North Korea in a Regional and Global Context

EDITED BY
Robert A. Scalapino and Hongkoo Lee
INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
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Introduction

The essays that follow come at a time of considerable fluidity in international relations, East and West. The broad trend is from alliance to alignment—from the type of tight, all-encompassing relationships that followed World War II when the major partner made absolute commitments and the minor partner pledged complete adherence, to a looser, more flexible relation in which neither absolute commitments nor total obedience is required. At the same time, the widespread proclamation of nonalignment is part myth, and conceals an important reality of these times. Few if any nations are or can be purely nonaligned. It will be recalled that Burma, one of the nations closest to such a status, withdrew from the Nonaligned Conference because it regarded most members as aligned. China is a good example. While proclaiming nonalignment, and notwithstanding its current efforts to improve relations with the USSR, the PRC today pursues tilted nonalignment, and the tilt is toward Japan and the West, especially the United States.

Is North Korea nonaligned? Certainly the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to use its official name, is not nonaligned with respect to the United States. It is actively hostile; this is also its stance toward a number of other states. The more complex issue, as explored in some of the essays here, is whether North Korea has maintained an equidistant position between Russia and China. It is my view that the term “equidistance” does not capture the essence of North Korea's relations with its two Communist neighbors. Rather, DPRK policies have been characterized by thrusts first in one direction, then in the other, being careful in recent years not to go beyond a point of no return. Whatever view one takes on this matter, there can be little doubt that the changing relations among the major nations surrounding the DPRK as well as changes on the domestic front have pro-
duced fluctuations in Pyongyang's foreign policies in the recent past. Whether these fluctuations will lead to a significant alteration in its previous xenophobic, isolationist policies remains to be seen, but at present, North Korea is being challenged by the dynamic environment—regional and global—in which it exists.

Dae-Sook Suh opens our survey with an exploration of the institutions and leading figures involved in the planning and execution of DPRK foreign policy, past and present. He identifies three elements as central: the party, which has the responsibility of setting the basic guidelines; the governmental agencies and the leading personalities who fashion specific foreign policies—policies that have undergone significant alteration since 1948; and “representative” organs charged with the ratification of the policies set before them.

It is Suh's view that the government has assumed a greater role than the party in the formulation and execution of foreign policy since 1972, symbolic of the enhanced powers of the government in general. The Constitution of 1972 stipulates that the cabinet is the supreme executive organ, in charge of directing DPRK foreign policy among other tasks. However, two party departments deal with foreign affairs directly, namely, the International Department and the External Department. Perhaps the formal allocation of powers between the party and the state is currently of limited importance since the key leaders occupy dual positions. In this respect, control over foreign policy as in all other matters has gravitated to Kim Il Sung. In the earlier years, Kim did not have such omnipotence. Rivals like Pak Hon-yang (head of the South Korean Communist movement and later executed), Nam II (a Soviet-Korean) and Kim Ch’ang-man (whose affiliations had been with Ya’nan), played important roles in the creation of DPRK foreign policy. By the 1960s, however, the dominance of Kim Il Sung and his Kapsan faction had been established, symbolized by the advent of Pak Song-ch’ol to the post of foreign minister.

At present, another transition appears to be taking place as Kim Jong Il, heir to his father’s position, rises. The replacement of the veteran Ho Tam as foreign minister by Kim Yong-nam, who appears to be a key element in the new team, is but one indication of the passing of the old guard.

Will the personnel changes reduce the potency—or at least the extensive display—of ideology in North Korean foreign policy? As B. C. Koh and Sang-Woo Rhee indicate, DPRK ideology can now be summarized in a single word, chuch’e (self-reliance). Whether the type of extreme nationalism encapsulated in chuch’e warrants the label “ideology” is a controversial question, but in any case its central contents are clear: the emphasis upon “independence” as a supreme value, the exaltation of North Korean society as superior to all others, and an extreme form of the cult of personality centering upon “the Sun of Nation,” Kim Il Sung. Rhee thus describes chuch’e as a “new, unique totalitarian system” designed to justify the dynastic rule of
Kim and his family. As Koh indicates, it would be difficult to find an "ideology" more antithetical to Marxism than this—the North Korean commitment to a highly centralized, collectivist socialism notwithstanding.

The North Korean party and state were and are deeply influenced by the Soviet model. Kim himself, however, appears to have identified more closely with the Chinese Communist movement, and Mao's ideas have found their way into North Korean rhetoric and policies.

If ideology affects the substance of DPRK foreign policy, its more dramatic influence is upon perceptions and style. Thus, views of the United States, while heavily distorted, appear to be deeply and sincerely held, thereby shaping attitudes and providing the justification for policies. In style, North Korean pronouncements are replete with an extraordinary quotient of invective against opponents and an equal amount of self-righteousness.

Koh believes that chuch'e has come to encompass both nationalist and Marxist–Leninist components, the former in the glorification of the North Korean culture, state, and leader, the latter in the commitment to socialism, the class struggle, and "proletarian dictatorship." But Marx would be appalled by the encasement of his theories in the chuch'e framework.

An interesting question lies ahead. Will North Korea follow China in advancing a pragmatic, experimental course replete with far-reaching economic and political changes? The signs on the horizon are modest as yet, but in the effort to "turn out" for economic reasons, potentialities exist. Moreover, chuch'e itself—at root a doctrine of national interest—poses no great barrier to a drift toward pragmatism. And in a variety of ways, North Korean leaders have shown the capacity to change course abruptly when they believed it suited their purpose. The movement from a monocracy to more emphasis upon collective, technocratic leadership may abet this course—but given North Korea's recent history and the adherence to "total unity" as a requirement for security, future ideological trends remain unclear; in any case, change is likely to be incremental, not of the extensive type now taking place in the PRC.

One might expect economics to lead politics in some degree, however, as a new generation of DPRK leaders come to power. As the essays by Suk Bum Yoon and Joseph S. Chung demonstrate, the recent signals of an interest in turning outward for science and technology are not without some background. The DPRK economy has represented a classic case of the Stalinist "big push" strategy, with extensive emphasis upon heavy industry and the creation of a significant industrial–military complex. But an effort to modify the heavily autarkic nature of the economy began in the early 1970s. That effort ran into difficulty primarily because North Korea could not generate exports, especially to the advanced industrial nations most desired as trade partners. A sizable debt accumulated which the DPRK has found difficult to repay, complicating the present plans. Trade did grow at a rate of more than 12 percent per annum between 1971 and 1982; this was
far below the South Korean record, but constituted rapid gains. Moreover, the percentage of trade with non-Communist states increased steadily, from only 15 percent in the early 1960s to approximately 50 percent by the late 1970s. The Soviet Union, however, has remained North Korea’s most important trading partner, substantially outdistancing China and Japan.

The data make it clear that the DPRK economic policies have been more flexible than the political rhetoric lauding chuch’e would imply, and Pyongyang’s current leaders obviously want to accelerate trade with Japan and West Europe, cognizant of the ROK’s spectacular performance. As both Yoon and Chung point out, however, it will not be easy, given the basic pattern of the North Korean economy, to overcome export weakness to industrial nations, hence, to resolve the debt problem. DPRK leaders are now aware that the massive introduction of Japanese-Western capital and technology, including direct investment, paved the way for rapid economic transformation in the ROK, and they have taken the first timid steps in that direction; but the imprint of the past—political as well as economic—still lies heavily on this society.

Following the essays on international economic policies, it is logical to commence an analysis of North Korean relations with neighboring states by examining the critical issue of North-South Korean relations. Chong-Sik Lee and Deok Kim provide an in-depth evaluation of the background and recent trends in North-South interaction and, in doing so, provide us with a sense of both the enormous obstacles to a new, harmonious relationship and the factors that offer hope for movement in that direction.

It is difficult to exaggerate the hatred and suspicion that exist between the two Koreas—product of war, subversive efforts, extensive militarization, and a host of other elements. Yet a combination of international and domestic developments, presented in detail by Lee and Kim, have induced some flexibility in the policies of both Seoul and Pyongyang relating to each other. The economic success of the South, combined with the U.S. defense commitment, engendered the degree of self-confidence that enabled the ROK to go furthest and earliest in demonstrating a willingness to come to terms with reality. North Korea’s desire to turn out, combined with the nudgings of the PRC (and the example it set) as well as the strongly adverse repercussions of the Rangoon bombing, induced a shift in some aspects of DPRK policy (such as the adamant refusal to deal with the Chun government). Dialogue replaced—or more accurately, supplemented—confrontation.

It is yet too early to predict where the present economic and Red Cross discussions will lead, although the dialogues continue at this writing, and some general agreements appear to have been reached. Yet there are major differences in the tactics as well as the strategies of the two governments, and the radically different nature of the two societies has not been altered. At most, one can express a cautious optimism, based largely on the proposi-
tion that the external and internal pressures tilt strongly in favor of accommodation and against another military conflict.

The policies—and attitudes—of the two major Communist states are vital in helping to influence the course of future developments on the Korean peninsula. Four essays—those by Yu-Nam Kim, Donald S. Zagoria, Chae-Jin Lee, and Chin-Wee Chung—deal with this matter from varying perspectives and with differing emphases. On certain crucial issues, however, there is substantial agreement. Positioned geographically on the borders of both China and Russia, North Korea has sought to maintain good (if somewhat aloof) relations with both while extracting from each the maximum economic, political, and security support. Kim’s policies toward China and Russia at any given time have reflected the concerns and priorities of the moment. Equidistance in any pure sense has been impossible and, more significantly, undesirable from Pyongyang’s standpoint—since, artfully played, the threat to move closer to one party activates defensive actions on the part of the other party generally beneficial to the DPRK. Yet North Korea must be careful not to go so far in one direction as to antagonize the party being slighted.

For cultural and other reasons—including geographic proximity—North Korea has generally tilted toward China, albeit not without periods of resentment and tension as well as specific disagreements on important policy matters. Recently, moreover, relations with the USSR have been considerably strengthened. In truth, the North Koreans are nearly as difficult as allies as they are as opponents. Privately, Soviet leaders—and the Soviet intelligentsia—have expressed very negative feelings about the DPRK and its supreme leader. Yet they must bid against China, and they have military and economic cards to play that often prove effective, whatever their reservations and the corresponding ones regarding the USSR held by Kim and his colleagues. DPRK–USSR relations, while of growing importance at present, are strictly a product of the national interest of both parties, wholly devoid of any personal warmth or cultural affinity.

While the USSR does not want another conflict on the Korean peninsula, it is probably least happy among the major states with recent developments, fearing that it may be odd man out. Thus, it has given no support to the idea of trilateral talks—South, North, U. S.—which South Korea and the United States also oppose for different reasons. In general, it has also signaled displeasure at the prospects of closer North Korean ties with Japan and the West while stepping up its economic and military assistance in response to North Korean requests. In return, the DPRK has moderated its position on certain issues—or at minimum, toned down its rhetoric on those matters that might offend the Soviets, Vietnam being an example. Nonetheless, the relationship between the USSR and the DPRK is likely to be circumscribed, as Donald Zagoria notes, for reasons set forth earlier.
Sino-North Korean relations have been generally closer both in the 1970s and the early 1980s, notwithstanding Pyongyang's qualms about PRC friendliness with the United States. Perhaps the policy of nonalignment enunciated by Chinese leaders after 1980 provided limited reassurance. There can be little doubt that China wants North Korea to tilt in its direction, and Beijing has been willing to pay a price for Pyongyang's favor. Yet as indicated, its capacity to provide economic and military assistance is limited. Hence, it must depend more heavily upon cultural exchanges and the reciprocal visits of leaders involving frequent consultation.

At times in the past, both the Soviet Union and China have displayed a willingness to engage in cross contacts with South Korea despite the unhappiness of the North with such activities. In recent years, China in particular has gravitated toward a de facto two-Koreas policy, notwithstanding staunch rhetorical support of basic North Korean positions on reunification and American troop withdrawal. PRC trade with the ROK has grown to an estimated $400 million in 1984 and promises to be higher in 1985. South Korean entrepeneuers have visited China, and they participate in joint ventures through Hong Kong sources. In addition, the Chinese have permitted Koreans living in Northeast China to visit relatives in South Korea and return; international sports meets involving Chinese and South Koreans (some in China) are commonplace. Negotiations at official levels took place after the highjacking of a Chinese passenger plane.

These developments—and the dramatic economic liberalization now occurring in China—must cause concern in Pyongyang, and the recent North Korean overtures to the Soviet Union are in part a response to the uncertainties of Chinese policy. At the same time, the Chinese claim credit, probably with justice, for influencing the North Koreans to undertake new economic policies of their own; and certainly, consultation between PRC and DPRK leaders has been frequent in the recent past. Perhaps as Chae-Jin Lee and Chin-Wee Chung both suggest, the complex mixture of cooperation and cleavage characteristic of the past will continue, but long-term mutual interests do exist, and in addition, the Chinese have often shown a sensitivity in dealing with Asians generally lacking in Soviet diplomacy.

Nevertheless, whether North Korea—or other Asian states—would welcome a militarily powerful China is an open question. In the meantime, the PRC has been playing an active role as middleman between Japan and the United States on the one hand, and North Korea on the other, seeking some modus vivendi that will accord with China's interests: a DPRK close to it and an ROK with which it can interact economically.

We turn next to North Korea's relations with Japan and the United States. Jung Hyun Shin and C. I. Eugene Kim provide analyses of DPRK-Japan relations. For more than three decades, North Korea and Japan have maintained a limited nonofficial relation, one marked by periodic tension but showing progress in the 1970s, especially in trade. North Korean
indebtedness to Japanese firms, with payments on the principal now to be made by June 1986, provide the primary barrier to further economic advances. Pyongyang sees Japan as a vital element in its quest for economic modernization, however, and Japan's long-term goal is a two-Koreas policy that seeks to use economic and cultural diplomacy to help reduce tension on the Korean peninsula and, at the same time, establish Japanese economic primacy in the region. How easily the objectives of the DPRK and Japan can be achieved hinges partly on North Korean policies (incidents like the Rangoon bombing cause setbacks) and partly on the general international environment.

A not insignificant portion of that environment relates to the attitudes and policies of the United States. Byung-joon Ahn and this author provide essays that explore North Korean–United States relations. When President Reagan took office, he inherited a thin and wavering line of PRK–U.S. contacts, mainly hostile. Since 1980, moreover, North Korean rhetoric aimed against the United States has not dropped in decibel level. Yet it is now clear that while Washington is accused of a litany of offenses and crimes, Pyongyang wants contacts of various sorts. Its efforts to draw the United States into formal negotiations are partly to gain a form of recognition and to disturb ROK–U.S. relations, but they also reflect a growing cognizance on the part of North Korea that the United States is a key to any basic “turning out” policy, reminiscent of the reorientation of PRC policies after 1969. One primary objective, of course, is the removal of U.S. forces from South Korea and the weakening of ROK–U.S. defense ties, yet the North does not presently make troop withdrawal a precondition for improved relations with the United States.

For its part, Washington remains committed to the principle that while the United States would welcome cross-recognition (China and the Soviet Union establishing diplomatic relations with South Korea, and the United States and Japan taking similar steps with North Korea) and the admission of both Korean states to the United Nations, it will not move toward unilateral recognition of the North. Nor is the Reagan administration interested in trilateral negotiations, despite the earlier Carter–Park initiative in this direction, then rejected—now supported—by Pyongyang. It sees such a development as doomed to certain failure since the primary DPRK objective is U.S. troop withdrawal and since formal talks are likely to be interpreted as a form of American recognition. However, the U.S. government has countenanced unofficial American–North Korean contacts and was prepared to see North Korea participate in the Los Angeles Olympic games. If the DPRK wishes to test this avenue, it will find a general acceptance. The U.S. government remains cautious, to be sure, deeply conscious of past DPRK actions from the Korean War to the Rangoon incident and unwilling to take any step that would undermine ROK confidence in the United States as an ally. There is an awareness that the North Korean government may feel
threatened by military exercises like Team Spirit, a theme propagated often by the Chinese. But there is also a memory that the North, not the South, has repeatedly taken military or violent actions disruptive of any progression toward North–South trust and a recognition also that the presence of American forces in South Korea, while small in numbers, prevent an incident from escalating into full-fledged conflict. Under present circumstances, therefore, no basic changes in U.S. policies toward North or South Korea are likely.

Young C. Kim deals with North Korean policies toward the Third World, a term now widely accepted, but imprecise and often obscuring the enormous complexities and differences that mark developing societies. For the DPRK, the effort to cultivate the Third World and seek identification with it is both a means of ideological expression and a policy rooted in national interest. During the 1970s, as Kim notes, Pyongyang enjoyed great success. Diplomatic recognition was ultimately obtained from over one hundred nations, more than sixty of which also recognized the ROK; in 1975, the DPRK was accepted as a member of the Nonaligned Conference, and the number of Third World delegations visiting North Korea showed sharp increases. One fruit of these gains was the adoption of a pro-North Korean resolution by the United Nations General Assembly in September 1975 in company with a pro-South Korean resolution (nonalignment in action!).

Despite its economic problems, North Korea has developed an assistance program as a part of its diplomatic offensive toward the Third World, with some 8,000 individuals sent to 38 countries between 1966 and 1983, according to Kim. In considerable measure, assistance has been military. It is important to note, however, that military exchanges have not been undertaken merely for political reasons. Indeed, military sales abroad to some 40 countries have accounted for the bulk of North Korea’s foreign exchange. However, arms along with training have also been given various guerrilla groups. Apart from military interaction, North Korean technicians operating in Third World Countries have set up model farms, provided help in irrigation projects, and trained local agricultural specialists.

Attention was directed at first primarily to the Middle East and Africa along with Asia; more recently, Latin America has figured importantly in DPRK goals. But the Third World offensive was damaged recently by North Korean militancy, and in particular by the Rangoon incident. The latest gains have been largely those of the ROK. Nevertheless, the quest for Third World support will continue to have high priority in DPRK foreign policy.

Chongwook Chung’s essay follows naturally, since he focuses upon North Korea’s quest for legitimacy internationally and especially upon the evolving North Korean attitudes toward the United Nations as well as its Third World policies. The general movement of DPRK policy with respect to the United Nations has been from hostility (in the Korean War era and its immediate aftermath) to participation (via auxiliary agencies and the Liaison
Mission in New York) while continuing to refuse to accept joint admission with the ROK.

Implicit in North Korean policies are many contradictions and anachronisms. Not only does the DPRK accept formal participation with the ROK in various U.N. activities and dual recognition from a large number of nations; with respect to the Third World, it persists in emphasizing the issues of the 1950s (anticolonialism and revolution) rather than those of the 1980s (economic modernization and concentration upon domestic sociopolitical concerns).

Our survey ends with essays by Young-Koo Cha and Norman Levin on North Korean strategic relations. It is Cha’s view that North Korean military capacities greatly exceed those of the South, as a result of heavy Northern military expenditures. Nonetheless, Pyongyang is obsessed with the “encirclement phobia,” with the most serious perceived threat being the ROK–U.S. alliance, but with tripartite military cooperation including Japan also a matter of concern; hence, the continuing military buildup, use of subversive tactics, and general paranoia about an external menace.

As Levin points out, despite the recent indication of a possible new policy toward the South, Pyongyang to date has refused to engage in confidence-building measures with Seoul or to come to terms with the ROK as an independent state. Its proposals, moreover—in contrast to those of the ROK—are clearly aimed at advancing “reunification” rather than peaceful coexistence. In addition, the removal of the American presence together with the weakening of ROK–U.S. and ROK–Japan relations remain primary DPRK objectives.

At the same time, Pyongyang seeks to guard its strategic alignment with the USSR and the PRC. But as both Cha and Levin point out, this is not an easy task. As a global power, the USSR has different priorities—and interests—from those of the DPRK, and beyond this, Moscow prefers the type of relations currently existent with the People’s Republic of Mongolia and Vietnam to the more independent position of the DPRK. Hence strains, abetted by vast cultural differences, are inevitable.

The PRC, given its present interest in focusing on domestic reform and development, also represents a problem from Pyongyang’s perspective. Its interest in preserving tranquility in the region (and in a de facto two-Koreas policy) give it a greater stake in the status quo on the Korean peninsula than North Korean leaders have. For cultural, historical, and geopolitical reasons, relations with China have been—and probably will continue to be—closer than those with the USSR. Yet Pyongyang can only count on cautious, conditional support from its two principal patrons, adding to the complexities of its general strategic position.

As indicated at the outset, these essays seek to capture various facets of an extraordinarily complex and fluid situation at a given point in time. No doubt a reassessment will be warranted within a few years. Nevertheless,
all of the essays indicate certain persistent features of North Korea and its foreign policies as well as certain consistent patterns in the evolutionary changes that have taken place that will certainly serve to illuminate the future, whatever its precise course.

The conference that engendered these essays was held in Cheju City, Republic of Korea, August 20–23, 1984. It was the second* such session on North Korea cosponsored by the Korean Association of Communist Studies and the Institute of East Asian Studies of the University of California, Berkeley. Revisions to the papers were made subsequent to the conference, but no attempt was made to impose a standardized format on the authors. Hence, there are inconsistencies in such matters as capitalization, translations, and forms of citations. We have used the McCune-Reischauer system of transliteration of Korean into English. Exceptions have been made, however, for such names as Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and for words for which the North Korean usage is clearly known. Common usage and personal preferences have also been recognized over the system.

In closing this introduction, we would like to pay homage to the following sponsors, whose financial assistance made possible the conference: the Earhart Foundation, Ann Arbor, Michigan; the Korea Research Foundation, Seoul, Korea; and the Korean Association for Communist Studies, Seoul, Korea.

Robert A. Scalapino

Berkeley, California
June 1985

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*The first conference was held in San Francisco in February 1981. The papers were published under the title *North Korea Today: Strategic and Domestic Issues*, edited by Robert A. Scalapino and Jun-yop Kim (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1983).
The Organization and Administration of North Korean Foreign Policy

Dae-Sook Suh

In his major report to the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in October 1980, Kim II Sung affirmed that the basic ideology shaping North Korean foreign policy was that of chuch'ë or self-reliance, and that North Korean foreign policy goals were threefold: independence, friendship, and peace. Kim stated that the Party would pursue an independent foreign policy, endeavor to promote friendly relations with all countries that respected Korean sovereignty, and strive for lasting peace and security throughout the world. In his discussion of the report, Hŏ Tam, then foreign minister of North Korea, vowed to implement these goals by advancing the Korean revolution to a more favorable phase and by demonstrating the unquenchable vitality of chuch'ë diplomacy. In his discussion of the same report, Kim Yong-nam, the present foreign minister, said that the "glorious Party Center" had advanced militant programs to infuse chuch'ë into the party and society and to provide a firm guarantee that Kim Il Sung's revolutionary ideas would be kept untainted. This, he said, will be accomplished by the political and ideological unity and cohesion of the Party and the revolutionary ranks. There is, of course, no record of the Party Center's militant programs, and North Korean authorities generally do not detail how their foreign

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policy goals will be implemented. In fact, except for the supreme leader, no one addresses the public about the ideological base, prescriptions, or implementation of foreign policy. Memoranda from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are harsh condemnations of their class enemies with reference to particular incidents, anniversaries, or past programs, but seldom do they deal with future policy objectives or any policy goals that they aspire to implement. A good example is the memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued in June 1984, on American strategy and the policy of turning South Korea into a nuclear base.\(^3\)

Kim's foreign policy goals in independence, friendship, and peace reflect North Korea's past experience, its current policy objectives, and its aspirations for the future. North Korean foreign policy behavior has long suffered from dependence, as dictated by the presence of two powerful neighbors who played dominant roles in liberating Korea and preserving the communist republic during the Korean War. Only an event as major as the Sino-Soviet conflict could free the North Koreans from big-power domination, and they treasure their independent status. When Kim says that he will shape all North Korean foreign policy independently, based upon the specific conditions of North Korea for the people of North Korea, he means that he will reject any interference from other countries. In his report to the Sixth Congress, Kim said that “today, our Republic holds its own in the international arena.”\(^4\)

For his second goal, that of friendship, Kim is cultivating the Non-aligned Movement, promoting friendship and establishing diplomatic relations with more than a hundred countries. In his report, Kim said that the decade between the Fifth and the Sixth Party Congresses (1970-1980) was most productive in promoting friendship. North Korea established diplomatic relations with sixty-six countries, nearly tripling the number of countries with which North Korea has diplomatic relations. In his most magnanimous gesture, Kim said that if the United States withdrew its troops from Korea and did not obstruct his plans for reunification, he was ready to be friends even with the United States.

Though a rhetorical flourish with little substance, Kim's third goal, to strive for lasting peace and security throughout the world, is a lofty ideal to which any country can subscribe. His more pressing policy objectives are to obtain the removal of nuclear weapons from South Korea, to establish a nuclear-free zone in Asia, and to oppose the subjugation of small nations by militarily powerful countries. In his report, he said that he is giving active support to the peoples of Palestine, other countries in the Middle East, and

\(^3\) *Pyongyang Times*, June 27, 1984.

\(^4\) Kim, *Report to the Sixth Congress*. 
South Africa in their “just struggle” against militarily powerful, imperialist nations.

These foreign policy goals have evolved through the long process of North Korean political development. For Kim to proclaim these goals at the time of the founding of the Democratic People’s Republic (DPRK) would have been unthinkable. Shielded from the world by the Soviet Union after World War II, North Korea was primarily concerned at the time not with foreign relations, but with the reunification of Korea. The organization and administration of North Korean foreign policy were simple then, and they remained so throughout the reconstruction period of the 1950s. The chief foreign policy concerns were North Korea’s two powerful neighbors and benefactors, the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China.

When the DPRK was established in September 1948, the new government had diplomatic relations with only seven countries: the Soviet Union, Mongolia, and five satellite countries in Eastern Europe. By 1984, North Korea enjoyed diplomatic relations with 106 countries. Although the administrative organization for implementation of North Korean foreign policy goals is less complex than that of most countries, more importantly, little is known about it.

This study is an introductory inquiry into the organization and administration of North Korean foreign policy. With the introduction of a new constitution in 1972, there were many important changes in North Korean government organizations and administrative structures, including foreign policy organs, and the conduct of North Korean foreign policy changed drastically during the 1970s. One might question whether the year 1972 marked a crucial change in North Korean foreign policy, but a new governmental structure and new administrative personnel were introduced that year, and North Korea expanded its foreign relations during the 1970s. Thus, for the sake of convenience, this study is divided into two periods: (1) from the founding of the DPRK until 1972, and (2) from 1972 to the present.

THE FIRST PERIOD: 1948–1972

To decipher the organization and administration of North Korean foreign policy during this period, it may be prudent to examine three foreign policy components of North Korean government: Party structure, government organization, and administrative personnel.

**Party Structure**

The Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) was organized long before the founding of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. In fact, the Party held two congresses before the government was established. The First Party Congress, in August 1946, established ten departments within the Central Committee:
Organization, Party Cadre, Agitation and Propaganda, Labor, Agriculture, Culture, Women, Youth, Finance, and General Affairs (Article 15). There was no department for international or external affairs. At the time of the Second Congress, in March 1948, four departments (Culture, Women, Youth, and General Affairs) were eliminated, but no external affairs department was added.

The first Central Committee plenum after the establishment of the DPRK was held in September 1948 and dealt with the problems of organization, creating an Organization Committee, and expanding the Standing Committee. However, there was still no formal Party organization dealing specifically with foreign policy, and there was no structural change during or immediately after the Korean War. It was not until the Third Party Congress, in April 1956, that Party control of the government organization was written into the bylaws of the Party. Article 38 of the bylaws adopted at the Third Party Congress in 1956 stipulated that to strengthen Party leadership in important government organizations, the Central Committee would establish political bureaus in government organizations and place its members in the bureau to direct Party policy. The Central Committee was to receive regular reports from members on the activities of the bureaus.

At the time of the Fourth Party Congress, in September 1961, this article reappeared as Article 40 of the revised Party bylaws, and it further elaborated the Party’s control of government as well as social organizations, such as the establishment of the politburo in the Democratic Youth League (Chapter 7) and the Korean People’s Army (Chapter 8). By the time of the Fifth Party Congress, in November 1970, the operation of the politburos was vastly expanded. The revised bylaws of the Fifth Party dealt with the operation of the politburo in a separate chapter with five articles devoted to them (Chapter 8, Articles 51–55). The chapter states in part:

The Central Committee of the Party, when necessary, shall organize political bureaus in important sectors of the political, economic, and military fields. The political bureaus organized in the cabinet and central organizations . . . perform the function of an executive unit of Party committees in that unit.⁵

There is no doubt that Party functionaries did operate in the cabinet, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the record of the organization, specific functions, or extent of power exercised by Party functionaries has not been made public. Furthermore, following the Third Party Congress in 1956, if not earlier, an International or External Affairs Department may have been operating in the Central Committee, but no information about it has ever been released.

The Government Organizations

The first constitution of the DPRK, adopted in September 1948, gave a great deal of power in the conduct of foreign relations to the Standing Committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly. While the right to approve a proposed cabinet was vested in the general assembly session of the Supreme People’s Assembly (Article 37, Item 4), ratification and termination of treaties and appointment and staffing of North Korean diplomatic missions abroad were the duties of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee was also charged with receiving the credentials of foreign diplomats to the DPRK (Article 49, Items 8, 9, and 10).6

In addition to the Standing Committee, the Supreme People’s Assembly created a number of ad hoc committees, such as Laws and Regulations. Because the legislative functions of the Supreme People’s Assembly were limited to unanimous approval of legislation proposed by the government or the Party, however, the legislative role of these committees is suspect. Nonetheless, the Supreme People’s Assembly, at the sixth session of the Second Assembly in October 1959, created four permanent committees in addition to the Standing Committee. There were the Bills Committee, the Budget Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Credentials Committee. These committees were kept intact throughout the third and the fourth assemblies, until a new constitution was adopted at the Fifth Assembly in December 1972.

In each general session of the Supreme People’s Assembly, the chairman of the Credentials Committee reported that the elected members to the Assembly had been verified. Functions of other committees, such as the Bills Committee, which prepared items of legislation to be adopted, and the Budget Committee, which examined the national budget and proposed new budgets, seem clear. The Foreign Affairs Committee, however, made no reports at the Assembly sessions, and its role remains unclear. The chairmen and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee are known, but their functions in relation to the government and party officials are not made public.

The new constitution stipulates that the cabinet is the supreme executive organ, and that the cabinet directs the foreign relations of the DPRK and negotiates treaties with other countries (Article 55). In the listing of cabinet ministries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is listed fourth behind the Ministries of National Defense, State Control, and Interior. During the twenty-four years of its life, from 1948 to 1972, the first constitution was

6The text of the first constitution is available in almost every yearbook published by the North. See for example, Chosôn chungang yŏn'gam, 1950 [Korean Central Yearbook, 1950] (Pyongyang: Chosôn chungang t’ongsinsa, 1950), pp. 2-11.
amended six different times. The amendments all came during the first fourteen years, and none directly involved any foreign policy organization.\(^7\) North Korean diplomatic relations were limited to a small number of countries during the first period. All through the Korean War and up to the time of the withdrawal of the Chinese volunteers from Korea in 1958, the DPRK maintained formal diplomatic relations with only eleven countries, and the organizational structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was simple. At its meeting of July 18, 1949, the Standing Committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly approved various organizational and operational regulations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the basic operational structure of the Ministry was maintained throughout the period. When the DPRK broadened its horizon to include newly emerging African countries in the 1960s, some measure of structural differentiation occurred within the ministry, though only gradually.

**Administrative Personnel**

During a twenty-five year period, three men served as foreign minister of the DPRK. These were Pak Hŏn-yŏng, who served five years (1948–1953); Nam Il, who served six years (1953–1959); and Pak Sŏng-ch’ŏl, who served by far the longest time, eleven years (1959–1970). These were all prominent political leaders of North Korea, and all of them concurrently served as vice-premier of the cabinet. They were also ranking members of the WPK; Pak Hŏn-yŏng was vice-chairman of the Party, and both Nam Il and Pak Sŏng-ch’ŏl were members of the Party’s Political Committee. The three men also represented different political groups in the North, and the rise and the fall of each marked a corresponding shift in North Korean foreign policy.

Pak Hŏn-yŏng was more a vice-premier than a foreign minister, and he was the political rival of Kim Il Sung from the time of the liberation of Korea until the end of the Korean War. Pak represented old Korean Communist Party followers in both North and South Korea, and his followers reportedly conspired to oust Kim Il Sung from power. The plot was exposed, however, and Pak was executed after the Korean War.\(^8\) Nam Il was not as prominent a political figure as Pak Hŏn-yŏng, but he gained prominence after successfully negotiating the armistice with the United Nations Command to bring an end to the Korean War. Nam was from the Soviet Union, graduating from Smolensk Military Academy and Tashkent University. He came to North Korea after World War II as a Soviet army captain and worked briefly as a lecturer in the Physics Department of Kim Il Sung

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\(^7\) For the details of different constitutional amendments, see Suh, *Korean Communism*, pp. 499–502.

\(^8\) For North Korean accusations against Pak Hŏn-yŏng, see *Tang ēi kongghohwa rūl wihan t’ujaeng* [Struggle to Strengthen the Party] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn nodongdang ch’ulp’ansa, 1956), pp. 2–103.
University before joining the interim government as deputy director of education. Nam represented the Soviet–Korean group, and many Soviet–Koreans were active in both Party and government after the Korean War. Nam’s demise came with the gradually worsening relationship between the DPRK and the Soviet Union on the Sino–Soviet dispute. Nam was retained as vice-premier in name only, being demoted to a much lower ranking position in the government. He died on March 8, 1976.9

Pak Sŏng-ch'ŏl is, of course, a partisan, belonging to the elite group of Kim Il Sung’s revolutionaries. After serving eleven years as foreign minister, he was promoted to vice-premier of the Administration Council, and he is currently vice-president of the Republic immediately below Kim Il Sung. Pak is the one who steered North Korean foreign policy during the difficult years of Soviet–North Korean disputes (1961–1965) and Sino–North Korean disputes (1965–1970) and engineered North Korea’s joining the ranks of the Nonaligned Movement. Pak also came to South Korea on a secret mission to confer with President Park Chung Hee before the North and South Koreans met for direct negotiation in the early 1970s.

In a rare speech on foreign policy, at the second session of the First Supreme People’s Assembly in January 1949, Pak Hŏn-yŏng said that he would follow the principle of equality in the DPRK’s diplomatic relations, and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was willing to enter into diplomatic relations with any country that respected the sovereignty of the people and the government of the DPRK.10 There were only a few takers, of course, but Pak praised the Soviet Union for its recognition of North Korea and for sending Terentii F. Shtykov as its first ambassador to Pyongyang. Ambassador Shtykov was a general in the Soviet army that occupied the North, and he also represented the Soviet Union’s occupation forces in negotiations with the American occupation forces in the South.11

North Korea in turn sent Chu Yŏng-ha, then minister of transportation in the first cabinet and former vice-chairman of the Workers’ Party of North Korea, to the Soviet Union as its first ambassador. Chu was a loyal supporter of Pak Hŏn-yŏng, and North Korea did its utmost to maintain the most cordial possible relations with the Soviet Union. Even after the People’s Republic of China was established and diplomatic envoys were exchanged, the North Korean envoy to China, Yi Chu-yŏn, another Pak supporter, was

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9 Nodong Sinmun, March 8, 1976.

10 See the text of Pak’s speech as well as discussion of his speech in the minutes of the Supreme People’s Assembly. Ch’oego inmin hoet’i che ich’a hoet’i hoet’irok [Minutes of the Second Session of the Supreme People’s Assembly], (Pyongyang: Ch’oego inmin hoet’i sangim wiwŏnhoe, 1949), pp. 203–276.

not as important a political figure as Chu. The first Chinese envoy to Pyong-
yang did not take up his post until after the start of the Korean War. It is
safe to say that throughout Pak’s administration of North Korean foreign
policy, Pak, rather than Kim II Sung, played the key role in administering
foreign policy. The Soviet Union, however, was the dominant influence in
the conduct of North Korean foreign policy.

After Pak was purged, Kim II Sung personally took charge of foreign
affairs, traveling around the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It appears
that Nam II, Kim’s new foreign minister, accompanied Kim as his Russian in-
terpreter. Nam II’s discussions of Kim II Sung’s report to the Third Party
Congress in 1956 reflect Kim’s active role in the foreign affairs of the DP-
RK. Nam II paid high tribute to Kim’s visit to the Soviet Union, but he
seems to have anticipated Kim’s move away from the Soviet Union, as in-
dicated by the purge of the Soviet-Koreans and the first pronouncement of
the chuch’e idea, as early as December 1955.

The rapid change in the North Korean domestic political scene during
the 1950s and the de-Stalinization campaigns in the Soviet Union caused
some difficulties both at home and in North Korean diplomatic missions
abroad. For example, the most prominent Soviet-Korean party leader, Hô
Ka-i, was purged, subsequently committing suicide, and the North Korean
ambassador to the Soviet Union, Yi Sang-jo, defected to the Soviet Union
and sought political asylum there. Increasing difficulties with the Soviet
Union ultimately brought an end to Nam II’s tenure as foreign minister, but
during his time in office, Kim II Sung showed much more interest in North
Korean foreign affairs, thus weakening Soviet influence on the administra-
tion of foreign policy. Because of his personal interest in the conduct of
foreign policy, Kim II Sung, rather than North Korean diplomatic officials,
was the first to sense a need for change.

From its Second to its Fourth Assembly (1957-1972), the Supreme
People’s Assembly included a Foreign Affairs Committee, and this com-
mittee seems to have served Kim’s need to steer North Korean foreign
policy away from the Soviet Union. The first chairman of the committee,

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12 Chosôn nodongdang che samch’a taehoe munhônjip [Documents of the Third Party
Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea], (Pyongyang: Choson nodongdang ch’ulp’ansa,

13 Kim Il Sung, “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Chuch’e in
Ideological Work,” Selected Works, vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing

14 It was a seven-member committee in all three assemblies. Except for its chairman, mem-
bers seem to have little to do with foreign policy of the North. Only two members served
more than once in the committee; these are Kim Ok-sun and Pak Yong-guk. See the entire
membership of the committee in Suh, Korean Communism, p. 440.
Kim Ch’ang-man, came from China. He was most vocal in denouncing the Soviet Union at the outset of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Kim Yong-guk, chairman of the committee in 1962, was a young man who rose up from the ranks of the League of the Socialist Working Youth, and he was eager to explore the vast area of relations with nonaligned nations. The chairman of the committee during the Fourth Assembly, in 1967, was Sŏ Ch’ŏl, a partisan who seemed to have supplied domestic political support for the change in foreign policy orientation.

The foreign policy objectives of Pak Sŏng-ch’ŏl as Minister of Foreign Affairs were to seek cooperation among the socialist countries and to expand North Korea’s diplomatic relations with the nonaligned nations. Four factors seemed to have helped Pak to achieve his goals. These were: the Sino-Soviet dispute and the North Korean difficulties with both countries during the 1960s, because of which North Korea was forced to look elsewhere for cooperation; Pak’s effort, albeit an unsuccessful one, to promote Kim Il Sung as the leader of the Nonaligned Movement; the military involvement of South Korea in the Vietnam conflict, which forced North Korea to ally herself with the Third World countries; and the rise of the partisan group to political prominence in both Party and government organizations of the DPRK.

Pak’s efforts were quite successful. When he took over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1959, North Korea had diplomatic relations with only eleven countries (Albania, China, East Germany, and Vietnam in addition to the original seven), but by July 1970, when he was promoted to vice-premier, he had established diplomatic relations with twenty-four more countries, bringing to thirty-five the total number of countries with which the DPRK had relations. These were mostly African countries, but Pak succeeded in concluding diplomatic relations with such leading Third World countries as Egypt and Indonesia.


With the introduction of a new constitution in December 1972, the organization and administration of North Korean foreign policy grew more complex in response to the growing need to deal with an even larger number of countries in the 1970s. More important than describing administrative per-

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15 There are two good rosters of the countries having diplomatic relations with the DPRK. For chronological order, see Byung Chul Koh, The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 11–12. For a list of countries in alphabetical order, see Tai Sun An, North Korea: A Political Handbook (Wilmington, Dela.: Scholarly Resources, 1983), pp. 80–82. See also a publication by the National Unification Board, Pukhan kaeyo [Survey of North Korea] (Seoul: kukt’o t’ongilwŏn, 1980), pp. 233–265.
sonnel and structural differentiation in North Korean Party and government organizations, however, is our recognition of the gradual but steady change that came about in the 1970s after the introduction of the new constitution.

The change consists in a greater emphasis upon the role of the government than on the Party in North Korean politics. It was the Party, the WPK, that Kim Il Sung used to gain power, struggling against factional elements in the 1950s and consolidating his position both at home and abroad in the 1960s. With the advent of the new constitution in 1972, however, the North Korean government seems to have become much more important, in organizational and operational terms, than the Party. In addition to the administrative role it played in the past, the new government seems to have taken over the policy-making role of the Party in foreign affairs.

Such a change can be detected in personnel assignments, frequency of meetings, and substance and style of discussions. For example, only two days before the Supreme People’s Assembly meeting, the Second Seven-Year Plan of 1977 was presented to the Party’s Central Committee by Hong Sŏng-yŏng, who was not even a member of the Central Committee at the time.16 By contrast, the plan was presented to the Supreme People’s Assembly by then Premier Yi Chong-ok of the government. In the past, all North Korean economic plans had been planned and discussed in detail by the party and routinely approved by the Supreme People’s Assembly. The frequency of meetings of the plenum of the Central Committee has also dwindled to once or twice per year, and the items discussed are routine matters, while the Central People’s Committee of the government has met often to discuss important state business.

To accommodate the members of the Political Committee, now the Politburo, the government has devised unprecedented joint meetings of the Politburo and the Central People’s Committee, thus bringing into the select Central People’s Committee meetings those members and alternate members of the Politburo who are not members of the Central People’s Committee. The joint meetings held in July 1978, July 1979, February 1981, April 1982, and February 1983 are good examples. As of January 1984, all members of the Central People’s Committee except Kang Hŭi-wŏn and Kim I-hun, who was appointed in January 1984, are members of the Party’s Politburo, but only ten of the eighteen-member Politburo are members of the Central People’s Committee.17

The change is closely related to Kim Il Sung’s effort to train his heir apparent in the affairs of the Party. From about 1974 to 1975, it gradually became known that Kim Jong Il was active in the secretariat of the party.

16 *Pyongyang Times*, December 19, 1981.

17 Compare the rosters in *Nodong Sinmun*, October 15, 1980 for the Party, and *Nodong Sinmun*, April 6 and 7 for the Central People’s Assembly.
Various campaigns and activities of the Three-Revolution Team Council were launched under the direction of the "Party Center," Kim Jong Il. While it is important for Kim II Sung to prepare his son to take over the Party, he seems to have shifted the center of power away from the Party to the government during the training period. Those who are currently in the Party secretariat are all supporters of Kim Jong Il, and these include Kim Chung-nin, Kim Yong-nam, Kim Hwan, and Yon Hyong-muk. More seasoned political leaders, such as Pak Sŏng-ch’ŏl, Yim Ch’un-ch’u, Yi Chong-ok, and O Chin-u, are not doing Party work but are concentrating on state business.

**Present Organization**

At the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in October 1980, the bylaws of the Party were amended for the sixth time, but no official version of the amended bylaws is available outside of North Korea. According to an unofficial version of the amended bylaws, there is no significant change in the Party organization that deals with foreign affairs. As the Party grew, many new departments were added to the Central Committee, but there is still no separate standing committee for foreign affairs equivalent to the Politburo, the Secretariat, the Control Commission, or the Military Commission. Foreign affairs are still dealt with on a departmental level. Various sources give different numbers of departments under the Central Committee. For example, the National Unification Board of the Republic of Korea gives twelve departments, while the United States Central Intelligence Agency indicates eighteen departments, but the departments that deal directly with foreign affairs are the International Department and the External Department.

The International Department was headed by Kim Yong-nam, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs during most of the 1970s and the early 1980s. It is the party organ that directly deals with North Korean foreign policy. The External Department is confused at times with the so-called Liaison Bureau that deals with North Korean operations in South Korea, particularly when Yu Chang-sik headed the External Department. North Korea, however, has not acknowledged the existence of the Liaison Bureau or any department that deals exclusively with North Korean operations in

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20 See the various government and party organization charts published by the National Unification Board in July 1978 and the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, such as CR76 10904 and CR77-11706.
South Korea. The External Department seems to deal with North Korean economic activities abroad.

After Kim Jong Il’s partial takeover of the Party beginning in the mid-1970s, it is questionable to what extent the Party has formulated North Korean foreign policy for the government to implement. In view of the fact that members of the Central People’s Committee, including the foreign minister, occupy prominent positions within the Politburo and other important Party organs, the Party seems to have been supplanted by the government in shaping foreign policy.

Even within the North Korean government, the foreign policy-making function has been consolidated more in the administrative branch than the legislative. Under the new 1972 constitution, many of the functions exercised by the Standing Committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly under the first constitution of 1948 were shifted to the office of the president, the Central People’s Committee, and the Administration Council.^^

The Central People’s Committee has the duty of formulating the domestic and foreign policies of the state (Article 103, Item 1). The president is empowered to “directly guide” the Central People’s Committee (Article 91), and it is the president who ratifies or terminates treaties (Article 96). The president also receives the credentials and recall orders of the foreign diplomatic representatives (Article 97), while the Central People’s Committee appoints and recalls ambassadors and ministers of North Korean diplomatic missions (Article 103, Item 8). All these powers were vested in the Standing Committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly by the first constitution.

The Supreme People’s Assembly still exercises the nominal and largely ceremonial function of formulating the basic principles of domestic and foreign policies (Article 76, Item 2), while functions dealing more specifically with foreign policy have been turned over to the Central People’s Committee. For example, the Foreign Affairs Committee that existed for nearly two decades, from the Second to the Sixth Supreme People’s Assembly (1956–1972), was abolished, and a new Foreign Policy Commission was created under the Central People’s Committee (Article 105).

The Administration Council is the highest executive organ of the state, and the constitution empowers it to conclude treaties and conduct external affairs (Article 109, Item 7). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a departmental executive body within the Administration Council (Article 114). It is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, that implements the foreign policy of the DPRK.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is headed by a minister, more than a dozen vice-ministers, and a counselor. It has eight regional and nine functional bureaus. With the expansion of North Korean foreign relations, regional bureaus have come to cover virtually the entire globe. The regional bureaus are in numerical order. The first bureau covers the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; the second, China, Mongolia and Vietnam; the third, Southeast Asia; the fourth, South Asia; the fifth, the Middle and Near East; the sixth, Africa; the seventh, Europe and Latin America; and the eighth, South Korea. There are nine functional bureaus. The first and the second Protocol Bureaus handle visiting foreign delegations to North Korea and foreign diplomats assigned to Pyongyang, respectively. Other bureaus are those dealing with cadres, communications, foreign affairs, information, international organization, relief and support, and treaties. Each bureau has a director and two or more deputy directors. There are more than three sections to each bureau, and the number of sections, as well as number of officers working in various bureaus, has significantly increased during the 1970s and the 1980s.

Other government organizations influence the formulation and implementation of North Korean foreign policy, such as the National Defense Commission, the Justice and Security Commission, the Domestic Policy Commission, and the Ministries of the People’s Armed Forces, Foreign Trade, and External Economic Relations, but these play indirect, if not auxiliary, roles compared with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There must be a number of extraconstitutional organs that play an important role in North Korean foreign policy making, including the North Korean intelligence community, but little is known about their organization or activities.

**Administrative Personnel**

Since the first session of the Seventh Supreme People’s Assembly, in April 1982, there have been rapid changes in the North Korean political scene. Two out of three vice-presidents of the DPRK (Kim Il and Kang Yang-uk) have died, as have three of the first four members of the Central People’s Committee (Kim Il, Kang Yang-uk, and Ch’oe Hyŏn). Prime Minister Yi Chong-ok was replaced by Kang Sŏng-san, and Foreign Minister Hŏ Tam

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22 For the list of various bureaus and roster of people who occupy these bureaus, see a directory prepared by the National Foreign Assessment Center of the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. *Directory of Officials of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: A Reference Aid*, April 1981, pp. 36–37.


24 Ch’oe Hyŏn died on April 9, 1982 at the age of seventy-five.
was replaced by Kim Yong-nam. Chairman Hwang Chang-yop, vice-chairmen Hô Chông-suk and Hong Ki-mun, and Secretary Kim I-hun of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly were all replaced. In addition, Budget Committee Chairman Kim Hwan and Bills Committee Chairman Yun Ki-bok were also replaced. There have been many other changes of this sort. In fact, all three sessions of the Seventh Supreme People's Assembly (in April 1982, April 1983, and January 1984) dealt with organizational problems in this unprecedented manner.25

The reshuffling in the high-ranking political leadership stands as a contrast to the relatively stable political developments in North Korea in the past. The deaths of such important leaders as Kim Il, Kang Yang-uk, and Ch'oe Hyŏn were due to natural causes, but the reassignment of high-ranking members in the Administration Council, such as the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the chairmen of the top leadership organs in the Supreme People's Assembly, can be considered a deliberate and important political move.

It is evident from the pattern of new assignments that there has been a generational change among North Korean political leaders in favor of Kim Jong II. Supporters of Kim Jong II from the Party are rapidly replacing the old revolutionaries and aging technocrats in important positions. The replacement of Yi Chông-ok with Kang Song-san and the advancement of Kim Yong-nam, Kim Hwan, Yŏn Hyŏng-muk, and Pak Su-dong are good examples.

Kim Il Sung's rule during the decade between the Fifth and the Seventh Supreme People's Assembly (1972-1982) was supported by a mixture of his partisan revolutionary comrades and his relatives, and he has seriously promoted his son as his political heir. Kim may have wanted to push this combination further even at the time of the Seventh Assembly, in April 1982, but when his key comrades, such as Kim Il, Ch'oe Hyŏn and Kang Yang-uk, passed away, he gradually yielded to the pressure of his son and a new generation of leaders.

As it was in his old partisan revolutionary days in Manchuria, Kim Il Sung was not afraid of the Japanese gendarmes or soldiers who came after him, but it was because of the cold, hunger, and the death of his comrades that he had to ultimately flee from the plains of Manchuria. So it seems today that Kim Il Sung has never been afraid of his political rivals in the North, but old age, and loneliness arising from the death of his old comrades who shared so much sorrow and happiness with him have forced him to yield his power to the younger generation. Consequently, a definite and important political change has taken place in the past two years in North Korea. The change of command in the affairs of the North Korean foreign

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25 The Second Session of the Seventh Supreme People's Assembly was held on April 5-7, 1983; the Third Session was held on January 25-27, 1984.
policy administration must also be considered in this light. It is not because Hồ Tam was unsuccessful that he was replaced; rather his replacement was a part of greater political changes in North Korea. Hồ was replaced by the equally able, if not more politically prominent and powerful, foreign policy expert, Kim Yong-nam.

Hồ Tam’s tenure of thirteen and a half years at the helm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the longest thus far, surpassing even that of Pak Sŏng-ch’ol, and Hồ’s record is most impressive. He concluded diplomatic relations with seventy-five countries, bringing to more than one hundred the number of countries that have diplomatic relations with the DPRK. Hồ carried out the goal set by the government of expanding diplomatic relations with Third World countries in Africa and Latin America, but his effort also included diplomatic relations with countries in Europe (Austria, Switzerland), Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway), and South and Southeast Asia (India, Pakistan, Thailand). He also led a North Korean diplomatic move to the United Nations, establishing a Permanent Observer Mission in New York. North Korea was also admitted as a full fledged member to the ranks of the Nonaligned Movement in August 1975.

It is alleged that Hồ was recruited into a prominent political position because his wife was related to Kim Il Sung. Hồ was no stranger to North Korean foreign affairs, however. He started to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shortly after the Korean War, in 1953, and he is a veteran foreign service officer of nearly three decades. Hồ commanded the support of his fellow government officers not just because of his family ties, but also because of his experience as a career foreign service officer.

Hồ has a good record as a foreign policy administrator, but difficulties arose because of the rapid growth in the number of countries with which North Korea has diplomatic relations. At the height of the North Korean diplomacy of friendship, the DPRK concluded diplomatic relations with forty-four countries in the three years between 1973 and 1975 (sixteen in 1973, fifteen in 1974, and thirteen in 1975), an average of more than one country per month.

In the course of this rapid growth, North Korea suffered from a shortage of foreign service cadres, a dearth of information on small and less well-known countries, less than adequate methods of information gathering, and

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26 Hồ concluded diplomatic relations with seventy-five countries, bringing the total to 110 countries, but diplomatic relations were broken off with four countries. As of the first half of 1983, North Korea maintained diplomatic relations with 106 countries. More than half of these countries (69) also maintains diplomatic relations with South Korea. An, *North Korea*, pp. 80–83.

27 Hồ’s wife, Kim Chŏng-suk, vice-chairman of the General Federation of Trade Unions and former vice-chairman of the League of the Socialist Working Youth, is said to be a cousin of Kim Il Sung.
inadequate training in standards of diplomatic conduct in noncommunist countries. There were many embarrassing incidents including diplomatic misconduct, smuggling of goods using diplomatic privileges, and illicit activities by ranking diplomats. Many North Korean diplomats were expelled, and some were tried and convicted prior to their expulsion. Furthermore, economically difficult times at home in the 1970s did not support the diplomatic victories won abroad.

If Hô Tam was a team player from among Kim Il Sung’s partisan revolutionaries and relatives, the current foreign minister, Kim Yong-nam, is a key member of Kim Jong Il’s team of newly emerging political leaders. Kim Yong-nam is no newcomer to the North Korean foreign relations scene; he is said to have participated in the International Department of the Central Committee of the Party as early as 1956, later becoming deputy director and director of the department. Nor is he a stranger to Kim Il Sung. Kim Yong-nam accompanied Kim Il Sung to the Soviet Union and China in June 1961 and to Yugoslavia in May 1980 to attend Tito’s funeral. He was Kim’s special envoy to European countries in 1978. Representing the Party, he traveled to Austria and Switzerland in 1973, to Cuba in 1975, to France in 1976, and to Peru in 1981.

Kim Yong-nam is a ranking member of the Secretariat (third behind Kim Jong Il and Kim Chung-nin), the Politburo (where he ranks twelfth), and the Central Committee of the Party. Kim was elected to the Fifth Supreme People’s Assembly in December 1972 from Hwap’yông (Chagangdo). He was also elected to the Standing Committee (ranked eighth) of the Supreme People’s Assembly, and he represented the Supreme People’s Assembly at the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting held in Tokyo in 1974. It is alleged that his trip to Japan facilitated the visits of many Japanese political leaders to North Korea in the 1970s. Kim was also elected to the Standing Committees of the Sixth Assembly in 1977, and he was elected from Tongjôn (electoral district no. 302) to the Seventh Assembly in 1982.

In his major foreign policy article in Kulloja (The Worker), Kim Yong-nam wrote as early as 1965 about the need for the DPRK to implement a more positive and imaginative foreign policy outside the confines of the socialist and communist world. Of course, he supported (1) the effort to

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28 In October 1976, the Scandinavian countries expelled seventeen North Korean diplomats, including the ambassador to Denmark. The ambassadors to Sweden, Norway, and Finland left their posts to avoid expulsion. An, North Korea, p. 88.

29 For biographical information on Kim, see Pukhan inmyông sajôn [Biographical dictionary of North Korea], (Seoul: Chungang ibosa, 1981), pp. 74–76.

30 Tongjôn is located in Kapsan’gun, Yanggangdo. Kim is thought to be from Hamgyông pukto. Nodong Sinmun, March 2, 1982.
promote proletarian internationalism, and (2) the struggle of the national liberation movement of oppressed peoples, but he also advocated (3) the expansion of diplomatic relations with Third World countries, and (4) working for peace in the Far East and the world. In his discussion of the report to the Central Committee by Kim Il Sung at the Sixth Party Congress in October 1980, Kim Yong-nam was the first and only one to point out the direction and future implementation of Kim Il Sung’s goals by Kim Jong Il and his group. Kim Yong-nam’s future policy as an administrator of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will reflect the aspiration of Kim Jong Il and his group. With his vast experience in the Party, as well as in the Standing Committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly, combining the roles of both party and government, Kim will be an able administrator of North Korean foreign policy because he is firmly established in the rising political group of North Korea in the 1980s.

The organizational structures of North Korean foreign policy making are relatively simple, both in the Party and the government. The Party and government departments and bureaus did proliferate, and the administrative personnel in these organizations did increase during the expansion of North Korean diplomatic relations with the nonaligned nations in the 1970s. However, there seems to be little, if any, Party control or legislative check structured into the organization of the North Korean political system. This cursory survey supports the obvious assertion that the organizational structure for foreign policy gives support to the president of the Republic and the chairman of the Party in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. The administration of foreign policy is also confined to a small number of people. During the nearly four decades of North Korean foreign policy, there have been only five foreign ministers, including the one appointed in 1984, and each seems to have represented a different stage of North Korean political development. Even the administrative personnel of North Korean foreign policy seem to carry out the wishes and policy decisions made by the supreme leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung.

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31 Kim Yong-nam, “Uri tang taeoe chöngch’aek üi súngni” [Victory of Our Party’s Foreign Policy], Kálloja [The Worker], no. 18 (October 1965), pp. 2–9.

32 Pyongyang Times, October 13, 1980.
Workers' Party of Korea
Sixth Congress in October 1980

Central Committee
145 members
103 candidate members

Secretariat General
Secretary Kim II Sung
9 secretaries

Politburo
5 Presidium members
19 members
15 alternate members

Military Commission
Kim II Sung, chairman
18 members

Control Commission
Sŏ Ch’ŏl, chairman
6 members

International Department

External Department

North Korea
Foreign Policy Organs
as of 1984

Supreme People's Assembly
615 delegates
7th session, April 1982

President
Kim II Sung

Vice-Presidents
Pak Sŏng-ch'ŏl
Yim Ch'un-ch'u
Yi Chong-ok

Central People's Committee
Secretary Kim I-hun
15 members

Administration Council
Premier Kang Sŏng-san
13 vice-premiers
32 members

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Minister Kim Yong-nam
15 vice-ministers
1 councilor

Standing Committee
Yang Hyŏng-sŏp (c)
Son Sŏng-p'il (vc)
Yŏ Yŏn-gu (vc)
Kim Pong-ju (sec)
15 members

Budget Committee
An Sung-hak (c)
6 members

Bills Committee
Ch’ae Hŭi-jŏng (c)
6 members

Credentials Committee
Yim Ch’un-ch’u (c)
6 members

Foreign Policy Commission

National Defense Commission

Domestic Policy Commission

Justice and Security Commission

Ministry of People's Armed Forces

Ministry of External Economic Relations

Ministry of Foreign Trade
Ideology and North Korean Foreign Policy

B.C. Koh

To explore the role of ideology in North Korean foreign policy, we must clear the preliminary hurdle of defining ideology in general and delineating the contours of North Korean ideology in particular. Even a cursory review of the literature yields a bewildering array of definitions. They range from "a manner of thinking characteristic of an organization" to "an interrelated set of generalizations and abstractions purported to be drawn from, or related to, ultimate social realities."

Political ideology is defined in a popular textbook as "a belief system that explains and justifies a preferred political order for society, either existing or proposed, and offers a strategy (processes, institutions, programs) for its attainment." Another textbook definition of political ideology sees a dual aspect: as a "philosophy," it provides a "rationalization for current or future political and social arrangements," whereas as a "science," it tends to present a "distorted description or explanation of political and social reality."

From the preceding sampling of definitions one may distill the essence of political ideology: it refers to a set of ideas that purport to explain or justify either existing or preferred social, economic, and political arrangements and to which a sizable number of people subscribe. This working definition leaves open the degree of sophistication, originality, and coherence. By stipulating that political ideology needs to have a large number of adherents, however, it posits a certain measure of appeal or persuasiveness. That is, a political ideology, to be taken seriously, must demonstrate a modicum of “internal plausibility”—capacity to generate support among its internal constituents.

NORTH KOREAN IDEOLOGY

Armed with the preceding working definition, we may now proceed to an examination of the contents of North Korean ideology. As a communist state, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) formally embraces Marxism–Leninism. Its commitment to Marxism–Leninism, however, is tempered, even eclipsed, by its dedication to chuch’e sasang, or “the idea of self-reliance.” Article 4 of the Socialist Constitution of the DPRK states:

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is guided in its activity by the chuch’e idea of the Workers’ Party of Korea, a creative application of Marxism–Leninism to the conditions of our country.

The bylaws of the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP) adopted in November 1970 contains a similar provision:

The Workers’ Party of Korea is guided in its activities by Marxism and Leninism and the chuch’e idea of Comrade Kim II Sung, which is the creative application of Marxism and Leninism to the reality of our country.

Significantly, the basic charters of both the state and the Party accord the idea of chuch’e a coequal status with Marxism–Leninism. The North Korean position on this matter is made more explicit in a less formal document. In an authoritative exposition of chuch’e published in 1982, Kim Il Sung’s son and heir-designate Jong Il wrote:

If Marxism has established for the first time the revolutionary Weltanschauung of the proletariat, the chuch’e idea has perfected it and elevated it to a new, higher stage.

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6 Ibid., p. 525.

As we shall see, the idea of chuch’e contains a heavy dose of nationalism, raising the issue of whether or not it merits the label of ideology. Scalapino and Lee, for example, view it as “a straightforward, orthodox form of nationalism, wholly unoriginal, albeit very powerful.” They appear to imply that chuch’e falls short of being an ideology. Given the loose definition of ideology adopted in this paper, however, we propose to treat chuch’e as an ideology, no matter how closely it may resemble nationalism. Let us now examine the concept of chuch’e as explained by Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong II.

**Chuch’e**

The concept of chuch’e, which can be loosely translated as self-identity or autonomy, made its debut in North Korea’s political lexicon in Kim Il Sung’s December 1955 speech at a meeting of Party cadres specializing in propaganda and agitation. Kim identified the primary problem plaguing Party propaganda work as the lack of chuch’e. Stressing that chuch’e does not preclude the need to learn from the experiences of all socialist countries, Kim stated:

> What is important is to know the purpose of learning: to apply the advanced experiences of the Soviet Union and other socialist states to our own Korean revolution. . . . It makes no difference whether we eat our meals with the right hand or the left hand or with a spoon or chopsticks. Does it matter how we eat as long as we put food into our mouth? 

Kim underlined the importance of “creatively adapting” the basic tenets of Marxism–Leninism to the realities of the Korean situation. Noting that the substance of revolutionary experience was more important than its form, Kim cautioned against the twin pitfalls of “dogmatism” and “formalism.” By the former he meant an insistence on the mechanical application of other people’s experience to Korea without regard to the unique history of the Korean people, their tradition, and level of ideological consciousness. By the latter Kim meant the habit of blindly adhering to a particular form of Marxism–Leninism as the only true path.

In a more extended exposition of chuch’e a quarter century later, Kim Jong II characterized his father’s ideas as an embodiment of the “philosophical principle that man is the master of all things and decides everything.”

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8 Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 868.


11 Ibid., pp. 40–42.
Specifically, *chuch’ë* is alleged to have elucidated four principles regarding historical development: (1) the popular masses are the masters of history and the motive force of social development; (2) the history of mankind is the history of the struggle by the popular masses for their independence; (3) the popular masses remake and change nature and society, hence they are the true creators of nature and society; and (4) the decisive role in revolutionary struggles is played by the independent ideological consciousness of the popular masses.¹²

What is striking about all this is its "quintessentially anti-Marxist" implications. For while Marxism certainly does not deny that man can play a role in history, it rests first and foremost on the foundation of economic determinism. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung’s exaltation of the masses is significantly diluted by his insistence that their creative role can be assured only by the intervention of correct leadership. For, in order to realize their creative potential, the masses need to be organized and their level of revolutionary consciousness needs to be raised, tasks that can only be accomplished by the Party and the supreme leader (*suryông*) of the proletariat.¹³

Kim Jong Il goes on to enumerate three sets of practical guidelines emanating from *chuch’ë*:

First, it is necessary to maintain an independent stand, which encompasses (1) *chuch’ë* in ideology, (2) independence in politics, (3) self-reliance in economic capability, and (4) self-defense in national defense.

Second, it is necessary to employ creative methods by (1) relying on the masses and (2) tailoring solutions to the concrete conditions at hand.

Third, primacy must be given to ideological remolding and political indoctrination.¹⁴

To establish *chuch’ë* in ideology, according to Kim Jong Il, necessitates the possession of a large measure of national pride, "particularly the pride of making revolution under the guidance of the Great Leader." It also calls for the jettisoning of *sadae chuUi* (flunkyism or sycophancy), of which the "most vicious manifestation today is flunkyism toward American imperialism." Independence in politics means making decisions according to a state’s own convictions and exercising "complete sovereignty and equality in foreign relations." While the goal of self-reliance in economic capability calls for reliance on domestic resources and efforts as much as possible, it in no way implies a "closed-door" policy; it does not downgrade international economic cooperation but simply opposes economic domination.

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¹³ Ibid., pp. 18–19. The expression, "quintessentially anti-Marxist," was suggested to me by Robert A. Scalapino, personal communication, October 5, 1984.

by, or subservience to, other countries. The same logic applies to the idea of self-defensive military capability; it does not preclude receiving assistance from fraternal countries. Primary emphasis, however, must be placed on building up a state's own defense capability.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Kim II Sungism and Marxism-Leninism}

In a concerted campaign to legitimize the choice of Kim Jong Il as his father's successor-designate, North Korean propagandists list as one of Jong Il's principle accomplishments the "formalization" (chŏngsik-hwa) of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary ideas into "Kim Il Sungism" (Kim Il-sŏng chut'u).\textsuperscript{16} Kim Jong Il is said to have completed the task in February 1974 when he published a treatise, "On Some Tasks Confronting the Party's Ideological Work Relating to Imbuing the Entire Society With Kim Il Sungism."

What, then, is the relationship between Kim II Sungism and Marxism-Leninism? Kim Jong Il reportedly stressed aspects of both "continuity" (kyesikng'song) and "originality" (tokch'ang-sŏng). Continuity may be seen in the fact that, although the two are "ideologies representing different historical epochs," they share a common purpose and mission: promoting the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat as a class. Moreover, Kim II Sungism originated and developed in the process of assessing the "ideological and theoretical achievements of Marxism-Leninism." Kim II Sungism is said to represent an "original ideology and theory" distinct in content and structure from Marxism-Leninism. Substantively, Kim II Sungism is permeated with chuch'e sasang. Structurally, it simultaneously possesses the attributes of ideology, theory, and method, in contrast to Marxism-Leninism, whose main structural components are "philosophy, economics, and scientific socialism." The limitations of Marxism and Leninism allegedly stem from the fact that neither Marx nor Lenin personally experienced the building of socialism and communism. Only Kim II Sungism elucidates the contours of communist society and the basic ways and means of achieving it, thus "perfecting the theory of scientific communism."\textsuperscript{17}

The emergence of the phrase "Kim II Sungism" in North Korea forms a striking contrast with the situation in China, where Mao Zedong's ideas were never characterized in similar terms, even at the height of Mao's influ-

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 37-55. The quotations are from p. 40, p. 41, p. 44, and p. 49.


\textsuperscript{17}Inoue, \textit{Hyŏndae Chosŏn}, pp. 133-135.
ence. Even though the North Korean practice bespeaks Kim Jong Il’s goal to enshrine his father alongside Marx and Lenin, in the pantheon of world philosophers, the expression has not formally replaced chuch’e. In fact, it is rarely used in official contexts. It has yet to make its debut in Nodong Sinmun; in Kǔloja (The Worker), the monthly theoretical journal of the Korean Workers’ Party; or in the public speeches of North Korea’s government and party leaders.

Although Kim Il Sung has not publicly endorsed the view that his own ideas are superior to those of Marx, he has nonetheless voiced reservations about Marxism. In his words, Marx “considered that revolution would break out continuously in the major capitalist countries of Europe and predicted that communism would triumph soon on a worldwide scale. But there is not a single country where communism has been realized, though over a century has passed since Marx and Engels made public The Communist Manifesto.”

To gainsay Kim Jong Il’s claim of originality for the chuch’e idea, one need only to quote his father. In an interview with the Japanese daily Mainichi Shimbun in September 1972, Kim Il Sung said of chuch’e: “We are by no means the first to discover this idea. Anyone who is a Marxist–Leninist thinks this way. I have merely laid a special emphasis on the idea.” Of the principal components of the concept of chuch’e, none can be regarded as really new. Accent on national pride and appeals to nationalist sentiment are as old as the nation-state. Nor is the apotheosis of independence and self-reliance idiosyncratic to North Korea. The elevation of the masses to the center stage of world history was foreshadowed, to mention but a recent example, by Mao Zedong. In fact, Kim Il Sung’s ideas bear a striking resemblance to Mao’s celebrated “mass line.” Finally, the strong voluntaristic thrust, the insistence on the primacy of ideological consciousness and political action, is eminently consistent with the ideas and practices of Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Zedong, even though the degree to which Kim Il Sung accentuates man’s role as the shaper of history is at odds with a basic Marxian premise.

The potency of ideas, however, does not depend on their originality. What matters most are the depth of conviction on the part of their adherents.

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18 During my visit to North Korea in the summer of 1981, I saw evidence of its usage, of which the most notable was a gigantic carving on a cliff in the scenic Myohyang Mountain, which read “Kim II-sŏng chuçii manse” (Long Live Kim II Sungism).


21 For an elaboration of this point, see B. C. Koh, “The Impact of the Chinese Model on North Korea,” Asian Survey, vol. 18, no. 6 (June 1978), pp. 630–634.
and the vigor with which they endeavor to carry them out. Viewed in this light, chuch’e emerges as a force to be reckoned with. Before pondering its probable impact on North Korean foreign policy, one needs to untangle the Marxist–Leninist component from North Korea’s ideological fabric. For it is plain that certain basic tenets of Marxism–Leninism have become part and parcel of the ideological consciousness of North Korea’s ruling elite.

To consider the most salient of these tenets, there is, first of all, the Marxian belief in the inherent contradictions and eventual demise of capitalism. Second, there is little doubt that the notion of class struggle is fully endorsed in Pyongyang. Third, the North Korean elite is firmly committed to the concept of proletarian dictatorship. In fact, Kim Il Sung seems to go further than Marx and Lenin when he says that the need for proletarian dictatorship may continue even after the stage of communism has been attained. As long as capitalism and imperialism remain in the world, he argues, such communist societies will continue to face both external threats from imperialism and internal threats from enemies allied with imperialism. Under such circumstances, not only would the dictatorship of the proletariat need to be preserved, but the state would not and should not wither away.

Fourth, Pyongyang enshrines Lenin’s theory of imperialism. Kim Il Sung attributes all the miseries and troubles of Korea, the Third World, and the entire globe to imperialism led by the United States, asserting that its eventual demise is preordained. Nevertheless, in keeping with a voluntaristic orientation, he would not sit with folded arms until imperialism dies a natural death according to the laws of history. Instead, he urges all socialist nations to wage a fierce struggle against it both individually and, particularly, as a unified camp. Nothing, in his view, is more alien to Marxism–Leninism than to compromise with the imperialists.

THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN FOREIGN POLICY

In what ways does North Korean ideology delineated in the preceding pages affect its foreign policy? For purposes of our discussion, the term “foreign policy” shall encompass North Korea’s policies toward all other states, including South Korea. Hence we shall be concerned with both foreign and reunification policies. Conceptually, a key linkage between ideology and foreign policy emerges in the form of a perceptual screen, prism, or filter. Along with the historical legacy and the policymakers’ personality predispositions, ideology helps to mediate the perception of the operational

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22 Kim Il-song, Uri hyŏngmyŏng esŏtki chuch’e e taehayŏ, pp. 487-488.

23 For a lengthy articulation of views along these lines, see Kim Il Sung’s report to the Representatives’ Conference of the KWP on October 5, 1966 in Kim Il-sŏng, Uri hyŏngmyŏng, pp. 392-431.
environment. Ideology may also help shape the strategic objectives and tactical decisions of foreign policy. Finally, it may affect the style of foreign policy.

**Ideology as Prism**

Ideology helps to accentuate the natural human propensity toward selective perception, thus increasing the amount of distortion in the decision-makers’ images of external reality. Belief in the innate superiority of socialism and in its ultimate triumph over capitalism, for example, may impede a dispassionate assessment of developments impinging on foreign policy. The habits of analysis nurtured by the Marxian concepts of contradictions, struggle, and dialectical movements may also interfere with a realistic perception of events. Finally, a commitment to the Leninist theory of imperialism may further distort the decision-makers’ images of the external setting.

Consider North Korea’s perception of America’s role in South Korea. First, as the main imperialist power, the United States can have only one aim in Korea: colonial domination and imperialist expansion. According to Kim Il Sung:

> The U.S. imperialists want to keep South Korea under their thumb partly because they want to make South Korea their permanent raw material base. It is a fact that they lust for the materials in South Korea. To the U.S. imperialists it is also essential to have control over South Korea as a military base. They want to seize the whole of Korea and, further, realize their world domination by using South Korea as their military, strategic base. They want South Korea as a military base to deter the Soviet Union and China and tighten their control of Japan.  

Second, North Korea appears to believe that the United States has already attained its goal of turning South Korea into its colony. As Pyongyang sees it, Washington has acquired and actually exercises the power to choreograph major events in South Korea, including the change of top political leaders.

One may justifiably question whether North Korean rhetoric aimed at multiple audiences corresponds to the true perceptions of its policy-making elite. Limited contacts with some members of the North Korean elite, coupled with direct exposure to selected aspects of North Korean society, lead me to believe that a discrepancy between verbalized and true perceptions may be considerably smaller than is widely assumed. North Korea’s

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26 This assessment is shared by other visitors to the DPRK. See Manwoo Lee, “How North Korea Sees Itself” in Kim and Koh (eds.), *Journey*, pp. 118–140.
quest for direct dialogue with the United States, of which the recent proposal for trilateral talks is but a tactical variation, albeit a significant one, may reflect, among other things, its ideologically reinforced conviction that the United States is the real boss in South Korea.

The filtering function of ideology is intertwined with another important function—that of reducing cognitive dissonance. Unpalatable developments are not swallowed whole but sweetened with ideological palliatives. Kim Il Sung’s response to the Sino–American détente is a case in point:

This means that the hostile policy towards China which the U.S. imperialists have recklessly pursued for more than 20 years... has eventually gone to complete bankruptcy, and this denotes that the U.S. imperialists have at least succumbed to the pressure of the mighty anti-imperialist revolutionary forces of the world.

In the last analysis, Nixon is going to turn up in Beijing with a white flag just as the U.S. imperialist aggressors who suffered a defeat in the Korean War in the past came out to Panmunjom with a white flag....

Nixon’s visit to China is not a march of a victor but a trip of the defeated, and it fully reflects the declining fate of U.S. imperialism. This is a great victory of the Chinese people and a victory of the world revolutionary people.27

According to Kim, the Chinese government had assured him that “it will... invariably and steadfastly adhere to its revolutionary principle and continue to actively support and encourage the fighting revolutionary people.” He then cautioned:

As historical experiences show, the aggressive nature of imperialism never changes even when its strength has become weak and the imperialists refuse to withdraw from their old position of their own accord. The deeper the imperialists sink into a quagmire, the more persistently they cling to the “double-dealing tactics” of holding an olive branch in one hand and brandishing a bayonet in the other and the more vicious they become in their manoeuvres of aggression and war under the cloak of “peace.”28

Ideology and Strategic Objectives

Ideology appears to play a significant role in generating and sustaining North Korea’s principal strategic goals, of which the most important is national reunification. The Marxist–Leninist goal of realizing socialism and, ultimately, communism on a global scale calls for the completion of the Korean revolution on the entire peninsula. More important, however, are the imperatives of chuch’e sasang. The restoration of national pride and dignity and the attainment of complete independence for the Korean nation require nothing less than territorial and national reunification.

Pyongyang’s strategy of reunification also bears a notable ideological imprint. Of relevance are the pivotal role assigned to a Marxist–Leninist party in waging a revolutionary struggle in the South, the idea of a united


28Ibid.
front encompassing workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals, and other elements, and the incessant calls for an escalation of the anti-imperialist, particularly anti-American, struggle throughout the world.

The last-mentioned item is seen as an indispensable link in the chain of revolutionary efforts that would ultimately lead to Korean reunification. Inasmuch as Pyongyang views the American military presence in South Korea as the principal barrier to reunification, its removal at all costs takes on utmost urgency. Increasing pressure on the United States in all corners of the globe in every imaginable way, in the North Korean view, will help bring about the desired result. Seen in this light, Pyongyang's assistance, both overt and covert, to regimes and movements that are opposed or hostile to the United States is rooted in both ideological and pragmatic considerations. As noted, however, the reunification strategy per se has strong ideological underpinnings.

North Korea's apotheosis of independence is both consistent with and fueled by the chuch'e idea. One of the most comprehensive and, perhaps, boldest articulations of Pyongyang's independent stand occurred in August 1966 when Nodong Sinmun published a two-and-a-half page editorial entitled "Let Us Defend Our Independence." Reiterating the principal themes in chuch'e sasang—"One should do one's own thinking," "One should have confidence in one's own strength," "Marxism–Leninism is a guide to action," "One should not mechanically follow other's experience," "One should have national pride," "An independent national economy is the material basis of independence," etc.—Nodong Sinmun asserted:

Communists cannot live ideologically shackled to anyone. They should live with their own spirit and possess the unshakable ideas of chuch'e. They should not dance to the tune of others. If Communists do not use their own brains they will forfeit independence.29

The paper then enunciated the principle of the absolute equality of all communist parties, rejecting Moscow's claim to provide guidance to fraternal parties. As Nodong Sinmun put it:

No matter how long a history or how rich an experience one party may have, it cannot impose on other parties its line and policy as the general line of the international communist movement. Decisions of one party are obligatory only within that party. Therefore, no one can force other parties to accept the policy of his party or to follow it. In particular, it is impermissible for a big party or the party of a socialist country to impose . . . its policy and put pressure on a small party and the party of a capitalist country.30

As already noted, North Korea sees no contradiction between the assertion of independence and the acceptance of external assistance, nor between

29 Nodong Sinmun, August 12, 1966.
30 Ibid.
self-reliance and "foreign economic cooperation," a euphemism for aid. Hence there is little ideological inhibition against entering into asymmetrical economic relationships with fraternal socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Pyongyang's apparent success in not compromising its independence vis-à-vis Moscow and Beijing, however, seems to owe less to its own ideological rectitude or diplomatic finesse than to the fortuitous dynamics of the Sino-Soviet dispute, notably the acutely felt needs of both communist giants to retain the goodwill of their strategically located neighbor.

Ideology and Tactics

Ideological constraints on North Korea's tactical behavior can be seen in its handling of the "southern revolution." As is well known, Pyongyang's three-pronged strategy of reuniﬁcation calls for the fostering of "revolutionary forces" in the South, of which the vanguard is to be a Marxist–Leninist party. Pyongyang's attempts to form such a party in the latter part of the 1960s fizzled, when the South Korean authorities arrested most members of the fledgling Revolutionary Party for Reuniﬁcation (RPR), executing nine ringleaders. Undaunted, Pyongyang has continued to maintain the fiction of the vitality of the RPR, producing its alleged members on ceremonial occasions, printing and distributing what are claimed to be its publications, including a weekly newspaper, *Hyŏngmyŏng Ch'ŏnsŏn* (Revolu¬tionary Front), and even operating a clandestine radio station in the name of the RPR. Although ideologically motivated, the fiction of the RPR may also serve a propaganda function; hence Pyongyang's expenditure of resources on it cannot be regarded as a total waste.

Other aspects of the "southern revolution" lend themselves to a similar interpretation. Pyongyang's enthusiastic support for and ringing endorsements of antigovernment demonstrations by South Korean students provide ammunition not to the demonstrators, but to the South Korean authorities who are quick to equate all dissent with communist-inspired subversion. Yet the North Korean behavior persists, not only because of its ideologically distorted perception that opposition to the governing elite in Seoul translates into latent support for the DPRK but also because of its tactical calculation that, given the dialectics of a revolutionary struggle, a vicious circle of repression–opposition–further repression–further opposition will ineluctably lead to the eventual downfall of the Seoul government. Additionally, or alternatively, Pyongyang may find it difficult to pass up opportunities to

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31 The radio station, which broadcasts the "Voice of the Revolutionary Party for Reuniﬁcation," is believed to be located in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province, the DPRK. See Byung Chul Koh, *The Foreign Policy System of North and South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 132–133.
gloat over the predicament of its ideological adversary, no matter how counterproductive such behavior may turn out to be.

Did North Korea's categorical refusal, until January 1984, to deal directly with President Chun Doo Hwan of South Korea have any ideological underpinnings? Two of the four principal reasons cited by Pyongyang smack of ideological overtones. It insisted that Chun was a "lackey of foreign powers" and a "traitor to the Korean nation," equating negotiation with him with "an insult to the dignity of the Korean nation." Pyongyang also charged that Chun was not sincere in his professed desire to negotiate with the North, seeing him as a diehard anticommunist who "suffers from the illusion that the path to reunification is 'victory over communism.'" In addition, Pyongyang cited Chun's lack of legitimacy because of the manner in which he seized power and of his role in the bloody suppression of the Kwangju Rebellion.32

North Korea's previous record of negotiation with the Park Chung Hee regime and its subsequent change in tactics suggest that considerations of expediency can partially eclipse those of ideology. With its proposal for tripartite talks, the DPRK made it clear in January 1984 that it was now prepared to negotiate with the Chun Doo Hwan government. How may one account for the tactical change? Pyongyang's hope, fueled by the continuing unrest on South Korea's college campuses, that Chun would not last long had been dashed. Even its last-ditch effort to eliminate him by force in Rangoon, Burma, in October 1983 failed egregiously. In a word, Pyongyang must have been compelled by events to come to grips with the reality of the Chun government as well as the prospects of its continuation for several years to come.

On the other hand, the ideologically reinforced goal of reunification required, according to Pyongyang's strategic scenario, the elimination of the American military presence from the South. This in turn undergirded Pyongyang's dogged pursuit of direct negotiation with the United States. Washington, however, had repeatedly spurned North Korean overtures, both direct and indirect, insisting that it would enter into negotiation with North Korea if and only if South Korea was also included in the process.

As Hô Tam, member of the KWP Politburo and former foreign minister, noted in his report to the Third Session of the Seventh Supreme People's Assembly in January 1984:

The tripartite talks proposal was originally made first by the then U.S. Secretary of State in August 1976 after we had proposed the DPRK-U.S. talks. Then, in March 32The preceding explanation was given to me and my colleagues by senior members of the DPRK Academy of Social Sciences during our trip to North Korea in the summer of 1981. See B. C. Koh, "The Korean Impasse: The View From Pyongyang," Korea and World Affairs, vol. 6, no. 4 (Winter 1982), pp. 541-543.
1978, ex-President Carter, in his talks with the Head of State of a country on a visit to America, expressed great interest in contacts and talks between representatives of the DPRK, the U.S. and South Korea, and the joint communique issued in July 1979 after his visit to South Korea also officially called for convocation of a “conference of high level authorities” between us, the United States and South Korea.

Again recently, the U.S. authorities repeatedly proposed the idea of tripartite talks. In September last year the United States proposed to us privately through a third country that it has the intention to hold talks with the DPRK with regard to the question of the Korean peninsula and that South Korea should be allowed to participate in the talks. U.S. President Reagan noted in his address made at the South Korean “parliament” in November last year that the United States would willingly participate in the talks with us with South Korea’s participating [in them] on an equal footing.^^

Hence, if Pyongyang wanted to negotiate with Washington, it had to pay the price of acceding to Washington’s demand for the inclusion of Seoul as an equal participant. The decision to change its posture toward the Chun government, then, was made grudgingly. This became apparent when North Korea promptly rejected South Korea’s counterproposal for bilateral talks.^^ Seoul’s demand for Pyongyang’s admission of responsibility for the Rangoon incident as a precondition for the resumption of dialogue, however, added a new dimension to the situation.

Ideology and the Style of Foreign Policy
The accent on chuch’e affects not only the substance of North Korean foreign policy but its style as well. For it helps to spawn a fierce pride on the part of the North Korean elite, pride bordering on chauvinism. A corollary of such pride is narrowmindedness in outlook and rigidity in posture. There is also a high quotient of self-righteousness in Pyongyang’s positions on major issues. All this may be linked to North Korea’s apparent reluctance or, perhaps, inability to be conciliatory, accommodating, and flexible in the conduct of foreign policy.

While Pyongyang is probably not oblivious to the adverse consequences of its behavior, change does not come easily. Consider its quest for direct contacts with the United States. While on one hand pursuing the goal with remarkable tenacity, Pyongyang on the other hand has conspicuously failed to offer any inducements to Washington. The least Pyongyang could have done is to tone down its anti-American invective. Apart from a temporary restraint in the wake of President Carter’s inauguration in 1977, however, North Korea has not relented. To illustrate the problem, one need only to note how North Korea has characterized President Reagan, with whose administration it seeks to have a dialogue:

^^Documents of the Third Session of the Seventh Supreme People’s Assembly of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (Pyongyang: January 1984), p. 20.

^^Han’guk Ilbo, February 6 and 16, 1984; Pyongyang Times, February 4 and 8, 1984.
The world jeers at the mean act of Reagan who, as soon as he became president, summoned the atrocious, murderous thug to embrace and caress him. All the dirty acts committed by Reagan in a few days since he took office in the White House remind the people of a report in the Western press that there is no man of large caliber in the United States in connection with the inauguration of Reagan, of clown origin, as the U.S. president succeeding Carter, the owner of a peanut farm. Reagan seems to be unfit for a politician of a country styling itself a big power, though he may be fit as a gangster on the theatrical stage.35

The Reagan administration, in rejecting the request of the DPRK Observer Mission to the United Nations for permission to travel from New York to Washington, D.C. to attend an international conference jointly sponsored by the United Nations and the World Bank in March 1981, specifically cited as one of the grounds for its action “the extraordinary level of crude invective being hurled at the U.S. administration and President Reagan personally by the North Korean government.”36 Pyongyang refused to retreat, continuing to depict Reagan in such harsh terms as a “war-thirsty element” and a “diehard defender of racism.”37 When asked about this aspect of North Korean behavior by a group of visiting Korean-American scholars in Pyongyang in July 1981, Vice-Premier Ch'ong Chun-gi first denied that North Korea had engaged in any personal attacks on President Reagan; he then made it clear that North Korea had no intention of making any tactical adjustments—such as ceasing anti-U.S. statements—since it valued its national dignity and independence more than anything else.38

North Korea’s practice of vilifying its adversaries at all costs contrasts sharply with its herculean efforts to glorify its own supreme leader not only at home but, more importantly, in the world arena. It appears that one of the major tasks of North Korean diplomats is to propagate the cult of Kim Il Sung by distributing books and other materials containing Kim’s putative words of wisdom or paeans to the Great Leader, by organizing and subsidizing groups dedicated to the study of chuch’'e sasang, and by placing paid advertisements comprising Kim’s words and portraits in leading foreign newspapers and magazines.39 That all this extracts opportunity costs of immense

35 Nodong Sinmun, February 10, 1981, as monitored by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).
36 Korea Herald, March 17, 1981.
37 Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), March 20, 1981, as monitored by FBIS; Nodong Sinmun, March 23, 1981.
38 Koh, Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea, pp. 202, 243.
39 As of early 1984, North Korea had helped to establish about 1,500 organizations dedicated to the study of chuch’‘e sasang in more than 100 countries. Vantage Point (Seoul), vol. 7, no. 5 (May 1984), pp. 9-10.
proportions not only in terms of the resources expended but also in terms of the performance of other pressing diplomatic functions is either not appreciated fully or ignored altogether. In a word, systemic and ideological constraints combine to undercut the efficacy of North Korean diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate, North Korean ideology has both nationalist and Marxist-Leninist components. Known as chuch' e sasang, the nationalist component extolls national pride and dignity, self-reliance, independence, the sovereignty and creativity of the masses, and the primacy of ideological consciousness and political will. The Marxist-Leninist component subsumes the belief in the ultimate triumph of the good (socialism) over the evil (capitalism), commitments to the twin concepts of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, and the acceptance of the Leninist theory of imperialism.

Together, these components of North Korean ideology help to shape and mold North Korean foreign policy in a number of ways. First, they function as the prism through which Pyongyang's policy-making elite perceives its operational environment, frequently distorting the latter in accordance with ideological doctrines and predilections. Second, they help to generate the strategic objectives of North Korean foreign policy, of which the single most important is national reunification. Third, they help condition North Korea's tactical behavior. Finally, they affect the style of Pyongyang's international behavior, contributing elements of self-righteousness and rigidity.

What needs to be stressed, however, is that ideology is but one of many independent variables that influence the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. One must therefore ask the elusive question, just how potent is its explanatory power in the North Korean context? If, as has been posited earlier, ideology operates as a prism through which objective facts are transformed into decision premises, then it is bound to contaminate calculations of expediency and self-interest. This may dilute considerably the utility of the familiar dichotomy between ideology and self-interest. With these caveats in mind, let us examine a few selected aspects of Pyongyang's track record anew.

A key intermediate goal in North Korean foreign policy is the elimination of the American military presence from the Korean peninsula, yet Pyongyang is no closer to the attainment of this goal than it was three decades ago. Had there been no ideological constraints on North Korean behavior, that is to say, had Pyongyang been able to devise and follow a strategy governed strictly by pragmatic criteria, the result might have been different. For the principal rationale for the American military presence has been and remains the need to deter North Korean aggression. Any measurable decrease in the former, let alone its elimination, is thus contingent upon
Washington’s perception that the need for deterrence has evaporated. From this it follows that a “rational” course of action for North Korea is to work toward reducing tensions in the peninsula, to reduce its military buildup, to cease all provocations, and to tone down its inflammatory propaganda. This “rational” scenario, of course, assumes that Pyongyang can convince itself that Washington means what it says—that its goal in Korea is deterrence, not colonial domination or imperialist expansion. If, as appears to be the case, Pyongyang feels threatened by the American military presence, then what ensues is not a calculated response but a vicious circle.

How shall we assess North Korea’s decision to join the Soviet-led boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympic games in Los Angeles? Although the decision may have been ideologically motivated, it helped to undermine the cause of North Korean ideology in an important sense: by following the Soviet lead, Pyongyang belied its vaunted ideology of chuch’e. For, even though the decision may have been based on the DPRK’s own convictions, the fact remained that Pyongyang was following in the footsteps of Moscow. More important, it parted company with three leading champions of independence in the communist orbit—China, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. To the extent that appearance and hence perceptions matter, did North Korea really advance the cause of chuch’e by adding its name to the roster of Soviet satellites and client states? Moreover, North Korea missed an opportunity to send a signal to Washington, to induce the latter to change its hard line policy toward Pyongyang, and to improve the chances of negotiation with the United States. In a word, given Pyongyang’s interests, the decision would be hard to justify on pragmatic grounds alone.

As noted previously, shifts in Pyongyang’s posture toward Seoul have sometimes reflected the ascendancy of pragmatic considerations. The first notable example was its decision to open a dialogue with the Park regime in the early 1970s, and another example may be its January 1984 proposal for tripartite talks. In both cases there were patent flip-flops in North Korean policy—from flatly refusing to deal with the authorities in Seoul to negotiating with them face-to-face. The conduct of the dialogue in the 1970s, however, revealed the resiliency of Pyongyang’s ideological constraints. Of the numerous reasons for the rupture of the dialogue, Pyongyang’s dogmatism and lack of flexibility were particularly notable. One should hasten to add

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41 One possibility that cannot be ruled out is that the decision may have been a quid pro quo for a Soviet concession—such as a pledge to supply MiG-23s. Such a deal may have been worked out during Kim Il Sung’s visit to Moscow in May 1984.
that the blatantly political uses to which the late Park Chung Hee put the
dialogue also contributed to the impasse.42

On balance, then, ideology seems to go a long way toward explaining
North Korean behavior. If the past is any guide, even pragmatically induced
change in Pyongyang's policy has a way of foundering on the rock of ideol-
ogy. Sustained change, then, may require a mellowing of ideology and "de-
radicalization."43 Whether political succession will trigger such a process, as
has happened in China, remains to be seen. On the one hand, Kim Jong Il's
role in stepping up ideological indoctrination and his stake in perpetuating
the legend of his father, of which the chuch'e ideology forms an integral
component, suggest that the chances for deradicalization may be rather
slim.

On the other hand, the absence of the charismatic leader may well
precipitate a chain reaction of incremental changes, which may help trans-
form Pyongyang's decision-making mode: articulation of views among the
top elite may become somewhat less constrained, facilitating a hard-headed
exploration of policy options. It is possible that the senior Kim may already
have retired from the front line of day-to-day decision making. If that is the
case, the general direction of North Korean policy in recent months and in
the days ahead may be suggestive. Noteworthy in this connection are such
episodes as the enactment of a joint venture law in September 1984 and
the delivery of relief goods to flood victims in South Korea in the same
month.44

42 Koh, Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea, pp. 135-139, 156-160, 174-
180.

43 For the concept of "deradicalization," see Robert C. Tucker, The Marxist Revolu-

44 Pyongyang Times, September 15, 1984; Han'guk Ilbo, October 1 and 2, 1984. The
enactment of a joint venture law may have been influenced by China. The unprece-
dented delivery of relief goods to flood victims in South Korea is a complex story,
analysis of which is beyond the scope of this paper.
As in other totalitarian nations, in North Korea political ideology shapes, guides, and limits foreign as well as domestic policies. It is openly claimed that every policy of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is based on a uniform ideology, namely, Kim Il Sung’s chuch’e (self-reliance) ideology. DPRK foreign policy is no exception.

In North Korea the patterns of official ideology and foreign policy are highly interrelated. More specifically, changes in ideological formulation precedes North Korea’s policy changes. When North Korea is confronted with a serious situation that dictates policy changes, it first reformulates its official ideology so that the policy change does not jeopardize ideological integrity. Thus we may assume that any serious North Korean move in remodeling its ideological system indicates impending foreign policy changes.

The thirty-six-year history of North Korea’s diplomatic performance in the rapidly changing international arena looks like a well-written drama. Starting as a fully dependent infant satellite of the mighty Soviet Union, North Korea has grown into an independent, self-assertive nation that makes the demand for equal locus standi to the United States, the almighty giant of global politics. Such a change in less than forty years is almost comparable to the evolution of Western nations in the past two or three hundred years.

The process by which North Korea’s foreign policy has evolved—from monolithic, passive, and dependent during the Cold War era of the 1950s to sophisticated, active, and independent in the 1980s—shows complex, erratic, and abrupt shifts and turns. To give appropriate explanations or make reliable forecasts of North Korea’s foreign policy thus seems an almost
impossible task. If we pay attention to the fact that North Korea’s foreign policy is strictly guided by its ideology, however, we can find some clues to the changing patterns of its policy changes.

There have been many excellent works on North Korea’s foreign policy that record and factually describe the nation’s performance. Unfortunately, however, there are not many analytic or theoretic works on this subject. Most of the studies under my review unilaterally emphasize changes in the international political environment, such as the Sino-Soviet dispute, in explaining North Korean policy shifts, giving us an impression that North Korea only passively reacts to outside stimuli. North Korea’s own initiatives have usually been neglected, and very few analysts have tried to examine these shifts within the broader context of North Korea’s overall design of its revolutionary scheme. There have especially been no serious attempts to link the changing patterns of North Korea’s foreign policy to its evolving official ideology, Kim Il Sung’s concept of chuch’e.

The central objective of this essay is to delineate the logical nexus between the evolution of the ideological structure of chuch’e, the official ideology of North Korea, and the changing patterns of North Korea’s foreign policy. For this purpose, first of all, chuch’e will be examined as a policy guideline, with emphasis on changes in, and continuity of, the thematic contents of the ideology. Then I will discuss the three basic elements of chuch’e ideology and their roles in North Korea’s conduct of its foreign policy. In conclusion, some implications of future policy directions of North Korea will be drawn from recent developments in North Korea’s foreign policy.

THE GENESIS OF CHUCH’E

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was established on September 9, 1948, as a communist state led by the Chosun Rodongdang (Korean Workers’ Party), the successor of the Chosun Kongsandang (Korean Communist Party). Neither in its first constitution nor in the Party bylaws, however,

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3 The Chosun Kongsan-dang (Korean Communist Party), led by Kim Il Sung, absorbed the Shinmin-dang (New Democratic Party), led by Kim Du-bong, on August 30, 1946, and the name was changed to the Chosun Rodong-dang (Korean Workers’ Party). For details, see the proceedings of the inaugural conference of the KWP, National Unification Board (ed.), Chosun Rodong-dang Daehoe Charyojip [Materials on the KWP], vol. 1 (Seoul 1980).
was Marxism–Leninism formally declared the official ideology, because at that time the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) was presumed to be a united front for all democratic parties in Korea. It was only at the Third Congress of the KWP held in 1956 that Marxism–Leninism was formally adopted at its official ideology. In the revised preamble of the bylaws it was declared that "the Korean Workers' Party is guided in its activities by the theory of Marxism–Leninism."^6

In 1961, at its Fourth Congress, the KWP not only retained Marxism–Leninism as its official ideology, but also advocated adherence to ideological orthodoxy by inserting an additional phrase to the original declaration that reads in part: "The KWP ... opposes all expressions of revisionism and dogmatism, and firmly maintains the purity of Marxism–Leninism."^7

In 1970, when the bylaws of the KWP were again revised at the Fifth Congress, the newly adopted "Chuch'e Idea of Comrade Kim Il Sung" was juxtaposed with Marxism–Leninism as the official Party ideology, and in 1972, when a new constitution was proclaimed, the two were combined into one as "the chuch'e idea of the Workers' Party of Korea, a creative application of Marxism–Leninism to the conditions of our country."^8 And finally in 1980, in the revised bylaws of the KWP, the official ideology was simplified as "the chuch'e Thought and Revolutionary Idea of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung."^9

North Korea emphasizes that chuch'e is a "creative application" of Marxism–Leninism to Korea's reality. This implies that it is neither a replacement for, nor a revision of, Marxism–Leninism. North Korea argues that chuch'e is rather a system of concrete policy guidelines for action derived from the universal principles of Marxism–Leninism.

4Despite its silence on official ideology, the KWP was unmistakably a communist party. In a report to the conference, Kim Du-bong praised Marxism, and the conference even unanimously elected Joseph Stalin as its honorary chairman. See "Message to Great Marshal Stalin," Chosun Rodong-dang, pp. 18-19; and "Kim Il Sung's Report," pp. 20-38.

5The Congress was held on April 23-28, 1956.

6The full English text of the bylaws is printed in Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, Communism in Korea (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 1331-1349.

7Ibid., p. 1331.


9In the preamble of the KWP bylaws of 1980 adopted at its Sixth Congress, it was declared that "the KWP is guided only by the Chuch'e Thought and Revolutionary Idea of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung." For the text (in Korean), see Pukhan Kaeyo [Introductory Manual of North Korea] (Seoul: NUB, 1984), pp. 345-360.
As Chinese communists use the words zhui (theory) for Marxism-Leninism and sixiang (thought) for Maoism, so do North Koreans use chui (theory or ideology) for Marxism-Leninism, and sa-sang (thought) for the idea of chuch’e. This close parallelism between Maoism and chuch’e leads us to believe that North Koreans themselves regard chuch’e as a “practical” ideology for the “pure” ideology of Marxism-Leninism, just as Franz Schurmann interpreted the thought of Mao Zedong as a practical ideology complementing the pure ideology of Marxism-Leninism. This means that in the North Korean ideological system, Marxism-Leninism, as pure ideology, gives a unified and conscious world view, while chuch’e, as a practical ideology, gives “rational instruments for action.”

North Korea seeks to give the impression that it faithfully abides by the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and that chuch’e is only a slight modification; yet it is difficult to call chuch’e a variant of Marxism-Leninism, since it departs from virtually all of the fundamental theoretical arguments of Marxism-Leninism. For example, Kim and his associates openly denounce Marx’s theory of dialectical materialism and of contradiction between productive forces and relations as a cause of social revolution. Furthermore, they even replace Marx’s materialistic world view with anthropocentrism for the philosophical foundation of chuch’e.

Then what is chuch’e? Simply, it is a new and unique totalitarian ideological system invented to justify the dynastic rule of Kim Il Sung and his family. Its philosophical foundations are a kind of voluntarism, or chuichui, collectivism of the working class, and an extreme elitism. It deviates far from orthodox Marxism in that whereas Marxism takes contradiction between productive forces and production relations as a cause of social revolution, chuch’e emphasizes the correct will of human beings as a group as prime movers of social development, and stresses the importance of the leader in guiding people to correct will. Within the theoretical structure of chuch’e, the leader is deified as an omnipotent being and people are asked to pay unconditional respect to him so as to be free from misconduct, an assumption that leads to extreme elitism. Furthermore, the concept of chuch’e, the self, here means “collective we,” suggesting that one should follow “our leader” rather than other alien leaders or doctrines. In this sense, chuch’e


deviates from the universality of Marxism; it is a unique and parochial ideology applicable only to Korea.¹²

In short, chuch'e is no more than a secular religion in which people are asked to worship the leader as an absolute entity. It is closer to the medieval political ideology of the divine right of monarchs than to the universal ideology of socialism or communism. The only thing chuch'e shares with Marxism–Leninism is the common goal of building a proletarian utopia and the collectivization of the working class as means to achieve that goal.

CHUCH'E AS A FOREIGN POLICY GUIDE

Democratic nations have no elaborate ideological framework guiding foreign policy; only a loosely defined "national interest" determines the conduct of foreign policy. Like domestic policies, foreign policy is usually formulated through a process of compromise among the contending opinion groups. Government alone cannot dictate it. Therefore it is usually futile to deduce foreign policies from a nation's ideological stance alone. To understand and predict a nation's foreign behavior, we must thus examine its internal political variables and its organizational process along with its ideological orientation.

Unlike democratic nations, totalitarian nations use official ideology to define foreign policy goals and give guidance in selecting instruments for action. Totalitarian nations also pursue maximization of their national interests, such as security and economic prosperity, as do all sovereign nations. But in totalitarian nations the leaders try to subsume variant foreign policy activities within the frame of official ideology, whereas in nontotalitarian nations no such efforts are seriously attempted. Thus in analyzing the foreign policy of a totalitarian nation like North Korea, it is quite useful to correlate the metamorphosis of its official political ideology with the changing patterns of its foreign policy, because a changed focus in the ideological structure will soon be reflected in foreign policy behavior.

As a guide to foreign policy, chuch'e has three basic ingredients or elements. The first is, of course, the principle of communism, which dictates that North Korea support international communism and advocate solidarity among all communist nations. The second is the principle of the absolute independence of a state's sovereign power. This is actually the core of the whole ideological system of chuch'e, as the term chuch'e itself means "self,"

“autonomy,” or “self-reliance.” The third element is the principle of Korean nationalism. In this North Korea strongly advocates that it inherits the Korean pride of having the longest history of self-rule and that chuch’e is actually an extension of that pride.

Careful scrutiny of the evolutionary process of chuch’e, however, reveals that all three ingredients were not incorporated into the North Korean official ideology at the same time. And even after the present form of the chuch’e idea took shape, each of these three elements has not been stressed with equal emphasis over time. Rather, the emphasis has shifted from one to another at different times and toward different objectives. The changing focal points provides us with a good analytic guide for explaining and predicting North Korea's foreign policy behavior.

There are at least three discernible stages in the evolution of North Korea's diplomacy. During the Cold War era of the 1950s, North Korea behaved as a faithful satellite of the Soviet Union. It maintained diplomatic relations with only fourteen communist nations within the Soviet camp and shared the Soviet Union's belligerent attitude vis-à-vis all noncommunist nations. Particularly under the Soviet suzerainty North Korea showed its strongest hostility against the United States and its close allies.

In the early 1960s, North Korea struggled to cast off its status as a Soviet satellite. This effort bore fruit. In the midst of the Sino-Soviet dispute, North Korea successfully managed to gain its “image as an independent communist nation.” As a free sovereign state, North Korea now moved into the second stage of its foreign policy campaign in the mid-1960s. After ten years of effort, in 1973 North Korea obtained the status of permanent observer at the United Nations and in 1975 got itself admitted to the Non-aligned Movement. The scope of its diplomatic contacts was also drastically expanded. By 1980, the number of states with which North Korea had established diplomatic relations reached 100.

In the 1980s, North Korea is moving into the third stage of its foreign policy campaign. North Korea is now cautiously knocking on the door of the United States and its close allies such as Japan, hoping to establish formal state-to-state contacts. If North Korea is successful in this campaign, it will have completed its ambitious design of globalizing its diplomatic

contacts, because there will be no significant states left out of North Korean contact.

The genesis of the *chuch'e* idea also shows clear evolutionary patterns corresponding to the behavioral patterns of the three phases of North Korean foreign policy. In the early 1950s, when North Korea remained a satellite of the Soviet Union, it faithfully upheld Marxism–Leninism as the only official ideology. In the late 1950s, North Korea moved into the second phase of its foreign policy, in which it strove for autonomy in conducting foreign policy. Needless to say, the Sino–Soviet ideological dispute provided the opportunity. Pressures from both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China to side with them actually worked to cancel out each other’s influence on North Korea, and North Korea could escape from monopolistic control by the Soviet Union.

In the wake of the Sino–Soviet conflict, North Korea began to take new steps to create a measure of distance from both the Soviet Union and China, and to broaden its contacts with Third World nations in order to counterbalance Soviet and Chinese influences. In doing so, North Korea needed to prove its ideological independence without jeopardizing its friendly relations with communist neighbors. Accordingly, North Korea added a new element of *chuch'e*, that is, autonomy of ideology, to the original official ideology of authentic Marxism–Leninism. In this way the second stage of North Korean foreign policy began.

The newly adopted official ideology of the "*Chuch'e Thought of Kim Il Sung*" served well for North Korea during this second stage of foreign policy pursued in the 1960s and 1970s. *Chuch'e* is a double-edged formal ideology that gives maximum flexibility to North Korea. By emphasizing Marxism–Leninism, North Korea can retain close relations with old friends among the communist nations; by stressing ideological independence at the same time, it can share the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence proclaimed by the nations of the Nonaligned Movement, which emphasize mutual noninterference in domestic affairs and a neutral position in the East-West conflict. Promulgation of *chuch'e* as a foreign policy guide was a signal of North Korea's move into global-scale foreign policy.

*Chuch'e* encompasses Korean nationalism as its third ingredient, and this nationalism also serves as a foreign policy guide. Despite Kim Il Sung's open denial, there is no question that nationalism is almost as important

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15 Kim Il Sung denounces the connection between *chuch'e* and nationalism. Kim said: "The *chuch'e* idea is not nationalism. We seek for *chuch'e* and emphasize self-reliance only to precipitate construction of socialism and communism. Our *chuch'e* idea has nothing to do with national communism." *Kim Il-sŏng chusok Tamhwajip* [Collected conversations of Chairman Kim Il Sung] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbun, 1973), pp. 85–86.
within *chuch’e* ideology as Marxism–Leninism. Whenever *chuch’e* is mentioned in North Korea, it is always linked with national pride, the uniqueness of Korean culture, and national self-confidence. And *chuch’e* by implication always means “our *chuch’e*” or “Korean *chuch’e*.”

Emphasis on the nationalistic element of *chuch’e* corresponds to North Korea’s third stage of foreign policy, in which it changed from its previous passive and defensive posture to an active, positive, and aggressive stand vis-à-vis South Korea and its allies. During the first stage, North Korea successfully secured the unshakable membership of the communist bloc by proving itself in word and deed an orthodox communist state. During the second stage, it acquired full sovereign status through securing recognition from the majority of the Third World nations. With these diplomatic successes, North Korea seemed to feel confident enough to take certain initiatives toward South Korea.

North Korea, governing only the northern half of the Korean peninsula and only one third of the population in one indivisible society, has set national unification, or “liberation of the southern half of the fatherland,” as its supreme goal for the past three decades. Until the end of 1970s, however, North Korea could not take active measures to achieve this goal, since it was preoccupied with other urgent tasks, such as consolidation of its independent and viable status in international politics. Now, in the 1980s, North Korea has finally overcome both its domestic and international vulnerability. Internally North Korea has achieved political stability by enthroning Kim Jong Il as the unchallengeable successor of his father. Internationally, North Korea stands firm as an independent socialist nation. Backed up by these achievements, North Korea is now launching the third stage of its external policy aiming at unification of the Korean peninsula under its control. To advance the plan, it eagerly pursues the removal of the U.S. commitment to South Korean defense.

As a preparatory measure to unfold its ambitious political actions toward South Korea and the United States, North Korea has carefully launched a series of new efforts to prove that North Korea, not South Korea, is the sole legitimate heir to the old undivided Korea and the only lawful representative of all Koreans. Once North Korea wins in the game of legitimization of the Pyongyang government and deligitimization of the Seoul government, it will have the upper hand in dealing with South Korea and will be able to claim that the United States should sever its relations with South Korea and deal with the Pyongyang government to solve problems pertaining to the security and unification of Korea. To win this game of legitimacy, North Korea has begun to emphasize the nationalistic element of *chuch’e* because anything identified with Korean nationalism will get nationwide support and the title to represent all Koreans in the international community. In this sense, it is rather natural that North Korea has incorporated Korean nationalism into the *chuch’e* ideology.
North Korea, subsuming three independent policy guidelines under the label of the "uniform ideology of the Chuch'e Thought of Kim Il Sung," can now enjoy sufficient flexibility in conducting seemingly mutually contradictory foreign policies simultaneously without violating its self-imposed ideological frame. Recently Kim Il Sung paid visits to Moscow and six other capitals of the Eastern European communist nations and emphasized solidarity among the socialist nations; he also visited Beijing to prove mutual friendship. On the other hand, North Korea supports the non-aligned nations and various insurgent groups in the Third World nations verbally as well as materially, advocating solidarity among the oppressed peoples to fight against "hegemonic imperialistic powers," which some would interpret to mean not only the United States but also the Soviet Union. Furthermore, North Korea is making earnest approaches at the same time to the United States and Japan for the improvement of mutual relations, arguing that it is the sole legitimate representative of all Koreans. And all of these steps are taken in the name of chuch'e. The chuch'e scheme is, therefore, really a Gladstone bag for North Korea, flexible enough to accommodate all that North Korea pursues without tarnishing the integrity of the official ideology.

THE THREE ELEMENTS OF CHUCH'E
AND CORRESPONDING FOREIGN POLICIES

As a foreign policy guide, chuch'e subsumes three basic elements: Marxism-Leninism, sovereign equality, and Korean nationalism. And each of these elements was carefully engineered into the official ideology to justify North Korea's distinct stage-by-stage evolution of foreign policy. Furthermore, theoretical modification always preceded new policy actions. This interrelation between changes in the structure of North Korea's official ideology and its actual foreign policy provides us with a good analytic frame for assessing North Korea's seemingly complicated foreign policy behavior. Let me illustrate these relations in detail.

Marxism-Leninism and Policies Toward Communist Nations

The most important foreign policy objective of North Korea is to attain reliable measures for national security in the face of threats by South Korea and its allies. Pragmatically, for this purpose North Korea must rely on support by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, since there are no other nations that can render military support to North Korea. This ultimate necessity requires that North Korea retain its ideological adherence to Marxism-Leninism.

So long as North Korea adheres to Marxism-Leninism, both the Soviet Union and China cannot leave North Korea without aid when it is threatened by anticommunist nations. Both will lose face if such an incident takes place, since both consider themselves the leaders of the communist nations.
Upholding Marxism–Leninism as an official ideology works as a safety bond for North Korean security against South Korea and the United States, and as long as it serves national security, North Korea will retain Marxism–Leninism as a foreign policy guide.

Although Marxism–Leninism has been an unchangeable element of North Korea’s official ideology, there have been substantial changes in the way North Korea has interpreted Marxism–Leninism. When the communist nations formed a solid bloc uniformly controlled by the Soviet Union, North Korea faithfully followed the Soviet guide and accepted Marxism–Leninism as interpreted by the Soviet Union.

During this period North Korea’s world view was monolithic. It perceived international politics as a kind of a zero-sum game between the socialist nations struggling as a group for worldwide socialist revolution and the capitalist nations, which resisted them. North Korea had clearly defined friends and enemies: The communist nations were friends and the United States, the head of the capitalist group, along with its close allies were enemies. At that time the nonaligned nations were outside the sphere of North Korea’s concern.

Erosion of solidarity among the communist nations and the emerging new group of nonaligned nations shattered North Korea’s perception of world politics. Among others, two symptomatic events stimulated North Korea to revise its world view and forced it to reshape its foreign policy stance. One was the Bandung Conference held in April 1955, in which twenty-nine of the newly independent nations from Asia and Africa declared the historic “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” and another was the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) held in February 1956, in which Nikita Khrushchev openly suggested the possibility of peaceful coexistence between communist nations and capitalist nations.

The Bandung Conference demonstrated to North Korea that a substantial number of nations existed that shared among themselves many common feelings, such as anticolonial sentiment and aspirations for rapid economic development, but that were not eager to be involved in the ideological struggle between superpowers. On the other hand, Khrushchev’s address gave North Korean leaders a shock. The Soviet Union, which as the leader of the world socialist camp ought to have taken a firm stance against the imperialists, now backed down from its warlike stance. In this situation North Korea could no longer retain its one-sided advocacy of worldwide socialist revolution. It needed to reformulate its own position.16

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16 On October 5, 1966, in his report to the second plenary session, Fourth Party Congress of the KWP, “The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party,” Kim recognized the changed situation, saying that “today’s situation is different from that of yesterday, when the Soviet Union was making a revolution single-handedly” (p. 342), and declared
The final blow to North Korea's effort to uphold faithful obedience to Soviet directives as a supreme foreign policy guide was the Sino-Soviet dispute, which started in the late 1950s and was intensified in the early 1960s. Needless to say, the dispute put North Korea into a delicate and dangerous situation that did not allow it to blindly advocate solidarity among the communist states.

In its policy toward the other communist nations and the international communist movement, North Korea began to deviate from its old position. And ahead of these positional changes, North Korea felt it necessary to reinterpret Marxism-Leninism to justify the changes in policy.

In the 1950s, North Korea pursued collectivism among communist nations, but since the 1960s it has pursued international communism in the form of associations of independent and different communist nations. North Korea discarded the blind affection toward all communist nations it maintained in the 1950s and began to distinguish "pure" communism and revisionism. And it declared itself ready to maintain the purity of Marxism-Leninism and fight against all forms of revisionism.

For security reasons, North Korea had to retain friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and China but it also simultaneously had to keep a measured distance from both, for too close ties with one would jeopardize ties with the other. North Korea's decision to distinguish "pure" and "revised" Marxism-Leninism and to uphold the "pure" as its official ideology was a cleverly designed escape hatch from the dilemma, because in this way North Korea could maintain neutrality in the Sino-Soviet conflict while retaining basic friendship with all the communist nations, including both the Soviet Union and China, since at bottom all communist nations shared Marxism-Leninism as their official ideology.

The revisionism North Korea opposed included both "left" and "right opportunism." According to North Korea's interpretation, "right opportunism" meant the idea of rejecting class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat, preaching class collaboration, and abandoning the fight against imperialism. On the other hand, "left opportunism" meant the failure to take into account changed realities and the dogmatic recitation of isolated propositions within Marxism-Leninism.17 By opposing both, North Korea paved a third way for itself to stay away from dangerous ideological disputes among the communist nations and to seek an independent position within the communist camp.


17 Ibid., pp. 349-350.
Reflecting all these considerations, North Korea officially formalized the change in its ideological stance in the preamble of the Bylaws of the Korean Workers’ Party revised at the Fourth Congress held in September 1961. To the original simple expression that “the KWP is guided in its activities by the theory of Marxism–Leninism” as stated in the 1956 Bylaw, a new phrase was added: “The KWP . . . opposes all expressions of revisionism and dogmatism . . . in the struggle for the international communism movement,” a phrase that has been permanently retained.

How far will Marxism–Leninism guide North Korea’s foreign policy? As long as North Korea feels threatened by anticommunist nations, it will retain Marxism–Leninism as its foreign policy guide to gain support from communist allies, but it also continues to advocate the purity of Marxism–Leninism to keep from being dragged into possible conflicts among the communist nations.

**Chuch’e and Policies Toward Nonaligned Nations**

In the late 1950s, when the Sino-Soviet conflict began to create a serious security danger for North Korea and the international communist movement entered a phase of fragmented group politics, North Korea decided to deviate from its previous policy of blind support of the collective anti-imperialist struggle led by the Soviet Union and seek a more flexible and independent foreign policy. As a prerequisite for effective pursuance of the new policy, however, North Korea should be, first of all, politically and ideologically independent from Soviet suzerainty, for as a vassal state of the Soviet Union it could not identify with nonaligned nations.

To keep a safe distance from Soviet intervention, North Korea decided to plunge into the worldwide Nonalignment Movement, since pressure by the powerful members of this movement could counterbalance possible Soviet intervention. The Soviet Union would not dare to override North Korea while it was supported by many sovereign nations in the world, since such an act would give serious damage to the image sought by the Soviets of being “the liberator of the suppressed people.” The addition of the chuch’ e element, or demand for self-reliance, to its original official ideology of Marxism–Leninism was the ideological preparation for North Korea to start its ambitious expansion policy of diplomatic contacts with nonaligned nations in the Third World.

The modification of chuch’ e ideology started in the mid-1950s and lasted about ten years. It is frequently pointed out that Kim Il Sung had already started speaking of the need to establish an independent line in 1955, but the first official manifestation of the autonomous or independent Party line to the outside world was made public in the form of an editorial in *Rodong Shinmun*, with the title “Let’s Defend Independence,”

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on August 12, 1966, and was elaborated by Kim Il Sung in his report to the Conference of the KWP on October 5, 1966. In this historic address, among other points, Kim made it clear that “independence is each party’s sacred right which no one is allowed to violate, and each party is duty bound to respect the independence of other fraternal parties,” and that “mutual relations should be based on the principles of complete equality, independence, mutual respect, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs and comradely cooperation.” Then Kim declared that “among the communist and workers’ parties, there can be neither senior nor junior parties, nor a party that leads, nor a party that is led,” and that “no party is entitled to hold a privileged position in the international communist movement.”

And further he claimed that “as in the past, so in the future, too, our Party [KWP] will continue to adhere to the line of independence in its internal and external activities.”

This declaration of independence from “interference by great power chauvinists in its internal affairs” has become the basis of chuch’e and an additional foreign policy guide for North Korea. More formally, the new policy line was incorporated in the 1972 Constitution, in which North Korea declares itself an “independent” socialist state (Article 1), and as its foreign policy guides declares that “the DPRK establishes diplomatic as well as political, economic and cultural relations with all friendly countries, on the principles of complete equality, independence, mutual respect, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs and mutual benefit” (Article 16).

North Korea was now free to expand its relations with most of the newly independent nations in Asia and Africa, disregarding their ideological orientations. The new emphasis on non-interference and mutual respect for independence were identical with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence adopted at the Bandung Conference in 1955 and this helped North Korea to be accepted by those non-aligned nations which upheld the Five Principles. By 1980, North Korea maintained diplomatic relations with 100 nations. North Korea had grown from a hermit nation isolated from the noncommunist world to an active actor in the global politics.

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20 Ibid., p. 362.
21 Ibid., p. 368.
22 The five principles are: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual nonaggression, mutual noninterference in internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.
23 Pukhan Kaeyo, p. 286.
Nationalism and the Policy of Unification

For the past forty years Korea has been divided into two de facto independent sovereign states, and both Koreas have developed into two viable and independent societies. This undeniable reality notwithstanding, both Koreas set national reunification as a goal of first priority. The people’s aspiration for national unification in both Koreas is so intense that no government can survive unless it faithfully pursues unification.

In competition with the South Korean government to take the initiative in the campaign for national unification, proving North Korea the sole legitimate heir to the old undivided Korea and lawful representative of all Koreans is an imperative task for the Pyongyang government. Thus from the beginning, legitimization of the Pyongyang government and delegitimization of the Seoul government have been the ultimate policy objectives of North Korea.

Incorporation of nationalism into the official ideology, however, was not an easy task for North Korea, since the theoretically parochial nature of nationalism contradicts the universality of Marxism–Leninism. Because the chuch’ë system is supposedly based on a universal ideology of Marxism–Leninism, therefore the argument for nationalism logically contradicts Kim’s claim to being authentic heir to Marxism–Leninism. North Korea has thus cleverly avoided using the term “nationalism” and has even publicly denounced it. Instead North Korea subsumed the nationalistic sentiments in chuch’ë by broadly interpreting the concept to mean “self-esteem,” “ourselves,” or “Koreaness.” In North Korea, “Koreaness” is fanatically emphasized in every aspect of the people’s daily life, but only in the form of “chuch’ë music,” “chuch’ë painting,” “chuch’ë sports,” “chuch’ë architecture” and so on.

North Korea has insisted that the Pyongyang government is the sole legitimate government that represents all Koreans because it inherited the spiritual and cultural tradition of old Korea and upholds Korean national dignity. Simultaneously North Korea has made every effort to defame South Korea as an agent of the U.S. imperialists who have contaminated the Korean soul and enslaved the Korean people.

Based on this argument, North Korea defines the issue of national unification as that of liberation of South Korea from the United States. And based on the same logic, North Korea insists that in solving problems related to peace in, and unification of, Korea, the Pyongyang government, which supposedly represents the will of all Koreans, and the U.S. government occupying South Korea should be the sole “partners of interest” in negotiation.

North Korea has also tried to link Korean nationalism, and chuch’ë, to anti-Americanism. Historically Korean nationalism has developed in the form of a spirit of resistance against foreign invaders and showed its greatest
strength in the national independence movement. North Korea therefore tries to invite the nationalistic zeal of the Korean people to fight against the intrusion of the U.S. imperialists.

North Korea has utilized chuch'e as anti-Americanism in two distinct ways. First of all, North Korea has used it to agitate the South Korean people to fight against their government, agents of the U.S. imperialists, and U.S. troops in South Korea. More specifically, North Korea has pushed South Koreans aroused by anti-American sentiment to demand withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea. On a global scale, North Korea used anti-Americanism as a symbol of North Korean determination to fight against U.S. imperialism at large and to show that North Korea also shares the same foreign policy goal with all the oppressed people in the world. It seems that Kim Il Sung and his associates believe that North Korea’s strong anti-American stance will provide them with good access not only to the Soviet Union, which directly confronts the United States, but also to the oppressed people of the Third World, especially in Latin America.

Will North Korea retain nationalism and anti-Americanism as its foreign policy guide in the foreseeable future? Most probably. North Korea seems to believe that its plea for nationalism attracts the sympathy of the younger generation in South Korea, and thus it is not likely that North Korea will voluntarily discard such an important asset.

WHITHER NORTH KOREA?

In the past ten years, regional balance in East Asia has drastically changed. Rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union has revived since the Reagan administration took positive measures to cope with ever-increasing Soviet military power in the region. The People’s Republic of China under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership began to actively promote the Shi-yung chui gom ing, the modernization revolution through pragmatic economic policies, which calls for closer ties with the United States and Japan to obtain economic cooperation. For the “Four Modernizations,” China even officially declared itself willing to discard certain old Marxist theories, and has adopted market economy policy for capitalistic efficiency. Ideological rhetoric has been replaced with pragmatic calculation for practical gains.

In the wake of this revolution, Sino-U.S. relations have been dramatically improved. They have also expanded from mere diplomatic interactions of the early 1970s to multitiered interactions that include trade, capital

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25 Renmin Ribao [Daily Worker], December 9, 1984.

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investment, technology transfer, training of skilled labor, cultural exchange, and even limited military cooperation. Enhanced Sino-U.S. relations have reinforced the newly emerging anti-Soviet alliance among the United States, Japan, and China. In 1978, both the United States and Japan signed treaties with China for diplomatic normalization.

Meanwhile the Soviet Union has strengthened its relations with Vietnam and has continued to build its military forces in the region. In 1978, Moscow signed a new treaty of alliance with Hanoi and the Soviet Union acquired naval and air bases in Vietnam.

As a result of these realigned bilateral relations, the East Asian power balance has taken the new form of a bloc confrontation between the U.S.-Japan-China entente on one hand and the Soviet Union-Vietnam alliance on the other. And this new regional balance puts pressure on North Korea to readjust its foreign policy. For instance, North Korea’s reliance on China for its security does not fit well with its strong anti-U.S. policy, and North Korea must either replace China with the Soviet Union as its prime protector against the United States, or discard its anti-U.S. struggle and move toward rapprochement with the United States in order not to jeopardize its good relationship with China.

In addition to the changed international situation, the ever-growing South Korean economic power has become another pressure on North Korea. South Korea has achieved an astonishing economic growth through the 1970s pursuing export-oriented industrialization. South Korea’s enhanced economic status, and its mutual economic interdependency vis-à-vis developing nations as well as industrialized nations, has strengthened South Korea’s position in global politics, and this in turn has pulled down North Korea’s status accordingly. Now even socialist nations such as China make friendly gestures to South Korea for economic benefits. In this situation North Korea has to reconsider its foreign policy. Among other things, North Korea has to compete economically with South Korea to legitimize the Pyongyang government’s leadership in national unification.

Against this background, North Korea began to readjust its foreign policy. On January 10, 1984, the North Korean government officially re-

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27 In 1983, the gross national product (GNP) of South Korea was U.S. $75.30 billion, while that of North Korea was $14.47 billion; the two-way trade volume of South Korea was U.S. $50.63 billion and that of North Korea $2.93 billion. In the same year, South Korea exported commodities of U.S. $24.44 billion worth, while North Korea exported one-eighteenth of this amount ($1.38 billion). For a detailed discussion of North Korean economics, see National Unification Board, Minju Tongil-ron [Unification Through Democratic Means], 1985, pp. 209-278.
quested the United States to participate in a tripartite conference among North Korea, South Korea, and the United States. This was a drastic deviation from its previous policy line, since time and again North Korea had refused to accept similar tripartite talks offered jointly by the United States and South Korea.

Through this appeal and others, North Korea has actively approached the United States for negotiations to replace the current Armistice Agreement signed in 1953 with a peace treaty between the DPRK and the United States. In December 1984, North Korean foreign minister Kim Yong-nam again sent an official letter to George Shultz, the U.S. Secretary of State, requesting a preparatory meeting in Beijing for the purpose.

At the same time, North Korea has softened its attitude toward South Korea. In October 1984 North Korea sent food, clothes, and other relief materials to South Korean flood victims, and in November North Korea sent delegates to the North-South Korean Economic Meeting and to the Red Cross talks, both suggested by South Korea. The economic meeting between the delegates of the two governments was the first of this kind since division of the country, and the Red Cross talks were a resumption of the previous talks unilaterally canceled by North Korea some twelve years ago.

In 1984, North Korea also launched a new open door policy for economic cooperation with nonsocialist nations that deviated far from its long-held policy of autarky. In January 1984, the North Korean government officially announced the expansion of trade with nonsocialist nations, and in September it passed a law called Hap-yong pop (the Joint Venture Law) that defines unusual privileges for foreign investment. At the same time, North Korea opened several free trading zones to lure foreign investment.

All of these actions are obvious symptoms of North Korea's new foreign policy aimed at improving its relations with the United States and Japan. Why is North Korea so anxious for change? Both security and economic reasons exist.

South Korea, which still maintains close relations with the United States and Japan, will eventually join the U.S.-Japan-China entente, which will be a serious threat to North Korean security. To break out of the encirclement, North Korea must either improve its relations with the United States and Japan, or seek strengthened assurances of protection by the

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28 A proposal adopted at a Joint Meeting of the Central People's Committee and the Supreme People's Congress held on January 10, 1984. See Korea and World Affairs, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 1984), Source Materials and Chronology, pp. 172-197.


30 The law was adopted on September 8, 1984. For the English text, see Korea and World Affairs, vol. 8, no. 4 (Winter 1984), pp. 958-961.
Soviet Union. At this juncture, North Korea seems to opt for a pro-American line, because it is far safer to negotiate a U.S. guarantee for peace than to expect unlikely Soviet support.

If North Korea is overridden by South Korea in economic development, North Korea's position vis-à-vis South Korea will be greatly harmed, for in that situation North Korea will not be able to persuade its people to side with the Pyongyang government against Seoul. Therefore it is imperative for North Korea to try a new policy of economic development by importing technology and capital from advanced nations. Practically speaking, the United States and Japan are the only countries to which North Korea can look for such help, because it is very doubtful whether the Soviet Union will and can supply it. Thus North Korea has to improve its relations with the United States and Japan.

Will North Korea seriously pursue this logical path for survival? We will have to wait to give a firm answer to this question. One thing, however, is obvious. North Korea must emphasize its independence from both the Soviet Union and China and downplay revolutionary slogans before it can seriously knock on the door of the United States and Japan. Considering the resumed U.S.–Soviet rivalry, it is hardly likely that the United States will accept a Soviet satellite as its friend. This means that North Korea must strongly advocate its doctrine of peaceful coexistence based on the *chuch'e* principle of ideological independence before it will take the pragmatic pro-U.S. course of action described above. On the other hand, if North Korea determines to take an alternative course of direct confrontation with South Korea and its supporters, expecting strong Soviet support, it must anachronistically re-emphasize the Marxism-Leninism element of *chuch'e* and the united front among the socialist nations.

Whichever course North Korea takes, we anticipate it will soon readjust its ideological stance to fit its future foreign policy in order not to harm its ideological integrity. It is thus time for us to watch every change in North Korea's ideological rhetoric as a means of predicting its future course of action.
Macroeconomic Interaction between Domestic and Foreign Sectors in the North Korean Economy: A Schematic Interpretation

Suk Bum Yoon

A command economy is one in which state preference completely dominates individual preference in national economic decision making. A socialist economy may be taxonomically classified as one in which both state and individual preferences function within a system of exclusive collective ownership of the means of production. A command economy is an extreme subset of a socialist economy as defined.

Drewnowski’s scheme for classifying socialist economies is based on the degree of effectiveness displayed by individual preference in shaping the everyday economic life of a nation.1 The Lange–Lerner type of market socialism—in which both state and individual preferences function effectively in resource allocation, adoption of production technology, and product distribution—may be treated as an example of a socialist economy at the opposite end of the continuum from the command socialist economy. It may thus be safely observed that a socialist economy exists in various forms or systemic types. Within this wide spectrum of possibilities, the North Korean economy should be considered as one of the most rigid command economies, similar to that functioning during the Stalinist era in the USSR.

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1 Jan Drewnowski.

In-gyu Kim assisted in compiling the statistical tables.
It is well known that rationing and allotment in this type of economy supersede the market and, consequently, that the citizen's utility function does not have any channel via the market through which to reflect its part in economic decision making. A pseudomarket is formed only to function as a rationing device, and price is determined not by supply and demand but by accounting cost, which usually deviates radically from a normal price.

The primary purpose of this paper is to derive analytically a logical process for determining North Korea's foreign trade and to investigate empirically the recent trend of North Korean trade. There are, of course, few sources for North Korean economic data. No consistent time-series economic data are officially published. The fragmentary propaganda material available contains only piecemeal economic data, which cannot be used for consistent economic analysis without revision and adjustment. Furthermore, in the North Korean economy, some primary economic concepts such as national income, cost, capital stock, and price have connotations or properties different from those understood in decentralized market economies, and thus, based on these variables, the two economies are not directly comparable.

Some of the sources for North Korean foreign trade statistics are International Monetary Fund trade statistics, United Nations trade statistics, and COMECON statistical yearbooks. Even these sources, however, do not necessarily provide uniformly consistent data, perhaps because of differences in methods of compilation and estimation.

Thus this study inevitably begins with a patchwork of statistical data, a collection wherever available of all kinds of statistics, then construction of a time series, even though it is not consistent. The information contained in such a data series, however, is sometimes of use in approximating a sectoral economic picture framed as a part of an aggregate economic model derived by logical reasoning.

In an overall view of the North Korea economy, the foreign sector may be treated as an organic component forming a part of the national body, both influencing and being influenced by other sectors of the economy. In this respect, this paper also attempts to build a theoretical model of the North Korean economy to illustrate the mechanism of overall economic operations. Through this theoretical model the foreign trade sector may be both theoretically and quantitatively analyzed.

OVERVIEW OF NORTH KOREAN ECONOMY AND TRADE

In contrast to a market-oriented economy, in which individual demand is reflected in production via a market channel connecting consumers and producers, a socialist economy operates by centralized planning, which in

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2Some of these features are highlighted in Yeon's study.
many aspects supersedes market operations. This is true of the North Korean economy, in which every important decision is made by centralized planning. Since all means of production are nationally or collectively owned, production decisions are also made by the state, represented by a handful of Party members.

In production, the three most important exogenous variables are predetermined: weather in the case of agricultural production, planned investment, and national defense expenditures. The total labor input is also determined exogenously. The composition of labor input by industry, however, is more or less proportionally dictated by the planned investment for each industry and the technological status of the economy. With this set of variables, production functions may be established as

\[ X_a = F_a(K_a, N_a, W) \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)

\[ X_m = F_m(K_m, N_m) \]  \hspace{1cm} (2)

\[ X_d = F_d(K_a, N_a) \]  \hspace{1cm} (3)

\[ X_a + X_m + X_d = X \]  \hspace{1cm} (4)

\[ N_a + N_m + N_d = N \]  \hspace{1cm} (5)

\[ K_a + K_m + K_d = K = K_o + I \]  \hspace{1cm} (6)

where \( X, K, N, \) and \( W \) denote production, capital input, labor input, and weather variables, while subscripts \( a, m, \) and \( d \) indicate agricultural, non-agricultural and nondefense, and defense sectors, respectively. \( K_o \) denotes the initial stock of capital; \( I \) denotes investment.

This scheme tells us that the investments for production are determined exogenously by the centralized plan, and the amount produced from each sector depends upon these exogenous variables and the technological level of the North Korean economy. Once production is determined by these factors, we have to determine the consumption level. The prevailing theory most commonly accepted hypothesizes that the consumption level of an economy is functionally set by the product of the economy, that is, national income; some hypotheses pertaining to this theory have been extensively developed and tested on a high level of sophistication. These hypotheses, however, are hardly applicable and testable in the context of the North Korean economy, primarily because consumption in North Korea is rarely induced by the market situation but rather by the allocation of what the economy has produced for this purpose. The consumption function, reflecting this type of reasoning, may be set as

\[ C = \alpha X_a \]  \hspace{1cm} (7)
where $C$ stands for consumption, and $\alpha$ the ratio that denotes inversely the share of agricultural production in the total consumption expenditure, namely,

$$\alpha = \frac{\text{Consumption expenditure}}{\text{Agricultural production}} \quad (8)$$

This ratio again varies with the level of national income, depending upon Engel's ratio. In the long run, the consumption level, disregarding the economic system involved, is directly or indirectly influenced by the economy's income level. In our case, however, it is assumed that the total consumption in North Korea is set by food production and other factors from the non-agricultural sector that are proportionately determined by food consumption, at least in the short run.\(^3\) This is indirectly supported by the fact that the exports and imports of North Korean food items are in general balanced.

Next comes the savings function, and it is not difficult to see that the savings level is obtained by

$$S = X - C - X_d \quad (9)$$

where $S$ indicates savings. Because of the lack of a market mechanism in a socialist economy, there is no guarantee that savings and investment will automatically balance, even in a *posteriori* sense. This means that investment may be realized in excess or in debit of the national savings level. This leads us to establish another relation illustrating material surplus or shortage within the economy as

$$V = S - I \quad (10)$$

where $V$ denotes national surplus in terms of the inventory stock change. When investment is greater than savings, $V$ assumes a negative value and, in this case, it denotes national material shortage or a decrease in the material inventory stock.

Since most of the socialist economies, and especially the North Korean economy, seek self-sufficiency and a minimum dependency on foreign trade, commodity import is restricted largely to the strategic sectors of the economy such as the defense industry or the technology-intensive manufacturing industries, where noncompetitive import requirements cannot be avoided. We have an import function as

$$M = \beta (I + X_d) + M_o \quad (11)$$

where $M$ denotes import, $M_o$ basic import not related to investment and defense production, and $\beta$ a parameter linking import with investment and defense production.

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\(^3\)This approach is based on Don.
The export behavior of the North Korean economy may differ somewhat from import behavior. North Korea exports mostly raw materials and whatever surplus it has. This fact will be clarified in the next sections. We depict the export relationship as follows:

\[ E = \gamma V + E_o \]  

(12)

where \( E \) denotes export, \( E_o \) autonomous export, and \( \gamma \) a parameter linking export to material surplus. Finally, we have the balance of payment either in surplus or deficit.

\[ B = E - M \]  

(13)

This last relationship is closely tied to the external debt of North Korea, and we will have occasion to return to this point again.

The simple model described so far in functional forms may be portrayed in a diagramatic scheme as follows:

Figure 1 shows that the exogenous variables, all of which are plan variables except the weather factor in agriculture production, stochastically determine the production levels of all sectors. Since a high priority is given to the national defense industry, \( X_d, N_d \), and \( K_d \) are determined exogenously from the remaining sectors of the economy. As we have seen, however, this sector influences other sectors through production and imports.

Once the total amount of production is set, the consumption level of the economy is primarily decided by agricultural production but partially by manufacturing production. Whatever remains after military and non-military consumption and investment constitutes nonraw material sources for export, and imports are determined by the needs of the strategic sector that cannot be replenished by domestic supply. The trade imbalance is matched by either a decrease in foreign exchange reserve or an increase in foreign borrowing or investment.

**QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW OF NORTH KOREAN ECONOMY AND TRADE**

The North Korean economy has shown continual change in every aspect. First, the size of population has grown from 9.26 million at the end of 1946 to 10.79 million at the end of 1960, to 16.40 million at the end of 1975, and to 17.42 million at the end of 1980.\(^4\) In other words, in the past thirty years or so, the population has almost doubled and the population growth rate during the past twenty years is estimated to be around 2.4 percent per annum, which is higher than that of South Korea for the same

---

\(^4\) Figures from 1946, 1960, and 1975 are quoted from various speeches of Kim Il Sung; 1980's figure was obtained from FAO estimates.
Figure 1.
NORTH KOREAN ECONOMIC MODEL.
period. The rural–urban composition of the population has also changed substantially. At the end of 1953, the year the Korean War ended, the urban population constituted only 17.7 percent of total population, but after a decade the urban population had grown to 44.5 percent of the population and this composition has been more or less sustained thereafter. When the Korean peninsula was divided in 1945, North Korea was basically an agriculture-oriented country, although it had a stronger industrial infrastructure than South Korea. The agricultural share of the total produce in 1946 was almost 60 percent, but this figure declined to less than 20 percent in 1964. The transformation undertaken during the past twenty years turned North Korea into an industrial state.

North Korea implemented various plans to attain economic growth and industrialization after the Korean War. From 1954 to 1956, the Three Year War Rehabilitation Plan was undertaken, and from 1957 to 1960 the Five Year Plan was implemented. Because of some lack of domestic coordination during plan implementation, the First Seven Year Plan was prolonged to span 1961 through 1970. The Six Year Plan for the period 1971–1976 was followed by the current Second Seven Year Plan, after a one-year intermission in 1977, for the period 1978–1984. It is not difficult to conjecture that these plans contributed to strengthening the basis of the socialist economy and restructuring the industrial composition of North Korea, giving a higher priority to extensive military investment that produced a typically heavy industry-oriented socialist economy.

Even though it is difficult to paint a fully accurate picture of the North Korean economy, the following estimates of gross national product may give an approximate idea of the growth of the economy. Although there were some differences in recent years, the series matches to each other and shows a more or less similar trend, which clearly indicates rapid growth, especially during the period between 1977–1979. The approximate growth rate of GNP in the 1970s is estimated to be in the range of 12.3–16.4 percent per annum in terms of current market U.S. dollar prices. Deflating the nominal GNP figures by the constant 1980 U.S. dollar, and dividing by the size of annual population, we have per capita GNP series in 1980 constant prices. This figure will be used to derive the nonmilitary consumption level of the North Korean economy.

Since the statistics on North Korean agricultural production in terms of money value are seldom published, a consumption function of the logistic type is used in deriving the share of nonmilitary consumption expenditure.

---

5 Chosön Chungang Yöngam [Korea Central Yearbook], various issues since 1964.
6 Ibid.
7 The approximate linkage of this type of derivation and Equation (7) is given in Equation (3).
Table 1

VARIOUS GNP ESTIMATES
(U.S. $100 million, N.K. W100 million)

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3. P. S. Lee, DPRK, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), p. 32. GNP = fiscal revenue x 0.6.
Table 2

VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF PER CAPITA GNP
(in 1980 constant U. S. $)

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SOURCE: Same as for Table 1.

The consumption function estimated from the People’s Republic of China is used in estimating the share of the annual level of nonmilitary consumption.\(^8\) Per capita GNP and the nonmilitary consumption level of North Korea in terms of the 1980 constant U. S. dollar are shown in Tables 2 and 3. As the tables show, the nonmilitary consumption share of GNP ranges from 45.3 to 66.3 percent, depending upon the size of per capita GNP. The five estimates of nonmilitary consumption expenditures indicate a more or less similar level. P. S. Lee’s estimates, however, deviate the most from other estimates.

To obtain investment and military expenditures even in the form of proxy variables, national budget figures are used. Again, these figures are transformed into U.S. dollar equivalents. Now we have a complete set of series with which to analyze the import and export behavior of North Korea. There is a strong suspicion that North Korea must have allocated more than what explicitly appears as its defense budget for military expenditure, and the so-called “people’s economic cost” does not match perfectly with the net increase in capital formation in the standard national accounting sense. These variables, however, may be treated as good proxies for military expenditure and fixed capital investment.

