

I

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

1. History of the Division of Korea

1— Geography and History of Korea

Protruding into the Pacific at the northeastern tip of the Asian continent, the territory of Korea consists of the Korean peninsula and its adjunctive islands. The peninsula faces Japan across the East Sea in the east and the Korean Strait in the south. In the west and the north, the Yellow Sea and two rivers, the *Amnok* (Yalu) and the *Tuman* (Tumen), make the natural borders between Korea and its neighbors, continental China and Russian Siberia. The total area of the Korean peninsula is 222,154 sq. km. The peninsula runs about 1,100 km from north to south with a maximum width of 320 km and a minimum of 200 km.

The first tribal state on the Korean peninsula was a theocratic kingdom known as *Kochosŏn* or the Ancient Chosŏn which was founded in 2,333 B.C. This date marks the beginning of over 4,300 years of Korean history. After the rise and fall of various tribal states, the Era of the Three Kingdoms began by the early first century B.C. The three major states that sustained a power balance dur-

ing this period were *Koguryŏ* (founded in 37 B.C.), *Paekche* (founded in 18 B.C.), and *Shilla* (founded in 57 B.C.). By A.D. 676, *Shilla* finally defeated the other two kingdoms and created the first unified Korean nation in the history of the peninsula. Afterwards, Korea remained unified for about 1,300 years through the successive reigns of the *Koryŏ* (founded A.D. 918) and the *Chosŏn* (or *Yi*, founded in A.D. 1392) dynasties. Sharing a single culture, tradition, language, and set of beliefs, the Koreans had developed a unique national culture throughout this period. Furthermore, in spite of countless aggressions by various foreign invaders, they were able to preserve national independence for over a thousand years.

At the end of 19th century, however, the Koreans failed to adapt to the new global wave of industrialization. As a result, they lost the chance to build a modern nation-state and suffered the consequences. At the turn of the century the great powers were competing fiercely amongst themselves to exercise influence over the Korean peninsula. Among them was Japan, which had just completed transforming itself into a modern nation through the *Meiji* Restoration of 1867. Having succeeded in developing its economic and military might, Japan made plans to take over the Korean peninsula. After winning the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, it finally annexed Korea by force in 1910.

Under the Japanese rule the Koreans continued their struggle for independence. *The March First Movement*, a nationwide, non-violent uprising against the colonial government, was the highlight of Korean people's efforts for independence. Later, a more organized movement for independence was led by the Provisional Government in Shanghai. In spite of brutal suppression by the Japanese

authorities, the Koreans continued their struggle for independence until the end of World War II when Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allies in August 1945. As a result, Korea finally regained its independence after thirty five years of colonial oppression.

2 — Division of Korea

The Partitioning of the Peninsula by the United States and the Soviet Union

The issue of Korean independence was first introduced in the international arena in the middle of World War II, when in 1943 the Allies began discussions on world peace in the post-war era. In particular, the issue was brought up by the United States while discussing matters regarding the former Japanese colonies in Asia.

On March 3, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull of the United States met with British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to discuss the future of Manchuria, Taiwan, Korea, and Indo-China. At the meeting, President Roosevelt proposed that Manchuria and Taiwan be returned to China while Korea and Indo-China be placed under the trusteeship of the United States, China, and the Soviet Union.

Subsequently, the Korean issue was discussed at the successive meetings held among the Allies to deal with the post-war aftermath: the Cairo Conference and the Teheran Conference, in November 1943, the Yalta Conference in February 1945, and the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. At Cairo, the Allies issued a declaration which stated that “in due course Korea shall become free and independent.” Later, at Teheran, an argument that Korea should be

placed under trusteeship prior to being granted independence was put forward. The issue of trusteeship was further discussed at the Yalta Conference. There the Allies also determined that the Soviet Union should join the other nations in the war against Japan.

At the Potsdam meeting held shortly before the end of the war, the Allies reaffirmed the Cairo Declaration that Korea would be given freedom and independence "in due course." Nevertheless, the Allies' discussion of the Korean issue did not include any agreed details except for a general understanding that Korea would be placed under the trusteeship of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union before being given complete independence.

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. The Soviet Union declared war against Japan on August 8 and began moving into Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. On that same day, the United States dropped the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan. Finally, Japan agreed to an unconditional surrender to the Allies on August 15.

On September 2, General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific, issued General Order No. 1, which stated that the acceptance of the surrender and the disarming of the Japanese troops would be carried out by the Soviet Union in the north of the 38th parallel and by the United States in the south of it. Therefore, it was clear that the 38th parallel was merely meant to be a temporary boundary to be used by the two powers for the military purpose of dealing with the surrendering Japanese troops.

