



**AFTER THE FALL OF NORTH KOREA  
A POST-CONFLICT STABILITY OPERATIONS EXERCISE**

**A Case Study by**

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## Author Biographical Sketch

Tamara Fitzgerald joined the U.S. Army War College's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) in August 2016 as its State Department Advisor. She is a career member of the U.S. Senior Foreign Service, with the rank of Counselor. Starting in her career in 1990, Ms. Fitzgerald served at the U.S. Embassies in Port of Spain, Moscow, Minsk, Berlin, Canberra, and Baghdad.

Ms. Fitzgerald also served as the U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Hague, and as Arms Control Counselor in the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna. In these roles she negotiated with diplomats from over 150 countries, first on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and in Vienna on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as on other nuclear and conventional arms and export control regimes.



Prior to those two assignments Ms. Fitzgerald served as the Foreign Policy Advisor (POLAD) in ISAF HQ's CJ-9 Civil-Military Affairs Division in Kabul working on governance issues in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and then as the POLAD to U.S. Air Forces Central Command (USAFCENT) in Qatar where she provided diplomatic guidance to the three-star Commander. Ms. Fitzgerald also worked in the Department of State in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, dealing with arms control treaties.

Ms. Fitzgerald graduated from the University of Colorado with a B.A. in Central and East European Affairs and Russian Language Studies, and from the National War College with an M.S. in National Security Strategy. She served in West Berlin in the mid-1980s as a U.S. Army Russian linguist. She speaks Russian and German.

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**The Scenario:**

Per DOD Joint Publication 3-07: “Stabilization is the process by which military and nonmilitary actors collectively apply various instruments of national power to address drivers of conflict, foster host-nation resiliencies, and create conditions that enable sustainable peace and security.”

**Backdrop: Hypothetical Current Conditions**

1. It is April 2020. The two-month kinetic battle, provoked by North Korea, is largely over and South Korea and the U.S. have won it. North Korea could not muster the logistical tail – including food – to keep fighting. Kim Jong-Un and his immediate elite cohort have disappeared, leaving the economy, infrastructure, political system and society in shambles: without the top structure, North Korea faces a complete governmental legitimacy crisis. Except at the smallest village level, no structure of government is left; even these village mayors will need assessment by the victors.
2. Over 90% of the North Korean population was already disenfranchised from its now non-existent government. Nearly all of the 25 million North Koreans are hungry. Over 10 million have lost their homes, either due to the fighting or to search for food. The people are bewildered, mistrustful, defeated, abandoned and angry. Few know where to turn and most feel that they have no voice.
3. While the North Korean Army (one general) surrendered yesterday, some scattered North Korean army insurgents are continuing guerilla warfare. Both the North and the South sustained significant infrastructure damage as well as high casualty rates. Starting from a total of over 1,000,000 North Korean military forces, the North suffered nearly 100,000 military deaths and some 200,000 injured, along with an unknown but significant number of civilian casualties. The South also suffered approximately the same numbers of casualties, but deaths and injuries on the civilian side were much higher than in the North – nearly half of the casualties were due to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK’s) indiscriminate “saturation” use of force. The United States lost about 4,500 soldiers and another 8,000 were injured. The morgues in the North and South are overwhelmed, causing further trauma, particularly in the North due to the absence of cold storage facilities.
4. There was limited North Korean use of chemical weapons (CW) in South Korea (artillery shells) and in Japan (short- and medium-range missiles), but no nuclear weapons were used during the fighting. The North Koreans used the non-persistent nerve agent sarin on advancing South Korean and U.S. troop formations above and below the DMZ, and they shelled rear-area military garrisons as well as Seoul with the persistent blister agent sulfur mustard, along with bombing Tokyo with it. Difficult CW remediation in South Korea and Japan continues as a few thousand civilians in both countries were severely affected.
5. During the last two-to-three weeks of the fighting, China created an unsanctioned (other than by Russia) de facto 50-mile deep “buffer zone” across the North Korean territory along its border. (Assumption: China states its reasoning as a desire to keep out an influx of refugees, but Beijing apparently wants defense in-depth and may be positioning itself to stake a permanent claim to part of North Korea’s territory for its natural resources and to be better positioned if U.S. forces remain above the 38th Parallel beyond a mutually acceptable moment in time [see #9 below].)
6. While the fighting took place, in preparation for a post-conflict UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter which makes the Resolution internationally legally binding, the ROK and the UN Security Council’s Permanent-5 agreed to form a UN Transitional Authority of primarily South Korean, U.S. and Chinese civilian and military leaders to govern the country after the war until the North can be reunited with the South. The UNSC Resolution was signed unanimously yesterday in New York.