\(^8\)The concrete form of the function and values of parameters are borrowed from Equation (3). The equation used is

\[
\frac{C}{Y} = 1980 \left\{ 16.64 \left[ \exp (1.789 + 0.6 \ln y) \right] \right\}^{-1}
\]

where \(C, Y,\) and \(y\) denote the nonmilitary consumption, GNP, and per capita GNP of North Korea, respectively.
### Table 3

**VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF NONMILITARY CONSUMPTION**  
(in 1980 constant U.S. $100 million)

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**SOURCE:** Same as for Table 1. (Estimates are based on the equation indicated in n. 8.)

### Table 4

**VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF NONMILITARY CONSUMPTION**  
(in current U.S. $100 million)

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**SOURCE:** Same as for Table 1.
Table 5

TOTAL FISCAL EXPENDITURE AND OTHER SPENDING

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<td>169.73</td>
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<td>105.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>111.06</td>
<td>99.70</td>
<td>225.46</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1. In current U.S. $100 million.
2. In 1980 constant U.S. $100 million.
3. In current N.K. won 100 million.

SOURCE: Official DPRK budgets.

Since we hypothesize the amount of imports into the North Korean economy as being determined by strategic necessities that cannot be met by domestic sources, and strategic necessities accrue mainly from capital formation and military expenditures, the estimated results based on the various estimates of imports and those of fiscal expenditure statistics are obtained as follows:

\[ M(1) = 6.040 + 0.091 \ (X_d + I) \]
\[ (4.010) \ (2.841) \]
\[ R^2 = 0.496 \quad F(1, 8) = 9.858 \quad DW = 1.376 \]

\[ M(2) = 4.481 + 0.130 \ (X_d + I) \]
\[ (2.501) \ (2.933) \]
\[ R^2 = 0.512 \quad F(1, 8) = 10.449 \quad DW = 0.969 \]

\[ M(3) = 3.2601 + 0.147 \ (X_d + I) \]
\[ (2.259) \ (4.626) \]
\[ R^2 = 0.701 \quad F(1, 9) = 24.440 \quad DW = 1.411 \]
In the above equations, \( M(i) \) denotes the annual import in terms of current 100 million U.S. dollars, \( i = 1, 2, 3 \), the different sources of import estimates as indicated in Table 6, \( \hat{R}^2 \) the coefficient of determination adjusted by the degree of freedoms, \( F(i, j) \) the \( F \) statistics with \( i \) and \( j \) degrees of freedom, and \( DW \) the Durbin–Watson \( d \) statistic, respectively. The figures in the parentheses at the bottoms of the estimated coefficients denotes the Student’s \( t \) statistics for the estimated coefficients. All estimated statistics were found to be highly stable and statistically highly significant, except some of the \( DW d \) statistics. In particular, the marginal propensity to import with respect to military and investment expenditure is estimated in the range of 0.091–0.147, which indicates that approximately one-tenth of total imports are induced by every unit of expenditure for military and investment purposes. This fact is statistically highly significant in all estimates of these three equations. The statistical evidence fully supports the hypothesis that North Korean imports are not determined by market forces but by centralized decision making reflected in plans and budgets.

The export side of the economy presents a somewhat different picture. First, we have five different estimates of the variable \( V \), which represents the more or less “exportable” surplus of the North Korean economy, and again we have three different estimates of North Korean exports. If we use Equation (12) to link exports to the “exportable” surplus, we end up estimating 15 different linear regression equations. These equations would produce more or less similar results if the estimates of two variables do not deviate very much from each other. As we have observed, however, in some cases the five versions of the GNP series differ from each other substantially, and again the three versions of the export series do not match closely to each other. Consequently, we cannot expect a uniformly matching result from every estimation of these 15 regressions. Some of the best results are selected and shown as follows:

\[
E(1) = 4.437 + 0.402 \ V(3) \\
(4.577) \ (4.938)
\]

\[
\hat{R}^2 = 0.750 \ F(1, 8) = 27.979 \ DW = 2.263
\]

\[
E(2) = 3.972 + 0.542 \ V(3) \\
(6.306) \ (8.007)
\]

\[
\hat{R}^2 = 0.888 \ F(1, 8) = 72.122 \ DW = 2.291
\]

\[
E(3) = 3.745 + 0.471 \ V(3) \\
(6.455) \ (9.228)
\]

\[
\hat{R}^2 = 0.903 \ F(1, 9) = 94.569 \ DW = 2.017
\]
where $E(i)$ denotes export and $i = 1, 2, 3$ different sources of estimation as indicated in Table 6, $V(3)$ obtained from Table 7 using the third estimates of GNP in Table 1. The estimated results show that the size of exports is determined very strongly by whatever is available as surplus after deducting nonmilitary consumption, military expenditure, and investment in terms of the so-called People's Economic Cost. The statistically strong significance of intercept terms suggests that North Korean exports contain some autonomous portions, which is determined independently from the interaction of macroeconomic variables such as consumption and investment.

To describe the export behavior of the North Korean economy and to establish the hypothesis that the North Korean economy exports whatever is available for the purpose of earning foreign exchange required for importation, an additional variable, size of imports, is included in the export of function. For the North Korean economy to meet planned targets, strategic commodities should be imported; to allow it to import these commodities, the economy needs foreign exchange, which can be financed either by export or foreign borrowing. Based on this line of reasoning, it is further hypothesized that the size of the import variable should have some explanatory power in the export function. The estimated results are:

$$
E(1) = 1.033 + 0.425 M(1) + 0.310 V(3)
$$

\[ (0.362) \quad (1.261) \quad (2.888) \]

\[ \bar{R}^2 = 0.767 \quad F(2, 7) = 15.814 \quad DW = 2.037 \]

$$
E(2) = 2.006 + 0.271 M(2) + 0.457 V(3)
$$

\[ (1.288) \quad (1.368) \quad (5.122) \]

\[ \bar{R}^2 = 0.899 \quad F(2, 7) = 40.921 \quad DW = 2.053 \]

$$
E(3) = 0.324 + 0.536 M(3) + 0.279 V(3)
$$

\[ (0.426) \quad (4.925) \quad (5.896) \]

\[ \bar{R}^2 = 0.973 \quad F(2, 8) = 181.567 \quad DW = 2.247 \]

All notations appearing in these sets of equations are the same as defined in preceding sets. All the estimated parameters of import variables and "exportable surplus" are statistically highly significant, supporting the hypothesis that North Korean export depends extensively upon the size of what is available and the urgency of import requirements to fulfill planned targets such as investment and military expenditure.

From the preceding analysis, we have found as a by-product that the five estimates of national income series do not give a uniformly consistent picture. The first two series of national income estimates provided by Sang
Table 6

VARIOUS TRADE VOLUME ESTIMATES
(in current U.S. $100 million)

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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>-1.88</td>
</tr>
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</table>

SOURCE:  1. International Monetary Fund, Direction of Trade, 1981.
         3. Sang San Lee (13).
Table 7
VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF "EXPORTABLE
SURPLUS" AND MILITARY INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES
(in current U.S. $100 million)

| Year | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   | $X_d + I$
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<td>72</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>78.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Same as for Table 1. Calculated from Tables 2-6.

San Lee and Soo Hyeon Kim are perhaps strongly underbiased in the sense that, when they are checked against the aggregate demand aspect, the quantities are substantially below an equilibrium level of the economy, resulting in ever-increasing deficit. Even though the North Korean economy has shown a chronic deficit in the balance of payment for the period 1971-1977 and, therefore, an increasing trend toward external debt, the balance of payment situation does not always exhibit such an enormous negative gap as portrayed by the estimates of the two national income series.

Since the North Korean economy is operated by centralized plan as distinct from a market-oriented economy, the balance of payments is also controlled by the centralized plan and is not completely swayed by the whim of market forces. Whenever there has been a strong trend toward deficits either in balance of payments or in the balance of aggregate supply and demand, the situation has been immediately followed by a strongly planned curb restricting the aggregate demand both in the domestic and the foreign sector of the economy.

Thus, there has been an explicit attempt in North Korean economic planning to attain a balance, at least in the long run. The probable underbiased nature of the two national income series may have originated from the fact that the official evaluation of the North Korean economy by the South Korean governmental institutes has had a strong tone of pessimism.
and conservatism, perhaps owing to the latent desire of the South Korean governmental institutes to show the performance of the South Korean economy predominating over that of the North Korean economy. This paper, however, does not intend to assert that the North Korean economy has always been in equilibrium.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS OF NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN TRADE

As we have already emphasized, the North Korean regime has consistently maintained the so-called autarkic economic principle based on "one-country socialism" in its foreign trade. As a consequence, it has so far tried to minimize the dependency of the North Korean economy on foreign economies. North Korea's share of the total trade volume in GNP is estimated in the range of 17.0-33.1 percent,\(^9\) whereas that of South Korea showed a range of 44.9-96.3 percent during the 1970s. In terms of trade growth, the pictures again contrast very strongly. While the North Korean trade volume recorded an annual average of 14.7 percent growth rate in terms of nominal U.S. dollar prices, that of South Korea showed 30.0 percent during the period 1971-1980.\(^{10}\)

Recently the rigid attitude of the North Korea regime toward self-sufficiency seems to have been relaxed, perhaps after experiencing various limitations arising from the closed nature of the economic system. This changed attitude may have been spurred by large-scale industrialization, which North Korea expects will lay the foundation for competition with South Korea, and by the initiation of division of labor among socialist countries with strengthening COMECON solidarity, which was clearly manifested in the promulgation of the so-called "Complex Programme of Further Intensification and Perfection of the Cooperation and Development of Socialist Economic Integration amongst the COMECON Countries" in Budapest in 1971. Even though North Korea was not then a member, economic activities with these member countries were extensively maintained. Until 1960, North Korea had been economically assisted by COMECON countries in the form of grants in aid. During the decade 1950-1960, North Korea received the equivalent of U.S. $51 million from the USSR, $34 million from the People's Republic of China, $20 million from Czechoslovakia, $10 million from East Germany, and $9 million from Poland, amounting to $123 million altogether,\(^{11}\) which was mostly used for the purpose of post-war economic reconstruction.

\(^9\)Calculated from various tables in this paper.


\(^{11}\)Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea data, calculated from various issues of International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade*; United Nations, *Economic Trade Statistics*; and OECD, *Trade by Commodities*. 

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Until 1970, North Korea strictly maintained a small-scale, balanced closed economy, absolutely minimizing trade relations with market-oriented Western economies. The trade share with nonsocialist countries in 1971 occupied only 15 percent of the total trade volume, with the remaining 85 percent devoted to trade with socialist countries, mostly the USSR and the People’s Republic of China. This pattern has gradually changed, however, and the proportion of trade with nonsocialist countries grew rapidly in the 1970s. By 1980, the trade shares with both socialist and nonsocialist blocs were balanced (50-50 percent). The average annual growth rate of North Korea’s trade with nonsocialist countries reached almost 35 percent, whereas that with socialist countries remained less than 9 percent. This fact demonstrates that North Korea’s annual trade growth rate of 14.7 percent in the 1970s was realized mostly through the expansion of trade with nonsocialist countries.

The trade expansion of North Korea with nonsocialist countries was also accelerated by the oil crisis and the chronic deficit of the balance of payments in the mid-1970s. This phenomenon is evidenced by North Korea’s sudden trade expansion with Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Switzerland, and Australia, as shown in Table 8. A recent unpublished report signals an interesting feature of North Korean trade\textsuperscript{12} that conforms with our present analysis. The degrees of dependency of North Korea’s trade on trade partner countries are measured by $T/X$, where $T$ indicates North Korea’s total trade volume with a given partner country and $X$ North Korea’s GNP plus the GNP of the given partner country. This ratio is an inversely GNP-weighted dependency rate over time and over countries. As shown in Table 8, North Korea’s trade with the USSR, the United Kingdom, and France declined over time without a clear difference between 1971 and 1979, whereas North Korea’s trade with Japan, West Germany, Italy, Australia, and Saudi Arabia increased with a clear distinction in approximately the same period of time. These 13 countries included in the table are some of North Korea’s most important trade partners.

As a nation’s trade volume increases, trade areas and trade commodities are in general gradually diversified; this phenomenon is extensively seen in many countries that have experienced expanded trade in the past decade. Most of the rapidly developing countries in Asia such as Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea are no exceptions. This phenomenon appears because as trade increases, income grows and the demand for goods has to be diversified because the demand elasticities of income and price limit the demand for a certain item at a given level. In other words, without diversifications of commodities and areas, trade cannot be expanded.

### Table 8

#### NORTH KOREA'S TRADE DEPENDENCY

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<td>(67.7)</td>
<td>(57.7)</td>
<td>(86.7)</td>
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**SOURCE:** Asian Trade Research Institute, *Trade Volume/GNP of Two Countries* (Tokyo), 1983.

**NOTE:** ( ) = ratio index. (Beginning year = 100.) All figures $\times 10^{-5}$.

To see if the same phenomenon is found in North Korean trade, let us conduct a simple statistical investigation. Coppock's Concentration Index (CCI)$^{13}$ is designed to measure concentrations of trade commodities and trade areas by using the following simple arithmatic device

$$
CCI = \left[ \frac{1}{h} \sum_{i=1}^{h} \left( \frac{E_i}{E} \right)^2 \right]^{1/2}
$$

$^{13}$Coppock.
where $E$ denotes the total export volume and $E_i$ the export volume of the commodities belonging to the $i$th group or the export volume of the commodities sold to the $i$th area. In grouping the commodities, the standard international trade classification codes are used. In classifying export areas, there is no standard system; conventionally, the trade zones most frequently used for each country's trade classification are adopted. CCI is calculated 1 when the export of a nation is made solely from one group of commodities or is sold to one area exclusively. CCI assumes $1/\sqrt{n}$ when export is made evenly from all $n$ groups of commodities or sold evenly to all $n$ areas:

$$\sqrt{\frac{1}{n}} \leq CCI \leq 1.$$  

The smaller CCI is, the wider the commodities or areas of export are scattered.

In calculating North Korea's CCI in terms of export areas, areas are grouped into the following 12 zones: the USSR, the People’s Republic of China, other socialist nations, the European Community, the European Free Trade Association, the United States, Japan, other advanced Western nations, Asia, Middle Eastern nations, Africa, and Latin America. The estimated CCI is obtained in Table 9. The calculation is based on the IMF trade statistics, the aggregate of which is shown in column 1 of Table 6.

In the same manner, North Korea’s CCI in terms of export commodities is calculated from the same statistics, and the results are given in Table 10.

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<td>1974</td>
<td>0.6356</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>1976</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
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</table>

The two estimates indicate that in export, the North Korean economy significantly widened its market during the 1970s; it could not, however, diversify its export commodities. In other words, the North Korean econ-
omy was not successful in developing wide varieties of export commodities, even though it widened some of the foreign markets for its export goods.\textsuperscript{14}

Based on the preceding analysis, we may predict that, primarily due to its domestic demand and pressure, North Korea inevitably has to expand its involvement in foreign trade with at least “friendly” capitalist countries, and this intention is repeatedly confirmed by various sources. It seems, however, that a major improvement in the nation’s balance of payments and external debt situation could not be achieved.

Some important reasons why North Korea had to expand trade with the nonsocialist bloc may be deduced from the following facts:

First, the First Seven Year Economic Plan, originally planned to cover 1961–1967 could not be properly implemented during this period primarily because of the cessation of foreign aid, the exhaustion of domestic raw materials, excessive interference from the central authority, and international conflicts, especially on the Indochina peninsula. The plan thus had to be extended to 1970.

Second, the program contained in the Six Year Plan, originally planned to cover 1971–1976, strongly indicates that, even though the North Korean regime did not fundamentally digress from the principle of an autarkic economy, new plants had to be imported to replace outmoded existing facilities and new foreign technology had to be introduced to enhance economic and engineering efficiency.

Third, to make up accumulating short-run debts mostly accrued from the importation of material and technology to fulfill the goals of the six year plan, North Korea relied more and more on long-term borrowing from foreign countries, and the self-help principle could not be strictly maintained once foreign capital started to be invested in North Korea.

Fourth, to finance import requirements of materials, industrial plants, and technology, North Korea gave explicit high priorities to the so-called “foreign exchange earning” projects, such as exploitation of base metal mines, processing of agricultural products, expansion of marine production, and similar ventures in the implementation of the Six Year Plan. These measures were a turning point in North Korea’s foreign trade structure.

Finally, the North Korean regime encountered an ever-increasing necessity to extend its ties with nonaligned countries as an important competitive tactic with South Korea, entailing economic and technical cooperation with these countries even though they were not necessarily socialist. This assumption is strongly supported by the fact that North Korea’s trade growth rate with nonsocialist developing countries reached almost 60 per-

\textsuperscript{14}There is a recent report that North Korea has started to export weapons on a large scale (\textit{see FEER}). This export seems in no way to be included in official trade statistics. Due consideration may reduce North Korea’s Commodity CCI.
cent in the 1970s, which is 43 percent higher than with socialist countries and 33 percent higher than with advanced capitalist countries.

In sum, it is not difficult to observe that the North Korean regime was obliged to undergo a substantial transition in its foreign trade pattern for various reasons, both domestic and foreign and, despite the socialist self-help principle, was forced to establish a channel of access to capitalist economies. As of the end of 1982, North Korea had accumulated a foreign debt amounting to U.S. $2.66 billion, the largest creditor being the USSR, who loaned the equivalent of U.S. $700 million. Western countries such as Japan, West Germany, France, and Sweden are also important creditors with outstanding loans in each case amounting to more than $200 million.\textsuperscript{15} It may be safely observed that, whether or not it tries to stick to the socialist self-help principle, North Korea is now trapped in the quagmire of the capitalist money markets.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

With limited resources, continuing attempts to follow socialist autarkic principles, incessant rivalry with South Korea, and the unavoidable appeasement of domestic economic discontent, the North Korean regime has attempted to achieve economic development by adopting a number of economic plans during the past three decades. Based on the explicitly stated creed of socialist construction, which necessarily dictated minimum dependency on foreign trade, the North Korean regime experienced inevitable conflicts in seeking to achieve its overly ambitious targets.

Even though the scale of North Korea’s foreign trade is negligible when compared to that of South Korea, foreign trade is conducted on the principle that an economic division of labor among socialist countries is a necessary instrument by which mutual assistance can at least eventually contribute to the efficient construction and development of the socialist economies. Consequently, foreign trade is severely limited only to those noncompetitive strategic commodities without which the fulfillment of the plans would be endangered.

This paper hypothesizes that North Korean imports are determined by the urgency to complement voids in military and investment expenditures that cannot be made up by domestic supply, and that its exports are conducted based on a practice that whatever is marketable will be exported when it is less urgently required in plan implementation.

A simple model has been constructed to reflect these hypotheses, and statistical tests significantly support the hypotheses, even though the statistical data on which tests are conducted seem in some respects dubious in

\textsuperscript{15} *Korea Heiron* [Korean Essays], June 1984 issue, Tokyo.
reliability. The data problem is not peculiar only to North Korea but is also found when investigating most socialist countries. It is better, however, to establish hypotheses based on estimated statistics rather than on wild guesses.

With the failure of some of its economic plans and the chronic accumulation of balance of payment deficits, both natural results of the North Korean regime's unswerving attitude during the early period, North Korea has recently eased its rigid obsession with the socialist principle of autarky and gradually indicated its willingness to establish economic ties with nonsocialist countries. Tokens of this change of attitude are often observed in plan documents, speeches, and statements. As a result, both North Korea's overall trade volume and the number of nonsocialist countries engaged in trade have shown a distinct increase.

The Coppock Concentration Indices measuring the degree of diversification of North Korean trade areas definitely show North Korea's recent trend of widening its export market. With respect to commodity diversification, however, limited progress has been made. In sum, the measures indicate the fact that, although North Korea has not been able to develop a sufficient range of commodities for export, so far it has diligently developed its foreign markets, partly revising its original socialist self-help principle.

In view of South Korea's recent trade behavior, which implicitly allows trade with nonhostile socialist countries, the change in North Korea's attitude toward the establishment of economic ties with nonsocialist countries is not entirely unexpected. Furthermore, it is projected that North Korea will become increasingly active in establishing economic and trade ties with nonsocialist countries as its balance of payments deteriorates with low prices for the raw materials it exports in the world market continuing, and the accumulation of external debts not showing signs of improvement.

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Foreign Trade of North Korea: Performance, Policy, and Prospects

Joseph S. Chung

For students of the North Korean economy accustomed to and frustrated by the dearth of usable economic information, studying North Korea's foreign trade using data supplied by its partner countries affords a rare opportunity for quantitative, albeit indirect, inquiries into this enigmatic and secretive country.

The magnitude, direction, and composition of North Korea's trade provide insights into important aspects of its economy. Trends in foreign trade offer supportive evidence on the speed and degree, as well as the nature, of the economic progress, transformation, and industrialization taking place in North Korea. Trends in imports reveal the extent and nature of North Korean dependence on foreign resources, capital, and technology, whereas export performance reflects the status of development and foreign exchange earning potentials. Trade, to some extent, also mirrors the state of North Korea's international relations: its stance in the Sino-Soviet rivalry, its attitudes toward the developed Western countries, and its aims in the Third World. Finally, knowledge of performance trends in external trade are essential in assessing the nature and shifts of overall North Korean trade and development strategies, particularly in terms of its official policy line of *chuch' e*.

INTRODUCTION

This study covers the years 1970 to the present, a crucial period for North Korea in many respects. The year 1970 marked the termination of the Seven-Year Plan that started in 1961 but ended up becoming a *de facto*
ten-year plan. Using the foundation laid up to that time, North Korea hoped for a genuine industrial takeoff via continued emphasis on heavy industry with machinery industry as the core. During implementation of the plan, however, the economy experienced widespread slowdowns and reversals, in sharp contrast to rapid and uninterrupted growth during previous plans. During the latter part of the extended plan (1967-1970), North Korea's policy of parallel strengthening of economic development and defense capabilities began.

It was against this backdrop that the Six-Year Plan was introduced in 1971, the basic tenets of which failed to reveal any significant deviation from those of the previous plan. More emphasis, however, was to be placed on technical revolution, self-sufficiency in industrial raw materials, and the development of power and mining industries, thereby raising product quality and restoring sectional balances. Mining and power industries were identified as major bottleneck areas partly responsible for extension of the Seven-Year Plan. The Six-Year Plan called for a self-sufficiency rate of 60–70 percent in all industrial sectors by substituting domestic raw materials for the dual purposes of economizing inputs and of organizing and renovating technical processes to make domestic substitutions possible.¹

In spite of official announcements of an early fulfillment of the Six-Year Plan by the end of August 1975, a full one year and four months ahead of schedule, the next plan, the Second Seven-Year Plan, was not unveiled until 1978, with 1977 designated as a “buffer” year. The principal goal of the current plan is achieving self-reliance, modernization, and “scientification,” marking the first time that these three rather broad goals have been incorporated specifically into the plan. Continued progress in mechanization and automation in all areas of the economy is what appears to be meant by modernization. The task of “scientification” is a buzzword for North Korean attempts to introduce modern production and management techniques founded on up-to-date scientific methods.

North Korea attracted worldwide notoriety in 1976 when it defaulted on its payment of foreign debt to Western countries resulting from its accelerated imports of capital goods from advanced industrial countries since the early 1970s. The oil shock of late 1973, worldwide stagflation, and declining prices for its main export products contributed further toward the dwindling reserve of foreign exchange and finally to the debt crisis. It was also during the middle of the 1970s that South Korea caught up with North Korea in per capita national income. South Korea’s impressive economic

success increasingly stood out in contrast to faltering efforts of the North to emulate the South in the area of foreign capital and technology importation.

The principal sources for data for noncommunist countries come from magnetic tapes of trade data issued by the United Nations and, to a lesser extent, those by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) based on returns of North Korea's partner countries. These have been supplemented by various issues of the United Nation's *Yearbook of International Trade Statistics* and IMF's *Directory of Trade Statistics*. Direct Japanese sources have been used for Japanese data whenever possible and desirable. Information for communist countries comes from the official publications of the USSR and China; the main source for Eastern European countries and Cuba is the United Nations yearbooks. Where gaps in the country series, extrapolations have been made by using time series analysis. Depending upon statistical fit, the equations used are simple trend, autoregressive, or autoregressive trend. Extrapolations would not seriously distort the estimates since the countries involved are minor partners without exception of North Korea and only fill the gap for one or two years in most cases. As will be seen, North Korean trade is highly concentrated with a few large partner countries. Such communist countries as Albania, Mongolia, Kampuchea, and Vietnam are excluded from the analysis for lack of data. The magnitude of North Korean trade with these countries is considered relatively small.

A major difficulty in estimating the magnitude of trade for a country based on partner returns lies in determining the extent of insurance and freight charges. Since what is involved is merchandise or visible trade, it is the practice of most countries (with the exception of some communist countries) to express exports f.o.b. (free on board) and imports c.i.f. (cost, insurance and freight). Since no information is available on the magnitude of actual insurance and freight charges involved in shipping goods to and from North Korea, this paper has adopted the IMF method of conversion. Accordingly, an average figure of 10 percent as an estimate of insurance and freight charges across the board has been used to convert a partner country's exports f.o.b. into North Korean imports c.i.f. For instance, Japanese exports f.o.b. to North Korea are multiplied by a factor of 1.1 to estimate North Korean imports c.i.f. from Japan. Similarly, North Korean export figures f.o.b. to Japan are estimated by dividing Japanese import figures c.i.f. from North Korea by the same factor. Obviously, if a partner country's imports are expressed f.o.b., as done in some communist countries, there is no need for conversion.

As far as the country and area direction of trade is concerned, all data in this paper have been reduced to the same basis, namely, exports f.o.b. and imports c.i.f., for consistency. This is particularly important in summing noncommunist and communist countries into an aggregate because of different reporting practices. For obvious reasons, this practice will increase
the magnitude of North Korean trade deficit relative to using trade partners' data without adjustments. This conversion makes North Korean exports smaller while increasing the value of its imports. As far as the commodity composition of trade is concerned, no conversion has been made. This is mainly because the percentage composition of exports and imports are not affected by the conversion, and the data on the commodity composition are much more limited in terms of both the coverage of countries and the quality of available information. This applies particularly to communist countries. In the rare case where such information is available, as with the USSR, commodities are not classified according to the standard international trade classification (SITC) system for comparability.

TRENDS IN THE OVERALL DIRECTION OF TRADE

North Korea's overall trade with the world has increased rapidly since the Korean War. Its total exports increased from roughly U.S. $31.0 and $45.0 million, respectively, in 1953 and 1955 to $307 million in 1970, while equivalent figures for imports grew from $42.0 and $60.3 million to $434.1 million. The rising trend continued in the 1970s and early 1980s, so that North Korea's overall exports (see Table 1) increased to $1,236.2 million in 1982, registering an annual average growth rate of 12.3 percent in the twelve years between 1971 and 1982. The export value in 1982 was about four times that of 1970. Increasing to a level of $1,620.2 million in 1982, growth rate in total imports from the world was slightly less, with 11.6 percent per annum. As a result the two-way trade of North Korea increased from $73.0 and $105.3 million, respectively, in 1953 and 1955, to $0.7 and $2.9 billion in 1970 and 1982, with an annual growth rate of 11.9 percent during 1971-1982.

In contrast to a more or less steady and smooth rise in the 1950s and 1960s, growth since 1970 for both exports and imports has been characterized by fluctuations with an increasing trend. Fluctuations are indicated by alternating positive and negative annual incremental rates of growth. The first downward shift for both exports and imports occurred in the mid-seventies. After a very high rate of growth in the early seventies, imports actually fell 11.2, 11.9, and 19.4 percent, respectively, in 1975, 1976, and 1977. North Korea's severe foreign exchange shortage and its difficulty in repaying foreign debt must have been the explanation for the decline in imports. This can also be seen by the largest amount of unfavorable balance of trade North Korea accumulated in a single year with developing countries in 1974 (about $540 million). Imports began to increase again in 1978, only

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# Table 1

**NORTH KOREA’S TRADE BY MAJOR AREAS, 1970-1982**

(U. S. $ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307.7</td>
<td>314.9</td>
<td>403.5</td>
<td>489.3</td>
<td>694.3</td>
<td>806.3</td>
<td>570.5</td>
<td>767.7</td>
<td>1184.6</td>
<td>1457.9</td>
<td>1528.0</td>
<td>1068.5</td>
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<td>Index of growth</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>102.3%</td>
<td>131.1%</td>
<td>159.0%</td>
<td>225.6%</td>
<td>262.0%</td>
<td>185.4%</td>
<td>249.5%</td>
<td>385.0%</td>
<td>473.8%</td>
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<td>347.3%</td>
<td>401.8%</td>
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<td>2.3%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
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<td>-30.1%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>247.1</td>
<td>251.6</td>
<td>326.3</td>
<td>361.0</td>
<td>436.3</td>
<td>488.3</td>
<td>358.8</td>
<td>436.9</td>
<td>625.8</td>
<td>836.7</td>
<td>869.5</td>
<td>670.4</td>
<td>915.6</td>
<td>6024.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Communist</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>120.3</td>
<td>256.0</td>
<td>318.0</td>
<td>211.7</td>
<td>330.8</td>
<td>558.8</td>
<td>621.2</td>
<td>658.5</td>
<td>398.1</td>
<td>320.6</td>
<td>4005.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>104.4</td>
<td>169.7</td>
<td>147.9</td>
<td>130.2</td>
<td>109.9</td>
<td>162.1</td>
<td>233.7</td>
<td>329.0</td>
<td>173.6</td>
<td>196.7</td>
<td>1922.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Developed</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>170.1</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>220.9</td>
<td>397.7</td>
<td>329.5</td>
<td>224.5</td>
<td>125.9</td>
<td>2082.7</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Imports (c.i.f)** |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |                 |
| Total             | 434.1 | 640.0 | 753.6 | 989.7 | 1414.2 | 1256.0 | 1106.6 | 891.9 | 1085.4 | 1469.4 | 1806.2 | 1529.0 | 1620.2 | 114996.3 |
| Index of growth   | 100.0% | 147.4% | 173.6% | 159.0% | 225.6% | 262.0% | 185.4% | 249.5% | 385.0% | 473.8% | 496.6% | 347.3% | 401.8% |                 |
| Annual growth     | 47.4% | 17.8% | 31.3% | 42.9% | -11.2% | -19.4% | 21.7% | 35.4% | 22.9% | -15.3% | 6.0% |                 |                 |                 |
| Of which:MONTHLY |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |                 |
| Communist         | 373.4 | 576.2 | 598.0 | 652.9 | 648.8 | 718.4 | 658.2 | 597.7 | 655.6 | 893.9 | 1066.8 | 887.2 | 955.3 | 9284.4 |
| Non-Communist     | 60.7 | 63.8 | 155.6 | 336.8 | 765.4 | 537.6 | 448.4 | 292.2 | 429.8 | 575.5 | 739.4 | 641.8 | 644.9 | 5711.9 |
| Developed         | 51.7 | 57.3 | 143.3 | 253.3 | 709.0 | 495.7 | 298.1 | 242.6 | 316.1 | 440.4 | 557.8 | 491.5 | 510.8 | 4570.6 |
| Less Developed    | 9.0 | 6.5 | 12.3 | 80.5 | 56.4 | 41.9 | 150.3 | 49.6 | 113.7 | 135.1 | 181.6 | 150.3 | 154.1 | 1141.3 |

| Growth rate per annum |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |                 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|                 |
| 1971-82               | 12.3% | 11.5% | 14.9% | 12.1% | 22.6% | 11.6% | 8.1% | 21.7% | 22.9% | 26.7% | 21.0% | 20.0% | 26.7% |                 |

---

Note: The table provides data on North Korea's trade by major areas from 1970 to 1982, including exports and imports, with respective growth rates and percentages for each year and category.
### Trade turnover (X+H)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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<th>Non-Communist</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Less Developed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Trade turnover</td>
<td>741.8</td>
<td>954.9</td>
<td>1157.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of growth</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>128.7</td>
<td>156.0</td>
<td>199.4</td>
<td>284.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual growth</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>620.5</td>
<td>827.8</td>
<td>924.3</td>
<td>1013.9</td>
<td>1085.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Communist</td>
<td>121.3</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>232.8</td>
<td>465.1</td>
<td>1023.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>101.6</td>
<td>107.3</td>
<td>206.6</td>
<td>362.7</td>
<td>878.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Developed</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>102.4</td>
<td>144.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trade balance (X-H)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Communist</th>
<th>Non-Communist</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Less Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade balance</td>
<td>-126.4</td>
<td>-325.1</td>
<td>-350.1</td>
<td>-500.4</td>
<td>-719.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of growth</td>
<td>-124.2</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>-11.5</td>
<td>-278.2</td>
<td>-460.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual growth</td>
<td>-536.1</td>
<td>-384.0</td>
<td>-11.5</td>
<td>-278.2</td>
<td>-460.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>-126.3</td>
<td>-324.6</td>
<td>-271.7</td>
<td>-291.9</td>
<td>-212.5</td>
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<td>-208.5</td>
<td>-507.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-80.0</td>
<td>-149.9</td>
<td>-539.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Developed</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-58.6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** With the exception of the USSR, China, and Japan, data are based on returns of partner countries as reported in U.N. trade data magnetic tapes supplemented by IMF direction of trade magnetic tapes and various issues of U.N., *Yearbook of International Trade Statistics* and IMF, *Direction of Trade Statistics*. For Japan, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), *Kita Chōsen no keizai to boeki no tenbō* [North Korea’s Economy and Trade Prospects], Tokyo, Japan, various issues. For China, *Chung-kua ching-chi nien-chien* [Almanac of China’s Economy], Hong Kong: Chinese Economic Yearbook, Inc., for 1950-80 and U.N. magnetic tapes for 1981-82. For USSR, *Vneshnaja Torgovlia SSSR: Statisticheskij Shbornik* [Foreign Trade of the USSR: A Statistical Review], Moscow, various issues.

**Notes:**

1. Developed countries include all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
2. Since Yugoslavia is a member of OECD, it is not included in the communist group. In addition, for lack of information, trade of Kampuchea, Mongolia, and Vietnam is excluded from the group.
3. To compensate for costs of freight and insurance, a partner country’s exports to North Korea f.o.b. are multiplied by a factor of 1.1 to convert them to North Korean imports c.i.f. For the same reason, North Korean exports f.o.b. are estimated by dividing the partner country’s imports c.i.f. by the same factor.
to decline in 1981. Growth in exports has occurred with relatively less fluctuation than in imports. Only two years, 1976 and 1981, saw negative growth. Declining imports, particularly from developing countries in the mid-seventies, must have dealt a severe blow to the economy, coming in the final years of the Six-Year Plan. Imports from developing countries increased from a mere $51.7 million in 1970 to a peak of $709.0 million in 1974. It is obvious that North Korea counted on imports from these countries to supply much-needed machinery and plants. This may be one clue as to why North Korea required a buffer year before introducing a new economic plan in 1978. North Korea’s total trade imbalance peaked in 1974 with $719 million in one year.

According to preliminary data based on returns of nineteen countries, including all major North Korean partners such as the USSR, China, Japan, and most Western European countries, North Korean trade value went through another downward swing in 1983. North Korean exports to the group decreased by 9.6 percent during this year, while her imports from them went down by 12.6 percent, with the result that her trade balance with the group was about $209 million.3

A declining trend in the share of communist countries that began in the 1960s continued through the seventies. In the years immediately following the Korean War, the share in total trade turnover hovered just below 100 percent (99.6 percent and 96.8 percent, respectively, in 1955 and 1957, for instance).4 The sharpest dip occurred around 1974–75. In 1975, the communist share in North Korean exports was an all-time low of 60.6 percent, while the same share in imports in 1974 was 45.9 percent. A slightly increasing trend appears to have emerged around 1981–82. The sharp decline in the communist share, particularly in the mid-seventies, is mainly attributable to North Korea’s turning to Western developed countries for much-needed imports for development projects and specifically to complete the Six-Year Plan on target. This switch in trade partners can also be demonstrated by an annual average growth rate of 22.1 percent (21.9 percent) between 1971 and 1982 for North Korean imports from the noncommunist (developed) countries as compared to 8.1 percent for the communist countries. The share of developed countries in the noncommunist world is understandably much higher for North Korean imports than for exports. Of the total cumulative trade during 1970–1982, this share was 80.0 and 48.0 percent, respectively, for North Korean imports and exports. The import


4 Chung, “North Korea’s International Trade,” p. 81.
share of developed countries reached more than 90 percent in 1972, 1974, and 1975.

Another dramatic change that occurred as a consequence of North Korea's increasing trade dependence on noncommunist countries is manifested in the share of her trade balance. In the early seventies, communist countries accounted for nearly 100 percent of the total North Korean trade deficit. Toward the middle of the seventies, the noncommunist share began to sharply increase. For example, in 1974, 70.5 percent of North Korea's total trade imbalance of $719.9 million came from her import surplus with the noncommunist countries. After some improvement, the percentage rose again to 52.9 and 89.7 percent, respectively, in 1981 and 1982. Since the seventies, less developed countries as a whole have been the only area of the world with which North Korea has been consistently accumulating export surplus (with the exception of only two years, 1976 and 1982), which partly paid off import surplus from other areas.

North Korea's foreign trade has been highly concentrated in three individual countries, namely, the USSR, China, and Japan. Taking the period between 1970 and 1982 as a whole, roughly two-thirds of North Korea's two-way trade with the world was accounted for by these three countries alone. The share of the three, which began with 75.7 percent in 1970, declined in the mid-seventies to about a 60-percent level but began to climb up again in the early eighties. The decline was mainly due to expansion of North Korea's trade with Western European countries. North Korea's dependence on the three principal partners is higher in imports than in exports. The share of the USSR, the largest partner throughout North Korea's history, began to slide continually over the years, while the shares of China and Japan have been on a gradual rise because of the faster growth in trade with these two. In the early 1980s, the share of the three in total trade turnover was roughly one-third, one-fifth, and one-sixth, respectively, for the USSR, China, and Japan.

**TRADE WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES**

That the communist share in North Korean trade with the world has been declining over the years was previously mentioned. Since 1970, there has also been a gradual shift in the regional composition within the communist group (see Table 2). While North Korea's exports to the USSR grew at the same pace as the exports to the group as a whole (11.4 percent per annum) between 1971 and 1982, exports to China and Eastern Europe increased at 15.5 and 7.8 percent, respectively. As a result, the Soviet share in total North Korean exports to communist countries stayed about the same, the Chinese share increased, and the Eastern European share decreased during the period. In North Korean imports to the group, both China and Eastern
### Table 2

**NORTH KOREA’S TRADE WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, 1970–1982**

*(exports f.o.b.; imports c.i.f.; U. S. $ million)*

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<td><strong>Total, Communist</strong></td>
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<td>488.3</td>
<td>358.8</td>
<td>436.9</td>
<td>625.8</td>
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<td>670.4</td>
<td>915.6</td>
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<td>718.4</td>
<td>659.2</td>
<td>599.7</td>
<td>655.6</td>
<td>893.9</td>
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<td>887.2</td>
<td>955.3</td>
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<td>135.6</td>
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<td>210.4</td>
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<td>62.2</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>86.2</td>
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<td>132.6</td>
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<td>128.2</td>
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<td>18.8</td>
<td>153.2</td>
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<td>17.5</td>
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<td>152.0</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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<td>3.8 3.8</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>12.4 6.7</td>
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<td>Romania</td>
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<td>19.0 15.9</td>
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<td>Cuba</td>
<td>9.8 8.7</td>
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**Source:** For the USSR and China, see Table 1. For Eastern Europe and Cuba, U.N., *Yearbook of International Statistics*, various issues, supplemented by U.N. trade magnetic tapes.

**Note:** Gaps in the data for some years have been extrapolated by using time series analysis (trend, autoregressive, or autoregressive trend depending on the statistical fit) as follows: Bulgaria, 1982; East Germany, 1976–1982; Poland, 1982; and Cuba, 1970–1973 and 1981–82. Extrapolation is based on data going back to the 1950s.
Europe grew faster, and the USSR much slower, than the group total. Consequently, the Soviet share in exports to the group declined, while that of China and Eastern Europe increased. In the early 1980s, the relative share in the communist trade turnover was approximately one-fifth, one-third, and one-sixth, respectively, for the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe. The differential growth between exports and imports between North Korea and the three regions has naturally changed the nature of its trade deficit with them. The deficit situation improved somewhat with the USSR, while imbalance worsened in trade with China and particularly with Eastern Europe.

North Korean trade with the USSR, which recovered in 1982 from a dip in the previous year in both exports and imports, decreased again in 1983 (a decline of 9.6 and 16.8 percent, respectively, over 1982). According to trade data for the first nine months of the year, North Korean exports to China also declined (by 19.4 percent) while imports increased slightly (0.7 percent) in 1983 over the same period in 1982.\(^5\)

Within Eastern Europe, North Korea's two-way trade with Bulgaria grew the fastest during the period followed by Rumania. North Korea's imports from Czechoslovakia grew at a rate of 16.7 percent annum, while the equivalent rate for her exports was a mere 4.4 percent, which eliminated her trade surplus with the country in the early seventies. North Korean trade with Cuba was running at an average rate of 2.2 and 1.0 percent, respectively, for exports and imports. While North Korean imports from Cuba have been declining gradually and consistently, exports fluctuated widely, with a peak of $23.6 million in 1974 compared with $9.8 million and $10.5 million for 1970 and 1982, respectively.

**TRADE WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

It was observed earlier that the share of North Korean trade with the non-communist world increased in the mid-seventies, with a slight reversal in the early eighties. Within the noncommunist group, trade with less developed countries increased faster than that with developed countries. The share of developed countries in the total noncommunist exports decreased from 82.3 percent in 1970 to an all-time low of 29.0 percent in 1978 and 61.4 percent in 1982 (see Table 1).

The pattern for imports was different. The developed share increased from 85.2 percent in 1970 to a peak of 92.6 percent in 1975 and then began to be stabilized around the mid-70 percent level in recent years. This figure simply reflects the importance of developed countries more as a source for North Korean imports than as a market for her export products.

\(^5\) JETRO, *[North Korea's Economy]*, pp. 82-83.
The reverse is true for the less developed countries. This must be explained, first, by North Korean needs for Western capital goods; second, by North Korean difficulty in marketing goods in developed countries; and third, by easier acceptance of North Korean exports in the Third World. North Korea's success in expanding its exports in the Third World may be partly due to the fact that manufactured goods of the level of sophistication produced by North Korea find more use by those countries at the lower end of development.

Strictly partitioning noncommunist countries between developed and developing is understandably somewhat arbitrary. In the case of North Korean trade, there is no very significant difference between defining developed countries broadly as comprised of all the members of the OECD, and defining them more narrowly as industrialized countries (OECD minus Greece, Portugal, Turkey, and Yugoslavia), although the difference began to widen somewhat in recent years in the case of imports (see Table 3). The advanced industrial countries' share of North Korean trade with developed countries has been nearly 100 percent throughout the period. The share in exports declined somewhat to about a mid-90 percent mark in the early 1980s. This fact underscores the point that North Korean trade with the developed countries is concentrated in the highly industrialized countries of Western Europe and Japan and, understandably, more so in her imports.

North Korea's imports from the European Community countries have increased rapidly at 17.9 percent per annum between 1971 and 1982, while the equivalent figure in exports was 8.2 percent. The relative importance of European Community countries increased significantly in the mid-seventies but began to decline toward the end of the decade in terms of their share of North Korean trade with the world as well as of noncommunist and developed countries. Japan and European Community countries together account for the bulk of North Korean trade with developing countries, particularly in exports. On the average, between 1970 and 1982, 94.6 percent of North Korean exports to developed countries were destined to these two regions, while 83.5 percent of her imports originated there. This seems to indicate that North Korean imports are more dispersed among the developed partners than are exports.

Japan remains by far the most important single trade partner of North Korea among the developed countries. Japan's share of North Korean exports stayed at an average of 60.6 percent during the period, with an increasing trend in the early 1980s, while the same in imports ran at 57.4 percent, with a generally increasing trend over the period. Of a cumulative total of $2.7 billion negative trade balance accumulated by North Korea with developed countries between 1970 and 1982, $1.5 billion (55.6 percent) was with Japan alone. North Korean exports to Japan declined 17.0 percent to $114.6 million in 1983 over 1982, while the former's imports
### Table 3

**NORTH KOREA’S TRADE WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, 1970–1982**  
(U. S. $ million)

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<td>Imports, World</td>
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<td>460.4</td>
<td>531.6</td>
<td>895.7</td>
<td>1411.2</td>
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<td>891.9</td>
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<td>1469.4</td>
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<td>537.6</td>
<td>448.4</td>
<td>292.2</td>
<td>429.8</td>
<td>757.5</td>
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<td>664.9</td>
<td>5711.9</td>
<td>22.12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed (DC)</td>
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<td>57.3</td>
<td>145.3</td>
<td>256.3</td>
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<td>495.7</td>
<td>298.1</td>
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<td>491.5</td>
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<td>Balance, Developed</td>
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**SOURCE:** Same as Table 1.

Notes: Developed countries are made up of the 25 countries of OECD. Industrial countries are a subset of OECD derived by subtracting Greece, Portugal, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. EC denotes ten countries of the European Community, namely, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxemburg, Netherlands, West Germany, and the United Kingdom.
from the latter increased by 4.4 percent to $359.2 million, further worsening the North Korean trade deficit with Japan ($245.2 million in 1983 as compared with $206.3 and $293.3 million, respectively, in 1981 and 1982). North Korean exports to Japan increased more or less steadily until 1975, when there was a 40.4 percent decline. From that time through 1983, the export value has fluctuated up and down regularly. In contrast, North Korea’s imports from Japan have been increasing with much less fluctuation in recent years. Since 1956, there were only two years in which both exports and imports declined simultaneously in trade with Japan: a decline of 40.4 percent and 28.3 percent, respectively, in North Korean exports and imports in 1975 and a decline of 22.5 percent and 22.3 percent in 1981. What happened in 1975 appears to be related to the North Korean debt problem, while developments in 1981 were more or less a part of an overall downward trend in North Korean trade with the world.

TRADE WITH LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

North Korea’s trade with the less-developed countries grew faster than that with the communist countries as a group and the developed countries, with a per annum growth rate of 22.6 and 26.7 percent, respectively, for exports and imports between 1971 and 1982 (see Table 4). As a result, the share of the less-developed countries in imports increased from a mere 2.1 percent in 1970 to about a 10 percent level around the end of the 1970s and early 1980s. The growth in their share of total North Korean exports was marked by wide fluctuations. Starting from 3.5 percent in 1970, the share increased very rapidly to a peak of 33.5 percent in 1977, only to decline sharply and steadily since then to the 10 percent level in 1982. The LDCs were the only group, as mentioned earlier, with which North Korea more or less consistently accumulated a trade surplus, a cumulative total of $936.2 million between 1970 and 1982.

The Middle East as a region generated the largest amount of exports for North Korea during 1970–1982, followed by Southeast Asia. In imports, the ranking was reversed between the two regions, with the Middle East running a very poor second. These rankings mostly reflect the importance of two individual partner countries, namely, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. As a single country, Saudi Arabia was the largest destination of North Korean exports, while Hong Kong was both the largest source of imports and the third largest destination of exports following India, which ranked second. India was also the third largest source of imports. In spite of the importance of Saudi Arabia in exports, North Korean imports from this oil-rich country were almost negligible. The pattern of imports from the

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6 Ibid., pp. 126–127.
Middle East in general indicates that North Korea has not relied on the region as a staple source of her oil. The only exception came in a one-time import of $104.1 million (c.i.f.) from the United Arab Emirates in 1976 and some sporadic imports from Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait typically in small amounts.

In North Korean exports, South Asia as a region increased at the fastest rate (50.1 percent) followed by the Latin America/Caribbean region. Fast growth in exports to South Asia is mainly due to the phenomenal growth of India as a North Korean market. In North Korean imports, the Latin American region grew the fastest followed by Southeast Asia. These differential growth rates have gradually changed the geographic composition of North Korean trade among the LDCs over the years in favor of faster-growing regions. The bulk of imports from Hong Kong are re-exports to North Korea. For example, during 1979, 1980, and 1982, Hong Kong's re-exports to North Korea amounted to an average of 97.1 percent of the former's total exports to the latter. A high percentage of re-exports prevailed throughout the period. In fact, nearly 100 percent of all re-exports from the LDCs go through Hong Kong. Since re-exports from the developed countries are almost nonexistent, this makes Hong Kong the world's principal conduit of re-exports to North Korea.

COMMODITY COMPOSITION OF TRADE

Data on commodity composition from most of North Korea's communist partners are not available. Even when they are, in the limited case of the USSR, they are not organized according to the standard commodity classification system as mentioned earlier. In the case of China, which only recently published its trade values with North Korea going back to 1950, 1982 was the first year for which the government published commodity information according to two-digit SITC. Fortunately, a fairly good data base for commodity composition is available for noncommunist countries in the form of magnetic tapes by the United Nations. Since compilation of the commodity composition of North Korea's overall trade with the world is not possible, examination of its commodity composition of trade with each major group will be attempted separately.

Data officially published by North Korea on its trade composition covering selected years starting from 1953 to the mid-1960s provide some indications of commodity composition trends in its overall trade before the 1970s. North Korea stopped publishing such information after that time. The data pointed to a significant change in the structure of trade since the

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7 Chung, "North Korea's International Trade," p. 79.
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<tr>
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**SOURCE:** Same as for Table 1.

**Notes:** Figures for India for 1981–82 have been extrapolated by using time series analysis. A zero entry denotes either there was no trade that year or trade value was less than $100,000.
Korean War, providing indirect evidence of the progress in North Korean industrialization and import substitution. Between the institution of the Three-Year Plan in 1953 and the middle of the Seven-Year Plan, the predominance of mineral exports gave way (from 81.8 percent of total exports in 1953 to 11.5 percent in 1964) to metals (from 9 percent to 49.9 percent), the largest export class in the mid-sixties. Machinery and equipment continued to be the largest category of imports (34.3 percent to 21.2 percent) though with a declining trend. Fuels and fuel oil had been rapidly gaining in relative composition of imports to assume the second largest import category (from 9.8 percent to 22.1 percent).

Commodity Composition of Trade with Noncommunist Countries

Close examination of the commodity composition of exports and imports based on one-digit SITC provides a broad picture of changes in the pattern of trade during the 1970–1982 period. Looking at the cumulative total of all exports to the noncommunist world during the period, by far the leading SITC group is manufactured goods (see Table 5). More than half (56.4 percent) of the total exports were in this category, made up of basic industrial goods. Manufactured goods were followed by a very poor second and third, foodstuffs (16.7 percent) and crude materials (15.4 percent). Manufactured goods were about evenly allotted to developed and developing countries, and most of the exports to the former went to Japan and the European Community in about equal amounts. The share of this group fluctuated constantly with no discernible upward or downward trend during the period. This effect is also indicated by the fact that the average annual growth of manufactured goods and the total exports between 1971 and 1980 is nearly the same. However, there has been a more definite trend toward a shift in the share between the developed and developing, in favor of the latter.

The foodstuff exports have been growing the fastest among the three largest groups, with a growth rate of 22.1 percent per year between 1971 and 1982. As a result, there has been a definite upward trend in this group's share in total exports. In a peak year (1975), the share reached 33.3 percent. Although until 1980 the share of developing countries had been on the increase, during 1981–82 there was a sudden reversal of dramatic magnitude. The share decreased from 53.8 percent in 1980 to 17.2 and 10.1 percent in 1981 and 1982, respectively. Most of the increase went to Japan, so that the Japanese share of total North Korean foodstuff exports increased from 40.7 percent in 1980 to 71.3 and 86.5 percent in 1981 and 1982. The relative share of crude materials has been on the decline, with a growth rate lower than that of total exports. Although the LDCs' share has been on the rise, the bulk of crude materials exports are still destined to developed countries, particularly to Japan in the early 1980s.
Though still occupying a small percentage of total exports, exports of machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufactures have been growing significantly faster than all other categories (39.5, 28.9, and 23.9 percent per annum, respectively), with the result that their respective share has been on the rising trend. Most of these products are destined for the LDCs.

Reflecting the overall composition of exports discussed earlier, leading North Korean export products have been mostly basic industrial products. According to a ranking based on 1980 exports,® the top four and six out of the top ten leading two-digit exports came from this group. Nonferrous metals have been the single most important export (accounting for 31.4 percent of total exports to the noncommunist world) followed by iron and steel (15.7 percent), textile yarn and fabrics (7.2 percent), and nonmetallic mineral manufactures (6.2 percent). In 1980, these four basic industrial goods together made up 60.1 percent of the total North Korean exports to noncommunist countries. For the 1970-1982 cumulative total, the percentage share of the four, respectively, was 24.5, 12.6, 6.4, and 5.3 percent, with a total group share of 48.6 percent. The shares of the top two have been somewhat on the decline since 1970, while those of the top third and fourth have been gaining in recent years. Others in the top ten list in 1980, starting from the fifth in descending order, were: fish, cereals, crude fertilizers and minerals, manufactures of metal, crude animal and vegetable materials, and rubber manufactures.^

Examining the major export products more closely, according to a five-digit SITC breakdown, we see that eight out of the top ten, thirteen out of the top twenty, sixteen out of the top thirty, and twenty-five out of the top fifty North Korean exports in 1980 were basic industrial goods.® The top ten in descending order (and their relative share) were: unworked or partially worked unrolled silver (15.1 percent); magnesite (3.1 percent), fabrics of synthetic fibers (2.8 percent); plywood (2.1 percent), iron and simple steel blooms (2.0 percent), iron and simple steel heavy plates (1.8 percent); iron and simple steel coils (1.2 percent); embroidery (0.8 percent); vegetables in temporary preservatives (0.7 percent); and aluminum tubes, pipes, and hollow bars (0.6 percent). These ten together accounted for 30.0 percent of total exports to the noncommunist countries. The top twenty (thirty) exports contributed 34.1 percent (36.0 percent) of the total in 1980.11

® Based on U. N. trade data magnetic tapes.
® Based on U. N. trade data magnetic tapes.
11For 1979 ranking of the top twenty-five five-digit exports, see Joint Committee, East-West Trade, p. 200.
### Table 5

**COMMODITY COMPOSITION OF NORTH KOREA’S EXPORTS TO NONCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES, 1970-1982**

(U.S. $1,000)

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<td>Total Exports (cif)</td>
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<td>84,267</td>
<td>282,213</td>
<td>320,290</td>
<td>398,232</td>
<td>708,214</td>
<td>283,711</td>
<td>14,157,258</td>
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<td>8,213</td>
<td>10,332</td>
<td>12,332</td>
<td>16,749</td>
<td>15,971</td>
<td>58,383</td>
<td>20.61</td>
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<td>3,243</td>
<td>5,332</td>
<td>6,759</td>
<td>9,441</td>
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<td>81,426</td>
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<td>938</td>
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<td>8,906</td>
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<td>4,143</td>
<td>2,021</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>LDC</td>
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<td>81,431</td>
<td>32,411</td>
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<td>81,431</td>
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<td>19,531</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>23,962</td>
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</table>

**SOURCE:** U.N. trade data magnetic tapes.

**Note:** Discrepancies between figures for total exports in this table and those in other tables (Tables 1 and 3) are because those in this table are unadjusted returns (imports c.i.f.) of partners and cover a slightly smaller number of countries.
North Korea’s imports from noncommunist countries (see Table 6) are more dispersed among the different categories than its exports. For the 1970-1982 period taken as a whole, machinery and transport equipment have been the largest category (38.0 percent of total imports) followed by manufactured goods (21.7 percent), foodstuffs (14.5 percent), chemicals (10.3 percent), and crude materials (7.4 percent). Understandably, most imports from the top four categories originate in developed countries, whereas crude materials, on the other hand, come from the LDCs. In the case of machinery and transport equipment, nearly 100 percent of imports are from developed countries, followed by manufactured products and chemicals (92.0 and 89.3 percent, respectively).

Although it is the largest category, imports of machinery and transport equipment have lagged behind the pace of total imports and, consequently, their share has been gradually on the slide. Crude material imports have also been on the downward trend, while a rising trend is observed for manufactured products and chemicals. Though relatively unimportant, imports of mineral fuels have been on the rise. The relative share of the LDCs as a source of North Korean imports in foodstuffs and chemicals has been on the rise, while the reverse occurred in crude materials and mineral fuels. As with North Korean exports, fluctuations in imports, both in absolute and relative terms, were the results of disruptions centered around the mid-seventies. As a case in point, the imports of machinery and equipment (all from developed countries) increased from $56.4 million (f.o.b.) in 1973 to $284.8 and $305.3 million, respectively, in 1974 and 1975. At the peak year of 1975, the share of this category in total North Korean imports from the noncommunist world reached a 62.8 percent mark, only to rollercoast down to 20.3 percent in 1978. In the early eighties, about one-third of imports were in this group.

Three of the top four two-digit North Korean imports in the 1980 ranking were machinery and transport equipment, with nonelectric machinery, the largest import, contributing to 17.2 percent of total imports from the noncommunist countries in that year. For the cumulative 1970-1982 total, the share was 22.5 percent. The share in the top imports started with 31.5 percent in 1975, increased to 46.8 percent in 1975, and began to decrease so that in 1982 it was 14.2 percent. Machinery imports were followed, in descending order, by iron and steel (7.8 percent); electric machinery (7.4 percent); transport equipment (7.4 percent); cereals (7.3 percent); textile fibers (5.8 percent); chemical materials and products (4.5 percent); textile yarn and fabrics (4.2 percent); paper and paper board (4.1 percent); and nonferrous metals (4.0 percent). These top ten two-digit items accounted for 69.6 percent of total imports from the noncommunist world.

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12 Based on U. N. trade data magnetic tapes.
in 1980. The comparable figure for the 1970–1982 total was 73.5 percent. As seen from the top ten list, imports of basic industrial goods were the second most important category after the machinery group.\textsuperscript{13}

As in two-digit SITC, the leading five-digit imports are dominated by products from the machinery and basic industrial goods categories. Four out of the top ten, seven out of the top twenty, sixteen out of the top thirty, twenty-two out of the top fifty, and twenty-five out of the top fifty-five imports in 1980 were machinery and transport equipment.\textsuperscript{14} The comparable figures for imports of basic industrial goods were three, eight, fourteen, nineteen, and twenty. The top ten five-digit imports in 1981 (and their relative share of total imports) were, in descending order, discontinuous synthetic fibers (3.1 percent); excavating, leveling, and boring machinery (1.8 percent); apparatus for treating materials with heat or cold (1.4 percent); electric measuring and controlling instruments (1.3 percent); polyacids and derivatives (1.0 percent); synthetic organic dyestuffs and natural indigo (0.8 percent); lifting and loading machinery (0.8 percent); iron or steel plates (heavy) of alloy steel (0.7 percent); and wire cables of iron or steel (0.7 percent).\textsuperscript{15} In 1980, the share of the top ten, the top twenty, and the top thirty imports were, respectively, 12.7, 17.8, and 21.3 percent in contrast to the comparable percentages in exports of 30.0, 34.1, and 36.0 percent. This is another indication of a wider dispersion of imports than exports among different commodities. For the cumulative total imports during 1970–1982, the top thirty imports accounted for 17.6 percent of North Korean imports from noncommunist countries.

In trade with Japan, the largest partner in the noncommunist world, North Korea uses Japan mostly as a source for procuring much-needed advanced machinery and equipment and as a market for metal, animal, and mineral products. In 1983, 22.7 percent of North Korean imports from Japan were machinery, followed by metals and their products (15.7 percent), transport equipment (13.0 percent), electrical machinery (9.8 percent), and chemical products (8.4 percent). North Korean exports to Japan were more concentrated than imports, with metals and metal products accounting for 28.2 percent of the total, followed by animal products (26.3 percent), mineral products (14.4 percent), and vegetable products (13.1 percent).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} For 1979 ranking of the top ten two-digit imports, see Joint Committee, \textit{East-West Trade}, p. 196.

\textsuperscript{14} Based on U. N. trade data magnetic tapes.

\textsuperscript{15} For 1979 ranking of the top twenty-five five-digit imports, see Joint Committee, \textit{East-West Trade}, p. 196.

\textsuperscript{16} JETRO, [North Korea's Economy], pp. 105–115.
**Table 6**

**COMMODITY COMPOSITION OF NORTH KOREA'S IMPORTS FROM NONCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES, 1970-1982**

(U. S. $1,000)

<table>
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<td>15.0%</td>
<td>148,579</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
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<td>0.31%</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
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<td>63.2%</td>
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<td>1,589</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>4,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>1,589</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>4,664</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crude materials</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>1,589</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>4,664</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
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<td>17.8%</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>4,503</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
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<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>79.6%</td>
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<td>71.5%</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
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<td>5,281</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
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<td>0.31%</td>
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<td>0.14%</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
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<td>8.4%</td>
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<td>86.3%</td>
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<td>7,633</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>10,791</td>
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<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4,664</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>18,486</td>
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**Notes:**
- The table provides a breakdown of North Korea's imports from noncommunist countries from 1970 to 1982, categorized by commodity groups.
- The data includes the value of imports in U.S. dollars, with a breakdown by year and site of origin.
- The table also includes data on re-exports to North Korea.

**References:**
- The table data refers to specific commodity categories such as Foodstuffs, Crude Materials, Mineral Fuels, and Chemicals, each with different subcategories under developed and LDC countries.
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------
| Manufactured goods            |      |      |      |      |      
| Developed countries           | 7,107| 6,692| 6,219| 362  | 415  
| LDC                           | 1,159| 1,032| 1,032| 777  | 808  
| EC                            | 5,948| 5,660| 5,187| 285  | 307  
| machinery and transport equip. |      |      |      |      |      
| Developed countries           | 26,721| 25,027| 25,027| 10,644| 10,394 
| LDC                           | 4,131| 4,092| 4,092| 2,262| 2,134 
| EC                            | 22,590| 20,935| 20,935| 8,382| 8,208 
| Miscellaneous manufactures    |      |      |      |      |      
| Developed countries           | 28,481| 25,147| 25,147| 12,044| 11,800 
| LDC                           | 4,512| 4,401| 4,401| 2,443| 2,402 
| EC                            | 22,969| 20,746| 20,746| 9,601| 9,394 
| Other                         |      |      |      |      |      
| Developed countries           | 1,023| 785  | 785  | 373  | 401  
| LDC                           | 177  | 177  | 177  | 91   | 91   
| EC                            | 846  | 846  | 846  | 282  | 282  

**SOURCE:** U.N. trade data magnetic tapes.

**Note:** Discrepancies between figures for total imports in this table and those in other tables (Tables 1 and 3) are because those in this table are unadjusted returns (exports f.o.b.) of partners and cover a slightly smaller number of countries.
Commodity Composition with Communist Countries

In trading with its largest trade partner, North Korean exports have been primarily concentrated in a few commodities, although their ranking has fluctuated from year to year. The top six exports and their shares in the total North Korean exports to the USSR in 1982 (and in 1981), in descending order, were rolled steel, 22.6 percent (17.3 percent); magnesia clinker, 19.8 percent (26.2 percent); clothing, 13.3 percent (7.7 percent); rice, 11.3 percent (17.0 percent); machinery and transport equipment, 7.3 percent (2.5 percent); and tungsten, 2.5 percent (3.7 percent). These six top exports generated 76.8 percent (75.3 percent) of total exports.

There appears to be a greater concentration of North Korean imports from the USSR than exports. The top five imports in 1982 (1981) contributed 86.3 percent (88.8 percent) of total imports. The shares of the top five in 1982 (1981) were: petroleum and petroleum products, 31.8 percent (24.3 percent); machinery and transport equipment, 23.5 percent (30.4 percent); wheat, 12.1 percent (15.2 percent); power generating machinery and equipment, 11.8 percent (12.1 percent); and solid fuel, 7.1 percent (6.8 percent).

As far as North Korea–China trade is concerned, 1982 is the only year for which a two-digit SITC information is available for the entire year at the time of this writing. According to the data there is a heavy concentration in a few products in both exports and imports. A whopping 57.5 percent of North Korean imports from China in 1982 were petroleum and petroleum products, followed by 29.5 percent in coal, coke, and briquettes. About one-third (31.3 percent) of North Korean exports were in nonmetallic mineral manufactures followed by coal, coke, and briquettes (20.1 percent) and metalliferrous and metal scrap (14.2 percent). Explanation for a two-way traffic in solid fuel (coal, coke, and briquettes) must be that North Korea is exchanging her relatively abundant anthracite coal for the coking coal that she is lacking.

FOREIGN TRADE AND THE NORTH KOREAN ECONOMY

In a command economy such as North Korea's, the kinds and magnitude of imports are mapped out to meet the requirements of domestic developmental plans. Performance in exports, chief means by which imports are financed, are affected by the ability of the domestic economy to produce and market salable products abroad. The level of imports, in turn, partially

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17 Based on *Vneshnjaja Torgovlia SSSR: Statisticheski j Sbornik* [Foreign Trade of the USSR: A Statistical Review], Moscow, various issues.

determines the pace of domestic economic development and its export capabilities. The trends and performance of North Korean foreign trade, as discussed earlier, offer certain indirect evidence that leads us to make some generalizations about the state of the North Korean economy.

To begin with, uneven growth in foreign trade since the seventies and the downward trend in 1981 and 1983 appear to be associated with a general slowdown in the North Korean economy. After the chaos of the mid-seventies and during the beginning of the current economic plan, the North Korean economy seemed to have adjusted to a decent growth rate, at least in industrial output. This was the time when both exports and imports recovered from reverses suffered in the mid-seventies. It is no coincidence that North Korea has not so far made public the growth rate in total industrial output (Gross Value of Industrial Output) for 1981 and 1983, which is quite unusual even for supersecretive North Korea. A high growth rate of 16.8 percent was made public for 1982, the same year in which foreign trade recovered from the decline of the previous year. It is significant that the New Year addresses by Kim II Sung for 1983 and 1984 lack specific references to economic achievements other than vague generalities and reiteration of plan targets; a certain somberness can be detected in his 1984 address. This is also true of annual state budget reports made by the finance minister in recent years. Withdrawing information has been one of North Korea’s main means of concealing unfavorable developments. A positive correlation between the tempo of economic development and the quantity of published economic data seems to apply here. The North Korean economy appears to be in a very difficult position, which was partly caused by its trade and debt problems. In 1983, North Korea’s exports to its three largest partners all declined, although imports from Japan increased and imports from China appear to be holding the 1982 level.

Looking at overall trends in trade, it is not very difficult to understand why North Korea allowed two years to elapse between the end of the Six-Year Plan and the unveiling of the Second Seven-Year Plan. As seen already, in an all-out offensive in importing advanced Western machinery and equipment from Japan and the Western European countries, North Korean imports began to soar. The annual growth rate in total imports from the world increased by 47.5, 17.8, 31.3, and 42.9 percent, respectively, in 1971, 1972, 1973, and 1974, so that in 1974 her imports were 3.26-fold those of 1970. Then, just as suddenly, imports began to decline starting in 1975. Only by 1979 was the level attained in the peak year of 1974 regained. North Korean total exports also increased rapidly in the early seventies until 1974, when the rate of growth was 41.9 percent in one year. The rate of increase slowed to 16.1 percent in 1975, and then, in the following year, exports declined by 29.2 percent, only to recover in 1977. Exports declined in both 1981 and 1983. Judging from the fact that the phenomenal increase
in imports began at the start of the Six-Year Plan, North Korea must have counted on imports to fulfill the plan targets. Then when, because of the mounting debt problem, planned imports stopped flowing in and actually declined drastically, the economy must have gone into severe disarray. This must have caused great havoc among economic planners. Plans had to be revised and input-output relationships reexamined. It is no wonder that North Korea needed this period for readjusting and revising plans based on more realistic levels of import flows. Although 1977 was officially designated as a buffer year, North Korea needed at least two years between 1976 and 1977 for this purpose. The year 1976 was particularly a bad year: both exports and imports declined. One can surmise the implications for 1981 when the same thing happened again. Disappointing export performance in the early 1980s must have been partially caused by a slowdown in importing the needed advanced Western capital goods to get industrialization going. Slow export growth, in turn, delays solving the debt problem, thus constraining imports further. The vicious cycle could not be broken.

North Korea's international debt problem seems to be worsening in the early 1980s because of poor performance in trade, particularly in exports. Her trade balance, after improving somewhat from the import frenzy of the mid-seventies, began to reverse again. North Korea showed a negative trade balance in 1982 even with the LDCs with which, in a typical year, she has been accumulating a trade surplus. North Korea's hard currency debt was roughly estimated to be about $2 billion by the end of 1980. This coincides with the accumulated total trade deficit with developed countries of $2,015.4 million between 1970 and 1980 (see Table 1). Because of the increasing unfavorable balance during 1981-82, the cumulative deficit with developed countries stood at about $2.6 billion at the end of 1982. In an effort to pay back part of the debt, North Korea exported gold bullion to the West. It was estimated that during the 1974-1979 period these sales amounted to $134 million. This is equivalent to 8.7 percent of the North Korean trade deficit with developed countries between 1974 and 1979.

As the overall pattern of trade balance among different regions of the world indicates, North Korea has been more successful in exporting to the less-developed countries than to developed countries. This has a great deal to do with the stage and strategy of domestic economic development. First of all, North Korea has decided to import Western capital, which raised the level of her imports from the developed countries phenomenally. In contrast, her ability to pay for imports by exports appears to be limited as far as the developed countries are concerned. More than half of North Korean

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20 Ibid., p. 186.
exports in basic industrial goods during 1970–1982 (the largest export category), nearly 90 percent of exports in machinery and transport equipment, and about three-fourths of exports in miscellaneous manufactures were destined to the LDCs. In all three categories, the share of LDCs has been on the rise over the years. While North Korean success in making inroads into the Third World market seems to be indicated here, this has partly to do with the quality and state of technology embodied in its export products. Given North Korea’s semiindustrial stage of development, its industrial products tend to meet the needs of countries who are in earlier stages of development. Obviously, North Korea would have more difficulty selling industrial products in the more technically sophisticated markets of the developed countries.

The commodity composition of North Korean trade during 1970–1982 reveals no fundamental structural change and definitive trends other than short-term disruptions in the mid-seventies. This is in sharp contrast to what happened in the fifties and sixties. This seems to indicate indirectly that the Six-Year Plan and the Second Seven-Year Plan have so far brought no real progress in industrialization. The North Korean economy does not seem to have come out of the semiindustrial stage. Exports of basic industrial goods still dominate the export scene, and their share has more or less remained at the same level. If anything, the share of foodstuffs has increased over the period. To be sure, the share of machinery and equipment has been on the rise, but their product quality does not seem to be very high, judging from the fact that most of them end up in the Third World. Dependence on Western manufactured goods, chemicals, and machinery and equipment remains very high, with an increasing share in the latter two categories in the total imports from noncommunist countries.

