

# US Coalition Diplomacy on the Korean Issue *Record of the Geneva Conference of 1954*<sup>1</sup>

V. Yungblyud, D. Sadakov

Vyatka State University

**Abstract.** The negotiation of parameters for the settlement of an armed conflict is always a complex process in which the interests of all its immediate participants and other concerned parties collide. One of the most striking examples of such confrontations is the settlement process at the end of the Korean War of 1950–1953, which culminated in the Geneva Conference of 1954. The purpose of this article is to specify the role of the United States as the leader of the UN coalition in the negotiations, as a result of which, after three years of war involving approximately two dozen countries, the situation returned to its original state – the pre-war border between North and South Korea was restored, and the most active and influential members of the opposing alliances agreed to a truce. The archival documents that have become available in recent years allow us to significantly supplement the ideas formed in domestic and foreign historiography about the reasons for the incompleteness of the peace settlement process in Korea after the end of the war of 1950–1953. The article examines the contribution of US diplomacy to the creation of the Korean agenda at the conference, and shows that the UN coalition had been functioning in the “double deterrence” mode by the start of the negotiations in Geneva. The role of the United States as the leader of the military-political alliance in the development of plans for the unification of the Korean Peninsula is clarified. We conclude that from as early as the second half of May 1954, the United States primarily proceeded from the motives of propaganda when making decisions and seriously considered terminating the negotiations. As a result, the chance to resolve the Korean issue was ignored and the Geneva Conference turned into a means of fundamentalizing the American strategy in the Northeast Pacific region. This article demonstrates that the results of the conference were in line with the immediate expectations of Washington and its long-term strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. The results of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference consolidated the division of Korea into two hostile states and for a long time closed the question of possible union of the country.

**Keywords:** United States; the Korean War; the Geneva Conference of 1954; coalition diplomacy; the United Nations; the division of Korea; Cold War; J. F. Dulles.

<sup>1</sup> English translation from the Russian text: lungblyud V., Sadakov D. 2020. «Uslozhniayushchii faktor»? Koalitsionnaya diplomatiya SSHA v koreiskom voprose. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy [International Trends]*. 18(4). P. 81-107. DOI: 10.17994/IT.2020.18.4.63.7

Coming to an agreement on the parameters for the settlement of an armed conflict is a complex process in which the interests of both the direct participants in a confrontation and other interested parties collide. This applies, first and foremost, to internationalized local conflicts where the outcome is unclear. One of the most vivid examples of this is the post-Korean War (1950–1953) settlement process, which culminated in the 1954 Geneva Conference.

Discussions about the nature and fallout of the Korean War, and why the settlement process was cut short, resulting in the signing of an armistice agreement rather than a full-fledged peace treaty, remain relevant from the perspective of studying the history of international relations and in terms of understanding current world politics. Modern research notes that this event “transformed the Cold War into a military confrontation between the superpowers.” The Korean War is often described as a “forgotten” or “unknown” war, a “war of mistakes,” and a “war that had no winner” (Wells 2020: 472; Westad 2019: 81; Li Xiaobing 2019: 158–163). Most authors emphasize the limited scope of the war, which is why it remained a localized, albeit very bloody, episode in the global Cold War that was becoming increasingly tense (Caldwell 2019: 227).

Experts have offered various arguments to suggest that the war occasionally went beyond the scope of a limited conflict and actually acquired attributes of an unlimited struggle. Its participants set themselves a rather ambitious political goal: to unite the country by changing the political regime in one of the two warring Korean states in order to gain an advantage in the global confrontation between the emerging socio-political systems and military blocs (Stoker 2019: 36–37; 56). An important feature of this was the involvement of a large number of external players in the hostilities. It was a battle of coalitions. “An almost inevitable civil war among people, Communist and non-Communist, determined to unite their country, became an international war and a catalyst for a terrifying arms race,” wrote Warren Cohen (Cohen 2005: 283).

The realities of international life in the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century are replete with examples of the great powers intervening in internal conflicts in different regions of the world, including under the auspices of the United Nations. And these interventions did not always bring positive results. Studying the behaviour of great powers and their allies in the final stages of local wars and the goals and motives that guided them during peace negotiations expands our ability to understand the origins and nature of many political processes taking place today (Nikitin 2016: 56–57). The emergence of the Korea issue and the build-up of conflict potential in relation to it in subsequent decades are a consequence of the circumstances under which the preparations for and holding of the 1954 Geneva Conference took place.

This article aims to detail the role of the United States as the leader of the UN coalition in the negotiations that, after three years of bloody and destructive fighting involving around two dozen countries, ended up restoring the situation that had existed before the conflict began – the existence of a border between North and South

Korea. And the most active and influential members of the opposing alliances relatively calmly agreed to an armistice, knowing full well that a mutually acceptable peace treaty would be all but impossible to achieve. Clarifying the role of US diplomacy in preparing the Korean agenda for the 1954 Geneva Conference is directly related to determining its responsibility for the outcome of the talks, as well as to shedding light on the extent to which the results of the negotiations corresponded to Washington's immediate expectations and its long-term strategy in the Asia-Pacific.

The United States became embroiled in the war in Korea as part of a coalition, albeit a rather unusual one. With the exception of the two world wars, the United States did not participate in military-political alliances, and did not even attempt to form any during peacetime until the late 1940s (Beckley 2015: 7). Having joined the armed conflict on the side of South Korea in June 1950, the United States led a coalition of UN member states made up of almost all the parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), created the year previously (12 of the 14 members were part of the coalition), with which Washington was bound by allied obligations. This circumstance significantly influenced the relationships between the coalition members, and it shaped the actions of the military command and the adoption of political decisions (Vasquez 2009: 190; Robb, Gill 2019: ch. 2, 6). On October 1, 1953, two months after the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement, the United States and South Korea concluded the Mutual Defense Treaty, which would go on to become an important element of the American security system in the region (Yungblyud, Sadakov 2019). This document was also taken into account when Washington was developing its negotiating strategy for the Geneva Conference. Finally, states that were not connected with the United States through allied relations took part in the war as part of the UN coalition. The complex composition of the coalition made it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to synchronize the interests of its members during the peace negotiations. Patricia Weitsman noted the objective nature of this misalignment of interests, explaining it by the fact that the aim of coalitions, as a rule, is operational effectiveness, while alliances created during peacetime “focus more on the political dimensions of effectiveness” (Weitsman 2010: 132). The history of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference contains material that can be used to test this thesis.

Issues of interaction between members of the military alliances created by the United States during armed conflicts have repeatedly been raised by international relations experts across the globe. Most works published on this topic focus on the issue of mobilizing allies and partners to take part in military operations, to the detriment of research into the specifics of their interaction at the stage of conflict settlement and during negotiations (Istomin 2017a; 2017b).

The issue of Korean settlement has been broached in works on the history of foreign policy in the United States and Korea, as well as in various special publications (see, for example: Barnes 2014; Brands 1987; Bystrova 2007; Immerman 1990; Lee 1995; Pechatnov et al. 2012; Roberts 2008; Ruane 1994; Torkunov et al. 2008; Urnov

2012; Volokhova 2015). Archival documents that have been made public in recent years<sup>2</sup> allow us to supplement the ideas formed in Russian and foreign historiography about the reasons why the peace process following the Korean War was not brought to a conclusion and about the role the United States played in ensuring the split on the Korean Peninsula.

## 1

The Korean War began in 1950 as a conflict between two competing political regimes in the process of unifying the country: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The confrontation soon acquired an international character. The United States wasted no time in offering assistance to Seoul upon learning of North Korea's invasion of the South. Less than 24 hours later, the Truman administration had decided to provide the South Korean Army with full-scale aerial support south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The official paperwork internationalizing the Korean conflict at the United Nations took just over a week.

A total of 17 countries joined the South Korean side as part of the UN coalition.<sup>3</sup> The number of allied troops never exceeded 10% of the total strength of the South Korean Army and the American contingent. The United States wanted to demonstrate the unity of the international community in "repelling communist aggression," and even expressed its readiness to assume control of the logistics of the entire coalition, although the issue of supplying rations "to suit various national tastes" often presented significant difficulties for the US Army's distribution system (Gough 1987: 120).

The Soviet Union and China were also involved in the Korean War from the very beginning. The decision to invade South Korea was sanctioned by Moscow, and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army became the largest military contingent on the Peninsula following the devastating defeats of the North Korean Army in September 1950. Soviet pilots and air defence units participated in aerial battles with the American side, and a significant contingent of military advisers from the Soviet Union was present.

The Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in Panmunjom on July 27, 1953 following lengthy discussions both between representatives of the warring parties, and

<sup>2</sup> These include a number of American archival documents that have been digitized and made available for research thanks to electronic archives and reading rooms (the Digital Collection of the US National Archives, documents from the UN Digital Library System, the US Department of State archives, the Wilson Center Digital Archive, and many more), and Russian archival documents (the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History). A feature of these sources on the history of North and South Korea between 1945 and 1954 is that a large part of the documents of this period was first introduced within the framework of international scientific projects and published in English translation either in the form of thematic collections or as appendices to documentary reviews with lengthy comments by the historians who first worked with these files. This practice was not unique, as many of the documents produced in socialist states on this topic were introduced into scientific circulation in the same manner. Since access to the originals of some of these documents is, for a number of reasons, currently restricted, references are given to the English versions.

<sup>3</sup> The coalition included Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. India sent a field hospital to South Korea, but in order to maintain neutrality, sent another field hospital to North Korea.

within the coalitions themselves (Wells 2020: 230–231). The Armistice put a ceasefire into force and established the Korean Demilitarized Zone along the line of contact between UN troops and communist forces. The issue of reunification was set to be considered at the next stage of settlement during a “political conference of a higher level.”<sup>4</sup> Approaches to resolving this issue at the United Nations took place during the work of the special session of the General Assembly in August 1953 (Whittaker 1995: 45).

The most heated discussions concerned whether or not India and the Soviet Union should be allowed to participate in the conference. The United States took the same position as that of the South Korean authorities, who opposed inviting India to the talks, as South Korean President Syngman Rhee saw the country as being a “communist sympathizer.”<sup>5</sup> In turn, the countries that fought as part of the UN coalition insisted on New Delhi’s involvement in the negotiations and emphasized its direct interest in a peaceful settlement as a neutral party chairing the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (Barnes 2014: 217).<sup>6</sup> The French delegation was particularly insistent on this.<sup>7</sup> India’s representative to the United Nations K. P. S. Menon put an end to the debate on the issue after he realized that a draft resolution would not secure the necessary two-thirds majority to be formally adopted by the General Assembly and thus withdrew his country’s participation from the conference.<sup>8</sup> (Barnes 2014: 220).

As for the Soviet Union, the General Assembly adopted a compromise decision with regards to its involvement in the talks. Great Britain insisted that the negotiations be held in a round table format, and that a Soviet delegation be involved (Barnes 2014: 217). Meanwhile, the American side believed that China and North Korea should be responsible for inviting the Soviet Union to the Forum.<sup>9</sup> The final wording contained the recommendation that the USSR take part in the political conference on Korea, if the “other side” so desired. The “other side” referred to the Chinese and North Korean governments. The ambiguity of this wording did not suit the Soviet delegation. In fact, none of the sides participating in the debates was satisfied with the result, including the US administration, which did not want to enter into negotiations of any kind with China, citing the illegitimacy of its government and the lack of diplomatic relations with it (Barnes 2014: 230).

<sup>4</sup> Armistice Agreement (July 27, 1953), <http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/armistice/armistice.pdf> (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States (hereinafter FRUS). 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2. Washington: GPO, 1984: 1469.

<sup>6</sup> The Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) was established in accordance with a UN proposal and consisted of representatives of Czechoslovakia, India, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland to regulate the procedures for the exchange of prisoners in Korea as a result of the signing of the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953. Memorandum of conversation between Sir Roger Makins and the Secretary. August 6, 1953. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4288. 795.00/7–3053.

<sup>7</sup> Memorandum of conversation. Further Elaboration of French views re Post Korean Armistice Political Conference. July 31, 1953. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4288. 795.00/7–3153.

<sup>8</sup> FRUS 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1503.

<sup>9</sup> Telegram from Lodge to Secretary of State. August 12, 1953. U S National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4289. 795.00/8–1253; Dulles to US UN. August 14, 1953. U. S. National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4289. 795.00/8–1353.

The final version of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 711 of August 28, 1953 recommended that “the governments of the countries concerned on both sides” convene a political conference of a higher level “to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc.” It was stipulated that the conference should begin its work no later than October 28, 1953, at a place that is acceptable to both parties.<sup>10</sup> The discussion of controversial issues at the General Assembly showed that the American delegation had sufficient resources to block proposals and amendments put forward by the Soviet Union and states close to it, without serious discussion. At the same time, cracks started to appear within the US-led delegation.

## 2

Washington realized that the US delegation and its allies would come up against well-prepared and uncompromising opponents at the Geneva talks. Moscow, Beijing and Pyongyang made no secret of the fact that the ultimate goal of the Conference was to achieve Korean unification in a manner that would pave the way for the expansion of communist power across the peninsula. Even during the development of the Armistice Agreement, the United States and its allies (excluding South Korea) had realized that continuing the hostilities was futile, meaning that the priority in resolving the Korean question was shifting towards political decisions, which largely depended on the attitudes of Soviet, North Korean and Chinese diplomats.

The socialist leaders started discussing the prospects of a political conference even before the Armistice Agreement had been signed. On July 17, Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union to the United Nations Andrey Vyshinsky and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko developed a package of proposals on the Korean issue to be presented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov. Their ultimate goal was to hold all-Korean elections under the supervision of an international commission, withdraw all foreign troops from Korean territory, and help the United Nations rebuild the country's economy. The assumption was that the decision on the principles of the settlement would be made by consensus between the representatives of the two Koreas, China, and the countries participating in the 1945 Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers.<sup>11</sup> Delegations of neutral countries were welcome to attend the conference (Volkhova 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Resolutions Adopted on the Report of the First Committee. 711 (VII) The Korean Question, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/711\(VII\)&Lang=R](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/711(VII)&Lang=R) (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> The decisions made at the meeting determined the approaches of the countries that had prevailed in the Second World War to the issue of how the Korean Peninsula would be structured in 1945–1947. The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain.

North Korea and China mostly supported the Kremlin's proposal. The Russian and Chinese leaders held closed talks in Moscow before the Geneva Conference, with Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Zhou En-lai flying into the Soviet capital for the meeting (Galenovich 2018: 573–575). At the talks, the parties agreed that the ideal format for negotiations for the Chinese side would involve 11 countries: the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, China, India, Poland, Burma, Sweden, North Korea and South Korea.<sup>12</sup> Meetings were proposed to be held in a round table format, and decisions taken with the consent of the warring parties. At the same time, while Kim Il-sung was interested above all in resolving the issue of the peaceful unification of Korea, Beijing was hoping to use the conference to bargain on the Taiwan problem and secure the right of the People's Republic of China to represent the country in the United Nations, including as a permanent member of the Security Council.<sup>13</sup> The American side did not recognize the People's Republic of China as the country's legitimate government, and insisted on its participation being limited, something that was unacceptable to Beijing.

Preliminary negotiations on the organization of the political conference in Geneva took place in Panmunjom.<sup>14</sup> In early September, the Department of State created a special position of Assistant Secretary of State for Preparations for the Political Conference, with the lawyer Arthur Dean taking up the role.<sup>15</sup> The US-led negotiations on the "UN side" with the Chinese and North Korean delegations started in accordance with Resolution 711 on October 26. As is typical of US diplomatic practice, the American side allowed a South Korean representative onto their delegation, but did not give him the right to vote or even speak, thus making it clear that they intended to steer the negotiation process and rebut any attempts by Seoul to destabilize the situation.<sup>16</sup>

The meetings were held in a tense atmosphere. Communication at the Joint Security Area on the demarcation line in Panmunjom was very different from the usual forms of diplomatic communication, as each delegation sat on its own side of the border, which could not be crossed without permission, and each left the building through a separate exit. There were no elements of informal communication or exchange of opinions. Arthur Dean presumed that the Communists deliberately demonstrated firmness and a desire to follow the protocol of the time in order to prove to the Americans that constructive interaction was impossible without the involvement of neutral countries.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the exchange of views boiled down to tabling mutu-

<sup>12</sup> Switzerland and Czechoslovakia were initially considered instead of Sweden and Poland [see: Volokhova 2015].

<sup>13</sup> FRUS, 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1496.