7. Under the UN Transitional Authority, the South Korean Minister of Reunification will serve as UN Special Representative and interim Governor of the North; he will have a U.S. and a Chinese Senior Advisor (deputy). The U.S. Advisor will assist on civilian issues such as governance, humanitarian assistance, provision of essential services, infrastructure reconstruction, internally displaced persons and refugees. Together with South Korean military and police leaders, the Chinese Senior Advisor will assist with security for the population, policing, and securing WMD. Russian, Indian, Japanese and Australian officials have offered to fill key roles, with Russian soldiers aiding in the search for WMD. (Assumption: because the ROK, the U.S., China and Russia have a common interest in ensuring the humanitarian crisis does not deteriorate further and they understand they [and international and non-governmental agencies] need to feed some 25 million hungry North Koreans, representatives from the four countries will work together cooperatively for the first three months.)
8. A South Korean General will take charge of the North Korean military and security operations, and a senior ROK National Police Officer will take over policing in the North. China will provide senior military and police advisors and will patrol the buffer zone region together with the South Korean Army. Up to the end of the war, the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) Commander also served as the Combined Forces Commander of the U.S. and South Korean Forces. He was also triple-hatted as the UN Commander in Korea. Due to Chinese insistence, however, under the UNSCR, his role has now been reduced to wearing only one hat, that of USFK Commander.
9. Right now, with some 40,000 U.S. troops in the South, there are over 18,000 American troops in the North. However, past an as yet undetermined moment in time, dependent on security conditions, the only remaining American “boots” on the ground in North Korea will be a small U.S. Army contingent helping to search for WMD and delivery systems, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unit, a Navy Seabee unit, and a USAF Red Horse Squadron to enable reconstruction, along with de-miners and a Civil Affairs and logistics unit to help provide humanitarian assistance.
10. This limitation on the presence of U.S. forces north of the 38th Parallel was part of the deal arranged in the UN Security Council to obtain Chinese and Russian buy-in for the Chapter VII UNSCR that established the actors and their roles for the post-conflict period. Another part of this arrangement was granting the PRC the Senior Advisor role for security, vice allowing the U.S. to have it. China and Russia also demanded economic access to North Korean ports as well as contracts for reconstruction, coal mining, etc., in exchange for acquiescing to potential Korean reunification.
11. Although China and Russia amassed troops on their borders with North Korea and China pushed into a 50-mile-deep swath of North Korean territory, neither country played an active role in the fighting. Both seem determined to ensure stability on the Peninsula now. However, the UNSCR did not establish a mechanism nor a timeline to remove Chinese forces from North Korean territory, nor for China to relinquish its security role in the North.
12. Kim Jong-Un is thought to be in hiding in the Chinese buffer zone, along with most of his inner circle. China's knowledge of, or participation in, this situation is unknown. The lone DPRK Army general who signed the surrender document yesterday is asking to play a role in establishing a re-united Korea.
13. Despite the horrific loss of life and property and resulting hardships in the South, the ROK Government remains stable and even popular for succeeding in defeating the North. However, given the tremendous damage to infrastructure across the South and the numerous, onerous challenges of stabilizing the North, the ROK Government is stressed and overwhelmed. It will be a few months before normal daily life can resume in South Korea, meaning that ROK Government attention will be pulled in all directions, and it will need consistent assistance and political support from the international community.
14. The South Koreans will begin a search for town mayors and technocrats to help operate and repair North Korea's infrastructure and economy. Several unknown North Korean individuals are beginning to approach South Korean, American and Chinese soldiers, expressing grievances and seeking jobs, food and shelter, or indicating they have useful information to provide in exchange for new leadership roles, restitution of their previous jobs, or other benefits.
15. WMDs are not yet fully secured. By design under the UNSCR, ROK, Chinese, U.S. and Russian forces are working together to find and secure CW artillery shells and other munitions, as well as missiles and nuclear components. The missiles and WMD will all be stored on ROK territory until they are destroyed, per the UNSCR.