Wide fluctuations during the mid-seventies and the absolute and relative decline during the Second Seven-Year Plan in imports of Western machinery and equipment do not bode well for successful completion of the plan by the end of 1984.

Past trade performance is a good indication of the import needs of the North Korean economy for some years to come. First and foremost are machinery and transport equipment. The most important commodities in this category are metal-working machinery, trucks, excavating machinery, and industrial heating and cooling equipment. In the next most important category, manufacturing products, such items as paperboard, iron and steel tubing, and miscellaneous metal manufactures lead the list. In chemical imports, pesticides, chemical elements and compounds, and plastics dominate. Rubber and synthetic fibers are important crude materials imports. In the foodstuffs category, wheat, sugar, and soybean oil are principal items. North Korea depends on China and the USSR for petroleum and petroleum products. In the mineral fuels category, North Korea imports coking coal, which she completely lacks.
These imports have been partially financed through exports of basic industrial products (nonferrous metals, textile yarn and fabrics, iron and simple steel products, synthetic fibers, plywood, aluminum tubes and pipes), foodstuffs (rice, marine products, vegetables, eggs, and so on), crude materials (magnesite, zinc ores and concentrates, natural steatite, natural graphite), and mineral fuels (mainly anthracite coal).

**IMPLICATIONS ON FOREIGN TRADE POLICY**

What emerges from an examination of North Korea's foreign trade performance and structural change is an overwhelming impression of a trade policy that is highly pragmatic, motivated by more or less the basic utility of comparative advantage. Except for its long-standing heavy reliance on communist partners, North Korea's trade policy has been more flexible than implied by the self-reliance dogma.

When the leadership and economic planners decided, at the inception of the Six-Year Plan and following on the heels of the disappointing conclusion of the Seven-Year Plan, on a strategy of massive infusion of advanced Western capital and technology, this was carried out with little fanfare or public pronouncements. Only when this new strategy backfired in the form of a highly publicized foreign debt crisis was the new trade approach fully appreciated, and only in recent years has the importance of expansion in foreign trade begun to be publicly emphasized. This seems to underscore the priority the leadership assigns to foreign trade as a means of attaining economic goals. In his 1979 New Year's address, Kim Il Sung emphasized the need for rapid expansion in trade to meet the requirements of an expanding economy. Kim also publicly alluded to some of North Korea's serious problems in exporting products, pointing to the importance of upholding what he called the credit-first policy, priority production of export products in every sector of the economy, raising the product quality, and a strict meeting of delivery dates. He also stressed expansion of harbor facilities and cargo vessels in this connection.

The policy of officially promoting foreign trade continued. In Kim's 1980 New Year's address, he again stressed the need to produce more cargo vessels, develop river transportation, renovate and expand harbor facilities, and find new export potentials as a means to diversify and expand

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21 For a full text of Kim Il Sung's 1979 New Year address, see JETRO, *Kita chosen keizaino genjo* [Current Condition of the North Korean Economy] (Tokyo, March 1979), pp. 136-144.

trade. For the first time in a decade, Kim officially announced that North Korean foreign trade (two-way turnover) increased by 30 percent in 1979 over the previous year. (Incidentally, this comes very close to the author's estimate of 29.0 percent increase for the year.) Kim's exhortation did not bring about the desired effect. In 1980, North Korean exports increased by only 4.8 percent, while imports increased by 22.9 percent. In the following year, both exports and imports declined by 30.1 percent and 15.3 percent, respectively. Unlike earlier addresses, Kim's New Year messages for 1983 and 1984 do not even mention trade, which is understandable in view of poor performance in recent years.

Another evidence of North Korean flexibility is her readiness to receive $8.85 million in technical assistance from UNDP (United Nations Development Plan), as agreed in November 1979. It is understood that the fund would be used to develop harbors, railroads, and the electronic industry. Only a short time ago it would have been unthinkable for North Korea to receive assistance from the international body in whose name troops were sent against it during the Korean War. Coming in the aftermath of the debt problem and slowdown in the inflow of Western capital goods, this unusual step further underscored the country's dire need for Western technical assistance and a pragmatic approach in dealing with the outside world, at least in the economic arena.

Perhaps the most important North Korean official statement on foreign economic policy is the January 26, 1984, decision of the Supreme People's Assembly signed by Kim Il Sung, entitled "For Strengthening South–South Cooperation and External Economic Work and Further Developing Foreign Trade." It is an unusual document, first of all, in the sense that a policy statement of this nature came from the Supreme People's Assembly. Second, its contents are unusual. The whole document is dedicated to the issue of foreign trade. It starts from the premise that "only through developing foreign trade extensively is it possible to stimulate the economic construction of the country and raise the people's standards of living." It then matter-of-factly states that the country, while increasing the exports of heavy industrial products, actively expanded exports of light industry and agricultural products and imported raw materials and fuel in short supply in the country as well as urgently needed plant facilities.

As a means of expanding external economic contacts, the document stresses the need to develop economic relations with the developing world (South–South cooperation). Countries of Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, are singled out for close cooperation because of their geographical proximity. In its trade with communist countries, North Korea is urged to expand

23 JETRO, [North Korea's Economy], pp. 144-154.
exports of machinery and other products of heavy industry and light industrial products while expanding imports of needed raw materials, fuel, and certain plant facilities, so that in the next five to six years trade value with these countries will be ten times the present level. What is more significant is the document's statement that "we must actively develop economic and technical cooperation and trade with capitalist countries that respect the sovereignty of our country." Economic and technical cooperation with European countries that maintain diplomatic relations with North Korea received special attention in this connection. The document further stresses the need to expand economic relations with capitalist countries with no diplomatic ties. This is quite a switch from the official pronouncements during the Sixth Party Congress of October 1980 that said very little on foreign trade policy and did not mention anything about the need to maintain and expand economic and technical cooperation with Western advanced countries, particularly Western Europe.24

The document also openly details various bottlenecks in export development that must be solved to achieve its goals. The fact that most of these problems are the same ones that Kim Il Sung mentioned in his 1979 New Year's address shows that they must be serious and persistent. The credit-first policy is mentioned again, as are the need to keep delivery dates, raise product quality, expand transportation facilities, and so on. This document stresses thoroughly observing the agreements on economic and technical cooperation with other countries as well as the need to abide strictly by the technical specifications and contract conditions.

In view of North Korea's relative success with the LDCs in terms of a faster rate of trade growth with this group, as well as marketing its manufacturing products while consistently accumulating trade surplus, the policy of expansion in LDCs is no new policy; it simply justifies what North Korea has been doing for a decade. The document, however, is significant in the sense that North Korea openly and explicitly recognizes the export potential of the Third World for her industrial products. The document called attention to the fact that more than half the world's population and resources are to be found in the developing world. A huge, untapped market is apparent to North Korea. This may also be an indirect admission of North Korea's pessimism in expanding exports to developed countries while recognizing the continued need for importing their advanced machinery and plants.

Generally, the document, though paying lip service to the virtues of a self-reliant economy, unfolds a very pragmatic foreign economic policy based on North Korea's own needs. It seems to say, in essence, that North

Korea is ready to deal with any country in the world in order to earn foreign exchange and to import needed resources and capital goods for domestic economic development.

Since then, North Korea made a surprising policy shift by proclaiming a joint venture law on September 8, 1984. In a way this was the next logical step from the new economic policy of January 1984, in which reference was made for the need to expand economic cooperation and technical exchange as well as trade. Perhaps, in terms of its future impact and what it symbolizes, this new move may be the latest and most affirmative indicator of North Korea's slow-but-steady progression to modernize its economy by turning to the West and by opening up its doors, however slightly. Judging from its contents, the joint venture law appears to be modeled after a similar Chinese law. The law "encourages joint venture between its companies and enterprises with foreign companies, enterprises, and individuals" and is allowed in many fields, including industry, construction, transportation, science and technology, and tourism. It has been reported that North Korea already operates a joint shipping company with Poland and recently concluded an agreement with a French company to build a fifty-story hotel in Pyongyang for joint management. At this time a number of detailed and specific laws and regulations related to the practical application of the joint venture law are being prepared and will be unveiled soon.

Lately some encouraging moves have recurred, involving both Pyongyang and Seoul, that appear to have raised the probability of some kind of inter-Korean economic interchange. Following Pyongyang's rejection of Seoul's August 20, 1984 proposal for inter-Korean economic cooperation, the North Korean Red Cross expressed the North's willingness to provide relief goods for the South's flood victims on September 8, 1984. With the more surprising acceptance of the offer by the South, relief materials, made up of rice, clothing, cement, and medicine were delivered at the end of the month. Subsequently, on October 16, 1984, North Korea agreed to the South's proposal, made on October 12, for an inter-Korean economic conference to discuss trade and economic cooperation. Though the talk, begun on November 15 at Panmunjom, has been interrupted due to the incident involving a Soviet defector escaping across Panmunjom, future meetings have been scheduled at the time of this writing to continue the dialogue.

The real objective behind North Korea's willingness to engage in bilateral economic talks with the South can only be guessed at. It is possible that North Korea's motive here is to soften its primary targets, Japan and the United States. Because of the difficulty of repaying existing debts as

25 For the full text of the law, see FBIS, Daily Report, September 12, 1984, D1-3.

26 The People's Korea, Tokyo, November 3, 1984.
well as of paying for future imports of much needed capital goods, Pyongyang hopes that both, particularly Japan, will enter into economic relations on a much more expanded scale through some kind of government grants.

There are reasons to believe that the Chinese influence has been a significant factor in determining the shape of recent North Korean pragmatism in foreign economic policy. There is no doubt that the North Korean leadership have been keenly aware of the recent Chinese campaign of Four Modernizations and this country's experience with opening doors to Western capital and technology, relaxation in central planning, and creation of special economic zones. When Kim Il Sung visited China in September 1982, he was personally taken by Deng Xiaoping for a visit to Sichuan Province, where Premier Zhao Ziyang made his mark by introducing enterprise autonomy. In February 1984, Kim Yong-nam, vice premier and minister of foreign affairs, toured the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in Guangdong Province. Upon his return to Beijing, Kim, who had also been on Kim Il Sung's Sichuan visit, told Zhao that he was much encouraged by China's economic progress. It was reported that Zhao also informed his host about the recent Chinese economic accomplishments. Further, in his meeting with Kim Il Sung in May 1984, Hu Yaobang emphasized the continuation of China's open-door economic policy. In turn, Kim applauded China's "new victory" in economic modernization. The Chinese also favorably noted North Korea's January 1984 Supreme People's Assembly policy to expand trade.27

PROSPECTS

Based on past performance and policy directions in North Korean external economic relations, domestic economic developments, and planning needs, some observations might be attempted regarding North Korea's prospects for future trade. First of all, an immediate turnabout in sluggish exports seems to be difficult to attain in the near future. Basic bottlenecks (product quality, packaging, meeting delivery dates, harbor and transportation facilities, and so on) are yet to be overcome and will need more time and investment of resources. Disappointing export growth will further strain North Korea's debt problem and its ability to import advanced Western capital goods, which, in turn, will constrain domestic economic development. In the early 1980s, North Korean imports from the developed countries remained at a high level while exports to the group were on a declining trend, obviously in an effort to finish the current economic plan successfully by its target year of 1984. Although this deficit trade with developed countries is partially alleviated by surplus with less-developed countries, it is not

27See Chae-Jin Lee's chapter in this volume.
expected to go on, given the mounting import surplus on top of the existing debt problem.

Judging from the way North Korea is handling the debt repayment with Japan, its largest creditor, there has been no fundamental solution to the debt problem since the crisis of 1976. This is easily understandable if one looks at the statistics on North Korea's ever-increasing trade deficit. As a way to rectify the debt situation, in 1979 North Korea succeeded in concluding an agreement with Japan to repay past debts over ten years starting in 1980. In 1983, however, North Korea, finding itself again unable to make the semiannual payment, approached Japan for postponement of payment on the principal. A new agreement was signed in April 1983 whereby North Korea will delay payment of the principal, originally scheduled semiannually between December 1982 and December 1985, until June 1986. At that time, the delayed principal will be added to the original payment schedule, which ends with the last payment by December 1989. North Korea agreed to make interest payment as soon as the agreement was signed.28

It is possible that the dominance of the three major partners may change somewhat in favor of Western Europe and certain less developed countries, particularly those in South and Southeast Asia. A phenomenal growth in recent years of trade with India, for instance, has already been pointed out. North Korea is expected to launch a major offensive in expanding the markets for exports in less-developed countries where it had considerable success in the past in earning much needed foreign exchange.

Whether the new policy of January 1984 and the joint venture law of September 1984 constitute a prelude to a fundamental shift in the overall North Korean development strategy to open the economy to attract Western capital and technology is not certain. China furnishes an example in this regard. Certainly the economy is in serious need of new direction and an infusion of new and advanced technology. It is perhaps significant that, at the conclusion of the three-day Supreme People's Assembly that passed the decision on foreign trade, First Deputy Premier Kang Sung-sang, an economic expert, was elevated to the premiership. A major opening up of the economy, however, requires equally fundamental political change. Given the uncertainties and political instability associated with the succession issue, the leadership must be cautious and wonder whether the present is an appropriate moment to bring about sweeping changes and emulate China in her modernization efforts, even if North Korea genuinely desires to do so. On the other hand, it is possible that a record of economic success through a bold new direction may be considered a sure way to consolidate Kim Jong Il's shaky new power. Perhaps the new trade policy and a

willingness to enter into joint ventures represent Kim Jong II’s gamble in this regard.

Whatever the implications of the new foreign economic policy, one thing appears certain. The North Korean economy is at a crossroads, faced with difficult problems internally and externally. The economy needs a lift of major proportions in order to pull it out of the doldrums in which it finds itself. Part of the solution lies in the relaxation of its rigid central planning system. With or without reform in its internal economic system, the economy needs modernizing. To achieve this goal, as the leadership well realizes, massive introduction of Western capital and technology, including direct investment, is the fastest route—as the South Korean example clearly demonstrates.
The Evolution of North-South Korean Relations

Chong-Sik Lee

North-South Korean relations remain frozen, and high tension continues to prevail. The two large armies continue to confront each other, and both sides have been striving to improve the quality of their armaments. The prospect of unification remains as remote as ever, and there is ample reason to be pessimistic about the prospect of North-South reconciliation. One could argue, therefore, that North-South relations have not changed much since the 1950s.

One could argue, on the other hand, that the relationship between the two states on the Korean peninsula today is markedly different from what it was in the 1950s. The two states that had fought a bitter war between 1950 and 1953 and had regularly called each other puppets of foreign powers engaged in bilateral talks between 1971 and 1973, and in 1980 even called each other by their official designations, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). In 1984, the South Korean side accepted relief goods offered by the northern side for flood victims and began another round of talks. There is a good prospect that the two regimes will resume talks in 1985 and may even hold a summit conference. In short, the relationship between North and South Korea has evolved considerably during the last three decades.

Proper understanding of North-South Korean relations, therefore, requires an analysis of the forces that prolong hostility and tension on one hand and the factors that contribute to change on the other.

THE FACTORS THAT PROLONG TENSION

The factors that perpetuate mutual hostility and resulting high tension are not difficult to find. Ideological and power confrontations between the Soviet Union and the United States played a major role in inter-Korean
relations until the early 1960s, and the effect is still felt today. But hostility is more deeply ingrained in the native soil. The historical experience since 1945 has produced deep animosity along with mutual fear and suspicion. Ideological and systemic differences also continue to feed this fear and suspicion.

The Historical Experience

Animosity between North and South Korea, born of the historical experience since 1945, goes beyond the realm of ideology. The issues that divided the left- and right-wing groups in Korea since liberation touched on the deepest emotions of Koreans, hence opponents were seen not merely as holders of contrasting or misguided views but simply as traitors.

The left-right division on the trusteeship issue in January 1946 was probably the most momentous in this connection. For the nationalist leaders and others who had longed for Korean independence throughout their lives, communist support of international trusteeship over Korea, as specified by the foreign ministers of four major powers at Moscow in December 1945, was simply unforgivable, and naturally a deep chasm developed between the left and the right. The Korean Communist Party’s complete turnaround on the issue on January 3 of that year buttressed the argument that the communists were puppets of a foreign power. The KCP in South Korea had vehemently opposed trusteeship until January 2, 1946. The communists, on the contrary, had accused their enemies as agents of American imperialism. When the two separate republics were established in 1948, neither side would give the benefit of doubt to those who headed the rival regime. The term “puppet” was used indiscriminately by both sides, fortified by the conviction of each that theirs was the only legitimate government.

Thus not ideology alone was at stake but a claim to legitimacy on the basis of nationalism, one of the most potent forces in the postliberation Korea. Of course, the war between 1950 and 1953 capped it all as each side slaughtered its opponents with equanimity. Direct involvement of China and the United States in the war only intensified each side’s claim that the opponent was the puppet of a foreign master or masters. The tragedy is that each generation of leaders in North and South Korea piled on layer after layer of emotional hatred until it became almost impossible to dislodge.

Threat Perception

Another factor contributing to continued hostility has been mutual fear and suspicion. The war not only intensified the hatred between the two states, but bred a deep fear among the South Korean populace of a renewed attack from the north. Denials from North Korean leaders notwithstanding, most South Koreans firmly believe that North Korean forces launched the war in June 1950, and they fear the possibility of a similar further attack. North Korean leaders’ persistent exhortations for a socialist
revolution have reinforced the Seoul government’s repeated warning that the regime in Pyongyang remains on the warpath.

South Korea is not the only side that perceives threat. The DPRK clearly derives no comfort from military modernization efforts in South Korea or the annual “Team Spirit” military exercises conducted by South Korean and U.S. forces. The DPRK’s denunciation of “U.S. Imperialists’ Asia Strategy and the Policy of Turning South Korea into a Nuclear Base” could be dismissed as nothing more than a political rhetoric, just as its incessant denunciation of a U.S.-Japan-South Korean military alliance, but they could also be taken as a North Korean expression of perceived threat from the south. The intensified military buildup after 1962 that necessitated a three-year extension of the first Seven-Year Plan (1961–1967) cannot be explained unless one takes into account North Korea’s fear of South Korean attack.

Only military experts with detailed knowledge of North Korean military equipment and deployment patterns could accurately assess the purpose of its massive military buildup in recent years, but unless we conclude that North Korean military strategy is primarily designed for offensive purposes, we must assume that much of it has evolved out of fear of South Korean attack. Suspicion and fear, of course, are exacerbated as each side acquires more and better armaments. Unless and until both sides are able to come to terms on limiting and reducing armaments, suspicion and fear will not be abated.

Ideology and Systemic Differences

Mutual fear and suspicion are not only a function of historical experience and armed confrontation, but of ideological and systemic differences as well. The DPRK, as is well known, is a monolithic state guided by the thoughts of its president; pluralism is rejected as a decadent legacy of the past. Its constitution states that the DPRK is a “revolutionary state” (Article 3) based on the principle of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” (Article 10). North Korea is a state in which public manifestation of devotion to the leader and his family are boundless. Its leadership is extremely self-righteous, and the Party’s control over the society and its economy is absolute. Article 5 of the constitution sums up North Korean leaders’ central concerns and aims: “The DPRK strives to achieve the complete victory of socialism in the northern half, drive out foreign forces on a national scale, reunify the country peacefully on a democratic basis and attain complete national independence.” In short, North Korean leaders wish to attain “socialist victory,” drive out U.S. forces, and unify the country.

While it is difficult to gauge South Korean public opinion, it is not far-fetched to believe that a vast majority of South Korean adults would find the North Korean political system inimical to their interests even though a substantial portion may find the present political system in their
own territory unacceptable. It is not the prospect of destruction alone that leads them to fear another internecine war; it is the prospect of living under a communist regime that is perceived as unpalatable. The vast majority of South Koreans believes that, given a chance, North Korea would attempt to impose its system on South Korea either through peaceful means or through violence.

To the North Koreans who have internalized the goals set forth by their leader, the South Korean system would be equally repulsive. On November 16, 1983, President Kim II Sung of the DPRK characterized the South Korean political system as follows:

South Korea is now under the rule of military fascism which is unprecedented in brutality. . . . The South Korean rulers are a band of military fascists who have massacred a large number of fellow countrymen in coldblood and stamped out the slightest trace of democracy.1

Given such a statement, it is only natural for Kim’s followers to be suspicious of President Chun Doo Hwan’s sanity and motives. The president had directed similar statements against various previous South Korean regimes on numerous occasions.

**FACTORS PRECIPITATING CHANGE**

These factors do not augur well for improved inter-Korean relations, let alone improved ties. How, then, do we explain the negotiations between North and South Korea between 1971 and 1973, and the subsequent events mentioned earlier?

**1971–1973 Bilateral Talks**

Broadly speaking, three factors precipitated the opening of the talks in 1971. The first was the momentous change in international environment. The other was the recognition of the rival regime’s autonomous power to affect the course of events. The third was each side’s needs and strategy.

*The International Environment*

Even though Soviet Premier Khrushchev’s enunciation of the policy of peaceful coexistence in 1956 failed to affect interstate relations on the Korean peninsula, the impact of the Sino-American and Soviet-American détentes after 1971 proved too formidable for either Korean regime to ignore. Subsequent developments proved the atmosphere of the early 1970s to be ephemeral, but many believed at that time that President Nixon’s visits to Beijing and Moscow in 1971 brought the Cold War to an end or at least made a beginning toward its end.

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The shifts in Korean policy of the three powers surrounding Korea were the result of the change in their priorities. Suffering from its prolonged involvement in Vietnam, the United States was in a mood for retrenchment from overseas commitments and for reduction in military expenditure. Hence President Nixon sought to reduce tension among the superpowers and expected American allies to follow suit. In Korea, the new strategy called for an improvement in North–South Korean relations.

China was another power to undergo a very dynamic shift. In the post-Mao and post-Gang of Four era, Chinese leaders turned inward and economic modernization became their foremost priority. This in turn required stability in the international environment, and the Korean question was seen in a new perspective. Even though the new leaders regarded unification with Taiwan a matter of great importance, they were no longer obsessed by that issue. Similarly, while they continued to support North Korea’s formula for unification, they did not desire sudden changes on the Korean peninsula.

Stability and improvement of North–South Korean relations also served Soviet interests. The Soviet Union had adopted a long-range strategic policy of East–West détente after 1969 to facilitate technological advancement through import from the West (including Japan) and to stabilize its control of Eastern Europe. The USSR had nothing to gain and much to lose from turbulence on the Korean peninsula.

**Interstate Perception**

The other factor contributing to the talks of the 1970s was the realization that Korea was destined to have two separate regimes for some time to come and each side's recognition of the stability, if not the permanence, of the rival regime in power.

The idea of a divided Korea, permanently or semipermanently, was slow to win acceptance in Korea. While some Koreans may have come to such a realization as early as 1945 or 1946, it was a difficult step for many Koreans to take because this thinking ran contrary to the notion that the Korean people, with their long tradition as a single, unified people, should not be divided. Those who launched the war in 1950 were certainly not resigned to the permanent or semipermanent division of Korea. Even after the truce agreement was signed at Panmunjom in July 1953, Premier Kim Il Sung (president after 1972) denounced the idea of peaceful coexistence of the two regimes as “justification for the division of the Fatherland and for perpetuation of the division.”

Even in 1985, the idea of peaceful coexistence is not acceptable to the DPRK leadership. This is why North Korea rejected the proposal for simultaneous admission of the “two Koreas” into

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the United Nations as proposed by President Park in 1973, and continues to
denounce the "two Koreas formula." President Syngman Rhee was also
emphatic in rejecting the "two Koreas" idea and refused to participate in
the Panmunjom talks for this very reason.

But the stalemate in the war and the continuing rivalry between the
two regimes abetted by the intense East-West confrontation at the super-
power level led both sides to accept the division of the country as a reality;
they realized efforts toward unification would have to be made from the
assumption that two states would exist on the Korean peninsula. The pro-
posal for a confederation, first enunciated by Kim Il Sung on August 14,
1960, belied his acceptance of the idea that the two systems were here to
stay. Since then, further concessions were made to the idea of reintegrating
the Korean people under a single system. In his speech of October 10, 1980
at the Sixth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, President Kim proposed
the confederation not as a step toward reintegration of the two parts of
Korea as he did in 1960, but as the ultimate form of a united nation. Under
this formula, the two different "social systems" were to coexist within the
"united nation."^3

The two sides also began to acquiesce to, if not recognize, the existence
of the rival political system. While both regimes during their initial years
had been heavily dependent upon the Soviet Union and the United States,
respectively, it was clear even in the 1960s that both regimes had autono-
mous powers to the degree that inter-Korean affairs could not be settled
without them. As for political stability, Kim Il Sung's position in North
Korea was unshakable by the end of the 1950s; the DPRK leadership, in
turn, would have seen that President Park had consolidated his position in
South Korea by the latter part of the 1960s.

Perception of political stability in the rival state was essential for some
important reasons: an agreement for talks is an implicit recognition of the
counterpart regime, at least as a de facto government, that would have con-
siderable impact on domestic and international politics of both regimes;
since the very process of talks could materially strengthen the position of
incumbent leadership in both Koreas vis-à-vis their respective domestic
opponents, neither side would wish to help the cause of the counterpart if
its position was perceived to be unstable. There is also the possibility that a
weak leader would not be able to implement an agreement that had been
concluded.

^3 For Kim's 1980 speech, see Kim Il-sŏng, Chosŏn Nodong-dang Che 6-ch'u taehoe e-sŏ
han Ch'ung'ang Wŏnghoe sa'ıp ch'onghwa pogo [Report on the Activities of the Central
Committee Delivered at the 6th Congress of the Korean Workers' Party] (Pyongyang,
1980), pp. 78-79. Excerpts from his 1960 speech are available in Kim Il-sŏng, Nam Chosŏn
hyŏngmyŏng kwa choguk ui t'ongil e taehayŏ [On South Korean Revolution and the
**Strategies and Tactics**

While these were necessary conditions for the commencement of the 1972 talks, they alone would not have been sufficient to open the talks. The most crucial factor, perhaps, was the political strategy of the two regimes concerned. The DPRK, which had opposed Sino-U.S. rapprochement until Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nixon issued their joint communique in Shanghai in February 1972, saw a possibility in the new environment for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea. Indeed, the United States had unilaterally withdrawn a division of its two army divisions from South Korea in 1970, and U.S. leaders were actively discussing the possibility of relocating the remaining forces elsewhere. North Korea pushed hard on the point when the political talks began in 1972, arguing that the withdrawal of U.S. forces was the first requirement for reducing tension on the Korean peninsula and of achieving unification.

South Korea, more threatened by this turn of events, was not sanguine about the prospect of improving the atmosphere on the Korean peninsula because it perceived North Korea to be a belligerent power intent on the conquest of South Korea through whatever means available. But given the U.S. emphasis on détente, it had little choice but to attempt to negotiate with the DPRK. South Korea, therefore, called for measures to build trust between the two sides rather than drastically changing the military balance that the U.S. troop withdrawal would produce. Of necessity, the South Korean proposal was gradual and pragmatic in contrast to that of North Korea, which was precipitous and ideological.

Given the persistence of the negative factors operating on the Korean peninsula, and given the conflicting strategic aims of the two sides in the talks, it was inevitable that the talks would reach a stalemate. By early 1973, the northern side evidently concluded that North–South talks would not lead to U.S. troop withdrawal. It terminated the talks and, beginning in March 1973, appealed to the United States for direct talks.

The uproar following the institution of the Yushin constitution in November 1972 and the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung from Tokyo in August 1973 also affected North Korea’s position. In subsequent months, the Park government suffered a severe loss of support from both Japan and the United States, and its international image was tarnished. The northern side not only could not accomplish its aim by continuing the bilateral talks, but by so doing would have contributed to the legitimization of the Yushin system in the south. Japan, in the meantime, moved toward an “equidistance” policy, with even those known as the “pro–South Korean group” in the Liberal Democratic Party actively seeking to improve their ties with the DPRK. North Korea clearly had no incentive to continue the North–South dialogue.

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4 I have discussed these developments in some detail in Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension (Stanford, 1985), chapter 4.
The 1980 Talks

The 1980 talks between North and South Korean representatives also proved to be futile, but they were important in the historical context. The ten "preliminary" meetings between February and August that year were held ostensibly to arrange a meeting between the premiers of the two regimes, but much more was involved. As noted earlier, it was on this occasion that the North Korean side in referring to South Korea used the official designation "Republic of Korea" for the first time, a practice that was reciprocated by the southern side. While it could be argued that both sides had implicitly recognized the other's integrity by engaging in talks in 1972-73, they had skirted the issue of recognition. Indeed, both Premier Kim Jong Pil (on July 5, 1972) and President Park (on June 23, 1973) denied that the North-South talks constituted South Korea's recognition of the DPRK.

President Park's speech of June 23, 1973, however, was a giant step toward South Korea's recognition of the DPRK in that he proposed the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas into the United Nations. North Korean President Kim Il Sung, however, rejected the proposal as a "splitist" attempt to perpetuate the division of the Korean nation and called for the establishment of the "Koryo Confederation," which would represent one Korea at the United Nations.

The impetus for the DPRK's January 1980 initiative on North-South Korean talks was provided by the turbulent change in South Korean politics. North Korea evidently wanted to test the inclinations of the new regime established in Seoul after President Park's assassination in October 1979, but finding no change in South Korea's attitude toward North-South relations, the talks were halted. Former Premier Choy Kyu-ha had been inaugurated president in December after the Park assassination and remained in that post until June 1980, when he vacated the post for General Chun Doo Hwan. Clearly, the 1980 talks were exploratory in nature.

North Korean Proposal for Trilateral Talks, 1984

The North Korean proposal for trilateral talks among North and South Korea and the United States also deserves to be discussed inasmuch as the DPRK proposal included the ROK as a negotiating partner. Since North Korean leaders had stridently denounced an earlier proposal for trilateral talks presented by Presidents Carter and Park on June 30, 1979 as a part of an "insidious scheme to perpetuate the division of Korea into 'two Koreas,'" which was "utterly unfeasible and does not stand to reason," there was speculation that the proposal of January 10, 1984, represented a major change in North Korean policy.


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Selective reading of the decision of the joint meeting of the DPRK's Central Political Committee and the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly would indeed give such an impression. It stated:

If a war breaks out in Korea, it cannot be a localized war confined to the Korean peninsula alone. It will not be a war by conventional weapons, but may be turned into an all-out nuclear war.

Those who do not want war but desire peace in Korea and her peaceful reunification should not resort to strength, but meet and have a dialogue with each other.

Dialogue is the only way of turning the dangerous current of the present situation racing to the brink of war in favor of peace and independent and peaceful reunification.

From this viewpoint the joint meeting decided to propose to hold tripartite talks by letting the south Korean authorities, another party responsible for the mounting tension in Korea today, participate in the talks between us and the U.S this time.6

Subsequent paragraphs in this statement, however, raised doubts:

When a peace agreement is signed and U.S. troops are withdrawn from South Korea, the source of threat to peace in our country and of obstacle to the independent and peaceful reunification of the country will be removed and a bright prospect for peaceful settlement of the Korean question will be open.

The north and the south should have a dialogue for reunification when conditions favorable for the independent and peaceful reunification of the country are created with the conclusion of a peace agreement with the U.S. and the adoption of a declaration of nonaggression between the north and the south.7

The impression was created that the North Korean leaders' intent had not changed; they wanted to "negotiate" with the United States on the withdrawal of U.S. forces; only when such an agreement was reached would the DPRK negotiate with the ROK on a declaration of nonaggression between the north and south. The [North] Korean Central News Agency's publication of President Kim II Sung's answers to questions raised by a delegation of Scinteia, organ of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party, on the same day that the North Korean leadership organizations adopted the resolution on tripartite talks left no doubt. The president was quoted to have said:

If the dialogue between the north and the south is to be a success, it is important that both sides to the dialogue take a firmly independent stand. . . . The South Korean rulers, however, persist in their traitorous policy of depending on outside forces with a view to keeping themselves in power. They are begging for the U.S. troops' permanent occupation of South Korea and zealously following the U.S. imperialist policy of colonial subjugation towards South Korea.


7Ibid.
The South Korean rulers are the out-and-out stooges of the U.S. imperialists. They totally lack chajusŏng [independent character]. A dialogue would be impossible with these imperialist stooges who have no chajusŏng whatsoever. There is no need at all to discuss with them the problem of reunifying the country independently and peacefully.\(^8\)

The president had made these remarks on November 16 of the previous year, but the government press chose to release them on the occasion of presenting the tripartite talk proposal. President Kim Il Sung's characterization of the Chun regime quoted earlier was made to the same Rumanian delegation.

Even though President Park had lent his name to the 1979 proposal for tripartite talks, he had done so only under U.S. pressure.\(^9\) Such an arrangement would only reinforce the image of patron-client relationship between the United States and South Korea, thus undermining the latter's position. But the North Korean proposal of 1984 was fundamentally different. The first proposal at least treated South Korea as an equal partner in talks with the United States; South Korea's role in the second would have been as a bystander until the United States and North Korea agreed on the withdrawal of U.S. forces and signed a peace treaty.

Why did the North Korean leadership decide to present a proposal that was clearly unacceptable to South Korea? Was it simply a ploy designed as propaganda?

This may not have been the case. According to an account presented in Newsweek magazine, U.S. Ambassador to China Arthur Hummel had "been pushing Washington for months" to realize the tripartite talks. While other officials rejected the idea, Secretary George Shultz "introduced the idea" to Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian "apparently prodded by a note passed to him by Hummel."\(^10\) This meeting would have taken place in October 1983 when the foreign minister visited Washington.\(^11\) If this account is correct, the idea originated on the U.S. side. North Korean leaders simply modified the original U.S. proposal to suit their purpose. Perhaps some analysts in North Korea discovered that President Carter had to pres-

\(^8\) *Nodong Sinmun*, January 10, 1984.

\(^9\) South Korean newspapers printed ringing denunciations of the proposal just before the Carter-Park joint communique containing the proposal was issued. The *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial of April 27, 1979, for example, was entitled "The Fantasy of Three-Way Talks on the Korean Peninsula." For more on this point, see the statement of former Ambassador William E. Gleysteen, Jr., in North-South Relations on the Korean Peninsula, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 98th Congress, 2nd Sess., March 20, 1984 (Washington, D.C., 1984), pp. 51-52.


sure President Park to join him on the 1979 proposal and that it would have been advantageous for the DPRK to have accepted the proposal.

Had North Korea negotiated with the Carter administration, which had strongly favored the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from South Korea, it might have prevented President Carter from succumbing to congressional and military pressures to reverse his campaign pledge regarding U.S. troops in Korea.\(^\text{12}\) Not only that, but by dealing with the United States and slighting South Korea, North Korea would have gained enormous propaganda advantages that could have had a direct impact on the stability of the Park regime. The chance afforded by the United States in late 1983, therefore, was not to be lost. Secretary Shultz, however, reportedly “clarified” his position publicly later, stating that his government would not support any plan that was not first approved by Seoul,\(^\text{13}\) and it does not appear that such talks are likely to be held in the near future in spite of North Korea’s persistent advocacy of the tripartite talks.

Other Developments in 1984–85

Developments since the latter part of 1984 may reflect North Korea’s perception that the tripartite formula had its limitations. North Korea was undergoing a major shift in foreign policy in early 1984, as reflected by President Kim Il Sung’s extended tour of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries between May and June. The DPRK’s relationship with these countries had not been close for some years, and President Kim’s journey itself was a reflection of changing North Korean policy. What was more significant was the milder tone of his speeches during the journey. Even though he did attribute tension in the international arena to the “adventurist power policy and war provocations of imperialists,” the president refrained from even mentioning either the United States or Japan in his speech of May 23 at the Kremlin,\(^\text{14}\) in strong contrast to Chairman Chernenko’s stringent denunciation of both countries.

Clearly, the North Korean leader was anxious to open diplomatic contacts with those two countries and decided to use all resources possible. The Chinese were actively mobilized, as can be seen from Premier Zhao Ziyang’s conveyance of the North Korean proposal for tripartite talks to President Reagan during his January 1984 Washington visit. President Kim


\(^{13}\) *Newsweek*, May 14, 1984.

also chose to use Ishibashi Masashi, chairman of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), as his bridge to Japan and the United States. The JSP had been suffering from a steady loss of popularity in domestic politics, and Ishibashi had gone to Pyongyang in September as a supplicant seeking to renew a fishery agreement between Japan and the DPRK. But President Kim lionized him by treating him as a state guest and seeing him six times, a few of them very extended meetings. When Ishibashi referred to Kim’s criticism, in East Germany, of the U.S.–Japan–South Korea trilateral military alliance, the president reportedly told Ishibashi that “that speech was tatemae [a front, something for public consumption],” the first time ever that a North Korean leader of any rank indicated that their public statements did not necessarily reflect their real intentions. Kim’s revelations to Ishibashi left no doubt that the DPRK was willing to go a long way to seek changes in U.S. and Japanese policies toward North Korea.

Kim Il Sung’s two other statements also merit close attention. The first relates to the U.S. presence in South Korea and the second to his attitude toward the incumbent leader in South Korea. According to the minutes of talks between Kim and the Japanese Socialist Party delegation held on September 19, 1984, as released by the JSP delegation on October 8, the president said, “We do not think the United States will immediately withdraw its troops from South Korea or its nuclear weapons because the superpowers are confronting each other. The Korean people are being sacrificed to the superpower confrontation.” And, while North Korea’s basic aim of removing U.S. forces has not changed, the withdrawal of U.S. forces would not be a precondition for the tripartite talks. Kim was not, however, ready to be as open to the government under President Chun Doo Hwan. He set forth a number of preconditions, namely:

1. President Chun must apologize for the Kwangju incident.
2. He must reaffirm the three principles enunciated in the July 4, 1972, joint communique.
3. He must terminate anticommunist agitation.
4. He must abolish restrictions on political activities in South Korea.  

Chairman Ishibashi, of course, used the leverage President Kim provided to the maximum extent and issued virtual verbatim text of these talks to the Japanese press. President Kim was quoted to have told Ishibashi that “our country is misunderstood to be a fearsome country, but that impression has to be corrected. Since the Japanese Socialist Party has much contact with the United States and the peoples of the world, we would like to have you explain our position.” Yomiuri Shimbun, September 21, 1984.

For details, see Yomiuri Shimbun, October 5, 1984.

Ibid., October 9, 1984.
Aside from the second point, these were not acceptable conditions for the Chun government.

Kim was also quoted as saying that it was impossible under the present condition to hold talks with the Chun regime. Instead, he called for talks with political parties, mass organizations, "democratic personalities," and personages of influence in South Korea and abroad.18

It was in this environment that the North Korean Red Cross Society offered, on September 8, to send relief goods to flood victims in South Korea. On September 14, its South Korean counterpart accepted the offer, and by September 30, 7,200 metric tons of rice, 100,000 tons of cement, 500,000 meters of textile fabric, and quantities of medicine were delivered to the south. There is no doubt that this was a historic event. Chun had offered economic and technical assistance to North Korea just a few weeks earlier on August 20, but North Korea had scoffed at the idea. The Chun government was determined to create a momentum for dialogue, and in full confidence of its superior economic status opted to accept the northern offer.

In spite of Kim's declaration to Chairman Ishibashi that he could not deal with the Chun government, representatives of the two governments did meet on November 15 for trade talks, and representatives of the Red Cross societies held their talks on November 20 for possible reunion of divided families. But the momentum stalled on November 23 by an unforeseen event. Military guards at Panmunjom exchanged a barrage of gunfire in connection with the defection of Vasily Yakovlevich Matuzok, a trainee at the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, killing a South Korean and three North Korean soldiers and wounding an American. On November 27, North Korea called for postponement of the second session of trade talks scheduled for December 5.19 Trade talks were rescheduled for January 17, and Red Cross talks for January 23, but on January 9, the northern side telephoned to postpone the talks indefinitely because of the "Team Spirit 85" joint U.S.-ROK military exercise scheduled for February 1. The Pyongyang Times' headline declared, "War Game Incompatible with Dialogue."20 The road toward reconciliation proved to be full of barriers.

It is noteworthy, however, that President Kim's New Year address of 1985 was highly positive about future talks with South Korea. He said:

Our Party and Government of the Republic will make every sincere effort to ensure that the negotiations on economic affairs and Red Cross talks that have

18 Ibid.
been held on our initiative after a long interval will bear good fruit, and that extensive negotiations and many-sided cooperation and exchange between the two parts of the country will become a reality.\textsuperscript{21}

He even intimated the possibility of meeting the South Korean president himself:

If the north-south dialogues proceed successfully to meet the expectations of the people and in accordance with the idea of national reunification, these will develop gradually into higher-level talks and further culminate in high-level political negotiations between north and south.\textsuperscript{22}

President Chun had expressed his desire to hold high-level talks as soon as he assumed power in 1980. In his New Year address, delivered on January 7, Chun "urged" the northern side to realize his meeting with Kim as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{23} Anticipating the agenda for such a meeting, South Korea’s Minister of the Unification Board told the press on January 17 that withdrawal of U.S. forces in South Korea could be discussed at the summit meeting although "the U.S. forces in South Korea are here based on the U.S.—ROK Mutual Security Treaty and they are basically a matter between us and the United States."\textsuperscript{24}

Thus each side appears to be eager to negotiate. At the same time, however, the North Korean side has shown much more hesitancy in doing so. Why the contradiction? An analysis of the motives of the two sides may explain these developments and perhaps provide an indication of future possibilities.

It is evident that the impetus for the talks in 1984 was provided by the Chun government’s acceptance of relief goods from North Korea. North Korea had made similar offers as early as 1960 when South Korea suffered from serious floods, and, as was the case in August 1984, South Korea had made similar offers also. South Korea’s acceptance of relief goods from the north was a decision that carried considerable risk for President Chun in that the South Korean people’s consumption of North Korean rice and other commodities would significantly affect the effectiveness of future indoctrination efforts against the communists. Why was President Chun willing to take the risk?

Aside from Chun’s professed desire to expedite the process of reconciliation and unification, one can cite the long-range benefits of reduced military expenditure and that of North–South Korean trade. But these

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} *Pyongyang Times*, January 2, 1985.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} *Dong-a Ilbo*, January 8, 1985.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 18, 1985.
\end{itemize}
benefits had always been present, and hence one must seek other, more urgent motives of the regimes in power.

As is widely known, what has characterized the Chun regime above all else has been its devotion, indeed obsession, with the holding of the Asian Olympic Games of 1986 and the more momentous International Olympic Games scheduled to be held in Seoul in 1988. What South Korea needs, therefore, is stability on the Korean peninsula, and this requires the moderation of North Korean bellicosity. North Korean leaders have repeatedly denounced the choice of Seoul as a site for the 1988 Olympics, and Seoul came to fear possible obstructive maneuvers from the north.

Another concern of the South Korean regime has been the lack of public support and need to eradicate the stigma of the Kwangju incident of May 1980, when a large number of demonstrators were killed by paratroopers dispatched by martial law command. While President Chun was successful in obtaining a U.S. $4 billion long-term loan from Japan in January 1983 and the economy began to revive in 1982 and 1983, the regime had been marred by repeated cases of large-scale financial scandals involving persons close to the presidential family, and hence public support behind the regime was slow in building. Success in negotiations with North Korea, therefore, would not only abet success with the Olympics but would strengthen the regime’s legitimacy.

President Kim’s apparent willingness to negotiate with the incumbent South Korean government in late 1984 contrary to his earlier denunciation of the “fascist” regime, on the other hand, belies the seriousness of North Korea’s needs. The most pressing of these is undoubtedly economic. As Joseph Chung’s analysis included in this volume shows, the DPRK has been suffering from its inability to meet foreign obligations; in spite of repeated exhortations from the leader, North Korea’s exports have failed to grow. In fact, both import and export declined substantially in 1981 (import by 15.3 percent and export by 30.1 percent, by Chung’s calculations), and exports in 1982 and 1983 did not reach the level of 1979 and 1980. For an economy saddled with large debts to both communist and Western countries and to Japan (estimated to be approximately U.S. $3.5 billion), and with a record of defaulting on payments for credit purchases, this constituted a very grave problem. The president’s extended visit to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries in May–June 1984, and his very unusual “unofficial visit” to China in November, may have been an attempt to address

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25 For example, Hô Tam, former foreign minister and member of the Politburo of the Korean Workers’ Party, told the Japanese Socialist Party delegation in September 1984, that the DPRK opposed Seoul as the site for the international Olympics. *Yomiuri Shim-bun*, September 26, 1984.
this situation. Not only the trade sector but the economy as a whole has been subjected to a slowdown. North Korea failed to report on its total industrial output in 1981, 1983 and 1984, a sign that things were not going smoothly. President Kim’s New Year address of 1985 is singularly devoid of economic data other than the mention of the production of 10 million tons of grain, which contrasts sharply with more prosperous years.

It is only logical to assume that the North Korean leadership has been searching for a way to escape from its increasingly burdensome economic problems. As South Korea continued to register substantial trade expansion, North Korean leaders would have been concerned about the widening gap in the scale of economy, technological levels, and managerial skills. It is only natural that the North Korean leaders began to pay more and more attention to developments in China, as evidenced by tours of Sichuan, Canton, and the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone by such leaders as Kim Il Sung, his designated successor and son Kim Jong Il, Premier Kang Song-san, and Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam. The adoption of the joint venture law in September 1984 was one of the outcomes of these visits. President Kim’s overtures to the United States and Japan was another. But as long as the DPRK maintained its hostile stance toward South Korea and insisted on tripartite talks, neither of these powers was willing to, or even able to, respond positively.

An ancillary problem for North Korea has been the “image of a fearsome country” that President Kim related to Chairman Ishibashi. The Rangoon incident of October 1983 certainly did not bolster the DPRK’s image of being a peaceful state. The attempt by North Korean agents to destroy President Chun in Rangoon resulted in the death of numerous South Korean leaders, including five cabinet members. In spite of the DPRK’s protestations of innocence, Burma declared North Korea guilty of the crime and severed diplomatic ties with it. The Burmese action was all the more damaging because Burma had previously been on more friendly terms with North Korea, with which it had maintained diplomatic ties since 1975, than it had with South Korea. Obviously, there was a need to recoup North Korea’s status in the international community, and an improvement of

26 While the Pyongyang Times, December 5, 1984, carried a front-page headline on this visit between November 26 and 28, the report did not indicate the nature of problems discussed other than to say “problems of further developing the friendly relations,” and “international problems of common concern.”

North-South relations would contribute toward that end as it could project itself as a peace-loving state.

Why, then, the hesitation? Was the North Korean citing of “Team Spirit 85” simply an excuse for some other hidden cause? Probably not. For the DPRK to proceed with the North-South Korean talks without protesting the joint military exercise would have been tantamount to condoning it, and this would have been a difficult pill for the DPRK to swallow. The general election in South Korea, held on February 12, is also likely to have entered into North Korea’s calculations. As stated earlier, neither North or South Korean leaders wish to abet the cause of their counterparts by proceeding with negotiations when the other side’s political gain is obvious. North Korean leaders also risk the charge of sellout by critics of the Chun regime in and out of South Korea by negotiating with the Chun regime, even when there is little likelihood of the North-South Korean negotiations affecting South Korean politics. North Korea could inflict more damage on its self-proclaimed status as a moralistic power if it proceeded with the negotiations just before the election.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Given the strong incentive for the talks, however, these factors are not likely to prevent bilateral talks in the future, and the two regimes are also likely to intensify contacts. But these intensified contacts will not necessarily reduce the level of hostility or tension, just as the relief goods from North Korea failed to affect South Korea’s image of North Korea. Having accepted the North Korean goods, the ROK government and government-controlled press ceased to make any reference to them. North Korea naturally sought to make much of the gifts, but the short-term effect of the North Korean gifts were not apparent. Even while northern cargo ships were still in the southern ports, President Chun spoke of the “unusual movements in the North, as they have deployed large tank units, long-range guns and guided weapons in the forward areas along the truce line,” and warned his people of “sinister designs behind the smile.” A week later, on October 8, speakers at a gathering of 20,000 people commemorating the first anniversary of the Rangoon incident stressed the need to nurture strength and intensify vigilance against communism. The language used by the North Korean side against the United States and South Korea on the occasion of the Panmunjom shootout was no less harsh. Actions taken to meet tactical and


29 *Han’guk Ilbo*, October 2, 1984.

30 Ibid., October 9, 1984.
strategic needs will not substantially affect either side's perceptions or attitudes or the other factors that perpetuate tension and hostility.

These contacts, however, are essential steps toward moderation on both sides. There is always the possibility that the pace will quicken and the atmosphere will change. Such steps may offer a rationale for both sides to adopt major policy changes that will have a significant impact on inter-Korean relations. The present international environment is certainly conducive to such a development, and domestic conditions in both North and South Korea call for it. One hopes changes of momentous proportions will occur within the near future.
The Evolution of North-South Korean Relations: Reassessment and Prospects

Deok Kim

The inter-Korean conflict has remained least changed in a rapidly changing world. Because of a complete absence of trust, there is an air of rigidity as antagonism continues between the two Koreas. The failure of the short-lived North-South dialogue in the early 1970s was partly responsible for generating pessimistic views of future relations between the two states. And the Rangoon incident of October 9, 1983, in which seventeen South Korean officials were killed in an act vividly demonstrating North Korean bellicosity, caused great pessimism based on the conviction that the Pyongyang regime led by fanatical leaders is too rigid to be responsive to the changing international environment.

On the other hand, some observers, both Korean and foreign, still express cautious hope about the future of the peninsula. These optimists contend that "North Korea, like most other states in the international community, does not blindly and inflexibly pursue a single policy orientation, but rather reacts to existing pressures and opportunities."^ They argue that the fact the two Koreas already had a dialogue in the early 1970s furnishes proof of North Korea's amenability to an altered international environment. In any case, this historic event marked a turning point in the evolution of inter-Korean relations, although the dialogue did not last long. While political strife, diplomatic rivalry, and military confrontation continue to prevail today, the two Koreas do not remain wholly unchanged. Despite

the seeming rigidity of the North Korean regime, its foreign policy in general, and that directed toward the South especially, appears to be under enormous pressure to change. The latest report of North Korea’s First Vice-Premier Kang Sung-san to the third session of the Seventh Supreme People’s Assembly in January 1984 indicates a realistic assessment of such existing pressures. Kang strongly emphasized the importance of closer economic exchanges with capitalist countries.

This paper will assess changing trends in evolving inter-Korean relations in terms of political, diplomatic, and military confrontation.

**POLITICAL RIVALRY**

Since early partition, North–South Korean political contention has centered on the issue of unification. The evolution of each state’s unification policies accordingly reflects the ups and downs in their political relations.

In the period before the conclusion of the Korean armistice agreement, both Seoul and Pyongyang had been quite doctrinaire in their stances on the unification issue. Syngman Rhee’s plea to “March North” was pitted against Kim Il Sung’s tenacious clinging to “the liberation of the southern half of the fatherland.” Their contradictory definitions of unification reflect the dogmatic character of their stances. The Republic of Korea, claiming to be “the sole legitimate government on the Korean peninsula,” regarded unification as the recovery of “lost territory.” In similar fashion, North Korea, asserting itself as “the only central government on the peninsula,” defined unification as an extension of communist rule into the southern part of the country. According to Seoul’s claims, the only way to achieve unification was to fill up the vacant seats in the national assembly reserved for representatives to be elected in a free election in North Korea. President Syngman Rhee clarified this position in a statement on February 18, 1949:

> The effort for national unification can be approved only if it will contribute to the existence of the Republic of Korea government. Definitely unacceptable is any negotiation with the North Korean puppet regime for it means a humiliation to give a de facto recognition to that regime.²

The Korean War was an outcome of the North Korean venture to extend its rule into South Korea by force. During the war, the South also attempted to recover “lost territory” as United Nations forces drove back North Korean troops to the Sino–Korean border in the fall of 1950. But the result of the tragic war was nothing but a more rigidly divided Korea. While the war stiffened South Korea’s anticomunist posture, the north,

having narrowly escaped a humiliating defeat thanks to intervention by the People's Republic of China, was compelled to give up temporarily the use of force as the solution to the Korean problem. Pyongyang thus began to capitalize on the peace offensive toward Seoul. Ever since the Geneva conference of 1954, in which Pyongyang's new unification policy began to take its form through Nam Il's proposal, a series of familiar proposals mainly advocating peaceful unification were repeatedly made by Pyongyang throughout the 1950s and 1960s.3

South Korean leaders refused to consider such peace offensives since they regarded such proposals as a kind of Trojan horse. During the 1960s, therefore, South Korea's negative attitude toward the unification issue stood in sharp contrast to the active peace offensive of North Korea. The peace proposals were completely ignored not only by President Syngman Rhee but also by his successors, Chang Myon and Park Chung Hee. Although their political styles differed, South Korean leaders were staunch anticommunists. The double-edged North Korean tactics fostered a strong antipathy on the part of the conservative leaders of Seoul. Pyongyang always attempted to capitalize on the peaceful solution of the Korean question whenever the domestic situation of the south turned favorable to revolution. On the contrary, the north launched armed provocations whenever the situation did not develop as it wished. Amidst an avalanche of peace rhetoric, the Fourth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP), held in September 1961, initiated a hard-line "southern strategy" to combine a broad-based anti-American national front in the south with a north–south socialist united front.4 And at the Eighth Plenum of the Fourth Central Committee of the KWP, a strategy for fostering "three revolutionary capabilities" was publicly

3 The "Five Points" suggested by Nam Il at the Geneva conference in April 1954 were a revised version of the "Principles of Peaceful Reunification" proclaimed by Kim II Sung at the Korean Workers' Party's Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee in August 1953; the "Points" included: (1) a general election for a "Chosen National Assembly," in preparation for the establishment of a unified Korean government; (2) establishment of an "All-Chosen Committee" composed of the representatives from North Korea's Supreme Council and South Korea's National Assembly; (3) economic and cultural exchanges between north and south; and (4) withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea. A series of proposals was made by North Korea during the 1950s and the 1960s, most of which were quite similar to these "Five Points." Among them, a proposal for the establishment of "federal governments" as temporary political authorities that would be replaced by a more formal, unified government, draws special attention. See Hak Joon Kim, The Unification Policy of North and South Korea (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1977), pp. 153-157; Puk'han Chônsô [A Complete Manual of North Korea] (Seoul: Institute of Far Eastern Studies, 1974), vol. 3, pp. 44-53.

4 Puk'han Chônsô, pp. 75-76.
propounded by Kim Il Sung. In the late 1960s, the north’s frequent armed infiltrations followed the earlier intensive peace proposals.⁵

Through the peace offensive, Pyongyang probably intended to separate the Korean question from the United Nations and at the same time incite revolutionary forces in South Korea by exploiting a political feud over the unification issue as shown in the fluid situation following the student uprising in April 1960.

After the military revolution on May 16, 1961, Seoul showed from the outset an even more negative attitude toward peace proposals made by the north, for military leaders had taken over the government ostensibly in response to a conservative plea for more security against the communist threat. The new government led by General Park Chung Hee put primary emphasis on security and economic development, relegating the unification issue to secondary importance. This tendency originated from Park’s realistic proposition that peaceful unification could be achieved only by making South Korea a far more powerful and prosperous country than the north. The fact that Pyongyang repeatedly stressed the theme of inter-Korean economic exchanges in its peace proposals from the position of economic superiority gave Park a strong incentive for rapid economic development.⁶ President Park’s “Construction First, Unification Later” approach was quite successful in achieving remarkable economic growth. But it temporarily withheld the task of unification as the secondary national goal to be tackled in the late 1970s.⁷

In contrast to South Korea’s strategy of concentrating on its economic development plan, North Korean leaders were still anxious to complete the Korean revolution because they found that time was not on their side. The sources of their frustration varied: their expectation for a revolution in the South “from within” was not fulfilled despite the eruption of violent student demonstrations in 1964–65 protesting the South Korea–Japan normal-

⁵In 1968, when North Korea’s military encroachment on South Korea reached its peak, a series of serious incidents occurred including a commando attack on the Presidential residence, the Pueblo incident, and a large-scale guerrilla infiltration in Uljin and Samch’ok area. And in 1968 alone, the number of guerrilla infiltrations by the North reached 332. *Puk’han Chŏnsŏ*, pp. 101–103.

⁶Kim Il, the vice-premier, emphasized in his report delivered at the sixteenth ceremony commemorating national liberation that “the only way to revive the South Korean economy and solve the problems in economic life is to depend upon the stronger economic capacity of the North by means of the North–South exchange,” thereby expressing confidence in the North’s economic superiority. *Puk’han Chŏnsŏ*, pp. 45–52.

⁷*Pyŏnghwa Tongilui Taeto-Pak Chŏng Hŭi Taet’ong-nyŏng Yŏnˇsŏl Munsŏn-jip* [A Great Way to Peaceful Unification—Anthology of Speeches by President Park Chung Hee] (Seoul: The Presidential Secretary Office, 1976).
zation talks; the conclusion of the South Korea-Japan treaty in 1965 would certainly contribute to the strengthening of Seoul's economic and security positions. During the 1960s, therefore, Pyongyang emphasized a South Korean revolution as much as peaceful unification. Neither the peace offensives nor the plea for a revolution in the south was successful, however. The north's armed provocations were found to be a dismal failure in that they had only aroused anticommmunist sentiment among the people in the south. Kim II Sung's idea of a Vietnam-type revolution in the south was based on the possibility of active agitation by an underground revolutionary organization, the Party for Unification and Revolution, which was destroyed by the South Korean authorities in August 1968.

Meanwhile, Seoul's shift in strategy was signaled by President Park's speech commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of national liberation from Japanese rule in August 1970. In that speech, Park reversed his earlier position by making an unexpected statement that his government would not oppose "North Korea's participation in the U.N. debate on the Korean question," if the North would accept unequivocally the legitimacy and authority of the world organization.8

In return, Pyongyang's rigidity seemed to wane when Kim II Sung made it clear, in his speech of August 6, 1971, welcoming ousted Prince Sihanouk, that he would be ready to meet "all South Korean political parties including the Democratic Republican Party, public organizations and individual personages."9 These statements by both President Park and Kim II Sung thus paved way for the subsequent north-south dialogue. South Korea was shrewd to take the initiative in proposing the North-South Korean Red Cross dialogue.

As the Red Cross talks began, an epochal change occurred in the political relations between the two regimes. What was more significant, the historical north-south joint communique was announced on July 4, 1972, as a result of secret contacts between Seoul and Pyongyang. Since the announcement of the joint communique, the government-level contacts through a north-south coordinating committee ran parallel with the non-governmental Red Cross contacts.

No one could deny that the change was caused primarily by the Sino-American détente. Also, it may not be farfetched to conclude that the inter-Korean dialogue left nothing but the showy confirmation of the three unification principles as evidenced by the fact that the North Korean strategy to revolutionize South Korea appeared unchanging despite the dialogue. Recent discovery of the three tunnels crossing the demilitarized zone by

8 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
9 Puk'han Chŏnsŏ, p. 55.
Republic of Korea troops convinced Seoul that Pyongyang had agreed to a dialogue only to expedite the process of communist revolution in South Korea. A clearer manifestation of Pyongyang's unchanging policy was Kim Il Sung's militant statement in Beijing in April 1975 that North Korea would only lose the military demarcation line and gain the reunification should war break out. Most recently, the Rangoon incident remains indisputable proof of the north's militancy.

Despite such continuities in the inter-Korean political conflict, some significant changes have unfolded since the beginning of the dialogue in 1971. The first significant change was in the South Korean attitude toward the unification issue. From total rejection of North Korean peace proposals, Seoul has begun to show a flexibility in its unification policy while making a series of active peace initiatives for inter-Korean dialogue. This change, originating in President Park's announcement of the new basic scheme for peaceful unification on August 15, 1970, has become more evident through ensuing policy declarations and peace proposals.

South Korea's change of attitude was, in part, due to the changing conditions of its United Nations diplomacy. Dependence on the United Nations as an umpire of the Korean question was found to be rather ineffective due to increasing support for the north's position. Ever since the twenty-third session of the U.N. General Assembly defeated (by a narrow margin of only fifteen votes) the draft resolution calling for unconditional invitation of the two Koreas, the need for the South Korean government to seek a more active strategy of unification politics has become urgent. Meanwhile, South Korea was so successful in its economic development through the 1960s that it could be encouraged to be more positive in its stance on the unification issue. The annual economic growth rate during the period of the first Five-Year Economic Plan (1962-1966) recorded 7.7 percent, and an even higher annual growth rate of 10.5 percent was realized during the period of the second Five-Year Plan (1967-1971), in striking contrast to the poor outcome of North Korea's Seven-Year Plan.

Apart from positive domestic factors, some negative factors were also responsible for the changes in South Korea's attitude. In the 1970s, social discontent emanating from the rapid economic growth of the 1960s necessitated a stronger emphasis on the objective of unification. It was quite natural that the political myth of national unification replaced "GNP faith" as the problems of distribution became acute amidst rapid economic growth. As a result, Seoul has emerged as a more active peace initiator than the North since the early 1970s, and the peace offensive thus ceased to be Pyongyang's one-sided game. Especially after the suspension of the dialogue, Seoul's

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flexible posture has made a striking contrast to Pyongyang's hard-line policy. Such flexibility was clearly demonstrated in President Park's proposal of January 19, 1979, urging a meeting of the South and the North Korean authorities "at any time, any place, and any level" to discuss any and all problems relating to peaceful unification. An even fresher initiative was made by President Chun Doo Hwan, who proposed on January 12, 1981, an exchange of visits between the highest authorities of the two Koreas "with no conditions attached." President Chun took this proposal a step further on June 5 by offering a summit conference between the South and the North.

Second, north-south dialogue has been held sporadically since the early 1970s and has become a model practice applicable to the future solution of problems relating to peaceful unification. Although this inter-Korean dialogue has produced nothing tangible so far, as long as the two Koreas maintain a channel for dialogue, it leaves the possibility for resumption of talks between the two parties whenever needed. The stalemate of dialogue is better than the absence of any prospect for it. Suspended in 1973, the inter-Korean dialogue has been resumed on an irregular basis. In February-March 1979, sporadic political contacts between the two Koreas took place at Panmunjom with each side having different purposes. Again in 1980, ten sessions of the preliminary working-level talks for a meeting of the prime ministers of the two Koreas were held for a period extending from February to August. Without doubt, the preliminary talks were doomed to failure since the motivations behind Pyongyang's acceptance of South Korean Prime Minister Sin Hyón-hwak's proposal were highly tactical, testing the fluid political situation in South Korea following the assassination of President Park. Not only these political contacts but some rounds of "sports talks" were held in 1979 and 1984. In short, both Koreas have been placed in a situation where neither could reject the dialogue proposal by the other party without justifiable reasons for doing so.

Third, speaking in relative terms, the differences in unification policies between the two Koreas have been gradually narrowed in substance. As competitive peace offensives were being waged by both parties, their respective unification policies have been put under the increasing pressure of

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12 In 1979, four rounds (February 27, March 5, March 9, and March 12) of ping pong talks were held between the North and South Korean Table Tennis Associations to discuss the issue of forming a single Korean team for the thirty-fifth World Table Tennis Championships. The meetings ended in failure. Again in 1984, three sessions of the sports talks (April 9 and 30, May 25) were held to discuss the issue of forming a single Korean team for the Los Angeles Olympic games and other forthcoming international sports events. These meetings, again, produced no agreement between the two parties. See International Cultural Society of Korea, North-South Dialogue in Korea, no. 020 (July 1979), pp. 63-87.
public attention and have ceased to be mere propaganda devices. Especially since 1980, the two Koreas have been anxious to modify their unification policies. On January 22, 1982, President Chun announced a new “Formula for National Reconciliation and Democratic Unification.” According to this formula, a Consultative Conference for National Reunification (CCNR) is to be organized to adopt a unified constitution. The CCNR is to accommodate Pyongyang’s time-honored claim for a “Great National Conference.” President Chun proposed to organize CCNR with “participants from the two sides representing views of the residents in their respective areas.” This new South Korean formula is aimed at moderating the incremental approach to induce a favorable reaction from the North. President Chun made such an intent clear as he proclaimed that “recent history teaches us that Korea will never be united as long as the South and the North each insists on a unification formula intended to advance only its own ideology, ideals and institutions.”

On the other hand, Kim II Sung proposed, in his report to the Sixth Korean Workers’ Party Congress of October 1980, an establishment of the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo (DCRK). But this proposed formula is slightly different from the earlier confederal formula in that this time the proposed unification is defined not as a transitional arrangement but as “a complete form of unified government.” This modification was perhaps intended to prove that Pyongyang would pursue nothing other than national reunification transcending ideology and institutions.

DIPLOMATIC COMPETITION

The beginning of the north-south dialogue in the early 1970s gave impetus to a diplomatic competition between the two regimes that was thereafter to expand its scope globally. Before the 1970s, the diplomatic behavior of both North and South Korea was largely shaped within the framework of East-West bloc diplomacy and was characterized by a strong ideological orientation. Direct diplomatic competition was, accordingly, rather modest in its intensity and scope.

Throughout the 1950s, the two Koreas were occupied with postwar recovery as the Cold War reached its peak; “stages” of diplomacy for the north and south were, therefore, clearly demarcated and there was virtually no “room” for the two regimes to initiate an independent diplomatic overture. Seoul’s diplomatic effort was largely confined to the consolidation of its relationship with the Free World nations, while Pyongyang attempted to enhance its close ties with such communist nations as the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, and Eastern European countries. It was

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13 Dong-A Ilbo, January 22, 1982.
during this period that Seoul strictly observed the so-called Hallstein Doctrine, and the Third World remained a remote concern for both Koreas. Because of its ideological orientation, South Korea at that time considered neutrality unthinkable, even immoral, following the famous anticommunist formula of John Foster Dulles. North Korea, on the other hand, was still adhering to Stalin’s inflexible two-camp image even after Khrushchev recognized at the Twentieth Party Congress the existence of three different camps in the world.

It cannot be denied that changes in the international environment during the 1960s significantly affected the respective foreign policy behavior of North and South Korea. The Sino-Soviet split became obvious after the Bucharest Conference, and a conciliatory mood began to appear in U.S.–Soviet relations. The political influence of the Third World increased gradually.

Amid these changes in global politics, Pyongyang intensified its attempt to secure international support, on the basis of the Party-affirmed goal of “strengthening the three revolutionary capabilities.” And in August 1966, the Korean Workers’ Party formally declared the adoption of chuch’e, an “independent road [to communism].” Pyongyang also started, in this period, an active diplomatic adventure in the Third World in support of national liberation movements against imperialism and colonialism.

Seoul, on the other hand, initiated its so-called “Active Diplomacy” during the 1960s, the purpose of which was to isolate the North in the United Nations by securing a wide range of pro-Seoul elements. Another stated goal of “Active Diplomacy” was an enlargement of the export market, which then was considered a necessity for economic development.

As already mentioned, Seoul gave its U.N. diplomacy special emphasis to maintain its status of “sole and legitimate government” on the Korean peninsula that the United Nations had conferred on it in 1949. Accordingly, Seoul attempted to block the entry of the North into the United Nations, thereby securing a “diplomatic sanctuary.” In this context, efforts were made to establish formal diplomatic relations with as many U.N. member nations as possible.

In addition, the passage of the “Stevenson Proposal” in the political committee of the fifteenth U.N. General Assembly provided Seoul with an

14 By 1960, the two Koreas were maintaining diplomatic relations with 16 nations; among these, none were Third World Nations. Namp’ukhan Pikyo Chongso [A Complete Manual of North-South Comparison] (Seoul: National Unification Board, 1982), pp. 136-141.

15 The Stevenson proposal, which proposed simultaneous invitation of the North and the South to the United Nations discussions on the condition that the North acknowledged the authority and competence of the United Nations on Korean problems, was rejected outright by North Korea. See Hankuk Oekyo, pp. 190-191.
incentive to intensify its penetration into the Third World. As a result of Seoul's active diplomatic efforts, the number of U.N. member nations having diplomatic ties with South and North Korea in 1971 reached 83 and 37, respectively, from 16 and 16 in 1961.

As the substantial difference in the number of U.N. members maintaining diplomatic ties with South and North Korea in the 1960s indicates, this period was not yet a time for fierce diplomatic competition between the two regimes. Both regimes, in this period, were following a radically different pattern of diplomatic behavior, in terms of both strategy and scope. First, while the United Nations remained an important diplomatic arena for South Korea, North Korea was virtually alienated from the world organization. Second, although diplomatic competition between Seoul and Pyongyang in the Third World had already started, Seoul's diplomacy was mostly oriented toward pro-Western countries in the region, whereas Pyongyang was attempting to penetrate into those developing countries having an anti-Western propensity. Finally, while Seoul's diplomatic behavior was shaped within the normal, government-to-government framework, Pyongyang appeared rather passive in using normal channels, following instead a line of revolutionary diplomacy.

With the beginning of the 1970s, however, dramatic changes in global politics brought about fierce diplomatic competition between the two Koreas. Most of all, degeneration of the "Pax Americana" that weakened the supporting role of the United States in Seoul's diplomatic efforts, as well as the entry of China into the United Nations, a circumstance that strengthened North Korea's position relative to South Korea, functioned as the most important factor inducing such competition. Especially the People's Republic of China's entry to the United Nations, where it could exercise a strong influence among the already powerful Third World bloc, provided Pyongyang with a favorable opportunity to intensify its Third World adventure.

The beginning of the North-South dialogue and Seoul's "6.23 Declaration" (also called the "Seven-Point Declaration for Peace and Unification") further accelerated North-South competition. In the 28th U.N. General Assembly, which was held shortly after Seoul proclaimed the "6.23 Declaration," the two Koreas participated for the first time in discussions on Korean problems and the competition between Seoul and Pyongyang to secure

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16 For example, in the 1960s, South Korea maintained formal diplomatic relationships with such pro-Western countries as Malaysia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, Jamaica, Guatemala, Panama, Haiti, Peru, Morocco, Tunisia, Gabon, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, and Kenya, while the North had diplomatic ties with such countries with anti-Western propensities as Indonesia, Egypt, Cuba, Syria, Burundi, and Tanzania. See Namp' ukhan Pikyo Ch'ong-sŏ, pp. 136-141.
favorable votes was again intensified. The competition for securing favorable votes was, naturally, accompanied by diplomatic campaigns by both regimes to expand the scope of diplomatic ties.

As Figure 1 clearly indicates, North Korea recorded a modest success in expanding the scope of its formal diplomatic relations throughout the

Figure 1

COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF COUNTRIES HAVING FORMAL DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA (as of October 1982)

![Graph showing comparison of numbers of countries having formal diplomatic ties with North and South Korea]

SOURCE: Nampukhan Pikyo Chôngsô [Comparative Credentials of North and South Korea] (Seoul: Kuk't'o T'ongil Wôn), p. 134.

