

# Bringing Peace in from Without How to End the Cold War in Korea<sup>1</sup>

Tong Whan Park  
*Northwestern University*

## **The Race Is Over but Confrontation Goes On**

From June 13 to 15, 2000, the first-ever summitry was held between the two Koreas since the peninsula's division at the end of World War II. The two heads of state produced a five-point agreement<sup>2</sup> designed to launch an era of dialogue between the erstwhile enemies. As part of the agreement, a limited number of people with separated families have since traveled to each other's capital for a tearful reunion. The ground has been broken to re-link the countries by rail that would pass through the Demilitarized Zone. Bureaucrats of the two countries have engaged in a flurry of activity including high level talks and the historic visit by North Korea's defense minister to the South. Seoul's *chaebols* also got themselves busy to jump aboard the bandwagon heading north. And the new mood of détente peaked at the opening ceremony of the 27th Olympiad in Sydney when athletes from the two Koreas—albeit competing as separate national teams—marched together following a hastily concocted flag with an image of the Korean peninsula.

Developments on the Korean peninsula since June have indeed been unfolding at a dizzying pace and led some optimists to observe that the last legacy of the Cold War is about to disappear. Is the Cold War ending in Korea? Notwithstanding the initial success of the summit talks, the question begs a careful scrutiny of where the two Koreas are now and will be in the future, not only in relation to each other but also in the international environment surrounding the peninsula. A historical sketch of how the *global* Cold War ended may serve as a framework with which to examine the fate of the *local* Cold War on the Korean peninsula and the *regional* one in East Asia.

More than a decade ago the Berlin Wall fell, closing an era that had been defined by the Cold War bipolarity. On the European front, the collapse of the Leninist systems led to Germany's unification and a fuller regional integration. In Northeast Asia, however, the other theater of East-West confrontation, the aftermath of Russia's demise was far

less devastating. While the Russian threat has all but dissipated, America's military presence remains strong and is being buttressed by a virtual alliance of Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul. Although this coalition—especially Japan's ever-growing military muscle—is a source of concern for the Chinese, the United States has nevertheless been trying to build a structure of cooperation among the 'new big three'—the United States, China, and Japan<sup>3</sup>. On the Korean peninsula, the Pyongyang regime has survived one crisis after another with its roller-coaster diplomacy. Even the death of its founding father Kim Il Sung in 1994 left few visible dents in the system's viability, disproving the pundits who had predicted that the elder Kim's exit would mean North Korea's certain collapse.

It should appear puzzling that there still exist two Koreas on the peninsula, considering that Germany became one in 1990 and long before that, Vietnam, another artificial division created by the Cold War, saw unification in 1975. The former was a result of Soviet disintegration whereas the latter a byproduct of America's weakening strategic presence in Southeast Asia. The Germans and Vietnamese were able to restore their previous state of merger once the external forces of separation departed. Why didn't a similar development occur on the Korean peninsula? What is so unique about Korea compared to Vietnam and Germany? What obstacles have blocked a Korean reunion in the post-Cold War era, and are those obstacles still in effect? Answers to these questions may be sought in the very structure that had sustained the Cold War system in Korea from 1945 to 1990 and a quasi Cold War situation since 1990.

From the end of World War II to the end of the global Cold War, the Korean peninsula had been a microcosm of the bipolar world system. For geo-strategic reasons, neither the United States nor the former Soviet Union could allow it to fall into the other side's sphere of influence when Japan surrendered it to the Allied Forces in 1945. In 1953, after a protracted war on the peninsula, Washington and Moscow once again could not but agree on a stalemate and drew a demarcation line not much different from the original partition. Though Nixon "opened" China in the early 1970s and Gorbachev began a new *détente* in the mid-1980s, the two Koreas remained in the glacial age as to a possible rapprochement. With the German unification in 1990, the Korean peninsula finally became a focus of global attention as the common wisdom had it that Pyongyang's days would be numbered. Worried about following the East German path, Pyongyang undertook a series of bold maneuvers—including the 1993-94 crisis surrounding a nuclear weapons development—to prolong the Cold War-like confrontation on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang's leaders must have

reasoned that only through confrontation could they maintain the regime's viability. Such reasoning becomes highly persuasive because North Korea had for long been a hopeless underdog vis-à-vis South Korea in its capabilities: without a confrontational attitude it would be a matter of time before the weaker side would be absorbed into the stronger.