Unfortunately, the United States and the Soviet Union had fundamentally different plans regarding the fate of the peninsula once

they moved into the southern and the northern half of Korea, respectively. These differences arose from the discrepancies in their national interests and international strategies. From the beginning, the Soviet Union had stipulated the political aspect of the 38th parallel. The Soviets hurried to transform the northern half of the peninsula into a communist state. The United States, on the other hand, had only seen the military aspect of the situation. The Americans were mainly concerned with the completion of the Japanese surrender. Once that process was completed, they planned to establish a single government on the Korean peninsula.

The Moscow Conference

While the differences in the Soviet and American policies were gradually consolidating the division of the Korean peninsula, the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met in Moscow on December 16, 1945. At this conference, the three ministers announced the Moscow Protocol on Korea which contained the following four points: (i) The Korean peninsula would be placed under the trusteeship of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union for a maximum length of five years; (ii) An interim government with a uniform administrative authority over the entire Korean peninsula would be established; (iii) The Joint US-USSR Commission would be established to support the interim government through consultation with democratic political parties and social organizations; and (iv) The Joint US-USSR Commission, with the participation of the interim government and democratic organizations, would prepare plans to achieve political, economic, social, and cultural development as well as the indepen-

dence of the Korean people and report the progress to the Trusteeship Council composed of the four powers.

That the placement of trusteeship was officially decided at the Moscow Conference was a shocking news to all Koreans, who had yearned to establish their own independent government. Soon a tide of anti-trusteeship protest swept across the country.

A few days later, however, the communists in the North and the leftists in the South suddenly changed their position, apparently under an instruction from Moscow. They publically announced their support for the trusteeship. The Soviets and the Korean communists in the North were convinced that they could easily communize the peninsula once the trusteeship took effect.

The Joint US-USSR Commission

The representatives of the US and Soviet armies met in Seoul from January 16 to February 5, 1946. In the same year, the first meeting of the Joint US-USSR Commission was also held in Seoul from March 20 to May 8, which was followed by the second meeting which convened on May 21 one year later.

The Joint Commission, however, ended in failure due to the Soviet demand for exclusion of anti-trusteeship organizations from the interim government. They insisted that only those organizations that supported the trusteeship be allowed to participate in the formation of the government. This meant that only the communists and their sympathizers would be eligible to take part in the process. After numerous confrontations and conflicts, the Joint Commission was finally dissolved on October 18, 1947.

The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK)

When its attempt to resolve the Korean question through the Joint US-USSR Commission failed, the United States decided to refer the issue to the United Nations. Being convinced by then that submission to the United Nations was the only way to resolve the Korean question, the United States submitted it to the General Assembly on September 17, 1947.

Subsequently, on November 14, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution on the Korean question. The resolution stated that (i) The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) would be established to oversee a fair election throughout Korea, (ii) A general election according to population ratio would be held in Korea prior to March 31, 1948, under the observation of the UNTCOK; the election would be based on universal suffrage and secret ballot, (iii) The government and National Assembly would be formed as quickly as possible after the election, and (iv) The foreign troops would withdraw from the peninsula within 90 days after the formation of the government.

On January 8, 1948, the UNTCOK arrived in Seoul and began its activities. However, the Soviet military authorities that were occupying the north refused the commission's entry into the region under their control. The United Nations' effort to establish a unified Korean government, therefore, ended in failure due to Soviet interference.

Birth of the ROK and the DPRK

Having realized the sad reality that the establishment of a single

government would be next to impossible at that time, the United Nations convened a committee meeting and decided to postpone the election in the North until it would become feasible while holding an election within the area accessible to the UNTCOK. Subsequently, under the monitoring of the United Nations a general election was held in the South on May 10, 1948, and, as a result, the Constitutional Assembly was formed. On July 17, the Assembly promulgated the constitution and elected Dr. Syngman Rhee the first president of the new republic. With the new president, the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) was formally inaugurated on August 15, 1948. In the meantime, however, the North, under the Soviet guidance, had already established a Soviet-style political structure that functioned as an independent government.

After the breakup of the Joint US-USSR Commission, the United Nations passed the resolution for the establishment of the UNTCOK and a general election in Korea. Consequently, the North refused the entry of the UNTCOK and hurried to inaugurate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In April 1948, the North Korean People's Congress adopted a draft for the constitution. Following the communist agenda, the North quickly organized the North Korean Workers' Party and North Korean People's Assembly. The North Korean People's Army had already been founded on February 8, 1948. On August 25, 1948, North Korea held an election for the Supreme People's Assembly and officially announced the Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 8. The DPRK government was inaugurated on September 9 with Kim Il-sung as its head.