17 At the twenty-eighth U.N. General Assembly, because of the possibility of excessively vehement North-South competition, voting on the Korean problem was not realized because of the diplomatic negotiations between Zhou Enlai and Henry Kissinger, which produced an agreement to dissolve the U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), an obvious concession made by the United States. In 1974, however, there was fierce North-South competition over the U.N. voting, and in the thirtieth U.N. General Assembly held in 1974, proposals made by the Western and communist blocs were simultaneously approved. See Hankuk oekyo, pp. 198-201.
1970s, recovering from an absolute inferiority vis-à-vis the South. Also, in 1975, North Korea was formally admitted to the Nonaligned Movement’s conference held in Peru. At the end of 1980, the gap between the number of pro-North and pro-South nations was sharply reduced, leading to a ratio of 112 to 100, respectively, for South and North Korea.

Diplomatic competition in this context indicates that the differences in patterns of diplomatic behavior between the North and South are gradually disappearing. North Korea, although it still rejects the proposal for simultaneous U.N. entry, has already joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), along with South Korea.

The increase in the number of nations maintaining formal diplomatic ties with both Seoul and Pyongyang also reflects the changes in the course of competition between North and South Korea. While the diplomatic efforts of both regimes have been largely concentrated on the expansion of formal ties with the nonaligned nations, the two Koreas are now making diplomatic headway even with those nations in the “enemy camp.” Pyongyang’s approach to the United States, Japan, and the EEC nations, and Seoul’s attempt to widen the scope of its nonpolitical exchanges with the Soviet Union, People’s Republic of China, and East European countries, reflects this new trend in diplomatic competition.

Since 1974, Pyongyang has continually suggested direct talks with Washington and sought to enhance its relations with Tokyo via the Japan Socialist Party. Also, North Korea has attempted to establish formal diplomatic ties with Western European countries since 1980, mainly through the channels provided by the French Socialist Party. In the Sixth Party Congress held in 1980, Pyongyang proclaimed its new foreign policy directions for the 1980s; among them, special emphasis was given to “the economic exchange and close ties with those friendly capitalist countries.”

South Korea has also sought to develop its relations with communist nations since the beginning of the 1970s. In 1971, President Park Chung Hee publicly stated his intention “to develop a South Korean relationship with nonhostile communist countries.” His “6.23 Declaration” reconfirmed the basic principle that the “relationship shall be established with those nations maintaining different ideological basis and political system under the principle of mutual benefit and equality.”

Seoul’s open-door policy to communist countries continues in the 1980s. On January 22, 1982, President Chun Doo Hwan reiterated in his

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18 North Korean trade missions were already stationed in Paris according to the 1967 agreement, and North Korea invited high French parliamentary officials to Pyongyang several times in an attempt to develop the trade relationship to a full diplomatic tie. In addition, on February 14, 1981, French Socialist Party Chairman Francois Mitterand visited Pyongyang for two days.

address to the National Assembly the effort to “open the bridge of dialogue with communist nations.” And on June 27, 1983, South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Bōm-sŏk announced a bold diplomatic overture to the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union in his lecture at the National Defense University, titled “Foreign Policy Goals for Building a Developed Homeland.”

Although Pyongyang is annoyed by the four powers’ basic agreement on maintaining the status quo on the peninsula, and Seoul is worried about the possibility of Washington’s approach to Pyongyang without a reciprocal Soviet and Chinese approach to its own government, it becomes increasingly plausible to expect a trend toward more cross-contacts. The scope of informal contacts between Washington and Pyongyang has expanded since the days of the Carter administration, and this trend is expected to continue under the present administration. It should be noted, most of all, that Pyongyang’s intention to enhance its relationship with Washington and Tokyo seems to be sincere, even though they have not yet ceased the political, or verbal, attack on “American Imperialism.” Tokyo is already the biggest trade partner among the noncommunist countries, and the American press corps and table tennis team were invited to Pyongyang in 1979, which suggests that North Korea is attempting to apply the famous Chinese-style “ping pong diplomacy” to its relationship with Washington. For Washington’s part, on October 7, 1983, the State Department allowed its diplomatic personnel to have contacts with North Korean diplomats outside the United States.

Seoul has also experienced a change in its relationship both with the Soviet Union and China. Korean representatives participated in various international conferences held in the Soviet Union, and on September 3, 1978, Minister of Health and Social Affairs Sin Hyŏn-hwak became the first South Korean government official to enter the Soviet Union, participating in a conference jointly sponsored by WHO and UNICEF. In addition, for the first time members of the South Korean press corps were granted entry visas to the Soviet Union together with Minister Sin. Soviet representatives’ participation in international conferences held in Seoul also denotes a change in the South Korean–Soviet relationship. The Seoul–Moscow relationship appears quite strained because of the recent South Korean airliner shootdown incident, but this strain is expected to be temporary.

Turning to the Seoul–Beijing relationship, a conspicuous change began to appear especially after the highjacking incident of a Chinese civil airliner

to Seoul and diplomatic contacts over the settlement measures in May 1983. Soon after the settlement of the incident, however, China rejected the entry of the South Korean delegation to an international U.N. conference held in Beijing, apparently as a political gesture to soothe Pyongyang. In February 1984, the situation changed again when South Korean tennis players were allowed to enter the People’s Republic of China to participate in the preliminary divisional game of the Davis Cup competition. And in April of that year, the chairman of the Korean Football Association, together with the South Korean press corps, were granted entry visas to China to participate in an Asian Football Association conference. Concurrently, a Chinese junior basketball team participated in the Asian Junior Basketball Game held in Seoul. All these incidents are indicative of the general trend by the big powers toward cross-contacts with Seoul and Pyongyang.

As already observed, the diplomatic behavior of the two Koreas’ in the 1960s was mostly shaped within the framework of bloc diplomacy, and it was not until the 1970s that both regimes began a fierce diplomatic competition. At first, the competition focused on penetration into the Third World; as time passed however, South Korea’s approach to communist countries, and North Korea’s attempt to develop its relations with the Western world and Japan, became a conspicuous pattern of competition. In this context, the recent trend toward cross-contacts with the two Koreas by the big powers is drawing much attention. In a sense, this trend reflects a movement toward the stabilization of the Korean situation through diplomatic means, which frustrates Pyongyang’s attempt to isolate Seoul by strengthening its “capability for international revolution.”

**MILITARY CONFRONTATION**

The Korean War taught two important lessons to both North and South Korea. The first was that any attempt to reunify the peninsula by military means would lead to a tragedy that must be avoided, while the second was that increase in military power was an absolute necessity for each to frustrate a possible military adventure by the other. From these two lessons, an uneasy deterrence has been maintained on the peninsula, while a fierce arms race to build stronger armed forces has continued between North and South Korea.

North Korea’s will to break down the status quo on the peninsula was already shown in the Korean War, and there is still no indication whatsoever of any change in Pyongyang’s basic goal of communist reunification. As Article 5 of the North Korean constitution clearly states, socialist victory throughout the peninsula remains a prime national goal of the North.²³

²³ Article 5 of the North Korean constitution states: “The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea strives to achieve the complete victory of socialism in the northern half, drive out foreign forces on a nationwide scale, reunify the country peacefully on a democratic basis and attain complete national independence.”
From the time of ceasefire in 1953 until now, Pyongyang has vehemently demanded withdrawal of the U.S. forces from the South, the real purpose of which is to create a favorable strategic environment for the “liberation of South Korea.” In other words, Pyongyang attempts to create a power dis-equilibrium on the peninsula that would provide an opportunity to launch a military attack on South Korea by removing from the Korean scene the most important factor of deterrence; it should be emphasized here that the Korean War itself broke out shortly after the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea.

From previous observations, one might say that peace on the Korean peninsula is totally dependent upon the military balance between the north and the south. As a historical example, the military capability of North Korea in 1948, both in terms of the number of troops and major equipment, far surpassed that of South Korea when the U.S. forces withdrew from Korea with no compensatory measures. By June 1950, the number of North Korean ground troops were almost double that of South Korea, and the north–south ratios in the numbers of howitzers and aircraft were 6 to 1 and 9.6 to 1, respectively. North Korea additionally possessed 242 T-34 Russian-made tanks, while South Korea had none.

When the war broke out, the United States, under the banner of the United Nations, directly intervened in the conflict to end the conflict and secure a free, democratic government in the South. Throughout the postwar period, the stationing of U.S. troops in South Korea, together with massive military assistance, have decisively contributed to the maintenance of military balance on the peninsula, and, at least up to the 1960s, there appeared no serious problem in maintaining the status quo. North Korea’s military buildup was mostly defensive in nature, while their offensives were largely political, seeking a “peace offensive” rather than attempting a military adventure.

South Korea by that time was occupied with burgeoning domestic political and economic problems, giving total trust to the unquestionable U.S. containment policy. In the latter part of the 1960s, however, escalation of the Vietnam conflict was followed by a massive involvement of U.S. forces as well as of the Korean troops requested by the United States, and this occasion became an inducement for North Korea’s frequent military encroachment into the south. Pyongyang’s military intrusions were perhaps a series of attempts to build a “second front” on the peninsula, exploit-

\[24\] Chosun Ilbo [Chosun Daily News], June 24, 1984.

\[25\] In 1964, responding to a request of the South Vietnamese government, the Republic of Korea sent noncombat troops to Vietnam; in 1965, combat troops were sent, the number of which in 1967 reached 47,000, a figure second only to that of the United States. See Kim Ki-t’ae, “Hankuk’dii Bet’nam Ch’amjönkwa Hanmi kwan’gye” [South Korean Participation in the Vietnam War and the U.S.–R.O.K. Relationship], Ph.D. dissertation, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, 1982, p. 108.
ing the strategic weakness of South Korea created by its involvement in Vietnam. As already indicated, in 1968 alone, substantially serious incidents occurred sporadically, such as a guerrilla attack on the South Korean presidential residence, the *Pueblo* incident, and a fairly large-scale commando infiltration in the Uljin and Samch'ok areas on the east coast. It seems that Kim Il Sung, inspired by the successful guerrilla warfare of the Viet Cong that inflicted heavy casualties on U.S. and South Vietnamese troops, attempted to apply the same tactics to the Korean scene.

Two incidents in 1969 provided momentum for changes in the military policy of the two regimes that later significantly affected the pattern of military confrontation between them. Those two incidents were the proclamation of the so-called Nixon or Guam Doctrine and the military clash between China and the Soviet Union. As the Sino-Soviet military clash produced a wave of shock in the North, the Nixon Doctrine was a political blow to the Park regime in the South. Shock waves in both north and south accelerated both regimes' efforts to achieve military self-sufficiency, leading to a fierce arms race in the 1970s. The intensity of the arms race was well reflected in the North Korean defense expenditure, the absolute amount of which far surpassed that of South Korea until 1976, while its per capita gross national product (GNP) was substantially lower than South Korea's.

The trend since the 1970s, which is characterized by an intense arms race, has made economic capacity all the more important as a basis for military buildup (see Figure 2).

The importance of economic capacity becomes conspicuous when we consider that the gap between the absolute amount of military expenditures between North and South Korea will gradually widen, although North Korea is allocating more than 20 percent of its total GNP to the defense expenditure compared to a mere 6 percent in South Korea. It is true that North Korea is still superior to South Korea in terms of the number of troops or equipment.\(^{26}\) As already indicated, however, if South Korea surpasses North Korea in terms of absolute amount of defense expenditure, we can easily expect in the near future a true military "balance" on the peninsula. And if North Korea adopts a more pragmatic, economic development-oriented policy to solve its urgent domestic problems, the military balance between the North and the South will be achieved even sooner. Kim Il Sung's proposal, made on October 1980 at the Sixth Party Congress, for a mutual reduction of the number of troops and an easing of military tension, reflects Pyongyang's annoyance that the time factor is functioning favorably for South Korea in the arms race. All these trends,

\(^{26}\) According to a South Korean government report in 1982, the number of North Korean troops maintains a 1.2 to 1 ratio over that of South Korea, while the ratio reaches 1.3 to 1 in case of the number of reserve forces. In terms of numbers of tanks, aircrafts, and warships, the ratios are 2.5 to 1, 2.4 to 1, and 5 to 1, respectively.
ultimately, seem to support Seoul's proposition that continuous increase in economic and military capabilities is the only way available to deter North Korea's revolutionary adventures.

Figure 2.

COMPARISON OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA.

CONCLUSION: FUTURE PROSPECTS

As already observed, changes in North–South Korean relations that occurred in the 1970s deserve special attention. If we follow the line of the present trend to predict the future course of north–south relations, it is difficult to ignore the possibility of some kind of significant change. According to the results of a recent survey done by the Korean Gallup Poll, 64.1 percent of the total respondents recognized the existence of a possibility of another military conflict between north and south.27 The fact that South Koreans still hold a pessimistic view of the Korean situation is not surprising, considering the actual strains involved.

In most cases, however, perception remains unchanged even when the actual situation changes. Furthermore, it is very difficult for ordinary South Koreans to see what actually happens in North Korea, perhaps the most isolated society on earth. Those who have pessimistic viewpoints are usually reluctant to believe in the possibility of any change in north–south relations.

However isolated and rigid the north might be, it is difficult to remain secluded permanently in this age of fast changes and development. That is, Pyongyang is now facing a deadlock in its lonely drive toward military buildup. Not only is the domestic economy faltering, but the scope of its international support has become significantly reduced. The gap in north–south economic capacity is ever widening, and China, once a sole and strong supporter of the revolution, has shifted its policy direction and urges appeasement rather than revolution. Resources for diplomatic competition and for the arms race with South Korea are now almost drained. In other words, Pyongyang must now begin to worry about the imbalance between resource availability and policy goals, which might bring about serious consequences. Still, Pyongyang seems to harbor a last hope to the political manipulation revolving around the Korean problems. Although North Korea’s economy is fragile, it appears that Pyongyang believes its political resources are ample, and its status stronger, relative to South Korea. North Korea’s attempt to gain leverage in political bargaining for the solution of the Korean problem may be interpreted in this context. Recent proposals for tripartite talks, to be sure, are an example of political engineering by North Korea. As long as Pyongyang attempts to secure political leverage, it will consider Seoul not as a real counterpart in political talks but as an object of manipulation. Since the 1970s, however, North Korea’s peace offensives have become obsolete, while South Korea has become gradually active and successful in its “politics of unification.”

Ultimately, the North Korean domestic and international environment will lead to Pyongyang’s agreement on a practical solution to the Korean

27 See Han’guk Ilbo [Han’guk Daily News], June 24, 1984.
problem. In this case, "practical solution" means more than a mere resumption of the north-south dialogue. Dialogue between the two regimes has always existed, albeit sporadically. "Practical solution" here means mutual cooperation between the North and the South on the basis of a shared perception that peaceful coexistence between them is an inevitability.
Changing Relations between Moscow and Pyongyang: Odd Man Out

Yu-Nam Kim

North Korea’s relations toward its communist allies can be viewed in terms of both long- and short-term foreign policy goals. The long-term goal is to maintain close ties with both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China in order to ensure their continuing support for Pyongyang’s reunification policies and the struggle against South Korea. Although relations between Pyongyang and both Moscow and Beijing have fluctuated over the past two decades, China and the Soviet Union have each been important sources of political, economic, military, and diplomatic support for Pyongyang.

While officially maintaining an equidistant policy toward the two communist “superpowers,” North Korea continues to capitalize on the volatile relations that exist between them. In effect, North Korea has sought its own national interests by playing off one power against the other in this strange courtship. When it appeared that the United States and the Soviet Union would achieve détente in the 1970s, Pyongyang relied on the Soviet Union’s peace plan to call for the withdrawal of American troops from the Korean peninsula, seeking to convince the United States that there was no threat from the North. When relations between the United States and China improved in the late 1970s and early 1980s, North Korea used China as the gateway for attempting direct contacts with the United States to discuss American troop withdrawal from South Korea.¹

North Korea's short-term goal is to remain ideologically close to the two major communist states while continuing to maintain its political independence. Although Pyongyang needs both Soviet and Chinese support in its international relations, it still desires to maintain its freedom of action domestically and internationally.

North Korea's efforts to enlist the international support of the PRC and the USSR are readily seen in the number of diplomatic exchanges and visits that have taken place over the past few years. Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang's Pyongyang visit in December 1981 was followed by visits from Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, and Defense Minister Geng Biao in 1982. Kim Il Sung reciprocated in September 1982 by visiting Beijing; in June 1983 Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong II, paid his own visit to Beijing. These exchanges appear to indicate that Chinese-North Korean relations were on an even keel, possibly improving.²

Relations between the Soviet Union and North Korea over the past few years have not been characterized by the same degree of warmth. While the Soviet Party General Secretary, Konstantin Chernenko, did send a warm congratulatory message to Kim Il Sung on the occasion of the latter's seventy-second birthday in April 1984, Kim Il Sung's visit to Moscow in May 1984 marked the first time that the North Korean leader had been in Moscow since 1967. Relations between North Korea and the Soviet Union might best be described as "fluid" since the end of World War II. Eight periods in these relations can be identified since 1945: (1) North Korea as Soviet satellite (1945-1950); (2) close relations between Pyongyang and both the Soviet Union and China (1951-1957); (3) political autonomy and independence (1958-1961); (4) positive neutrality while leaning toward Beijing (1961-1964); (5) positive neutrality while leaning toward Moscow (1965-1968); (6) a return to political autonomy (1969-1978); (7) a return to positive neutrality while leaning toward Moscow (1979-1981); and (8) a period of positive neutrality while leaning toward Beijing (1982-present).³

A pertinent question is why have North Korea's relations with these two communist superpowers fluctuated so dramatically? The answer is relatively simple. North Korea is acting in terms of its own national self-interest. As the relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated,


³Out of these eight stages, the latter five periods from 1962 can be grouped as the stage of positive neutrality. For related studies on these periods, see, among other works, Joungwan Alexander Kim, "Soviet Policy in North Korea," World Politics, no. 22 (January 1970), pp. 237-253; and Joseph M. Ha, "Soviet Perceptions of North Korea," Asian Perspective, vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1982), pp. 107-111.
North Korea took advantage of the situation by courting one or the other of the two for its own immediate gains. When Soviet policy goals and support to North Korea have seemed insufficient or detrimental to Pyongyang's unification policy, North Korea has wasted no time in focusing its attention upon Beijing. Such changes have been easily accomplished thanks to China's phobia toward its Soviet neighbor since 1969, and the reverse has been equally true, although what the future holds is unclear.

It is interesting that this small communist country has been so skillful in manipulating the two communist giants. The dilemma in which the Soviet Union finds itself appears to be the result of the failure of its Asian policies during recent decades. While the Soviet Union was at loggerheads with China, a tacit U.S.-China-Japan anti-Soviet alignment began forming; Pyongyang quickly seized upon this threat as a basis for further concessions from Moscow. In sum, North Korea used its strategic importance and anti-Soviet sentiment in Northeast Asia to play upon Soviet fears.

The importance of Asia to the Soviet Union can scarcely be exaggerated. Over three-quarters of all Soviet territory is in Asia and 50 million people (20 percent of the Soviet population) are Asians. Success in improving the Soviet economy depends extensively on exploiting the rich mineral and energy resources of Siberia and the Soviet Far East. Thus the Soviet Far East is an area of long-term economic and geopolitical importance to the Soviet Union, and it is determined to make its strategic presence felt to counter American power in the region, as well as to meet any threat from a neighboring Asian state. The history, geography, economy, and demography of Northeast Asia all combine to suggest that the Soviet Union will continue to be concerned with the security of the Far East against the forces of the United States, Japan, or China, singly or in combination.

Of primary concern to the Soviet Union is the safeguarding of the Korean peninsula against opponents of both the USSR and North Korea—

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5 It should be noted that the Korean peninsula is the only place in the Asian-Pacific region where the armed forces of the four major powers come into physical contact. Because of its geostrategic position, North Korea occupies a key position in relation to the strategic importance of the Soviet Pacific Fleet in Vladivostok, to Manchuria, and to Beijing itself as well as to the strategic importance of the Japanese archipelago and the Sea of Japan.

6 See a statement by William A. Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary, made before the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and on Asia and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, October 19, 1983.

South Korea and the United States. Today, Moscow is bound by treaty to defend the Pyongyang regime just as Washington is committed to defend South Korea. Moscow is burdened with the additional requirement of having to ensure that Pyongyang does not move too far into Beijing's orbit and thus must attempt to increase its own influence over the North Korean regime. However, Moscow has long been aware that the control it can exercise over Pyongyang under the current regime has definite limits. As a result, the USSR has attempted to give North Korean issues a relatively low priority in recent years and has apparently hoped that the PRC would do the same. Over the last ten years, up to the end of 1984, Moscow had not dispatched any new major weapons systems or provided substantial increases in its economic support to North Korea. In effect, Moscow has "maintained" its relationship with Pyongyang but has shown no strong interest in intensifying it.

Kim Il Sung's May visit to Moscow, the first in 17 years, may mark a new beginning in Soviet-North Korean relations. Konstantin Chernenko, during his brief tenure as top Soviet leader, was more vocal than his predecessors in condemning the U.S.-Japan-China "alignment." The Russians may now feel that the time has come to reverse Soviet setbacks in Northeast Asia and improve relations to a level commensurate with the region's importance to Soviet national interests.

Let us now explore the May 1984 Moscow visit by Kim Il Sung, focusing on the objectives that both the North Koreans and the Soviets hoped to achieve from this meeting. We shall use Kim Il Sung's and Chernenko's banquet speeches as a point of departure. A detailed reading of these two carefully prepared speeches may shed some light on the value and perceptions that underwrite Soviet and North Korean foreign policy. An inductive approach is taken here that warrants an initial caution. Too literal a reading of any foreign policy speech can be misleading. The two speeches examined in this essay are used as a point of departure for subsequent discussions on Soviet and North Korean perceptions and interests that can be and are substantiated from other sources.

We will first examine Soviet perceptions of North Korea, using Chernenko's banquet speech. Second, we will turn to Kim Il Sung's speech for a similar evaluation. Because Soviet and North Korea perceptions give rise to different sets of foreign policy objectives, the means each has chosen for its

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8 See works on this subject written by Robert A. Scalapino, Donald S. Zagoria, Allen S. Whiting, and Ralph N. Clough.


respective plans will then be analyzed—the Soviet proposal for confidence-building measures (CBMs) in Northeast Asia and North Korea’s proposals for tripartite talks.

SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF NORTH KOREA

Relations between the Soviet Union and North Korea have not remained static for any protracted period of time. Kim II Sung’s personality cult, dating back to his great-grandfather and extending now to his son Kim Jong Il and the nationalist chuch’e ideology of North Korea, do not seem to sit well in Moscow. In their private conversations with Western counterparts, leading Soviet apparachikies, scholars, and intellectuals have often been critical of the North Korean regime and especially of Kim II Sung. North Korea is significant only because of the scant attention given it in Soviet foreign policy writings and official documents. Since 1975, Soviet foreign policy textbooks offer formal, rather than substantive, references in support of the socialist system established after the Soviet “liberation of Korea” in 1945. The official policy statements made by the Party Secretary General to the 25th Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1976 and to the 26th Congress in 1981 make no reference to North Korea, and the Soviet news media also appear to be extremely reluctant to give more than “lukewarm support to Kim II Sung.”

Two principal factors have forced the Soviet Union somewhat grudgingly to continue their less than cordial relationship with North Korea: (1) North Korea’s strategic location has become increasingly important in terms of Soviet national interests, and (2) during the last decade and a half of Sino-Soviet rivalry, the Soviet Union could ill afford to have North Korea drawn too closely into China’s orbit. From Moscow’s point of view, China has gone to considerable length to court North Korea. Since the death of Mao, top Chinese leaders have visited Pyongyang and had extensive discussions with their North Korean counterparts. In 1983, Kim II Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il, were warmly received in Beijing in a gesture that appeared to indicate top Chinese acceptance of Kim Jong Il’s succession.

This warming of relations between North Korea and that of a rival along its borders have forced Moscow to reconsider its interests in Northeast Asia and particularly in North Korea. As early as 1946, the Kremlin clearly

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stated its interests in North Korea when discussing the 38th parallel issue with the United States: "The Soviet Union has a keen interest in Korea being a true democratic and independent country, friendly to the Soviet Union, so that in the future it will not become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union." The Soviet Union's historical fear of instability along its borders together with the growing economic and military significance of Siberia form the backdrop against which North Korea's relations with China were earlier evaluated in Moscow. Not wanting to find itself "odd man out" in Northeast Asia, Moscow extended an invitation to the North Korean leadership to visit the Soviet Union in May of 1984. On the eve of Kim Il Sung's arrival, the Soviet press released the following statement supporting North Korea's unification policy while at the same time being critical of China's role:

The United States is currently working hard with China to seek mutual concessions on the Taiwan issue and to make Washington and Beijing arrive at basically identical views on the issue of the Korean peninsula. Recently, some people in Washington put forward plans to ask China to help tackle the Korea issue. Another trend in the U.S. diplomatic circles is to encourage the Seoul authorities to establish all types of unofficial contacts with China and promote trade between South Korea and China.

The Soviet Union has always opposed the imperialist policy of splitting Korea forever and of separating Taiwan from China.

When President Ronald Reagan was still in Beijing, Tass confirmed Kim Il Sung's invitation and scheduled visit to Moscow, reporting that he would "pay an official friendly visit to the Soviet Union in the second half of May." Significant by their absence, however, were the customary welcoming remarks that normally accompany the announcement of an official state visit.

Leaving Pyongyang on May 18, Kim Il Sung arrived in Moscow on May 23 and spent a total of five days in the Soviet capital. Accompanying Kim were North Korean Premier Kang Song-san, Defense Minister O Jin-u, Vice-Premier Li Jong-ok, Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam, and Vice-Premier Kong Jin-tae, among others. This prestigious delegation was met at Moscow's Yaroslavl railway station by Soviet Premier Nikolay Tikhonov, Foreign


Minister Andrei Gromyko, and Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov along with other Soviet dignitaries.16

During Kim Il Sung's visit, it was reported, Kim and Chernenko had at least one private closed-door session and two additional sessions where other members of both delegations were present. These sessions were designed to exchange views on various issues, including international problems of mutual interest and the situation on the Korean peninsula. At the larger meetings of May 24 and 25, the youngest Politburo member, Mikhail Gorbachev, was reported to have been the most active of the Soviet participants. Gorbachev had already been picked by many observers as the next Soviet leader.

On the evening of May 23, preceding the summit between Chernenko and Kim, a dinner banquet was held in honor of the visiting North Korean delegation. At this banquet Chernenko read a carefully worded, 15-minute text outlining the Soviet Union's position and hinting at Moscow's dissatisfaction with the present state of Soviet-North Korean relations. Three important Soviet perspectives on relations with North Korea were emphasized in the speech: (1) better cooperation between the two states was needed not only in the economic arena, but in other branches of bilateral relations as well, (2) Moscow viewed military tension and instability along its borders with great concern, and (3) mutual cooperation between socialist countries could help solve internal and external problems effectively.

Chernenko's banquet speech cannot be categorized as an especially warm salutation. Presumably concerned with North Korea's intensely nationalistic brand of communism, Chernenko stated:

Twenty-three years ago, a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance was signed here in the Moscow Kremlin. It has become a reliable foundation for the development of Soviet-[North] Korean relations, an important factor of peace and security in the Far East....

Of course, the possibilities of our cooperation are far from being exhausted. It can be further expanded, and not only in the economic field. Exchanges of experience in Party and State work and interaction in the sphere of international activities are becoming, we believe, ever more important now....

We attach much importance to the forthcoming talks. They will undoubtedly help to raise the Soviet-[North] Korean ties to a new level. I would like to stress here once again that the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government will continue exerting efforts to consolidate our cooperation on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism.17

Others present at the railway station welcoming ceremony were V. V. Kuznetsov, alternate member of the Politburo; K. V. Rusakov, Secretary of the Central Committee; N. V. Talyzin, member of the Central Committee; T. N. Mensheshashvili, General Secretary of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; B. V. Balmont, V. M. Kamentsev, N. S. Konaev, N. N. Tarasov, Ya. P. Ruabov, members of the Central Committee; and S. A. Losev, director of Tass.

16 For a full text, see Pyongyang Times, May 26, 1984, p. 2; and for a condensed text in English, see Pravda, May 24, 1984, p. 2, in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), vol. 36, no. 21 (June 20, 1984), pp. 12-13.

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Inherent in Chernenko’s carefully prepared text were Moscow’s hopes for closer Soviet and North Korean positions on international and foreign policy issues. Implicitly, Moscow appeared once again to be employing the “carrot and stick” approach. Soviet foreign economic assistance could not be the sole basis for cooperation between the two countries—there had to be reciprocal support on international issues: “the possibilities of our cooperation are far from being exhausted.”

The call by Chernenko to “raise the Soviet-[North] Korean ties to a new level” by implication clearly involves China and called for concessions on the part of North Korea. Moscow recognizes that Pyongyang is approaching a leadership succession and it is also aware of the fact that China has already acceded to the selection of Kim Jong Il as his father’s successor. The close ties between North Korea and China, and North Korea’s open criticism of the Soviet-supported Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and more indirectly, of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, have been regarded with concern in Moscow. “Marxist-Leninist internationalism” as manifested in the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine denying the right of any state to leave socialism is still applicable in the eyes of the CPSU and it applies to Soviet-North Korean relations.

Soviet concern with a possible Seoul-Tokyo-Washington alliance was clearly manifest in Chernenko’s speech. Given the planned expansion of the Vladivostok-Vostochny-Nakhodka Soviet naval complex, the final completion of the Baikal-Amur Siberian railway (BAM), and the projected development of Siberia and the Far Eastern Maritime District, Moscow has enhanced national interests in Northeast Asia and it must meet Western challenges to its self-image as the leader of the region’s “socialist community.”

In recent years, Moscow has repeatedly accused the U.S. and Japan of forming a triple alliance with South Korea against the Soviet Union and other socialist states in the region. Consistent with these actions, Chernenko reiterated the Soviet concern that

[Imperialists] are again trying to form militarist axes and triangles like the Washington-Tokyo-Seoul bloc. We are against such geopolitics, against all manner of “spheres of influence” and “zones of interest,” against closed military groupings anywhere and in the Pacific in particular. . . .


I should say that we are seriously worried by such a dangerous seat of military tension close to the state borders of the Soviet Union. 21

Because of its proximity to the Soviet Union, the Korean peninsula is in a key position in "relation to strategically important territories such as the Soviet Maritime Province with the main bases of the Soviet Pacific Fleet in Vladivostok and Nakhodka." 22 Although Soviet writers in the past have warned South Korea, the United States, and Japan about increasing their military ties, this was the first time a Soviet leader officially claimed that South Korea has joined an anti-Soviet military alliance. The implications for Soviet–North Korean relations and North Korea’s role against such an alliance are clear.

The Soviet Union already uses the facilities of Najin as its warm-water north Pacific port in accordance with a series of agreements aimed at prompting economic cooperation between North Korea and the Soviet Union. It appears, however, that Chernenko may not have been totally satisfied with the status quo and that the Soviet Union seeks better arrangements with Pyongyang than those described as "normal, quite proper, not heated nor elevated, but not cool either." 23 One could assume from Chernenko’s remarks that Moscow had begun to think of increasing its military cooperation with North Korea possibly in exchange for use of North Korean bases. The trip of Vice-Foreign Minister M. S. Kapitsa to North Korea in December 1984 reportedly explored these and other matters, with as yet unrevealed results.

Finally, attention must be paid to Chernenko’s banquet remarks on Soviet “peace programs,” particularly the Soviet-proposed Mery po Ukrepleniui Dovertia 'confidence-building measures' in the Far East. Initially, Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, at the 26th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1981, first introduced CBMs as a Soviet peace program for the Far East. This concept still appears to be Moscow’s approach to peace and security in Asia at the most basic level. Concerning North Korea’s specific proposal for trilateral negotiations involving the United States and South Korea, Moscow clearly had reservations. Note Chernenko’s comments:

The Soviet Union consistently stands for Korea to be reunified by peaceful means, on a democratic basis, after the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea.

We support the DPRK’s important initiatives which provide for signing a peace treaty instead of the existing armistice agreement, adopting a declaration on non-

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aggression between north and south, carrying out mutual reduction of armed forces... The Soviet Union is consistently in favor of starting an active, conscientious search for ways to improve the situation in the Asian continent without wasting precious time.

The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union proposed that talks be conducted on confidence-building measures in the Far East with all interested countries.

Well-known are the DPRK's peace initiatives directed at lessening tensions in Korea, in the Far East. The world public positively assessed the proposal advanced by the Mongolian People's Republic that a convention be concluded on mutual non-aggression and non-use of force in relations between states in Asia and the Pacific.\(^{24}\)

There is a background to these remarks. When Pyongyang announced its tripartite proposals in January 1984, *Pravda* carried only a short report stating that North Korea had "called for the trilateral talks, focusing on the question of replacing the truce with a peace treaty and withdrawing American troops." No additional comments were added to the factual report.\(^{25}\) Few signs of support for the North Korean proposal were to be found in Chernenko's speech. Even the word "tripartite" was absent from his description of the talks. Instead, he simply referred to North Korean "initiatives for signing a peace treaty" and "adopting a declaration of nonaggression" to "lessen the tension in Korea."

It is apparent that the Soviet Union is not comfortable with the idea of having the United States as a party to peace talks on the Korean question without Soviet participation. It has been Moscow's firm position that the Soviet Union should be "one of the main participants in any peace negotiations which bear on the direct interests of the Soviet Union."\(^{26}\)

For North Korea, Chernenko's response to the tripartite talks was no doubt disappointing. Kim Il Sung had two major press interviews with Soviet correspondents prior to his Moscow visit, and in those interviews he thanked the Soviet Union (in advance) for their strong support of his proposal for the tripartite talks. During the interview with the Soviet news agency Tass on March 31, Kim Il Sung stated: "I am very grateful to the Soviet Communist Party, the government, and people for their active support of our proposal for creating a Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo and our proposal for tripartite talks."\(^{27}\) In another interview with *Pravda* on April 15, Kim Il

\(^{24}\) *Pyongyang Times*, May 26, 1984, p. 2; and *Pravda*, May 24, 1984, p. 2.


Sung thanked the Soviet Union again for its support of the tripartite talks. But Kim’s appreciation for Soviet support was premature.

There was also no direct reference to the question of Kim Jong Il’s succession in Chernenko’s speech. Moscow may have refused to acquiesce on this matter until more cooperation from Pyongyang was forthcoming on other matters. The Soviet ideological magazine, the New Times, printed the following comments after seeing Kim Il Sung off from the Moscow railway station on 27 May:

The Socialist countries are tackling the tasks involved in the building of a new society in close cooperation with one another.

The extension of ties between the fraternal countries and the strengthening of their mutual cooperation help each of them to solve its internal problems effectively and exert a beneficial influence on the international climate.

Top level meetings between leaders of socialist countries are especially useful in this respect, as was again demonstrated by the official friendly visit to the Soviet Union of a Party and a state delegation from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea led by Kim Il Sung.28

For the Soviets, the emphasis in this passage is on the solution of internal and external problems. From the Soviet point of view, its ultimate trump card over North Korea is the succession issue. If North Korea is willing to improve its relations with the Soviet Union and become a more respectful ally, Moscow will support Kim Jong Il’s succession. If such conditions can be brought about, Kim’s visit may be heralded later as marking the beginning of a new era in Soviet–North Korean relations. Kim Il Sung’s remarks at the banquet and following his visit, however, suggest that such an era may not yet have been reached. Let us turn therefore to the North Korean side of the coin.

NORTH KOREAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION

North Korea’s foreign policy toward the Soviet Union and China over the past 23 years has often been categorized as a “zero-sum game.” What China won in terms of concessions, Moscow supposedly lost. Yet North Korea has done little to support this thesis. It has actively pursued its own national interests by courting both suitors. Kim Il Sung’s historic visit to Moscow was no exception; it was preceded by a trip to Beijing and by a visit by the Chinese General Secretary Hu Yaobang to Pyongyang in early May. Before North Korean perceptions of the Soviet Union can be discussed, therefore, some background information must be provided concerning the Sino–North Korean talks held prior to Kim Il Sung’s Moscow visit.

A few days after President Ronald Reagan’s six-day visit to Beijing, on May 4, 1984, Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang arrived in Pyongyang for the start of a two-week visit in North Korea. On May 11, Kim Il Sung made an important speech at Hu Yaobang’s welcoming banquet indicating that Sino-North Korean relations were on the upswing and would continue to improve regardless of what transpired during Kim’s forthcoming trip to Moscow.

We [Kim and Hu] have had sincere and informal meetings and talks on several occasions to meticulously analyze the international issues of common concern, especially the problems concerning the situation in Asia and the Korean peninsula and peaceful reunification of Korea and reconfirmed the consensus of our views and stand.

In whatever trials may come, our people will invariably fight on, shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese people.

In his reply, Hu Yaobang responded to Kim Il Sung’s warm remarks by confirming what the president had said and closed by stating that China “treasures and defends Sino-[North] Korean friendship as the apple of our eye.” Kim Il Sung’s comments that Beijing-Pyongyang ties would be maintained through whatever trials might come could have been a reference to his forthcoming talks with Chernenko as well as other matters. Kim no doubt sought to reassure his Chinese friends that any change in North Korean-Soviet relations would not affect the “consensus” achieved in Chinese-North Korea views. Hu Yaobang was particularly astute and generous in stating that the Sino-North Korean friendship will be “defended by China as the apple of our eye.”

Two weeks after seeing Hu Yaobang off from Chongjin railway station, Kim Il Sung arrived in Moscow. From Pyongyang’s point of view, neither the Chinese nor the Soviet offer of friendship was without qualifications. Beijing’s recent contacts with Seoul, such as the visit of director Shen Tu of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) in May 1983, growing levels of PRC-South Korea trade both directly and through Hong Kong, and increasingly frequent sports and cultural contacts between China and South Korea have left some doubt in North Korean minds as to China’s true commitments.

29 It is believed that Hu Yaobang conveyed the Chinese view of Reagan’s Beijing visit to North Korea, just as Secretary of State George P. Shultz briefed South Korean leaders when he flew to Seoul on May 1, 1984. For more on Hu Yaobang’s Pyongyang visit, see “China Turns Attention to Ties with Soviet Union and North Korea,” New York Times, May 5, 1984, p. 2.


31 Ibid., p. 2.
Toward the Soviet Union, the North Korean leaders are at least equally suspicious. Pyongyang knows that on a few occasions Moscow has extended "feelers" to South Korea, apparently as an expression of Moscow's displeasure over Kim II Sung's secret visit to Beijing. Additionally, the Soviet news agency Tass sent its delegation to Seoul for the third meeting of the Organization of Asian News Agencies (OANA) on October 11, 1982; less than a week later, the head of the Art Conservation Department of the Soviet Cultural Ministry, G. Popov, came to a meeting of the Asian Regional Museum Organization (ARMO) held in Seoul on October 17, 1982. These Soviet delegation visits occurred within a few weeks after Kim II Sung's Beijing visit, which took place September 16-25, 1982, and seemed to be an attempt to counterbalance North Korean moves toward Beijing.^^

Before his arrival in Moscow, Kim had stated several times that "there is no reason to strain relations with either communist power... in a tense situation like ours where we are confronted with the South. Why should we aggravate the situation by quarreling with the Russians or the Chinese?"^^

In his response to Chernenko's demand at the dinner banquet for better relations between Moscow and Pyongyang, Kim II Sung replied emphatically:

[North] Korea and the Soviet Union are friendly neighbors which border on the same river. The [North] Korean and Soviet peoples are class brothers and comrades-in-arms who fought in cooperation for their common ideal and purpose for a long time. The might of socialism exists in solidarity and cooperation. Only when they strengthen solidarity and cooperation can each of the socialist countries thwart the economic blockade and all obstructive moves of the imperialists, and ensure success in building socialism. Only then can all the socialist forces counter the allied imperialist forces with their unbreakable strength of unity and solidarity.^^

In reply to Chernenko's condemnation of the Washington-Tokyo-Seoul "military bloc," Kim II Sung said that only through strong ties between Moscow and Pyongyang could the American-South Korean "menace" be countered. In other words, because of North Korea's strategic importance to the Soviet Far East, Kim II Sung was suggesting that Soviet economic and military support to Pyongyang would become a support for Moscow's security in Northeast Asia.

Here Kim II Sung was also reminding the Soviet Union of the difficulties that North Korea faced in its economic development efforts, partly because of its heavy defense expenditures. In recent years, North Korea

^^For details, see "North Korea-USSR Relations," USSR and Third World, vol. 12, no. 5-6 (1982), p. 58.


spent almost 16 percent of its GNP on defense efforts and another 25 percent on defense-related industries.\textsuperscript{35} In terms of neutralizing the Western economic blockade and other “obstructive moves of imperialists,” Kim Il Sung was highlighting the fact that part of North Korea’s economic problems arise directly from its service as a “front line state” in support of the socialist world.

Whether North Korea and the Soviet Union will move closer toward an operative military alliance or not remains to be seen. Since Soviet national interests in Northeast Asia appear to be increasing, a closer Moscow–P’yongyang security tie is possible. Under certain circumstances, could Soviet willingness to shoulder a heavy economic and assistance burden in Vietnam to counter the Chinese threat in Southeast Asia be duplicated in Northeast Asia?\textsuperscript{36}

Having long been irritated by the big-power chauvinism of the Soviet Union, however, Kim Il Sung once again seized the opportunity in Moscow to reiterate his chuch’e ‘self-reliant’ ideology in reference to the concept of Communist Internationalism:

Communism represents the bright future of mankind, and the building up of a socialist society and communist society is the most important revolutionary task of the Parties and states of socialist countries. . . .

In order to promote successfully the building of socialism and communism, the socialist countries must properly enlist the creative abilities of their own peoples and, at the same time, strengthen their international solidarity and cooperation.\textsuperscript{37}

Kim Il Sung cautiously called for Moscow to accept North Korea’s chuch’e concept of applying indigenous traditions, experiences, and “creative abilities” on a broad spectrum to build its own socialist system. By including “creative abilities,” Kim Il Sung may have also intended to signal the issue of Kim Jong II’s dynastic succession.

In response to Chernenko’s call for moving to a “new stage” in the Soviet–North Korean relationship, Kim Il Sung used similar words.

We hope that during this visit we will sincerely discuss with the Soviet Party and state leaders the effective ways of expanding and developing the friendly and cooperative relations between our two countries in all fields and in an all-round way, the current international situation and other matters of common concern and that comradeship and confidence in each other will be further promoted. . . .

I firmly believe that our visit to the Soviet Union will bear good fruit to meet the expectations of the [North] Korean and Soviet people, and will mark a turning


\textsuperscript{36} For more on Moscow–Hanoi relations, see Tan Shan, “Kremlin–Hanoi Pact: Sources of Southeast Asian Tension,” \textit{Current World Leader}, vol. 27, no. 1-3 (February 1984), pp. 100-102.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{P’yongyang Times}, May 26, 1984, p. 2; and \textit{Pravda}, May 24, 1984, p. 2.
point in developing the traditional [North] Korea-Soviet friendship onto a higher stage.\(^3\)

The "new stage" may have been signaled, but it had not yet been reached. There have been some signs of improving Pyongyang-Moscow relations in the past few years, including an increasing number of exchanges, but substantial improvements in Pyongyang's relationship with Moscow have not occurred. In truth, Pyongyang is not particularly close with either Moscow or Beijing. Because relations between its two big neighbors have been troubled, North Korea has wanted to some extent to stay out of troubled waters.\(^3^\)

Examining Kim's perspective on steps toward peace on the Korean peninsula expressed in Moscow, we find a strong emphasis quite naturally on the proposed tripartite talks.

With a view to lessening the tension and averting a war in the Korean peninsula, the Workers' Party of [North] Korea and the government of our Republic maintain invariably the policy of peaceful national reunification.

Recently our Party and the government of our Republic made a new proposal for tripartite talks between the DPRK, the United States, and South Korea, precisely for the fundamental purpose of easing the tension and removing the war danger from the Korean peninsula and thus creating a situation and precondition for the independent and peaceful reunification of the country.

Today the governments and peoples of the Soviet Union and many other countries actively support our proposals for peaceful national reunification and for tripartite talks.

We firmly believe that the cause of the reunification of the country, which is our nation's supreme desire, will be accomplished in a peaceful way, with active support and encouragement from the fraternal Soviet people and the progressive people of the world.\(^4\)

Kim was fully aware of the Soviet reluctance to give active support to the North Korean proposal when he made these remarks. The Soviet Union has long been actively supporting a Mongolian peace program calling for agreements both on mutual and multilateral nonaggression pacts and for the non use of force in international relations in Asia and the Pacific. In effect, this program is nothing more than Ulan Bator's version of the Soviet proposal for confidence-building measures. North Korea's tripartite proposal, on the other hand, was an initiative designed in consultation with Beijing and involving Beijing's possible collaboration with Washington.\(^5\)

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 2.

\(^4\) "Much Astir in Northeast Asia," South China Morning Post, April 24, 1984, p. 4.


Kim made no reference in his remarks to Chernenko's peace plan, which called for a Helsinki-type security conference in Asia. Although well aware of the Soviet proposal, Kim II Sung continued implicitly to reject this formula. In 1982, North Korea did not respond to Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's speech at the United Nations General Assembly in which he suggested that the problems on the Korean peninsula could be solved by means of the confidence-building measures that had worked in Europe.

The Soviet Union is ready to discuss this matter in a practical vein with the participation of the PRC and Japan [within the framework of the proposed confidence-building measures]. Tensions increased by the situation on the Korean peninsula still after decades [have] not [been] brought to normal. The Korean problem can and must be settled by peaceful means.42

Chernenko's intransigent position reiterating the call for confidence-building measures must have reconfirmed Kim II Sung's suspicions that the Soviet Union placed its priorities on competition with the United States. The grand strategy of the USSR has very little interest in any North Korean reunification plan, be it violent or peaceful, unless it serves Moscow's broader strategic interests. From Pyongyang's point of view, Soviet leaders hope to achieve gains in the Far East principally to offset losses in Europe, in the arms race, or in Latin America. The Soviet Union has long fished in the troubled waters of Northeast Asia, going after the big fish using North Korea as bait.43

Kim II Sung did make a concession to the Soviet Union following the Soviet-North Korean summit. While Kim was traveling to the Eastern European countries following the May meeting, Pyongyang announced at the last minute that it would boycott the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Citing the Soviet line, Pyongyang said its withdrawal was based on concern over its athletes' safety and the failure to create a joint Olympic team with South Korea.44 The North Korean decision may be interpreted as Pyongyang's response to Chernenko's warning that "the sphere of international activities are becoming ever more important" for Soviet-North Korean friendship. In other words, North Korea acquiesced to the Soviet demand that its allies' foreign policies must support those of its own and that this was a critical point on which to judge the trustworthiness of its allies.45


43 It has been rumored that Leonid Brezhnev remarked to an Eastern European leader that he didn't like Kim II Sung after meeting him on the occasion of Tito's funeral at Belgrade in May 1980.


A review of the limited publications available both from Moscow and Pyongyang tends to indicate that North Korea was trying to accomplish the following objectives in the Moscow talks:

1. Acquire Soviet approval and support for the North Korean-proposed tripartite talks, which would allow North Korea to open its doors to the United States.

2. Obtain a Soviet pledge to increase Moscow’s economic assistance to North Korea and consolidate Pyongyang’s socialist economic ties with the Soviet Union. This would not prohibit Pyongyang from preparing for economic contacts with non-communist countries.

3. Gain Soviet acceptance of the succession of Kim Jong Il as Kim II Sung prepares gradually to retire.

4. Increase Soviet transfers of modern weapon systems to North Korea in exchange for Pyongyang’s global security cooperation with the Soviet Union. Pyongyang might allow the Soviet Union base rights and might permit joint exercises between the Soviet Union and North Korea in the future.

As of late 1984, the Soviet Union was still silent on the Kim Jong Il question. China, on the other hand, invited Kim Jong Il to Beijing following his father’s visit, and the Chinese People’s Daily on at least one occasion publicized Kim Jong Il’s picture and deeds on its front page along with flattering comments concerning his leadership ability and accomplishments in the North Korean Workers’ Party. Although no direct reference to Kim Jong Il was found in Chernenko’s speech, no criticism of dynastic succession was made, either. Some indications do exist that the Soviet Union will simply have to accept whatever leadership transition occurs in North Korea.

A particularly noteworthy commentary appeared in the New Times following Kim Il Sung’s Moscow visit. The Communist Party’s ideological magazine reported:

[Chernenko and Kim II Sung] advocated equality and independence, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, the promotion of cooperation in the economic and other fields on bases of mutual advantage, and an independent and free choice of the road to social development.\(^\text{46}\)

If the language of “non-interference in each other’s internal affairs” and “free choice of the road to social development” refers to the issue of Kim Jong Il’s succession, the Soviet Union will accept the choice of the North


Korean Workers' Party for leadership succession as long as the new leader in Pyongyang remains friendly to Moscow.

The long standing issue of increased Soviet economic assistance to North Korea also remains cloudy. The Soviet Union, faced with its own economic problems, is already heavily committed to North Korea, not to mention its obligations to Vietnam and Afghanistan. In 1981, Moscow promised Pyongyang support in connection with eight new projects under North Korea's second Seven-Year Development Plan (1978–1984). These new projects included the Kimchaek Steel Refinery Complex, the Chongjin Thermal Power Station, the Aoji Chemical Plant, and the Pyongyang Generator Plant. These new commitments were in addition to some 51 projects already under construction. With North Korea's foreign debt currently standing at U.S. $2.66 billion, it is doubtful that the Soviet Union is prepared significantly to increase its economic assistance to North Korea without substantial concessions on the part of Pyongyang.

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES VERSUS THE TRIPARTITE TALKS

What differences continue to exist between North Korea and the USSR in terms of their perceived national interests? Clearly Moscow's "superpower" view of the world differs from that of North Korea. Moscow must give priority to its global interests, whereas Pyongyang's vital horizons are smaller. This difference is demonstrated when one compares the Soviet Union's proposals on confidence-building measures in Northeast Asia with North Korea's proposal for tripartite talks. The Soviet Union appears far more concerned with its participation in any international talks on the Korean problem than with support of the North Koreans. North Korea, conversely, seems to be more interested in its direct contact with Japan and the United States than in its support for Soviet national interests or proposals. Accordingly, motivations for reducing tensions on the Korean peninsula and for demanding the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea arise from significantly different sources.

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49 Of course, the Soviets would like to see the American troops withdraw from South Korea in principle, but they see it as practically impossible because of their perception that the United States' global strategy necessitates its military bases throughout the world. See Dmitriy F. Ustinov, USSR Defense Minister, "To Struggle for Peace to Strengthen the Defense Capability," Soviet Military Review, supplement issue, no. 2 (1983), pp. 6-13.
The Soviet proposal for initiating confidence-building measures aims at achieving a multiparty peace conference on Northeast Asia. At the 26th Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party held on February 23, 1981, Party Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev called for negotiations on confidence-building measures in the Far East with all interested countries. From the Soviet point of view, the Helsinki Accords of 1975 constituted a recognition of the status quo in Europe in terms of the territorial boundaries and areas of influence and also in terms of accepting the political and economic status of the socialist systems in Eastern Europe. Although the Soviet Union has claimed that its CBM proposal is in line with Pyongyang's tripartite talk initiative and with the Mongolian peace plan, Moscow continues to avoid using the word "tripartite" in its description of the North Korean proposal. Several Soviet writers have even suggested that the North Korean proposal would provide for the signing of a peace treaty with South Korea, which is certainly not the case. Pyongyang has clearly stated that the present armistice agreement should be replaced with a peace treaty with the United States, not with South Korea. One Soviet writer has expressed the Soviet view as follows:

[The Soviet Union] supports Pyongyang's initiative which provides for the signing of a peace treaty with South Korea to replace the present truce agreement; the adoption of a declaration on non-aggression; mutual reduction of the armed forces; and the conversion of the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone.

Implementation of these initiatives would substantially improve the situation on the peninsula, create favorable conditions for a productive dialogue, and pave the way toward reunification of the country.

In the April 1984 issue of Asia and Africa Today, Georgy Kim, a Russian-Korean scholar who is a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Science, wrote an article on the applicability of Soviet CBMs in Northeast Asia. The article is considered an important reflection of official Soviet thought because Kim is also deputy director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Soviet Academy of Sciences, and editor of Asia and Africa Today. He discussed Asian peace and security in relation to the Soviet proposed CBMs as follows:

Although the basic principles of the Final Act signed in Helsinki are undoubtedly acceptable to the Asian states as well, the situation in Asia differs radically from

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50 The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was formally adopted by the heads of 35 states, but not by Albania, the United States, and Canada. At Helsinki in 1975, the Soviet Union attained its first objective. The West formally recognized the “Yalta” division of Europe in exchange for a modest concession on human rights and an even more modest set of measures, the so-called confidence-building measures (CBMs). See H. G. Skilling, “CSCE in Madrid,” Problems of Communism (July–August 1981), pp. 1-16.

51 New Times (Moscow), no. 23 (June 1984), p. 7.
that in Europe. Therefore, merely copying or automatically transferring the European collective security system to Asia is out of the question.

The Peace Programme contains specific and realistic proposals and is directed at overcoming all obstacles on the path toward promoting peace and developing peaceful cooperation between states of all countries. It is a real way to insure security in Asia.

In creatively developing the Peace Programme, in view of the international situation, the 26th Congress of the CPSU came out with a number of proposals formulated in Leonid Brezhnev's report.

As Leonid Brezhnev pointed out in his speech in Tashkent on March 24, 1982, "not only have our peoples come to know each other better during those years, but they have also learned to respect and sincerely value each other—all this in spite of the differences in our socio-political systems."⁵²

Soviet foreign policy toward Asia up to the end of 1984 seemed to be following the same course as that charted by Brezhnev, and essentially, this was the message that Konstantin Chernenko gave to Kim Il Sung in May. Chernenko insisted that the foreign policy guidelines set by the 26th Party Congress and particularly its confidence-building measures were an essential part of the Soviet peace program and of Soviet foreign policy in Northeast Asia. Although the Soviet peace program in the Far East is primarily concerned with Soviet policy toward China and Japan,⁵³ many Soviet writers have treated the Korean question within the same framework. Yevgeny Primakov, the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies; Gleri Shirokov and Georgy Kim, both deputy directors of the Institute of Oriental Studies; Professor Vladimir Tikhomirov at Moscow State University; and Iriita Zuvuagelkaya and Vladimir Moskalenko of the Soviet Ministry of Culture have all stated that confidence-building measures can provide a realistic solution to the problem of the Korean peninsula.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, no precise application of these confidence-building measures has ever been formally presented by Soviet authorities.

The Soviet Union earlier took several measures directed toward expanding contacts with South Korea slightly as was noted. Unofficial trade and contacts between Seoul and Beijing, however, still dwarf those between Seoul and Moscow. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union seems to be moving

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⁵³ For the application of CBMs to Japan, see Hiroshi Kimura, "The Soviet Proposal of Confidence-Building Measures and the Japanese Response," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 37 (Summer 1983), pp. 81-104.

slowly toward a "two-Koreas" policy, a policy which is more compatible with an attempt to ease tensions on the peninsula as well as with the proposal for confidence-building measures. Undisclosed sources from time to time have informed South Koreans that the Soviet Union now perceives that the cross-recognition of the two Koreas is the only realistic solution for reducing tensions on the Korean peninsula. Moscow has also openly stated that it cannot afford to allow Washington to form a U.S.-Japan-South Korea triple alliance—something must be done before South Korea becomes an anti-Soviet military bastion.\(^{55}\)

At the same time, Moscow is anxious to find a conceptual justification that would incorporate both its confidence-building measures and the tripartite talks into an interdependent system. From the Soviet point of view, Moscow would be satisfied with any peace program that would guarantee Soviet participation in the Korean peace talks. The Soviet Union foresees that if North Korea normalizes relations with the United States as a result of these tripartite talks, China might do the same with South Korea on a *quid pro quo* basis. If this happened, the Soviet Union would be isolated. Moscow is also interested in South Korea's fast-growing industrial potential, and in addition, it must face the dilemma of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Following its 1984 boycott of the Los Angeles games, Moscow will be hard put to boycott two consecutive games. Thus the Soviet Union will probably participate in the 1988 Seoul Olympic games as "the eyes of the world will then increasingly shift to South Korea."\(^{56}\) The Soviet Union also knows, however, that in South Korea it is held responsible for shooting down a Korean Air Lines 747 on the night of September 1, 1983,\(^{57}\) with an apology still demanded.

The longer the Soviet Union waits to begin building legitimate contacts with Seoul, the more difficult the process is likely to be. The Soviet Union realizes it is behind China in this regard. The first sports exchange in 40 years between Seoul and China occurred at the Davis Cup Eastern

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\(^{57}\) In defense of its action, Moscow charged that the passenger plane was on a spying mission provoked by American secret services. At the same time, there were noticeable indications that Moscow tried hard not to offend the aggrieved South Koreans. See the content of the Soviet statement made at a news conference led by Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, on September 10, 1983, in *New York Times*, September 10, 1983.
Zone elimination rounds held in China on March 2–4, 1984. At that event, China hoisted the South Korean national flag for the first time.\footnote{58}

Moscow opposes the trilateral negotiations because North Korea is proposing to talk directly, on a bilateral basis, with the United States. Moscow knows that Pyongyang had initially asked China to present the proposal to Washington on October 8, 1983—one day after the Rangoon bombing. It also knows that Premier Zhao Ziyang and General Secretary Hu Yaobang both had extended talks on the tripartite proposal with President Reagan during his visit to Beijing in April 1984.

The Soviet Union further realizes that the disarray of the North Korean economy requires more access to Western goods, capital, and technology. South Korea could also assist the North. Moscow thus understands that Kim II Sung's objective in wooing the United States is to get American troops out of South Korea, thereby weakening the South militarily while at the same time paving the way for assistance to the North.\footnote{59} In terms of its leverage, the Soviet Union's window of opportunity is closing as Pyongyang steadily, though slowly, increases its economic contacts with Japan and West Europe.

**CONCLUSION**

Several conclusions are now in order. First, the saliency of a timely resolution to the tensions on the Korean peninsula is different for North Korea and the Soviet Union. The aging Kim II Sung is determined to make a breakthrough. He knows that over the coming years he must gradually give more and more responsibility to his son, Kim Jong II. Kim II Sung does not want to pass on to his son the Korean problem in its present state, for Kim Jong II will have his hands full merely in consolidating his power when the final transition occurs. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is not prepared to accept any formula that might enhance American influence or thrust, or that might abet U.S.–PRC–Japan cooperation. The Soviet strategy with respect to the Korean peninsula must also take into consideration all of Northeast and Southeast Asia and the Pacific as well.\footnote{60} Soviet long-term

\footnote{58}China sent its two basketball teams (boys and girls) to the 8th Asian Youth Basketball Championship Games in Seoul on April 7–19, 1984. China also sent twenty athletes and nine officials to the 2nd Asian Swimming Championship Games in Seoul, April 27–May 3, 1984. Each time the Chinese five-star flag was hoisted.


\footnote{60}In a recent Soviet press report on South Korea, the Soviet Union recognized the strategic importance of South Korea to all major powers in the region. See Dmitriy Kapustin, “Koreya: Reportazh c 38-y Paralleli” [Korea: A Report from the 38th Parallel], *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 24, 1984, p. 21.
interests are much more focused on China, Japan, and the United States than they are on a nation of less than 20 million. In this sense, for the Soviet Union the settlement of the Korean question is but a means of accomplishing its global objectives, not an objective itself.

A final conclusion concerns the relative number of options open to both the Soviet Union and North Korea. North Korea is in the advantageous position of being the most able to take initiative, as the dramatic events of the winter of 1984 demonstrated. By shifting course and opening bilateral discussions with the South, Pyongyang now seeks a different route to Japan and the United States, more indirect but possibly in the long run more effective.

In terms of Soviet options, six alternatives appear to exist:

1. In light of Japan’s increasing role in discussions on the Korean peninsula, the Soviet Union could support six-party talks between North and South Korea, Japan, China, the United States, and itself. This option would fit well with the Soviet CBM proposal, but North Korea would probably veto the idea since it would not have control over the talks.

2. The Soviet Union could continue to stick to its CBM proposals and propose talks with the four major powers on the issue while leaving North and South Korea as observers. Although this option would meet Soviet objectives, North Korea again would be opposed.

3. The Soviet Union could forge a compromise position with North Korea between the CBM and tripartite proposals. Although this option appears the most logical, it is the same dilemma that currently exists and such extensive talks appear to lose some of their saliency and in any case, it would probably not meet North Korea’s requirements.

4. The Soviet Union could attempt to gain North Korea’s support for its CBM proposals through increased Soviet military and economic assistance. How far the Soviets are prepared to go down this route is unclear, with details concerning the Soviet offers during the Kapitsa visit of December 1984 not available.

5. The Soviet Union might support the tripartite proposals of North Korea at a superficial level, retain its own CBM initiatives, and concomitantly begin to establish better relations with Seoul. The Soviet Union can no longer afford to back itself into a corner, especially in light of the upcoming 1988 Olympic games. This option is plausible.

6. The Soviet Union might decide to give its support to North Korea’s tripartite proposals and use this stance to justify broadening relations with

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Seoul. This option prevents Moscow from being left out of the talks, allows the Soviet Union to retain its influence with North Korea, and establishes yet another channel of communication to one of the two principal participants.
Soviet Policy toward North Korea

Donald S. Zagoria

Moscow's primary interest in the Korean peninsula is strategic and it stems from the location of that peninsula on its border. Because of their obsessive concern with "border security," the Soviets want not merely friendly but responsive governments all along their frontiers. In the pursuit of this goal, they have subdued much of Eastern Europe, subjugated Outer Mongolia and Afghanistan, made it plain to Finland what they would and would not tolerate, and tried in vain to get Japan to sign a "friendship treaty" that would make it illegal for Japan to have foreign military bases on its territory. The Russians have in fact long behaved as if they believed that the "Brezhnev Doctrine" was applicable to all their neighbors. In 1946, the Soviets occupied the northern part of Iran and left only after considerable Western pressure was applied. In the same year, a Soviet representative candidly informed the United States that Moscow could not risk individuals hostile to the Soviet Union coming to power in Korea; the Soviets wanted a government that would not allow Korea to become a "base" for an attack on the Soviet Union.¹

Until the outbreak of the Korean War, Moscow used its occupying army and the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang to ensure that the northern half of Korea it occupied would be "loyal." Indeed, the Soviets made such a thorough satellite out of North Korea that a U.S. State Department research mission, studying documents captured during the Korean War, concluded in 1951 that the northern half of Korea was already well advanced toward becoming a Soviet republic.

¹See the relevant citations in Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," in Donald S. Zagoria (ed.), Soviet Policy in Asia (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982).
But the Korean War enabled Kim II Sung to escape the fate of Eastern Europe, Outer Mongolia, and Afghanistan. Kim took advantage of the Chinese entry into the Korean War and the withdrawal of Soviet advisors during the war to emancipate North Korea from Soviet domination. By skillfully exploiting the Sino-Soviet conflict that erupted in the late 1950s, by ruthlessly purging various contenders for power from within his own party, and by developing a fiercely independent ideology of chuch'e or self-reliance, Kim made sure that North Korea would never again become a Soviet satellite while he lived.

Kim’s fierce determination to keep North Korea independent of the Soviet Union is one of the factors that has been a continuing source of tension in Soviet-North Korean relations ever since. In 1956, Kim survived an effort by internal opponents to overthrow him, an effort that almost certainly had the support of the Russians.

In later years, Kim made plain that he considered the Soviet Union to be a “colonial” power. A North Korean editorial in October 1963 publicly accused the Russians of using economic and military assistance to interfere in North Korea’s internal affairs, of opposing North Korea’s attempts to construct an independent economy while seeking to integrate Pyongyang’s economy into that of the Eastern bloc, and of behaving in a “superior, chauvinistic, arrogant and even racist manner.” In 1964, another North Korean blast charged that the Russians flagrantly interfered in the internal affairs of all Third World countries, that they wanted those countries to become suppliers of raw materials, and that the Soviet Union sought to exploit North Korea by charging higher than world market prices for its equipment while paying below world market prices for North Korea’s valuable minerals.

In the late 1970s, Pyongyang even coined a new term—“dominationism”—to express its continuing concern over Soviet efforts to regain a position of influence in North Korea. In his speech to the Sixth Party Congress of the Korean Workers’ Party in October 1980, Kim warned that the “great powers” were “scrambling for spheres of influence” and this meant that the interests of small nations could be “harmed” and that they could be “victimized.” He warned that “the imperialists and all other dominating forces are ceaselessly perpetrating armed interventions, subversions and sabotage against the newly emerging nations” (my italics). And, he pointed out, only a year after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, “the dominating forces are scrambling more fiercely to subordinate newly independent nations again and place them under their control.”

Kim’s determination to remain independent of the Russians has taken many forms. In foreign policy, until 1985, Kim tilted more toward China than toward Russia. Since Kim’s visit to Moscow in 1984, there has been a certain warming in North Korea’s relations with the Soviet Union. He had, for example, consistently opposed the Soviet-supported Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Immediately after the invasion, Kim withdrew his ambassador.
from Vietnam. (The ambassador returned only recently.) North Korea also
continued to support the guerrilla movement inside Cambodia fighting
against the Vietnamese puppet government led by Heng Samrin. And Kim
allowed Prince Sihanouk, one of the leaders of this resistance movement,
whom Moscow regularly describes as a "hireling of the imperialists," to re-
side in Pyongyang. In Third World conclaves, the North Koreans championed
the independence of small countries and encouraged resistance to big power
dictation.

While still heavily dependent on economic relations with the Russians—
the Soviets take up somewhere between 20 and 30 percent of North Korea's
total trade—Pyongyang has been careful to reduce this dependence in recent
years. And in the military realm, Kim has developed a huge autonomous
defense industry, a development that was probably spurred by Moscow's
past refusal to supply North Korea with its most advanced arms, particularly
its most advanced fighter planes. During a highly publicized trip to Moscow
in May 1984, Kim sought advanced Soviet fighter planes to balance the
F-16s that the United States is providing to South Korea. In 1985, the
Soviets began to supply MiG-23s to North Korea.

Despite the new warming trend, the Soviets do not trust or like Kim. They
are resentful of the North Korean leader's efforts to play them off
against the Chinese. They mock Pyongyang's efforts to achieve independence.
When the North Koreans asked the Soviets for hard currency to help them
pay off their debts to Western countries, they were turned down with the
advice: "You're always talking about self-reliance, why don't you practice
it?"2

The Soviets are also resentful of what they regard as insufficient North
Korean appreciation of past Soviet assistance. Soviet commentaries on North
Korea almost always stress how many of North Korea's factories and indus-
tries were begun with assistance from Moscow while Pyongyang's own
commentaries almost never stress this point. In a similar vein, the Russians,
when commenting on the anniversary of the North Korean state, always
recall their own sacrifices in helping to liberate Korea from the Japanese.
The North Koreans, on the other hand, deliberately deemphasize all outside
assistance in defeating the Japanese.

The Soviets also look upon Kim II Sung as something of a "loose can-
non." In 1968, 1969, and again in 1976, the North Koreans engaged in
provocative acts that led to American responses which might have triggered
a new Korean conflict. In each instance, particularly in the last two, the
Soviets registered their disapproval.3

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3 For the details, see Janet Dorsch Zagoria and Donald S. Zagoria, "Crises on the Korean
Peninsula," in Stephen S. Kaplan, Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Politi-
Against the backdrop of this record of mutual mistrust, it is unlikely that the new thaw in Soviet-North Korean relations is going to lead to a breakthrough.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first is a brief historical overview of Soviet-North Korean relations with particular emphasis on the warming trend that began in 1978. The second advances some of the reasons why the rapprochement between Moscow and Pyongyang is likely to be limited, and a final section offers some conclusions.

I.

The North Korean-Soviet relationship has evolved through a number of stages since the end of World War II. From the time that Soviet troops entered North Korea in the waning days of World War II up through the outbreak of the Korean War, North Korea was a virtual satellite of the Soviet Union.

Kim Il Sung was, however, able to use the Chinese entry into the Korean War and the withdrawal of Soviet advisors during the war to emancipate North Korea and, by the end of the 1950s, was on his way toward establishing an independent dictatorship. By skillfully exploiting the Sino-Soviet conflict that developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he began to balance between Moscow and Beijing in order to maintain North Korea's independence. His signing of friendship treaties with both Russia and China in 1961 was an early and significant stage in the balancing act that he has continued ever since.

By siding with Beijing on a number of foreign policy issues in the early 1960s, however, Kim antagonized Moscow; by the end of the Khrushchev era in 1964, there was a virtual break between Moscow and Pyongyang. The Russians withdrew most of their military and economic assistance, and this action had a serious impact on North Korea's capabilities. Kim then moved to patch up relations with Khrushchev's successors, an effort that was accelerated by the sharp deterioration in North Korea's relations with China during the Cultural Revolution. But after 1970, when Zhou Enlai made a fence-mending trip to Pyongyang, North Korean-Chinese relations steadily improved, and throughout the early and mid 1970s Pyongyang was again perceptibly tilting toward China. In this same period, North Korean relations with Moscow entered a new period of deterioration. The best reflection of this circumstance was the fact that when Kim made a rare trip abroad in 1975, he was not even welcomed in Moscow.

Since late 1978, however, when China normalized its relations with the United States and signed a friendship treaty with Japan, a new cycle in North Korean-Soviet relations has begun. Kim was obviously alarmed at China's growing rapprochement with the West, which he felt could come only at the expense of his own desire to force U.S. troops from South Korea. Throughout 1978 and 1979, North Korean media began toning
down their criticism of the Russians and subtly but clearly indicating their disapproval of China’s new turn to the West.

Following the signing of the Sino-Japanese Friendship Treaty on August 12, 1978, North Korean media did not even acknowledge, let alone approve of, the treaty and there was at least one occasion when a DPRK vice-minister of defense was indirectly critical of the treaty. There were similar signs of displeasure from Pyongyang with the Sino-American normalization agreement. In an early comment on the normalization, North Korean media wondered aloud why the United States should not abrogate its security treaty with the Republic of Korea just as it had abrogated its treaty with Taiwan. The clear implication was that China had struck a deal with the United States that benefited China but left North Korea out in the cold. To make the point unmistakable, Kim Il Sung told North Korea’s Sixth Party Congress that socialist countries “must make no unprincipled compromises with imperialism” and, above all, they must not “sacrifice the interests of other countries in their own interests.”

In addition to his anxieties concerning China’s turn to the West, Kim Il Sung must also have been concerned about China’s new domestic policies under Deng Xiaoping. China’s de-Maoization program was an implicit criticism of Kim’s own “cult of personality” and Deng’s pragmatic new economic policies were in sharp contrast to Kim’s more rigid doctrines.

To express his dissatisfaction with these Chinese policies, Kim made a number of overtures to the Russians beginning in 1978 and 1979. In June 1979, a North Korean Party delegation led by Kim Yung Nam talked with Konstantin Rusakov in Moscow. (Rusakov is the Central Committee secretary in charge of Moscow’s relations with “socialist” countries.) Then in May 1980, Kim and Brezhnev met at Tito’s funeral in Belgrade. Subsequent Soviet media reports were to treat these two meetings as important turning points in Soviet-North Korean relations.

