their own reputation than to its peacekeeping task.

The Premier then outlined the desired change of attitude that should save the Commission in three points:

1) The Commission must be busy all the time, so that the Swedes, the Swiss and the Americans cannot claim it is useless. They should be given work so that they do not tell there is nothing to do. 2) The Czechoslovak and Polish members should improve their relations with the Swedes and the Swiss. Initiative in this matter is needed. (...) Their life in the north should be improved. They are bored there, people in capitalist countries live in different conditions, they miss that environment. 3) The atmosphere in dealing with the Americans should be improved. More than a year passed since the armistice was signed. Ways of treating them should change from what was there when

the negotiations began. We noticed in Geneva [conference], how they sometimes tried to approach us. When comrade Nam Ir was pouring water in his glass, the American asked him for water, too. It's obvious it's possible to lower the tension between people. (Report, 1954, 26 August).

Conference participants who spoke after the host, starting with the North Korean Foreign Minister Nam Ir and ending with the Polish chargé d'affaires in Beijing Góra, all praised Premier Zhou Enlai's analysis and his new guidelines.

In a separate meeting, the recently-appointed Czechoslovak NNSC member General Hečko spoke with a Chinese deputy foreign minister about the situation in the NNSC, *"in such an open and frank manner as the matter required."* He presented his assessment of the relationship with *"the Chinese and Korean comrades"* as *"not correct. The assertion of friendship produced a totally uncritical attitude towards everything the Korean and Chinese comrades were doing and the way they were doing it, instead of a critical attitude towards matters that might have been done otherwise and better."* (Report, 1954, 26 August).

If a historian of the Czechoslovak and Polish participation in the NNSC was writing an account of the past 65 years, I would definitely recommend her to set the generally unknown Beijing conference of August 1954 as a landmark concluding the first period of the Commission's work. The devoted representation of the interests of the Chinese and North Koreans by their Czechoslovak and Polish comrades led the NNSC to the brink of non-existence. The change of tactics, as articulated by Premier Zhou Enlai at the conference, enabled its survival; but I dare say the experience of the first year left its indelible mark, one of those disqualifying the NNSC as an effective peacekeeping operation.

Looking at our Communist history from a growing distance, people are sometimes inclined to show understanding or even sympathy toward acts that were pointless, harmful, immoral or otherwise wrong. I came across an assertion that *"in the NNSC, Czechoslovakia and Poland defended primarily the interests of the North Koreans and Chinese volunteers, and in many respects, in the similar way the Swiss and Swedish members stood up for Americans, that is, the United Nations Command."* (Švamberg, 2013). To me, a review of the NNSC documents in the archives of the Czech Foreign Ministry showed quite vividly that this was definitely not the case.

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Analysis of the Documentary *Československá nemocnice v Koreji*

George Hays II

Abstract

Jiri Ployhar's documentary, *Československá nemocnice v Koreji*, focuses on the role of Czechoslovak medical aid to North Korea in the late stages of Operation K, specifically with the operation of the joint North Korean/Czechoslovak hospital in Chongjin. While the film may at first appear to be more of a simple Cold War propaganda piece, rather than a documentary, a careful analysis shows some surprising additional symbols, messages, and identifications. Perhaps most striking among these "non-Cold War" identifications are the gender significations of war, as well as the colonial role of "advanced" European helping the "backward" Asian.

Jiri Ployhar's short film *Československá nemocnice v Koreji* (*A Czechoslovak Hospital in Korea*) produced by the Czechoslovak Army in 1954, is declared to be a documentary. This film, though, portraying the Czechoslovak hospital at Chongjin at the late stages of Operation K,⁴ is far more a layered propaganda and narrative piece than a documentary. To say "propaganda," however, is a bit of a misleading oversimplification. Ployhar's film is not just a cliché "anti-capitalism" piece. An analysis of the work shows many more layers and themes.

To analyze Ployhar's film, it is helpful to utilize some guiding questions (Hays, 2012, Hays, 2014). In particular, it is useful to look at who is the intended audience of the film, what is the actual conflict in the film, and thereby what is the message of the film. Ployhar's film would seem to be directed mainly at the Czechoslovak Army (who is also the producer of the film), and the medical corps in particular (who is also one of the main actors, the "good guy", in the film). The conflict is very much that of health vs illness and death, where the Czechoslovak medical corps fights for health and against the legacy of American led death and damage. The message is that, without the advanced knowledge and technology brought to the "Eastern" North Korean people by the "Western" Socialist Czechoslovaks, American-dealt death will triumph.

⁴ The author is very grateful for the historical information concerning Operation K and the Chongjin hospital found in Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinu komunismu, "Aktivity československých institucí v jiho-východní Asii v době korejské a vietnamské války," *Securitas Imperii* 9 (2002); and the author is particularly appreciative of the research and translation help of Professor Milada Polišínská of Anglo-American University, Prague, the Czech Republic.

How are these points determined? An analysis of the film, seeking themes and symbols and metaphors, formulates the argument in support of the message (Hays, 2012, Hays, 2014). The dominant points of the argument touch upon the prominence of the color white, the juxtaposition of women and children to wounded soldiers, and the dual advantage of Czechoslovak Socialism and Western-ness over the American enemy (Western but not Socialist) and the North Korean ally/victim (Socialist but not Western).

The prevalence of the color white, as well as its contextual use, is quite straightforward throughout much of the film. This can be contrasted well with two scenes early on. In the opening shots of the hospital, as well as the scene of the hospital gates being opened, we see regular people and regular dress (although slightly less so in the gates-scene). The people we see are dressed in a variety of clothing.

In the hospital-scene, we see patients, medical staff, and what looks like a family of visitors. The medical staff are dressed in all white, and the visiting family are dressed in Western clothes. This is significant, as personal photos of medical staff do not often have them in completely white dress, but rather a mixture of a white shirt/coat and a variety of pants (essentially whatever clothes they had). The family of visitors is also unique, as Western dress does not appear to be prevalent in any of the other scenes of civilians in the film (such as the gates-scene). In short, this group of individuals would seem to be purposefully placed in the hospital-scene establishment shot. Support for this leads us to looking at the patients.

While the medical staff and visitors seem oblivious to anything that is going on around them, the patients walking around are noticeably focused on them and the camera. There are also numerous individuals on the hospital roof, staring straight down at the medical staff and visitors. This all reinforces the assertion that those medical staff and visitors are part of the direction of the scene, while the gawkers are simply gawking. This is important, because it helps us establish a normalcy baseline for dress and color. The patients on the ground are in gray robes, and there is a mixture of colors among the people on the roof. Whether they are staff or patients, this demonstrates that white is not normally prevailing. This means that its prevalence in later scenes is purposeful and symbolic.⁵

Having now established the purposeful use of white in the majority of the film, why is it there? What is the color's importance? It would appear that the answer is a combination of innocence, purity, and perfection/excellence. These are three common significations of the color white, and they are all utilized in different contexts in Ployhar's film.

⁵ This is reinforced in the orphanage-scene, where all of the women appear in white, while one woman in the background can be seen quickly trying to put on a white smock to cover her normal clothing.

To begin with perfection/excellence, the doctors are noticeably most covered in white. This refers to shirts, pants (the ones most often shown at any close range), and medical coats (especially when it comes to Czechoslovak doctors, as North Korean doctors are repeatedly shown wearing white robes that are identical to ones shown on close-ups of patients). Nurses are shown in white top-layers with gray sublayers. Together, this shows a hierarchy of knowledge and ability, with the Czechoslovak doctors at the top, next the North Korean doctors, and finally the nurses.

The significations of innocence and purity are much more straightforward. Keeping in mind the contrasting context of the hospital-scene's gawking patients, almost every single other (stage-directed) patient shown up-close has a white top-layer. When this comes to the wounded soldier-scenes, this refers to purity of purpose and righteous self-defense (reinforced by the narration). When this comes to children and women (either as patients or as caretakers in the orphanage), the prevalence of white (and often well-lit white), refers to the combination of purity and innocence. These individuals are often made radiant and sacred⁶ in their innocence and purity through lighting, as are the expert doctors.

The discussion of innocence and purity shifts well into the next general concept, and that is the juxtaposition of women and children to wounded soldiers. In this juxtaposition, several things are accomplished. First, we are shown the innocent and pure children and women as patients/victims. This shows what "we" are fighting for. Next, we are shown the wounded soldiers, specifically. This shows what victory entails. Finally, we are shown more women and children, showing us the consequence of victory. It is telling that the only mention of loss/death refers, or is otherwise attached, to victims (the incurable little girl, the parents of the orphans), while the soldiers are only referred to in terms of wounded survivors ("*240 comrades [have been torn] out of the clutches of Death*"). This speaks to the audience of the film in particular. The good doctors are needed to save the still-suffering innocent, while brave soldiers are needed to suffer (but not to die, explicitly) to protect the innocent and pure. This also fits perfectly within the motif of "just warriors" protecting "beautiful souls." (Elshtain, 1982, Elshtain, 1987).

Another interesting bridge between these two spectral ends of the audience is the attention paid to physical labor. Two scenes in particular make a point of emphasizing the physical labor of the medical personnel assigned to the hospital. The first is in the scene of the truck getting stuck in the river, while the second is the scene of the unloading of supplies for the hospital.

