

US Misrepresents its Role in the Korean War. US Occupation Troops in South Korea under “UN Command”

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In 1994, the [UN Secretary General](#) in a letter to the North Korean Foreign Minister distanced the UN from the UNC by writing “the Security Council did not establish the unified command as a subsidiary organ under its control, but merely recommended the creation of such a command, specifying that it be under the authority of the United States. Therefore the dissolution of the unified command does not fall within the responsibility of any United Nations organ but is a matter within the competence of the Government of the United States.”

July 27 of this year will be an important anniversary. It will be the 60th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement which provided the means to end the hostilities of the Korean War.

The armistice was recognized as a temporary means to stop the military action. It included a recommendation that it be followed by a political conference three months later to hammer out a political agreement which would serve as a peace treaty ending the Korean war.

The political conference has never been held. And no means has yet been created to settle the unresolved issues of the Korean War.

At the UN on Friday, June 21, the permanent mission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), more commonly known as North Korea, held a press conference. (1) Sin Son Ho, DPRK’s Ambassador to the United Nations, presented journalists with a statement outlining the background of a serious problem remaining from the Korean War, a problem that needs to be resolved if the tension on the Korean Peninsula is not to escalate.

He documented how the United States, without any authority from the United Nations, changed the name of the Unified Command it was to direct, to the name ‘UN Command’. This change falsifies the nature of the US role in the Korean War and in the Armistice, making it appear that the US is acting under the authority of the United Nations. The decisions made by what is called the ‘UN Command’ are made by the US. The US is not acting as a subsidiary or representative of the UN when it acts under the name of the “UN Command”. Yet the false appearance given is that the US is acting under the authority of the UN.

The DPRK Ambassador explained how this misrepresentation was accomplished by the US in July 1950. On July 7, a Security Council Resolution (SC 84, 1950) was passed putting the US as the head of what was called in the resolution the Unified Command, but with no oversight

obligations by the UN for the actions of the US. On July 25, 1950 the US submitted a report to the Security Council in which it replaced the name Unified Command with the name 'UN Command'.

Subsequently, the US uses the designation UN Command despite the fact that this creates a false impression that there is a role played by the UN in Korean Armistice activities. The US even uses UN Command as its designation in the actual Armistice Agreement.

The DPRK has at various times tried to get the US to drop its misleading use of the title UN Command. In November 1975, Resolution 3390 (XXX) B was passed by the UN General Assembly calling for negotiations between the relevant parties so that the US would no longer use the misleading designation 'UN Command' to represent the US military role. The US has not fulfilled on the obligation to carry out these negotiations. Instead the US at the time argued that changing its designation as the UN Command would affect the oversight provisions provided for in the Armistice Agreement.

Subsequently, the DPRK points out that in the 60 years since the Armistice Agreement was signed, any oversight provisions it may have included no longer exist and the actual decisions regarding the agreement currently are made through negotiations between the Korean People's Army (KPA) and the US military authority.

In view of the facts, Ambassador Sin said, the existence of the UN Command is an "anachronism." Instead of agreeing to dissolve it, however, he explained, the US is projecting that it can serve as a "multinational force command" which would constitute the "matrix of an Asian version of NATO."

Two former UN Secretary Generals have spoken out against the continuing use by the US military of the name 'UN Command'. Ambassador Sin noted that both Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan have gone on record confirming that there is no UN military activity related to the US claim that it is the UN Command.

At the June 21 noon press briefing by the Deputy Spokesman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, a question was raised asking for Ban Ki moon's views on the issue. The journalist asked(2):

"As I am sure you know, just now, Sin Son Ho, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, held a press conference in which he said he called for the dismantling of the "UN Command" uh, in South Korea, and he said it is not really a UN body at all, and quoted Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan to that effect. So what I wonder is as, as, the office of the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, as the head of the UN system, has, does he, what is his position on the legal status in terms of the UN of the 'UN Command'? And separately, does he have any, what...would be, what's his response to a call to, to dismantle this entity?"

In apparent agreement with the DPRK, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary General, Eduardo del Buey responded:

"But the United Nations has never had any role in the command of any armed forces deployed in the Korean peninsula. In particular, the United Nations did not at any time have any role in the command of the forces that operated in Korea under the Unified Command between 1950 and 1953."

In response, to the part of the question relating to Ban Ki-moon's view on the US representing itself as the UN Command, the Deputy Spokesperson promised a future reply. He noted that:

"Well, first of all, as you know, the Secretary-General is just getting off the plane from China now, so he is going to be reading the transcript of the statement by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we'll have something later on to say."

To an email asking for further clarification of the Secretary General's view about the DPRK's call for the dissolution of the 'UN Command', the Deputy Spokesperson answered by referring to the Secretary General's view that with respect to an issue related to the Armistice Agreement(3):

"This is a matter for the parties to the Agreement. The United Nations is not party to the Armistice Agreement."

Does this mean Ban Ki-moon believes that the misuse of the UN name by the US is an issue to be solved by the parties to the Armistice Agreement, and is not a concern for the UN?

In his press briefing Ambassador Sin said that if the US did not dissolve the UN Command, the DPRK is considering once again pursuing this issue at the UN General Assembly, which in November 1975 had already urged the US to dissolve the UN Command (See 3390(XXX)B 1975).

Ambassador Sin explained that "due to the existence of the 'UN Command', the security mechanism on the Korean peninsula has become war-oriented not peace-oriented."

"In other words," he elaborated, "the existence of the 'UN Command' is not serving the peace building efforts on the Korean peninsula. On the contrary, it is the root of evil or tumor laying a stepping stone for the US armed forces of aggression toward the DPRK and the realization of the America's Pivot to Asia strategy."

Ambassador Sin proposed that "If the United States has real intention to put an end to hostile relation with the DPRK, it should make the right decision to dissolve the 'UN Command' and replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace regime as proposed by the DPRK this year when we mark the 60th year since the Armistice Agreement was signed."

Notes

1)Press conference June 21 2013, Ambassador Sin Son Ho at the UN

<http://webtv.un.org/media/press-conferences/watch/ambassador-sin-son-ho-the-permanent-representative-of-the-democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-to-the-un-press-conference/2498682301001>

A text version of the statement presented is online at:

<http://www.4thmedia.org/2013/06/26/illegitimacy-and-injustice-of-the-un-command-in-south-korea-dprk-calls-for-its-immediate-dissolution/>

For an earlier version of the statement, see: KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Ministry Issues Memorandum" January 14, 2013

2)Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General
June 21, 2013

<http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2013/db130621.doc.htm>

3)Email from Eduardo del Buey on June 25, 2013.

A version of this article appears on netizenblog at
<http://blogs.taz.de/netizenblog/2013/06/26/us-misrepresents-its-role-as-un-command/>

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