In October 1980, Rusakov and Soviet Politburo member Viktor Grishin led a Soviet delegation to the Korean Party Congress, and they held two rounds of talks with North Korean leaders, including one with Kim Il Sung himself. (In 1974 and 1978, Kim had snubbed visiting Soviet delegations.) The Soviet Party newspaper Pravda, as if to underline the significance of these 1980 meetings, carried reports from the North Korean Congress for a whole week, including a half-page summary of Kim’s speech that emphasized his call for stronger relations with the socialist countries. Meanwhile, Soviet-North Korean trade turnover increased by 30 percent in 1978–79 (see Table 1).

In February 1981, the warming process was given further impetus when North Korea’s Prime Minister Yi Ching-ok attended the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress in Moscow and stressed North Korea’s role as the “eastern outpost of socialism.” He also praised the “decisive” Soviet role in crushing fascism in World War II and he thanked his Soviet hosts for “resolutely” opposing
Table 1
NORTH KOREAN TRADE WITH USSR
(in U.S. $ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Exports (X) (f.o.b.)</th>
<th>Imports (M) (c.i.f.)</th>
<th>Total Trade (X + M)</th>
<th>Balance (X - M)</th>
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SOURCE: For these figures, I am indebted to Joseph S. Chung's chapter in this volume.
the United States in South Korea and for extending "active" support to Korean reunification.

Beginning in 1983, indications of a warming trend in Soviet-North Korean relations began to multiply. On January 15, 1983, Pravda carried excerpts from an interview by Kim Il Sung that had appeared in a Japanese newspaper. Pravda singled out Kim's remarks that the American "imperialists" were attaching most importance to Asia in the course of their alleged plans to establish world domination. The United States, said Kim, was bringing to South Korea large quantities of nuclear and other weapons and was planning to establish a tripartite military alliance with Japan and South Korea. Pravda also noted Kim's remarks that it was necessary to achieve Korea's unification "as soon as possible" and his "hope" that this process would be carried out by "peaceful means."  

In late January 1983, Pravda picked up a DPRK appeal that called for a withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea and again complained about the tripartite military alliance that the Reagan administration was allegedly developing with South Korea and Japan. In late February, Pravda reported a joint session of the DPRK Politburo and Central Committee at which Kim Il Sung said that the international situation was "exceptionally tense" and that there was "growing danger of a new world war."  

In the spring of 1983, Pravda also began to refer to a number of articles in the North Korean press that supported Soviet foreign policy initiatives in Europe. Rarely in the past had Pyongyang's press commented approvingly on Moscow's European policy. Now there seemed a deliberate effort on North Korea's part to do so. For example, on February 27, 1983, Pravda reported that Nodong Sinmun, the official organ of the Korean Workers' Party, carried an article supporting Soviet initiatives on nuclear arms limitation in Europe. The North Korean journal also approved of the Soviet proposal to conclude a treaty on the nonuse of force between the Warsaw Pact countries and NATO.  

During the spring of 1983, the Soviet military press also began to stress—like the North Korean press—the dangers of a tripartite U.S.-Japan-South Korea military alliance. Red Star ran a series of articles on "Team Spirit 1983," the joint U.S.-South Korean military maneuvers which the Soviet paper called the largest U.S. military maneuvers in the Far East in recent years. These exercises were "so aggressive and so ominous," Red Star wrote, that North Korea "had to put its armed forces on the alert."  

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Meanwhile, Soviet-North Korean trade was steadily increasing. In September 1983, the Soviet newspaper *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* disclosed that the 1982 trade between the two countries had increased by 29 percent in comparison with 1981 and that trade had reached a total of 681 million rubles, "the highest amount in the history of Soviet-North Korean ties." The newspaper added that there were plans for a 40 percent increase in trade between the two countries during the five years from 1981 through 1985.8

The Soviet downing of a South Korean passenger airliner in September 1983 probably provided added stimulus to the Soviet-North Korean rapprochement because it interrupted Seoul's *Nordpolitik*. Until this tragic incident took place, Seoul had been cautiously seeking to improve contacts with Moscow and there had been some progress.

Nor did the October 9, 1983, bombing tragedy in Rangoon that took the lives of seventeen high-ranking South Korean officials seem to slow up the Soviet-North Korean thaw. Soviet media not only initially denied that North Korea was involved in the attempted assassination of South Korea's president, they accused President Chun of exploiting the incident in order to intensify suppression in South Korea.9

In the early spring of 1984, Kim II Sung took a major step forward in signaling his desire to improve relations with Moscow. At the end of March 1984, Kim held an unusual interview with Tass correspondents in Pyongyang that was clearly intended to signal Beijing of his unhappiness with Chinese foreign policy and to lay the groundwork for his impending visit to Moscow. Although Kim did not mention China by name, he suggested that China was drifting into collusion with North Korea's enemies while Moscow and North Korea continued to share common strategic interests. In the interview, Kim praised the Soviet media "for denouncing moves to form a triangular military alliance of the U.S. imperialists, the Japanese militarists and the South Korean puppets." Kim also praised the Soviets for heightening their vigilance against the revival of Japanese militarism. The swipe at China was clear. Chinese media had not denounced the so-called triangular military alliance and had appeared to accept Prime Minister Nakasone's public assurances that Japanese militarism was a thing of the past.

Then, a month later, on the eve of Kim's visit to Moscow, there were hints in the Soviet press of increased Soviet military aid to North Korea. In late April, the Soviet Defense Minister Ustinov sent greetings to North Korean Defense Minister O Chin-u in which Ustinov noted that the tense

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9 *New Times* (November 1983) even claimed that President Chun might have planted the bomb in order to remove associates he considered undesirable and to whip up anticommunist hysteria at home. See FBIS, Soviet Union, *Daily Report*, November 17, 1983, p. C1.
atmosphere in the Far East would require "the further enhancement" of the capability of both the Soviet and the DPRK armed forces.\textsuperscript{10} 

The visit by Kim to Moscow in May 1984—his first such visit in more than twenty years—and the events that followed do suggest some signs of a new phase in the Moscow—Pyongyang relationship. The Soviets have supplied advanced fighter planes to North Korea and have received overflight rights and access to intelligence facilities in return. The North Koreans, for their part, have toned down their criticism of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, joined the Soviets in the boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics, and signed friendship treaties with several Eastern European countries.

Both Moscow and Pyongyang have substantial reasons for wanting to improve relations that have been severely troubled in the past. Moscow's reasons have to do with great power relations in Asia. The Sino–Japanese Peace Treaty and the Sino–American normalization of 1978 raised the specter for Moscow of close collaboration among its three major adversaries in the Far East. Under these circumstances, Moscow is anxious to improve relations with North Korea to avoid being isolated in Northeast Asia.

North Korea, for its part, although deeply suspicious of the Soviet Union because of past Soviet efforts to dominate and control it, is anxious to obtain greater economic and military assistance from Moscow.

II.

There are a number of reasons why the Soviet–North Korean thaw will probably remain limited. First, there is deep suspicion of Moscow in Pyongyang. North Korea's suspicions of Moscow have their roots in the past history of the relationship. Stalin sought to turn North Korea into a Soviet colony between 1945 and 1950 and it was only the Chinese intervention in the Korean War that enabled Kim Il Sung to free his country from Soviet domination. Khrushchev withdrew economic and military aid from North Korea in the early 1960s in a blatant effort to pressure Pyongyang into siding with Moscow against Beijing in the early days of the Sino–Soviet split. Khrushchev also intervened in internal North Korean politics, evidently in an effort to help depose Kim Il Sung. Brezhnev's intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Afghanistan in 1979 came as a worrisome reminder to Pyongyang of the potential implications of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" for North Korea's own independence. Thus, although Pyongyang views Moscow as an asset to its own security, it also views Moscow as a potential threat to its cherished independence.

These suspicions carry over into the economic relationship. North Korea's attitude toward Soviet economic assistance is ambivalent. On one

hand, the Russians are Pyongyang's most important trading partner. They account for somewhere between 20 and 30 percent of North Korea’s foreign trade; if North Korea’s trade with Eastern Europe were included, that figure would be even higher. The Russians are the only supplier of whole plants for North Korea and they are an important source of oil.

On the other hand, Pyongyang has in the past bitterly complained of Soviet efforts to use its economic assistance for political leverage and Pyongyang has not succumbed to what must have been intense Soviet pressure to get North Korea to join the Soviet Bloc economic organization, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, as a full member. North Korea was given observer status in the Soviet-led CMEA in 1957, but it has avoided becoming a full member because of its reluctance to tie its economy to that of the Soviet bloc.

Moscow’s deep distrust of Kim II Sung will be a second limiting factor. Soviet public and private comments about North Korea over the years suggest that the Russians regard Kim as something of a megalomaniac—unpredictable and untrustworthy. Moscow deeply resents Kim’s reckless behavior on several occasions during the past decade or more when the North Korean dictator might have involved the Russians in a confrontation with the United States. The Soviets also resent Kim’s persistent efforts to minimize Soviet military and economic assistance and to carry out an independent foreign policy. The Russians are also highly critical of Kim’s personality cult. There were reports from Moscow in October 1984, several months after Kim’s visit, that Soviet theorists bitterly criticized the idolization of Kim as well as North Korea’s emphasis on “nationalist ideology” and “pro-Beijing orientation.”

A third limiting factor will be North Korea’s continuing interest in maintaining harmonious relations with China. The North Koreans still recall that it was the Chinese and not the Russians who rescued them from defeat at the hands of the Americans in 1950. Kim II Sung is said to harbor deep resentment over the fact that Stalin did not give him stronger support in the Korean War. According to Khrushchev’s memoirs, Stalin withdrew all Soviet advisors from Korea immediately after the start of the war in order to avoid any possibility of a Soviet-American confrontation. Good relations with China are important to North Korea for a variety of strategic, diplomatic, and economic reasons. Moreover, the Chinese have gone much further toward endorsing Kim’s son, Kim Jong Il, as Kim’s chosen successor than have the Russians. And it is the succession issue that is one of the most pressing problems that Kim II Sung is now facing.

Finally, the Soviet–North Korean thaw will be limited by the conflicting interests of the two sides concerning Korean reunification. On one hand, the Russians give verbal support to North Korea’s proposals for reunification. On the other hand, the Soviets have made it abundantly clear that they do not support a high-risk strategy for reunifying Korea. Both during
and after Kim’s visit to Moscow, the Soviets continued to adhere to their formula that Korean reunification must take place “peacefully.” On several occasions, they pointedly noted that the situation in Korea was “complex” and that North Korea was working to ease tensions. Especially at a time when Moscow is preoccupied with economic problems at home, with a war in Afghanistan, and with a continuing crisis in Poland, the Soviets are unlikely to have an appetite for a new crisis in Korea with the United States. Nor does Moscow want to provoke a crisis with China over Korea at a time when it seeks to improve relations with Beijing.

But going beyond the level of tactics, it is quite likely that Moscow does not desire a unified Korea. A reunified Korea, combining South Korea’s economic and technological power with North Korea’s military muscle, would be a formidable new power in East Asia. Such a Korea would be able to play a much more independent role in East Asian politics than North Korea is presently able to do. If such a powerful and independent Korea were to join the Chinese and/or the Western camp, it would add a formidable new threat to Soviet security.

Thus, for a variety of reasons, Moscow and Pyongyang will find it in their interests to improve relations. But it remains unlikely that the new warming trend will lead to any fundamental rapprochement.

III.

There are a number of reasons why it is possible to be cautiously optimistic about the prospects for peace in the Korean peninsula and why the limited thaw in Moscow-Pyongyang relations is not likely to change these prospects. At the heart of the matter is the fact that pressures on Pyongyang are growing to change its militant policy toward South Korea.

Foremost among these pressures is the reality of the North-South competition. In diplomatic, economic, and military competition, time is working more and more for the South. South Korea is now recognized by about 120 countries while North Korea is recognized by about 103. South Korea will host the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympics in 1988. All this means that North Korea’s persistent efforts to isolate South Korea have failed. In the economic arena, South Korea’s gross national product (GNP) is now almost five times that of the North and its per capita income is double that of North Korea. Militarily, the South has embarked on a military modernization program with the full support of the United States, and the military imbalance now favoring the North will be closing by the late 1980s. By the 1990s, South Korea may in fact have military superiority over the North.

Another reality is that North Korea’s options are increasingly limited. It has resorted to terror, to infiltration, and to various efforts at destabilization. Yet these efforts have often backfired. The effort to assassinate South Korea’s president at Rangoon was but the latest in a series of provocations that have helped to lower North Korea’s international image and to alarm even its allies.

There is also the fact that both Moscow and Beijing want to improve their relations with Seoul. The downing of a South Korean airliner by the Russians in September 1983 temporarily halted any improvement of Soviet-South Korean relations. But, over the longer run, it is likely that Moscow will seek better relations with Seoul even as it seeks also to improve its ties with North Korea. An East German professor visiting Seoul in June 1984 said that the Soviet Union continued to have an interest in opening “non-political” relations with South Korea and that Moscow regarded the shooting down of a South Korean airliner as an “isolated incident” which did not affect its long-range policy.\(^\text{12}\)

Growing ties between China and the West, and Beijing’s new desire to play a more active role in easing tensions in Korea, are another reason for guarded optimism. China is increasingly playing the role of a mediator on the Korean issue, and indirect trade between China and South Korea is growing. The Chinese have invited several South Korean sports delegations to play in China and they have permitted South Koreans to visit relatives among China’s Korean minority living in Manchuria. According to the well-informed Los Angeles Times correspondent, Michael Parks, the Chinese made a major policy decision in the summer of 1983 to ease tension on the Korean peninsula and to get the two Koreas involved in a dialogue while Kim II Sung is still in power.\(^\text{13}\) The Chinese evidently calculate that after Kim’s demise, the struggle for power in Pyongyang will inhibit efforts to improve North-South relations.

Finally, there are some new signs of flexibility in Pyongyang. North Korea has delivered relief supplies to South Korea after recent floods in the South and Pyongyang has agreed to resume Red Cross talks on divided families after a ten-year hiatus. There are also some signs that the Chinese may be having some impact on North Korea’s thinking. North Korea has enacted a new investment law seeking to attract foreign capital. This suggests that North Korea may be conducting an agonizing reappraisal of its own difficult economic situation. It would be premature, however, to be optimistic about the prospects for a stable peace in Korea. North Korea continues a two-track policy. While holding economic talks with South Korea and opening its

\(^{12}\) Korea Herald, June 28, 1984, p. 2.

\(^{13}\) Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1984.
economy somewhat to the West, it also is building up its forces along the DMZ and obtaining more modern weaponry from the Soviet Union.

A solution to the Korean tension is not hard to imagine. North and South Korea would both enter the United Nations; there would be a direct dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang leading to some kind of formula relating to gradual reunification; a multilateral conference involving the great powers could endorse that formula; and the major powers would recognize both Seoul and Pyongyang.

The major obstacles to such a solution is continued North Korean insistence on American withdrawal from South Korea and continued North Korean refusal to enter into a direct dialogue with South Korea. Were North Korea to abandon these two unrealistic policies, the path toward compromise could be opened.

The West can probably contribute to such a compromise only marginally. But it can play some role in the process. The United States has been much too passive in its Korean policies. Compare the enormous U.S. investment in Middle Eastern shuttle diplomacy and the almost total lack of any comparable effort to resolve the Korean impasse. Yet the stakes for the United States in Korea are extremely high, certainly no less than the stakes in the Middle East. It is time for Washington and Seoul to get together to discuss what should be their common objective in Korea and how best to achieve it. Frank discussions between Washington and Seoul on how best to deal with North Korea are long overdue.
China’s Policy toward North Korea: Changing Relations in the 1980s

Chae-Jin Lee

The People’s Republic of China has shown a close but delicate pattern of complex interaction with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea during the early 1980s. The Chinese leaders have continued their security commitment for North Korea, assisted its Second Seven-Year Plan (1978–1984), and endorsed Kim Il Sung’s unification formula and diplomatic proposals. As demonstrated by an unprecedented exchange of high-level Chinese and North Korean delegations, whose numbers increased from about 100 in 1981 to about 300 in 1983, both sides have sustained one of the most cordial and cooperative phases in their thirty-five-year relationship. And China has gradually assumed a pivotal role in improving North Korea’s communications with the United States and Japan.

Yet the politics of the Chinese-North Korean alliance is not free from potentially serious tensions and disagreements. As Chairman Deng Xiaoping and his pragmatic associates transcend the Maoist model of ideologically inspired revolutionary policy and pursue the ambitious Four Modernizations program, they seek to expand their political and economic ties with the United States and Japan and to avert armed hostilities with the Soviet Union. They also emphasize the continuing importance of peace and stability in the Korean peninsula, but signal a significant change in their approach toward the Republic of Korea. The principal thrust of China’s current domestic, regional, and global policies stands in notable contrast to those of North Korea. It is therefore a difficult task both for China and for North

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Korea to harmonize their respective policy priorities and to enhance the maturity of their alliance system. The outcome of this task is likely to affect not only the changing pattern of Chinese–North Korean relations, but also the future of the Korean peninsula.

**CHINA’S POLICY INTERESTS IN KOREA**

The fact that China has been deeply involved in the management of Korean affairs can be explained by a variety of reasons that render Korea uniquely relevant to China’s important policy interests. In general, the Chinese leaders, irrespective of their ideological orientations and factional affiliations, tend to exhibit a greater sense of personal affinity and policy familiarity toward Korea than any other country with which they share borders. This tendency is in part attributable to a common cultural heritage and shared historical experiences between the two nations. Viewed from the traditional perspective of the “Middle Kingdom,” it seems rather natural that they regard Koreans as “close relatives” or “little brothers” and characterize their relationship with North Korea as that of “lips” with “teeth.”

The continuity of China’s traditional outlook is reinforced by Kim Il Sung’s pro-China predispositions nurtured by his educational and revolutionary roots in Manchuria. He attended a Chinese school (Yuwen Middle School) at Jilin from 1927 to 1930, joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1930s, served under a Chinese military commander, and carried on his anti-Japanese guerrilla activities in Manchuria. The Chinese maintain an exhibit in honor of Kim at Yuwen Middle School, whose delegations visit North Korea from time to time. He is fluent in the Chinese language and feels comfortable in the company of Chinese. In welcoming Chinese visitors to North Korea, he openly expressions his greetings in the Chinese language; this practice is duly noted in the Chinese press with a tinge of appreciation as well as satisfaction. Kim’s Chinese connections were prominently mentioned in his biographical information published in Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily) before his most recent state visit to China in Septem-

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3 For an example of the Yuwen Middle School delegation to Pyongyang, see Renmin Ribao, October 19, 1983. For a North Korean delegation to Yuwen with Kim Il Sung’s gifts (a Korean musical instrument and a ceramic vase), see Renmin Ribao, May 7, 1984.

ber 1982. Moreover, his speeches and turns of phrase are heavily influenced by Chinese political terminology.

While Deng Xiaoping confided to Utsunomiya Tokuma (member of the Japanese Diet and president of the Japan-China Friendship Association) in May 1981 that the Chinese knew the North Korean system better than any other foreigner did, Kim Il Sung told Iwai Akira (advisor to the Japanese General Council of Trade Unions) in April 1982 that he had enjoyed a long period of working relationships with Deng since the latter became a CCP Secretary General in the 1950s. On the other hand, Kim spoke of the uncomfortable and unproductive meeting that he had with Leonid Brezhnev during the Tito funeral at Belgrade in May 1980.

Obviously, such intangible factors as cultural similarity, traditional ties, and personal networks between China and North Korea do not necessarily bring about a harmonization of their respective national interests, but it may establish a psychological or perceptual framework that can influence the way in which mutual interests are conceived, communicated, and managed. This personal rapport may account for the secret visit that China’s two top leaders—Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang (General Secretary of the CCP)—made to North Korea on April 26–30, 1982, shortly after the massive celebration of Kim’s seventieth birthday. Hu described this “internal visit” (neibu fangwen) without publicity as “rich and colorful inspections” and as the “most unforgettable experience” in his life. Wang Bingnan (president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries) explained that Deng’s and Hu’s secret trip was a good way to bypass ceremonial procedures and to conduct substantive discussions without interruptions. In addition, the secrecy was probably designed to avoid the appearance of their participation in Kim’s birthday celebration and to arrange their first-hand acquaintance with Kim’s son and heir apparent, Kim Jong II.

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5 Renmin Ribao, September 16, 1982.
6 Tokyo Shimbun, May 4, 1981.
7 Asahi Shimbun, April 15, 1982.
8 The visit was publicly acknowledged by Hu Yaobang for the first time in September 1982 when he spoke at the banquet welcoming Kim Il Sung’s state visit to China. See Renmin Ribao, September 17, 1982. A 40-minute special program on Deng’s and Hu’s visit to North Korea was shown on Chinese television; it highlighted their meetings with Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong II.
9 Hu made this characterization in his banquet speech at Pyongyang. See Renmin Ribao, May 5, 1984.
10 Wang’s interview was reported in Asahi Shimbun, October 8, 1982.
A few months later, Deng and Hu welcomed Kim II Sung to China with extraordinary red carpet treatment. Deng himself took Kim to Chengdu, and Hu accompanied Kim to Xian. At one of several lavish banquets, Hu declared:

History shows that as the destinies of our two peoples were inseparably linked together, we were not separated in the past nor will we be separated in the future. . . . You may rest assured that no matter what may happen in the world in the future, the Chinese people will invariably stand foursquare behind the Korean people as in the past and support the Korean people’s just cause of socialist construction and the independent and peaceful reunification of the country.11

Kim responded:

We are very pleased with the invariable, continued development of great Korea-China friendship which has a historical tradition. . . . Korea-China friendship is an invincible one which no force can ever break. It will further flourish down through generations. It will last as long as the mountains and rivers of the two countries exist.12

The euphoria of friendship “down through generations” paved the way to Kim Jong Il’s “internal visit” to China on June 2–12, 1983. Accompanied by O Chin-wu (Minister of National Defense), the junior Kim met with most members of the CCP’s Political Bureau and Secretariat and traveled 6,300 km in China. Hu Yaobang was a host for Kim during his tour of Qingdao and Nanjing and Hu Qili (member of the CCP Secretariat and ex-chairman of the All-China Youth Federation) guided Kim to Shanghai and Hangzhou.13 Just as the Chinese handled both Kims’ visits with great care and extreme sensitivity, the North Koreans warmly welcomed Hu Yaobang’s second Pyongyang visit in May 1984. About half a million people turned out to greet his arrival, and Kim II Sung escorted Hu to Wonsan, Hamhung, and Chongjin. On various public occasions Hu and other Chinese leaders reiterated the


13This information is given in Hu’s speech, Renmin Ribao, May 5, 1984. Hu Qili, born in Shanxi Province in 1929, has been active in China’s youth movements. He was Beijing University branch secretary of the China New Democratic Youth League, chairman of the All-China Students Federation, vice-chairman of the Communist Youth League, and chairman of the All-China Youth Federation. He also served as vice-president of Qinghua University and mayor of Tianjin. He is a regular member of the CCP Central Committee.
immutability of China’s “brotherly affection” (xiongdi qingyi) and “militant friendship” (zhandou youyi) with North Korea.14

The origin of militant friendship goes back to the Korean War, which has exerted a seemingly profound and lasting impact upon China’s subsequent policy toward North Korea.15 As Peng Dehuai, commander of the Chinese People’s Volunteers (CPV), points out in his posthumously published memoir, he supported Mao Zedong’s decision to dispatch the CPV to Korea in October 1950 mainly because the United States, once in control of the Yalu River and the Taiwan Straits, could use any excuse to invade China.16 The CPV almost singlehandedly saved the Kim regime from territorial extinction. In the process, the Chinese suffered enormous material and human sacrifices—about 1 million casualties, including Mao’s son (Mao Anying)—and lost the opportunity to conquer Taiwan. At the end Peng, as CPV commander, joined Kim Il Sung (Supreme Commander, Korean People’s Army) and General Mark W. Clark (Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command) in signing the Korean Military Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953.

Although the CPV completed their withdrawal from North Korea in October 1958, they have retained their liaison office to the Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjom. It appears that the legacy of the Korean War remains as a potent element in Chinese-North Korean relations. Symbolically, both sides have several special occasions each year to commemorate the history of their military cooperation and to reassure each other of their mutual support. They pay particular attention to October 25 (the day of the CPV’s official entry into the Korean War) and July 27 (Armistice Day). On these days and at Qingming (the spring festival) the Chinese, both military and civilian, hold memorial meetings at the CPV cemeteries scattered in the northeastern region—such as the Cemetery for Resist-America and Aid-Korea Martyrs in Shenyang. On the thirtieth anniversary of the CPV’s entry into the Korean War in October 1980, Wang Ping (political commissar of the General Logistics Department of the People’s Liberation Army), who had served as CPV political commissar in Korea, took part in a

14 See Hu’s speeches made in North Korea in Renmin Ribao, May 5, 7, and 11, 1984. For Hu’s North Korea visit, see Great Lasting Friendship: Comrade Hu Yaobang’s Visit to the DPRK (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984).


Pyongyang mass rally to celebrate China’s military contributions. In Beijing CCP Vice-Chairman Li Xiannian, PLA Chief-of-General Staff Yang Dezhi, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Huang Hua attended a commemorative banquet at the North Korean Embassy. In his speech Yang reaffirmed China’s security commitment to North Korea.

On the thirtieth anniversary of the “Victory of Korea’s Fatherland Liberation War” (Armistice Day) in July 1983, the North Korean Embassy in Beijing entertained China’s political and military leaders—Xi Zhongxun (member of the CCP Politburo), Vice Premier Li Peng, and PLA Deputy Chief-of-General Staff Xu Xin. Similarly, Hong Xuezhi (director of the PLA General Logistics Department), who had been CPV deputy commander in Korea, led a friendship delegation to Pyongyang. While Vice-Minister of National Defense Paek Hak-rim thanked the CPV for “heroism” and “proletarian internationalism,” Hong praised North Korea’s successful struggles against “U.S. aggressors” and urged the United States to withdraw its troops from South Korea. Kim Il Sung decorated Hong, members of his delegation, and members of the CPV liaison office to the Armistice Commission. Moreover, in November 1982, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il gave instructions to expand the “Korea–China Friendship Tower” on Pyongyang’s Moranbong Hill, which had been originally erected on the ninth anniversary of the CPV’s entry into the Korean War. No other country maintains such close symbolic military association with either China or North Korea.

One important factor that is often overlooked in discussions of the Chinese–North Korean military relationship is the fact that a large number of senior PLA officers are veterans of the Korean War. The CPV included millions of China’s most experienced officers and soldiers; about 300,000 of them received special medals and awards from the North Korean government. The twenty-three-member Politburo of the Twelfth CCP Central Committee includes three Korean War veterans—Li Desheng, Yang Dezhi, and Qin Jiwei. The powerful nine-member Central Military Commission, set

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20 Hong was accompanied by another Korean War veteran—Fu Chongbi (first deputy commander of the Beijing Military Region). See *Renmin Ribao*, July 27, 1983.

21 The decision was to extend the tower’s height from 20 to 30 m and to enlarge its area from 20,000 to 50,000 sq m; this project was to be completed by October 25, 1984. See *Renmin Ribao*, December 2, 1983 and April 2, 1984.

up in June 1983, includes Yang Dezhi and Hong Xuezhi—the only two members in active military service. A Long March veteran, Yang served as commander of the 19th Army Group, CPV chief-of-staff, and deputy commander during the Korean War and then replaced Deng Hua as CPV commander in October 1954; later he commanded PLA operations against Vietnam in 1979. Peng Dehuai once stated that Hong Xuezhi, another Long March participant, should receive half the credit for the CPV's successful campaigns in Korea. Other Korean War veterans now command several military regions (Qin Jiwei at Beijing, Li Desheng at Shenyang, You Taizhong at Guangzhou, Yang Chengwu at Fuzhou); lead the PLA General Staff Headquarters and the Departments of General Political Affairs and General Logistics; and hold high positions in the Air Force, Navy, Armored Forces, Artillery Corps, and other fields.

It is difficult to assess the exact impact of the Korean experience upon the perceptions and attitudes of these military leaders toward Korea. The Korean War was the only extensive foreign military assignment for many of them. Even if they may not always have a greater degree of sympathy or solidarity with the North Korean cause than their civilian counterparts or their military colleagues with no Korean connection do, they are apt to have a sense of vested interest in Korea and to claim some intimate knowledge of and expertise in Korean military affairs. They usually reminisce about their Korean War experiences in positive ways. To them it is no figure of speech to declare that China and North Korea share "militant friendship" cemented with blood.

The Korean War veterans are active in visiting North Korea, hosting North Korea's military delegations, sending special greetings to "Korean comrades-in-arms," and articulating China's security promises for North Korea. For instance, Hong Xuezhi, Wang Ping, Yang Yong, Han Xianchu, Liang Biye, Cao Lihuai, Xie Fang, Li Zhimin, Wu Dai, and Fu Chongbi have

23 The Central Military Commission, a new state organization on military affairs, is chaired by Deng Xiaoping. Other members are Ye Jianying, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen, Yang Shangkun (who went to North Korea with Hu Yaobang in May 1984), Yu Qiuli (director of the PLA General Political Department), and Zhang Aiping (Minister of National Defense). See Renmin Ribao, June 21, 1983. Yang Dezhi was born in Hunan Province in 1910, joined the CCP in 1928, and took part in the Long March. Hong Xuezhi was born in Anhui Province in 1913 and joined the CCP in 1929.


25 For recent samples of such personal reminiscences, see Renmin Ribao, December 20, 1981; September 24, 1982; December 8, 1982; October 10, 1983; and November 23, 1983.
visited North Korea during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Hong, Wang, Liang, and Xie attended the state banquets held for Kim Il Sung at Beijing in September 1982. You Taizhong, as Chengdu Military Region commander, accompanied Kim’s Sichuan tour. As a leader of the CPV’s delegation to Pyongyang in October 1982, Han Xianchu called North Korea “our nation’s most friendly and intimate neighbor” and declared that “we, the old officers and soldiers of the CPV, will maintain eternal unity with the Korean People’s Army and will fight shoulder to shoulder with them to achieve new victory.” On the death of Yang Yong (former CPV commander) in January 1983, Kim Il Sung sent a moving message of condolence to Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping; it said that “the Korean people deeply grieve the loss of Comrade Yang Yong, a communist fighter and comrade-in-arms” and that “the exploits performed by him for the Chinese revolution and Korea–China friendship will be cherished long in the hearts of the Chinese and Korean peoples.” On May 16, 1984, Shenyang Military Region Commander Li Desheng welcomed Kim Il Sung, who was on his train ride to Moscow, at Tumen City, and accompanied Kim all the way to Manzhouli in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. Although some of China’s high-level military leaders in their late sixties and seventies may die or retire in the near future, it is conceivable that their junior officers in their late fifties and early sixties who belong to the Korean War generation continue to constitute an influential “interest group” in the PLA leadership structure, at least for the next ten years.

The Chinese security interest in Korea, which was most dramatically manifested during the Korean War, is codified in the Chinese–North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance; North Korea is

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26 Yang Yong (born in 1912) served as the 20th Army commander, CPV deputy commander, and CPV commander (March 1955–October 1958) in Korea. Later he was commander of the Beijing and Urumqi Military Regions. In 1977 he visited North Korea. At the time of his death in January 1983, he was deputy chief-of-general staff. In Korea Xie Fang (born in 1908) was CPV chief of staff; he attended the armistice negotiations at Kaesong in 1951 (together with Deng Hua, Nam Il, and Li Sang-jo). He visited North Korea with Han Xianchu in October 1982. At the time when he died in April 1984, he was vice-president of the PLA General Logistics Academy.

27 Renmin Ribao, October 13, 1982.

28 See the text in Pyongyang Times, January 15, 1983.

29 The welcoming ceremonies for Kim were held at Tumen City, Mudanjiang City, and Manzhouli City, a border town with the Soviet Union. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Gong Dafei also accompanied Kim from Tumen to Manzhouli. See Renmin Ribao, May 19, 1984.
the only country for which China has a legally binding defense obligation. The seven-article treaty was signed by Zhou Enlai and Kim Il Sung at Beijing on July 11, 1961, and it came into effect on September 10, 1961—the same day on which the Soviet–North Korean Treaty became effective. The two treaties have a few minor semantic and procedural differences, but China and the Soviet Union are equally committed to the protection of North Korea’s security. Article 2 of the Chinese–North Korean Treaty states that if either of the parties should suffer armed attack by any country or coalition of countries and thus find itself in a state of war, “the other contracting party shall immediately extend military and other assistance with all necessary means at its disposal.”

This treaty is supposed to last permanently unless both parties agree to revise or terminate it. Even though Kim Il Sung indicated in 1980 his willingness to abrogate both treaties if the United States agreed to transform the Korean Armistice Agreement into a peace treaty with North Korea, the Chinese have never expressed reservations or reluctance about their treaty relationship with North Korea. On the contrary, they have made every effort to reaffirm that relationship during the 1980s. In their joint message sent to Kim Il Sung on the treaty’s twentieth anniversary, Hu Yaobang, Ye Jianying, and Premier Zhao Ziyang noted that the treaty played an “important role” in strengthening the cooperative and brotherly relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang and guaranteeing peace in Asia and the world for twenty years. They also pledged to solidify their “great unity” (weida tuanjie) with North Korea. A Renmin Ribao editorial (July 11, 1981) demanded “complete withdrawal” of U.S. troops from South Korea. The same demand was reiterated by Minister of National Defense Geng Biao who, together with Liang Biye, visited North Korea in June 1982. They toured the DMZ area, inspected North Korea’s army, navy, and air force units, and observed military exercises. At a Pyongyang meeting Geng, a Long March veteran, criticized America’s “hegemonic” and “aggressive” policy in Korea and South Korea’s “fascistic rule.” He promised to give military support to North Korea until “final victory.” This promise has been translated into China’s considerable military assistance programs for North Korea. According to U.S. and Japanese intelligence sources, for example, China delivered 40 A-5 fighter aircraft (the improved Chinese version of the MiG-21) from

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31 See the text in *Renmin Ribao*, July 11, 1981. For Kim Il Sung’s message to Hu and Ye and Premier Li Chong-ok’s message to Zhao Ziyang, see ibid.

Xian to Sinuiju on March 31 and April 1, 1982; this supply was added to North Korea’s estimated possession of 120 Soviet-made MiG-21s and 180 China-made MiG-19s.^^

China’s security interest in North Korea is inherent in their respective geopolitical conditions; Korea is important to China’s Manchurian industrial and mineral resources, and also relevant to the Sino-Soviet rivalry in the Asian and Pacific region. The Chinese cannot afford to lose North Korea as a military ally and a buffer zone or to see its drift to the Soviet embrace. They are bound to encounter a grave threat to their security if North Korea allows the Soviet Union to station its divisions on the peninsula or to use Najin or Nampo as its naval bases as it does in Vietnam’s Cam Ranh Bay. Given the deterioration in China’s relations with other socialist countries (Vietnam, Cuba, Mongolia, Albania, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and Laos), North Korea’s importance has loomed larger within the perspective of China’s diminished status in international communist affairs. It is crucial to Chinese prestige and influence that Kim Il Sung refuse to support the Soviet-sponsored campaign against Beijing or to join the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance and that he cooperate with China in the Third World, especially in the context of nonaligned movements.

For a combination of pragmatic reasons, the Chinese have vigorously competed with the Soviet Union during the early 1980s to woo Pyongyang’s allegiance by means of security guarantees, economic assistance, and diplomatic patronage. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung has shrewdly performed a balancing act between Moscow and Beijing to protect his chuch’e (“Self-reliance”) ideology and to extract the maximum possible benefits from both allies. Nevertheless, the Chinese find it difficult to fully satisfy North Korea’s requirements of sophisticated weapons, advanced technology, and economic aid.

Although China’s economic interest in North Korea is secondary to its overall strategic and political objectives, China has been a useful partner for North Korea’s economic programs during the 1980s. In view of China’s emphasis on its Four Modernizations program and North Korea’s Second Seven-Year Plan, both sides have held frequent meetings and concluded various agreements in a variety of fields—trade, payments, hydroelectric power, navigation, railways, civil aviation, communications, publications, educational exchange, public health, and science and technology. A recent example of technical exchange is the visit made by Kimch’aek Steel Company’s leaders to the Baoshan Iron and Steel Complex in Shanghai—a multi-billion dollar construction project equipped with the most advanced plants

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33 Asahi Shimbun, October 12, 1982. In February 1983, a North Korean Air Force captain used a China-made MiG-19 to defect to South Korea. In October 1982, a Chinese pilot came to South Korea with a MiG-19 and another Chinese test pilot took his MiG-21 to South Korea in August 1983.
imported from Japan, the United States, and West Germany.\textsuperscript{34} The two sides have expanded cooperative ties among industries, cities, institutes, and agricultural units—as, for example, the \textit{Hongxing} (Red Star) China-Korea Friendship People’s Commune in Beijing and the Taekam Korea-China Friendship Cooperative Farm near Pyongyang.

It is estimated that China has shared about 20 percent of North Korea’s total foreign trade (about U.S. $3.3 billion per year) during the early 1980s. This share represents less than 2 percent of China’s growing foreign trade (about $40 billion per year).\textsuperscript{35} Crude oil is a major item in China’s exports to North Korea; the “China-Korea Friendship Pipeline,” completed by joint efforts in January 1976, transports Daqing oil to North Korea.\textsuperscript{36} In the aftermath of Premier Hua Guofeng’s visit to Pyongyang in 1978, China evidently agreed to increase its annual oil export up to 1 million metric tons (about 1 percent of China’s total annual output), but to keep the cut-rate “friendship price” ($4.50 per barrel) intact. China also sent its engineers and technicians to North Korea for construction of refinery, petrochemical, and other industrial plants.\textsuperscript{37} As the Chinese faced no increase in oil production and drastic economic retrenchment in 1980 and 1981, they may have increased the oil price or requested North Korea’s larger compensation. The future of China’s oil exports is apparently spelled out in the Long-Term Trade Agreement (1982-1986) that Chinese Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Chen Muhua and North Korean Vice-Premier Kong Chin-tae signed in October 1982.\textsuperscript{38} For diversification of oil suppliers,

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Renmin Ribao}, May 11, 1984.


\textsuperscript{37} In 1980, three North Korean industrial plants constructed by Chinese engineers started production (\textit{Renmin Ribao}, January 12, 1981). The Hamhung Fertilizer Plant sent more than 100 technicians and workers to China for study and inspection for twenty years (\textit{Renmin Ribao}, December 25, 1981). And it is interesting to note that O Kuk-yol (chief-of-general staff), among others, awarded medals to forty-six Chinese engineers for their construction projects in North Korea (\textit{Renmin Ribao}, December 26, 1983); the projects may be related to military purposes.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Renmin Ribao}, October 28 and 29, 1982.
however, the North Koreans may have turned to the Soviet Union, Iran, and other Middle Eastern countries.\textsuperscript{39}

The Tumen and Yalu rivers are a convenient channel for active border trade—especially between Dandong and Sinuiju and between Tumen City and Onsong.\textsuperscript{40} Along the Yalu River both sides have long benefited from hydroelectric power stations at Supung (700,000 kw) and Unbong (400,000 kw); electricity generated in joint projects is usually split evenly between both sides. The binational China–Korea Yalu River Hydroelectric Corporation meets each year to decide power distribution and financial matters and to agree upon new plants and expansion projects. In 1980, North Korea assumed primary responsibility for constructing a plant at Wiwon (390,000 kw), and in 1982 China started to build another plant at Taipingwan (190,000 kw).\textsuperscript{41} The two projects are part of China’s and North Korea’s ambitious plans to increase hydroelectric power capacity by the end of the 1980s. The connections of railways across both rivers are a principal medium of transportation; for thirty years since the Agreement on Border Railways was signed in January 1954, 130 million tons of cargos and some 200,000 people have been transported between China and North Korea.\textsuperscript{42}

The border railways are essential to a new trilateral arrangement for using Chongjin as a transit port in Sino–Japanese trade. This idea had been discussed among three parties for several years, but the negotiations were quickly consummated following Kim Il Sung’s China visit in 1982. After a four-month experiment, in July 1983 China and North Korea signed an agreement to transport goods between Chongjin and China’s Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces.\textsuperscript{43} A Japanese ocean shipping company agreed to transport the goods between Chongjin and Japanese ports—Moji, Niigata, Kobe, Osaka, and Yokohama.\textsuperscript{44} The Japanese company operates a 5,000-

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\textsuperscript{39} Premier Li Chong-ok visited Iran in May 1982. It was reported that in accordance with the agreement on barter trade Iran promised to provide 1 million metric tons of crude oil to North Korea per year. North Korea and China are known to be major military suppliers to Iran in its war against Iraq.

\textsuperscript{40} For Dandong-Sinuiju and Tumen-Onsong connections, see \textit{Renmin Ribao}, April 15, 1984 and January 12, 1981. The Chinese renamed Andong to Dandong (literally, “Red East”) because the term Andong had a chauvinistic overtone—“to pacify or control the East” (namely, Korea).


\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Renmin Ribao}, January 22, 1984.

\textsuperscript{43} The agreement was signed in Pyongyang by Wu Bingze (deputy general manager of the China Foreign Trade Transportation Corporation) and Son Ki-p’yon (vice-president of the Foreign Transportation Company). See \textit{Renmin Ribao}, July 29, 1983.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Asahi Shimbun}, October 30, 1983.
ton cargo vessel once a month and assists the expansion of port facilities at Chongjin. Because Dalian in Liaoning Province is highly congested and excludes cargos to and from other provinces, the Chinese regard Chongjin as an attractive and economical outlet for promoting trade between Japan and Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces. The two northeastern provinces are well endowed with natural resources and modern industries. Heilongjiang, in particular, has a major project for mechanized agriculture. The Chinese think of Chongjin as a counterpoint to Najin—a transit port for Soviet-Southeast Asian trade.

The significance of this competition is demonstrated by Hu Yaobang’s visit to Chongjin in May 1984—the first such visit by a Chinese leader. According to the Renmin Ribao report (May 11, 1984), Hu himself decided to see Chongjin in order to promote economic cooperation between China and North Korea. Each year North Korea exports 1.5 million tons of iron filings from Chongjin to Shanghai. Accompanied by Kim Il Sung, Hu inspected Chongjin’s modernized port facilities, talked to North Korean officials, and greeted members of a Chinese cargo ship. In 1983, Chongjin handled 34,000 tons of goods in Sino-Japanese trade; the figure was to reach 200,000 tons during 1984. Hu praised Chongjin as a “new bridge” in Chinese-North Korean friendship and took the train from Chongjin to Yanbian in China. China uses Chongjin to export soybeans, lumber, coal, and feed grain to Japan and to import Japanese chemical fertilizers and machinery. The volume of this trade is expected to grow up to 10 percent of total Sino-Japanese trade (about $10 billion a year) in the next few years. North Korea earns foreign currencies by allowing China and Japan to use port facilities and railways and gains experience and knowledge on international economic cooperation.

The Chongjin project is part of China’s design for North Korea to understand and assist China’s economic modernization policy. In September 1982, Deng Xiaoping took Kim Il Sung to look at the celebrated Sichuan model of enterprise autonomy. And in February 1984, Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Yong-nam, who had accompanied Kim on his Sichuan visit, toured the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in Guangdong Province—an outstanding example of China’s open-door policy for utilizing foreign capital and technology from capitalist countries, including the United States and Japan. Upon his return to Beijing, Kim told Premier Zhao Ziyang that he was much encouraged by the “smooth progress” China had made in economic construction.45 Zhao explained the recent records of Chinese economic achievements. Likewise, Hu Yaobang stressed the con-

tinuation of China’s open-door economic policy in his meetings with Kim II Sung in May 1984; Hu said that for the first quarter of 1984 China’s industrial production registered a 12 percent increase over the corresponding period of 1983. Kim, in turn, applauded China’s “new victory” in economic modernization. \(^{46}\) In this context the Chinese favorably noted the Supreme People’s Assembly’s recent resolution to expand North Korea’s economic cooperation with capitalist countries, to increase its annual exports in 1989 by 4.2 times over those in 1980, and to set up special export bases. \(^{47}\) The Shenzhen model attracted an increasing number of high-level visitors from Pyongyang. Even though the North Koreans are reluctant to give up their ideology of self-reliant national economy and to emulate China’s new economic policy, they can hardly ignore the effects of China’s Four Modernizations campaign, if it proves to be demonstrably successful. The Chinese tend to believe that they could influence North Korea’s future economic orientations.

Added to China’s traditional, strategic, political, and economic interests in North Korea is its diplomatic help for North Korea. At the United Nations China has consistently protected Pyongyang’s positions, including its opposition to North Korea’s and South Korea’s simultaneous admissions. In a strictly diplomatic sense the Chinese have rejected any move for a “two Koreas” formula, such as “cross-recognition.” They have endorsed Kim II Sung’s proposal for the Democratic Confederated Republic of Koryo. It is important to note that in August 1983 Deng Xiaoping and Kim II Sung held a secret meeting at Dalian and that Deng conveyed Kim’s conciliatory posture to U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger during their meeting on September 28, 1983. Subsequently, on October 8, 1983 (one day before the Rangoon incident), China notified the U.S. embassy in Beijing that North Korea reversed its earlier opposition to the tripartite talks. \(^{48}\) The Chinese appreciated this reversal as a “constructive” and “positive” change in North Korea’s policy and as a big step toward Korea’s unification. \(^{49}\)

\(^{46}\) Renmin Ribao, May 5 and 6, 1984.


\(^{48}\) This sequence of events was first reported in Asahi Shimbun (January 28, 1984), and it was later confirmed by a high-ranking U.S. diplomat in Beijing. My interview with this person took place on July 25, 1984, in Beijing. According to this source, Deng indicated to Weinberger China’s receptiveness to a four-power conference on Korea. Some other U.S. diplomats, however, suggest that Deng did not commit himself to anything as specific as a four-power conference. For this information I am grateful to Professor Robert A. Scalapino.

\(^{49}\) For Tao Bingwei’s assessment of North Korea’s policy change, see Mainichi Shimbun, February 6, 1984. Tao is a Korea-educated director of the Asian and Pacific Research Department of the Institute of International Problems—a research organization under the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
When North Korea on January 10, 1984 publicly proposed to hold tripartite talks among Pyongyang, Washington, and Seoul, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs promptly issued a supportive statement on the following day.\(^{50}\) It welcomed the proposal as useful to easing tension on the Korean peninsula and achieving Korea's peaceful unification. At the same time, Premier Zhao Ziyang urged President Ronald Reagan to accept the new North Korean proposal during their meeting in Washington. In response to Reagan’s counterproposal that the tripartite talks be expanded to include China, Zhao, in effect, demurred in deference to North Korea’s declared preference.\(^{51}\) Reagan also upheld the South Korean position that talks be first held between top leaders of both Koreas, but the South Koreans were not adverse to Reagan’s idea for four-party talks. In April 1984, when Reagan paid his first state visit to China, Zhao told him that “it is still China’s hope that tripartite talks will be held at an early date.”\(^{52}\) The Chinese believe, however, that it is ultimately up to the two Korean sides to negotiate for the establishment of confederation, which will allow the peaceful coexistence of two separate systems under one state.\(^{53}\) The active Chinese diplomatic maneuver in support of North Korea is intended to assure that they can retain a degree of leverage and influence in Korean affairs and to help relax the pent-up tension in and around the Korean peninsula.

**CHINA'S POLICY CLEAVAGES WITH NORTH KOREA**

The recent development of China's friendly and cooperative relations with North Korea does not vitiate a substantial gap that exists in their perceptions and positions with respect to a number of crucial issues on Korea. A persistent source of policy cleavage concerns the relative priorities of peace and unification in Korea. Whereas the Chinese, preoccupied with their own policy preferences, attach a higher priority to Korea's stable peace and military balance than to its unification, Kim II Sung seeks Korea's territorial reintegration as his primary policy goal. He is bent on inciting internal dis-

\(^{50}\) See the statement in *Renmin Ribao*, January 12, 1984.


\(^{52}\) *Beijing Review*, May 7, 1984, p. 8.

\(^{53}\) See Hu Yaobang's press conference at Kyoto in *Renmin Ribao*, November 29, 1983. Similarly, at the National People's Congress in May 1984, Premier Zhao Ziyang said that after Taiwan joins China, China can adopt a formula for “one state and two systems.” See *Renmin Ribao*, May 16, 1984.
order and revolutionary change in South Korea, but the Chinese have asked
the United States to help South Korea’s political stabilization.54

This Chinese position on Korea is in apparent conflict with their policy
toward Taiwan’s liberation, but they do not equate the character of China–
Taiwan relations with that between North and South Korea. After all, they
conceive of Taiwan as one of China’s twenty-two provinces and do not fear
any imminent threat or viable military competition from Taiwan. The actual
imbalance in power potentials and diplomatic functions between Beijing and
Taipei is not at all comparable to the Seoul-Pyongyang parity. Even if the
Chinese refuse in principle to renounce the use of force in their unification
policy, they appear to be supremely confident that it is a matter of time for
them to absorb Taiwan by peaceful means. The North Koreans may have
the exactly opposite perspective—namely, that the longer they wait, the
more difficult it will be for them to take over South Korea. Hence there is
a possible temptation for North Korea to disrupt or destroy South Korea’s
interests.

It seems clear that the Chinese do not wish to see renewed armed con-
licts in Korea because another Korean war will impose an extremely un-
desirable and risky dilemma upon them. Conditioned by their explicit
treaty obligation, they may find it difficult not to assist, at least indirectly,
North Korea’s war efforts. Such an involvement will seriously undermine
their economic modernization programs and strain their cooperative ties
with the United States and Japan. If, however, they decide not to support
North Korea, the Soviet Union may reap a distinct advantage in North Korea
at China’s expense. If the Chinese have learned any lesson from a unified
Vietnam’s recalcitrance, they may have second thoughts as to whether or
not a unified Korea under the fiercely independent-minded Kim’s auspices
would be conducive to their long-range national interests.

The immediate objective of China’s policy in Korea is therefore to
relax tension and to bring about dialogue rather than confrontation among
all parties concerned. For this reason, the Chinese have taken every oppor-
tunity to inform the United States and Japan that Kim II Sung has neither
the intention nor the capability to invade South Korea and that they are
genuinely interested in easing tension in Korea.55 Deng Xiaoping said to

54 Especially in the aftermath of President Park’s assassination, the Chinese often spoke
of the “power vacuum” and “political uncertainty” in South Korea. See Beijing Review,
November 9, 1979, pp. 14–15 and December 21, 1979, p. 24. In the summer of 1980,
Chinese Ambassador Cai Zemin asked the United States to stabilize the South Korean
domestic situation. (Conversation with a State Department official, August 23, 1980,
Kansas City.)

55 For example, see Hu Yaobang’s assurances given to Prime Minister Nakasone in Nihon
Keizai Shimbun, November 25, 1983.
Utsunomiya Tokuma that it would be a "foolish policy" to let the tension rise in Korea and thus drive Kim Il Sung to the Soviet Union for arms supply.\textsuperscript{56} Hu Yaobang frankly agreed with Sasaki Ryosaku (chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party), who argued that peace was more important than unification in Korea.\textsuperscript{57} Premier Zhao Ziyang told both President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro that China was opposed to "all acts by any quarter that would aggravate the tension" in Korea.\textsuperscript{58} In response to the Rangoon bombing, he voiced China's opposition to any form of terror.\textsuperscript{59} Guided by this perspective, the Chinese may have discreetly attempted to exercise some moderating influence over North Korea. At times they have qualified their security guarantee for North Korea by implying that they would come to North Korea's defense only if it was first attacked by others.\textsuperscript{60} Yet they told Reagan and Nakasone that their ability to influence North Korea's behavior should not be overestimated.\textsuperscript{61} This suggests that China's search for Korea's peace and stability is considerably constrained by Kim's characteristic sensitivity as well as by the Soviet Union's countervailing influence.

Another serious source of Beijing-Pyongyang policy differences is related to the way in which each deals with the United States and Japan. It is axiomatic in international politics that cooperation between the two

\textsuperscript{56}Tokyo Shimbun, May 4, 1981.

\textsuperscript{57}Tokyo Shimbun, November 26, 1983.

\textsuperscript{58}Beijing Review, April 2, 1984, p. 11; May 7, 1984, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{59}The Chinese reported the Rangoon bombing incident in an even-handed manner. It was first reported in Renmin Ribao (October 10, 1983), together with a report on student demonstrations in Seoul. Renmin Ribao (November 6, 1983) carried parallel reports on the Burmese government's announcement and North Korea's response. Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Chen Muhua visited Rangoon in December 1983, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Xueqian went to Rangoon in February 1984. It is most likely that while they were thoroughly briefed on the Burmese investigation of the incident, they attempted to play a role of mediation between Rangoon and Pyongyang.

\textsuperscript{60}In his interview with a Nodong Sinmun delegation, Hu Yaobang emphasized that the only correct policy for Korea is to seek a "peaceful reunification in a confederation." He made it clear that "should any country invade the northern part of Korea, we will, as we have stated, go all out to help you defeat the invaders." See Beijing Review, April 9, 1984, p. 9.

military and diplomatic coalitions tends to increase suspicion and tensions in intracoalition relations. The Chinese-North Korean coalition is no exception to this general tendency; the two allies have traversed diametrically opposite directions in their approaches to the United States and Japan during the early 1980s. Gone is the solemn common pledge that Zhou Enlai and Kim Il Sung made in their 1970 joint communique to fight against U.S. "imperialists" and Japanese "militarists." The primary threat to China's national security is no longer posed by the traditional American policy of military containment but comes rather from the Soviet Union, which has deployed some fifty divisions, nuclear-equipped missiles, modern tanks, and fighter aircraft along their 4,500-mile-long borders. Soviet military might in Asia is augmented by its growing Pacific Fleet and by another trans-Siberian railway. As an effective counterweight and deterrence against the formidable Soviet power, the Chinese appreciate their normalized relations with the United States and Japan and favor strong American military presence in the Asian and Pacific region. They now welcome the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty and Japan's modest defense buildup plans. The Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship concluded in 1978 commits both sides to mutual cooperation and an antihegemonist stand. Furthermore, the Chinese are prepared to purchase military weapons and nuclear power plants from the United States and to rely upon American and Japanese capital and technology for their modernization programs.

This rapid Chinese rapprochement with the United States and Japan makes the North Koreans uneasy and nervous because they continue to regard U.S. "imperialists" and Japanese "militarists" as their mortal enemies who present the main obstacle to their unification scheme. They must be particularly perturbed by the warm welcome that both Prime Minister Nakasone and President Reagan received during their visits to China in the spring of 1984. North Korea considers the Nakasone government the most reactionary one in the entire postwar era and castigates his promise of $4 billion in loans to South Korea as "military funds." The Tokyo-Pyongyang relationship has markedly deteriorated since the Rangoon incident. More important, the North Koreans hurl an endless barrage of harsh invective against Reagan, whom they call "the most bellicose nuclear war fanatic" and "the sworn enemy of our nation." The Chinese are confronted with the pressure of North Korea's escalating anti-Washington and anti-Tokyo vituperation, but they are not willing to sacrifice their global and regional interests merely for North Korea's satisfaction. The only practical tactic they have is to take a correct public posture by supporting North Korea's


63 *Pyongyang Times*, November 26, 1983.
proposals and demands in their meetings with American and Japanese representatives and to assure their apprehensive ally that China does not sell out North Korea's central interests. And they probably attempt to persuade Kim II Sung that as China negotiates with the United States and Japan on his behalf, he can expect to gain some tangible benefits—such as diplomatic breakthrough and improved relations with the United States or Japan.\(^\text{64}\)

China's détente with the United States and Japan, however, may have contributed to Kim's decision to visit the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries in late May and early June 1984. He is undoubtedly heartened by the progressive worsening of Moscow's relations with Washington and Seoul. While China joined the United States and Japan in criticizing the Soviet destruction of the KAL airliner at the United Nations and requested reparations for its victims, North Korea firmly endorsed the Soviet arguments and accused the United States and South Korea of arousing "anticommunist war hysteria" following the incident.\(^\text{65}\) The Chinese ignored the Soviet decision to boycott the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, but Kim II Sung followed the Soviet boycott with the hope that it would have an adverse effect on the Seoul Olympics. In his widely publicized interview with a Tass delegation in 1984, Kim praised the Soviet Union for denouncing a triangular military alliance among U.S. "imperialists," Japanese "militarists," and South Korean "puppets" and declared that "the socialist countries must naturally deal a blow at Reagan's bellicose policy."\(^\text{66}\) It was a thinly veiled criticism of China's collaboration with the Reagan administration. He added: "Korea and the Soviet Union are comrades-in-arms that maintain the relationship of alliance. . . . There is no difference [of views] between our two countries." His typical balancing act between Moscow and Beijing continues in full swing.

The continuing U.S. military presence in South Korea seems to be an irritant in China's evolving relations with North Korea and the Soviet Union. A Soviet scholar once argued that the Soviet Union upheld a principled stand in opposing U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, but that China deviated from that position.\(^\text{67}\) It is generally assumed that, notwithstanding

\(^{64}\) For example, Hu Yaobang urged Nakasone to expand Japan's exchange programs with North Korea (\textit{Asahi Shimbun}, March 25, 1984) and Zhao Ziyang asked Reagan to accept North Korea's proposal for tripartite talks (\textit{Beijing Review}, May 7, 1984, p. 8).


\(^{66}\) The text was widely distributed by the North Korean Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York in a press release (Special Issue, April 11, 1984).

\(^{67}\) Discussion with Dr. Boris Zanegin of the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, October 24, 1981, Moscow. He also mentioned that the Soviet participation in the Seoul Olympics will be determined by the status of the U.S.-Soviet relationship.
its official statements, China favors the presence of some U.S. military strength in South Korea as a necessary condition to preserve military balance and political stability on the Korean peninsula and to counterbalance Soviet strategic ambitions in Asia. Asked about this assumption, North Korean Ambassador to China Chon Myong-su angrily responded that both in public meetings and private conversations, the Chinese always supported North Korea's opposition to the U.S. military presence in South Korea. He asserted that North Korea maintained equally good "class-based fraternal relations" with China and the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, a careful study of China's public statements and documents reveals that China is somewhat reluctant to fully support North Korea's demand for "immediate and complete withdrawal" of all U.S. military personnel and equipment from South Korea. Henry Kissinger reports that Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders "never really pressed us to remove our forces from Korea" because they "correctly judged that the visible presence of American power was crucial for maintaining a balance of power in Asia and Europe." The Chinese frequently call for "complete withdrawal" (quanbu chezou) of U.S. troops from South Korea, but only on rare occasions do they refer to "immediate withdrawal" (liji chezou). In fact, an analyst of Beijing Review stated:

> It is clear that to secure a peaceful settlement of the problem of Korea, the United States should create favorable conditions for the reunification of Korea, pull its armed forces out of South Korea as early as possible and leave the problem of reunification to the Korean people.

This qualified position is consistent with the thrust of China's present policy interests in Korea. In his meeting with President Reagan in April 1984, Hu Yaobang publicly expressed China's opposition to the stationing of U.S. troops in South Korea. "This," he told the President, "does no good to your reputation." It is a relatively mild statement whose primary audience was probably intended to be Kim Il Sung rather than Reagan. Shortly thereafter, Hu reported to a Pyongyang mass rally that he had urged

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68 Interview with Chon Myong-su, August 4, 1981, Beijing.


70 Premier Zhao Ziyang and Defense Minister Geng Biao referred to "complete withdrawal" in their respective speeches made in North Korea. See Renmin Ribao, December 24, 1981 and June 16, 1982. As to the Chinese usage of "immediate withdrawal," see Renmin Ribao editorial (September 16, 1982), which welcomed Kim Il Sung's visit to China.


President Reagan to pull U.S. troops out of South Korea. After asserting that he and Kim reached a “complete consensus” regarding Korean affairs, Hu failed to mention either complete or immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. He stated that “this problem must be settled in the process of realizing the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea.”

In the early 1980s the Chinese have refrained from attacking the U.S.-South Korea Mutual Security Treaty itself and have been conspicuously reticent about the issue of U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea, perhaps because they recognize the value of nuclear deterrence or because they do not want to heighten North Korea’s anxiety. They have, however, supported Kim Il Sung’s proposal for establishing a nuclear-free zone over Korea. In response to the “Team Spirit” exercises jointly conducted by the U.S. and South Korea, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs charged that these large-scale military maneuvers threaten peace and stability in Korea. They are probably less concerned with the scale of these exercises than with their provocative effects upon North Korea, which declared a state of semi-war in February 1983. Similarly, they protest the U.S. supply of “sophisticated weapons” (e.g., F-16 jet fighters, the “Stinger” air defense system, M-55-1 light tanks, and M-88 tank retrievers) to South Korea precisely because they are afraid that new weapons may upset a precarious military balance in Korea or prompt North Korea’s requests for more Chinese and Soviet military aid.

Again, China’s ability to help relax military tensions or to introduce arms control measures in Korea has been less than effective. If the Chinese are skeptical about the immediate feasibility of America’s complete military disengagement from South Korea, they may only hope that the United States lowers its military profile in South Korea or even makes a symbolic reduction of its troops there.

More disturbing to North Korea than China’s détente policy is a growing cleavage in their assessments of and approaches toward South Korea. For the unfolding of China’s economic and cultural contacts with South Korea runs counter to one of North Korea’s cardinal foreign policy objectives—to contain, isolate, and disrupt South Korea. On the South Korean economy the Chinese have publicly echoed North Korea’s ideologically biased negative comments during the early 1980s; a Chinese reporter, for instance, stated that “the economy [in South Korea] is now chaotic and inflation and un-


75 See the Chinese statements in *Renmin Ribao*, February 8, 1983 and February 9, 1984.

They have also reported on South Korea's economic corruption and financial scandals—notably, the Chang Yong-ja case in 1982 and the Myongsong scandal in 1983. There is, however, enough evidence to suggest that the Chinese in fact have an objective and favorable assessment of South Korea's overall economic performance. They also hold an annual meeting of the Chinese Society on Korean Economy.

In a book published in 1980, noted Chinese economist Qian Jiajun reported that between 1961 and 1978 South Korea's GNP made a seventeen-fold jump, unemployment declined from 8.2 percent to 3.6 percent, and exports recorded the world's fastest growth rate (42 percent per year). He recommended that China should learn from South Korea's successful economic tactics—such as the government's efficient intervention in economic affairs, utilization of foreign capital and technology, enterprise merger and reorganization, encouragement for study abroad, and exports of labor force. In a more recent article in Shanghai's Shijie Jingji Daobao (World Economic Journal), Zhang Wen discussed “Nine Measures Adopted by South Korea to Promote Exports.” He said that the amount of South Korea's exports was only $55 million in 1962, but it grew to $842 million in 1970 (a 1,400 percent increase in eight years) and to $12.7 billion in 1978 (another 1,400 percent increase in eight years). He added: “In recent years, the growth rate has slightly dropped, but the export amount still reached $20.9 billion in 1981, an increase of 20 percent over 1980.”

As to the nine measures he listed: (1) establishing industrial bases for export (ten bases such as Masan and Ulsan), (2) attaching importance to investigation and research and strengthening marketing and sales, (3) making use of the financial lever, (4) playing an active role in contracting to build foreign projects, (5) attaching importance to reputation and practicing grade system, (6) being strict and fair in meting out rewards and punishments and establishing a four-color card system, (7) direct intervention by the government in economic policies (and the president's personal involve-


78 See Renmin Ribao, June 7, 1982 (on Chang Yong-ja) and August 26, 1983 (on Myongsong).


ment in trade promotion), (8) supporting large commercial firms, and (9) sending people to foreign countries. He also pointed out South Korea’s two major economic problems—too great a dependence on the United States and Japan and high import costs for raw materials and fuel.

The combination of China’s pragmatic open-door economic policy and its positive appreciation of South Korea’s trade performance led to a rapid growth in indirect trade between China and South Korea through Hong Kong, Japan, and the United States. Total value of this trade was estimated at only $20 million in 1979, but it increased to $60 million in 1980 and $120 million in 1981. The last amount was about 20 percent of the estimated scope of Chinese–North Korean trade. In an attempt to strain Beijing–Pyongyang relations, the Soviet newspaper Izvestia reported in March 1981 that China betrayed North Korea’s interest by promoting trade with South Korea “on an official basis.” The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Trade issued a statement to categorically refute such a report. It reaffirmed China’s disapproval of any “two Koreas” machination and its nonrecognition of the South Korean authorities. The Chinese countercharged that the Soviet Union was flirting with the South Korean regime, abetting in the plot to create “two Koreas,” and inviting its “government ministers,” economic delegations, scholars, and sportmen as “honored guests” to Moscow. The trade issue was presumably high in the agenda of Premier Zhao Ziyang’s discussions with Kim Il Sung and Li Chong-ok in December 1981. In his public statements made in Pyongyang, Zhao put particular emphasis on China’s rejection of a “two Koreas” policy pursued by the United States and South Korea. Indirect trade between China and South Korea did not stop in the first half of 1982. Rong Fengxiang (director of the Second Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade) said in June 1982 that China intended to continue its policy to import commodities indirectly irrespective of their origins. After Kim Il Sung’s China visit in September 1982 this indirect trade relationship declined appreciably.

A significant breakthrough in the Beijing–Seoul relationship took place unexpectedly in May 1983 when six armed Chinese civilians hijacked a Trident airplane during a flight from Shenyang to Shanghai and forced its
landing in South Korea. A thirty-three-member Chinese delegation led by Shen Tu (director-general of the Civil Aviation Administration of China) came to Seoul to conduct direct negotiations with a South Korean government team headed by Gong Ro-myong (assistant minister of Foreign Affairs). As a result of the first bilateral government-level talks between Beijing and Seoul, Shen and Gong signed a nine-article memorandum on May 10, 1983. It stated: “Both sides have expressed their hope to maintain the spirit of cooperation... in future cases of emergency which may involve the two sides.” They settled all issues to mutual satisfaction except for the legal controversy over the six hijackers. Shen requested their extradition to China, but Gong said that they would be tried in a South Korean court. Since the memorandum identified Gong as “Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Republic of Korea” and Shen as “Director-General of the CAAC, The People’s Republic of China,” it implied that China tacitly recognized the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea. In order to explain the incident to Kim Il Sung, Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian flew to Pyongyang and reiterated China’s policy not to accept any “two Koreas” formula and to honor the traditional friendship and alliance between China and North Korea.

In spite of Wu’s commitments, the Shen–Gong achievement may have contributed to modifying China’s hitherto policy that had steadfastly refused to allow any South Korean official to attend international meetings held in China. In August 1983, the Chinese issued a visa for the first time to a South Korean official to attend a month-long seminar in Wuxi under the joint auspices of the United Nations Development Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization. In anticipation of North Korea’s protest, they made it clear that South Koreans would be admitted to China only for the purpose of participating in conferences sponsored by the United Nations or its specialized agencies. This decision was followed in 1984 by a series of international sports events held in China and South Korea that both sides attended. Much to Pyongyang’s chagrin, the new sports diplomacy between Beijing and Seoul is expected to culminate in China’s participation in the Asian Games (1986) at Seoul.

Another emerging issue that contains a potential seed of Chinese–North Korean friction is the status of the Korean minority in China. The issue has

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86 See the English text in Korea Herald, May 11, 1983, or its Korean text in Dong-A Ilbo, May 11, 1983. Upon his return to Beijing, Shen held a press conference and mentioned that he and the “South Korean side” had signed a memorandum in Seoul. But the memorandum itself was not published in the Chinese press. See his press conference in Renmin Ribao, May 17, 1983.

87 See Wu’s speeches and activities in North Korea in Renmin Ribao, May 21, 22, 24, 25, and 26, 1983.
been made salient in the aftermath of Prime Minister Nakasone's China visit in March 1984. Upon Seoul's request, he proposed to his Chinese hosts that humanitarian considerations be given to those Koreans in China who wish to visit their relatives in South Korea or to invite their South Korean relatives to China. Premier Zhao unhesitatingly accepted this proposal with no conditions attached. The South Korean Red Cross followed up the Zhao-Nakasone understanding by proposing to the Chinese Red Cross that both sides meet and discuss how to realize the reunions of those Korean family members who were separated between China and South Korea. The Chinese did not respond quickly, however.

According to the 1982 census data, there were about 1.8 million Koreans in China, who constituted the eleventh largest ethnic group among China's fifty-five minority nationalities. An overwhelming majority of them reside in China's northeastern (Manchurian) region—63 percent in Jilin Province, 24 percent in Heilongjiang Province, and 11 percent in Liaoning Province. Heilongjiang is heavily populated by immigrants from South Korea's Kyongsang region. About 800,000 Koreans live in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province across the Tumen River from North Korea. The Koreans in China are known to have the highest level of formal educational attainment among all China's ethnic groups and to share a strong sense of Korean cultural identity. They are also active in China's political and diplomatic affairs. The top-ranking Korean leaders in Jilin Province are Cho Nam-ki (regular member of the CCP Central Committee; Jilin Provincial Party Secretary; political commissar of the Jilin Provincial Military District; Deputy to the National People's Congress; and ex-vice governor of Jilin Province), Li Dok-su (Yanbian First Secretary and chief prefectural administrator), and Cho Yong-ho (Yanbian Party Secretary and member of the NPC's Presidium). The Sixth NPC (2,978 members) has seventeen Korean deputies. Other subcabinet-level Korean leaders in Beijing include Mun Chong-il and Hwang Kwang-hak.

It has been reported that some Korean intellectuals in China are critical of Kim Il Sung's personality cult and Kim Jong Il's designation as his father's successor and that they face a great difficulty in visiting their relatives in North Korea or inviting their North Korean relatives to China. This dif-

88 See the description of the Zhao-Nakasone understanding in Asahi Shimbun, March 24, 1984, and its clarification in Nihon Keizai Shimbun, March 27, 1984. The issue was not mentioned in the Chinese press.

89 The proposal was made on April 25, 1984, but there has been no Chinese response throughout May. See Korea Herald, May 1, 1984, and Dong-A Ilbo, May 31, 1984.


ficulty contrasts with South Korea's willingness to facilitate the mutual visits of relatives between China and South Korea. Since 1978, the Chinese government has permitted several hundred Koreans in China to visit their family members in South Korea. In order not to arouse North Korea's concern, China and South Korea have so far dealt with the matter in a quiet and informal fashion. Now that the issue has been discussed at the Zhao-Nakasone summit meeting and formally raised by the South Korean Red Cross, it is possible that the North Koreans are becoming apprehensive about the possibilities that the Red Cross meetings may be a catalyst in governmental exchanges between Beijing and Seoul and that South Korea may expand its influence among Korean communities in China. The North Koreans may be particularly sensitive about China's northeastern region, which is regarded as the sacred site of Kim Il Sung's past revolutionary activities. This sensitivity is perhaps responsible for the unusual return trip that Hu Yaobang took from Chongjin to Yanbian in May 1984. At Yanbian he issued several specific policy instructions to promote the economic and cultural conditions for the Korean minority. If North Korea indeed presents a serious objection to the Red Cross talks, the Chinese, despite Premier Zhao's promise, may decide to impose restrictions on the categories and frequencies of family reunions. There is a danger that the innocent Koreans in China may become an unfortunate pawn in intensely politicized tri-lateral maneuvers.