With the birth of two separate governments, the division of the Korean peninsula had become an undeniable reality. Nonetheless,

the United Nations recognized the ROK government which was established under a UN resolution as the sole legitimate sovereignty on the peninsula. At its third meeting, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to invite ROK delegation to a UN committee meeting. Consequently, the ROK government was able to dispatch a delegation to the United Nations for the first time in the country's history. On December 12, the General Assembly adopted, by a vote of 48 to 6 with 1 abstention, General Assembly Resolution No. 195 which reaffirmed that the ROK was the sole legitimate government on the Korean peninsula. Soon after, the United States and many other nations in the free world also recognized the ROK government, giving the ROK the endorsement of the international community.

3 — The Korean War and Geneva Conference

The Outbreak and Development

Well before the birth of two governments on the peninsula, the communists in the North, with strong support from the Soviet Union, had begun planning for the communization of the entire peninsula by means of military force. Subsequently, the North Koreans organized the People's Army and continued their military build-up thereafter.

In South Korea, however, efforts to reinforce the national defense met with various difficulties due to political confusion, the weak economy, and the reluctant support of the United States. Furthermore, the announcement of the complete withdrawal of US forces from South Korea by the end of June 1949 and the emergence of a

communist regime in the continental China in October 1949, became an overwhelming concern for the South Koreans. On January 12, 1950, the U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated before the National Press Club in Washington D.C. that the American defence perimeter in the Pacific would no longer includes the Korean peninsula. This further encouraged the North Korean communists to lay out their scheme for military invasion.

Heavily armed with Soviet tanks and jet fighters, the North Korean forces unleashed a surprise full-front attack on the South in June 25. Seoul, the capital of South Korea, fell into the communists' hands within three days after of outbreak of the war. The North Korean forces continued to advance southward and occupied almost the entire area of South Korea within two months.

Entry of the UN Forces

Upon the outbreak of the Korean War, the United Nations immediately convened the Security Council, which adopted a resolution that defined the North Korean invasion as an act of aggression to destroy peace. The resolution also urged the North Korean communists to stop their hostile actions and demanded them to withdraw back to north of the 38th parallel. North Korea, however, ignored the UN resolution and continued its aggression. The Security Council called upon the members of the United Nations to furnish the Republic of Korea with the assistance needed to repel the armed attack by North Korea and to restore world peace and security. Responding to the call, a total of sixteen countries including, the United States dispatched their forces to form the United Nations Forces to fight in the Korean War. The UN Forces fought side by

side with the ROK army and, by around October 25, they had forced the communists to retreat to the border town of *Chosan* along the *Yalu* River. It seemed that the unification of the country was clearly within sight.

The Armistice Agreement

The situation began to change, however, with the entry of Red Chinese forces that came to North Korea's assistance. Thereafter, fierce fighting between the two sides continued and eventually the war came to a complete stalemate. Talks on a truce began on July 10, 1951 and finally an armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. The three-year war was thus brought to a halt, at least for the time being.

The war completely destroyed the socio-economic foundations of both Koreas and left the entire peninsula in rubble, with a total of five million casualties on both sides. During the war, millions of North Korean residents fled to the South in search of freedom, resulting ten million Koreans being separated from their families. It also created enmity and tension within the nation and destroyed the sense of national community that had been developed over several thousand years. The mistrust between the South and the North became far more deeply entrenched. In addition, the war encouraged an arms race between the two and thus caused a distortion in the overall resource allocation. This has been proved to be a major hinderance to the development and prosperity of the entire Korean people.

The cost of the war was enormous, yet the country still remained divided. Furthermore, intra-Korean relations became characterized with more intensified hostility and mistrust.

The Geneva Conference

Article IV clause 60, of the Armistice Agreement provided that a political conference among the government representatives of all the countries that had fought in the war would be held within three months after the announcement of the Agreement in order to discuss the withdrawal of foreign forces and the peaceful settlement of the Korean question.

Pursuant to this provision, the representatives of the Republic of Korea, the United States, and the fifteen other nations that formed the UN Forces met with delegates from the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea in Geneva on April 26, 1954. At the conference, the Republic of Korea proposed to build a unified Korea through a UN-monitored general election based on the population ratio. North Korea, however, insisted on the immediate withdrawal of the UN Forces and proposed a free election under the supervision of neutral nations. The conference eventually broke down on June 15 without any result because the North Korean side refused to recognize the authority and functions of the United Nations on the Korean peninsula.

Consequently, the Allied side issued the Sixteen Nations Declaration on Korea which requested that the United Nations seek a political solution of the Korean question. Furthermore, it clearly stated that until such a solution was reached so that the danger of the recurrence of war no longer existed, the UN Forces would continue to be stationed on the Korean peninsula.

4 — The Cold War and Intra-Korean Relations

Confrontation in the United Nations

From the end of World War II to the early 1980's the United States and the Soviet Union had been the two major axes in the international order. Nations were divided into two camps: capitalists and communists. The structure of the Cold War, which was characterized by sharp confrontation between those two camps, underpinned the international order during this period. As the Cold War in the international arena intensified, the division of Korea became further consolidated, since inter-Korean confrontation was a direct product of the global Cold War.