The Cold War system in Korea was sustained by the two related elements of competition and confrontation. Of the two, competition is no longer the issue. By all accounts, Seoul has won the race. Economically, its domestic output is at least twenty times that of Pyongyang's. Militarily, the South outspends the North by a ratio of 2.3 to 1. Even though North Korea still has an edge in the number of military personnel (1.5 to 1 in its favor), major equipment (1.9 to 1), and firepower (2.3 to 1)<sup>4</sup>, conventional forces of the two are roughly equivalent if the quality of equipment and Pyongyang's severe shortages in fuel and food are factored in. When the United States forces in Korea are added, the balance is no longer there. Politically, liberal democracy has won the game all over the world with North Korea one of the few remaining exceptions. With the race over, one might expect that confrontation, the other component of the Cold War system, would also end. Nevertheless, confrontation goes on between the two Koreas. Especially since they lost in competition, Pyongyang's leaders have to come to depend more on confrontation for survival. Arguably, the grand gesture of dialogue signified by last June's summitry might be construed as a move to assure Pyongyang's longevity. In a sense, it was a different form of confrontation in which Pyongyang pronounced to the world that it could stand its own ground at the negotiating table. Contributing to North Korea's continued viability is the fact that the South Koreans appear neither ready nor willing to pay for the cost of an absorptive unification. Moreover, the four surrounding powers would hardly welcome any radical change in the regional balance of power. At least for now, confrontation appears to serve the interests of all regional players.

Then how would we end the Cold War in Korea? More specifically, how can we turn the atmosphere of confrontation to one of genuine reconciliation and cooperation? The question boils down to that of what to do with North Korea, the last vestige of the Cold War structure. Common sense dictates that there may exist two possible ways. One is to engineer a domestic transformation in North Korea, whereas the other is to change Northeast Asia's international environment, leaving the North Korean system more or less intact<sup>5</sup>. The former includes options ranging from North Korea's disintegration to its rebirth as a state compatible with other regional players. These options,

though not inconceivable, have very low probabilities of success. Not only has the Pyongyang regime demonstrated a high degree of resilience during the last decade, but also the surrounding powers have not been sparing efforts to uphold the status quo on the Korean peninsula.

If an internal solution to end the Cold War on the Korean peninsula seems beyond reach, the second alternative of changing the international environment deserves a careful examination. After all, what could be more pressing to regional players than the maintenance of peace and stability? If so, why not accommodate North Korea without demanding a domestic transformation, as long as Pyongyang is made to understand that its military adventurism would not be tolerated? Surely, this approach may not bring an abrupt end to the Korean Cold War compared with the first one in which North Korea undergoes a systemic transformation. But then one should look at how messy the German unification has turned out both politically and economically. And the Germans had numerous advantages over the Koreans, including the decades of contact and exchanges in addition to the absence of a history of armed conflict.

Hence it becomes necessary to explore the possibility of ending the Cold War on the Korean peninsula using the second method. Instead of forcing a systemic change on Pyongyang, the surrounding powers may create a regional environment in which the North Koreans could shed their insecurity complex and behave somewhat like the citizens of a normal state. What the North Koreans would require are assurances from outside in four areas before they could begin to feel secure from the threat of East German style disintegration. The four prerequisites are political recognition, security guarantee, economic survival, and sociopsychological support. In a sense, Pyongyang's rogue behavior may be attributed to its desire to win these assurances through a diplomacy of extortion. Of course, nobody can tell for sure whether they would turn North Korea into a normal state. History is replete with the cases of appeasement breeding an aggressor that would later wreak havoc in the international system. Though fraught with uncertainty and danger of backfire, the assurances are worth a try, as North Korea's relatively small size should prevent it from becoming Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Soviet Union. That some members of the region may not hesitate to wield a powerful stick to check Pyongyang's misconduct should add credence to this line of thinking.