A number of other issues can be thought of as actual or potential sources of policy cleavage between China and North Korea. They include territorial demarcations, border river navigation, military and economic aid, technology transfer, nuclear development, domestic policies (notably, Kim's personality cult and political succession), and approaches toward the Third World. No reliable information is readily available on the relative

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92 It is reported that there were 40 cases of such visits in 1981, 93 cases in 1982, and 156 cases in 1983. See Asahi Shimbun, January 14, 1984. The number of non-Korean Chinese visitors to South Korea was 8 in 1981 and 3 in 1982. See Asahi Shimbun, August 27, 1983.

93 The Hu party traveled from Chongjin to Namyang, crossed the Tumen River, and moved from Tumen City to Yanji City on May 11, 1984. At Yanji he was welcomed by Hu Qili, He Zhengwen (PLA deputy chief-of-general staff), Li Desheng (commander of the Shenyang Military Region), Qiang Xiaochu (first CCP secretary in Jilin Province), Cho Nam-ki (Jilin Party secretary), and Li Dok-su (Yanbian Party secretary and chief prefectural administrator). See Renmin Ribao, May 12, 1984. Hu had a press interview at Yanji on May 12 and appeared at a military review in Changchun on May 16. He returned to Beijing on May 18, 1984.

saliency of these and other issues. As far as Kim Jong Il’s hereditary succession is concerned, the Chinese have clearly decided to honor Kim Il Sung’s preference partly because they are concerned about North Korea’s political stability in the post-Kim era. They are also quite pragmatic about the wisdom of noninterference in internal affairs of fraternal parties. Deng Xiaoping declared:

A party may often make comments on the activities of a foreign fraternal party according to some existing formulas or some rigid patterns. Facts have shown that this approach can get one nowhere. Conditions vary from country to country, the level of political awareness varies from people to people, and the class relations and relative strength of class forces in one country are different from those in another. . . . In short, we must respect the way the parties and peoples of different countries deal with their own affairs. They should be left alone in blazing their own paths and exploring ways to solve their own problems. No party can act as a patriarchal party and issue orders to others.95

Besides relying on this principle, the Chinese have publicly embraced Kim Jong Il, probably because they intend to blunt an apparent pro-Moscow tendency among North Korea’s young technocrats, who may view China’s present economic and technological conditions with contempt and look up to the Soviet Union as an effective supplier of what they need most.96 A relatively young Chinese leader, Hu Qili, whose political fortune at the age of fifty-five is rising rapidly under Hu Yaobang’s tutelage, was chosen as a principal Chinese contact person for Kim Jong Il; they hosted each other during Kim’s China visit in June 1983 and Hu Qili’s North Korea visit in September 1983. It remains unclear, however, whether the Chinese can transfer their close personal rapport with Kim Il Sung (and his partisan colleagues) to Kim Jong Il (and his generational cohorts).

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The preceding discussions suggest that China’s policy toward North Korea is characterized by a complex mixture of cooperation and cleavages, but that the commonality of their long-term shared interests has so far overshadowed whatever differences and tensions they may have had during the early 1980s. Yet the Chinese perception of their policy interests in Korea has shown both continuing and changing aspects. The continuity of China’s

95 This statement was reprinted in Beijing Review (August 22, 1983, pp. 15–16) with a large picture showing Deng Xiaoping and Kim Il Sung together at Chengdu; the picture suggests that Deng’s remarks were directed to the North Korean case. For the original text, see Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 278–279.

96 This pro-Moscow tendency was hinted in some of the comments that I heard from North Korean cadres in Pyongyang and Beijing in 1981.
involvement in North Korea is conditioned by a unique set of cultural and geographical ties, joint armed efforts, and formal defense commitments; the basic framework of China’s military, diplomatic, and economic support for North Korea remains intact. On the other hand, the Chinese have gradually adapted their policy to the changing realities—especially, China’s domestic priorities, the shifting quadrilateral relationships (China, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Japan), and the North-South conflict in Korea.

It is amply demonstrated that there is often a gap between rhetoric and substance or between theory and practice in China’s policy toward North Korea. The preeminent feature of China’s Korean policy during the early 1980s has been its search for realistic assessment and pragmatic behavior. As Deng Xiaoping and his followers have done in their domestic fields, they tend to downgrade the role of ideology as a determinant of their foreign policy and to deradicalize their global and regional outlook. This has been reflected in China’s serious emphasis on Korea’s peace and stability and in a preliminary opening of Beijing-Seoul contacts. The South Koreans can expect to continue cumulative improvement in their functional relations with China—trade, sports, and other cultural exchanges. Chinese participation in the Asian Games (1986) is almost certain, and its result is likely to affect their decision on the Seoul Olympics (1988). Yet it may be counterproductive if the South Koreans impatiently push China too far in such sensitive issues as official negotiations and the Korean minority in China.

China’s overriding security interest in Korea can be satisfied by three requirements—to preserve China’s cooperative alliance system with North Korea, to prevent North Korea’s integration into the Soviet-controlled strategic encirclement, and to maintain a credible military balance on the Korean peninsula so that armed conflicts can be prevented. Although the Chinese have openly pledged to fight shoulder to shoulder with their North Korean “comrades-in-arms,” it is in their best interests to persuade Kim Il Sung that another Korean war will be a disaster to North Korea. In the unlikely event of such a war, the Chinese, despite their treaty obligation and public utterances, will be hesitant to assume direct armed engagement in Korea unless their vital national security is in imminent jeopardy. They will be most interested in containing the scope of military confrontations and seeking a prompt negotiated settlement.

The Chinese have been unable to convince the United States and South Korea that Kim Il Sung disavows any intention to invade South Korea. After his meetings with Kim in May 1984, Hu Yaobang stated that the notion of North Korea’s southward thrust was “sheer nonsense.” Except for verbal assurances and persuasive efforts, the Chinese have no easy option to defuse

a powderkeg in Korea. They will continue to urge the United States to withdraw its troops from South Korea and to stop its joint military exercises with South Korea. One can question the seriousness or intensity of such Chinese requests, but the Chinese will welcome a gradual reduction of the U.S. military presence in South Korea so that it can alleviate North Korea’s probable feeling of military insecurity. If South Korea owns nuclear weapons, China, along with the Soviet Union, will be hard pressed to assist North Korea’s nuclear programs.

It seems highly unlikely that even if the Chinese continue their pragmatic foreign policy and informal contacts with South Korea, they will suddenly change their opposition to any specific methods of a “two Koreas” formula, such as “cross-recognition” and “simultaneous admission” to the United Nations. A key determinant of this opposition is not China’s intrinsic diplomatic principles or its position on Taiwan, but North Korea’s rigid objections. While China flatly rejected Taiwan’s representation in the U.N. General Assembly, it had no difficulty in accommodating West Germany’s and East Germany’s dual representation in the world organization. If North Korea modifies its position on these diplomatic issues, so can China. The same observation is applicable to China’s attitude toward three-way or four-way talks on Korea. As a compromise of the conflicting proposals, China may agree to serve as a host, mediator, or chairman of the tripartite negotiations. Even if the Chinese maintain a legal fiction that the Korean Military Armistice Agreement was signed by Peng Dehuai not as a representative of the People’s Republic of China, but as commander of the Chinese People’s Volunteers, they are after all not a disinterested party to a future disposition of the Armistice Agreement.

If the Chinese can move the idea of tripartite talks out of the deadlock and accomplish a tangible diplomatic outcome on North Korea’s behalf, they can solidify and expand their role as North Korea’s diplomatic patron. If, however, no diplomatic advancement is made, they will inevitably lose their credibility and utility in the eyes of the North Koreans, who will clearly see the limits of China’s diplomatic abilities and of the Sino-American détente. It is unclear how the Chinese have reacted to the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s suggestion for six-party talks on Korea, but they will probably endorse whatever decision Kim Il Sung may make on it, regardless of the rivalry between Beijing and Moscow. In spite of his disillusionment with some of China’s current policies, Kim is unlikely to tilt decisively toward the Soviet Union, mainly because his most successful policy has

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98 The four-party and six-party talks were first proposed by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger at the United Nations in 1975. In January 1984, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted the idea of six-party talks. See Asahi Shimbun, January 12, 1984.
been to strike a balance between Moscow and Beijing. In addition to his intimate personal association with Chinese leaders, he cannot gain much by alienating or antagonizing this powerful neighboring country whose support and assistance he definitely needs in the context of intense intra-Korea competition.

Dwight Perkins projects that China’s GNP, which stood at one-third of that of the Soviet Union by the end of the 1970s, may reach about 60 percent of the Soviet GNP in 1990 (and about 86 percent in the year 2000). If China’s modernization campaign, especially its Seventh Five-Year Plan (1986–1990), continues to bear fruits throughout the 1980s, it will not only increase China’s economic leverage vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in influencing North Korea, but also will exert some spillover effects on North Korea’s international economic orientation. Economic considerations are expected to loom larger than ever before in China’s policy toward North Korea as well as South Korea in the years ahead.

For the early 1980s, the Chinese have conducted their delicate relationship with North Korea reasonably well and have contained their persistent policy cleavages to a manageable level. They have emerged as a constructive force in the evolution of Korean situations. And they have attempted to exercise a positive, albeit limited, influence over North Korea in a cautious fashion lest it hurts Kim Il Sung’s ego and interests. Even if the Chinese admit that their ability to influence North Korea is severely constrained, China still is one of the only two powers that have the necessary means and channels by which North Korea’s behavior can be moderated in even a marginal or incremental way. In this sense China’s future policy is an important factor in determining the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula. One should not completely dismiss the probable sources of China’s internal policy cleavages regarding Korea—such as tensions between moderates and radicals, generational and regional differences, intrabureaucratic dynamics, and the gaps between Korean War veterans and other military leaders. As long as the Chinese can sustain a Deng Xiaoping-sponsored leadership structure and a pragmatic open-door foreign policy, however, they are likely to pursue a moderate and adaptive policy toward Korea during the latter half of the 1980s.

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### Appendix 1

**CHINESE VISITORS TO NORTH KOREA: 1980–1984**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li Xiannian</td>
<td>CCP Vice-Chairman; PB</td>
<td>1980/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Ping</td>
<td>PLA General Logistics Department Political Commissar</td>
<td>1980/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Ximing</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of Power Industry</td>
<td>1981/February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Xiuquan</td>
<td>PLA Deputy Chief-of-General Staff</td>
<td>1981/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cao Lihuai)</td>
<td>Air Force Deputy Commander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Gensheng</td>
<td>CCP Secretary in Jilin Province</td>
<td>1981/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Ying</td>
<td>First Secretary of the Communist Youth League</td>
<td>1981/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiao Ruoyu</td>
<td>Beijing Mayor</td>
<td>1981/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhao Ziyang</td>
<td>Premier; PB</td>
<td>1981/December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chen Muhua)</td>
<td>Vice-Premier; Minister of Economic Relations with Foreign Countries; PB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deng Xiaoping</td>
<td>CCP Vice-Chairman; PB</td>
<td>1982/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hu Yaobang)</td>
<td>CCP General Secretary; PB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geng Biao</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense; State Counselor; PB</td>
<td>1982/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Liang Biye)</td>
<td>PLA General Political Department Deputy Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Daohan</td>
<td>Shanghai Mayor</td>
<td>1982/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xianchu</td>
<td>CCP Central Committee Member</td>
<td>1982/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Xie Fang)</td>
<td>PLA General Logistics Academy Vice-President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Muhua</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade; State Counselor; PB</td>
<td>1982/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xi Zhongxun</td>
<td>NPC-SC Vice-Chairman; PB</td>
<td>1982/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling Qing</td>
<td>Permanent Representative to the United Nations</td>
<td>1983/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Xueqian</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>1983/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Xuezhi</td>
<td>PLA General Logistics Department Director</td>
<td>1983/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fu Chongbi)</td>
<td>Beijing Military Region First Deputy Commander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peng Zhen</td>
<td>NPC-SC Chairman; PB</td>
<td>1983/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hu Qili)</td>
<td>CCP Secretariat Member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Lei</td>
<td>Heilongjiang Provincial Governor</td>
<td>1983/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gan Weihan</td>
<td>PLA General Political Department Deputy Director</td>
<td>1983/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Qing</td>
<td>Xinhua News Agency General Director</td>
<td>1983/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Puru</td>
<td>Minister of Railways</td>
<td>1984/January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu Yaobang</td>
<td>CCP General Secretary, PB</td>
<td>1984/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Yang Shangkun)</td>
<td>Central Military Commission Vice-Chairman; PB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Persons in parentheses accompanied persons listed before him (her).  
CCP Chinese Communist Party  
NPC-SC National People's Congress-Standing Committee  
PB Politburo  
PLA People's Liberation Army
# Appendix 2

## NORTH KOREAN VISITORS TO CHINA: 1980–1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paek Hak-rim</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of National Defense; PB</td>
<td>1980/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Si-hak</td>
<td>Central Broadcasting Committee Chairman</td>
<td>1980/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So Ch’ol</td>
<td>KWP Control Commission Chairman; PB</td>
<td>1980/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Chong-ok</td>
<td>Premier; PB</td>
<td>1981/January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choe Chong-gon</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Trade</td>
<td>1981/February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Chae-suk</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>1981/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Song-gol</td>
<td>Korean Central News Agency President</td>
<td>1981/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Kwan-sop</td>
<td>President of the Korea-China Friendship Association</td>
<td>1981/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chong-suk</td>
<td>SPA Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>1982/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Yong-sok</td>
<td>KWP Central Committee Member</td>
<td>1982/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Chung-guk</td>
<td>General; KWP Central Committee Candidate Member</td>
<td>1982/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyon Jun-gok</td>
<td>KWP Deputy Departmental Director</td>
<td>1982/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim II Sung</td>
<td>President; KWP General Secretary; PB</td>
<td>1982/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(O Chin-wu)</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense; PB</td>
<td>1982/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yun Ch’i-ho</td>
<td>General; KWP Central Committee Candidate Member</td>
<td>1982/September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Man-gom</td>
<td>People’s Committee Chairman in Pyongyang City</td>
<td>1982/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwang Chang-yop</td>
<td>SPA Chairman</td>
<td>1982/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’oe Chong-gon</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Trade</td>
<td>1982/December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chon In-ch’ol</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>1983/March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So Yun-sok</td>
<td>Pyongyang City Party Secretary; PB</td>
<td>1983/April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Jong II</td>
<td>KWP Secretary; PB</td>
<td>1983/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(O Chin-wu)</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense; PB</td>
<td>1983/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu Hyon-ok</td>
<td>Korean Central News Agency President</td>
<td>1983/June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Hyung-sop</td>
<td>SPA Chairman</td>
<td>1983/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Song-yul</td>
<td>Minister of Land and Marine Transportation</td>
<td>1983/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Ch’ung-song</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of Power Industry</td>
<td>1983/October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Sae-yong</td>
<td>Minister of Resource Development</td>
<td>1983/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwang Chin-taek</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of Public Security</td>
<td>1983/November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’oe Dok-hong</td>
<td>Minister of Railways</td>
<td>1984/January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Yong-nam</td>
<td>Vice-Premier; Minister of Foreign Affairs; PB</td>
<td>1984/February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Yong-si</td>
<td>Red Cross Vice-President</td>
<td>1984/March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Ki-nam</td>
<td>Nodong Sinmun Editor-in-Chief</td>
<td>1984/May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Yong-hak</td>
<td>Kolloja Editor-in-Chief</td>
<td>1984/May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Persons in parentheses accompanied person listed before him (her).

- **KWP**  : Korean Workers’ Party
- **PB**   : Politburo (KWP)
- **SPA**  : Supreme People’s Assembly
### Appendix 3

**CHINESE MILITARY LEADERS WITH KOREAN WAR EXPERIENCE: 1983**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Present Position</th>
<th>Korean Experience</th>
<th>Past Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yang Dezhi</td>
<td>Chief-of-General Staff; PBRM; CMC; NPC; CCMC Deputy Secretary General</td>
<td>19th Army Group Commander; CPV Deputy Commander and Commander</td>
<td>Vice-Minister of National Defense; Wuhan MRC; Kunming MRC; Jinan MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Desheng</td>
<td>Shenyang MRC; PBRM; CCMC</td>
<td>12th Army Deputy Commander</td>
<td>CCVC; PBSC; General Political Department Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin Jiwei</td>
<td>Beijing MRC; PBAM</td>
<td>15th Army Commander</td>
<td>Chengdu MRC; Kunming MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Xuezhi</td>
<td>General Logistics Department Director; CMC; CCMC Deputy Secretary General</td>
<td>CPV Deputy Commander</td>
<td>Director of the Office of Defense Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Ping</td>
<td>General Logistics Department Political Commissar; CAC-SC</td>
<td>CPV Political Commissar</td>
<td>Nanjing MRC; Wuhan MRC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang Biye</td>
<td>CCRM</td>
<td>13th Army Group Political Commissar; CPV Political Commissar</td>
<td>Jinan MR Political Commissar; General Political Department Deputy Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Shilun</td>
<td>President of the Academy of Military Science; CAC-SC</td>
<td>9th Army Group Commander</td>
<td>Nanjing MRDC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Chengwu</td>
<td>Fuzhou MRC; CCRM; CPPCC-NC Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>20th Army Group Commander</td>
<td>Beijing MRC; Deputy Chief-of-General Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Taizhong</td>
<td>Guangzhou MRC; CCRM</td>
<td>12th Army Commander</td>
<td>Beijing MRDC; Chengdu MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xianchu</td>
<td>NPC-SC Vice-Chairman; CCRM</td>
<td>19th Army Commander; CPV Deputy Commander</td>
<td>Deputy Chief-of-General Staff; Lanzhou MRC; Fuzhou MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nie Fengzhi</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>CPV Air Force Commander</td>
<td>Air Force Political Commissar; Nanjing MRC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du Yide</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>3rd Army Group Deputy Commander</td>
<td>Navy Commander; Lanzhou MRC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Chongbi</td>
<td>Beijing MR Political Commissar</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>Beijing Garrison Commander; Beijing MRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Zhimin</td>
<td>Fuzhou MR Political Commissar; CAC</td>
<td>Secretary General to CPV Commander; CPV Political Commissar</td>
<td>President of the Higher Military Academy; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xie Fang</td>
<td>General Logistics Academy Vice-President; NPC-SC</td>
<td>CPV Chief-of-Staff; Representative at the Armistice Negotiations</td>
<td>Vice-President of the Higher Military Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Service/Military Experience</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang Xinting</td>
<td>Armored Force Commander; CCRM</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>Chengdu MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cao Lihuai</td>
<td>Air Force Deputy Commander; CAC</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Jihui</td>
<td>Air Force Deputy Commander</td>
<td>CPV Air Force Combat Hero</td>
<td>First Air Force Combat Division Commander; CCAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Dai</td>
<td>Beijing MR Deputy Political Commissar</td>
<td>38th Army Political Commissar</td>
<td>Beijing MRDC; Second Artillery Corps Commander; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Shiqing</td>
<td>Nanjing MRDC; CPPCC-NC</td>
<td>67th Army Deputy Commander</td>
<td>Beijing MRDC; Second Artillery Corps Commander; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiang Yonghui</td>
<td>Shenyang MRDC; CCRM</td>
<td>38th Army Commander</td>
<td>Luda Garrison Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Zhen</td>
<td>Urumqi MR Second Party Secretary; CCRM</td>
<td>13th Army Commander</td>
<td>Hebei Provincial Military Command Commander; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Hui</td>
<td>Beijing MRDC</td>
<td>201st Division Commander</td>
<td>Guangzhou MR Political Commissar; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Rong</td>
<td>Wuhan MR Advisor; CCAM</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War; Member of the Armistice Commission</td>
<td>Guangzhou MRDC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Sizhong</td>
<td>Jinan MR Deputy Political Commissar</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>Beijing MR Political Commissar; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su Jing</td>
<td>Director of the Operations Department</td>
<td>Work at the CPV Headquarters</td>
<td>Guangzhou MRDC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhao Xingyuan</td>
<td>Heilongjiang Provincial Military Command Political Commissar; CCRM</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>118th Division Deputy Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Xianrui</td>
<td>Lanzhou MR Adviser; NPC</td>
<td>CPV Railway Corps Commander</td>
<td>Beijing MR Political Commissar; Chengdu MR Political Commissar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Yuan</td>
<td>Capital Construction Engineering Corps Deputy Director; CPPCC-NC</td>
<td>Division Commander</td>
<td>Lanzhou MRDC; CCAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceng Siyu</td>
<td>Nanjing MR Advisor</td>
<td>Service in the Korean War</td>
<td>Shenyang MRC; Wuhan MRC; Jinan MRC; CCRM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**
- CAC: Central Advisory Commission
- CAC-SC: Central Advisory Commission—Standing Committee
- CCAM: Central Committee Alternate Member
- CCRM: Central Committee Regular Member
- CCMC: Central Committee Military Commission
- CMC: Central Military Commission
- CCVC: Central Committee Vice-Chairman
- CPV: Chinese People's Volunteers
- MRC: Military Region Commander
- NPC: National People's Congress
- PBAM: Political Bureau Alternate Member
- PBSC: Political Bureau Standing Committee
- MR: Military Region
- MRDC: Military Region Deputy Commander
- NPC-SC: National People's Congress—Standing Committee
- PBRM: Political Bureau Regular Member
## Appendix 4

### KOREAN LEADERS IN CHINA: 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean Name</th>
<th>Present Position</th>
<th>Past Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mun Chong-il</td>
<td>SNAC Advisor; CCP Central Committee for Inspecting the Discipline</td>
<td>SNAC Vice-Minister; CPPCC Standing Committee; Yanbian Chief Administrator; Korean Volunteer Corps and NCKYF SNAC First Department Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwang Kwang-hak</td>
<td>SNAC Vice-Minister; President of the Federation of Nationalities Research Organizations</td>
<td>SNAC First Department Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho Nam-ki</td>
<td>Jilin Provincial Secretary; Jilin Military District Political Commissar; CCP-CC Regular Member; NPC</td>
<td>Yanbian First Secretary; Jilin Provincial Vice-Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho Yong-ho</td>
<td>Yanbian Secretary; NPC President; Yanbian People’s Congress Chairman</td>
<td>Yanbian Chief Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Dok-su</td>
<td>Yanbian First Secretary; Yanbian Chief Administrator</td>
<td>Jilin Provincial Secretary of the New Democratic League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Hyon-taek</td>
<td>CPPCC Standing Committee; Director of a Tianjin hospital</td>
<td>CCP-CC Alternate Member; NPC; Yanbian Second Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Myong-han</td>
<td>Vice-Chairman of the Jilin Provincial CPPCC Committee</td>
<td>Yanbian Deputy Administrator; Vice-Chairman of the Jilin Provincial CPPCC Committee; Korean Volunteer Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’oe Ch’ae</td>
<td>Vice-Chairman of the Jilin Provincial People’s Congress Standing Committee</td>
<td>Yanbian Deputy Administrator; Vice-Chairman of the Jilin Provincial CPPCC Committee; Korean Volunteer Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Min</td>
<td>Chairman of the Heilongjiang Provincial Nationalities Affairs Commission; Vice-Chairman of the Heilongjiang Provincial Trade Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Mun-il</td>
<td>Yanbian University President; NPC</td>
<td>Yanbian University Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chong Min</td>
<td>Minister at the Chinese Embassy in Japan</td>
<td>Deputy Director of the First Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Names in parentheses indicate Chinese pronunciation

- CCP-CC: Chinese Communist Party—Central Committee
- CPPCC: Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
- NCKYF: North China Korean Youth Federation
- NPC: National People’s Congress
- SNAC: State Nationalities Affairs Commission
## Appendix 5

### KOREAN DEPUTIES TO THE SIXTH NATIONAL PEOPLE’S CONGRESS: 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean Name</th>
<th>Chinese Pronunciation</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Province/Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cho Nam-ki</td>
<td>Zhao Nanqi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho Yong-ho</td>
<td>Cao Longhao</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Mun-il</td>
<td>Piao Wenyi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yun Myong-suk</td>
<td>Yin Mingshu</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pak Yong-ho</td>
<td>Piao Longhao</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yi Chong-ch’ol</td>
<td>Li Zongtie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Yong-sun</td>
<td>Jin Yongshun</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chong Yong-suk</td>
<td>Zheng Yingshu</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sok Ch’un-hi</td>
<td>Shi Chunji</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Heilongjiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Jae-myong</td>
<td>Jin Zaiming</td>
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North Korea’s Relations with China

Chin-Wee Chung

North Korea’s relations with China have been influenced by Sino-Soviet relations. Ever since the Sino-Soviet conflict became apparent, North Korea has tried to pursue balanced relations with Beijing and Moscow, without being overly dependent upon, or alienated from, either of its two communist neighbors. Pyongyang has sometimes been successful in remaining neutral in the Sino-Soviet competition over North Korea. Occasionally the Sino-Soviet dispute has presented Pyongyang with opportunities to manipulate Beijing and Moscow to its own advantage.

As long as the Sino-Soviet rivalry continues, however, North Korea will continue to be subject to pressures to tilt toward one or the other of the two big communist states. Indeed, there has been an increase in Sino-Soviet competition for influence in Asia. Since the early 1970s, China has emerged as a more active and influential political power in Asia than formerly. The Soviet Union also has been adjusting to changes in the region by strengthening its military position and by stepping up its political activities on a broad front in order to compete against China and the United States. Intensification of Sino-Soviet competition for influence in Asia would affect the policies of both countries toward the Korean peninsula and, in particular, would put added pressure on the North Korean regime. Continued relaxation of tension between China and the USSR, on the other hand, might put less pressure on North Korea, but it might also reduce Pyongyang’s leverage.

It is a generally accepted view that Sino-Soviet differences are serious and will be difficult to overcome, notwithstanding recent efforts. There are good reasons why an accommodation between them would be mutually beneficial. It would grant them leverage over the United States, Japan, and other countries throughout the world and would reduce the enormous
costs of confrontation. But the roots of the Sino-Soviet conflict are very deep; the causes of the dispute are historical, cultural, territorial, nationalist, geopolitico-strategic, ideological, and even racial and emotional. A limited détente may be a possibility. Yet the prospects for genuine Sino-Soviet normalization seem dim for the near future, despite the recent modest improvements in relations between the two communist powers. More probable is a continuing rivalry for influence on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of Asia.

This paper will review the patterns of North Korea's fluctuating relations with China within the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute and will then analyze various delicate and conflicting issues that confront Pyongyang in its relations with Beijing.

NORTH KOREAN-CHINESE RELATIONS IN THE SINO-SOViet DISPUTE

Until the outbreak of the Korean War, the Chinese communists participated very little, if at all, in North Korean politics, and North Korea was a veritable satellite of the Soviet Union. By 1958, however, a state of equilibrium between Soviet and Chinese influence over North Korea had been reached. North Korea began to emulate Chinese economic policies in 1958 and showed a strong affinity for Beijing's militant policy of unremitting struggle against the West, particularly the United States. During 1958–1961, however, the North Koreans tried to steer a neutral course in the face of worsening Sino-Soviet relations. After 1960, as the conflict became further embittered, the Pyongyang regime showed that it was incapable of total detachment. The North Korean communists also attempted to balance Soviet and Chinese influence and sought to minimize the extent of either direct Chinese or Soviet involvement in the internal affairs of the Pyongyang regime.

By the fall of 1962, the North Korean regime had begun to lean toward the Chinese line in the course of the communist camps' disputes over such

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2 Washington Post, September 27, October 5, and November 17, 1982; Korea Herald, March 1, 1983; Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News], March 2, 1983.

3 For a detailed discussion of North Korea in the Sino-Soviet dispute, see Chin O. Chung [Chin-Wee Chung], Pyŏngyang Between Peking and Moscow: North Korea's Involvement in the Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1958–1975 (University, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 1978).
matters as de-Stalinization, the Soviet quarrel with Albania, the Sino-Indian border dispute, and the Cuban missile crisis. From the beginning of 1963 until Khrushchev's downfall in October 1964, North Korea became Beijing's strongest ally in Asia in the Sino-Soviet rift.

The overthrow of Khrushchev in October 1964 marked the beginning of a move to improve the badly deteriorated relationship between the Soviet Union and North Korea. The emergence of the Brezhnev-Kosygin team provided an opportunity for the Pyongyang leadership to resume closer economic and political ties with Moscow and the communist countries of Eastern Europe. The discreet but determined efforts of the new Soviet leadership to reassert Soviet influence in North Korea were coupled with Pyongyang's desperate need for Soviet economic and military assistance.

During 1965–66, there were three important developments in Asia that might have drawn North Korea closer to the Soviet side. First was the beginning of American bombing of selected North Vietnam targets on February 1965, which apparently alarmed the North Korean leaders. The second was the signing of the South Korean-Japanese normalization treaty on June 22, 1965. This development, coupled with American bombing of North Vietnam, might have convinced North Korea that in the future only Soviet military support and Moscow's nuclear protection would provide an effective deterrent to American power, in case North Korea were again to become embroiled with the United States. Finally, the internal crisis created in China by the Cultural Revolution was another factor affecting North Korea's decision toward a closer alignment with Moscow.

Throughout the 1965–1968 period, the restored relations between Moscow and Pyongyang were strengthened by frequent exchanges of high-ranking officials and close economic and military cooperation between the two countries. North Korea's rapprochement with the Soviet Union had an immediate cooling effect on Sino-North Korean relations. Pyongyang launched a strong attack on the Chinese in a Nodong Sinmun editorial on September 15, 1966. North Korea's negative opinion of China's Cultural Revolution was made clear in the article. The North Korean leaders were apparently alarmed by the violence of the Cultural Revolution, which they did not want to see repeated in North Korea. The Chinese then began to retaliate against Pyongyang's criticism of Beijing and its pro-Soviet orientation. Some Beijing wall posters reported that an anti-Kim Il Sung campaign had erupted in various parts of North Korea, while others called for the removal of Kim. Subsequent posters appearing in China continued the attack, calling Kim a "fat revisionist" and a "disciple of Khrushchev."

Friendly relations between North Korea and China were restored after the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in April 1969.

4 Nodong Sinmun, October 2, 1965.
which marked the end of the most intense phase of the Cultural Revolution. As the Cultural Revolution drew to a close at the end of 1969, Beijing decided to relax its policy of self-imposed isolation and sought to reestablish normal political relations with selected countries, including North Korea. There were some indications that Soviet economic help had not been as abundant as anticipated and that Pyongyang wanted to build a military and economic base more independent of Moscow.

President Nixon's visit to Beijing and Moscow in 1972 undoubtedly caused serious apprehension within the North Korean regime. North Korea was more concerned with the outcome of Nixon's trip to Beijing than with his journey to Moscow. Pyongyang and Moscow fully shared their apprehension over Nixon's visit to Beijing, and the Soviet Union apparently used the situation to promote its influence in North Korea at China's expense by exchanging high-ranking delegations and by providing additional economic and military assistance. But the Soviet Union achieved only partial success. As a result of Soviet efforts and North Korea's concern over the Sino-American rapprochement, Pyongyang returned to a more balanced relationship with both Beijing and Moscow, but still with a tilt toward the former.

The significant event in 1975 for North Korea's relations with China was Kim Il Sung's visit to Beijing April 18-26, 1975. His hurried trip to Beijing, the first since 1961, came on the eve of the defeats of Cambodia and South Vietnam. The Chinese as well as the Soviets reportedly discouraged Kim Il Sung from any efforts to take advantage of the Indochina debacle with a thrust at South Korea.\(^5\)

The highlight of Sino-North Korean relations in the 1970s was Hua Guofeng's visit to North Korea in May 1978. His visit, the first ever as chairman of the CCP, was certainly intended to keep North Korea closer to Beijing. Less than four months after Hua's Pyongyang visit, Deng Xiaoping arrived in North Korea on September 8 to attend ceremonies for the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the North Korean communist regime. During most of the 1970s, North Korea maintained a considerable tilt toward Beijing. Even though Pyongyang kept up many personnel and economic exchanges with Moscow, North Korean-Soviet relations were not as cordial as the intimate relationship that existed between Pyongyang and Beijing.

In the years between 1978 and 1981, there were some signs of strain in the relationship between China and North Korea, whereas there were a variety of indications that Moscow-Pyongyang relations were improving. North Korea was unhappy with the foreign policy orientation of the Chinese leadership, the change in Chinese economic policies, and the process of de-Maoization, all of which had serious implications for North Korean interests.

Neither the signing of the Sino-Japanese peace and friendship treaty nor the normalization of Sino-American relations was well received by the North Koreans. In the latter case, the North Koreans seemed to object to the handling of the Taiwan issue, a point on which they may have felt that the Chinese had bartered principle for diplomatic gain.

During the same period, the Soviet Union tried to take advantage of some signs of strain in Sino-North Korean relations. While Russians repeatedly accused Beijing of collaborating with "the imperialist countries" and of supporting U.S.-South Korean relations, they gave North Korea increased verbal support on the issues of Korean unification and American troop withdrawal. In February 1981, Yi Chong-ok thanked Moscow for "resolutely" opposing the U.S. military presence in South Korea and for extending "active" support for Korean unification. In 1980, Soviet-North Korean trade reached its peak, totaling $880 million, whereas North Korea's trade with China was about $558 million for the year.6

Soviet media coverage of North Korea sharply increased from twenty-four news items in 1978 to 288 items in 1980. Media coverage of North Korea by Beijing and Moscow and vice versa reached a point of equilibrium in 1980 and 1981, thus ending the predominance of media coverage between China and North Korea that had existed until 1978.

The exchange of delegations between Moscow and Pyongyang also increased both in 1979 and 1980. In 1980, North Korea sent forty-six delegations to the Soviet Union and only twenty-two to China; it received about the same number of delegations respectively from its two neighbors. As for the composition of these delegations, North Korea and China exchanged visits of high-ranking officials in a variety of fields; Soviet-North Korean exchanges have been limited to relatively low-ranking officials. The last visit to Pyongyang by a high-ranking Soviet official was in 1980 by the Politburo member and Moscow Communist Party leader Viktor Grichin, who attended the Sixth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP). Except for his informal trip to Vladivostok for a secret talk with Brezhnev in May 1967, Kim Il Sung had not made an official visit to Moscow since 1961 until he went to the Soviet capital on May 23–26, 1984.

Since 1981, however, North Korean-Chinese relations have improved considerably. Beijing apparently decided to strengthen its relations with Pyongyang as a political and strategic necessity. North Korea also appears to have opted to pursue close ties with China as the Pyongyang regime must have thought it necessary in order to overcome the internal and external dilemma it faces. Internally, north Korea has been confronted with economic difficulties since the early 1970s and with the problem of leadership

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6 "Economic and Trade Relations Between China and North Korea," *China Newsletter*, no. 36 (January-February, 1982), pp. 25-29.
succession. Internationally, Pyongyang has become increasingly isolated while the pro-Seoul tendency continues to grow in the international community. It was particularly embarrassing for the North Korean regime when Seoul was selected as the site for both the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympics.

Kim Il Sung went to China in September 1982, immediately after the conclusion of the Twelfth Congress of the CCP. His visit carried many political implications for the shifting tangle of relationship among the three communist countries in Northeast Asia. Perhaps the most important items on the agenda Kim brought to China were: (1) Beijing’s support for a hereditary succession of power through his son, Kim Jong Il; (2) economic and military assistance from China; (3) assurance of North Korea’s place in the growing American–Chinese relationship; and (4) Pyongyang’s concern about the increasing South Korean–Chinese contacts.

Kim Il Sung appears to have won important concessions from China. Beijing has informally endorsed Kim’s son as his successor. This was first evidenced by CCP Chairman Hu Yaobang’s expression of appreciation for “energetic work of comrade Kim Jong II.” A series of reforms in the Beijing political hierarchy has stood in sharp contrast to Pyongyang’s move to make Kim Jong Il heir apparent, but China appears to have decided to live with the act as a means of keeping North Korea within Beijing’s orbit; China also wants to guard against Kim Jong Il’s turning toward the Soviet Union. In May 1983, Renmin Ribao ran an ideological essay by Kim Jong II, thus assigning some legitimacy to his aspirations. By inviting Kim Jong Il to Beijing in June 1983, the Chinese gave further indication that they were ready to accept the succession arrangements. For the North Korean communists, China’s endorsement of the Pyongyang leadership succession is extremely important both for domestic and for international consumption. It is particularly important because the Soviet Union and other communist countries are said to be appalled by the prospect of a communist dynasty in North Korea.

The improvement of Sino–North Korean relations has also involved a significant increase in Chinese military and economic assistance to Pyongyang. In an apparent move to keep Pyongyang on its side in the Sino–Soviet rift, China reportedly supplied North Korea with a total of twenty A5 fighter planes, the improved Chinese model of the MiG-21. It was the first time that China had supplied North Korea with these most sophisticated of

Chinese aircraft, and it was unusual that they provided twenty, amounting to one half of its annual production. Up to now, Beijing has cautiously provided North Korea with crude oil, AN2 planes, and T62 tanks, expressing fears that excessive military strength might prompt North Korea to make adventurous moves.\textsuperscript{10}

Also, in August 1982 China reportedly extended economic aid, amounting to $100 million, to Pyongyang. The recent trade volume between the two countries has been on the increase. The Chinese provide 0.7 million barrels of oil a year to North Korea.\textsuperscript{11} Pyongyang has conceded to China the use of Chongjin, an east coast port city, for Chinese exports to Japan; the concession was apparently made when Kim visited Beijing. In connection with this concession, North Korea has begun constructing a bridge across its border to China. Beijing and Pyongyang have concluded an agreement on Chinese use of North Korean railroads, port facilities, and warehouses.

The improvement in Sino-North Korean relations is clearly evidenced by exchanges of highest-ranking leaders between the two countries. In the space of three years, the Chinese leaders who visited Pyongyang included Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang in December 1981; elder statesman Deng Xiaoping and CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang in April 1982; Defense Minister Geng Biao in June 1982; Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian in May 1983, shortly after the hijacking of a Chinese airline to South Korea; Peng Zhen, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, in September 1983; and General Secretary Hu Yaobang in May 1984, shortly after President Reagan’s visit to China.

On the North Korean side, then Premier Yi Chong-ok visited Beijing in January 1981; Kim Yong-nam, Politburo member and then chief of the International Affairs Bureau of the KWP, went to China in November 1981; both Kim II Sung and Kim Jong Il visited China in September 1982 and June 1983; and Premier Kang Song-san made a five-day visit to Beijing in August 1984.

There are other important indications of a significant shift in balance between Beijing and Moscow. North Korea now openly supports the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk against the Soviet-backed, Vietnamese-installed regime in Phnom Penh. At the Twelfth CCP Congress, China put North Korea ahead of Beijing’s close socialist friends, Rumania and Yugoslavia. In a speech at a welcoming banquet for Kim II Sung, Hu Yaobang said that Kim’s “brilliant revolutionary practice had made him the esteemed and beloved great leader of the Korean people.” Hu showed he was willing to tolerate the powerful

\textsuperscript{10}Asahi Shimbun, October 12, 1982.

personality cult that surrounds Kim. The term “great leader” is never used to refer to Deng and Hu, who view the Mao cult with revulsion.

SINO-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS: DILEMMA AHEAD?

Despite warm relations between North Korea and China, important differences on various views persist between the two countries because the priorities and interests of Beijing’s domestic and foreign policies are bound to differ from those of Pyongyang. In fact, the discord between China and North Korea on delicate issues is already emerging and is likely to grow in the future.

Differing Perspectives on the U.S. Role in the Korean Peninsula

That the North Korean communists were drawn closer to the Chinese during the Maoist era was due in part to the fact that the North Korean and Chinese communist revolutions occurred at roughly the same time and that their respective leaders shared a similar outlook. The leaders of both countries represented a first-generation revolutionary elite who were profoundly dissatisfied with world conditions, highly nationalistic, and extremely hostile toward the West. Kim Il Sung joined with Mao Zedong in disputing Khrushchev’s policy on peaceful coexistence with the United States. Beijing’s more militant line appeared more closely attuned to Pyongyang’s interests. The North Koreans apparently believed that Beijing’s hard line offered greater protection from the United States and was more likely in the long run to bring about Korean unification on communist terms. In fact, Beijing wholly endorsed North Korea’s political and territorial ambitions. Furthermore, the communists in Beijing and Pyongyang shared common animosities and complaints against the United States, which alone “obstructed” the unification of their respective countries by the presence of its forces in the Republic of Korea and in the Taiwan Straits. This attitude toward the United States was one of the important factors that bound them together.

Beijing and Pyongyang, however, no longer share the same perspective on, and common animosities against, the United States. China is accepted and recognized as a major world power; Beijing is a full-fledged member of the United Nations and its associated organizations. China has concluded a peace and friendship treaty with Japan and normalized its relations with the United States. Furthermore, the Chinese perception of the “American threat” has changed considerably since the announcement of the Shanghai communiqué in 1972. Thus, Beijing’s foreign policies are now developed in the light of global and regional considerations that far transcend North Korea’s interests.

Beijing is very anxious to prevent Soviet advances in the Pacific–Asian area. The Chinese appear more apprehensive about a Soviet military buildup in Asia than about the U.S. troops in Japan and South Korea because they
view the American presence as a deterrent to Soviet designs on China. Also, Beijing reportedly believes that any wavering of the American stance in Korea not only would push Japan into rearming but would also encourage the unpredictable Kim Il Sung to engage in military adventurism in Korea. Another war in Korea would almost certainly involve the United States and thus lead to a new Sino-American confrontation at a time when Beijing is anxious to maintain friendly relations with Washington. Such a conflict might also lead to much greater Russian involvement on the side of North Korea and increased Soviet influence in Pyongyang, as was the case in Vietnam. It is significant to note that North Korea has never been able to compel China to establish the Korean issue as a question of principle in Sino-American relations.

Publicly, the Chinese have always supported North Korea’s demand for the withdrawal of American forces from South Korea and in recent years have emphatically reiterated their full support for Pyongyang’s demands. This is because of Beijing’s need to avoid alienating Pyongyang, given China’s desire to have North Korea tilt to its side. Nonetheless, it is generally believed that Beijing prefers the retention of an American presence in South Korea, for the time being at least.

**Korean Unification**

China does not place as high a priority on Korean unification as does Kim, who has been obsessed for decades with the goals of unifying Korea by any means. The immediate concern of the Chinese is “Soviet hegemonism” abroad and the “Four Modernizations” at home; these matters inevitably take precedence over Korean unification. The Chinese are thus more interested in preserving the Korean status quo than in any changes in Korea that might enable the Soviets to enhance their geopolitical advantages and disrupt the Chinese economic development program. When he visited Japan in October 1978, Deng Xiaoping said that Korean unification would occur “eventually,” but there was no possibility of a major change in the political stalemate on the peninsula in the near future. While Beijing will probably continue to give ritualistic support to Pyongyang’s aspirations and avoid a public disagreement over Korean unification, the Chinese will continue to favor the status quo in Korea.

**Status of the Personality Cult**

Since Mao’s death in 1976, and particularly since the rise of Deng Xiaoping, China has been practicing the policies of de-Maoization and liberalization, both of which threaten the legitimacy of the North Korean regime. The

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downgrading of ideology and the continuous attack on the cult of personality surrounding Mao Zedong represent serious threats to "Kim Il Sungism." The Chinese de-Maoization program is an implicit criticism of the cult of personality that surrounds Kim. Because North Korea has adhered to its longstanding national version of Stalinism and Maoism, there is no doubt that Kim II Sung deplores China's criticism of Mao as much as Mao resented Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign. Kim II Sung will not forget the attempt by Ch'oe Ch'ang-ik and Pak Ch'ang-ok to overthrow his leadership in 1956 following the de-Stalinization campaign. The whole cast of North Korean officials was and still is Stalinist in makeup, and North Korea was modeled after the Stalinist system. Thus, North Korea cannot afford to practice de-Stalinization, nor can it afford to repudiate the cult of personality, for to do either would jeopardize Kim's own dictatorial leadership. In fact, the idolization and deification of Kim II Sung has steadily intensified since 1958.

Economic Policies
The new pragmatic Chinese economic policy stands in stark contrast to North Korea's continued Stalinist economic policy. During the 1950s and 1960s, North Korea and China took similar attitudes toward economic development. The two countries were striving to emerge from economic backwardness and placed first priority on the construction of heavy industry. North Korea's agricultural and industrial policies closely paralleled China's commune system and the GreatLeap Forward movement. But Beijing is now experimenting with economic decentralization, and the old "Stalinist" priorities—heavy industry, defense and rapid accumulation—have been replaced by new priorities focused on light industry, consumer goods, agriculture, and raising the standard of living. During Premier Kang Song-san's recent visit to China, Hu Yaobang reportedly made remarks that seemed to criticize Pyongyang's heavy industry-oriented economic policy. Moreover, China has decided that its first priority is to develop and modernize China's economy by the end of this century. For this vast undertaking, the Chinese will have to acquire enormous amounts of trade, technology, and foreign credits from the Western industrial world.

North Korean leaders cannot avoid seeing the new Chinese economic program as an implicit rejection of their own policies, and these policies could give an impetus to the newly emerging "technocrats" in the North Korean leadership who might desire to replace Kim's Stalinist policies with those of Deng Xiaoping. Kim himself expressed this concern as early as 1963 when he lashed out against the "degenerating" tendencies among the youth in North Korea. As Pyongyang seeks to increase its foreign trade and other foreign contacts, it is inevitable that the country will be exposed to more information from abroad. It thus seems a possibility that younger military,
party, and civilian bureaucrats will be impatient for faster growth, for a more flexible and "open door" diplomacy, and for less dogmatic ideology.

**South Korean-Chinese Relations**

Since the Republic of Korea expressed its interests in establishing relations with "nonhostile" communist states on June 23, 1973, Beijing has slightly eased its hardline attitude toward Seoul, especially during the last several years. There have been a number of minor signs that the Chinese are showing an interest in direct or indirect relations with South Korea. In 1974, a mail service was established and telegraphic links were set up between the two countries. In 1976, two South Korean fishing vessels impounded for violation of Chinese territorial waters were promptly released. It has been reported that since 1981 Chinese diplomats have been allowed to make contacts with their South Korean counterparts at diplomatic gatherings in other countries. South Korea, Japan, and China reached a final agreement on a new air route linking Fukue in Japan and Shanghai in China through the Korean flight information region beginning August 4, 1983. The opening of the new air route will eventually enable flight control in Taegu, Korea to communicate directly with its counterpart in Shanghai. In October 1983, Beijing permitted two South Korean officials to attend an international conference in Shanghai. In March 1984, Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang said that China was willing to permit Korean residents in China to visit the Republic of Korea and that China would allow South Koreans to meet with their separated families on Chinese territory. From 1978 to March 1984, a total of 189 Koreans in China visited South Korea to meet with their relatives.

Beginning in 1984, there have been several exchanges of athletic teams between South Korea and China. In March 1984, a Korean tennis team entered China to compete in a Davis Cup qualifying match; this was the first time that Korean athletes had set foot on Chinese soil since World War II. In April 1984, the Chinese participated in the Eighth Asian Basketball Championships held in Seoul. In July 1984, China formally indicated that it would participate in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Lu Jindong, vice-president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, reportedly said, "We will no doubt attend the next Olympics in the Olympic spirit." Previously, Beijing unofficially repeated its intention to participate in the 1986 Asian Games and the Seoul Olympics of 1988.

There have been a number of reports that China has opened up an indirect trade via Hong Kong and Japan with the Republic of Korea. Beijing's drive for modernization and its rapidly expanding economic relations with Korea's allies, the United States and Japan, have laid the groundwork for long-run improvement in the Korean-Chinese economic relationship.

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The rapid growth of South Korea’s economic might, and its consequent increase in importance in Asian politics, is also providing China with an important impetus to improve her relations with South Korea when it becomes necessary. From Beijing’s point of view, furthermore, South Korea is a significant importer of resources whose annual import total is over $24 billion, much of which could be imported from China. China could also import from the Republic of Korea various consumer goods at prices cheaper than anywhere else in the world. In fact, the total trade volume between Seoul and Beijing was estimated at $600 million in 1980. The main items that South Korea exports to China include: chemical fertilizers, synthetic fibers, ammonium nitrate, television sets and parts, and packing sacks. Korean import from China includes: various coals, wool and wool products, and manmade fibers.

Perhaps the most significant event between the Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China was the direct negotiations held in Seoul in May 1983 over the hijacked Chinese airliner. It was the first official contact between the two states, which have no formal diplomatic relations. Beijing, which recognizes Pyongyang as the “only legitimate government” on the Korean peninsula, called Seoul “the Republic of Korea” and Seoul reciprocated by calling Beijing “the People’s Republic of China.”

South Korea’s foreign minister publicly expressed Seoul’s desire to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing at the earliest possible date. The hijacking incident thus presented a fresh opportunity for direct contact and dialogue between the two countries. Indeed, these official negotiations and the subsequent issuance of memoranda represented a new era in the hitherto blocked relations between Seoul and Beijing.

China cannot ignore the fact that South Korea is an emerging power in East Asia. South Korea, in cooperation with the United States and Japan, could make a significant contribution to Chinese economic modernization by providing technology at low cost and by cooperating in the expansion of Chinese trade. South Korea could also provide virtually the only comparable developmental model for the Chinese to emulate or partially duplicate. Beijing also has a strong security interest in the Korean peninsula. China has a vital, long-term interest in positive relations with the capitalist states to its east and south. China’s ambitious economic agenda for the 1980s and 1990s cannot be accomplished without stable and moderately amicable ties with its noncommunist neighbors, including South Korea.

Ibid., May 11, 1983.

Ibid., May 17, 1983.

No dramatic mellowing of relations between Seoul and Beijing can be expected in the near future, however. The "North Korean factor" or "North Korean veto" is the major obstacle in advancing to any serious relationship between the two countries. There are limits in the Chinese moves toward Seoul because the gains from courting the Republic of Korea are not so great as to risk alienating North Korea and consolidating Pyongyang-Moscow ties. Yet tensions in the Sino-North Korean relationship will continue serving as both a cause and result of the growth in informal contacts between Beijing and Seoul.

CONCLUSION

During most of the 1970s, North Korea maintained a considerable tilt toward China. During 1978–1980, North Korea returned to a more balanced relationship with Beijing and Moscow as a result of Beijing's pragmatic policies and Soviet efforts to woo North Korea. As a new cycle in the Sino-Soviet-North Korean triangle appears to have begun in 1981, both Beijing and Pyongyang have clearly shown their desires for closer relations. China apparently decided to strengthen its links with North Korea at the expense of the Soviet Union. Recent exchanges of the top-level leaders between Beijing and Pyongyang undoubtedly strengthened the tie between the two countries. Keeping North Korea within the Chinese orbit is particularly important for Beijing since China's neighbors—Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan—have become outright pro-Soviet. North Korea also appears to have decided to overcome domestic and external problems by improving its relations with China.

As noted earlier, however, many delicate issues confront the Pyongyang-Beijing relationship. North Korea's interests will probably differ from those of China on such issues as desirability of any large-scale conflict on the Korean peninsula, Korean unification, the role of the United States in East Asia, and the desire of Beijing to continue its friendly relations with the United States and Japan. China's new policies put North Korea in an uncomfortable position because they are the direct opposite of the important motivations that bound North Korea and China together in the past. The two countries had similar outlooks on the world, similar attitudes toward economic development, and a common animosity toward the United States. It is not clear yet how North Korean leaders will adjust to China's rapidly changing economic policies, criticism of Mao's cult, and new world outlook.

Nevertheless, despite these differences, ties between North Korea and China will probably remain basically good. China appears to be more supportive of North Korean objectives than the Soviet Union, including supporting its succession plan and providing as much economic assistance as it can afford. Moreover, the Chinese have been much more sensitive than the Soviets in dealing with other Asians. In addition, Pyongyang views Moscow
as posing a greater threat to its independence than Beijing. Mutual distrust between North Korea and the Soviet Union has been deep and difficult to overcome. From the Soviet perspective, North Korea is a difficult and ungrateful partner that cannot be fully trusted. Pyongyang, however, is quite aware of the dangers of too close a relationship with the Soviet Union. This combination of fear and mistrust of Moscow on one hand, and Pyongyang’s need for Soviet aid on the other, has been the crux of North Korea’s dilemma in its relations with Moscow up to the present.

Finally, the importance of tradition in the relationship between China and North Korea should be stressed. The cultural affinity between the two countries could be an important factor. While Pyongyang and Beijing share an ancient common civilization, the cultural link between North Korea and the Soviet Union has never been close. Kim Il Sung himself appears to have more personal attachment to China than to the Soviet Union. Having moved to Manchuria at the age of fourteen, Kim spent about fifteen years in China until 1941, when he was forced by the Japanese to retreat into Soviet Siberia. In short, the history of the past thirty years suggests that both Pyongyang and Beijing value their relationship, and that both are willing to invest the effort to overcome whatever difficulties may develop between them.
North Korea's Relations with Japan: The Possibilities for Bilateral Reconciliation

Jung Hyun Shin

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, North Korea and Japan have maintained a limited nonofficial relationship. Because of the absence of diplomatic relations, this relationship has been characterized by informal and intermittent contacts and exchanges. Although there have been transactions between the two countries in certain nonpolitical fields, some of these have not been open to the public. North Korea, despite its lack of normal channels of access to Japan, has had an advantageous position to make contacts through Japan's domestic political groups and Korean residents supporting its cause. It is well known that there are deeply seated pro-Pyongyang elements, including the Choch'ungnyŏn and various leftist groups, within Japan. By conducting so-called "people's diplomacy" toward these supporters, North Korea has pursued its long-standing policy aimed at bringing about the normalization of diplomatic relations with Japan.

But Japan has not changed her nonrecognition policy toward the North Korea regime. In particular, the conservative government of Japan has taken a cautious attitude toward North Korea's Japan policy and has moved slowly to expand cultural and economic exchanges between the two countries. In fact, it was not until the early 1970s that North Korea's relations with Japan grew substantially, both in political and economic terms. This growth in relations resulted mainly from Japan's adoption of a policy designed to improve her relations with communist states and to North Korea's corresponding accommodation.

Japanese leaders, including some of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) high-ranking members and businessmen, urged their government to change Japan's anti-Pyongyang policy into that of promoting
friendly relations with North Korea. This urging was much affected by the emerging détente among the major powers, such as the Sino–U.S. rapprochement and Sino–Japanese diplomatic normalization. More concretely, it was embodied into Japan’s pursuit of a “two-Koreas” policy.

North Korea, in turn, has responded positively to Japan’s new move. It demanded that the Japanese government adopt a policy based on an “equidistance” diplomacy toward Pyongyang and Seoul that could ultimately lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan. North Korean leaders once suggested that Japan could conclude another treaty with North Korea for the purpose of normalizing bilateral relations between the two countries without abrogating the existing Japan–South Korea treaty.

Consequently, cultural and economic relations between the two countries became closer during the 1970s than before. At present, North Korea has become Japan’s major trading partner among communist states. In addition, exchanges of personnel between the two countries prospered. Even in the 1980s, North Korea’s relations with Japan have not experienced a decline. Rather, with the development of the Sino–South Korean thaw, bilateral relations between the two countries seem to have gained a new momentum. This reasoning may be based upon the theme of “cross-contact,” whose goal is to let Japan expand her relations with North Korea in exchange for the growth of China’s relations with South Korea.

These days, the international environment surrounding North Korea and Japan has shown some signs of change. The three major powers, the United States, China, and Japan, have increased their efforts to expand the range of their mutual understanding and cooperation through a series of summit meetings held recently in Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo. At these meetings, they seemed to agree on the reduction of tension on the Korean peninsula but diverged in terms of how to achieve it. In particular, it was reported that both China and Japan agreed that they should be more cooperative in deterring lingering conflict on the Korean peninsula and in keeping the status quo of a divided Korea. These growing concerns of both China and Japan have been demonstrated since the Rangoon incident in 1983. Whatever diplomatic efforts China and Japan are making, it appears that such efforts are certain to have impact on the handling of the Korean problem and on the future of the two Koreas’ respective relations with China and Japan.

Under these circumstances, this paper will be concerned primarily with examining the possibilities for further reconciliation in the near future as well as describing briefly the evolution of the past relationship between the two countries. For this purpose, three important questions will be examined: First, since their inception in 1953, how have North Korea’s relations with Japan evolved? Second, what factors have been most crucial for the development of relations between the two countries in the last three decades? And
finally, where are those relations heading? In search of proper answers to these questions, this paper will pay analytical attention to the following factors: (1) the major powers’ policies toward the Korean peninsula, (2) the prospect of South-North Korea relations, and (3) the basic interests of North Korea and Japan in pursuit of their bilateral relations. The selection of these factors is based upon the assumption that bilateral relations between North Korea and Japan have been, and will be, significantly affected by the operation of the changing international system in East Asia in general and of inter-Korean relations in particular.

BACKGROUND

Immediately after the end of the Korean War, North Korea sought to establish relations with Japan. North Korea’s efforts were made mainly in two ways: the “government-to-government” approach and “people-to-people” diplomacy. A first official approach was initiated by the announcement of a statement by Foreign Minister Nam Il of North Korea in 1955. The statement made two special proposals. One was to set up formal diplomatic relations between North Korea and Japan as early as possible, and the other was to open trade and cultural relations “in conformity to mutual interests” between the two countries. Most noteworthy in Nam Il’s statement was that North Korea demonstrated its willingness to conduct trade with Japan even before diplomatic relations between the two countries were formally established.

The Japanese government, then led by Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichiro, did not accept North Korea’s proposals. Rather, Hatoyama made clear that his government had no intention of promoting economic and cultural relations with North Korea as long as they had an adverse impact on the resumption of diplomatic ties between Japan and South Korea. Despite Japan’s official refusal, North Korea did not cease its efforts to seek certain contacts with Japan. In particular, the North Korean communists tried to extend their penetration into leftist groups in Japan. There have been three major channels through which they tried to maintain their contacts with those leftist groups. These were: (1) to organize and mobilize the leftist Korean minority in Japan, (2) to strengthen political and ideological affinity with Japanese leftist forces, including the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), and (3) to promote friendly contacts with Japanese visitors to Pyongyang, particularly with influential figures of the political, business, and media establishments.

1 Nodong Shinmun [Workers’ News], February 26, 1955.
2 Mainichi Shimbun [Daily News], June 22, 1955.
3 For these channels of North Korea’s access to Japan, see Jung Hyun Shin, Japanese-North Korean Relations: Linkage Politics in the Regional System of East Asia (Seoul: Kyung Hee University Press, 1981), pp. 102–111.
In May 1955, the leftist Koreans in Japan formed an organization named Choch'ungnyŏn (in Japanese, Chōsenren, or General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan), and this organization was soon brought under the direct control of North Korea. Choch'ungnyŏn was primarily designed to perform two functions: to make efforts to improve North Korea's relations with Japan, and to capture the leadership of all the Korean residents (amounting to some 600,000) in Japan. Since its inauguration, this organization has become the major mouthpiece for North Korea's policy toward Japan with the support of such groups as the Japan–Korea (North) Association (JKA) and the Japan–Korea (North) Trade Association (JKTA).

The JSP and the JCP also became major channels of North Korea's access to Japan. Although the JSP and the JCP alike did not support North Korea's position to the same degree, they were greatly interested in broadening contacts with the North Korean communists, and also kept pace with them in handling some important issues, including the termination of the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty, the neutralization of Japan, and the opposition to the Japan–South Korea talks. To carry out their common goals, the two leftist parties of Japan sent their high-ranking members to Pyongyang for talks with North Korean leaders. During the 1950s, important Japanese leftists visiting Pyongyang included Tetsu Katayama and Ishino Hisao, JSP members of the Diet, and Miyamoto Kenji, secretary of the JCP's Central Committee.

In addition, the number of Japanese civilians visiting North Korea increased steadily. The first Japanese visitor to Pyongyang after the end of the Korean War was Oyama Ikuo, a winner of the International Stalin Peace Prize; the purpose of his visit was to commemorate the conclusion of the Korean Armistice. During the year 1955, it was reported that the number of Japanese visitors to North Korea amounted to 53. As Japanese visitors to North Korea increased, the Japanese government took some steps to discourage visiting Japanese. In the vice-ministers' meeting held in October 1955, the Japanese government made a decision that any personnel or material exchanges with North Korea would not be officially recognized. This decision, however, was not successful. In reality, the flow of Japanese visitors to North Korea could not be effectively blocked. Rather, the composition of Japanese visitors became more diverse. It included a wide range

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4 In comparison with the Japan Socialist Party's contacts with North Koreans, the Japan Communist Party remained relatively inactive. The main reason was that the activities of the JCP were highly constrained by the government's tight security control, and also by a complex intraparty factional strife.

5 For details of Oyama's visit, see Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Japan, Daily Report, November 6 and 10, 1953.

6 Ibid., January 3, 1956.

7 Nihon Keizai Shimbun [Japan Economic News], October 26, 1955.
of social and cultural groups, such as artists, reporters, and labor and peasant unions. Most visitors from Japan entered North Korea through Beijing and Moscow.

Now that North Korea's relations with Japan have begun to unfold within arm's reach, one key question could arise over North Korea's basic motives and goals. It can be said that North Korea's approach to Japan was motivated largely by its twofold policy considerations: diplomatic and economic. First, North Korea put priority on detaching South Korea from Japan while pursuing its own close relations with Japan. For North Korea, this policy was regarded as having the effect not only of isolating South Korea in the international community, but also of producing a milieu favorable to the reunifying of the Korean peninsula on its own terms. At this time, North Korea was also encouraged further by the worsening relationship between South Korea and Japan in the postwar era. The deterioration of South Korea's relations with Japan was mainly caused by a deep-rooted mutual animosity and complicated pending issues between the two countries, such as the Peace Line and the fishery dispute. Amid the growing feud between South Korea and Japan, North Korea accelerated its efforts to improve relations with Japan.

Second, North Korea's approach to Japan was given an economic importance. North Korea was interested in gaining some economic benefits from its transactions with Japan, which were considered necessary to recover its war-torn economy and to propel its economic growth. A Japanese correspondent observed in 1955 that what Japan once built in the north still constituted the basis for the country's rehabilitation, and that for this reason North Korea had an unusually strong interest in trading with Japan. Moreover, North Korean leaders frequently stated that the purchase of commodities from socialist states was highly unfavorable because of the high freightage and other circumstances, while Japan could be a more lucrative market for North Korea because of the geographical proximity between the two countries.

During the post-Korean War period, most noticeable in bilateral relations between North Korea and Japan was the conclusion of an agreement of the repatriation of Korean residents in Japan. The repatriation of Koreans in Japan was a thorny problem pending among the three countries, Japan,

8 The so-called Peace Line, proclaimed by the Rhee government of South Korea in 1952, extended about 60 nautical miles off the Korean coast. The Rhee government held that the Peace Line replaced the MacArthur Line, declared in 1945, in order to protect "all natural resources in the shelf adjacent to the Korean peninsula" and to ensure Korea's national defense against external infiltration. It was reported that during the 1952-1964 period, a total of 232 Japanese boats were seized, and 2,784 fishermen were caught traversing the Peace Line to engage in fishing operations.

South Korea, and North Korea. While Japan had no diplomatic relations with either of the two Koreas, South and North Korea each attempted to use the Korean minority as a lever in their approach to Japan. Both South and North Korea competed with each other for the allegiance of Koreans residing in Japan. But comparatively speaking, the Rhee government of South Korea did not take concrete measures for the solution of the Korean minority problem. Meanwhile, North Korea moved to conduct negotiations with Japan in order to solve this problem. Under these circumstances, Japan demonstrated an interest in repatriating Japanese nationals detained in North Korea. On February 9, 1956, a Red Cross meeting between North Korea and Japan was held in Pyongyang to deal with the repatriation problem of Japanese nationals in North Korea. This meeting ended on February 29 with the issuance of a joint communique providing that out of the forty-eight Japanese in North Korea, only thirty-six persons would come back to Japan because twelve Japanese did not want to return home.10

After this meeting ended, North Korea began renewed efforts to repatriate Koreans in Japan. To this end, North Korea launched a wide range of activities calling for repatriation. Choch'ungnyŏn and its affiliates played a major role in this drive. And many Japanese leftist groups, including the JSP and the JCP, joined the campaign supporting North Korea's cause. As a result, the Kishi cabinet of Japan decided to permit the repatriation of Koreans in Japan to North Korea despite strong protests from South Korea.

With the conclusion of the so-called “Calcutta agreement” between the two Red Cross Societies of Japan and North Korea in 1959, the repatriation problem was settled in North Korea's favor.11

With regard to the repatriation accord, one question is raised: Why did both Japan and North Korea agree on the repatriation of Koreans in Japan to North Korea despite South Korea's strong opposition? Above all, the Calcutta agreement could be accepted as conducive to Japan's efforts to alleviate the social and economic agony deriving from the Korean minority. At that time, the Korean minority was regarded as a potential threat to the stability of Japanese society. And the bad economic situation of Korean residents became a difficult problem facing vanquished Japan. Most Koreans living in Japan's major urban areas were unemployed and also unskilled laborers.12

10 *Asahi Shim bun* [Morning Sun News], February 29, 1956.
11 For details of the Calcutta agreement, see Jung, *Japanese-North Korean Relations*, p. 117.
12 It was reported that 75 percent of the Koreans who were registered to return to North Korea were unemployed in Japan. See Richard H. Mitchell, *The Korean Minority in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 120.
On North Korea's part, it seemed that the repatriation agreement served two basic goals: to improve bilateral relations with Japan and to solve a manpower shortage. As a matter of fact, in 1957, two years before the repatriation began, North Korea initiated the Five-Year Plan with emphasis on the rapid growth of heavy industry. But this plan was not backed by sufficient manpower. North Korea had lost a vast number of its population during the Korean War not only because of battlefield casualties but also because of a massive movement of Koreans across the 38th parallel from the North into the South. It was meaningful that Kim II Sung frequently called for an effective management system of industrial labor in the late 1950s while launching the nationwide Chollima campaign.13

Meanwhile, North Korea's "trade-first" policy toward Japan gave an impetus to the development of economic relations between the two countries. As suggested in the statement of 1955, North Korea was eager to conduct trade with Japan despite the absence of normal diplomatic relations. But North Korea's trade with Japan was hampered by two factors: Japan's policy of giving priority to the normalization of relations with South Korea in concert with U.S. policy toward the Far East, and South Korea's strong opposition to commerce between North Korea and Japan. Consequently, Japan-North Korea trade did not make any progress throughout the 1950s. Although some Japanese businessmen and North Koreans continued to announce joint communiques on commercial transactions and even concluded several private trade agreements, actual trade relations between the two countries still remained in an inchoate stage.14 The total volume of two-way trade between North Korea and Japan amounted to about U.S. $4,135,000 in 1957, but it dropped to about U.S. $4,008,000 next year.15 The Japanese government maintained its policy of not permitting any direct transactions with North Korea, and thus trade between the two countries could be conducted only indirectly on a nonofficial basis.

With the inauguration of the Ikeda cabinet in 1960, North Korea's trade with Japan entered a new phase. The new government of Japan took some steps to facilitate trade with communist states in general. In 1961, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan abolished the system of compulsory barter trade with six communist states, including China and Hungary. While taking this step, the Japanese government also put North

14 At this time, a major portion of Japanese traders in commerce with North Korea were composed of leftist Korean residents in Japan. Since then, Japan-North Korea trade has been often called "cho-cho trade," meaning trade between leftist Koreans in Japan and North Koreans.
15 *Ajia Boeki* [Asia Trade], August 19, 1962.
Korea under the regulations of compulsory barter trade and permitted a direct commercial shipping service. And in 1962, the Ikeda cabinet of Japan nullified the Trade Embargo Act, which was aimed at restricting Japan's trade with communist states. One year later, it took steps to allow the settlement of trade accounting through the regular banking system, and to offer short-term deferred payment and bank loans to North Korea. As a result, North Korea's trade with Japan increased significantly. In 1961, when the barter trade system and direct commercial shipping service were formally recognized, the trade volume between the two countries amounted to about U.S. $8 million, an increase of about 62 percent over the previous year. Also, in 1964, when the practices of deferred and installment payments in trading between North Korea and Japan were approved, trade between the two countries doubled, still remaining about two to one in favor of North Korea's exports. As shown in Table 1, as North Korea began to purchase a large scale of industrial facilities and equipment from Japan in the late 1960s, the trade volume also increased at a modest rate. Thus, in 1970, North Korea became Japan's fourth largest trading partner among com-

Table 1

ANNUAL TRADE VOLUME BETWEEN JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA: 1961-1970
(U.S. $1,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Korea's Exports</th>
<th>North Korea's Imports</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>3,460</td>
<td>4,456</td>
<td>7,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>4,553</td>
<td>4,781</td>
<td>9,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>9,430</td>
<td>5,347</td>
<td>14,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>20,231</td>
<td>11,284</td>
<td>31,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>14,723</td>
<td>16,505</td>
<td>31,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>22,692</td>
<td>5,016</td>
<td>27,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>29,606</td>
<td>6,370</td>
<td>35,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>34,632</td>
<td>20,748</td>
<td>55,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>32,186</td>
<td>24,159</td>
<td>56,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>34,414</td>
<td>23,344</td>
<td>57,758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: The figures for the 1961-1964 period were taken from Tsusho Hakusho, White Paper of the MITI (Tokyo: Tsusansho, 1964, 1965), and other figures from Nitcho Boeki, Japan-North Korea Trade (Tokyo: March 1975).


17 In 1964, the Ikeda cabinet of Japan approved the case of a one-year deferred payment on the shipment of steel materials to North Korea, totaling about U.S. $2.24 million. Ibid., p. 150.
munist states after China, the Soviet Union, and Poland, its total volume amounting to about U.S. $58 million. But this amount was still negligible when compared with the trade volume between South Korea and Japan, amounting to about U.S. $1 billion.

As strikingly contrasted with the growing trade relationship, social and political relations between the two countries during the late 1960s had been considerably strained. While the Japanese government conducted negotiations with the South Korean government for the normalization of diplomatic ties, North Korea took various counteractions. In particular, North Korea tried to mobilize various propaganda media and many Japanese personages or groups sympathetic to its position, including the JSP and the JCP. Choch’ungnyŏn and its affiliates performed a leading role in opposing the Japan–South Korea talks. When the talks between South Korea and Japan were in full swing, Choch’ungnyŏn even proposed a call for a tripartite parley among Japan, South and North Korea as an alternative to ongoing bilateral meetings between Japan and South Korea. This proposal was first made by the representatives of Choch’ungnyŏn in January 1963 and was later reaffirmed by the JSP.18

But the Japanese government did not respond to this proposal. Despite growing criticism by the opposition parties and a number of leftist social organizations in Japan, the conservative government of Japan did not change its firm stand on the Japan–South Korea diplomatic reconciliation. Thereafter, the Sato cabinet adopted a policy of “pushing forward diplomacy toward Asia” and emphasized as its first step the establishment of diplomatic ties with South Korea. As a result, the Japan–Republic of Korea Treaty was formally concluded in 1965, and the relationship between the two countries was normalized.