and nuclear materials eventually will be shipped to Russia for dismantlement/destruction under IAEA monitoring, while the chemical weapons will be secured in place under OPCW monitoring until their elimination.

16. Japan has offered significant reconstruction and development aid, as has Australia, to both the North and South of the Peninsula. China and Russia are pushing back against Japan's requests to play a significant political role in North Korea, causing angst in Tokyo as the Japanese begin to assess the alterations to the regional balance of power in North East Asia.

17. Of North Korea's population of 25 million people, roughly 8.5 million are IDPs due to the destruction of their homes or lack of food, 1 million are refugees in South Korea, and 1 million are refugees in the Chinese buffer zone or in China.

18. The only refugee camps currently existing are UN-led. There are four just south of the DMZ, holding some 500,000 refugees on South Korea's territory.

19. UN organizations and NGOs are awaiting access to help with the IDP/refugee crisis, but there are no North Korean NGOs, only South Korean and international ones, and those are mostly focused on helping on immediate needs in South Korea.

20. North Korean landmines and UXO pepper the landscape, especially across the DMZ. Germany has volunteered UXO remediation training.

21. Nearly all of Korea's road networks, bridges, sea ports, railway tracks, and military air fields were bombed during the fighting. Pyongyang's civilian airport is barely functioning, as is Seoul's. Civilian housing, commercial buildings and other infrastructure on both sides were heavily damaged, but moreso in the South. In the immediate aftermath helicopters provide the only readily available form of transport for personnel and humanitarian assistance, which obviously isn't enough, although units from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and a USAF Red Horse Squadron are en-route to the Pyongyang airport. In the South, local officials, U.S. and ROK military engineering units, and private construction companies are already busy planning massive infrastructure reconstruction efforts, but because of the scale of the damage to lines of communication, it will take months for full resumption of normal commerce to take place.

### **The Exercise:**

There are three steps to this exercise. The questions below serve to illuminate the scope of activities that any intervention will need to consider and prioritize. First, you the participants must grapple with these questions, either in two or four groups, dividing up the four lines of effort plus the general questions for all. Second, you may have the opportunity to role-play a USG Principals Committee meeting in Washington which takes place on "Day One" of the peace: a North Korean general surrendered his forces yesterday; today the Principals meet in Washington; and tomorrow ("Day Two") the UN Transitional Authority takes up residence in Pyongyang. [NOTE: the Principals Committee is made up of the heads of the USG Departments and agencies needed to resolve a given issue. It is essentially a Cabinet meeting, minus the President and Vice President.] This PC meeting's task is to advise the President on what the desired end state for the Korean Peninsula should be, and, based on that, make a recommendation to him on the level of the USG's near- and longer-term commitments, and then provide immediate guidance to the U.S. representatives meeting with counterparts in Pyongyang the following day. The third step, if there is time, is to role-play the initial meeting of the UN Transitional Authority on "Day Two" with representatives of South and North Korea, the United States, Russia, China, Australia, India, Japan, the UK, Germany, and France, as well as perhaps NGOs and IGOs (depending on how many participants there are), on their first day in Pyongyang. The primary goal in all three steps is to prioritize tasks and figure out who can fulfill them. It is important to remember that the U.S. and other international stakeholders will follow South Korea's lead.