### **Political Recognition: Consolidation of 'One Nation Two States'**

Above everything else, the North Koreans—more precisely, their leaders—want their state and regime to survive. Since the 1945 division

of the peninsula by the two superpowers, the northern half has been under the iron grip of the Kim family. The elder Kim built a cultist state and his son runs it in the aura of his late father. This is the longest-running dictatorship in the contemporary history. As such, the institutional inertia alone would keep the regime's forward momentum going. Another critical factor operating in favor of Pyongyang's staying power is the peculiar balance of power in Northeast Asia in which the Western bloc could not declare a total victory at the end of the global Cold War as was the case in Europe. The presence of China prevented such one-sidedness, while North Korea serves as proof that old regimes die hard.

Assuming that the European way of ending the Cold War—the collapse of the former Soviet Union and its satellites—is hardly applicable to Northeast Asia, the second model suggests a political accommodation of North Korea. The first step toward it should be the completion of what is commonly known as the cross recognition of the two Koreas by four major powers. South Korea established diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union in 1990 and China in 1992. As of late-2000, however, the other half of the equation is still missing. The 1994 Agreed Framework was supposed to bring a step-level change in Pyongyang's relationship with Washington. But the relations have been improving at a snail's pace.

Why? Are North Korea's leaders afraid of the Stars and Stripes fluttering in their capital? Or are the Americans balking due to domestic and international pressures? Turning to the international factors, what is Beijing's attitude toward the Washington-Pyongyang rapprochement? Do the Chinese feel that they are not prepared to see North Korea, its vital buffer, become a client of America's? Similarly, where does Japan stand in cross recognition? What were the reasons underlying the sluggishness in the bilateral talks to establish diplomatic relations since Shin Kanemaru's historic visit to Pyongyang about a decade ago? Did the United States by any chance suggest that Japan not race ahead? While these questions are not within the scope of this article, one thing is certain. That is, the cross recognition should help stabilize the Korean situation. Along with the membership in the United Nations, which Pyongyang won jointly with Seoul in 1991, diplomatic recognition by the United States and Japan would assure the North Koreans that their country is a sovereign state with its rightful place in the community of nations. Though it may sound naïve, such assurance could hopefully lead to Pyongyang's acceptance of international norms and regulations, which should in turn lower the level of tension on the Korean peninsula. This is in part why South Korea has long favored the diplomatic recognition of North Korea by the United States and Japan.

Seen in this light, it becomes imperative for Washington and Tokyo to speed up the process of rapprochement with Pyongyang.

Critics may argue that cross recognition means the perpetuation of two separate states on the Korean peninsula and may result in a permanent division of the Korean people. They should be reminded, however, that national integration may be achieved without a formal merger and that what is at stake now is not necessarily unification<sup>6</sup> but that of ending a hostile confrontation between the two Koreas. If the formalization of 'one nation two states' is believed to increase the probability of a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, it is the price that the Koreans shall have to pay.

### **Security Guarantee: Protection from the New Godfather**

Security assurance is of equal import to North Korea's viability as political recognition, if not more. So long as the North Koreans perceive themselves as militarily vulnerable, they would be reluctant to accommodate any measures of arms control and disarmament, hence prolonging the Cold War-like situation on the peninsula. Having once launched an unsuccessful invasion into the South, they could fear that the reverse might not be impossible. Even without looking at the naval clashes on the West Sea in 1999, the conventional military balance is unquestionably in favor of the South. Combined with the awesome firepower held by United States forces stationed in Korea, the imbalance becomes more magnified. Indeed, there are ample grounds for Pyongyang to be seriously concerned with the further erosion in conventional-force balance on the Korean peninsula.