⁶ An extreme example of this can be seen in the framing of a woman and child during an examination at the orphanage that perfectly replicates the Madonna and child Christ composition, emphasized by the narration that "The child will live." It is surprising that this overt religious symbolism escaped the censors.

In the truck-scene, the narration and visuals both emphasize the physical nature of the work of the hospital. Doctors are shown riding in the back of a military truck. When the truck gets stuck, the doctors remove all of their (white) symbols of hierarchy and authority, jump into the water in their underwear, and manually rescue the truck through rope and winch. This highlights both the importance of physical labor versus mental labor, as well as showing that the Czechoslovak hospital is as much an effort of physical labor (championed by the Socialists) as it is an effort of elitist labor (which, we will see more clearly in relation to the final concept, symbolizes the West).

The second example refers to the supply-scene. This scene again emphasizes the importance, necessity, and willingness of physical labor on the part of the elite medical personnel (“*all volunteer*”). It similarly highlights the importance of physical labor, in general, when it comes to the success of Operation K.⁷ This supply-scene transitions us to the final general concept of overall development.

Throughout the film, the point is repeatedly stressed that Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovaks are more advanced than the North Koreans and their state. Similarly, it is repeatedly stressed that, while the Americans are advanced, capitalist powers are immoral (a mention of the Japanese is thrown in, too, for good measure). Taken together, these points of technical advancement and ethical system present a very curious creature.

The American comparison is more straightforward, and for our purposes less interesting, so it is better to turn to this area first. The Americans are repeatedly presented as being powerful and advanced. Their progress in conquering the Korean peninsula, for a time, is one of the first things mentioned by the narrator. Repeatedly, the sophistication and power of American weaponry is referenced and shown (shrapnel, bombs, napalm, and terrifying control of the air during the war). Combined with this, almost in direct negative correlation, the American actions are condemned as immoral. They are murders, the inhuman terrorizers and orphaners of children, and barely different from the Imperial Japanese who last ruled the territory. The Americans are Western (advanced), but not Socialist (and thus immoral, to the point of handicap).

Far more interesting is the reverse conceptualization of the North Koreans. They are Socialist, and thus by definition, a moral and valuable people. The North Koreans are not Western, though, and thus by definition in need of guiding and saving. In short, the age-old colonial instinct of Europe and the “white man’s burden” creep into the egalitarian Socialist Czechoslovak understanding of the North Koreans.

⁷ A look at the historical account makes this scene even more interesting, as the various phases of Operation K were notoriously under-supplied. See Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinu komunismu, 2002.

This burden to educate, to lead, to civilize, and to save the North Koreans is presented numerous times in numerous ways. One instance was already mentioned above, when it comes to unloading supplies. The North Koreans are in material need. This example may not be convincing, as any society immediately post-war is likely to be in material need. This is not the only form of lack in advancement, though.

While the narration says, and accurately so (Kolektiv autorů ÚDV, 2002), that the hospital in Chongjin is a joint endeavor with Czechoslovaks and North Koreans working together as equals, the film portrays a very different dynamic. Even as the narrator says this over a scene of a Czechoslovak doctor and nurse conferring with a North Korean doctor and nurse, it is obvious that the Czechoslovak doctor is dominant. He is the one giving information to the North Korean doctor.

Such dominance of knowledge is shown again several times. Most clearly is the almost complete absence of any North Korean doctor being referenced in any other part of the film. Rather, Czechoslovak doctors are shown traveling alone throughout the region (accompanied by a North Korean nurse, yes, but no North Korean doctors), and teaching the North Korean nurses about medical procedures. The traveling examinations are quite telling, especially in the scene that precedes the Madonna like imagery alluded to above (see footnote 6).

A Czechoslovak doctor is shown examining a North Korean infant. The narration tells us that the much older North Korean medical resident who had been caring for the infant had given up on him, due to lack of strength and “*medical means.*” The Czechoslovak doctor, however, with superior strength of will and knowledge, takes the infant to the main hospital. “*Science and medical care won,*” and the child lives.

The two themes of material want and intellectual want come together in the arch of the film’s entire narrative. At the beginning, two North Koreans in need of the hospital are shown being transported over the almost non-existent roads (“*broken paths*”) of the region. The first is a young woman lying in the back of an ox-drawn cart, while the next is an old man being carried along a river bed by a young woman. We see these two patients again, at the end of the film, leaving the hospital. The woman from the cart is shown, happily leaving with twins in her arms. The old man, in traditional (white) dress and looking quite strong, leaves under the power of his own two feet.

The significance of these bookending scenes is two-fold. First, without all of the efforts of the Czechoslovak hospital and medical personnel described in the film, these North Koreans would likely not be alive. Second, the Czechoslovak presence helps preserve the

historical value and culture of the North Korean people (represented by the old man), while also laying the groundwork for a stronger and more advanced future for the North Korean people (represented by the mother carrying two children, outnumbering the “old”). Together, this shows the Czechoslovak aim of protecting the Socialist side of North Korea, while replacing its backward Eastern-ness with the advancements taught by the Western doctors. It is an impressive mix of “new” Socialist egalitarianism and traditional European socio-racial hierarchism.

Ployhar’s film shows much more than the workings of the Czechoslovak hospital at Chongjin, and more than the importance of the battle against the capitalist Americans. It shows the complex nature of the self-identification of Czechoslovakia, the identification of the North Koreans, and the identification of the relationship between the two peoples. These identifications and expressions, as could be expected, do not escape the broader and longer term trends of identification. The “other” is inhuman, while “we” and “ours” are pure and innocent. “Warriors” are just and necessary to protect the “beautiful souls” of innocent women and children. The “West” is more advanced than other peoples, and has a duty to help them through material and intellectual development. In short, with a few defining details of names and flags changed, Ployhar’s film could have documented any other Western-style power in any number of conflicts from the last several hundred years.

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The film may be viewed at: <https://www.auni.edu/korea-conference-2018/>

Coercive diplomacy: The case of North Korea

Jan Polišenský, Klára Semerádová

Abstract

The presentation focuses on North Korea from the point of view of coercive diplomacy and of the practical use of this policy since the accession of Kim Jong-un. Three specific cases will be used to illustrate the character of the application of the coercive policy of the DPRK. These cases include a landmine detonation incident in the demilitarized zone in 2015, a North Korean submarine ballistic missile test in 2016, and a test launch of a new version of the missile in 2017. The purpose of this paper is to point out the insufficient attention, as well as understanding, of the actions undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when it comes to coercive diplomacy.

Introduction

Diplomacy is perceived as one of the tools of sovereign states in conducting foreign relations. Due to its role, diplomacy is highly discussed and widely researched on academic grounds, but also analyzed by reporters and commentators. The state has broad range of tools how to conduct the diplomacy. Thus, we have developed cultural diplomacy, sport diplomacy, checkbook diplomacy, economic diplomacy, Dollar diplomacy and many others. Diplomacy plays a key role in foreign relations, and, thus, we “label” specific diplomatic achievements that were used for the specific occasion, so we can speak about Panda Diplomacy (Chinese Foreign policy with its important partners – lending the Panda bear to the specific Zoos), Ping-Pong Diplomacy (Normalization of relations between China and the United States) and many others.

Coercive Diplomacy is used especially in times of crisis. Coercive Diplomacy uses force (or the manifestation of using force) to achieve a specific goal. The dispute arises when the interests of two state actors who have different goals or want a different solution to a situation clash. The dispute turns into a crisis when one of the actors uses the threat of military force (or its actual employment) to change the status quo.

The foundations of the theory of Coercive Diplomacy were laid by Thomas Schelling in 1966 (Schelling, 1967). In 1998 Peter Jakobsen presented four conditions necessary for the successful use of Coercive Diplomacy (Jakobsen, 1998). If we analyze these *four conditions*, we can say that the first recommendation speaks of the enemy's conviction about the *credibility of the threat*. States that use the coercion strategy must be able to implement the threat. This means military superiority, such as ballistic missiles and/or a nuclear program.

For successful pressure-based diplomacy, it is important to set a *deadline* for meeting the requirements. This limit can also be a further demonstration of determination that brings the feeling of urgency and pressure into the whole situation. The opponent must be assured that there will be *no further requirements in the future* (Jakobsen, 1998).

The last, fourth condition, concerns the *reduction of impacts* if the state fulfills the given conditions. This is the implication of “carrot” to increase the motivation of the opponent. Therefore, it can be said that four outcomes can be achieved (Schultz, 2001, p. 28):

- preservation of the status quo;
- withdrawal of the Targeted state;
- withdrawal of the Challenger;
- war (Schultz, 2001).