South and North Korea fiercely competed against each other on the international stage. In the United Nations, the tension between the two Koreas escalated around such issues as the introduction of the Korean question into the floor agenda and the application for membership. The United Nations had recognized the Republic of Korea as the sole legitimate government on the Korean peninsula at the third meeting of the General Assembly convened on December 12, 1948. Furthermore, when the Korean War broke out, the organization immediately defined North Korea as an unlawful invader. The North, however, ignored the organization's authority and function.

The North denounced the UN intervention in the Korean peninsula and insisted on the withdrawal of the UN and US forces from South Korea. The Pyongyang regime also demanded the dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) whose function was to assist

the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula. However, such demands were consistently rejected by the United Nations.

By the 1970's, though, communist China and a number of Third World countries had joined the United Nations, adding weight to the North Korean side. Subsequently, the North began to demand open discussion on the floor and decision by ballot of the Korean question. As a result, owing to support from the Soviet Union, China, the East European bloc, and the Third World, a resolution on the Korean question proposed by the communist camp was adopted, for the first time in the history of the United Nations. At the 30th meeting of the General Assembly in 1975 the communist resolution stood alongside a Western resolution. The Western resolution passed along with it called for direct talks between the two Koreas in order to secure permanent peace on the peninsula. The Communist resolution, on the other hand, urged the withdrawal of foreign troops from the South, replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty, and simultaneous arms reduction by the South and the North.

Furthermore, the two Koreas continuously vied against each other for membership in the United Nations: each of them made several attempts to gain membership, but each time they blocked each other. Their diplomatic battle persisted endlessly throughout the 70's and 80's.

On June 23, 1973, South Korea released the Special Foreign Policy Statement on Peace and Unification which stated that the ROK government had no intention of opposing joint membership in the United Nations. Believing that joint membership would contribute to peace and unification on the peninsula, the South urged the Pyongyang regime to simultaneously apply for UN membership.

The North, however, opposed the proposal, arguing that joint membership would make the national division permanent.

Ironically, the unification of Germany and of Yemen undermined North Korea's argument. At the same time, South Korea's position gained the overwhelming support of the international community as the country's reputation was boosted after successfully hosting the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Subsequently, on May 28, 1991, the North expressed its desire to join the United Nations in an announcement made by its Foreign Ministry. On September 17, at the 46th meeting of the General Assembly, the two Koreas were finally admitted as full members of the United Nations.

Armed Conflicts and Acts of Terrorism

Since the end of the Korean War, a military stand off between the two Koreas persisted. The North has continued to denounce the South Korean government and tried to divide and disturb its society. While the South has pursued peaceful unification through dialogue and negotiation, the North has never gave up its intention to complete the communization of the entire Korean peninsula through the means of force and violence.

After the adoption of the four point military lines in 1962, the North reinforced its military forces and dispatched spies and guerilla forces into the South to carry on various forms of espionage and terrorist activities. In January 1968, 31 North Korean guerrillas penetrated into Seoul to make a surprise attack on the Blue House, the presidential residence. On August 15, 1974, a terrorist instructed by the North attempted to assassinate President Park Chung-hee. In October 1983, seventeen senior members of the presidential

entourage, including the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Presidential Chief of Staff, who were accompanying President Chun Doo-hwan on his state visit to Rangoon (then Burma) were killed by the explosion of a bomb planted by a North Korean agent. In November 1987, the Seoul-bound Korean Airliner KE-858 from Baghdad exploded in mid-air, killing 115 passengers and crew members. This, too, was a tragedy staged by North Korean special agents. Between the signing of Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953, and the end of 1993, North Korea had violated the Agreement over 410,000 times in total, including technical violations of the Armistice.

Intra-Korean Talks: Efforts and Setbacks

The international environment changed rapidly in the 1970's: communist China became a member of the United Nations in October 1971; both Sino-US and Sino-Japan relations improved; West and East Germany signed the Basic Treaty in December 1972. The world moved into an era of detente and peaceful coexistence. South and North Korea, too, began to search for a way to open a dialogue.

On August 15, 1970, the ROK government announced the Idea for Peaceful Unification and urged the Pyongyang regime to join it in a productive competition for development and prosperity of their respective countries. Subsequently, the government proposed to resolve the Korean question in an autonomous and peaceful manner through dialogue between the governments of the two countries. On August 12, 1971, the South added another dimension to its initiative by proposing talks between the National Red Cross of the Republic of Korea (KNRC) and the Red Cross Society of the North

(RCSNK) in order to deal with the humanitarian issue of the separated families.