<sup>14</sup> Communists Asked Again for Views on Time and Place of Conference. Department of State Bulletin 29, no. 744: 422; US Representative to Meet with Communists at Panmunjom // Department of State Bulletin 29, no. 748: 550–551.

<sup>15</sup> Carl W. McCardle to the Secretary. September 12, 1953. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4289. 795.00/9–1253.

<sup>16</sup> FRUS, 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1541.

<sup>17</sup> Dean's assumption may not have been unfounded. According to Y. Galenovich, the memoirs of the Chinese state interpreter Shi Zhe (M.A. Karsky) suggest that North Korean leader Kim Il-sung did not want to advance peace negotiations, preferring an armistice instead, and that he coordinated his positions on this with the leader of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong [see Galenovich 2018: 577].

ally unacceptable proposals. The only thing the sides could agree on was the agenda of the negotiations, as well as on the fact that the final agreement should be a package of measures and include all aspects of the procedures and regulations of the political conference (Volokhova 2015).

Public opinion in the Commonwealth of Nations<sup>18</sup> was rather pessimistic about the prospects of the Panmunjom.<sup>19</sup> Seeing the difficulties that the United States was having in developing a dialogue with the Communists, these countries proposed resuming the discussion of the Korean problem at the UN General Assembly, including the issue of convening a political conference.<sup>20</sup> The Americans countered this by saying that it would only lead to a fresh clash of irreconcilable positions between the Communists, India and the UN Command. As for the possibility of convening a political conference, the American side was concerned that the compromise proposals suggested by Menon or the Communists could split the coalition of states that had sent troops to Korea under the auspices of the United Nations.<sup>21</sup> Further developments showed that there were indeed grounds for such concerns.

### 3

The Communists made their move at the Berlin Conference of foreign ministers (January 25 – February 18, 1954), which was convened at the initiative Moscow. The event was aimed, first and foremost, at achieving a consensus on the international status of Germany, and on collective security in Europe. The British historian Geoffrey Roberts believes that these diplomatic manoeuvres on the part of the Soviet Union were part of the country's campaign to end the Cold War that was launched shortly after Stalin's death (Roberts 2008: 35–75).<sup>22</sup> One of the components of this campaign was the Soviet proposal to hold a “five-power conference that the People's Republic of China would attend (...) to reduce international tensions,” which would deal with disarmament issues, the most pressing regional issues, and international trade.<sup>23</sup>

The sharp turnaround in Moscow's political course was viewed with suspicion in the West. The Soviet Union was suspected of seeking to undermined the unity of the United States, France and Great Britain. Soviet initiatives were not taken seriously, and

<sup>18</sup> The military contingent of Great Britain the Commonwealth member states occupied a separate position in the UN coalition. The UK Government also adopted a separate stance on a number of fundamental issues. In particular, unlike the United States, the United Kingdom was against the use of nuclear weapons and pursued diplomatic recognition of China [see: Foot 1986: 43–44, 57].

<sup>19</sup> Aldrich to Secretary of State. November 6, 1953. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4290. 795.00/11–653.

<sup>20</sup> 19 FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1734.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.:1728–1729.

<sup>22</sup> Stalin's death is often cited as a decisive reason for ending the Korean War and opening peace negotiations (see: Wells 2020: 231). However, the argument that Moscow and Beijing had decided that ending the War would be the best course of action as early as 1952, and that Stalin's death merely accelerated the process of withdrawing from the confrontation [see: Szalontai 2005: 39; Weathersby 1998: 108–109] is far more compelling.

<sup>23</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. VII. Part 1. P. 842.

many assumed that Moscow was still committed to spreading communism worldwide (Bystrova 2007: 446; Ruane 1994: 155). In early December 1953, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, rather undiplomatically, at a meeting with the heads of government of Great Britain and France in Bermuda, that the Kremlin's politics were not about to change any time soon, and announced the America's intention to throw the USSR out of the place it had adopted in world politics to the political backyard. The President's bluntness offended the Europeans, who tended to use political euphemisms and had never heard such language at diplomatic conferences before (Graebner 2010: 2017).

The awkwardness was aggravated by the fact that Eisenhower launched his anti-Soviet tirade in response to Winston Churchill's proposal to adopt a dual approach to the Soviet Union – holding the atomic bomb in one hand while extending the other for a handshake. For those present, this episode left an unpleasant aftertaste, as memories of the Second World War and the role that Churchill had played at the military leader of Great Britain and a member of the “Big Three” were still fresh in everyone's memories. But the seasoned British politician preferred to let it slide: he did not argue with his “old comrade in arms,” who had commanded the expeditionary forces in Europe and was now leading the international coalition in the Korean War. Instead, Churchill saw this inflexible and belligerent stance as coming directly from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, whose diplomatic skills he did not rate at all (Manchester et al 2016: 1096–1098). The British leader's opinion remained unchanged after this, which left its mark on the relationship between the members of the UN coalition at the later stages of the negotiations.

Washington's allies had to take public opinion at home into account, as people were pushing for an end to the Cold War. V.O. Pechatnov, A.S. Manykin and N.I. Yegorova note that the pressure from the European side on Washington played a decisive role in the short-lived “thaw” of 1954–1955 (Pechatnov et al. 2012: 352; Yegorova 2016: 85–88). In November 1953, the “majority of Americans” (79%) were also in favour of convening a meeting “to ease international tensions” (Bystrova 2007: 447).

In the days leading up to the negotiations in Berlin, the Americans defiantly resisted attempts to recognize the People's Republic of China as a great power.<sup>24</sup> The uncompromising approach of the United States concerned British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. On January 23, 1954, he wrote in his diary about the dangers of even small disagreements between the allies. He saw the five-power conference as preferable to returning the Korean question to the UN General Assembly for consideration.<sup>25</sup> For his part, French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault stated that he understood the arguments against convening such a conference, but the mood of the French public did not

<sup>24</sup> McConaughy to Ogburn. January 19, 1954. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4292. 795.00/1–1954.

<sup>25</sup> A. Eden, *Full Circle* (London: Cassel, 1960), 62–63.

allow him to simply brush aside “honourable negotiations” with Communist China.<sup>26</sup> The French time were also under time pressure: the state of affairs in Indochina forced them to look for quick solutions, and not wait until the negotiations on Korea were over.<sup>27</sup>

As a result, the countries of the “free world” had still not harmonized their positions by the time the Berlin meeting had kicked off. The United States was forced to call a large-scale conference to discuss international problems related to the Far East, with the proviso that the People’s Republic of China attend as a regional player, rather than a great power.<sup>28</sup> At the Berlin Conference on January 27, the American side rejected the Soviet Union’s proposal to organize a five-power conference in the format the USSR had suggested.<sup>29</sup> Molotov was not going to give up so easily: he convinced the American delegation of the abnormality of the United States’ current relations with China, and demonstrated to the French contingent that he was prepared to act as an intermediary between France, on the one hand, and Chinese and Vietnamese communists, on the other.<sup>30</sup>

The US leaders saw a direct connection between the Soviet proposal to hold a conference and the stalled Panmunjom talks,<sup>31</sup> so they considered a diplomatic rallying of the allies to be a necessary condition for securing acceptable decisions on all issues of the proposed agenda. But Dulles ultimately failed to get the parties to agree on a unified position. In the end, he decided to switch tactics and focus on organizing the five-power political conference on Korea.<sup>32</sup> On January 30, 1954, he informed America’s allies that any five-sided body that might be created would not be permanent and would not be aimed at solving world problems in general. At the same time, Korea, in his opinion, would be a good pretext for negotiating with “Chinese communists (...) without official diplomatic recognition.” This would involve the four foreign ministers present at the Berlin meeting inviting representatives of the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, South Korea and other countries that took part in the Korean War to discuss the terms of the settlement. Subsequently, this conference could also include the Indochina question on its agenda.<sup>33</sup>

The French side added a provision to the American draft of the conference’s final resolution on the transition to a discussion of the Indochina issue almost immediately after the end of the Korean phase of the conference.<sup>34</sup> The draft resolution was submit-

<sup>26</sup> In November 1953, the French National Assembly demanded that the government explore all available options for securing the settlement of the Indochina issue. FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. VII. Part 1. Washington: GPO, 1984, 819.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 790–791.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 786.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 840–842, 844.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 833, 834, 882–884, 891–892.

<sup>31</sup> Dulles from Berlin to Secretary of State. January 31, 1954. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4292. 795.00/1–3154.