An important factor in the use of coercion is the use of a credible and strong threat so the opponent is convinced that it is in his interest to meet the counterpart's requirements. Coercive diplomacy applies pressure and effort to persuade the opponent to stop the aggression by using sufficient force (or the threat of force) to demonstrate the determination of the state, as well as to persuade them of the credibility of the threat that more force will be used if it is needed. For this strategy to succeed, it is also necessary to attach rewards to the threats if the state meets the requirements that are known in advance. It can be argued that Coercive Diplomacy is the strategy of suitably applied “carrots and sticks” with three key factors (Jetleson, 2006):

- Proportionality is the key factor in the relationship between the scope and the nature of the goals and tools that are used as leverage;
- Within the framework of reciprocity, it is an explicit, or at least a quiet mutual understanding, of the interdependence of threats, goals, and concessions. The main condition is to make clear what is expected of the opponent;
- Credibility concerns the need for the target state to be aware that a final refusal to cooperate will have serious consequences (not just military and economic). Of course, this credibility is greater if the state applying the Coercive Diplomacy is supported by other states or the international environment (Jetleson, 2006).

The coercive strategy has multiple forms and includes a wide range of tools and goals. The first goal is *to end an event whose course has already begun*. The other is about *reversing what the opponent has already reached*. The hardest version, however, is *to stop/interrupt* the opponent's hostile behavior through changes in the composition of his government or the regime.

In the theoretical framework of Coercive Diplomacy, there are several conditions that help the state in applying pressure to make the strategy successful. It is mainly about:

- Effective expression of objectives;
- Obvious goals;
- Strength and the willingness of using force;
- Coercive threats are more effective if they come from a powerful state;
- Sense of urgency in the dispute;
- Greater credibility when supported by the domestic opposition and by other states or international organizations;
- Strong leadership.

Because of the events in the international environment, the North Korea's leadership realized that it needs a mechanism which will enable the survival of the regime and at the same time allow the existence of economic assistance from other actors. Because of this, the use of force or the threats of the use of force have become a part of the plans/strategies that the DPRK applies to achieve its political goals (Michishita, 2010).

Coercive Diplomacy and North Korea

- North Korea's policy of coercion has five factors that characterize it (Suh, 1988, pp. 212–237).
- First, there is the notion that domestic political factors have not been the mainstay of coercion;
- The second characteristic is the use of intimidation/deterrence as the main instrument for militant-diplomatic action;
- Thirdly, a very broad knowledge of legal points, and their excellent use, so they are to the benefit (or favorable) to the North Korean regime;
- Fourthly, surprise, which has always been an important part of North Korea's strategy;
- Lastly, the assertion that the coercive policy is being implemented, even though the development of the international environment and the view of the DPRK are positive (Michishita, 2010, pp. 1–4).

The leaders of North Korea continue to use nuclear coercive diplomacy as one of the main drivers of coercion. Strong statements (an example can be pointed out in a part of the 2017 New Year speech, when Kim Jong-un declared that North Korea is in the final stages of the intercontinental ballistic missile testing), provocative actions, such as rocket tests and nuclear tests, are real manifestations of the coercive diplomacy of the DPRK.

North Korea's Coercive Diplomacy Tools

During its existence, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has used coercion instruments many times. The most used tools are

- the army;
- the nuclear and missile program;
- the withdrawal from international treaties or bargaining;
- and provocative statements.

The DPRK has over one million active military personnel and another six to seven million active backups. It is also a well-known fact that around seventy percent of the army and half of the naval and aviation forces are concentrated in the area within a hundred kilometers of the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. Another threat to South Korea is also the impressive artillery located along the demilitarized zone. It is the largest artillery capacity in the world, which includes thirteen thousand systems. The most used tools of North Korea's coercive diplomacy are its nuclear and ballistic programs. Pyongyang considers the development of nuclear weapons as an existential necessity (Cha, 2012, p. 220). This idea derives from American interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. The tendency is to base the programs on the points of self-defense and the survival of the regime (K.-A. Park, 2010, pp. 34–35).

From the point of view of the DPRK's position in the international environment, this is a rational decision for the regime. North Korea is aware that the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war is a situation that today's international environment is trying to prevent by all possible means. Therefore, these weapons put North Korea in a position where it is not so vulnerable.

Developing a nuclear program and trying to miniaturize an atomic weapon so that it can be deployed on to one of the many missiles owned by the DPRK is currently one of the biggest concerns of the international environment. However, it is necessary to take into consideration that ballistic missiles are not the only possible way to transport a nuclear bomb. It is also possible to use different types of transport, such as a boat, plane, train or freight wagon.

The DPRK uses nuclear fuel (extracted plutonium) from the Yongbyong reactor as a base material to produce its nuclear warheads. It is estimated that North Korea owns between twenty-four to forty-two kilograms of plutonium, which is usable for nuclear weapons production, which, according to the estimates of the international environment, would be enough to produce three to eight nuclear bombs. There are also speculations that North Korea has highly enriched uranium, but there are no reports as to the amount (Lewis, 2013).

Although the DPRK has conducted five nuclear tests, nuclear power states refuse to recognize North Korea as a nuclear state. The missile program of the DPRK is a very significant project that has more purposes. It serves as a way to defend the regime and also as a way to acquire foreign currency. When the DPRK began to test its rocket system more intensively in 2016, it also modernized its infrastructure. This development was mainly focused on the Sohae station that was built for satellite deployment, which was officially completed in 2011 but was already fundamentally expanded in 2013. This expansion included, for example, an increasing of the height of the start-up tower, which allows the launch of rockets up to fifty meters long; and two new warehouses for the purpose of doubling the fuel and oxidizing agent supplies. An important addition was also the underground railroad and mobile structures for the missile preparations that make it harder to spot the preparation process for the launch (Hansen, 2013).

The detonation of a landmine in the demilitarized zone

In August 2015, two South Korean army soldiers were seriously wounded when a landmine exploded. South Korea has accused the DPRK of the placement of this mine and, as a reaction to this incident, launched a cross-border loudspeaker broadcast that was thematically targeted against the North's regime.

The reaction of the DPRK was of a sharper nature, but it could have been expected also because there was a joint training exercise of the US Army and ROK Army at that time. The regime had felt threatened, and the launch of South Korean "propaganda" only increased its hostility. North Korea's leader declared a "semi-state of war" on August 20, and set an ultimatum for South Korea to end its broadcasts against the DPRK. If the ultimatum were not abided, the DPRK would opt for retaliation in the form of military intervention in the southern part of the peninsula (J. Park & Munroe, 2015).

On the same day, an exchange of artillery fire occurred in the demilitarized zone, which, according to the southern side, was started by the DPRK. This started a gradual increase of tensions on the peninsula, which lasted three days. Other actions undertaken by the DPRK include: putting the army in a state of emergency, doubling the artillery equipment and military equipment at the border with the ROK, and sending about fifty submarines and ten large hovercrafts to the waters around the sea border (Rothwell, 2015).

South Korea has also undertaken strategic steps, notably by announcing increased military readiness, and negotiating with the US on moving the US B-52 Stratofortress bomber to a base in the ROK. America also considered sending a nuclear submarine, which at the time was anchored at a naval base in Yokosuka, Japan.

Just two hours before the expiration of Kim Jong-un's ultimatum, the DPRK offered to negotiate in the Joint Security Area (JSA). These meetings were realized in the form of talks among senior officials from both countries (Rothwell, 2015).

The agreement was reached on August 24, when both sides signed a document that stopped the state of alertness and stipulated that talks to establish better relations would be implemented as soon as possible. In addition, North Korea expressed regret over the events that occurred in connection with the landmine explosion on the southern side of the demarcation line, and guaranteed the end of the "state of semi-war." South Korea promised to stop cross-border broadcasting by the midnight of the following day. Finally, both states promised to carry out a meeting of separated families and revitalize exchanges in the area of non-governmental organizations (Yonhap, 2015).

During this several-day crisis, the Korean Peninsula came close to military conflict, and for the first time in five years, there was an artillery exchange between the two Koreas. Through this situation, we can easily determine that Kim Jong-un understands the principle of using coercion. The goals that the DPRK wanted to achieve were clearly identified. The ultimatum and the penalty that would follow if the requirements were not met were set out, too. The threat of power and the demonstration of power were sufficient enough to force South Korea to take the threats of their northern neighbor seriously. In this case, the reward for both states was the retention of stability in the region.

Conclusion

By the time of updating this article for this publication, the behavior of North Korea seems to have changed rapidly. During the spring of 2018, Kim Jong-un visited China multiple times (this frequency was never seen before). An extraordinary meeting of the leaders of both Koreas happened, and Kim Jong-un even met in Singapore with US President Donald Trump. This change of behavior leads to even more questions than it does answers. However, by the evaluation of the historical motives and the behavior of the leaders of Korea, it is an important indicator in predicting the future.

The current leader of North Korea applies radical measures both internally and internationally. Upon his accession in 2011, he began to strengthen the power and position of the leader through repressive measures and purges. He also continues with the coercive policy that is being used by the officials of the DPRK since its establishment. It is necessary to realize that the North Korean regime is a rational player on the field of international relations. Due to its isolation, some form of disinformation about developments in the international environment can be found, but this situation can also occur in countries with democratic arrangements. The problem of observing North Korea and its actions is the small amount of

reliable information we have about this state, as well as the emotional coloring of the information which describes the DPRK as an irrational state that does not know the rules of international relations and does not care about either the international or its domestic situation.