Being an underdog in conventional armed forces, what did Pyongyang do to overcome the shortfall? Lacking the economic resources with which to build up their conventional forces — an extremely costly proposition — the North Koreans executed two schemes to redress the balance. One was to invest in unconventional forces that are less costly than the conventional arsenal. The other was to seek protection from a new Godfather—the United States that had emerged as the unitary hegemon in the region, if not the world. The strength of this move was that the first measure would lead to the second, thus allowing the parsimony and consistency in Pyongyang's policy.

What Pyongyang has earned with its nuclear card since the early 1990s demonstrates that the North Koreans have made some shrewd foreign-policy maneuvers. More importantly, Washington's response appeared as if it had been waiting for such overtures from Pyongyang. In 1993 the United States gave North Korea a virtual negative security assurance (NSA) in which it promised not to use nuclear weap-

ons—later codified in the 1994 Agreed Framework<sup>7</sup>. This was extremely significant in that the nuclear powers had never before issued anything beyond the positive security assurance (PSA) to a non-nuclear power. With the PSA, a nuclear power pledges to protect a non-nuclear state under nuclear attack from a third party. The de facto granting of NSA to North Korea had the potential of contradicting the mutual defense pact between the United States and South Korea. Nevertheless, the United States, in essence, gave up the option of retaliating with tactical nuclear weapons should the North make another invasion into the South.

The other evidence supporting Washington's obliging attitude is that, despite the talk of a surgical strike of Yongbyon's nuclear facilities in the summer of 1994, its treatment of North Korea could not have been more different from that of Iraq. What makes such posture truly amazing is a widely held belief that Pyongyang would not easily relinquish its program of developing the nuclear weapons or long-range missiles. Nuclear weapons would be the final deterrent for Pyongyang in a conventional war, as they would prevent Washington and Seoul from making a massive retaliation<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, long-range missiles would become an instrument with which to bring and hold Tokyo in Pyongyang's game of survival. Now that Japan is within the range of North Korea's missiles, it seems that Tokyo is following Washington's footsteps in accommodating Pyongyang's demands.

Moreover, apparently working to Pyongyang's advantage is the presence of United States troops in Korea. Originally planted to serve as a tripwire against North Korea's invasion, they have been playing the role of dual deterrence<sup>9</sup>. Lacking a territorial foothold in Asia, the United States also regards these troops—along with United States forces in Japan—as the concrete symbol of America's position as an Asian Pacific power. United States forces in Korea will hence continue to be deployed for a long time to come. Then the bottom line is that North Korea is quite secure—in fact, more secure now than during the Cold War period.

Is the policy of accommodation tantamount to rewarding the bad behavior, as argued by some critics? It is true that Pyongyang has won a great deal while offering up very little. By promising to withhold a threatening act, North Korea has been granted many kinds of assurance and assistance. But the reason why Pyongyang has been supported should not be attributed to America's stupidity or immorality. Instead, it was due to the meeting of the minds between North Korea and the United States. North Korea needed a protector without a territorial ambition in Northeast Asia while the U.S. wanted to tame a potential proliferator of the weapons of mass destruction. That South Korea and

other regional actors favored the maintenance of the status quo on the peninsula also contributed to the successful deal between the United States and North Korea. Nevertheless, the bilateral game is not over yet. As shown in the Perry report released in September 1999, the United States has a list of demands against North Korea. However, by stating that if Pyongyang refrained from missile testing and nuclear weapons development Washington would go ahead with the normalization of relations, the report is long on carrots and short on sticks—another manifestation that the United States is not out to destroy the Pyongyang regime.