<sup>32</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. VII. Part 1: 847–848.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 891–892.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 954, 964–965.

ted for discussion by the ministers of the four powers on February 8 and, as expected, the Soviet delegation rejected it. Molotov categorically objected to the wording, which did not recognize the People's Republic of China as a great power. He also did not agree with the proposed composition of the participants and protested against the mention of the UN General Assembly resolution of August 28, 1953, which the Soviet delegation did not support.<sup>35</sup>

On February 11, the Soviet side submitted its own draft resolution, which was fundamentally different from the American one: it proposed organizing a conference on Korea and "other urgent problems related to the restoration of peace in various parts of Asia" in a five-power format, with "interested countries" being invited to take part.<sup>36</sup>

The ministers of the Western states responded by proposing compromise draft resolutions drawn up jointly by France and Great Britain in which the provisions that the Soviet delegation had objected to were either softened or removed completely, while maintaining a firm position on the issue of great powers. A list of potential participating countries, including North and South Korea, was drawn up. The People's Republic of China was fifth on that list; the Soviet Union was fourth.<sup>37</sup> On February 17, Molotov announced that the parties had agreed on the first two paragraphs of the document, which related directly to the Korean question. The remaining differences were eliminated the following day.<sup>38</sup> Geneva was chosen as the venue for the conference, and it was scheduled to begin on April 26, 1954.<sup>39</sup>

The People's Republic of China welcomed the results of the Berlin meeting. At a meeting of the Secretariat of the Communist Party of China Central Committee on March 2, 1954, Zhou Enlai praised the meeting as a great achievement of Soviet diplomacy, thanks to which the Geneva Conference would be the first major international event involving the People's Republic of China as an equal party. All this fit perfectly into the framework of the concept of peaceful coexistence promoted by the Chinese authorities (Shen Zhihua 2015: 141, 209). Furthermore, both the Chinese and Soviet delegations used the agreements reached in Berlin to further assert that the Geneva Conference would not be connected with the unacceptable resolutions of the UN General Assembly, since the sides had only managed to convene the conference after the communiqué of the meeting of French, British, American and Soviet ministers of foreign affairs in Berlin was published on March 18.<sup>40</sup> As for the programme for the future structure of Korea, Zhou Enlai talked about supporting the idea of peaceful re-

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 996.

<sup>36</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. VII. Part 1: 1193.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 1106.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 1147, 1163–1164.

<sup>39</sup> The Avalon Project: Indochina – Plans for the Geneva Conference on Korea and Indochina: Quadripartite Communiqué of the Berlin Conference, February 18, 1954, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/inch018.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/inch018.asp) (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example: On the Korean Question Once Again. Statement by V.M. Molotov at the Geneva Meeting of Foreign Ministers, May 11, 1954. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28. Proceedings of the International Meeting of Foreign Ministers on the Restoration of Peace in Korea and Indochina (April–July 1954), vol. 1, sheet 160.

unification, holding free elections, criticizing Syngman Rhee's military ambitions and the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea signed on October 1, 1953.<sup>41</sup> On March 4, the Chinese government officially announced its consent to participate in the conference.<sup>42</sup>

Syngman Rhee was not informed about the details of the negotiations in Berlin. He was given a copy of the agreement on the evening of February 19. The US Ambassador to Seoul, Ellis Briggs, reported to Washington that the South Korean president looked "more saddened than angry" after reading the document. He agreed with the proposed approaches to organizing the conference and said he was sure that the talks would ultimately fail.<sup>43</sup> However, the participation of the South Korean delegation in this conference remained in doubt until April 18, 1954, when Seoul issued an official statement on its intention to send representatives to Geneva in exchange for Washington promising to expand its aid to South Korea (Yungblyud et al. 2019).<sup>44</sup>

The acquiescence of the United States on the Korea issue was the result of a combination of factors. *First*, such a compromise did not contradict Washington's strategic line in the Asia-Pacific, which had been formed well before the Berlin Forum (in July–November 1953) during highly tense negotiations between the Eisenhower administration and South Korean President Syngman Rhee, when US diplomacy had to resolve a number of tasks at the same time – first and foremost, the creation of a regional system to contain communism. And South Korea played a key role in this. During these negotiations, the United States developed general policy principles for the Korean Peninsula (NSC 154/1 and NSC 170/1), which recognized the existence of two Koreas and an official demilitarized zone. The plan did not provide for unification. This approach formed the foundation of the US position in the run up to the Geneva Conference, and was an argument in favour of the political justification of the policy of appeasing Syngman Rhee in late 1953 and early 1954 (Yungblyud et al. 2019). At this stage in its relations with South Korea, the United States was able to clearly limit its allied obligations to maintaining the status quo on the peninsula, effectively ruling out the possibility of situations arising in which it would have to "defend the result of a revisionist move" by South Korea (Kim 2011: 362, Rapp-Hooper 2020: ch. 2).

The second significant circumstance that prompted the US leadership to show flexibility and prudence was the attitude of its European allies, primarily Great Britain and France, which were intent on achieving the speedy normalization of the situation in Korea. The pressure exerted by this side so great that Washington could not ignore

<sup>41</sup> Preliminary Opinions on the Assessment of and Preparation for the Geneva Conference, Prepared by the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (drafted by PRC Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai) [Excerpt], March 2, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 206-Y0054. Translated by Chen Zhihong, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111963> (accessed December 7, 2020); "The Geneva Conference of 1954. New Evidence from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16: 11–13, [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin16\\_p1\\_1.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin16_p1_1.pdf) (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>42</sup> Soviet–Chinese Relations. 1952–1955 (Moscow: Knigograd, 2015), 171–172.

<sup>43</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI. Wash.: GPO, 1981: 18–19.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*: 104.

it, as both its regional plans and its entire global strategy hinged on strong relations with these allies. In this context, the position of Great Britain, a key player in NATO that was capable of swaying Australia and New Zealand, which had entered into ANZUS Treaty with the United States in 1951, was particularly significant (Robb et al 2019: ch. 6).

The decision on the procedure for convening the political conference in Korea and on which countries would take part in it was thus the result of the Soviet desire to bring the People's Republic of China into the circle of great powers, the opposition of the US leadership to these intentions and its desire to assert its leading role in the coalition, the French hopes that it could get itself out of the mess in Indochina, and the desire of Great Britain to reach a compromise. In the end, the Berlin Conference allowed the sides to break the deadlock that had emerged in the dialogue between the American and Chinese sides in Panmunjom.

#### 4

Work on the development of an American plan for Korean settlement, slated for discussion at the Conference, started in March 1954. The United States proceeded from its previous proposals, which were contained in UN General Assembly resolutions passed in 1947–1953, particularly Resolution No. 376. This document provided for the creation of a United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea made up of representatives from Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey.<sup>45</sup> This approach gave a certain legitimacy to Washington's proposals, allowing the sides to support the South Korean position.<sup>46</sup>

The US plan was based on Memorandum NSC-154/1, which had been approved by Eisenhower on July 3, 1953.<sup>47</sup> The National Security Council optimistically believed that the Communists might agree to its proposals, since an independent Korea, small and weakened by the war, did not pose a serious threat to them. Far more dangerous for both China and the Soviet Union would be the deployment of US military bases in the south of the peninsula. What is more, a settlement agreement would prove the peaceful nature of China's foreign policy and pave the way for economic sanctions to be eased and for negotiations on the issue of Taiwan to be opened.<sup>48</sup> The loss of the "North Korean satellite" would certainly be a reputational blow, but that would be offset by the money the country would save by not having to rebuild the North

<sup>45</sup> Resolutions Adopted on the Reports of the First Committee. 376 (V). *The Problem of the Independence of Korea*, <https://undocs.org/ru/A/RES/376%28V%29> (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>46</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 68.

<sup>47</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1341–1343.