In conclusion, the definition of coercive diplomacy, which is relatively brief in the current state of research on a global scale, has not yet reached its maximum potential. This can be a problematic factor for the identification of the practical uses of the different types of strategies, here in particular deterrence and coercive diplomacy. Coercive diplomacy in today's world strives to resolve disputes without the need to use full military power.

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The NNSC and the Communist Tactics and Dynamics during the 1968 USS Pueblo Incident on the Korean Peninsula

Margaret K. Gnoinska

Abstract

The capture of the USS Pueblo in 1968 by the North Korean government was one of the major events in the Cold War that could have sparked yet another military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula. The Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) was involved in negotiating the release of the American sailors who spent time in captivity in North Korea. This paper aims to fill in a gap in the historiography of this complex event by shedding light on the tactics and dynamics of the Czechoslovak, and especially Polish, members of the NNSC, amid the Sino-Soviet split and the Vietnam War. The paper relies heavily on previously unpublished documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives (AMSZ) and Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw.

The topic of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) seems to have been studied in isolation by many scholars until now. I, for example, wrote a piece in *Slovanský přehled* in 2012 on the origins of the NNSC and its relationship to yet another peace commission in Indochina, as well as the dynamics between the Polish and Czechoslovak members and their relations with the Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers (KPA/CPV) representatives to the Military Armistice Commission (Gnoinska, 2012).

This conference is therefore long overdue and serves as a great opportunity to *finally* exchange our research and ideas at the international level while bringing to the fore this very timely topic of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. I personally see this venue as the beginning of future collaboration because the more we study about the NNSC and what it did or did not do, the more we can learn about how international bodies operated within the structure of the Cold War and about what lessons we can apply to peacekeeping today. To me, this is important when it comes to our understanding of the role of the commission in general and the dynamics within the communist world in particular. A further examination of the relationship between the Czechoslovak and Polish representatives in the NNSC and the role of the Sino-Soviet split on the work of the commission is a special interest of mine.

We simply cannot study the history of the commission in isolation based solely on archives from one country. What will make us truly understand the commission, its work and

challenges, is having an active scholarly network and collaboration through the exchange of ideas and archival materials from both the former communist world and archives from the West, most importantly Sweden and Switzerland, which served as the two other members of the commission. Clearly, the documents from the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China are also key to the study of the commission; as are, of course, documents from South Korea and currently inaccessible materials from North Korea. I very much look forward to a cooperative project, which I think will yield fruitful results.

The topic I picked is one of those dramatic events that involved the commission, that is, the capture, of the 83 American crewmen of the USS Pueblo by the North Korean government in January 1968.

As you all know, 1968 was a crucial year in the history of the 20th century, but especially for the Cold War and the communist world: the Prague Spring of 1968 (in fact, we are commemorating its 50th anniversary), the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War in February 1968, civil rights movements, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and many others. These monumental events still tend to eclipse the USS Pueblo in Cold War historiography in general, and especially when it comes to the analysis of the communist world dynamics at the time. So, what was the event about? What did it mean? What can we learn from it?

On January 23, 1968, the USS Pueblo, an intelligence gathering ship that posed as an environmental research ship, allegedly collecting oceanographic data, was captured by North Korean patrol boats. Interestingly, the capture of the USS Pueblo took place only two days after the attempted raid on the Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, by the North Korean Special Operation Forces unit of the Korean People's Army, which had already increased tension on the Korean Peninsula.

In any case, the 83 USS Pueblo crewmen were captured, and the ship was confiscated. One crewman died in the attack, and the other 82 were kept in captivity until December 23, 1968. They were finally released after having been beaten, tortured, forcefully made to sign confessions of apology to the North Korean government for spying and trespassing into the North Korean waters and vowing not to ever engage in such activities again. The Polish Foreign Ministry Archives hold numerous letters from the crew, which were given to the Polish members of the NNSC. The crewmen were all court martialed upon release, but not charged. Some, especially the ship's Commander Llyod M. Bucher, wrote memoirs depicting their experiences in North Korean captivity (Bucher, 1970).

In addition, we now have not only secondary sources (see, for example, Mitchell B. Lerner, *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign Policy*, University Press of Kansas, 2002), but also many primary documents available for scholarly analysis. The documents from former Eastern European countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia add more knowledge to our understanding of the crisis.

So, what does this USS Pueblo incident tell us about the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula and especially about the role, if any, of the international peace keeping institutions such as the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC)?

First, it shows the misperception, and in fact, quite a flawed understanding, held by the United States of the dynamics within the communist world at the time. The U.S. policy makers did not understand the intricacies and complexities present in relations among communist nations at the time. Clearly, the Americans, and the whole world for that matter, were aware of the fact that Moscow and Beijing were at odds with each other.

Even then, Americans thought that the North Korean capture of the ship was ordered by the Soviet Union. They couldn't have been farther from the truth. As Polish evidence shows, and as Sergey Radchenko aptly documented in one of his pieces (Radchenko, 2011) we now know that Moscow had nothing to do with it and that it was exclusively a North Korean decision to go ahead and capture the American ship.

Moreover, as soon as it became evident that the capture of the crewmen took place, American ambassadors in Moscow and in Eastern European capitals, namely, Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest, rushed as quickly as they could to ask these countries to assist them with mediating the incident; hoping, of course, for a quick release of the crewmen and any information about the captured crew in the meantime. There is evidence that the socialist bloc coordinated its response to the request by the U.S. To the disappointment of the Americans, none of these countries wanted to engage in any mediation despite the efforts of their ambassadors. For example, Ambassador John A. Gronouski tried really hard, but did not succeed in convincing the Poles to take up the role of a mediator.

WHY? Well, at the time of the USS Pueblo crisis, the communist world, if you can call it that, was rocked by the Sino-Soviet split, which started in the early 1960s. North Koreans took the side of the Chinese in the split, but in late 1967 and into early 1968, primarily because of the Cultural Revolution in China, they began to veer away from the Chinese and closer to the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc. In fact, there was a cooling of relations between Beijing and Pyongyang. Therefore, nations like Czechoslovakia and Poland, and especially the Soviet Union, were *very careful* not to upset the North Koreans and how

they wanted to proceed with resolving the issue. Publicly, they especially argued that the DPRK was a sovereign nation. They were therefore capable and had the right to make their own decision regarding the matter. This is why they were reluctant to play any role as intermediaries in the crisis. Interestingly, what communist archives reveal is that Czechoslovakia, unlike Poland, seemed to suggest that Czechoslovakia paid less attention to the USS Pueblo incident, and its participation in the NNSC as a whole was less active. This was possibly related to the fact that, at the time, Czechoslovakia was going through huge internal problems, namely the Prague Spring.

Second, the USS Pueblo clearly shows how independent the North Korean leadership under Kim Il Sung was from the Soviet Union, China, or anyone else for that matter, in its decision-making. We now know that North Korea used the incident for its own domestic purposes, which included galvanizing its people for war against “American imperialism” and extracting economic and military aid from not just the Soviet Union, but also from other Soviet bloc nations. In other words, the longer the crisis continued, the more confident the DPRK leadership looked to their own people and the more leverage Kim Il Sung had to keep his Soviet and Eastern European counterparts in suspense. Clearly, neither the Soviet Union nor other Soviet bloc nations, unlike China, were taking an aggressive and militant stance against the United States at the time in fear of a larger conflict. And the North Koreans realized that both the Soviets and Eastern Europeans wanted them to deepen relations following the years of estrangement since the Sino-Soviet split.

Therefore, since the North Koreans did not want *any* involvement of the NNSC, or the United Nations (UN) for that matter, but strictly direct bilateral negotiations with the United States, the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc nations such as Poland and Czechoslovakia not only acquiesced, but also respected the wishes of the North Koreans. They were especially upset that the Americans initially put the USS Pueblo case on the U.N. agenda and ignored the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and even the NNSC. Interestingly, North Korea wanted to keep the NNSC alive in general, but in this case did not want the Americans to use the commission as a forum to justify Washington’s claims that the USS Pueblo was in international and not Korean waters. This is also why the NNSC was not directly involved. At the same time, the North Koreans expected full support from the Polish and Czechoslovak members of the NNSC (just as they did in the “good old days” prior to the Sino-Soviet split), but did not want any help from anyone in the communist world to resolve the crisis. It is important to mention, though, that the Poles and the Czechs were the only ones in the communist world who were given updates and information on how things were developing in the crisis. We now know that the Soviets would “delicately” remind the North Koreans of the gravity of the situation surrounding the USS Pueblo to ensure that “things would not go too far.” We also know that despite fears held by the Poles, who saw the crisis as “very tense,”

and even though China backed the North Koreans to be more confident vis-à-vis the Americans, Pyongyang did not seem to be interested in intensifying the crisis and only prolonged it for political and economic gain.

Third, and most pertinent to our discussion today and this conference in general, the USS Pueblo incident tells us a great deal about the role of international peacekeeping institutions like the NNSC. What it shows is that the NNSC was exploited in different ways depending on the situation at hand. In fact, it became a *tool of Cold War politics and the politics within the communist world*, all sides using the commission for political gain when it was convenient.