America's engagement policy should turn out to be beneficial to North Korea. For Pyongyang, one of the worst possible scenarios is isolation from the international community, which may hasten its demise. Despite the fervent cry of *juche* (self-reliance) ideology, the North Koreans cannot rely on themselves for survival. That is why they had originally stirred up the nuclear controversy to win America's attention. Now, using last June's inter-Korean summitry as a stepping stone, Kim Jong-il has sent his deputy in the powerful National Defense Commission to Washington where President Clinton greeted Vice Marshall Jo Myong Rok in full military uniform<sup>10</sup>. Inasmuch as North Korea pursues a policy of 'self-reliance through external dependence'—in particular, one orchestrated by the United States—engagement by the surrounding powers shall go on. Making too much fuss over the specific contents of engagement may possibly be counterproductive to inter-Korean rapprochement.

### **Economic Support: Aid Without Extortion**

Political recognition and security assurance would be an empty shell without the economic means to back them up. North Korea has been in a difficult position to sustain itself without outside support. It thus holds no mystery that North Korea has become the largest recipient of United States economic aid in East Asia at 270 million dollars a year with the cumulated-aid commitment from the United States of about one billion dollars. From the mid-1990s when the North Korean government admitted that the famine had spread widely, food aid of about one billion dollars has been delivered, mostly from China and the United States.

Not to be outdone, South Korea has provided the North with various payments and assistance—food, cows, automobiles, and cash for the Mt. Kumgang project. Ever since the first voyage into the North in November 1998, the Mt. Kumgang tour has ferried tourists numbering in six figures. The Hyundai group will pay Pyongyang one billion dollars over six years for this project alone. In addition, South Korea



will shoulder most of the financial burden—over 70 percent—of building two light-water reactors (LWRs) in North Korea. Finally, Pyongyang can expect a massive infusion of hard currency from Japan after normalization—mostly in the form of reparation for the damage suffered by the North Koreans during Japan's colonial rule.

In sum, North Korea is not in such a bad shape as portrayed in the Western media. The food shortage, though real, can be made up without a huge amount of money: the remittances from Hyundai may be sufficient. Alternatively, Beijing can solve the problem for Pyongyang, should it so desire. This may be why Pyongyang has been buying armaments with hard currency injected from outside, while depending on humanitarian aid for food—indeed a savvy move knowing that the surrounding powers will not let North Korea go under.

While it is good news that North Korea's economic conditions have begun to improve, critics of the engagement policy argue that North Korea has been exploiting the surrounding powers.<sup>11</sup> Whether it is called extortion or exploitation, the reality is that there is hardly any middle ground between support and neglect vis-à-vis North Korea. Conditional support or reciprocity is easy to say but hard to implement at this stage. It is because there are not many usable sticks other than the withdrawal of carrots—namely, the re-imposition of sanctions. The only stick with some compelling power may be the use of military force, but its utility is highly questionable. Even a limited response from the North to a surgical strike would cause irreparable damages to the Seoul metropolitan area; the United States-Korea combined forces will be constrained from staging a massive retaliation for fear of Pyongyang's nuclear devices; and China would not tolerate a military defeat suffered by its buffer state.

Consequently, the best course of action for the surrounding nations is to continue the policy of support. Simultaneously, however, they need to drive home the message that the brinkmanship and extortion would no longer be tolerated since North Korea appears to have weathered the worst of the storms. As Pyongyang is not a cornered animal any more, its rogue behavior may prompt a policy shift from support to neglect by its neighbors. It would also help to remind Pyongyang that it would be free to choose the mode of economic cooperation that is least threatening to the viability of the North Korean regime.

### **Self-Esteem: Making the Northerns Believe in Themselves**

Objective circumstances would mean little, if the North Koreans cannot feel confident about their fate. Diplomatic recognition by the United States and Japan, a wall of security guarded from within and

guaranteed from without, and even a sufficient level of economic well-being are but necessary conditions for North Korea's survival as a state. If the leaders and ordinary residents in the North believe that they are in a transitional stage to, say, a merger with the richer and stronger South, they can hardly be expected to behave normally in international interactions. Hence the last and probably most critical element in ending the Cold War in Korea is the promotion of self-confidence among the North Koreans. Security in the political, military, and economic arenas would help the northerners develop a sense of control about their future—especially, the prospect of coexistence with the South Koreans on an equal footing. But it would take time, and if there is a way to shorten it, the possibility should be explored.