<sup>48</sup> Korean Political Conference. Analysis of Bargaining Strength of Both Sides. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/3–354.

alone.<sup>49</sup> The Americans attempted to avoid their intractability being perceived around the world as negatively as the intransigence of the Communists was.<sup>50</sup>

The idea was to unify Korea by joining the North to the South under the supervision of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea. The United States intended to negotiate from a position of strength, and the proposed approach was clearly unacceptable to the Communists, who did not support any of the UN resolutions on Korea. Moscow and Beijing saw the project to create a neutral Korea, spun as a significant concession, as an attempt to create a state that was hostile to them, even though the new country would be neutral in name only (Volkhova 2015). They were well aware of the fanatical anti-communism of Syngman Rhee, which made achieving unification without any blood being shed impossible. They were also aware of the potential threat of maintaining close ties with the United States and a unified Korean state, not to mention the fact that such a turn of events would quite easily transform the “victory of the camp of peace” slogan into a statement of obvious defeat.<sup>51</sup>

In early April, the wheels were put in motion for a discussion of the ideas put forward by the National Security Council and the Department of State with the United States’ partners in the UN coalition. Seoul, which was busy negotiating concessions in exchange for participation in the Geneva Conference, refrained from participating in consultations with the United States. Washington put this down to Syngman Rhee’s desire to retain a modicum of freedom in his manoeuvres.<sup>52</sup>

John Foster Dulles consulted personally with his colleagues from Great Britain and France, visiting London and Paris in mid-April 1954. During the talks, the Secretary of State stressed the unwavering position of the United States and called for its allies to at least start supporting the US plan and the proposals of South Korea, believing that this would create space for bargaining with the Communists.

As the Geneva Conference opened, France still had not formulated a clear position on the Korean issue. Even so, Washington was counting on its support in exchange for US assistance on the Indochina question.<sup>53</sup> Representatives of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations criticized the US plans. They strongly objected to the American plan, even if it was only to be tabled as a tactical measure, and did not support the idea of giving power over the entire country to the South. What the Commonwealth was looking for was the creation of a single Korean state on the basis of

<sup>49</sup> For example, on August 3, 1953, the *Central Committee of the Communist Party* of the Soviet Union allocated 1 billion roubles for the restoration of North Korea. See: “Protocol No. 22 of a Meeting of the Special Committee Under the Council of Ministers of the USSR,” History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the President of the Russian Federation, August 3, 1953, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112931> (accessed December 7, 2020).

<sup>50</sup> Ogburn to Robertson. March 2, 1954 // U. S. National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/3–254.

<sup>51</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XV. Part 2: 1345.

<sup>52</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 93.

<sup>53</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 93.

a new constitution.<sup>54</sup> Anticipating a breakdown in the unification talks, Great Britain proposed negotiating at least interim agreements with the Communists to reduce international tension, mitigate the consequences of the impasse, and achieve progress in resolving the issue.<sup>55</sup> America's partners in the Korean War were unwilling to continue the hefty price of uniting the country exclusively on the terms put forward by the South (Lee 1995: 253).<sup>56</sup>

A basis for potential compromise was proposed by US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia U. Alexis Johnson, who had previously worked in the Department of State's Far East Bureau and coordinated the activities of the US delegation at the Geneva Conference. Johnson suggested holding simultaneous elections in the North and the South to the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea on the basis of South Korean law. In addition, the process could be supplemented by parallel elections for an all-Korean president. This approach would not undermine the state foundations of the South, may very well meet the approval of Syngman Rhee, and could gain sufficient international support.<sup>57</sup>

Dulles backed the proposal. As a result, the American side arrived at the Geneva Conference with no fewer than three potential settlement plans. The first (Plan A) was based on the position of Syngman Rhee and involved the annexation of the North by the South. The second (Plan B) was a compromise, and was based on Johnson's proposal. Plan C, the most acceptable for the Commonwealth countries, was to hold general elections to the Constituent Assembly and create a new Korean state. All three plans provided for the gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Korean territory; however, in the first two cases, the withdrawal process would begin (but not end) before elections were held. This was not enough for Syngman Rhee. The South Korean delegation in Geneva was instructed to agree to nothing less than the complete withdrawal of the Chinese Communists from Korea. This was a matter of principle. It was thus necessary to get the Americans to promise not to reach a settlement until that demand had been satisfied.<sup>58</sup> Washington was not prepared to do this.<sup>59</sup>

An important difference between Plan C and the other two plans was that it would be implemented under the supervision of a new commission created especially for the purpose, and not the existing United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea. The tactics of the US delegation should have been to wait for the Communists to make the first moves before tabling its Plan A. After the Com-

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.: 81, 93–94.

<sup>55</sup> MacArthur to the Secretary. March 31, 1954. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/3–3154.

<sup>56</sup> For more on Winston Churchill's stance on the matter, see: Peter G. Boyle, ed., *The Churchill Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953–1955* (Chapel Hill; London: UNC Press, 1990), 41–42, 59. On the differences within the ranks of the "coalition of unequals," [Pembroke 2018: 140–141].

<sup>57</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 94.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: 146.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: 116.

unist proposal and the American Plan A proved unacceptable, the United States got ready to put forward Plan B as a compromise. Plan C was seen as a backup, only to be used if the Communists showed a genuine desire to reach a compromise on the Korean question.<sup>60</sup>

## 5

The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China set about coordinating their positions in early spring 1954. On March 6, Minister of Foreign Affairs and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Vyacheslav Molotov opened the conversation with the Chinese Ambassador to the Soviet Union Zhang Wentian by asking whether it made sense to put forward a proposal to create a single provisional government for the whole of Korea with equal representation of the North and the South. At the same time, Molotov intimated that he was aware that Kim Il-sung would not welcome the holding of general elections.<sup>61</sup>

Consequently, Moscow and Beijing agreed that North Korea should propose a plan for the peaceful unification of the country during the first days of the conference. The first step would be to withdraw all foreign troops from the peninsula within six months. During this time, a special commission should be set up consisting of representatives of both Koreas to develop electoral law, ensure the freedom to hold a general election, and establish relations between North Korea and South Korea. All countries involved in the conflict would assist in this.<sup>62</sup>

The requirement to develop a new electoral law was of fundamental importance, since the majority system that existed in South Korea effectively guaranteed that the right forces would emerge victorious in any South Korean elections. Given the ratio of the population of the North to the South, this would make the results of all-Korean elections easy to predict. The final Soviet programme (its Plan A), supported by the Chinese leadership, included reaching agreements on holding general elections and the unification of Korea. Plan B called for maintaining the status quo, the phased withdrawal of foreign troops and the development of inter-Korean relations.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 131–139.

<sup>61</sup> "Telegram, PRC Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian to the PRC Foreign Ministry, Zhou Enlai and the CCP Central Committee, 'Reporting the Preliminary Opinions of Our Side on the Geneva Conference to the Soviet Side,' 6 March 1954," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (2008): 13.

<sup>62</sup> "The Restoration of the National Unity of Korea and the Holding of National Elections," 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. AVPRF. F. 06. Op. 13, D. 5. Papka 69: 13–20. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg, <https://digital-archive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114942> (accessed December 7, 2020); FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 150; The Korean Problem at Geneva Conference. April 26 – June 15, 1954. Washington GPO, 1954: 39–40.

<sup>63</sup> "From the Journal of [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M.] Molotov: Secret Memorandum of Conversation between Molotov and PRC Ambassador [to the Soviet Union] Zhang Wentian, 6 March 1954," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (2008): 86.

An American analysis of the potential tasks of the Communists in Geneva drawn up by Department of State official Walter J. Stoessel Jr.<sup>64</sup> summarized the goals of the delegations of the countries of the Soviet camp as follows:

- 1) to secure China's status as a great power;
- 2) to secure the withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea;
- 3) to maintain the *status quo* on the peninsula;
- 4) to sow discord within the ranks of the allies of the United States;
- 5) to take advantage of the Geneva Conference as a platform for propaganda.<sup>65</sup>

The wording of the third point indicates that the American side had only a basic understanding of the essence of the Soviet strategy: the plan agreed upon by Moscow, Beijing and Pyongyang was initially aimed at unification, not consolidating the pre-war status quo. It assumes the possibility of maintaining control over the Korean Peninsula, which is why such importance was afforded to measures that were to be taken during the transitional period – it was about creating conditions for the unification of Korea and the subsequent establishment of socialism in the country. The preservation of the pre-war situation, including the line of the state border between the Koreans along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, was allowed, but it was not a priority.