On the one hand, the crisis proved the ineptness, limitations, and constraints of the NNSC in resolving crises that jeopardized peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. This was due partially to its make-up and the Cold War structure. One of the key obstacles was the definition of neutrality in the make-up of the commission. A “neutral” member of the NNSC meant a nation which did not take part in combat during the Korean War. It did not mean that said nation would act as a neutral nation as normally understood in international relations. Therefore, even though the NNSC members attempted to act as “neutral” nations, it was understood by both sides of the Cold War that Poland and Czechoslovakia would represent the interests of the communist bloc and work closely with the CPV/KPA representatives in the MAC; and Switzerland and Sweden were viewed as countries that represented the interests of the “free world” and worked much more closely with the American members of the MAC. So, again, because the North Korean leadership did not want any involvement by the commission in the release of the American crewmen, neither the Polish nor Czechoslovak members of the NNSC wanted the commission to get involved.

The Americans, too, wanted to exploit the NNSC to their advantage. The irony was that although the United States deemed the NNSC as inept in fulfilling its tasks, especially Article 13(d) of the Armistice Agreement, ever since the late 1950s, the U.S. government still wanted the commission to serve as an intermediary when the USS Pueblo crisis erupted. This is why the American ambassadors in Prague and Warsaw targeted the Czechoslovak and Polish governments, respectively, due to their membership in the NNSC, hoping that they could use their “good services” to convince the North Koreans to get the commission involved in resolving the crisis. What they did not realize is that neither the Poles nor the Czechs had any leverage over their North Korean counterparts in this situation. Interestingly, the U.S. also approached the Hungarians, who apparently were interested in mediation much more than either the Poles or the Czechs at the time.

On the other hand, the commission became an *information gathering body* and thus a *window* into an otherwise isolated North Korean regime. This was true not only for the West but also for communist nations who had very little contact with the DPRK leaders at the highest levels. Therefore, the presence of the Polish and Czechoslovak members in the NNSC, despite the fact that their number were significantly reduced from the early days of the commission, served as a conduit of information for the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc in general as to the internal affairs of North Korea. In the case of the USS Pueblo, it was only the Poles and the Czechs who were given updates and information on how things were developing in the crisis. For example, they received letters of confession from the U.S. crewmen which were later passed on to the Soviets. Interestingly, even though the Polish communist government refused to act as an intermediary in the release of the American crewmen, it was apparently General Waclaw Czyżewski, the head of the Polish commission in the NNSC, who served as a back-channel contact in facilitating and setting up direct contact between the American Rear Admiral John Victor Smith and the North Korean Major General Pak Chung Kuk to start bilateral negotiations, which lasted until December 1968. Other than that, the Poles had no influence over the North Koreans and their actions. Apparently, based on the available evidence from the Polish archives, the Polish members took more interest in the USS Pueblo crisis than their counterparts from Czechoslovakia, who neglected the work of the commission and used it more for personal gain (smuggling merchandise and so on, even though the Poles also did engage in such activities). Nevertheless, the fact the Polish and Czechoslovak members continued to serve on the NNSC was very important to the Soviets, who otherwise had very little contact with the North Koreans. The commission became the opportunity for, for example, the Polish ambassador to visit the DMZ because he was going to meet with the Polish NNSC members. The Poles provided analysis for the Soviets who were still isolated in North Korea following the Sino-Soviet split. In other words, the Soviets received information from the Poles because they had no close relations with the DPRK leadership and could not move freely around the country, unlike the Poles (and the Czechs) who used their membership in the commission to do so. Therefore, overall, the NNSC served as a source of information, or a foot in the door so to say, for the Soviet bloc to keep up with North Korea's foreign, and especially, domestic affairs.

Overall, from the inception of the NNSC in 1953, one of the main issues was that the commission was not able to truly supervise the remilitarization of both sides on the Korean Peninsula, but neither side of the Cold War wanted to dissolve it. WHY? Neither the communists nor the "free world" wanted to be responsible for doing so in the eyes of the world due to the Cold War competition. They both wanted to look like they sought peace on the Korean Peninsula. Most importantly, the dissolution of the commission would require

amending the Armistice Agreement, something that neither side was willing to do. And, interestingly, to this day, no party wants to do this, thereby keeping the NNSC alive.

In conclusion, a closer analysis of the commission during the eleven month long USS Pueblo crisis, from January 23, to December 23, 1968, shows how this international peace institution was influenced by the ebb and flow of Cold War politics and the complex dynamics within the communist world rocked by the Sino-Soviet split; making it a chameleon-like peacekeeping body that was often used as a mechanism for information gathering and observation for both sides of the Cold War. If anything, the existence of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission did serve as a deterrent on the Korean Peninsula to a wider conflict and maintained some level of security in the region.

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Polish Participation in the NNSC and the Possible Role of the Commission in the Current Efforts to Restore Peace and Stability on the Korean Peninsula

Stanislaw Pawlak

Abstract

According to the Korean Armistice Agreement, Poland, as a neutral nation whose combat forces did not participate in the Korean War, was nominated jointly to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission by the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers. The first Polish delegation started its work in Panmunjom in the NNSC on August 1, 1953. Members of the Polish Delegation from the very beginning actively participated in inspections and investigations to ensure the implementation of relevant provisions of the Armistice Agreement. In the years 1958-1995, the NNSC ceased its control functions and solely forwarded to the two parties of the Armistice Agreement reports on the entering and the departure of military personnel of the UN Command. In June 1995, following long discussions with the North Korean authorities and pressure from Pyongyang, Poland decided to withdraw her delegation from Panmunjom, but not from the NNSC. From that time, Polish delegates have continued to attend NNSC meetings together with the Swedish and the Swiss delegations, which remain in the Southern part of the Demilitarized Zone. In rotation with Sweden and Switzerland, Poland organized consultations of three Member States of the NNSC. The latest developments on the Korean Peninsula require a new look at the NNSC mission because it is still the only legal instrument for the avoidance of hostilities in that area. The denuclearization process is very important and crucial, not only for Korea but for the whole world. The solution to this problem should not be seen, however, in isolation, but as an important contribution to the peace, stability and reunification of Korea, which is the most important issue from the political and human point of view. This question has more than bilateral importance. It needs the support and, if necessary, the involvement of all other parties concerned. The crucial problem in this context is transferring the existing Armistice Agreement into a permanent peace treaty. The NNSC could play some role in this process, if the involved parties would envisage that.

From my perspective as a man who, 62 years ago, worked as a legal adviser and Analytic Officer in the Polish Delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Panmunjom, this conference has significant emotional and personal meaning because in Korea I began my long diplomatic and academic career. There, I also met many friends and started to like and understand the Korean people and their aspirations. I am saddened that

three quarters of a century has passed but the most unjust legacy of World War II – the division of the Korean Peninsula – still exists. This division has forced the Korean nation to live in separate States, which are technically at war.

It is very encouraging that the upcoming development, namely the announced meeting of the US and North Korean heads of State, could bring a positive change to this situation. I am impressed by President Donald Trump's statement of 10th March that: "The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the world." (Schallhorn, 2018). Later he added, "It would be great also for North Korea, it would be great for the Peninsula." Let us be optimistic, but also cautious.

I still believe that high level diplomatic talks are the only way to remove the tragic division of the great Korean Nation.

In my opinion, there are three interrelated issues: denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the reunification of Korea and the normalization of relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Solving these issues in a peaceful way requires the close cooperation of the two Koreas and the United States, China, Japan as well as Russia. There is also a need for the support of other nations. I also see a possible role of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC).

The mission of the Commission, established in 1953 by the Korean Armistice Agreement, was to carry out inspections and investigations to ensure the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Armistice, namely subparagraphs 13 [e] and 13 [d]. The purpose of those provisions was to prevent reinforcements from being brought to Korea, either additional military personnel or new weapons other than piece-for-piece replacement of damaged or worn out equipment. Reports were to be made to the Military Armistice Commission.

Poland, as a neutral nation, whose combat forces did not participate in the Korean War, was nominated jointly to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission by the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers. The first Polish delegation, consisting of 301 members, started its work in Panmunjom in the NNSC on August 1st, 1953. The members of the delegation worked in its headquarters and in twenty Neutral Nations Inspection Teams, ten permanently located in the ports of North Korea and South Korea, and ten mobile teams. (Gaj, & Zuziak, 2011, p. 24).

If we go back to the history of the activities of the NNSC, we have to admit that the Commission did not fulfill its mandate fully. It was not the fault of its four members, but because, from the very beginning, both sides of the Armistice Agreement did not create the

right conditions for its operation. We have to remember that it was the time of the Cold War, and both sides did not trust each other. There were also hostilities to the NNSC inspection teams by the South Koreans, and doubts about the balanced application of inspections on both sides of the conflict.

This situation brought about the need to withdraw the inspection teams in June 1956. As a result, the number of the Polish personnel in the NNSC, like in other Delegations, had to be gradually reduced from 301 in August 1953, to 7 members at the end of the 1980s.

When I came to the Polish Delegation in January 1957, as a legal adviser and analytic officer at the rank of First Lieutenant, the NNSC activities were practically limited to recording information offered in weekly reports by both parties. These reports were analyzed by a group of four analytic officers from the delegations to the NNSC and presented in a special report to weekly meetings of the Commission. The reports sent by the parties informed the NNSC on the exchange of personnel and the piece-by-piece replacement of damaged or worn-out equipment to prevent military reinforcements on either side.

