

Asia Challenge Sample Position Paper

Topic: Korean Peninsula Crisis: The Disputed Maritime Border Between North and South Korea in the Yellow Sea

Country: Myanmar

I. Introduction

Rising tensions concerning the failure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to come to an agreement upon the boundaries of the Northern Limit Line have allowed for the international and local risk to the citizens and economies of all parties involved. The aggressive and violent advances by the DPRK upon the islands, properties and peoples of the ROK have fed the extremely dangerous and implosive disagreement regarding the territories of the Yellow Sea. Recent actions such as the sinking of the ROK's vessel the *Ch'önan* as well as the shelling of the Island of Yönp'yöng have posed grave risks to the ROK, with the shelling resulting in the death of 2 civilians and 2 marines, as well as the injury of 3 civilians and 15 marines. (Bermudez) In addition, the shelling "caused moderate damage to ROK Marine positions, damaged fuel stores, began bushfires at numerous locations on the island and destroyed or damaged a number of civilian structures in and around the village of Yönp'yöng-ni" (Bermudez). The highly disputed territory of the Yellow Sea, (disputes which the ROK has attempted to resolve by recognizing and agreeing to the Northern Limit Line following the Armistice of 1953) "crosses an area of fishing grounds that are important to the ailing Northern economy and are close to busy Southern ports..." (Engman et al). "Negotiations on common exploitation of marine resources, particularly the crab that is fished in the area, have come to nothing and there has been little progress on various confidence building measures that could help prevent future crises, for example: the use of common radio frequencies, or better signalling of intent by vessels and a naval hotline" (Engman et al). Due to the extreme economic significance this area holds, as well as the recent violence brought about by a history of unresolved tensions, Myanmar urges their partners at the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to take action and to deescalate the situation as quickly, carefully, and fairly as possible. As stated in the RCEP's agenda: "SEEKING to establish clear and mutually advantageous rules to facilitate trade and investment, including participation in regional ... supply chains." The delegation of Myanmar calls upon its partners at the RCEP to uphold their values by working in unison to create a solution to the Korean Peninsula Crisis.

II. The De-escalation of the Korean Peninsula Crisis

Though Myanmar may not demonstrate economic aggression equatable to that of its friends at the RCEP, the RCEP's agenda points to their duty as an organization to strengthen and support all of its members: "CONSIDERING the need to facilitate the increasing participation of Least Developed Country Parties in this Agreement so that they can more effectively implement their obligations under this Agreement and take advantage of the benefits from this Agreement, including the expansion of their trade and investment opportunities and participation in regional and global supply chains." As a member of the RCEP, the delegation of Myanmar firmly

believes in the de-escalation of the Korean Peninsula Crisis by any means necessary. As of right now, there are no real plans from the RCEP to do anything with this maritime border, but since tensions are rising between North Korea and South Korea, action needs to be taken as soon as possible. South Korea has already placed extreme security on the border to increase surveillance in case any violence erupts on the sea. The delegation of Myanmar believes that to solve this conflict, war is not necessary. A peace treaty can be created and signed that will benefit North Korea, South Korea, and the RCEP as a whole. Both of the Koreas can state that they will allow both of their naval troops to be removed from the border if a few things happen on both sides of the border. First, both countries must agree that the Inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement is taken seriously and any violations of the agreement by citizens will be dealt with harshly. The Inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement is a document used to try and relieve some military tensions and the document “includes many CSBMs that seek to reduce risks as well as restore and improve trust between the two Koreas. These include ceasing all live-fire artillery drills within 5km of the DMZ, ceasing all live-fire maritime exercises in certain regions, and the creation of No-Fly Zones around the DMZ for military aircraft, among many others” (“North Korea: The Risks of War in the Yellow Sea”). As well as the compliance with the Inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement, we believe that some changes should be made to it as well. We believe that the live-fire drills should not occur within 20 km of the demilitarized zone, and military occupancy of the DMZ should be formed of a combined military of both North Korean and South Korean troops. Therefore, the two militaries can learn to work together to benefit both countries as a whole. Also, both countries must agree on set coordinates that the boundary line is on. There has never been an agreement on the exact location of the Northern Limit Line, and that must be addressed and placed into the revised Inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement. The RCEP would support most of our resolution plan, including the increased no-fire zone and the assessment of the exact coordinates of the boundary line because it will relieve tensions and help our economy grow as a whole. One portion of the plan that might be controversial between the RCEP is the combination of the Korean militaries. North Korea is not part of the RCEP and if South Korea worked with them at a military standpoint, other countries might become nervous. Overall, with the help from Myanmar and the other members of the RCEP, we can come to a solution to help our ally South Korea as they deal with the tensions of the maritime border.

III. Conclusion/Closing Remarks

As the delegation of Myanmar and a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, we believe that the conflict between North and South Korea over the maritime border needs to come to a peaceful resolution for the RCEP as a whole to complete its goal of the growth and development of the global economy. If North and South Korea can come to an agreement on the location of the border and how conflict can be dealt with along it, they can stop spending time worrying about each other and start working on trading with other countries and building their own economy up. As a member of the RCEP, this would help our economy as well if South Korea increased their exports and imports because we would have the ability to trade with them more often, benefiting both of us and the RCEP altogether. When one country succeeds, we all succeed, so the resolution of the Korean Peninsula Crisis is very important for the growth and success of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Overall, this conflict is important for not just North and South Korea, but the RCEP and the entire global

economy, so the resolution of the boarder has a broader impact than at first glance and needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

Works Cited

- Bermudez, Joseph S. "38North_SR11-1_Bermudez_Yeonpyeong-Do." 38 North, 11 Jan. 2011.
- Engman, Mats, et al. "Towards a New Conflict Management System on the Korean Peninsula." *Institute for Security and Development Policy*, isdpeu.eu/publication/towards-a-new-conflict-management-system-on-the-korean-peninsula-a-military-perspective/.
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