Neither the Soviet Union nor China were going to abandon the North Korean regime and its leader Kim Il-sung. Both Moscow and Beijing realized the importance of strengthening the socialist system. Accordingly, strengthening unity among communist parties and socialist states was one of the top priorities, and the two sides were extremely earnest in their pursuit of this goal. Modern historians note that, on important international issues, the Chinese and Soviet leaders carefully consulted with each other in order to align their strategies and political aspirations. In the run-up to the conference, note Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong, Zhou Enlai visited Moscow on two separate occasions to take part in a series of meetings with Soviet leaders, which resulted in a well-coordinated Sino-Soviet strategy on the Korean and Indochinese issues (Chen Jian et al. 1998: 258). Shi Zhe, who witnessed these events first hand, confirms this conclusion (Galenovich 2018: 575–581). On the eve of the Geneva Conference, and indeed throughout the entire proceedings, the contacts between the Soviet and Chinese delegations aroused great interest on the part of European and American observers, who tried, unsuccessfully, to detect signs of inconsistency in them, or of one side dominating the other. According to US diplomats and intelligence officers “there were no reliable indications that the Sino-Soviet balance of power in Korean affairs represented a major source of friction between the two powers” (Kim Heesu 1996: 145).

<sup>64</sup> Walter J. Stoessel Jr. served as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1974–1976.

<sup>65</sup> Soviet Objectives at the Korean Political Conference. U. S. National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/3–1054.

## 6

Talks at the Geneva Conference on the Korean issue commenced on April 27, 1954. The American side immediately tried to steer the proceedings from an open exchange of views towards a more formal structure. To begin with, Eden, Dulles and Bidault agreed that those who wanted to deliver opening remarks had to lodge a formal request before noon on April 29 in order to be allowed to speak. The second step was to hold consultations involving the United States, China, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and North and South Korea. Tellingly, Dulles used the phrase “five powers” when tabling this proposal, which was not used in the official American rhetoric. Nevertheless, from the very beginning of the conference, the American side tried in every way possible to belittle the importance of the People’s Republic of China as a participant in the negotiations, which was reflected both in the seating arrangement of the delegation members, and in Dulles’ defiant refusal to shake hands with Zhou Enlai (Miyoshi Jager 2013: 304).

As a starting point for the negotiations with the Communists, Dulles proposed the neutralization and demilitarization of North Korea in exchange for the withdrawal of US troops from the Korean Peninsula and the abolishment of plans to deploy US military bases in Korea. Eden did not support this idea, suggesting that preliminary consultations should be held with the other coalition members. Bidault made it clear that he was particularly interested in making quick progress in the negotiations, so that attention could then be turned to the issue of Indochina.<sup>66</sup> The South Korean delegation sided with the Americans.<sup>67</sup>

On May 2, 1954, a closed informal meeting of the foreign ministers of the five powers and the two Koreas was held. The discussion revolved around the issue of all-Korean elections. Molotov and Zhou Enlai rejected the idea of holding elections under the supervision of the United Nations, citing the fact that the latter was itself a party to the conflict. In turn, the American and South Korean delegations were not happy with the idea of North and South Korea being equally represented in the electoral commission proposed by the Communists.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 152.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.: 174. The position of the South Korean side was set out in greater detail in the “Statement of Byeon Yeong-tae, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, April 27, 1954.” Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 1, sheet 4–5.

<sup>68</sup> The plan submitted by the North Korean delegation provided for the holding of all-Korean elections to the National Assembly, the creation of a government of the united Korea, the formation of an all-Korean electoral commission consisting of representatives from the North and the South, the development of an all-Korean electoral law, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Korean Peninsula within six months. See: Telegram of V. Kuznetsov to the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs “On the Restoration of National Unity and the Holding of Free All-Korean Elections” dated April 27, 1954. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 1, sheet 18–19; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI. P. 176; Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia: Joint Draft Resolution. October 2, 1950, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1478294> (accessed December 7, 2020).

Following the meeting, Dulles concluded that he did not see any cracks in the monolithic position of the opposing side, nor did he observe the desire of the Communists to change their position in any way.<sup>69</sup> The obvious failure of the negotiation formats that had initially seemed the most promising led the American side to refocus its efforts on creating a favourable public opinion. At the start of the conference, it looked like the Communists would win in this regard: their proposals appeared to be more balanced than the US-backed South Korean position. In their public statements, Eisenhower and Dulles described the Communist plan for the unification of Korea as a “Chinese copy” of the Soviet scheme for the unification of Germany and pointed out that voting in any countrywide elections could not be weighted equally among the North and South Korean sides, because South Korea had a larger population.<sup>70</sup> The US allies repeated these concerns at the meetings in Geneva.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, speeches were heard in the US Senate on the inadmissibility of compromises with “Communist imperialism” – “satanic masters of intrigue and infiltration.”<sup>72</sup>

While this was happening, the positions of the UN coalition members on the American Plan B were being coordinated.<sup>73</sup> In a short period of time, representatives of the US delegation held a series of meetings with its allies, managing to get representatives of Canada, the Netherlands and Ethiopia to speak in defence of South Korea’s position at the next plenary session. The Canadian Lester B. Pearson made a mark when he compared the accusations of US aggression with the propaganda attacks of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany against Poland in September 1939, and stated that the North Korean Plan gave no hope for the creation of a free, united, democratic Korea.<sup>74</sup>

The main work on coordinating the proposals of the states of the “free world” was carried out within the framework of US–South Korea negotiations, which confirmed the forecasts of US experts who warned that the South Korean delegation would block attempts to come to an agreement on a unification that would violate the sovereignty of South Korea or lead to the neutralization of the country. In order to ensure prompt communication with Syngman Rhee, Dulles sent Arthur Dean to Seoul as his personal emissary.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>69</sup> FRUS, 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 177.

<sup>70</sup> Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 83d Congress. Second Session. Vol. 100. Part 5. Washington: GPO, 1954: 6233.

<sup>71</sup> Statement by Eden, Head of the British Delegation. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 2, sheet 62.

<sup>72</sup> Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 83d Congress. Second Session. Vol. 100. Part 5. Washington: GPO, 1954: 6577.

<sup>73</sup> FRUS, 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 161–162; T. Kenneth. Young to Johnson and Robertson. Presentation of Draft Proposal on Korea. May 5, 1954. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/5–554.

<sup>74</sup> Statement by Mr. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, May 4, 1954. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 1, Doc. No. 17, sheet 108, 111; FRUS, 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 196–200.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.: 115–117.

As Henry Brands notes, Syngman Rhee employed his usual tactics during the conference, making threats, erupting into rages, resorting to insults, weeping, and putting forward unrealistically high demands (Brands 1987: 75). The difficulties created by the South Korean leader caused the Americans to fear that one of the delegations would put forward a proposal similar to their Plan B: to hold all-Korean elections under the supervision of the United Nations with the simultaneous phased withdrawal of foreign troops. Such a turn of events could well have received wide public support in the United States and around the world, thus undermining the position of Washington, which officially continued to support Plan A.<sup>76</sup>

The international situation did not favour making concessions to Syngman Rhee. On May 7, 1954, French troops capitulated at Điện Biên Phủ. While Syngman Rhee was taken aback by this news,<sup>77</sup> it only strengthened his confidence in his importance to the United States and inspired him to put new conditions forward, notably the demand for the full surrender of the Korean People's Army (Brands 1987: 79).

In early May, it became clear that the US delegation was not in a position to bring up the programme that had been coordinated with the South Korean authorities for discussion. There were also numerous disagreements within the US-led camp. Given this state of affairs, the Americans decided to focus on criticizing the proposals put forward by the Communists. The settlement plan suggested by North Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs Nam Il was a somewhat awkward target. And the fierce criticism the Communists levelled at the United Nations and the role it had played in the Korean problem were not welcomed in Western Europe or in South Korea. As a result, the American side spent most of its time defending the United Nations.

The US delegation spent the last three weeks of the conference narrowing down the issues up for discussion to that of the UN's powers. This approach put Washington in a vulnerable position. Seeking to achieve a real compromise, Anthony Eden made great efforts to persuade the North Koreans to formally agree to the United Nations playing a peacekeeping role, promoting the ideas that formed the foundations of the American Plan C.<sup>78</sup> Reporting to the Chinese Foreign Ministry on the progress of the negotiations, Zhou Enlai noted that Eden's proposals had been met with indifference, and while it was obvious that he was trying to achieve a deal, the possibility of counter concessions could still be detected in his proposals.<sup>79</sup> At one point, the Americans started to believe that the British contingent might be able to persuade the Communist

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.: 222.

<sup>77</sup> Drumright to the Secretary. Discussion with President Rhee. July 23, 1954 // U. S. National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4294. 795.00/7–2354.