In the years 1958-1995, the NNSC ceased its control functions and solely forwarded to the two parties of the Armistice Agreement reports on the entrance and the departure of military personnel of the UN Command. In June 1995, following long discussions with the North Korean authorities and the pressure from Pyongyang, Poland decided to withdraw her delegation from Panmunjom, but not from the NNSC. From that time, Polish delegates have continued to attend NNSC meetings together with Swedish and Swiss delegations, which remain in the southern part of the Demilitarized Zone.

In rotation with Sweden and Switzerland, Poland organizes consultations of three Member States of the NNSC. The last one took place in Warsaw in June 2017. The discussions during such meetings are generally focused on the current situation on the Korean Peninsula and its impact on the activities of the NNSC.

I would like to underline that those meetings play an important role as the right forum for exchanging views and opinions, as well as bringing about recommendations from the participants. These recommendations and opinions draw the attentions of the public and underline the reason for the existence of the Commission and its present activities. I completely agree with the joint statement of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission Member States, issued after their consultations in Warsaw in June last year: *“As long as the Armistice Agreement is not superseded by a comprehensive peace treaty, the role of the NNSC remains important in maintaining the military armistice as well as in promoting transparency and confidence on both sides of the demarcation line.”* (The Government of Sweden, 2017).

That role, in my opinion, should concentrate first of all on maintaining and building relations with both sides and by showing presence in the inner Korean border; and thus demonstrate the Armistice is still in force.

The latest developments related to the Korean Peninsula require a new look at the NNSC mission because it is still the only legal instrument for the avoidance of hostilities in that area. I hope that both parties of the upcoming historical meeting of their leaders will be successful and the possible role of the NNSC will be envisaged in a peace process started by them.

Coming back to the situation on the Korean Peninsula now, I as a person, who for more than six decades have been following developments in the Far East, believe that the most important issue from the political and human point of view is the reunification of Korea. This task is understood well in the South and the North. It requires also understanding and international support. We also have to acknowledge the efforts of South Korean leaders who are engaged in the process of preparation for Korean reunification. They make efforts to involve younger Koreans in reuniting their country. They also attempt to use the anniversaries of Korean division to seek broader popular support for the goal of reunification.

In the process of the reunification of Korea, the denuclearization of the peninsula is a crucial factor, not only for Korea but for the whole world. The solution to this problem should not be seen, however, in isolation, but as an important contribution to peace, stability and reunification of Korea.

Theoretically speaking, as a possible solution to the existing contrasting visions for building relations between the two Korean States, one could look into the history and practice of other countries which were, or are, in a similar situation.

The reunification or unification of states is not a new phenomenon. One could recall the unification of 13 independent sovereign states into a federation during the American Revolution at the end of the 18th Century. In recent times, the unification of Germany could also serve as a good example. My own country, following 123 years of partitioning, division and occupation by its 3 neighbors (Russia, Germany and Austria), reunited in 1918 and rebuilt itself as an independent unified state.

There are many factors which, however, may complicate the reunification of the two Korean States. In my opinion, at the beginning both South Korea and North Korea should, with the assistance and support of their allies, work out principles of reunification as equal and sovereign partners.

When looking at possible solutions for the reunification of the two Korean States, one possibility is to follow the historical examples of the notion of a federation. Such federations were established not only in North America, but also, among others, in Argentina, Nigeria and Mexico. There are even examples of asymmetric federations, such as the one in Malaysia where Sarawak and Sabah agreed to form a federation on different terms and conditions from the states of Peninsular Malaysia.

I do not think, however, that the federal model of future relations between the ROK and the DPRK is realistic because of the different economic, social, and political systems of both states. Theoretically speaking, a more realistic model seems to be a confederation system. Such a system in modern political terms is usually limited to a permanent union of sovereign states for common action in relations to other states. The closest entity in today's world is the European Union, which constitutes a type of confederation. This classification of the EU entity composed of 28 sovereign states is questioned by some scholars and politicians, but it is, in my opinion, a kind of a model, which could be examined by both Koreas (Shaw et al, 2000, p.149).⁸

We should be realistic and understand that the expectations of either side to absorb the other in the process of reunification cannot materialize. It should be understood that Pyongyang is not likely to be interested in a process designed to put its political and social system to an end. One should not expect the DPRK to agree to its own demise or to be absorbed into the ROK or reunited solely on South Korean terms. Those terms, among others, were revealed in June 2009, in the "Joint Statement" for the bilateral alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea, where they declared that the central goal of the US and the ROK would be... *"to build a better future for the people on the Korean Peninsula establishing durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principle of free democracy and market economy."* (The White House, 2009).⁹ This view shows that the US and the ROK's judgement is based on the assumption that reunification would involve North Korea's absorption by the South.

⁸ See also: Federation on CIA Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

⁹ See also:

- https://cfrd8-files.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/Korean_PeninsulaTFR64.pdf, pp.43-49.
- Geun-hye, P. (2011). A New Kind of Korea: Building Trust Between Seoul and Pyongyang. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(5), 13-18. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23041772>
- Evans J.R. Revere presentation "Korean Reunification and U.S. Interests: Preparing for One Korea" at the 3rd Korea Research Institute for Security-Brookings Joint Conference on "Cooperation for Regional Stability in the Process of Korean Unification: Contingency Preparations with the ROK-US as Anchor" in Seoul, Korea, 2015, January 20.

Though this goal is very noble and interesting, and I agree in principle with its spirit, I also understand that it would be very difficult to achieve, because today, there is no common South/North vision of a united Korea. Bearing this in mind, what could be done now to make the reunification of the Koreas more visible and less distant? One has to be optimistic. Sooner or later, Korea will be reunited. It is, in my opinion, only a question of time. We have to be patient, but also helpful.

Reunited Korea, a dynamic nation of more than 75 million people will be an important partner and factor, not only in the North Pacific Region but also for the whole world.

To achieve reunification, both sides should base their relations on mutual trust, building confidence, cooperation and transparency. It is not an easy task. A lot depends on the approach of the leaders of both Koreas. They, I hope, will take into consideration not only their interests, but also the interests of younger Koreans on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone in reuniting their country. They do not remember the Korean War and do not understand why their nation should be divided.

For the process of reunification there is, as I mentioned before, a need to eliminate nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from the Korean Peninsula. I hope that the upcoming talks between the US and North Korea will be successful and thus will contribute to the reconciliation and reunification of the Koreas. Such a reunification process will also inevitably help to build the Far East as a peaceful and stable region.

In conclusion, I would stress that the reunification of the Koreas leading to stability and peace on the peninsula is not a task for the United States, South Korea and North Korea only. The task has broader importance. The path for reunification will not be an easy one. There are different expectations and maximalist terms of both parties. They should be overcome. Partners should avoid ideological debates and concentrate on putting into practice the desires and the interests of all the Korean people who, because of the results of World War II, were unjustly deprived of unity as a nation.

Here, I would like to repeat what was said in Warsaw in the Statement last year: *“NNSC Member States also reaffirmed that denuclearization must be achieved and reiterated that the only way to bring about lasting stability in the region is by establishing a permanent peace arrangement in the Peninsula.”*

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About the Authors (in alphabetical order)

Prof. Margaret K. Gnoinska, Ph.D

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Area of expertise and short biography

Modern Eastern Europe, Modern East Asia, International History of the Cold War

Margaret Gnoinska earned her Ph.D. from George Washington University (2010, dissertation "Poland and the Cold War in East and Southeast Asia 1949-1965"), and is also a Fulbright Scholar and Boren NSEP Fellow. She traveled and researched extensively throughout East and Southeast Asia, including Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam. She is currently working on revising her dissertation into two books: one on Poland's peacekeeping efforts during the Vietnam War and another on Sino-Polish relations during the Cold War with a specific focus on the role of the Sino-Soviet split and the U.S.-China opening.

George Hays II, Ph.D.

Anglo-American University, Prague
Chair of the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Lecturer, School of International Relations & Diplomacy

Area of expertise and short biography

Post-Structuralism, Film Analysis, Identity, International Relations, International security and War studies, Central European Politics

George Hays II studied philosophy (concentrating in Philosophy of Language and Philosophy of Time) and international politics (concentrating in Slavic studies, the V4, and their accession to the EU) at various US universities before beginning his Masters studies in international relations, politics, and economics at Charles University in Prague. After defending his thesis (*The Effects of Cold War Speech in the Post-Cold War World: Identification of the Enemy in the War on Terror*, 2009), he continued in the doctoral program in International Relations at Charles. In 2016, he defended his dissertation *American "Foreign Policy" in Film*, which analyzes the fracturing of American identity beginning after World War II. He has written articles on American identity and identity analysis, as well as commentaries on the North Korean nuclear program, Czech political elections, and the ongoing war in Syria.