To accelerate the process, a catalytic change may be required. Just as the 1988 Summer Olympic Games brought about a quantum leap in the civic consciousness among the South Koreans, a similar feat may be necessary for North Korea. The only problem is that Pyongyang's leadership is extremely averse to the events that might open up its society, as demonstrated in their reluctance to co-host with Seoul some of the 2002 World Cup soccer games. Is there any way to boost the level of self-confidence among the North Koreans without exposing them to the "corruptive" influence from the outside world?

There is one idea worthy of consideration. Assuming that the inter-Korean dialogue matures on the heels of the summitry, it may be possible to create a setting in which the Nobel Peace Prize might be awarded to the representatives of the two Koreas or at least the subject can be broached in the international community. Before brushing aside the idea as outlandish or impractical, let us give it a closer look. For starters, serious objections will be raised about giving the coveted prize to someone from a state that has committed many acts of terrorism and still is on Washington's list of terrorism-sponsoring states. It is a legitimate question and should be dealt with squarely. If a person is directly linked to a specific terrorist act, he should be eliminated from candidacy. Other than that, personal backgrounds may be less important than the specific achievement. As to the criteria for the award, lessons can be drawn from the past record. In 1973, Le Duc Tho<sup>12</sup> and Henry Kissinger, not the heads of states of North Vietnam and the United States, were jointly awarded the prize for their roles in negotiating the Vietnam peace accord. The 1978 award was divided equally between Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin for negotiating the peace between the two countries. In 1993, the prize was given jointly to Nelson Mandela and Frederik DeKlerk for their endeavor to end the apartheid in South Africa. Then in 1994, Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and President of the

Palestine National Authority shared the award with Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East. These cases confirm that those who produced concrete results in peacemaking from both sides<sup>13</sup> would get the prizes and their personal attributes may not count heavily.

Applied to the Korean case, therefore, it is definitely possible that the peacemakers from both sides of the Demilitarized Zone could jointly receive a Nobel Peace Prize. For such a possibility to materialize, however, the two Koreas need to negotiate a peace comparable to those for which the prizes have been given. Would that be feasible within the foreseeable future? The answer is not a definite NO, provided that the two Koreas and the surrounding powers continue to pursue the second model of ending the Cold War in Korea. This is why the inter-Korean summitry needs to be followed up with careful management. President Kim Dae-jung's visit to Pyongyang had the effect similar to that of Nixon's trip to Beijing almost three decades ago. As Mao Ze-dong received Nixon, Chairman Kim Jong-il accepted "South Korean President's request to meet him." That Kim Dae-jung made the trip north—not the other way around—must have been a tremendous morale booster to the North Koreans. And Kim Jong-il made the most of it by exploiting the media exposure to the world. In one fell swoop he tried, with some success, to change his image from that of an alcoholic recluse to one of an effusive leader well versed in global affairs. And the result was the five-point declaration that would require a lot of work for implementation—more from the South in economic support. In a sense, the summitry was a no-loss proposition for Kim Jong-il. Should the follow-up negotiations proceed in a way not threatening to the domestic order in North Korea, he would take all the credit for having opened a new chapter of peace on the peninsula. Should they turn out to be not to his liking, Kim Jong-il would simply enjoy a propaganda victory by telling his people and the world that he did his best by accepting Kim Dae-jung's request. All the blame will then be placed squarely on Kim Dae-jung, while Kim Jong-il would escape unscathed by saying that he had fulfilled his late father's wish.<sup>14</sup>

In case the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded jointly to the representatives of the two Koreas, its impact would be enormous. In the South, the acrimonious debate would be dampened about the utility of Kim Dae-jung's 'sunshine policy' designed to support the North. With the new structure of peace worthy of a Nobel prize, the South Koreans would at long last feel free from the danger of another war. In the North, the search for security would see a happy end as the leaders and residents would finally be able to shed the fear of disintegration. They would be justified in enjoying the international recognition that would

accompany the prize.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

With a shift of perspective from the domestic transformation in North Korea to a change in the international environment, one may find a more feasible way to end the Cold War on the Korean peninsula. In reality, the four major powers have already embarked on a course of action in that direction. Seoul's 'sunshine policy' of course goes along with the international trend of embracing Pyongyang. And this is why one can be cautiously optimistic that the momentum of the June summitry will last long enough for the two sides to begin to learn a new way of dealing with each other.