<sup>78</sup> On May 13, Eden proposed five principles for resolving the Korean question, and mentioned the expediency of clearly defining the conditions for the withdrawal of UN troops from the South and including representatives of neutral, non-belligerent states in the UN election observation mission. See: Statement by Eden, Head of the British Delegation. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 2, sheet 63–64; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 264.

<sup>79</sup> "Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others, Regarding the Situation at the Tenth Plenary Session, 14 May 1954," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (2008): 19.

side to agree to a compromise: a concession from them would immediately put the United States in a difficult position. But the demands of North Korea, China and the Soviet Union regarding the United Nations were unwavering: the coalition forces must leave Korean territory six months before elections are held, and the elections in the North must be supervised by an “acceptable” commission, not one sent by the United Nations.<sup>80</sup>

Unlike the United States, which was already seriously considering closing the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference, the Communists had not abandoned its attempts to reach a compromise.<sup>81</sup> On May 15, consultations were held between the heads of the Soviet, Chinese and North Korean delegations. The participants in the meeting came to the conclusion that the negotiations would likely end in a deadlock if the Americans continued to insist on the withdrawal of troops after, not before, countrywide elections and that the elections be held under UN supervision. One compromise solution suggested by the Communists was to have elections supervised by neutral countries.<sup>82</sup> Another issue of fundamental importance was the preliminary development of a new electoral law by an inter-Korean commission made up of an equal number of representatives from North and South Korea.<sup>83</sup>

These proposals were presented at the plenary meeting held on May 22, 1954, but were shot down almost immediately by a barrage of criticism from South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Byeon Yeong-tae,<sup>84</sup> who said that the plan would only help the Communists infiltrate the South and seize power there.<sup>85</sup> That same day, the South Korean delegation presented its 14-point plan for unification, the bulk of which was unacceptable to North Korea. The document was tabled in a defiantly uncompromising manner, and the American delegation fully supported it.<sup>86</sup>

In late May 1954, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Prince Wan Wai-thayakon, proposed a compromise: to create a special body of representatives of interested countries (most likely the Soviet Union, the United States, France, Great Britain,

<sup>80</sup> These demands were reiterated by Zhou Enlai and Nam Il during the meeting on and were not subject to discussion. See: Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 2, sheet 134–135, 143, 145; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 262.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: 314.

<sup>82</sup> Supervisory functions could be taken over by the existing Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

<sup>83</sup> “Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others, Requesting Instructions on the Korean Issue and Regarding the Situation at the Fourth Plenary Session on the Indochina Issue, May 15, 1954,” History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 206-Y0049. Translated by Gao Bei, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110623> (accessed December 7, 2020); “Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others, Requesting Instructions on the Korean Issue and Regarding the Situation at the Fourth Plenary Session on the Indochina Issue, 15 May 1954,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (2008): 23.

<sup>84</sup> Byeon Yeong-tae would go on to become Prime Minister of South Korea from June to November 1954.

<sup>85</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 313.

<sup>86</sup> The key provisions of this plan involved holding all-Korean elections in accordance with South Korean law, by proportional representation, under the supervision of the United Nations. UN troops were expected to remain in Korean territory for the duration of this process. “Proposal of the Republic of Korea for the Unification of Korea on May 22, 1954; Speech by General Walter Bedell Smith, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States of America, May 28, 1954.” Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 3, sheet 2–6, 67–74.

China, North Korea and South Korea) to continue negotiations “whenever prospects improve.”<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile, the United States had by that time already decided that an agreement with the Communists was impossible.<sup>88</sup> Walter Bedell Smith, who was heading up the US delegation at this stage, reported to Washington on May 22 that terminating negotiations on the Korean issue could be presented as evidence of the refusal of the Communist side to negotiate. He also noted that such a turn of events would please the South Korean authorities and create more favourable conditions for the United States in the upcoming negotiations on Indochina.<sup>89</sup> Prince Wan Waithayakon’s proposal did not fit in with this line. The Americans feared that agreeing to this format would displease Syngman Rhee, help legitimize China’s role as one of the five great powers, and reduce the prestige of the United Nations. They thus opposed a “second phase” of Korean negotiations in any way, shape or form.<sup>90</sup>

At a meeting of members of the UN coalition on June 4, the Americans proposed setting up a meeting with the Communists behind closed doors to get them to agree to the unification of Korea after free elections monitored and supervised by the United Nations. In the event that the opposite side refused to agree this, or gave “false consent,” the plenary meeting following the closed-doors meeting would be the last one in the Korean part of the Geneva Conference. Anthony Eden, having enlisted the support of the Commonwealth delegates, proposed that the key element of this ultimatum be the consent of the Communists to free elections, but the delegates of the Philippines, the Netherlands, Turkey, Belgium, Greece and South Korea favoured the American position, and the idea for the United Nations to play a decisive role in the process remained the most important point on the agenda.<sup>91</sup>

It is telling that the Soviet, Chinese and North Korean delegates, who had heard that this discussion had taken place, took it as a sign that some US allies were attempting to resist the efforts of the United States and South Korea to disrupt the Geneva talks, and thus decided to continue their work on developing compromise solutions.<sup>92</sup> In this regard, an attempt to agree on the general principles of the settlement was nevertheless made – at the initiative of the Communists. The delegates of the socialist countries decided to make their initial proposal more general in nature, leaving all points of contention out to be discussed at a later date. Zhou Enlai reported to Beijing that the goal of the three delegations was to give the UN coalition as little reason as possible to reject the new proposal. If the proposal was met with another “no,” then the

<sup>87</sup> “Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Prince Wan Waithayakon.” Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 3, 62–64; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 315.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*: 300.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*: 314–315.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*: 327.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*: 342–344.

<sup>92</sup> “Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others, Regarding the Situation at the Fourteenth Plenary Session, June 13, 1954,” History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 206-Y050. Translated by Gao Bei, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111496> (accessed December 7, 2020).

Communists would take this as a clear sign that the United States and its allies were not going to agree to anything.<sup>93</sup> On June 5, Molotov presented the updated proposal Communists, which was aimed at compromise and the rapprochement of positions on a number of issues, at the 13th plenary session of the Geneva Convention.<sup>94</sup>

Dulles was sceptical about the news, informing those present in Geneva that Molotov's proposal would only make it possible to resolve one of the many contentious issues. The Secretary of State was particularly unhappy with the Communists' continued disregard of the role of the United Nations – the Soviet proposal called for elections to be held under the supervision of an “appropriate international commission.”<sup>95</sup> Given the difficulties in formulating a common position among the members of the UN coalition, as well as the constant threats of Syngman Rhee to send the South Korean delegation, Dulles advised that the coalition to no longer “play this dangerous game of Molotov's.”<sup>96</sup>

US fears were amplified after Smith held an informal conversation with Molotov and discovered that by “appropriate international commission,” the latter meant a body that was half made up of Communists. The Americans managed to rally the support of the allies, who recognized that the Soviet proposals may have looked attractive, but they did not tackle fundamental issues and would only confuse the international community. The US allies no longer saw the need for a closed meeting.<sup>97</sup> After this, the only thing left was to decide on the tactics of bringing the negotiations to a conclusion.<sup>98</sup>

The final meeting of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference took place on June 15, 1954. The Americans and their allies completely sabotaged the attempts of the Communists to agree on the general principles for a Korean settlement, or at least a joint statement of intent to continue working to restore unity to the peninsula.<sup>99</sup>

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It is widely believed in historiography that the ineffectiveness of the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference was due to the prominent of Cold War manoeuvring, the incompatibility of the positions of the Communists and the countries of the “free world,” and the unwillingness of the two sides to budge on any of the major issues. Russian researchers tend to focus on the fact that the Communist delegations were more willing to negotiate. V. Batyuk notes the “irreproachability” of the actions of the Soviet diplomats, who “managed to bring their ally, Communist China, out of isolation” and

<sup>93</sup> “Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others, Regarding the Situation at the Ninth Restricted Session, 1 June 1954,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (2008): 30.

<sup>94</sup> Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union V.M. Molotov, June 5, 1954. Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. File No. 5, Inventory 28, Vol. 3, sheet 133–142, 143–144; FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 351–352.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*: 351.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*: 356.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*: 357–358.

<sup>98</sup> Memorandum for Under Secretary Smith. Termination of Korean Phase. June 1, 1954. US National Archive and Records Administration. RG 59. General Records. Central Decimal File, 1950–1954. Box 4293. 795.00/6–154.