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International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Hamburg, Germany

Member of the Tribunal since 1 October, 2005; re-elected from 1 October, 2014; President of the Chamber for Marine Environment Disputes since October 2017

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Area of expertise and short biography

Diplomatic: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1955–2005, selection): Legal Adviser and Analytic Officer, Polish delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Panmunjon, Korea (1956–1958), Polish Embassy, Tokyo (1958–1963); Senior Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1963–1965, 1970–1972); Deputy Chief, Polish delegation to the International Control Commission, Saigon, Viet Nam (1965–1966); Polish Embassy to the United States of America (1967–1970; Head of Polish delegation, talks with the GDR delegation on delimitation of the maritime boundary (1983–1988); Head of Polish delegation, talks with the USSR on the delimitation of the Polish-Soviet sea border; Director, International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1986–1989); Polish Representative to the UN General Assembly (1973–1978, 1983–1990, 2002–2005); Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland, UN, New York (1989–1991); Delegate of Poland to the Steering Committee for Human Rights, Council of Europe (1992–1995); Ambassador, Syrian Arab Republic and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (1996–2001); Adviser to the President of the Republic of Poland (2001–2005); Titular Ambassador (2002–present).

Academic: Visiting Professor, various universities in the United States, Canada and Syria (1967–2001); Associate Professor from 1974 and from 2002 to 2012 Professor of International Law and International Relations, University of Warsaw (1974–2001); Professor Emeritus, University of Warsaw (till the present); Professor and Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Administration, Warsaw Academy of Computer Science and Administration (2005–present).

Publications: Numerous books and articles in scientific magazines on international law, law of the sea and international relations concerning activities of the UN, disarmament, international terrorism and on Japanese, Chinese, Canadian and American foreign policy.

Distinctions: The Golden Cross of Merit (1974); The Officer's Cross of Polonia Restituta (1985); The Commander's Cross of Polonia Restituta (2005); and other high Polish, German, Syrian and Vietnamese decorations.

Prof. PhDr. Milada Polišenská, CSc.

Anglo-American University, Prague

Deputy to the President & Chief Academic Adviser, Professor of history and international relations

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Area of expertise and short biography

Modern and contemporary European history with a main focus on the history of Central and Eastern Europe, history of international relations, diplomacy, and nationalism

Milada Polišenská has worked for the Institute of International Relations (Prague) and the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences and has taught as a visiting professor at universities in the United States, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Prof. Polišenská has been awarded several major research grants (the Czech Science Foundation, the International Visegrad Fund), scholarships (Fulbright scholarship, Open Society Archive), and fellowships (Cold War International History Project Fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C., Senior Fernand Braudel Fellowship at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, 2013).

Prof. Polišenská has written many academic publications, including her most recent book *Czechoslovak Diplomacy and the Gulag, 1945-1953* (Central European Press, New York/Budapest, 2015).

She is a member of academic boards at several universities and a reviewer of the Czech Accreditation Bureau and of CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies).

Jan Polišenský, MSc., Ph.D.

Assistant professor, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, College of International and Public Relations Prague

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Area of expertise and short biography

Politics, security and international relations in East and South East Asia

Ph.D. in International Relations, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic (2016 Thesis: Chinese Foreign Policy towards the European Union since 2001); MSc. Tamkang University in Taipei, Taiwan (2008, Thesis: European Union and the Taiwan Straits: Military Strategies and Security Perspectives)

University of Oslo, Summer School “The Rising Powers: China and the Future of International Development” (2011); The LSE-PKU Summer School Programme 2010, Beijing, China: “China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy since 1949” (2010); Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, South Korea. “History in the Triangle: Korea, Japan, and China” and “Confucianism in a Global Era” (2010).

He has been a member of research project teams supported by grants (Armed conflicts in international relations after the end of the Cold War; Current problems of International Security), co-author of several articles, including an Impact factor publication, and a presenter at international conferences (“European Arms Trade to China”, Nicolas Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland).

Mgr. Klára Semerádová graduated from the College of International and Public Relations Prague o.p.s., focusing on International and Diplomatic Studies. Her fields of interest are in international relations and security issues, with special attention on Asia.

Amb. PhDr. Tomáš Smetánka

Tomáš Smetánka is a diplomat at the Czech Foreign Ministry. His ambassadorial posts included the Republic of Korea (2004-8) and China (2001-3) with accreditation to the DPRK.
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Area of expertise and short biography

He graduated in Arab studies at Charles University in Prague, and worked as a teacher and journalist before joining the Czech Foreign Service in 1993.

Alex Švamberk

Foreign commentator and journalist working for the server Novinky.cz
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Area of expertise and short biography

Foreign affairs, particularly frozen and active war conflicts and tensions on the Korean peninsula, the Balkans, Ukraine, and South Africa.

Graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Czech Technical University, Prague. He is a journalist, writer, musician, and composer in the field of contemporary music. He was awarded a grant from the Czech Foreign Ministry for the project *Czechoslovaks in Korea* (http://www.mzv.cz/public/95/8e/e1/506920_396488_Svamberk040109.pdf). In cooperation with his father, Jaromír Švamberk, a former member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, he wrote and published the book *Nasazen v Koreji*. Praha: Gutenberg, 2013.

PhDr. Prokop Tomek, Ph.D.

Military Historical Institute in Prague
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Area of expertise and short biography

Relations between citizens and the Czechoslovak communist regime, and on the daily life in the Czechoslovak People's Army in the period 1969-1990, 2nd and 3rd Resistance, history of the Czechoslovak People's Army.

Signatory of Charter 77, member of Amnesty International. Started his high school studies during the collapse of communism, and then studied history at Charles University (graduated in 2006, Ph.D. in 2012, with the dissertation "Historie československé redakce Rádia Svobodná Evropa a její význam pro české dějiny", History of the Czechoslovak Desk of Radio Free Europe and its Significance for Czech History). He worked in the Office of Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes of Communism, later in the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. Currently, he works as historian at the Institute of Military History in Prague. He is the author of dozens of studies and exhibitions dedicated to various topics from the time of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, and he lectures extensively. In 2012, he was elected to membership on the Ethical Commission of the Czech Republic by the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament; becoming vice chairman of this commission.

Conference Presenters without Articles in this Volume

Assoc. Prof. Marcei Burdelski, Ph.D.

Academy of International Relations and American Studies in Warsaw and Jagiellonian University in Kraków

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Area of expertise and short biography

International Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region, international security, security problems of the Korean Peninsula, Chinese foreign and internal policy, Polish policy towards North East Asia.

Dr. Burdelski graduated in journalism and political science at the University of Warsaw. He is a lecturer at Academy of International Relations and American Studies in Warsaw and Jagiellonian University in Kraków, member of a number of academic gremials on Asia and the Pacific, author of a number of articles and books.

Title of the presentation:

Poland's Role and Functions in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission to Korea: 1953-2018

Abstract:

The Armistice Treaty was signed 65 years ago on July 27, 1953, in Panmunjom. Poland was invited to be a member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission by the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers, while western countries questioned the neutrality of Poland and Czechoslovakia. The main function of the NNSC was armistice supervision, observation and investigation. Poland sent 301 soldiers and diplomats to the NNSC. In the sixties, Polish personnel to the NNSC were reduced to 10 persons. A significant change to the work of the Polish mission to the NNSC was caused by changes in the political landscape after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the lack of interest demonstrated by the Czech government to take on tasks in the NNSC initiated the withdrawal of the Czech representative from the northern part of the JSA. The DPRK moved to undermine the position of the NNSC. The KPA limited the possible activity of the Polish delegation to the NNSC. In 1995, as a result of enormous pressure, the Polish delegation, headed by Gen. Andrzej Owczarek, was forced to leave the northern part of the JSA in Panmunjom. The government of Poland decided to continue its activity in the NNSC in Korea. The Polish delegation visited Panmunjom 4 times a year via Seoul. Now, the chief of the mission is Col. Andrzej Rozyński. It must be underscored that 1000 Polish soldiers and diplomats have worked as part of the NNSC. The Polish mission to the NNSC created a great contribution to peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Polish government is working now to open a permanent mission to the NNSC.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Mats Engman

Head of the Swedish Delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, 2015-2017,
Institute for Security and Development Policy

Contact: Mats.e.engman@gmail.com

Area of expertise and short biography

Maj. Gen. Mats Engman has more than forty years of active military service. Before retiring at the end of 2017, his most recent assignment was as Head of the Swedish Delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, in South Korea between 2015–2017. He was commissioned in the Swedish Air Force in 1976 and has predominantly served in joint and international positions. Among those are; two times as a UN military observer in the Middle East, three years as the Swedish Defence attaché to the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, Instructor in strategy at the National Defence College, Deputy Director of the Military and Security Directorate and Head of the International Department at the Defence Staff. Before deploying to South Korea, he served as acting Head of the Policy and Plans department at the Defence Staff, responsible for operational planning, force planning, research and development as well as international relations at the joint level.

Maj. Gen. Engman is a graduate from the Swedish Command and Staff College, as well as the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. He has also attended the US International Intelligence Fellows program at Bolling AFB, the US Senior International Defence Management Course in Monterey and the United Nations Senior Mission Leaders Course in Amman, Jordan.