In order to give time for the learning process to take root, neither side should commit acts that might derail it. As Pyongyang may be tempted to play with the process for maximal gains or to withdraw for domestic reasons, it may be prudent to keep sending a message to the Pyongyang regime. The message will consist of two parts. The first part should make it explicit that the international community will try to create an environment in which North Korea can act like a normal state without having to undertake radical domestic reforms. Political recognition, security guarantee, economic assistance, and socio-psychological support will thus be forthcoming. But the second part should clarify in no uncertain terms that North Korea is expected to halt the diplomacy of extortion and other irresponsible behavior that could cause concern in its neighbors. If not, the other five countries in the region will seriously consider switching to the policy of neglect in which some or most carrots may be withdrawn. Such a message would certainly aid Pyongyang's leaders in defusing the possible domestic opposition to a system of peace engineered by the external forces. Hopefully, the North Koreans would decipher the message correctly and help end the Cold War on the Korean peninsula.

## Notes

1. Revised version of a paper delivered at the annual conference on Korea (Theme: Projecting Korea and Its Culture to the Outside World) sponsored by The Richard L. Walker Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, May 19-21, 2000. Some of the arguments contained in this article were first presented in Seoul at the annual conference of the Korea Council of Area Studies on November 26, 1999. I am indebted to Dae-Sook Suh, In-Young Chun, Kun-Young Park, Kyoung-soo Kim for their critical comments.

2. Though there is one Han-gul (Korean alphabet) version of the June 15 declaration, the English versions of the North and the South differ somewhat. As these nuanced differences might affect the tone of future inter-Korean dialogue, it should help an analyst to examine both. The South Korean translation reads "1. The South and the North have agreed to resolve the question of unification independently and through the

joint efforts of the Korean people, who are the master of the country; 2. For the achievement of unification, we have agreed that there is a common element in the South's concept of a confederation and the North's formula for a loose form of federation. The South and the North agreed to promote unification in that direction; 3. The South and the North have agreed to promptly resolve humanitarian issues such as exchange visits by separated family members and relatives on the occasion of the August 15 National Liberation Day and the question of unwavering Communists who have been given long prison sentences in the South; 4. The South and the North have agreed to consolidate mutual trust by promoting balanced development of the national economy through economic cooperation and by stimulating cooperation and exchange in civic, cultural, sports, health, and environmental and all other fields; 5. The South and the North have agreed to hold dialogues between relevant authorities in the near future to implement the above agreements expeditiously" (Source: The ROK Ministry of Unification). In contrast, Pyongyang's English text reads " 1. The North and the South agreed to solve the question of the country's unification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation responsible for it; 2. The North and the South, recognizing that a proposal for federation of lower stage advanced by the North side and a proposal for confederation put forth by the South side for the reunification of the country have elements in common, agreed to work for the reunification in this direction in the future; 3. The North and the South agreed to settle humanitarian issues, including exchange of visiting groups of separated families and relatives and the issue of unconverted long-term prisoners, as early as possible on the occasion of August 15 this year; 4. The North and the South agreed to promote the balanced development of the national economy through economic cooperation and build mutual confidence by activating cooperation and exchanges in all fields, social, cultural, sports, public health, environmental and so on; 5. The North and the South agreed to hold dialogues between the authorities as soon as possible to implement the above-mentioned agreed points in the near future" (Source: Korea Central News Agency).