<sup>99</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. XVI: 381.

successfully resist American settlement plans, using the “language of classical diplomacy” for this purpose (Batyuk 2018: 63).

Despite these attempts, the political conference convened with the goal of ending the war to reunify Korea ended in vain. No peace agreement was signed, and Korea remains divided to this day. The Korean problem effectively served as a pretext for bringing the foreign ministers of belligerent powers to the negotiating table, determine the *status quo* on the Korean Peninsula, and shift the focus of attention to Indochina. While the final document of the Geneva Conference did reflect compromise, the intransigence of the American side forced the Soviet delegation to deviate significantly from its original position, and the content of the document was close to the provisions of UN General Assembly Resolution 711.<sup>100</sup>

South Korean historian Byung Yong Yu notes that “the political conference on the unification of Korea in Geneva was expected to fail. None of the great powers was willing to pay an excessively high price for the unification of Korea. All the parties represented in Geneva were interested in maintaining the status quo” (cit. ex: Torkunov et al 2008: 185; see also: Urnov 2012: 66; Yong-Pyo Hong 2000: 71). Was that really the case? What prevented a peace document from being signed?

Odd Arne Westad quite reasonably notes that the delegations that participated in the Geneva meetings – North Korea and South Korea – did not see such an outcome as a blessing. The leaders of these states, Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee, objected to a truce. They were intent on achieving the liberation of the whole country (Westad 2019: 180) and wanted to see Korea as a single state under their rule. Another modern researcher notes that China has traditionally seen Korea as part of the China-centric world (Pardo 2020: 19), and the Geneva Conference was spun as a success in Beijing, especially since Chinese volunteer fighters, having shared the hardships of war with North Korea, had suffered heavy losses, and representatives of the Chinese delegation were dismissed outright by US diplomats.

While representatives of 19 states were present at the negotiating table in Geneva in later April 1954, the talks were bilateral, between two coalitions. This proved to be a serious challenge for the United States, due to the complex structure of the coalition it was heading up.

The functioning of military-political alliances “implies a combination of elements of cooperation and competition” (Istomin 2017b: 7), the balance of which may change over time. These properties are particularly evident during periods of transition from war to peace, when, under the influence of the interaction of the participants in the events, “images and definitions of the situation” are constructed that can directly influence the institutionalization of the results of military operations and political processes (Vasquez 2009: 191). One such result was the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea, which in October 1953 formalized a bilateral

<sup>100</sup> FRUS. 1952–1954. Vol. VII. Part 1: 1225.

“stereotypical asymmetric alliance” within the UN coalition (Istomin 2017a: 101), created so that Washington could use it in the future as a “tool of management and control” (Kim 2011: 360, 362). Through this alliance, the Eisenhower administration was able to define South Korea’s place in the US defence strategy. In terms of US interests in the region, the Geneva talks could add little to this particular result.

The “special” relationship that Washington and Seoul enjoyed in the run-up to and throughout the Geneva Conference was a cause of intrigue within the UN coalition. Most of the coalition members were interested in a speedy end to the conflict and the elimination of conditions that could lead to escalation. The threat of a new world war, this time with nuclear weapons, was taken very seriously. And the source of this threat was considered to be both the Communist offensive and the militancy of the South Korean leadership. Acting as the patron in the US–South Korea tandem allowed the United States to keep a leash on Syngman Rhee’s adventurism. At the same time, the main problem for them was the growth in the prestige and international influence of the communist states. The emergence of China in this regard was particularly irking. Strengthening the unity of the coalition became a top priority for the United States. The work of the UN coalition in the run-up to and during the Geneva Conference was thus focused on “double containment,” that is, to limit the confrontation with its adversaries (the Soviet Union, China and North Korea) and within the allied camp itself (specifically with South Korea) (on “double containment” alliances, see (Istomin 2017a: 98)).

In order to properly understand the outcomes of the Geneva Conference, one must look at the nature of the Korean War itself – a civil war that gained an international dimension almost immediately. The modern historian Donald Stoker categorizes the Korean War as a limited confrontation. The main difference between a “limited” war and an “unlimited” war, in Stoker’s opinion, is the political goals set by the warring parties. A war become unlimited if it is waged for the sake of changing the existing regime (Stoker 2019: 65).

Looking at the history of the Korean War through the prism of this typology allows us to explain some of the nuances of US negotiating tactics. When it entered the war in June 1950, the Truman administration was not looking to conquer North Korea; its goal was to protect South Korea and save the Syngman Rhee regime. Washington’s strategy may have changed as the war progressed, but its goal by the time the Armistice Agreement was signed in July 1953 was to restore the border along the 38th parallel. If it had set itself a more ambitious goal at that time, it would have been running the risk of the hostilities spilling beyond the Korean Peninsula, of nuclear weapons being used, and of other consequences appearing that would have made the future unpredictable and victory in the war unlikely.

A particularly undesirable consequence for the United States would have been the collapse of the UN coalition and the aggravation of contradictions between the Western states that formed its backbone. NATO was barely a year old when the Korean War began, and Washington did not want to risk the integrity of the alliance (see:

Risse-Kappen 2005: 44–56). This is why plans A, B and C prepared for Geneva were not initially considered as a basis for the unification of Korea, not least because of their obvious unacceptability to the other side. Their purpose was to ensure the continued unity of the countries of the “free world” (Brands 1987: 74).

The Eisenhower administration is often criticized for choosing tactics that were too cautious and conservative, for failing to effectively take advantage of the polycentrism that was evident in the socialist camp (Immerman 1990: 65–66). But it was clearly not just the choice of tactics here. It was also the peculiarities of the views of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who, as a rule, did not draw a line between communism and nationalism, convinced that world globalism was a monolithic phenomenon controlled from Moscow, and he would not entertain the notion that China and North Korea could in certain cases be guided by their own interests and act on their own initiative. The tone of intransigence in his communications with the opposite side effectively ruled out any possibility of reaching a compromise. According to eyewitnesses, Dulles flouted diplomatic protocol and completely ignored the head of the Chinese delegation Zhou Enlai at the plenary sessions and “conducted himself with the pinched distaste of a puritan in a house of ill repute” throughout the negotiations.

“Dull, unimaginative, uncomprehending,” Churchill said of Dulles upon learning of his behaviour in Geneva and that he had left the Conference long before it had ended, “so clumsy I hope he will disappear...”<sup>101</sup> The situation at the negotiating table became less tense after the Secretary of State left for Washington, although the overall focus of the dialogue remained virtually unchanged.

The documents available today allow us to conclude that the Soviet side earnestly wanted to achieve a compromise solution to the Korean problem, right up until the very end of that phase of the conference. At the same time, by late May 1954, the United States was motivated by propaganda considerations when making decisions, and was seriously thinking about drawing a line under the negotiations. Consequently, the issue of resolving the Korean issue was put aside, and the Geneva Conference turned into a vehicle for the Americans to pursue its strategy in the northeast Pacific.

Unlike the UN coalition, Moscow and its partners were able to quickly agree on a position on Korea, but this solidity, along with China’s insistence on moving into the “club of great powers,”<sup>102</sup> aroused US suspicion. It was Washington that put an end to the attempts to find a compromise, clearly looking to preserve the divided status of Korea. At the same time, in terms of what the United States wanted to achieve in the war and during the negotiations, the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference can be considered a success of American diplomacy. The Americans managed to get out of a tricky situation without suffering any political losses, deftly manoeuvring between the position adopted by South Korea and global public opinion; they effectively insisted on maintaining the status quo and retained leadership in the UN coalition.

<sup>101</sup> According to the minutes of the Conference, Dulles last attended the meetings on May 2 [Kinzer 2013: 192].

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, *Soviet–Chinese Relations. 1952–1955* (Moscow: Knigograd, 2015), 194.

The Korean phase of the Geneva Conference served to consolidate the division of Korea into two states that were hostile to each other and for which the question of unification would remain closed for decades to come.

#### **About the Authors:**

**Valery T. Yungblud** – Doctor of History, Professor, President of Vyatka State University. Moskovskaya str, 36, 610000, Kirov, Russia. E-mail: yungblud@vyatsu.ru.

**Denis A. Sadakov** – PhD in Historical Sciences, Assistant of the Department of General History and Political Sciences of Vyatka State University. Moskovskaya str, 36, 610000, Kirov, Russia. E-mail: rstk2005@gmail.com.

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The authors declare the absence of any conflicts of interest.

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