After retirement, he joined ISDP – Institute for Security and Development Policy as a Distinguished Military Fellow. He is also conducting his own business as a founder and senior consultant at Independent Views, focusing on analysis and training within the fields of security policy, crisis management and exercise management and evaluation. Maj Gen Engman is also working part-time as a reserve officer, currently with joint and international exercises. Amongst his many accolades, he has been awarded the US Legion of Merit and the Republic of Korea’s Order of National Security Merit, Cheonsu Medal.

Title of presentation:

The Role and Value of the NNSC Today

Abstract:

The security situation on the Korean Peninsula has changed significantly since 1953. Consequently, the role and mission of the NNSC has had to be adopted to adequately serve the objectives enshrined in the Agreement. During my presentation I will identify four different periods that reflect the political and security situation at hand. In 2010 a major change to the tasks of the NNSC took place with the agreement of the “Expanded Tasks” between the United Nations Command, South Korea, Sweden and Switzerland. These tasks were reaffirmed by the same parties in 2016, and today these reaffirmed tasks, or contributions as they are now referred to, form the basis of the day-to-day activities of the NNSC south of the Military Demarcation Line separating the two Koreas. With the “Expanded tasks” the operational tempo of the NNSC increased significantly, and with this

also the possibility for the NNSC to contribute to transparency, stability and conflict management in the area. The presentation will focus on, and in some detail describe, these “Expanded tasks” and present an assessment on the operational value of the NNSC in today’s security environment. Moreover, it will highlight possible areas for future development.

Professor Kyuchin Kim

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea

Area of expertise and short biography

Czech and Slovak studies, literature, and translations

After graduating from the University of Chicago (1980-1988), he assumed leading academic and administrative positions at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. As vice President, Dean of the Faculty of Central and Eastern European Studies, and particularly as director for many years of the Institute of Eastern European and Balkan Studies and Head of the Department of Czech and Slovak Studies, he earned great credit for the development of Czech Studies in South Korea, and for spreading an interest in the Czech culture, language, and country. He is author of a large number of academic publications and the translations of works by Karel Čapek, Arnošt Lustig, Bohumil Hrabal, Milan Kundera, Josef Škvorecký, and Václav Havel. In 2018, he was nominated for the prestigious Jiří Theiner Award.

Contact: kyuchin@hufs.ac.kr and kyuchin@hotmail.com

Title of the presentation:

Korean Literature since 1953, When my Education Started

Abstract:

In this paper, I will provide a limited account of my perspective on Korean literature since the end of the Korean War in 1953. I begin with my childhood impressions from stories I heard and my first exposure to Korean War literature as a high school boy in the early 1960s, as Korea was still recovering from the war and started on its path to development. I also review some of the 1970s novels that portray the depravity and suffering of Korean workers in a developing society, who were at the same time fighting against a military dictatorship. Furthermore, I characterize the literature of the 1980s as literature that emerged due to one pivotal event, issues that revolved around the 1980 Gwangju Democratization Movement in which many writers stood up against the military regime in power throughout the 1980s. Literature as a force for social change is the defining characteristic during this period. Korean literature of the 1990s began to show very different literary sensibilities and technique than in preceding eras. Not only had political and social conditions changed greatly within Korea itself, but Korea also began to gain international attention; moreover, the era of women’s literature began in earnest. The historical and social current of Korean literature since 1953 discussed above shows the development of the social conditions of Korea. As the conditions for the development of Korean literature have been based on Korean social events, it is important to consider the relationship between Koreans’ lives and Korean literature.

Program

Thursday, 26 April 2018

9.30 - 10:00 Welcome speech

AAU President Petr Jan Pajas

H.E. Ambassador of Korea Moon Seoung-hyun

AAU Deputy President & Chief Academic Adviser Milada Poliřenská

10.00 - 12.15 1st Conference Panel

Chair: Daniela Lenčěř Chalániová, Ph.D.

Prof. Margaret K. Gnoinska, Ph.D

The NNSC and the Communist Tactics and Dynamics during the USS Pueblo 1968 Incident on the Korean Peninsula

Professor Kim Kyuchin

Korean Literature since 1953, When my Education Started

Prof. PhDr. Milada Poliřenská, CSc.

A Forgotten Mission after a "Forgotten War": the Czechoslovak Delegation to the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea (1953-1954)

Amb. PhDr. Tomáš Smetánka

Under Chinese command: Czechoslovakia in the NNSC, Year One

13.00 - 14.00 Vernissage of the exhibition *Repatriating Prisoners of War in Korea*

Opening speech:

H.E. Ambassador of Korea Moon Seoung-hyun

Col. Misra Tapas Kumar, Defence Attaché, Embassy of India

Prof. PhDr. Milada Poliřenská, CSc.

14.00 - 14.45 Screening

Documentary *Czechoslovak Hospital in Korea* (Czechoslovak Army Film, 1954) from the collection of the Military Historical Institute.

Comments and Analysis:

George Hays II., Ph.D.

15.00 - 17.15 2nd Conference Panel

Chair: Prof. Margaret K. Gnoinska, Ph.D.

Assoc. Prof. Marcelli Burdelski, Ph.D.

Poland's Role and Functions in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission to Korea: 1953-2018

Alex Švamberk
The Korean War through the Eyes of Czechoslovak Diplomats

Jan Polišenský, MSc., Ph.D.
Coercive Diplomacy: The Case of North Korea

Prof. Dr. Stanislaw Pawlak
*Polish Participation in the NNSC and the Possible Role of the Commission
in the Current Efforts to Restore Peace and Stability on the Korean Peninsula*

17.15 - 19.00 Reception

Opening speech:
Peter Bolcha, Vice-President for Research, AAU
Jana Chamrová, Director of Czech-Korean Society

Friday, 27 April 2018

9.30 - 12.00 3rd Conference Panel

Chair: George Hays II., Ph.D.

Maj. Gen. (ret) Mats Engman
The Role and Value of the NNSC Today

PhDr. Prokop Tomek, Ph.D.
*Changes of the Czechoslovak Delegation in the Neutral Nations Supervisory
Commission*

Summary and conclusion:
Milada Polišenská

Repatriating Prisoners of War in Korea

Exhibition of historical photographs from the personal collection of Deputy Chairman of the Czechoslovak Delegation to the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission Pavel Winkler (with additional photographs from the United Nations Peace Memorial Hall, Busan, South Korea, in the introduction).

[Panels in online version](#)

Introduction

Introductory and organizational information concerning the exhibition of the Pavel Winkler collection, as well as photographs provided by the United Nations Peace Memorial Hall, Busan, South Korea.

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom 1

„Pagoda of Peace“, venue from August 1953 to February 1954 of negotiations of Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC).

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom 2

Meetings of the NNRC; Officers of the Korean People's Army and of the Chinese People's Volunteers (KPA/CPV); Press conference and other events.

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom 3

Czechoslovak delegates with delegates and officers of Poland and India.

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom 4

Indian and top commanders of U.N. and U.S. forces responsible for the repatriation of Prisoners of War (POW). Officers of the KPA/CPV.

Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom 5

Scenes from the conference site in Panmunjom.

Tongjang-ni Camp 1

Scenes of the camp located in the southern part of the Demilitarized Zone and delegates of the NNRC inspecting the site. Transfer of POWs. Explanation Center and process of explanation.

Tongjang-ni Camp 2

Scenes from the camp: protests, wounded POWs.

Tongjang-ni Camp 3

Transfer of POWs.

Songgong-ni Camp 1

Scenes of the camp located in the northern part of the Demilitarized Zone. Arrival of POWs.

Songgong-ni Camp 2

Off-duty soldiers of Indian Custodian Units.

Repatriation Process 1

The Indian Army handing over POWs to the KPA/CPV.

Repatriation Process 2

POWs after repatriation to KPA/CVA.

Repatriation Process 3

Scenes from repatriation, including American POWs. Chairman of Czechoslovak delegation Ladislav Šimovič and his deputy Pavel Winkler in Panmunjom.

The exhibition

REPATRIATING PRISONERS OF WAR IN KOREA

The Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea, 1953-1954
Photographs from the personal archive of Czechoslovak diplomat Pavel Winkler

**Photographs from the United Nations Peace Memorial Hall
Busan, Republic of Korea**



The exhibition presents a unique collection of photographs from the personal archive of Pavel Winkler, Czechoslovak diplomat and deputy chairman of the Czechoslovak delegation in the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) in Korea (1953-1954).

The photographs document work of the NNRC (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland) under the chairmanship of General K.S. Thimayya (India), the repatriation of Prisoners of War, soldiers of Chinese People's Volunteer Army and Korean People's Army, everyday life situations in POW camps and many more. The exhibition has been contributed by the photographs provided by the United Nations Peace Memorial Hall in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Vernissage: 26 April, 2018 at 1pm

Anglo-American University, Letenská 5, Prague 1

The exhibition will be open till **May 4, 2018**

The exhibition was prepared by:

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From April 26 to April 27, 2018, the conference Korean Security and the 65 Year Search for Peace was held at Anglo-American University in Prague. As if designed, as our conference in Prague ended, President Moon and Chairman Kim were announcing the result of their summit in Panmunjom; and the result looked like peace. An academic could not wish for more than such an alignment of stars and fortunes, and a rational person could not wish for more than such a peaceful resolution to 65 years of conflict.