As a result the Joint Communiqué between South and North Korea was made public on July 4, 1972. It was the first formal agreement ever signed between the two Koreas. The South-North Joint Communiqué, as it is commonly called, laid out three fundamental principles based on which Korean unification must be pursued: independent efforts, peaceful means, great national unity.

The intra-Korean dialogue continued into the 1980's in various fields, including parliamentary exchanges, trade, and sports. Though it was nothing more than a mere symbolic gesture, a cross visit of Seoul and Pyongyang by separated families took place in 1985. The Cold War still dictated international relations; and intra-Korean relations were no exception. Enmity and mistrust still lingered between the two Koreas. The talks ended in failure and the intra-Korean relations were again stained with conflict and confrontation.

5 — Intra-Korean Relations in the Post-Cold War Era

The Korean National Community Unification Formula

The later half of the 1980's witnessed the slow disintegration of the Cold War regime. The new international order called for reconciliation and cooperation. The new order created a more favorable environment for Korean unification. South Korea had achieved remarkable economic development. The successful hosting of the Olympic Games further lifted the spirits of South Korean people. Subsequently, they began to realize that the confrontation between

the two Koreas must be put to an end. The unification of Germany also raised hope among the Korean people.

In a response to the changing international order and growing public demand, the ROK government drafted the Korean National Community Unification Formula (the KNCU Formula), thus laying out the guidelines in formulating policies for unification and intra-Korean relations. These policy guidelines announced on September 11, 1989, were based on the recognition of the North as a partner in unification, rather than as an enemy in confrontation. It proclaimed that with the understanding that both are integral parts of the national community, the South and the North must first work together to secure their co-existence and co-prosperity. After that, the Formula proposed, the two Koreas would complete the social, cultural, and economic integration of the two systems. Afterwards, with the completion of political integration, national unification would be achieved in the form of a single nation-state.

The KNCU formula has been further improved under the Kim Young-sam Administration and now provides for the basic philosophies, principles, and processes of the Korean unification, as well as the future of a unified Korea.

The Effectuation of the Basic Agreement

With the mutual understanding that moving away from political and military confrontation and toward mutual exchanges and cooperation was a pressing issue, the South and the North opened a series of high-level talks headed by their prime ministers. As a result, at the sixth round of high-level talks held in Pyongyang, the two sides finally came to sign on February 19, 1992, perhaps the two

most important documents in the history of intra-Korean relations: The Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation Between the South and the North (commonly known as the Basic Agreement) and the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Those two documents laid a foundation for peaceful unification through the autonomous efforts of the two Koreas.

At this point, unfortunately, such hope seems to have been lost. With a threat to withdraw itself from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its continued refusal to resume intra-Korean dialogue, North Korea made South Koreans worried over Pyongyang's intention to develop nuclear capability. The Pyongyang regime also continued to ensure its efforts that the Basic Agreement remains ineffective.

Simultaneous Membership in the United Nations

After a long disagreement over applying for membership in the United Nations, the two Koreas finally agreed to join the international organization simultaneously. They became full members of the United Nations on September 17, 1991, thereby moving one step toward peaceful unification through mutual respect and trust as responsible members of the international community.

The Charter of the United Nations states that all members are to fulfil the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter. In short, all members have obligations to refrain from the threat or use of force, to settle their international disputes by peaceful means, and not to intervene in matters which are within the domestic jurisdiction of any other state. They also have an obliga-

tions to participate in military or non-military assistance or sanctions that are called for by the United Nations in accordance with the Charter to maintain and restore the international peace and security. As member states, therefore, South and North Korea should refrain from the threat or use of force against each other in order to maintain peace on the Korean peninsula. In other words, the North has to give up the hostile policy against the South and look for a peaceful way to ease the tension on the peninsula.

New Challenges By North Korea

Despite the end of the Cold War and South Korea's active efforts for the implementation of a peaceful policy toward it, North Korea threatened the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula by a series of provocations, including the announcement of its intention to withdraw from the NPT, attempts to invalidate the Armistice Agreement, and numerous infiltrations into South Korea by its commandos.

On March 12, 1993, North Korea announced its refusal of a special inspection suggested by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and revealed its intent to withdraw from the NPT. Suspicion of the international community over the North Korean nuclear development mushroomed. Subsequently, on April 1, the IAEA decided to refer the issue to the United Nations Security Council. On May 11, the Security Council urged North Korea to reconsider its position and comply with the IAEA inspection. The Council adopted a resolution that in case North Korea would not comply the United Nations would take additional measures. The North Korean nuclear crisis became a major obstacle in the improvement of the

intra-Korean relations as it escalated the tension between the two Koreas.