3. For a thoughtful exposition of the triangular relationship among the U.S., China, and Japan, see Ming Zhang and Ronald N. Montaperto. *A Triad of Another Kind: The United States, China, and Japan*. New York: St. Martin's, 1999.

4. *Defense White Paper 1998*, Ministry of Defense, Republic of Korea.

5. The possible scenarios of North Korea's transformation and the responses by the surrounding powers are discussed in Tong Whan Park (ed). *The U.S. and the Two Koreas: A New Triangle*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

6. This does not mean that unification should be dropped from the agenda of national debate. In the long history of the unified Korean nation, its division since 1945 is nothing but a small blip which will one day disappear. Of course, there are many obstacles to overcome before the unification will happen and the wait could be longer than expected. The question is how to protect the Korean people in the interim period—from North Korea's possible self-destruction or another war on the peninsula.

7. The exact wording in the Agreed Framework was "The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S."

8. One may see the relationship as the Korean version of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) in which the American troops stationed in the South and the weapons of mass destruction in the North are pitted against each other. Paradoxically, these two would help prevent a major war on the peninsula as the original MAD between the two superpowers had prevented a nuclear exchange during the Cold War era.

9. Even from the late 1960s, Pyongyang tended to acknowledge the role of dual deterrence played by the American troops in Korea. Especially at times of crises instigated by North Korea—the 1968 attack on Seoul’s presidential palace, the 1974 assassination of South Korea’s first lady, and the 1983 Rangoon massacre of the presidential staff—Pyongyang appeared to look upon the U.S. to prevent a South Korean retaliation. This tendency became more pronounced in the early 1990s following the German unification and the officials began to make public statements cautiously implying the utility of the U.S. troops in serving Pyongyang’s security interests. It was Kim Yong-sun who in 1992 showed the first official sign of Pyongyang’s softening attitude toward the American troops in his talk with the State Department officials. Then Kang Suk-ju made a direct reference to the term ‘dual deterrence’ in his negotiations over the nuclear freeze. In 1994 Kim Il Sung himself showed a willingness to tolerate the presence of American forces until both Koreas reduce their respective forces to the level of 100,000. In the same vein, Rhee Chong-hyuck made a statement in 1996 that the U.S. forces might serve as temporary peacekeeping forces on the Korean peninsula. And finally, Kim Jong-il himself was attributed to telling Kim Dae-jung at the summitry that “U.S. forces in Korea are necessary and help maintain the stability of Northeast Asia” (*The Hankook Ilbo*, Chicago edition, June 21, 2000).

10. Special envoy Jo’s visit with Clinton at the White House on October 10, 2000, was truly a landmark event, breaking one of the few remaining Cold War barriers. Though not initially substantive in terms of concrete results, the meeting’s historic significance should be found in the fact that it has taken place. North Korea’s military has been most hostile to the U.S. and is seen to have the potential veto power over Kim Jong-il’s courtship with the West. The image of Jo in uniform shaking hands with Clinton is a loud announcement to the world, and the entire spectrum of North Korean society, that Pyongyang has won America’s friendship.

11. One such critic is Rep. Benjamin Gilman, Chair of the House International Relations Committee, who argues that the unconditional support given to North Korea would simply increase its threat to the neighbors (*The Chosun Ilbo*, November 13, 1999).

12. Le Duc Tho declined the prize.

13. An exception could be the 1971 award to Willy Brandt for West Germany’s Ostpolitik. As it was a unilateral change in the attitude towards East Germany and Eastern Europe, there was no counterpart who reciprocated Brandt’s initiative.

14. Kim Il-sung had agreed to a summit talk with Kim Young-sam in the summer of 1994. His death put a hold on the summitry ever since.

15. Conceivably, some in the North may worry about the Vietnamese experience in which the award-winning peace negotiation was quickly followed by the fall of Saigon. But they need to be reminded that it was Kissinger, not a South Vietnamese, who represented South Vietnam in the negotiation. Again, a more applicable model should be the PLO-Israeli peace negotiation.