**General Questions:**

1. What does the incoming UN Transitional Authority need to know about stabilization theory and practice? (See the attached PowerPoint charts for guidance.)
2. Where does it start the process – what are the key needs and priorities? Rack and stack.
3. How do you reconcile the different agendas of North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Russia, Japan, and the UN? As a U.S. official, what is your policy, or your Department's policy and goals? What are your redlines? Similarly, if you role-play a North Korean, Chinese, or Russian representative, what are your objectives and red lines?
4. Who is likely to be competing for power? Which actors might seek to fill the power vacuums?
5. Based on your expertise (and, if engaged in the international role-play, your assumed nationality), what can you bring to the table?
6. What capabilities are needed, who has them and can carry out the needed tasks, and what are the gaps? What capabilities might your country refuse to bring to the table?
7. How can national aid agencies, IGOs and NGOs be brought in early to help with strategy development as well as immediate humanitarian relief? How can they be merged with international military aid and reconstruction efforts?

**Security:**

1. How does the UN Transitional Authority go about providing for the immediate security needs of the population, especially with several hundred rogue North Korean soldiers and police officers on the loose who have not surrendered, as well as a populace that is at best deeply suspicious of foreigners and at worst deeply terrified of them?
2. With thousands of South Korean, Chinese and U.S. troops on the ground in the immediate aftermath, who should provide for initial security and public order, particularly given that the U.S. has committed to withdraw nearly all of its troops to South Korean territory as soon as practicable?
3. Should the UN establish a full-blown military and police Peacekeeping Force in the North? In other words, should the soldiers and policemen currently in place don blue helmets? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of that action? (NOTE: The U.S. Forces Korea [USFK] Commander is simultaneously the UN Commander [inferred from the 1950s Korean War] and the Combined Forces Commander of U.S. and South Korean forces. Under the UNSCR, his role has now been reduced to wearing only the hat of USFK Commander.)
4. Or, does North Korea need just blue-helmeted UN police (vice military) peacekeepers, given that the South Korean police are stretched thin across the Peninsula? Should the UN ask for Australian, Italian, German, Mongolian, etc., national police to deploy quickly?
5. How will the U.S., South Korea, China and Russia go about finding and securing North Korea's remaining WMD and delivery systems, including those in the Chinese buffer zone? How do they track down the North Koreans who might know the whereabouts of the WMD?
6. How do the South Korean and Chinese (and to a lesser extent, U.S.) soldiers account for the North Korean soldiers and what do they do with them? How do they begin the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) process? What kind of IO campaign is needed to get the remaining rogue soldiers to surrender?
7. How do the ROK, Chinese and U.S. troops go about finding Kim Jong-Un and his inner circle? Who is in charge of that? What will the UN Transitional Authority do with them, once they are found?
8. How does the UN Transitional Authority identify trustworthy North Korean military officers or police to help establish public order? How does it vet and document North Korean officials and citizens?
9. How will the IDP and refugee camps be secured? Is this something China should do? North Korean soldiers?
10. How will critical infrastructure be secured in both the North and the South, especially as roads, bridges, airports, etc., have to be rebuilt?
11. As some desperate North Koreans turn to crime (such as attacking World Food Program convoys), how does the UN Transitional Authority respond?
12. Who will inspect outgoing cargo at North Korean seaports to ensure no key North Korean leaders, WMD or other contraband items are leaving?

13. Over the longer term, how will security sector reform (SSR) be carried out? Are there initial steps that must be taken immediately to set SSR up for later success?