An additional threat to peace on the Korean peninsula came from the North Korean attempt to nullify the Armistice Agreement. The Armistice Agreement is an important device that has maintained the fragile peace on the peninsula for over forty years since the end of the Korean War. The North, however, unilaterally removed the Czechoslovakian and Polish delegates from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission and the Chinese representatives from the Military Armistice Commission (MAC). Instead, on May 24, 1993, the North government established the People's Army Delegation at Panmunjom (PADP) to replace those two agencies. On April 4, 1996 the PADP announced that North Korea would relinquish all of its duties entailed in the Armistice Agreement. It was a serious threat to the Armistice regime.

Furthermore, on September 18, 1996, twenty-six North Korean commandos infiltrated into the east coast of South Korea using a submarine. When this act of provocation was caught, North Korea threatened revenge on South Korea unless the submarine was returned, making an excuse that the vessel had drifted due to an engine problem while in a military exercise.

The ROK government demanded that Pyongyang should take understandable measures, including admit its guilt, apologize, and promise not to repeat such an act of provocation. North Korea's recklessness became a target of international criticism. On October 15, the United Nations Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement that expressed its "serious concern" over the incident and stressed that the armistice agreement should remain in force and that the issues between the two Koreas should be settled by peace-

ful means. The European Union also released a Declaration by the Presidency and condemned the submarine infiltration as a “new and serious violation of the 1953 armistice agreement” and urged the North Korean authorities to abide by the agreement.

The submarine infiltration clearly demonstrated the fact that North Korea was still pursuing the communization of the entire peninsula by force. Being a serious challenge to South Korea’s efforts to maintain stability and peace on the Korean peninsula, this provocative incident reminded us of the urgency of building a durable peace regime on the peninsula. Peace on the peninsula, however, would hardly be accomplished unless there is a substantial change in North Korea’s hostile policy toward South Korea.

2. The Current Status of Intra-Korean Relations

Ever since two separate and ideologically different regimes were established on the Korean peninsula in 1948, the South and the North have maintained special relations between them —legally, politically, militarily, and economically.

Legal and Political Relations

In the Basic Agreement effectuated on February 19, 1992, the South and the North define intra-Korean relations “not being a relationship between states, [but] ... a special interim relationship stemming from the process toward unification.” The fact that the two Koreas do not recognize each other as a sovereign state and define themselves being in a “special interim relationship” reflects their

strong desire to avoid the permanent division of the Korean peninsula and to pursue the reunification of the country.

Article I of the Basic Agreement also states the agreement between the two Koreas that “the South and the North shall recognize and respect each other’s system.” In other words, the two Koreas agree to recognize each other’s political, economic, social, and cultural system and respect the *de facto* jurisdiction of each other’s government. However, such recognition is relevant only to the international aspect of intra-Korean relations, not to its internal aspect.

Despite the effectuation of the Basic Agreement, there still remain fundamental differences in how the South and the North view each other’s regime. The South admits the reality that there exist two different political systems on the Korean peninsula, just as it is stated in the Basic Agreement. It also regards the North as a partner in creating single economic, social, and cultural communities through reconciliation and cooperation. The South believes that this partnership will eventually lead to the formation of a single political community.

The North, on the other hand, still claims that the DPRK government is the only legitimate regime on the Korean peninsula. It regards the South as a subject to be absorbed into its own system and the ROK government, a “subject to be overthrown for the sake of a communist revolution.” Consequently, the North has refused the resumption of dialogue and contact with the South while attempting to undermine the authority and the legitimacy of the ROK government through continuous slander and defamation. Therefore, North Korea’s hostility toward the South is the major barrier in improving intra-Korean relations and the main obstacle in moving toward unification.

Military Relations

Since the division of the peninsula, the two Koreas have confronted each other while constantly building up their armed forces. Finally, in June 1950, the Korean War broke out as the North began a full-front attack on the South. The war, which lasted three years, left millions of deaths and an astronomical amount of property damages when it finally ended as the two Koreas ceased all hostilities and use of forces against each other in accordance with the armistice agreement which was effectuated on July 27, 1953.

Nonetheless, the sharp military confrontation between the two Koreas still continues along the armistice line because of North Korea's frequent violation of the armistice agreement and its continued provocation against the South. Recently, the North attempted to invalidate the armistice agreement structures and violated the agreement by infiltrating a group of commandos into the South using a submarine. It has thus escalated tension between the two Koreas.

Article 5 of the Basic Agreement states: "The two sides shall endeavor together to transform the present state of armistice into a solid state of peace between the South and the North and shall abide by the present Military Armistice Agreement (of July 27, 1953) until such a state of peace has been realized." The North, however, has not kept its end of agreement. The realization of true peace and stability on the Korean peninsula requires that the North sincerely abide by the armistice agreement and the Basic Agreement.

Economic Relations

After the division of the peninsula, the North implemented a socialist planned economy, while the South developed a capitalist

market economy. In spite of political and military tension between them, the two Koreas have gradually expanded economic exchanges in the civilian sector.

The basic frame for intra-Korean trade was laid down in the Basic Agreement and the Protocol on the Compliance with and Implementation of Chapter III, South-North Exchanges and Cooperation, of the Basic Agreement signed in 1991 and 1992, respectively. The volume of intra-Korean trade reached \$287 million in 1995, making the South the third largest trade partner of North Korea; only Japan and China rank ahead of South Korea.

In November 1994, the ROK government published the additional measures to promote intra-Korean trade, thereby opening the door for South Korean businesses to invest in the North. When the North suffered from unprecedented food shortage in 1995, the South provided 150,000 tons of rice aid free of charge. In 1996, it also donated \$3 million worth of additional food stuffs for the North Korean flood victims.

National Awareness

The two Koreas have competed with and confronted each other for over a half a century under two completely heterogeneous systems. Nevertheless, Koreans have always believed that they are one people in one nation. The Korean people have lived in a single community over several thousand years within the well-defined geographical boundaries of the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, the country remained unified for at least over 1,300 years. It is, therefore, very natural for them to think of the two Koreas as one nation. And it ought to be so. According to a survey conducted among the

South Koreans in 1995, 91.8 percent of those who replied answered that they wished for unification.

3. Intra-Korean Relations in the Regional Context

In the Northeast Asian arena the Cold War around the Korean peninsula had developed along two axes: the northern triangle composed of the former Soviet Union, China, and North Korea and the southern triangle composed of the United States, Japan, and South Korea. With the emergence of Mikhael Gorbachev, however, the Cold War structure started to crumble in the mid 1980's. When the Soviet Union finally collapsed in December 1991 both triangles underwent substantial transformation. In the early 1990's, South Korea normalized its relations with the old friends of North Korea-Russia (who had by then succeeded the Soviet Union) and China. Likewise, North Korea has been trying to improve its relationship with the United States and Japan. Consequently, Russia and China are currently reexamining their traditional alliance with North Korea.

ROK-US Relations vs. North Korea-China and North Korea-Russia Relations

The United States and South Korea share a common ideology and the values of democracy and market economy. Based on such similarities, the two countries have maintained a solid alliance in national security as well as broad cooperation in trade and commerce. More recently, the partnership between the two countries has grown

beyond the political and security area and expanded into almost every areas including business, trade, science, and technology.

North Korea-China relations were built upon socialistic solidarity. These two countries have maintained a partnership alliance in various fields of interaction. In particular, the military alliance between them has been sustained based on the [North] *Korea*-China Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance signed on July 11, 1961. According to Article 2 of the treaty, “both parties have a responsibility to jointly take all the necessary measures to prevent an attack on one party by any other country.”

The former Soviet Union was the first nation to recognize North Korea as the sole legitimate government on the Korean peninsula in October 1948. Until the normalization of relations between Russia and South Korea, North Korea-Soviet (or Russia) relations were based on Marxist-Leninism and the principles of proletariat internationalism. The Russian Federation that succeeded the Soviet Union, however, has renounced any ideological bias in its foreign policy. Consequently, the North-Russia relations must now shake off the ideological or military ingredients of the past.

The military alliance between the two countries has been based on [North] *Korea*-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance signed on July 6, 1961. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia automatically assumed the Soviet Union’s place in the treaty. On September 7, 1995, however, Russia notified North Korea of its intention not to extend the treaty when it expires. Moscow has proposed that Pyongyang sign a new treaty based on mutual friendship, instead.

***Normalization of ROK-Russia and ROK-China Relations
and North Korea's Attempts to Overcome Isolation***

Having normalized their relations in September 1990, Russia and South Korea have held five summit meetings and more than ten meetings between the foreign ministers of the two countries. The exchange of high-level officials has expanded ROK-Russia relations in almost every field including political, economic, technological, scientific, and the cultural area. It has even been spread into the field of military cooperation: in 1994, the ROK Minister of Defense made a visit to Russia and in 1995 his Russian counterpart visited South Korea in reply.

On August 24, 1992, the foreign ministers of China and South Korea signed a document that cleared up the legacies of the Cold War and established ambassadorial relations between the two countries. Following the normalization, a remarkable improvement was observed in the political field as well as in the economic field. High-level visits between the two countries have noticeably increased and trade has rapidly expanded. In particular, ROK-China trade has shown a rapid growth owing to geographical proximity as well as the complementary aspects of the South Korean and Chinese economies. Trade volume reached \$16.5 billion in 1995 and China has emerged as the third largest trade partner of South Korea, trailing behind only the United States and Japan.