**Governance:**

1. How does the UN Transitional Authority handle strategic communications with a frightened population in the Hermit Kingdom and reassure it that its immediate needs will be met and that it should not fear the foreign government personnel and forces? What methods does it use?
2. How does the UN Transitional Authority establish new national, regional, and local level governance structures, and what should those structures be?
3. Given the tremendous loss of life, property and treasure on both sides, should the South Korean Government conduct a referendum asking both sides if reunification (its own desired end state) is in fact desired by the two populations? How soon should it do so? And if the answer is a majority “yes” to reunification under the South Korean flag, should revising the ROK constitution be considered?
4. What legal codes will be used? South Korea’s or some other sort of hybrid with something else until a new Constitution can be drafted, presuming reunification is the goal?
5. How does the UN Transitional Authority leverage the knowledge of the appropriate former North Korean government elites and bureaucrats, both for governance and to make what’s left of the economy function?
6. How does the UN Transitional Authority identify and track down North Korean war criminals to bring them to justice?
7. Does it try them under South Korean or international law (the International Criminal Court in The Hague)?
8. How does the UN Transitional Authority start educating North Korean students (and their parents), opening them to the outside world, without instituting the equivalent of a de-Nazification program? What lessons should be drawn from the de-Nazification and de-Baathification efforts to re-socialize a population?
9. Over the medium term what should be done about the Chinese buffer zone along the Chinese border? (For example, what if the Chinese won’t withdraw even after the North Korean IDPs and refugees are settled and there are no permanent U.S. troops above the 38th Parallel?)
10. As a longer term dilemma, how will a new justice sector be built that respects the rule of law? How will this relate to security sector reform? As the North Korean soldiers are disarmed, what other immediate steps need to be taken in this regard?

**Essential Services:**

1. How does the UN Transitional Authority address the IDP/refugee crisis – food, water, housing, sanitation, medical care – particularly with a barely functioning airport and minimal roads and train tracks?
2. How many IDP camps are needed? Where?
3. How does the UN Transitional Authority go about restoring – or establishing – heat, water, electricity, and other essential services? How quickly can it arrange international contracts to provide these services?
4. How does the UN Transitional Authority make use of UNHCR, UNOHCA, WFP, etc., in a timely and effective way to care for the overall population?
5. How does the UN Transitional Authority mobilize USAID, AUSAID and other countries’ aid agencies and get them in-country?
6. How does the UN Transitional Authority get capable NGOs (e.g., Doctors without Borders, Mercy Corps) into the former DPRK to assist with the IDPs/refugees, establish essential services, etc.?
7. How does the UN Transitional Authority identify North Koreans who are able to assume leadership roles in governance and the functioning of municipalities, such as those who know how to make the power plants, sewers and hospitals run?
8. Can South Korean municipal leaders (mayors, deputy mayors, public works officials) help in North Korean “sister-Cities”?

9. How will the UN Transitional Authority manage the hundred thousand or more prisoners in North Korean labor camps?
10. Should the U.S. insist on providing longer-term U.S. engineering battalions, air traffic controllers, etc., to aid in reconstruction and logistics even if China and Russia complain?
11. How much should Russia and China be expected to do to assist in reconstruction and humanitarian assistance across their borders with the North? How much should the United States be expected to provide?

**Economic Stabilization and Infrastructure Rebuilding:**

1. How does the UN Transitional Authority begin to assess short- and long-term economic and infrastructure needs, looking at current capabilities in the markets, banking system, agriculture, and infrastructure?
2. Based on such a damage assessment, what are some logical steps under each line of effort? What are the capacity building needs?
3. Develop short- and long-term timelines and milestones to achieve infrastructure reconstruction.
4. How does the UN Transitional Authority locate appropriate North Koreans to work on economic stabilization and infrastructure rebuilding?
5. Can/should former North Korean soldiers and policemen be reintegrated by rebuilding the North's infrastructure? Can they be trained quickly in construction and be paid all the while? Who will pay?
6. Can North Korean IDPs and refugees be put to work building the IDP/refugee camps and clearing roads and rebuilding bridges, etc.? How will they be paid and where will they turn to buy food and other necessities? Can local markets be quickly reestablished? How?
7. Should the UN Transitional Authority begin planning, for example, for agri-business development teams or construction or mining companies to play a role? Who would let the tenders for rebuilding airports or paving roads? What other immediate and longer-term contracting quagmires exist?

**Links to websites for further details:**

Country Dashboard <http://janes.ihs.com/dashboard/country/Korea,%20North>

Country Watch <http://www.countrywatch.com/Intelligence/CountryReviews?CountryId=91>

BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15258878>

CRS

North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation: <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41259.html>