Pyongyang is worried that the normalization of ROK-Russia and ROK-China relations may lead to its isolation in the international community. In addition, it is facing with severe economic difficulties. For those two reasons, North Korea is trying to catch two birds at once; to restore its old friendships with Russia, China, and other

former socialist countries and to make new friends with the United States, Japan, and other western capitalist countries.

So far, North Korea has signed with the United States the Agreement Framework in Geneva (October 21, 1994) and the Kuala Lumpur Accord on the provision of light-water reactors (June 13, 1995). Yet, there are still issues pending between the two countries. These include: the easing of US economic sanction against North Korea, opening of liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang, the repatriation of the remains of American soldiers, and control of North Korean missile exports. North Korea has recently reinforced its efforts to resolve those issues.

On March 30, 1995, upon the visit by a Japanese delegation of the three-party coalition, North Korea agreed to the resumption of talks for the normalization of North Korea-Japan relations. In addition, it has reached an agreement with the Japanese government for the donation of 500,000 tons of rice in two shipments, on July 31 and October 3, to help the North Koreans overcome their food crisis. Through the exchange of politicians and journalists, the two governments are trying to create a favorable environment for the resumption of the talks.

At the same time, North Korea is also trying to restore its relationships with Russia and China which have been estranged to a certain extent after those two countries established diplomatic relations with South Korea. China and North Korea have exchanged a number of delegations at the political, party, and civilian levels. On various national holidays of the two countries, North Korea's Kim Jong-il and Chinese President Jiang Zemin have exchanged messages reassuring that the two countries would further enhance their friendship and solidarity.

North Korea-Russia relations departed from the military alliance and moved into a new stage after Russia announced its intention not to extend the [North] *Korea-Soviet Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance* in September 1995, a year before its expiration. North Korea and Russia are currently searching for a way to move away from the old-style military alliance and develop a normal relationship that is often observed between any two sovereign states.

Interests of the Four Powers in the Unification of the Korean Peninsula

For a long time the United States has played the role of a hegemony in Northeast Asia in order to contain the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, it now seeks to play the new role of a balancer among the regional powers. Accordingly, Washington began to place a greater value in the existing ROK-US alliance while improving its relationship with North Korea in order to induce a stable transformation of the Pyongyang regime.

Once one of the super powers in Northeast Asia, Russia proposes to construct a reconciliatory structure through multinational talks, thereby reducing its own security burden. It desires to expand economic cooperation with the United States, Japan, and South Korea. At the same time, it wants to redefine its relationship with North Korea so that it can exercise a balanced influence over both Koreas.

In the past, China had a strong bias favoring North Korea. Beijing now, however, wants to separate politics from business. Having adopted a pragmatist policy, the Chinese are pursuing after practical benefits. While, on one hand, China wishes to maintain political

and security ties with North Korea, which still clings to socialism even after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, it also wants to reinforce its economic tie with South Korea.

Japan is searching for a way to obtain political and military influence matching for its economic status. It believes that peace and security on the Korean peninsula are indeed important for the stability of the Northeast Asian region. It also realizes that as long as North Korea remains as a threat to South Korea, Pyongyang could also be a potential threat to its own security. Japan, therefore, attaches great importance to friendly cooperation in the ROK-Japan relations.

It seems that all four powers around the Korean peninsula agree on one point. They all agree that unification of the Korean peninsula must come about through a cooperative agreement between the two Koreas, and that in the meantime it is necessary to reduce tension and maintain peace on the peninsula.

Unification of the Korean Peninsula and Peace in Northeast Asia

Intra-Korean relations is not only a problem between the two Koreas but also a crucial variable in the matrix of regional order-building. In 1993, for example, suspicion over North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and its rejection of IAEA's special inspection constituted a threat to the security of not only the Korean peninsula but also of the entire Northeast Asian region.

Two years after the death of Kim Il-sung who had ruled North Korea for nearly fifty years, Pyongyang has still not been able to inaugurate his successor. In the meantime, the worsening economy

and aggravating food shortages could pose a serious threat to the Pyongyang regime. The instability of the North Korean regime would be a threat to the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and present an unexpected danger for the nations around it.

Under such circumstances, the government of the Republic of Korea is taking a firm stand on its policy to safeguard the fragile peace on the peninsula while leading North Korea toward stable change. The logic behind such a stand is that the preservation of peace is the foundation in solving the Korean question and that the transformation of North Korean society is the shortest path to unification.

The government also maintains the position that the directly concerned parties to the Korean question are no other than the two Koreas themselves. Consequently, the role of the other concerned countries should be limited to supporting or endorsing the efforts of the two Koreas in the peace-building process.

Ultimately, the Korean people are pursuing a “unification for the benefit of the world.” A unified Korea would contribute to the realization of such universal values as liberty, human rights, and social welfare. A unified Korea would indeed make a greater contribution toward the peace and prosperity of the human community.