Immediately following the signing of the Japan–Republic of Korea Treaty, North Korea issued a memorandum declaring the treaty null and void. In the memorandum, the North Korean communists denounced the Japan–South Korea negotiations as initiated by the United States from the outset in an effort to form an anticommunist military alliance in East Asia, which would finally trigger the revival of Japanese militarism.19 Thus, North Korea’s relations with Japan showed a downward trend. The growing conflict between the two countries was well embodied in several bilaterally pending issues.

First, the negotiations on further repatriation of the remaining Koreans in Japan were stopped because of diametrically opposed positions between

18 The proposal was first offered when Yi Sang-chol, chief of Choch’ungnyŏn’s Department of Foreign Affairs, and his party visited the office of the Prime Minister of Japan. FBIS, Japan, Daily Report, January 9, 1963.

the two countries. This issue could not be solved by February 1971, when representatives of the Red Cross Societies of Japan and North Korea signed a new agreement.

Second, both countries were again confronted with the issue regarding Korean residents’ free travel to North Korea and the entry of North Koreans into Japan. North Korea demanded that personnel exchanges with Japan should be equal and reciprocal. A high-ranking official of North Korea complained in an interview with the Asahi Shimbun in February 1965 that “thousands of Japanese trading company representatives have visited North Korea since the Korean War, but the North Korean delegates have never visited Japan, because the Japanese government was firmly opposed to it.” The Japanese government, however, maintained that personnel exchanges with North Korea should be conducted on a case-by-case basis. In line with this policy, the Sato cabinet of Japan did not approve the entry of North Koreans into Japan except for those concerned with the North Korean Red Cross and with athletic contests.

Third, North Korea also criticized Japan’s policy concerning the education of Koreans in Japan. It argued that Choch’ungnyŏn and its suborganizations should be responsible for educating Korean youths in Japan. And toward this end, North Korea sent a large amount of educational funds to them. But a critical issue arose over the accreditation by the Japanese government of Chosen University, which was newly established and directed by Choch’ungnyŏn. At first, the Japanese government would not extend accreditation to such a two-year college. Under growing pressure from many quarters of Japanese society, however, the government allowed Minobe Ryokichi, newly elected governor of the Tokyo prefecture, to grant accreditation to the university in 1968.

Fourth, North Korea was greatly opposed to Japan’s legal treatment of Korean residents. After the Japan–Republic of Korea Treaty was concluded in 1965, the Japanese government renewed the foreigners’ registration books, by which Koreans in Japan were permitted to switch their nationality registration from Chosen (the North) to Kankoku or Daiken Minkoku (the South). North Korea severely denounced this action, saying that the “reactionary” Sato cabinet of Japan was trying to impose compulsory South Korean nationality on Korean residents. Despite this protest from North Korea, the Japanese government did not revise its policy.

Throughout the 1960s, North Korea’s relations with Japan did not go smoothly. Although North Korea was eager to set up formal diplomatic relations, the Japanese government continued its nonrecognition policy

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20 Asahi Shimbun, February 18, 1965.

21 But the Japanese government would not in principle permit a change in reverse. See Yomiuri Shimbun, October 27, 1965.
toward the North Korean regime. Furthermore, political relations between the two countries in the late 1960s were featured by a high degree of antagonism. This was mainly caused by the conclusion of the Japan–Republic of Korea Treaty in 1965. And as the Korean situation grew more tense with the occurrence of such incidents as the invasion of Seoul by a thirty-one member commando team from North Korea, the seizure of the Pueblo, and the downing of a U.S. EC-121 aircraft, the Japanese government intensified its anti-Pyongyang position. Many Japanese conservatives even urged their government not to pursue a policy of promoting cultural and economic exchanges with North Korea. They also argued that Japan should be prepared to play a major role in deterring North Korea’s threat on the Korean peninsula. This concern was well reflected in the 1969 Nixon–Sato joint communique, which stated that the security of South Korea was essential for Japan in terms of her own national security interest.

DEVELOPMENT

In the early 1970s, substantial progress was made in North Korea’s relations with Japan. Both countries tried to adjust their bilateral relations in various ways. Although no diplomatic relations existed, political and economic exchanges between the two countries were increasingly made on a non-official basis. The accommodating efforts on both sides were boosted by the changing international scene in East Asia. Many advocates of Japan–North Korea reconciliation suggested that the Sino-U.S. détente and the resumption of Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties would logically lead Japan to normalize her relations with North Korea. This way of thinking was actually encouraged further by the opening of the South–North Korea dialogue started in 1971. Some conservative leaders of Japan argued that now that representatives of the two Koreas had held talks, it would be unnecessary for Japan to continue a “discriminatory” policy toward North Korea.

The critical momentum for forming better relations between North Korea and Japan began in November 1971, when a large number of Japan’s LDP Diet members participated in the constitution of a supra partisan organization called the Dietmen’s League for Promotion of Friendship Between Japan and North Korea (Dietmen’s League).22 This organization, with Kuno Chuji, a senior LDP member, as chairman, was set up for the purpose of promoting friendly relations between the two countries, and presented various programs suitable for that end. North Korea immediately applauded the inauguration of this organization as “a fruit of the valuable efforts of the Japanese people to develop friendly relations between the two

peoples." As its first action, the Dietmen’s League sent a goodwill mission headed by Kuno Chuji to Pyongyang in January 1972. After a series of talks with North Korean leaders, the mission issued a statement calling for “the early removal of abnormal relations between Japan and North Korea so as to meet equally the interests of the two peoples.” Kuno’s mission also concluded an agreement on the expansion of trade between the two countries. This trade agreement, which was not officially recognized by the government of Japan, marked a new stage in bilateral relations. With the conclusion of this trade agreement, both countries opened the so-called “agreement trade,” which was quite similar in character to the Japan–China memorandum trade.

Thereafter, North Korea stepped up its efforts to improve relations with Japan. Its concrete step appeared as a proposal of governmental-level contacts with Japan. As mentioned earlier, North Korea demanded in August 1971 that Japan should conduct the so-called “equidistant” diplomacy toward South and North Korea. In this respect, Kim Il Sung indicated that the normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea would not be hampered by the existing relationship between Japan and South Korea.

The Tanaka cabinet of Japan, however, would not accept North Korea’s formula of equidistant diplomacy. Instead, the Japanese government revealed its willingness to pursue a “two Koreas” policy. This policy was basically aimed at maintaining Japan’s ongoing separate relations with the two Koreas. Japan’s Foreign Minister Ohira stated that his government had no idea of “treating the two Koreas equally.” Nevertheless, the Japanese

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23 Nodong Shinmun, November 18, 1971.


25 In several aspects, the “agreement trade” was different from those concluded between the two countries previously on the private level. First, the new trade agreement was collectively negotiated between the Dietmen’s League and the JKTA. Second, it contained a semiofficial element because it was signed by a member of the ruling LDP, and because its implementation required the Japanese government to approve long-term deferred payments and the use of Export-Import Bank funds for trade with North Korea. Third, it included large-scale transactions to be conducted between the two countries for a few years to come, its total volume amounting to £100 million or £200 million by 1976.


27 Originally, Japan’s “two Koreas” policy idea seemed to be derived from Prime Minister Ikeda’s utterance. Replying at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House on August 29, 1962, he said that “his government was negotiating with the government of South Korea, bearing in mind that its role does not extend to areas north of the 38th degree latitude.” This meant that there existed a de facto government in North Korea. See Japan Times, August 30, 1962.

government, implicitly or explicitly, tended to recognize informal contacts between political figures of the two countries. Unlike its previous position, the government of Japan issued visas to members of North Korean groups visiting Japan. Among high-ranking North Korean visitors, there were Chong Kwang-son, who led a twenty-five-member North Korean high school soccer team in 1973; Hong Ki-mun, vice-chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, who visited as a head of the delegation of the 61st Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1974; and Hyun Chun-kuk, who led an eight-member North Korean parliamentary delegation in 1977. These persons of North Korea were allowed to meet Japanese cabinet members as well as members of the Diet.29 Through the meetings, North Korean delegates urged Japan to take steps to improve friendly relations between the two countries.

Likewise, the number of Japanese political figures visiting North Korea has also increased. Among them, the most important figures were Utsunomiya Tokuma, a pro-Pyongyang LDP Diet member, and Tamura Hajime, former Minister of Labor and chairman of the Committee of Korean Affairs of the Afro-Asian Problem Study Group. In the talks with these Japanese politicians in 1975, North Korean leaders revealed their intention to increase informal contacts with the United States for the improvement of relations. In particular, at the meeting with Tamura's party, Kim II Sung stressed that a peace agreement should be concluded between North Korea and the United States.30

Despite these exchanges, the Japanese government did not seek the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea. Faced with this Japanese position, North Korean leaders began to feel that North Korea's relations with Japan would not go further. In an interview with a Yomiuri Shimbun correspondent in May 1977, Kim Il Sung said that relations between North Korea and Japan could not develop further because the conservative government of Japan had always followed the U.S. policy of giving priority to close diplomatic and economic ties with South Korea.31 These remarks recognized that there existed a great obstacle to the development of relations between North Korea and Japan.

Although North Korea's relations with Japan in political and diplomatic aspects were brought to a standstill, there have occurred several new developments furthering social and cultural exchanges between the two countries. First, a new agreement on further repatriation of Koreans in Japan to North Korea was signed by representatives of the Red Cross Societies of the two countries in Moscow in 1971. By this agreement, about

29 For the visits of these North Koreans to Japan, see Jung, Japanese-North Korean Relations, pp. 201-203.
15,000 Koreans were allowed to go to North Korea within a period of six months after the resumption of repatriation.\textsuperscript{32}

Second, a private agreement on cultural exchanges between the two countries was also signed between the Japan–Korea (North) Cultural Exchange Association and the Korean Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. This cultural agreement was not officially approved by the government of Japan but became a momentum for the increase of exchanges in the fields of art and sports between North Korea and Japan. In 1973, a mammoth delegation composed of 220 North Korean artists, called the Mansudae Dancing Troupe, was allowed to visit Japan for a twenty-day performance schedule in major cities. This troupe was led by Yun Ki-Pok, former Minister of Common Education of North Korea.\textsuperscript{33} Also, there were an increasing number of mutual contacts between athletic teams and journalists of the two countries.

According to Japan’s official statistics, North Korean visitors to Japan in 1971 numbered 25, while Japanese visitors to Korea numbered 275. But in 1981, ten years later, the number grew to 270 and 841, respectively, as shown in Table 2. These figures mean that a certain degree of mutuality in personnel exchanges between North Korea and Japan could be achieved by an increase of North Korean visitors to Japan. Furthermore, the number of Korean residents who returned from their visits to North Korea increased rapidly. For instance, the total number of Koreans who obtained reentry permits from the Japanese government rose from 27 in 1971 to 4,101 in 1981.\textsuperscript{34}

Third, remarkable progress in North Korea’s relations with Japan during the 1970s was made in the trade sphere. North Korea, launching a new Six-Year Plan from 1971, was also interested in expanding trade with Japan. With the opening of the “agreement trade” era in 1972, North Korea’s trade with Japan grew significantly. Besides, the increase of trade between North Korea and Japan was due to several measures taken by the government of Japan. In 1972, the Justice Ministry of Japan for the first time allowed the entry of a seven-member economic delegation from North Korea into Japan. This delegation had the purpose of making technical-level arrangements on the private trade agreement concluded earlier. Thereafter, a number of economic delegations from Japan visited Pyongyang and paved the way for improvement of trade relations between the two countries. Also, as the trade volume between North Korea and Japan continued to increase, the Japanese government moved to approve the extension of

\textsuperscript{32} Japan Times, February 5, 1971.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., July 31, 1973.

Table 2
NUMBERS OF VISITORS BETWEEN JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA: 1971-1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Koreans to Japan</th>
<th>Japanese to North Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>770</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>615</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>587</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>408</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>639</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


an Export-Import Bank loan for trade with North Korea in 1973.\(^{35}\) It was the first time that Japan permitted such a loan for trading with a country like North Korea, with which she had no diplomatic ties. Announcing this decision, the Japanese government stated that it was made because of the détente in Asia.

Consequently, the trade volume between North Korea and Japan in 1972 jumped to about U.S. $132 million, more than twice as large as that of the previous year. But, as indicated in Table 3, a new trend began to appear in trade relations between the two countries. It was that North Korea’s imports from Japan exceeded its exports by almost 2.5 to 1, amounting to about U.S. $93 million and U.S. $38 million respectively. It produced a heavy imbalance of trade between the two countries. North Korea’s deficit in trade with Japan was mainly caused by its growing import of high-priced industrial products from the Japanese market. The total amount of North Korea’s debts to Japan grew to over U.S. $270 million as of Octo-

\(^{35}\)This loan, its volume amounting to some 300 million yen, was to help finance the export of a 500 million yen towel manufacturing plant to be constructed by Enshu manufacturing Co., and Shinwa Buesan Co. See Jung, Japanese-North Korean Relations, p. 215.
Table 3
(U.S. $1,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Korea's Exports</th>
<th>North Korea's Imports</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>30,059</td>
<td>28,907</td>
<td>58,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>38,311</td>
<td>93,443</td>
<td>131,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>72,318</td>
<td>100,160</td>
<td>172,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>108,824</td>
<td>251,914</td>
<td>360,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>64,839</td>
<td>180,630</td>
<td>245,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>71,627</td>
<td>96,056</td>
<td>167,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>66,618</td>
<td>125,097</td>
<td>191,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>106,852</td>
<td>183,347</td>
<td>290,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>152,027</td>
<td>284,848</td>
<td>436,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>180,046</td>
<td>374,305</td>
<td>554,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>139,476</td>
<td>290,995</td>
<td>430,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>152,026</td>
<td>313,162</td>
<td>465,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>126,149</td>
<td>327,077</td>
<td>453,226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In order to settle North Korea's liabilities, the JKTA sent its twelve-member delegation to Pyongyang in May 1976. After a series of negotiations, the JKTA's delegation concluded a private agreement with North Korea on the settlement of payments of the latter's debts to Japan. In this agreement, both sides agreed on a two-year moratorium on payments of the principal and the charges of 7.5 percent rate per annum during the two-year grace period. But in 1978, North Korea again suspended payment of its debts to Japan. Thus, in 1979, a delegation of North Korea’s Trade Bank, headed by Pang Ki-yong, president of the Foreign Trade Bank of North Korea, visited Japan and held talks with Japanese creditors to settle North Korea's debt repayment, amounting to over 85 billion yen (U.S. $390 million). Both sides succeeded in concluding a broad agreement calling for North Korea to pay 60 percent of 10 billion yen in overdue interest by the end of 1979 and the remaining 40 percent by June 1980, with the interest rate set at the level of 1.25 percent higher than the European rate. The

agreement also called for North Korea to pay the principal debts over a period of ten years starting in 1980.\textsuperscript{37}

The signing of the agreement paved the way for normalization of economic relations between Japan and North Korea, which had been strained by the long overdue debt problem. In 1980, the total volume of two-way trade between the two countries amounted to about U.S. $554 million, an increase of 28 percent over that of the previous year. But North Korea's imports from Japan (U.S. $374 million) still exceeded its exports to Japan (U.S. $180 million), by almost two to one. With this growing trade deficit, North Korea was again unable to repay its debts to Japan as scheduled in the agreement. Therefore, North Korea in 1983 sought to postpone payment of the principal. A new agreement was concluded in April 1983, allowing North Korea to delay payment of the principal originally scheduled in annual installments between December 1982 and December 1985 until June 1986.\textsuperscript{38}

Finally, the two countries concluded a private fishery agreement in 1977. This agreement was signed between the delegation of the Dietmen's League of Japan and the Korean Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries of North Korea. Before this agreement was concluded, two serious incidents took place. One was the capture by a North Korean patrol boat of a Japanese fishing boat named \textit{Shosei Maru} in the Yellow Sea in 1975, and the other was North Korea's unilateral proclamation of a 50-mile military border line with the 200-mile economic zone off its coast in 1977. In the face of these actions by North Korea, the government and fishery circles of Japan alike felt increased concern about the safety of Japanese fishermen off the North Korean coast. Keeping pace with growing concerns within Japan, the Dietmen's League took the initiative in solving the pending fisheries problem and send its sixteen-member delegation to Pyongyang. The private fishery agreement was the product of the negotiations between North Korea and Japan. The agreement stipulated that North Korea would permit the fishing operations of small-time Japanese fishermen from October 1, 1977, to June 30, 1978, in the economic sea zone outside the military border line.\textsuperscript{39} Since then, in 1978 and 1980, the fishery agreement has been extended twice on a two-year term basis. In 1982, certain efforts were also made to extend the fishery agreement before it expired in June. For this purpose, the Dietmen's League asked the government to allow a North Korean delegation to visit Japan to negotiate extension of the agreement. But the Japanese government did not accept the request from the Diet-


\textsuperscript{38}Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), March 1984, p. 123.

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Japan Times}, September 6, 1977.
men's League because Japan was then in negotiation with South Korea on the problem of economic cooperation between the two countries.

In view of the government's refusal, the Dietmen's League itself decided to send its delegation to North Korea for negotiation on extension of the agreement. But North Korea, in turn, would not accept the Japanese delegation. Under these circumstances, the two-year provisional fishery agreement expired at the end of June 1982.

In connection with the expiration of the agreement, North Korea stated that it was caused mainly by the unfriendly attitude of the Japanese authorities. 

Since the agreement expired, both Japan and North Korea have moved to take some steps for the renewal of the agreement. The JSP and the Dietmen's League again asked the government to allow a North Korean delegation to visit Japan for talks to conclude a fishery agreement. In particular, a delegation of the Dietmen's League, led by Chuji Kuno, visited Pyongyang and held talks on a new fishery agreement in July 1983. At these talks, the two sides had reportedly discussed problems not only of reopening negotiation on a fishery agreement, but also of permitting airline services to each country, establishing trade liaison offices in each country, and exchanging a number of reporters. Then the Dietmen's League made a plan to hold a meeting in Tokyo in mid-August with a North Korean delegation to review the fishery agreement.

But this plan was suspended by Japan's sanctions against North Korea, which had been taken following the Rangoon terror bomb attack in October 1983. Nevertheless, informal contacts between the Dietmen's League of Japan and North Korea officials were soon resumed on extension of the fishery agreement. These contacts were further accelerated by the Japanese government's moves to review its sanctions against North Korea. As a result, in October 1984, a delegation of the Dietmen's League, led by Acting Chairman Yoichi Tani of the organization, succeeded in signing a new provisional fishery agreement with North Korea. According to the new agreement, the term of validity was extended over a period of two years and two months between November 1984 and December 1986. Tani also revealed that the fishery agreement included provisions concerning the establishment of a joint fishery commission between the two countries, whose major functions are to set up a private-level joint venture and to exchange scientific and technological information and data.

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43 Korea Herald, October 18, 1984.
Although there were somewhat recurrent strains in bilateral relations between North Korea and Japan throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, it seemed clear that both countries had increased the channels of access to each other in many ways without giving rise to any serious setback.

**CONCLUSIONS**

What will be the future of North Korea's relations with Japan? This question cannot be easily answered, for a variety of factors may operate in determining the future course of bilateral relations between the two countries. At present, Japan's official position is to continue to pursue a "two Korea's" policy. From time to time, Japanese officials have stated that their country would expand cultural and economic relations with North Korea without seeking formal diplomatic relations. At the same time, the Japanese government is increasingly concerned with strengthening Japan's relations with South Korea in various spheres.

Nevertheless, North Korea has not relinquished its basic policy aimed at setting up diplomatic relations with Japan. While stepping up its efforts to expand cultural and economic relations with Japan on a nonofficial basis, North Korea has also increased political contacts with Japan, which would be considered a means for making certain diplomatic breakthroughs in relations between the two countries.

In looking back three decades after the first contact was made between North Korea and Japan in 1953, it can be said that the evolution of relations between the two countries have been more or less affected by the combined operation of three major factors: the international system, inter-Korean relations, and Japan's policy toward the Korean peninsula. During the 1950s, North Korea's relations with Japan were much more restricted by the bipolar confrontation between the East and the West. At this time, Japan's policy priority was toward the maintenance of close ties with the United States in security and economic spheres. In this context, the Japanese government was also interested in normalizing diplomatic relations with South Korea. Thus, despite the Hatoyama cabinet's policy goal designed to relax tension with communist states, North Korea's approach toward Japan could only be blocked. During the 1960s, North Korea's efforts to improve relations with Japan were further frustrated by the resumption of diplomatic ties between Japan and South Korea. Although the East-West confrontation seemed to ease up because of the growing Sino-Soviet conflict and the Franco-Chinese reconciliation, the conservative government of Japan still felt that Japan was highly vulnerable to the threat from communist powers. Under these circumstances, the Japanese government finally agreed with the South Korean government on the normalization of diplomatic relations. Meanwhile, both countries tended to push through their
anti-Pyongyang policy, perceiving North Korea as a possible threat to secur-
ity on the Korean peninsula.

From the early 1970s, North Korea's relations with Japan had gained
an impetus for progress. The emerging détente among the major powers
and its consequences for Japan's foreign policy were important factors lead-
ing to improved relations between the two countries. North Korea also ex-
hibited its adaptability to the changing international environment in East
Asia. Some conservative Japanese leaders argued that after diplomatic rela-
tions between China and Japan were normalized, the time was ripe for the
Japanese government to take positive steps for improving the relationship
with North Korea. In particular, they were further encouraged by the open-
ing of the South-North Korean talks in 1971. Their view was that as long
as the two Koreas began talks, there was no reason why the Japanese govern-
ment should maintain its nonrecognition policy of the regime in Pyongyang.
North Korea initiated its efforts to use these situations as a good oppor-
tunity to develop relations with Japan. Another important interest of North
Korea's in expanding relations with Japan lay in utilizing Japan's advanced
industrial capability for the implementation of its ambitious Six-Year Plan.

Scrutinizing the overall trend of North Korea's relations with Japan, we
can say that they are now in transition, but their future direction is still
uncertain. Two scenarios on the future development of relations between
the two countries may be projected. One is that those relations continue to
improve so that both countries can reach an agreement either on the setting
up of permanent trade missions in each other's capitals or on the establish-
ment of formal diplomatic relations. The other is that the ongoing relation-
ship between the two countries continues without further development, thus
making it impossible to expect further improvement of bilateral relations.

Scenario 1 can be probably supported by two reasonings. The first is
that the theme of cross-recognition, or cross-contact, if it materializes, will
greatly improve North Korea's relations with Japan. For instance, if the
three major powers—the United States, China, and Japan—agree to deter
the growth of tension on the Korean peninsula and to make a concerted
effort to improve their relations with the two Koreas respectively, the
possibilities for reconciliation between North Korea and Japan will increase
correspondingly. Recently, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone,
after his return home from a four-day visit to Beijing in March 1984, re-
vealed that both China and Japan agreed to cooperate to reduce tensions
and avoid the possibility of another conflict on the Korean peninsula.
Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe, who accompanied Nakasone on the China
trip, also indicated that there was room for improvement in relations be-
tween North Korea and Japan, saying especially that Japan was considering
asking China to act as go-between in solving "humanitarian problems"
between the two countries. Also, it was reported that General Secretary
Hu Yaobang of the Chinese Communist Party informed Prime Minister Nakasone that China intended to help Japan expand contacts with North Korea in the absence of diplomatic relations. These remarks implied that the two major powers, geographically adjacent to the Korean peninsula, might play a much bigger role in the Korean problem than before.

An unexpected opportunity inducing a thaw in Sino–South Korean relations was provided by the landing of a Chinese airline in South Korea in May 1983. This event apparently paved the way for wider contacts between the two countries, which have no diplomatic relations. Thereafter, a number of sports exchanges between China and South Korea have been made. In April 1984, a thirty-four-member Chinese basketball squad arrived in Seoul to participate in the eighth Asian Junior Basketball Championships. It was the first time that a Chinese sports team had visited South Korea since the inauguration of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. It was also known that both countries have conducted indirect trade mainly through Hong Kong for the past several years, its volume amounting to millions of dollars.

To the extent that China will increase her relations with South Korea, Japan may be also stimulated to improve her relations with North Korea. Japan’s policy toward North Korea will be further influenced by U.S. policy toward the country. This assumption is based on the fact that Japan had stepped up her efforts to normalize diplomatic relations with China immediately following the Sino–American reconciliation. At present, the United States has maintained a certain degree of informal exchange with North Korea. In the new guidelines on social contacts with North Koreans issued at the end of 1982, the U.S. State Department allowed diplomats in Moscow, New York, and other areas to make direct contacts with North Korean diplomats. Also, the United States relaxed rules governing the issuance of visas to North Koreans visiting the United States by private organizations. Additionally, some economic exchanges have been conducted between the United States and North Korea. According to U.S. Commerce Department figures, the volume of trade between the two countries from 1979–1981 amounted to about U.S. $310,000. Moreover, the United States approved a loan of U.S. $8 million by the United Nations Development Programme for North Korea to upgrade its railway facility. These steps taken by the United States could constitute a favorable milieu for

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45 Korea Times, April 6, 1984.


48 Far Eastern Economic Review, vol. 120, no. 22 (June 2, 1983).
Japan to cope with changes in the situation while seeking to improve relations with North Korea.

Scenario 2 derives from a cultural perception. Economic exchanges by the United States and Japan with North Korea might contribute to leading North Korea to modify its hard-line policy on the reunification problem of Korea and to take a somewhat moderate position. It seems that such a perception prevails among a number of policymakers and intellectuals in the United States and Japan. If policymakers in Washington and Tokyo believe that contacts with North Korea are useful for allowing North Korea to relinquish its militant policy and seek the solution of the Korean problem without resort to force, North Korea’s relations with Japan can be improved significantly.

Scenario 2 on the future course of North Korea’s relations with Japan can be advocated for the following reasons. First, bilateral relations between the two countries have been, and will be, affected by the rivalry between the major powers. As a matter of fact, since the late 1970s, the international situation in East Asia has become to some extent tense because of the emergence of a new cold war between the two superpowers, caused mainly by the Soviets’ incursion into Afghanistan in 1979. What caused the situation to deteriorate further was the buildup of Soviet naval power in the Far East. If the situation in East Asia remains unchanged, and if North Korea moves to strengthen its military ties with the Soviet Union, Japan will become very reluctant to improve her relations with North Korea.

Second, inter-Korean relations will also have some impact on the development of North Korea’s relations with Japan. The Japanese government has emphasized the maintenance of close ties with South Korea, while pursuing a tension-reduction policy on the Korean peninsula. Japan’s relations with South Korea were further strengthened by Prime Minister Nakasone’s visit to Seoul in January 1983. His trip was a moment to reconfirm that “peace and stability on the Korean peninsula are essential to those in all of East Asia including Japan,” and to make concerted efforts to promote stability in the region.49 Also, as the Korean situation became endangered by the Rangoon bomb blast in October 1983, the Japanese government put some sanctions on North Korea. Among these sanctions were a suspension of exchange of visits by government officials and a ban on contacts between diplomats of Japan and North Korea at third countries.50 The effect of these steps was mild but certainly damaged the existing relationship between North Korea and Japan. (With the signing of a new fishery agreement in October 1984, however, the Japanese government has decided to lift its

49 See the joint communique, Korea Herald, January 13, 1983.

sanctions imposed against North Korea on January 1, 1985). As long as the present relationship between the two Koreas, which contains some degree of tension, is not improved to the extent that both sides can open a dialogue, Japan's nonrecognition policy toward the North Korean regime will not easily be changed.

Third, as a major factor blocking further improvement of North Korea's relations with Japan in the near future, Japan's domestic politics should be considered. Since its inauguration, the Nakasone cabinet of Japan has tried to establish closer ties with South Korea. This position of the Japanese government was related to its intention to take more positive measures for the defense of Japan as well as the security of Northeast Asia as a whole. For instance, Japanese officials revealed that a study will be made with regard to "the eventual transfer from the U.S. to Japan of military responsibility for a body of strategic water extending 1,000 miles south of Japan." Prime Minister Nakasone also recognized the need to increase Japan's defense spending despite serious financial difficulties by saying that "we, living in a larger house, need to pay larger insurance premiums." Entering into the 1980s, Japan's relations with South Korea have been further strengthened by the Reagan administration's policy of stressing a relationship of "mutuality" with its two Northeast Asian allies, Japan and South Korea. It seemed clear that the Reagan administration urged both Japan and South Korea to cooperate in coping with the threat of the North Korean military buildup and the growing Soviet Pacific Fleet in Northeast Asia.

In addition, the declining trend of pro-Pyongyang political forces within Japan should be considered. In the general election held in December 1983, some leading LDP Dietmen, including Chuji Kuno, who had supported North Korea's position, lost their seats. Kuno's loss especially is a drawback to the activities of the Dietmen's League, a unique collective channel of contacts among political figures of the two countries. In June 1984, Yoichi Tani, a lower house member of the LDP, was elected acting chairman of the Dietmen's League so that he could fill the post left vacant after Kuno's defeat in the election.

In sum, taking all factors into account, we can conclude that any drastic change in North Korea's relations with Japan, such as diplomatic normalization, cannot be expected in a few years. But it seems possible that relations between the two countries will made headway provided that China continues to improve her relations with South Korea, and that the Korean situation does not worsen to the extent that another serious conflict occurs between the two Koreas.

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52 *Japan Times*, January 1, 1983.

In the Shadow of Chuch’e: North Korea’s Relations with Japan

C. I. Eugene Kim

This chapter analyzes the foreign policy behavior of North Korea with special reference to Japan. It must be a modest attempt because so much about North Korea is unknown in the West. Axiomatically, the less we know, the more likely we are to resort to ready-made generalizations and dramatic aphorisms. Often referred to as a “hermit kingdom,” a “paranoic nation,” a “nation of true believers,” or a “tightly controlled, xenophobic and self-enclosed nation,” North Korea has been the subject of only a few scholarly efforts.

Writing in 1969, B. C. Koh identified the ideological component of North Korea’s foreign policy as consisting of: (1) the ideology of Marxism and Leninism; (2) Mao’s ideas on both guerrilla warfare and wars of national liberation; and (3) North Korea’s modernizing nationalism, that is, North Korea’s national interest as perceived by Kim Il Sung. More recently, Koh also identified nine distinct North Korean foreign policy directives: (1) neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute; (2) alliance with Beijing; (3) rapproche-

Thanks are due to Professor Robert A. Scalapino for his encouragement to undertake this study and to Professor Ernest Rossi of Western Michigan University for his useful comments.


ment with Moscow; (4) military conquest of South Korea; (5) psychological warfare against South Korea; (6) guerrilla war in South Korea; (7) establishment and promotion of relations with all friendly nations; (8) establishment of economic and cultural relations with all nations regardless of their ideological leanings; and (9) vilification of the United States, whenever and wherever possible.

Another useful insight is that of Robert A. Scalapino. In his study, “North Korean Relations with Japan and the United States,” he posited North Korean foreign policy premises and goals as: (1) advancing the goal of Korean reunification and achieving the ultimate dominance of the peninsula; (2) moving North Korea from the status of “satellite state to relative independence”; (3) acquiring the recognition and approval of the so-called Third World; and (4) increasing economic and cultural interaction with the advanced industrial societies. Wayne S. Kiyosaki, on the other hand, has emphasized the dynamics of subjectivism in North Korean foreign policy decisions. According to him: “Pyongyang’s subjectivity, which is generally inherent in the meaning of chuch’e, must be understood not only as a key element of North Korea’s attitude toward other countries but also as the basis of its undoing as a militant country given to periods of unpredictability.”

The studies cited here show the variance in emphases given to the interpretation of North Korea’s foreign policy behavior. Different assumptions have been made from which different conclusions have often been drawn. For this paper, however, the following assumptions are distinctly appropriate: (1) North Korean foreign policy behavior is rational, that is, it has its own inner operational logic; (2) North Korean decision making is monolithic and is dictated by the supreme leader, Kim II Sung; (3) North Korean policy implementation follows various vertical channels of bureaucratic organization, very often without any horizontal coordination; (4) North Korean foreign policy behavior is dictated by a sense of self-righteousness often running counter to any international morality, yet perpetuated by the closed nature of its society; and (5) North Korean foreign policy and its behavior vis-à-vis Japan are governed by unique sets of circumstances resulting from the historical and fraternal relationship with left-wing forces.

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in Japan and also from the special relationship with the General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan (Zainihon Chōsenjin Sōrengōkai; Chōsören or Choch’’ongnyŏn [in Korean]).

A case in point that illustrates some of our assumptions is in the murderous bombing on October 9, 1983 of a mausoleum in Rangoon, Burma, which resulted in the massacre of seventeen South Korean officials awaiting the arrival of their president, Chun Doo Hwan, who was making a historic state visit there. What justification was there for this terrorist act? The first foreign reactions to the bombing were rather circumspect. As reported by the New York Times, “Some Asian and European diplomats here expressed doubt today that North Korea was responsible for the bomb explosion in Burma over the weekend that killed 19 people, including four South Korean cabinet ministers.”6 South Korean reactions, however, were more direct and immediate, accusing North Korea of total responsibility for the blast.7 President Chun himself immediately broke off his much publicized five-nation Asian tour and returned to Seoul accusing North Korea of “an unprecedented attempt on my life.”8 The latest evidence shows that President Chun’s accusation was well founded.9

During a North Korean journey by six Korean-American scholars in 1981, the visitors were repeatedly briefed on the need for Korean reunification.10 They were told that Korean reunification must be consummated during “our lifetime,” clearly meaning while President Kim is still alive. Time appears running short, however, because of President Kim’s age; he celebrated his seventy-second birthday in April 1984. According to North Korean authorities, Korean reunification must come through the Koreans themselves and in a peaceful manner. North Korea is convinced that as long as American troops are present in South Korea and the American commitment to South Korean security remains credible and strong, another Korean War-type solution would be too costly and counterproductive. Consequently, inter-Korean war is practically ruled out from North Korea’s perspective. This logic would dictate the promotion of a north-south dialogue, yet North Korea feels bound by a “moral” commitment not to deal with the government of President Chun in the south. President Chun was held responsible


7 Ibid.


10 See Kim and Koh, eds., Journey.
for the so-called “Kwangju massacre” in which the South Korean military was ordered to quell a revolt in the city in 1980.11

The South Korean government under President Chun advocates meeting North Korea at any time and at any place to discuss national reunification.12 North Korea's answer has been: “any South Korean leaders but Chun.”13 To North Korea, President Chun is the greatest impediment to the reunification process. According to North Korean logic, the removal of President Chun would be the highest demonstrable act of loyalty to President Kim. Under these imperatives, the coordination between the various North Korean agencies, all vying for proofs of loyalty to the supreme leader, is unknown. In any case, loyalty to President Kim, who is literally believed to be the world's greatest leader, seems to justify even the most abominable acts of terror. Furthermore, North Korean logic concludes that the longer Korean reunification is delayed, the greater the danger of the revival of “Japanese militarism” instigated by “American imperialists,” which is welcomed by South Korean “American puppets.”

North Korea's latest proposal for a tripartite talk among the United States, North Korea, and South Korea must be regarded as an interesting turn of events.14 The initial concrete idea for such a talk was proposed by the United States during President Carter's visit to South Korea in 1979 and with the obvious blessing of the late President Park of South Korea.15 Before that proposal, North Korea insisted on direct talks between North Korea and the United States regarding a peace agreement and the removal


15A joint communique of President Carter and Park issued in Seoul on July 1, 1979.

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of American troops in the Korean peninsula as a prelude to genuine reunification talks between North and South Korea. South Korea was to participate in the U.S.–North Korea talks only as an observer.\(^{16}\)

The real motive of North Korea's change of mind is difficult to determine. One probable answer is "to regain some diplomatic leverage in the wake of the Rangoon massacre."\(^{17}\) A detailed study of the history of North Korea's tripartite talks proposal shows that the first suggestion of it by North Korea was made to the Beijing government on October 8, 1983, one day before the aforementioned Rangoon bombing. The Beijing government then conveyed the message to Washington on October 12.\(^{18}\) North Korea subsequently renewed the proposal on December 3, when South Korean authorities sank an armed North Korean spy ship in the sea off Pusan and captured two surviving agents. The formal proposal to the parties concerned was not made until January 10, 1984, however, following a joint meeting in North Korea of the Central People's Committee and the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly. On the following day, just when Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang was to meet with President Reagan in Washington, North Korea broadcast two letters containing the proposal to both United States and South Korean authorities. Premier Zhao was to urge President Reagan to accept the proposal.\(^{19}\) According to Robert A. Scalapino, however, North Korea's tripartite proposal diverged from the Carter–Park offer earlier in 1979 in an effort to camouflage its true intent, namely: "Two bilateral negotiations [are] to take place under a trilateral umbrella, with clearly identified and separate agendas."\(^{20}\)

Significant is the fact that Kim II Sung seems to think that he has made a strategic concession by the proposal for dialogue with the United States and South Korea. He may have been encouraged also by the Chinese leadership that his proposal would be honored by the parties concerned. This mindset of Kim II Sung can be seen in the following quote from the talk he had with a delegation of the Soviet news agency Tass on March 31, 1984:

\[\text{North and South Korean unification formulae have been studied extensively. For a detailed comparative study, see Hak-Joon Kim, }\]
\[\text{The Unification Policy of South and North Korea (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1977). For a further reference,}\]
\[\text{see Han-kyo Kim, ed., Studies on Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980).}\]


\[\text{Ahn, "North Korea's Proposal," pp. 44–47.}\]

\[\text{See Chae-Jin Lee's chapter in this volume.}\]

\[\text{See Robert A. Scalapino's chapter in this volume.}\]
We have long proposed negotiation between us and the United States to discuss the question of replacing the Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement. Nevertheless, the U.S. authorities held that they would not have talks with us without the participation of south Korea. The United States proposed tripartite talks, instead of accepting our proposal for DPRK-USA talks.

In order to ease the tensions prevailing in our country, the Government of our Republic recently advanced a proposal for holding tripartite talks by letting the south Korean authorities participate in the talks between us and the United States on an equal footing.

But the United States has not yet accepted our proposal. This is because the U.S. imperialists have a wild design to use south Korea as their bridgehead in opposing the socialist countries, keeping hold on it as their colony and military base.\(^{21}\)

**CHUCH’E AND JAPAN**

*The Land of Chuch’e* is the title of a book on North Korea published in Japan in 1983, written by Yokobori Hoichi, Secretary General of the Society for the Study of the Chuch’e Idea in Chiba Prefecture. The idea of chuch’e, which literally means independence, self-reliance, and self-identity, is promoted worldwide, wherever possible, as the grand ideological contribution of Kim Il Sung, who is referred to in North Korea as not only the foremost revolutionary, theoretician, and statesman Korea has ever produced but also a world leader whose discovery of chuch’e should make him equal to, if not greater than, such historical figures as Marx, Lenin, and Mao. North Korea is not only a communist country, it is also the land of chuch’e.

“We have done it by ourselves” is a proud remark often heard in North Korea. Chuch’e is thoroughly propagandized in North Korea. It is also a highly pragmatic and flexible doctrine. Everything that North Korea does is in the name of chuch’e, a word that also means an eternal force and truth.

According to North Korean accounts, chuch’e does not mean exclusiveness and isolation. Chöng Chun-gi, a North Korean vice-premier, when interviewed by the aforementioned Korean-American scholars visiting North Korea in 1981, stated eloquently that chuch’e means to live within one’s own means, particularly with respect to the basic necessities of life, so that the people are not subjected to the whims of the international marketplace.\(^{22}\) Furthermore, the vice-premier admitted that North Korea could not produce everything on its own and must trade, purchasing abroad what it needs but does not have and selling abroad what it produces.

In practice, chuch’e in North Korea means “What is good for North Korea is chuch’e, and what is chuch’e is truth.” Furthermore, Kim, as the


great discoverer and theoretician of chuch'e, embodies truth itself and cannot be wrong. This interpretation of chuch'e is significant in explaining North Korea's foreign policy behavior, which appears contradictory to the outside and which manifests both rigidity and flexibility.\(^{23}\)

For Kim, Korean reunification means the realization of chuch'e and is therefore the supreme task of the Korean people. Furthermore, it must come during his lifetime. How can Japan accommodate Kim's Korean reunification scheme? Can Japan in any way assist in Kim's reunification of Korea? To Kim, Japan is a former colonial power that paid duly for its colonial exploits in Korea. Almost ignored in the historiography of North Korea is the fact that it was the United States, "the arch-imperial power," who, together with its allies in the Pacific theater of World War II, defeated Japan and liberated Korea. Instead, North Korean history is manipulated in order to credit Kim with Korean liberation. Kim's revolutionary career began during his anti-Japanese struggle and he is credited with having played the leading role in the communist struggle against Japanese colonialism in the spirit of chuch'e: his return to Korea in 1945 is recorded in North Korea as that of a triumphant hero.\(^{24}\)

Glorification of Kim's revolutionary career in North Korea means castigation both of Japanese colonialism and of Japan as a former colonial power. At the same time, as a defeated former enemy nation that was once occupied by the United States, Japan is to be commiserated with. Kim seems satisfied with the provisions contained in Article 9 of the postwar Japanese constitution, which mandates Japan forever to "renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes."\(^{25}\) If Japan is a frequent target of Kim's wrath, however, it is because of Japan's forfeiture of chuch'e in her subservient relationship with the United States. On the whole, Kim has not only a subdued, and at times contradictory, view of Japan colored by his

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\(^{23}\) See Scalapino, "North Korean Relations."


revolutionary experiences, but also a paternalistic attitude toward Japan. During the interview cited earlier with a delegation of the Soviet news agency Tass, Kim stated:

I once had a talk with a delegation of influential liberal democratic dietmen of Japan on a visit to our country. It was a big delegation consisting of more than 20 dietmen. At that time, I said to them: It is good for Japan to become an economic power, but it is not good for her to take the road of militarism again. If Japan takes the road of militarism again, she will be an object of hatred for the Asian people, because in the past almost all of them suffered calamities inflicted by the Japanese. In this case, she will also be hated by the rest of the world's people. Japan, a small island country, which imports the greater part of [its] raw materials and fuel from foreign countries, will be blockaded by the world's progressive countries, including the third world countries, if she follows the road of militarism. Then smoke will disappear from all the chimneys in Japan in a matter of a few days, and Japan, an economic power, will go to ruin.26

Continuing with his rather interesting but also revealing observation of Japan, Kim continued:

After that another delegation of liberal democratic dietmen from Japan paid a visit to our country. When I met with them, I said to them that, though Japan is an economic power, she has no CHAJUSONG [independence]. A country without CHAJUSONG cannot be called an independent state. If the United States catches cold, Japan also sneezes. Under such situation, no CHAJUSONG is conceivable for Japan. ... If Japan, an economic power, develops economic relations with foreign countries, she will be well off, but if she takes the road of militarism, [her] economic power will collapse.27

NORTH KOREA'S INTEREST IN JAPAN

Kim II Sung does not accord much significance to the role Japan could play in the achievement of his foreign policy goal of national reunification. Japan, however, could hinder the realization of Kim's national reunification as a militaristic ally of the United States by assisting South Korea's counterpoise to North Korea. Therefore, it is in the scheme of North Korea's chuch'e to maintain friendly relations with Japan. Kim also thinks that he has 600,000 overseas Koreans in Japan with whom he should be concerned and whom he is willing to assist. Kim does not insist that Japan should sever ties with South Korea to have ties with North Korea. Kim thinks such a demand not only "unreasonable" but also impractical because it will never be met.28

27 Ibid.
According to a report filed by Kōan Chōsachō, the Japanese public security investigation agency, North Korea in the early 1950s was preoccupied with the Korean War and postwar recovery, and its policy toward Japan was indeterminate, except in organizing the Korean residents in Japan as a positive force for North Korean war efforts. Then in 1955, North Korea's Foreign Minister Nam II proposed normalization of relations with Japan. Contained in this proposal are the North Korean-Japanese policy guidelines that have often been repeated in various disguises. In the proposal, Nam II stated that North Korea: (1) advocates a peaceful and an independent Japan; (2) opposes remilitarization of Japan and Japan's military adventurism against Asian nations; (3) supports a friendly relationship between the Korean and the Japanese people; (4) desires mutually beneficial trade and cultural exchanges with Japan; and (5) welcomes the statement by Prime Minister Hatoyama (1954–1956) indicating his interest in the promotion of trade, cultural, and other exchanges between the two countries.

Following this proposal, no subsequent diplomatic relations have been consummated between North Korea and Japan. Instead, in 1965 Japan finally normalized her diplomatic relations with South Korea, formally recognizing the South Korean government as the only lawful government of the Korean people.

Whether chuch'e is a “truth-force” or not, North Korea has not had any leverage to affect Japan's Korean policy, and North Korea is very much aware of that fact. Japan’s interest in the Korean peninsula is to maintain the status quo, that is, not immediate Korean reunification but the peaceful coexistence of North and South Korea as separate entities. Furthermore, Japan's Korea policy is heavily skewed in favor of South Korea. Since the formation of the Nakasone government of Japan in 1982, North Korea has become increasingly critical of the Japanese government, calling it most

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29 Japan, Public Security Investigation [Status of North Korea].

30 Ibid.

Prime Minister Nakasone has shown a personal interest in South Korea. By visiting Seoul in January 1983, he became the first Japanese prime minister ever to visit South Korea while in office since Korea's liberation from Japan at the close of World War II. In September 1984, Nakasone also became the first Japanese prime minister to receive an official visit from the South Korean head of state.

North Korea's interest in "a peaceful and an independent Japan," however, is intended to drive a wedge in Japan's alliance with the United States by exploiting Japan's antimilitary, antinuclear, and peace sentiments. It also means to convince Japan of the need for friendly relationships and beneficial cultural and trade exchanges between the two states. In promoting these causes in Japan, North Korea has used not only its own mass organization of some 200,000 Chōsŏren, but also exploited its built-in allies, Japan's left-wing forces and other friendly groups.

North Korea's "fraternal" left-wing forces in Japan have traditionally included the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). North Korea's relationship with the JCP has now soured. Once closely allied, North Korea has found that the JCP's critical and independent approach does not serve their purposes. The JCP withdrew its representatives from Pyongyang in 1969 and has been critical of Kim II Sung's personality cult. The JCP has opposed the Sino-American détente and has also criticized the July 4, 1972 North and South Korean Joint Communique concerning peaceful reunification as a futile action as long as U.S. forces are present in South Korea. The JCP has been cynical of the establishment of a communist dynasty in North Korea whereby Kim Jong II has been groomed to inherit his father's mantle of power. Recently, it has charged North Korea with the Rangoon bomb attack and denounced North Korea's repeated attacks on Japanese fishing boats as "inhuman and outrageous."

The JCP has been supportive of communization in South Korea. It has advocated withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Korean peninsula and has

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32 Recent issues of the *Pyongyang Times* are full of negative comments on Japan. See, for instance, "Criminal Compact Between S. Korean Puppet Army and Japanese 'Self-Defense Forces'," *Pyongyang Times*, November 30, 1983.


34 Japan, Public Security Investigation [Status of North Korea].

35 *Vantage Point*, vol. 3, no. 8 (August 1984), p. 21. Since 1977, North Korea has unilaterally maintained a 200-mile economic sea zone and a 50-mile military security limit off the coast. The nongovernment agreement which permitted Japanese fishing boats to operate in the economic sea zone was concluded between North Korea and the Dietmen's League for the Promotion of Friendship Between Japan and North Korea in 1978 and 1980, but upon its expiration in 1982 the North Koreans have refused renewal.
opposed the exchange of visits by Prime Minister Nakasone and President Chun. What North Korea expects of the JCP, however, is the unquestioned compliance of its policies as a "true comrade-in-arms" and "trusted friend." North Korea has refused to deal with the JCP in their independent course of action. North Korea has the JSP, however, which has become an effective mouthpiece for North Korean policy in Japan, echoing the North Korean view in the Japanese political process. JSP leaders have frequented North Korea as intermediaries between Tokyo and Pyongyang, with the latest visit occurring in September 1984 headed by the JSP's Chairman of the Central Committee Ishibashi Masashi and accompanied by the Chōsōren's Chairman of the Central Standing Committee Han Tōk-su.

Besides the JSP and the JCP, a profusion of other groups, Korean and Japanese, support the North Korean cause. They have at times included the Clean Government Party (Kōmeitō), the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Sōhyō), the Japan Teachers' Union (Nikkyōsō), the aforementioned Dietmen's League for the Promotion of Friendship Between Japan and North Korea (established in November 1971 with its membership drawn from all the political parties including the ruling conservative LDP), the Association of Tokyo Assembly Members for the Promotion of Friendship Between Japan and North Korea (established in 1972 and including some LDP members) and others. These groups have been North Korea's vocal lobby in Japan. For instance, a meeting held in Tokyo that was obviously sponsored by the Chōsōren denounced "Team Spirit 1984," the joint South Korean-U.S. military maneuvers, as "provocative and increasing the danger of war, particularly a nuclear war, on the Korean peninsula." Key speakers at the meeting included: Takazawa Torao, deputy secretary general of the Japan Socialist Party; Kurokawa Takeshi, chairman of the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Sōhyō); Iwai Akira, chairman of the Japan Committee for Supporting the Independent and Peaceful Reunification of Korea; and Shimizu Sumiko, chairwoman of the Japan Women's Council and General Secretary of the Japanese Women's Liaison Council for Solidarity with Korean Women.

The Chōsōren is particularly unique in its organization and the role it plays in championing the cause of North Korea. Earlier, there were other

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36 *North Korea News* [Naewoe Press], no. 233, August 20, 1984.


Korean resident organizations mindful of protecting their rights in the hostile environment of Japan following World War II. Many of these organizations were soon controlled by the Korean communists in Japan in cooperation with the revitalized Japanese communist forces, thus contributing to their radicalization. The Chōsōren, regrouping some of these forces, was organized in 1955 to (1) help strengthen the "democratic base" in Japan as a way to achieve the peaceful unification of Korea, (2) protect the rights of Koreans in Japan, and (3) promote friendly relations between North Korea and Japan.

The reorganization of Korean residents into the Chōsōren is due mainly to North Korea's initiative and direction. In contrast to the policy followed by South Korea, North Korea, especially after the Korean War, has displayed a great deal of interest in Korean residents in Japan. When the Koreans in Japan were asked to register as aliens with the Japanese government, more than 75 percent signed as citizens of North Korea. Discussing the issue of Korean residents in Japan, Kim II Sung stated:

Our Korean residents in Japan should oppose American imperialism and Syngman Rhee [South Korea] in order to help reunify our Fatherland but should not aim at the overthrow of the Japanese governments of Yoshida and Hatoyama. The Japanese revolution should be left to the will of the Japanese people, for, even if all of 600,000 Koreans in Japan revolt, they cannot bring about a revolution in Japan. . . .

Whatever happens, our Korean residents in Japan must build the foundation for their unity. As overseas residents, they must enlarge and strengthen their unity as a national group and should work together. They must live on the firm foundation of livelihood and maintain a close rapport even with the capitalists of South Korea and endeavor for Fatherland reunification. At present, various conditions favor Japan to establish a closer relationship with South Korea and it is important to make full use of available opportunities.

In the same statement, Kim promised help to Korean–Japanese residents to further their education in both Japan and North Korea and also with the

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42 Japan, Public Security Investigation [Status of North Korea], translated by the author. This statement is from a report submitted by Im Kwang-ch’ol to Han Tōk-su at the Chōsōren central headquarters.
operational expenses of the Chōsōren. He also promised that he would welcome those Koreans in Japan wishing to return to their homeland.43

Censuring some rash actions taken by Korean residents in Japan, Kim advised against the Chōsōren’s engaging in illegal activities. According to him, problems related to Korean residents in Japan must be settled diplomatically between the Japanese and Korean (North Korean) governments. He said his government was working strenuously to promote economic and cultural relations with Japan. Koreans in Japan, Kim insisted, must consider national honor and prestige, and their actions should not deter future diplomatic relations between the two nations.44

The Chōsōren plays a diverse role for North Korea in Japan. More than an innocuous organization of Korean-Japanese residents, it is a quasi-diplomatic mission performing many diplomatic functions and serves the function of an intermediary between North Korea and Japan. It is also a full-fledged Communist Party of Japan operating under the direction of North Korea’s Workers’ Party. Its secretariat is organized nationwide with prefectural, district, and branch offices and with headquarters in Tōhoku, Kantō, Chūbu, Kinki, Chūkoku-Shikoku, Kyūshū, and Hokkaidō. Its central office has several departments—foreign affairs, cultural, social welfare, education, public information, finance, political, and organizational. The Chōsōren also maintains its own educational system that includes Chosŏn Taehakkyo (Korean University) in Tokyo, which is duly accredited as a private higher educational institution in Japan. The Chōsōren’s other peripheral organizations include the Japan–North Korea Society, the Korean–Japan Export–Import Company, banks, artistic groups, book companies, press and publishing firms, and two newspapers (Chosŏn Shibo in Korean and Chosŏn Jiho in Japanese). According to one account, “the Chōsōren has 48 local headquarters, some hundred branch organizations, 13 affiliated social organizations of various strata, and 14 affiliated enterprises.”45

The powerful role of the Chōsōren in Japan–North Korea relations has also been noted by the Japanese press. Any critical comments on North Korea and the Chōsōren have been vigorously countered by the Chōsōren.46 The Chōsōren has also been active in the repatriation of Korean residents of Japan into North Korea. Since 1959, when the repatriation program began, some 94,000 pro-North Korean residents in Japan have repatriated to North

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.


46 Ko, “North Korea’s Relations with Japan.”
The Chōsŏren’s success with the repatriation program, however, has been a pyrrhic victory. North Korea has been able to meet its manpower shortage with youthful pro-North Korean repatriates from Japan, particularly in the early 1960s. It has welcomed the aged Koreans of Japan wishing to return home to North Korea. For Japan, the repatriation program has been a blessing as it has provided the gate of exit for those poor, unemployed, and radical Korean elements of Japan that are regarded as undesirable by the Japanese authorities. Thus, although the repatriation program has had some humanitarian considerations, the Chōsŏren has thereby lost many hardcore followers in Japan. The Chōsŏren has also been suffering defections from the rank and file. Some defections have resulted from ideological cleavages and differences. Furthermore, reports from the repatriates have not been all sanguine. The stories of their hardships in North Korea are public knowledge. Their families in Japan have been under pressure to help them by supplying them with needed goods. The South Korean government and its Mindan (South Korea’s counterpart to the North Korea’s Chōsŏren) have also been active in wooing Chōsŏren members away from their sympathy with North Korea.

**TRADE BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND JAPAN**

North Korea is a land of chuch’ε. Although no ordinary consumer goods are foreign made, however, visitors can encounter many foreign-made goods in use: Sanyo refrigerators, National (Matsushita) air conditioners, Hitachi and Soviet-made color television sets, Yamaha pianos, cars from West Germany (Mercedes-Benz), Sweden (Volvo), Japan (Toyota), and China (Honggi [Red Flag] Sedan), and various machinery and equipment from West Germany (Siemens, Berthiez, MAAG), Japan, and other Western nations.48

As an increasingly industrialized nation, North Korea must engage in foreign trade for continued socialist construction. According to the *Pyongyang Times* of February 11, 1984, “The DPRK is directing much effort to the development of foreign trade. Having established economic and foreign relations with more than 100 countries on the five continents of the world, the DPRK is developing foreign trade and other economic and technical exchanges with them. With the rapid development of foreign trade, the gross foreign trade value of the country increased 2.2 times in the six years of the

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47 *North Korea News* [Naewoe Press], no. 231, August 6, 1984, pp. 3–4.

Second Seven-Year Plan period [1978–1984].” North Korea’s goal is to increase the annual export value above 4.2 times the 1980 figure at the end of the 1980s. Emphasized for export are greater productive efforts in mining, cement, machine tools, large-size hydraulic and thermal power turbines, power generators, multipurpose coal cutters, heavy-duty lorries, large-size electric locomotives, heavy-duty wagons, cargo ships, and others. The paper also noted: “The payment capacity of the country has markedly increased with powerful export goods production bases built in different parts of the country.”

Despite these claims, North Korea’s trade volume in 1980 ranked 100th, with U.S. $3.1 billion, and a credit rating at 106th in the world (see Table 1). North Korea has been unable to finance the deficits creating defaults of its payments to foreign creditors starting in 1975, thus alienating those wanting to do business with North Korea. (South Korea’s trade volume in 1980 ranked 19th, with U.S. $39.7 billion, and a credit rating of 32nd in the world.)

Kim Il Sung has shown a limited notion of trade for North Korea’s national development and socialist construction. As shown in his policy statement in the December 1967 meeting of the fourth Supreme People’s Assembly, North Korean development is predicated first on the construction of the self-reliant people’s economy and only secondarily on the promotion of foreign economic relationship and trade. The importance of trade in North Korea has been emphasized only to the extent that it meets North Korea’s internal developmental needs. Furthermore, trade has been used as a lever for further promotion of cultural exchanges and political relations. North Korea has also attempted to maintain a trade balance, emphasizing a barter relationship by importing what it needed only to the extent that it is able to pay through exports.

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50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.


53 Kim Il Sung’s policy statement at the December 1967 meeting of the fourth Supreme People’s Assembly.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Trade</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Trade Balance</th>
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<td>144</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>1,800</td>
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North Korea’s pursuance of these foreign trade policies explains to some extent the fluctuating and irregular trade volumes ranging from a low of $296 million in 1961 to a high of $3,300 million in 1982.6 Furthermore, the volume of trade between North Korea and Japan has been slow in attaining the amount agreed on in 1972. In the five-year trade agreement signed in Pyongyang between Kuno Chuji, chairman of the Dietmen’s League for the Promotion of Friendship Between Japan and North Korea, and Kim Sok-chin, vice-chairman of North Korea’s Committee for the Promotion of International Trade, it was stipulated that trade between the two would gradually

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6 *Foreign Trade*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1972), pp. 19–20. This agreement also stipulated that Japan will make available deferred payment conditions (exceeding eight years) to North Korea on the latter’s purchases of machinery.
increase to the $450-$500 million level by 1976; this level of trade, however, was attained only in 1979 (see Table 2). North Korea's recent foreign debt repayment problems must have been caused by miscalculation and by imports over exports required to fulfill the renewed goals of developing heavy industries and expanding the defense industry. North Korea has been faced with a limited foreign currency reserve from which to purchase what it needs abroad.

Even though the role of foreign trade in its national economy is limited, North Korea's trade relations with Japan are exceeded in volume only by its trade with the USSR and the People's Republic of China. It also occupies more than 50 percent of its noncommunist bloc trade. Before 1972, North Korean trade with Japan was small and limited; exports exceeded imports. Since 1972, however, North Korea's trade with Japan dramatically increased, accumulating in the process increasing trade deficits. In 1972, its trade with Japan amounted to $127,254,000 (exports of $33,811,000 and imports of

Table 2
NORTH KOREA'S TRADE WITH JAPAN
(U. S. $1,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Imports</th>
<th>Trade Balance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
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<td>152,026</td>
<td>313,162</td>
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Kim [North Korea's Foreign Trade Structure]. In detailed discussions, see also the chapters by Jung Hyun Shin and Joseph S. Chung in this volume. See also Table 2.

Suh, "North Korean Industrial Policy and Trade."
$93,443,000) with a deficit of $59,632,000. In 1982, the trade volume was $465,188,000 (exports of $152,026,000 and imports of $313,162,000) with a deficit of $161,136,000. These trade imbalances, however, have not deterred North Korea's increasing trade with Japan. Both in 1976 and 1979, North Korea and Japanese creditors were able to negotiate the delayed payment of the defaulted debts.

The increasing role of Japan in North Korea's trade is not without explanation. Not only are both North Korea and Japan geographically propinquitous, but also, as stated earlier, North Korea enjoys an effective lobby in Japan. Furthermore, both countries have felt the advantages of having their doors open to each other, despite their inability to negotiate formal diplomatic relations. The result of Japan's "two Koreas" policy in effect means freedom of maneuverability for both. Consequently, the various Japanese administrations have given off different signals to both at different times—a balancing act between North and South Korea. Japan's deeper political and economic involvement with South Korea thus implies inevitable complimentary relations with North Korea. For North Korea, trade with Japan is needed not only to acquire needed technical know-how, but also, following Kim Il Sung's basic trade policy guidelines, to promote relations with Japan and to make Japan eventually more palatable to its reunification efforts.

NORTH KOREA'S BALANCING ACT

Both North and South Korea have competed for closer relations with Japan. The deeper Japan becomes involved in South Korean affairs, however, the greater the risk that Japan will have its North Korean policy and its policy for the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia dictated by its South Korean client state. Given its preference for the status quo on the Korean peninsula and the presence of North Korea in its midst, Japan has refused to become completely one-sided in its relationship with the divided Korea. The Japanese government has not been deterred in maintaining "the unofficial diplomacy of the Diet groups and of the opposition parties" and has continued with its cultural exchanges and trade with North Korea, at times balancing it against South Korea. Can Japan sustain such a Korean policy?

North Korea is in no position to alter Japan's South Korean policy, but it is not without some influence to get what it wants from Japan. North Korea may be able to play both its China and USSR cards against Japan. By this calculation, it may be assumed that in the shifting political, economic, and security relationship surrounding Northeast Asia, South Korea needs

59 Kim [North Korea's Foreign Trade Structure].

60 See in particular Olson, "Politics of Adversary Relations."
Japan as a friendly partner for national security and economic development more than Japan needs South Korea. In the final analysis, Japan needs China more than it needs South Korea.

The past performance of Japan’s Chinese policy supports this assertion. Since the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972, Japan’s Korean policy has shown signs of critical adjustment. For instance, Foreign Minister Kimura stated in August 1974 that “the Seoul government is not the only lawful government in the Korean peninsula” and “peace on the peninsula, not the security of the ROK, is vital for Japan’s security.” The fact that this statement was no accidental utterance has been shown by subsequent statements from Japanese leaders. For instance, Prime Minister Fukuda stated in the Carter-Fukuda Joint Communiqué of 1977 that “peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is of continuing importance for the security of Japan.” Emphasis has increasingly been placed on peace on the peninsula, not necessarily on the security of South Korea.61

What is the meaning of these cross-cutting relations and precarious balancing acts surrounding the Korean peninsula? For our purpose, it is maintained that North Korea’s hand, in which the Chinese and Soviet cards are found, appears to affect Japan’s relations with North Korea more strongly than with South Korea. Furthermore, North Korea could influence China by showing its Soviet card, thereby pressuring Japan to reconsider Japan–North Korea relations. In the course of such a development, South Korea may find its hand too weak to counter any Chinese pressure on Japan to improve its relationship with North Korea.

This scenario was dramatized in an intense and recent diplomatic maneuver by the communist nations of Northeast Asia—North Korea, the People’s Republic of China, and the USSR. Recently, the Pyongyang Times has been full of charges against the United States, Japan, and South Korea, against the visits of Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone and President Reagan to Seoul in 1983, South Korean President Chun’s visit to Japan in 1984, the “Team Spirit 1984” joint military exercises of the United States, South Korea, and Japan, the “Criminal Compact between S. Korean Puppet Army and Japanese ‘Self-Defense Forces,’” “The U.S.–Japan–South Korea Military Alliance,” and “Japan’s U.S.–Obeying Policy.”62 The paper also widely publicized Kim Il Sung’s visit to China in September 1982, as well as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Hu Yaobang’s visit to North Korea early in May 1984.

61 Do Young Chang, “Inter-Korea Relations and the Major Powers,” Asian Affairs, Summer 1983, pp. 38 ff. See also Ko, “North Korea’s Relations with Japan,” and Kim [North Korea’s Foreign Trade Structure].

Most dramatic, as reported in the *Pyongyang Times*, was Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR in the latter part of May 1984 (Kim's last visit to Moscow was in 1967), as if a forewarning of things to come. Both China and Japan are fearful of a closer alignment between the Soviet Union and North Korea and a mutual military buildup between the Soviet Union and North Korea in Northeast Asia. Given the security concerns of both China and Japan in the face of Soviet military buildup in Northeast Asia, North Korea through its skillful playing of the Soviet and Chinese cards may yet succeed in its long-standing cultivation of closer relations with Japan. North Korea, however, must be aware of Japan's foreign policy imperatives in Northeast Asia, which cannot alienate its friendly ties with South Korea and the United States.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In the shadow of *chuch'e*, North Korea's relations with Japan could best be characterized as realism dictated by inner operational logic. Whatever North Korea does is in the name of *chuch'e*. Furthermore, *chuch'e* stands for eternal truth, and Kim Il Sung as its discoverer embodies it. North Korea displays a strange sense of confidence in its dealings with Japan and challenges Japan in pursuing what it perceives as its own national interests and contributions to the realization of its national reunification goal. At the same time, North Korea is realistic enough to understand that it cannot dictate Japanese foreign policy.

North Korea's immediate concern with Japan is contained in its perception of an emerging pattern of military alliance among Japan, South Korea, and the United States in Northeast Asia. North Korea is also interested in Japanese technology. North Korea, however, is realistic enough to discern that it is in no position to sway Japan to its favor in contradiction to the imperatives of Japanese national interest. The tactical question for North Korea consists in how to equate its interests in the relationship with Japan with the imperatives of Japan's national interests. Thus far, North Korea's answer has been to promote closer cultural and economic relations with Japan and exploit Japan's antimilitary and antinuclear peace sentiment. North Korea can also use its Soviet and Chinese ties to influence Japan.

In any event, North Korea should not expect a sudden transformation of Japan's foreign policy with regard to the Korean peninsula. The best that North Korea can expect may be the expansion of informal contacts, the promotion of cultural and personal exchanges, and the increased volume of trade for its economic and technological advancement. Japan seems desirous of such developments as a means of lessening tension in the Korean peninsula. If past performance provides any historical lesson, however, it was

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63 Ibid., May 23 and 26, 1984.
the détente in East-West relations and the lessening of tension between North and South Korea, when Japan became more active in the implementation of an "equidistance" policy toward the two Koreas, which North Korea thought would favor it in the long run. In the early 1970s, as we have seen, the Sino-American détente and the initiation of dialogues between North and South Korea were catalysts in the formation of various organizations for the improvement of North Korea and Japan relations.

These improvements in the relationship between North Korea and Japan have recently been somewhat impeded by the return of the Cold War confrontation in East-West relations and by acts of belligerence on the part of the North Koreans, for instance, by North Korean unilateral imposition of military security and economic sea zones off the coast in 1977 and in the Rangoon massacre of 1983.

North Korea sees advantages in improved relations with Japan, both in terms of achieving its foreign policy goal of national reunification and in helping to promote its further economic and technological advancement. Japan also sees such development desirable as a means of preserving peace on the Korean peninsula. For the moment, however, Tokyo does not seem to feel free to improve its relations with North Korea, which would endanger its relations with Washington and Seoul. Meanwhile, Tokyo is obliged to maintain a strategic balance of the forces surrounding the Korean peninsula who have their own cross-cutting interests (the United States, the USSR, the People's Republic of China, and North and South Korea) and to cope with domestic pressures for improved relations with North Korea.
North Korea and the United States in Global and Regional Perspective

Byung-joon Ahn

NORTH KOREA AND THE UNITED STATES

Since the two countries formally do not recognize each other, no diplomatic relations exist between the United States and North Korea. The United States has eschewed even unofficial contact with North Korea, except for military commission meetings for the Panmunjom Armistice and occasional visits to Pyongyang by private American citizens. North Korea has consistently sought to have direct talks with the United States ostensibly to discuss the matter of replacing the armistice with a "peace agreement," but the United States has refused to have any such talks unless South Korea is fully represented and unless either China or the Soviet Union shows a comparable action toward South Korea.

United States involvement in the Korean War in 1950 and support for South Korea since then have been the primary cause of hostility between the United States and North Korea. North Korea has demanded withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea and direct talks with the United States to undermine the legitimacy of the South Korean government while seeking reunification of Korea on its own terms. In contrast, the United States has sought to deter North Korean aggression by maintaining a defense commitment with South Korea, has supported South Korea's quest for dialogues with North Korea as a means of lessening tension and eventually achieving reunification, and has developed a reciprocal economic relationship with South Korea.

As a result of these diametrically conflicting interests, there has been little bilateral interaction between North Korea and the United States. Since
the Korean peninsula is a strategic buffer between several contending powers and since the United States has its own global and regional interests in this region, North Korea and the United States have often tried to maximize their own interests through their relations with the other major powers. Their primary concerns in so doing, however, have been the South Korean-U.S. alliance; North Korea has consistently sought to weaken it whereas the United States has defended it for the purpose of deterrence. Unless North Korea comes to recognize the legal status and legitimate interests of South Korea, therefore, there is little prospect for direct diplomatic relations between North Korea and the United States even though some form of limited détente may be possible, depending on North Korea's behavior on the international scene.

Thus, the relationship among the major powers and the South Korea-U.S. relationship have become two most important constraints on North Korean-American relations. One can make some broad observations on this matter. First, during the formative years of the Cold War in the 1950s, North Korea relied on the Soviet Union and China in seeking its interests with the United States, and the United States in turn saw North Korea as a Soviet proxy and dealt with it as such in its global efforts to contain Soviet communism.

Second, during the 1960s, North Korea began to see the U.S.-Japanese alliance as the major challenge to its survival because the United States urged Japan to appreciate the importance of South Korea for Japan's security. Japan indeed tried to normalize diplomatic relations with South Korea and began to recognize the strategic importance of South Korea for its own security largely in response to U.S. biddings.

Third, beginning in the 1970s and through the early 1980s, North Korea became an issue of common concern in U.S.-Chinese relations as these two erstwhile adversaries first reached rapprochement and then gradually improved their relations over the years. Because the United States wanted China to use her influence over North Korea while North Korea also wanted China to use her influence over the United States and South Korea, China assumed the role of diplomatic mediator for North Korea's efforts to have some contact with the United States.

Fourth, the most important goal North Korea has sought since 1953 is to drive a wedge in, or at least to weaken, the U.S.-South Korean alliance. For this purpose, North Korea has tried to draw the United States into direct talks since 1974 while refusing to talk with South Korea. The primary aim of North Korea in this effort is to force the United States to withdraw troops from South Korea. Since the United States is firmly committed to preventing another war on the Korean peninsula, it cannot take any action that may adversely affect its security relationship with South Korea.

Fifth, whether or not North Korea can have direct talks with the United States will depend on its relations with South Korea. Unless North
Korea reaches a basic understanding on peaceful relations with South Korea through constructive dialogues, it will be difficult for it to have any formal talks with the United States. The challenge to the United States in this regard is how to achieve détente with North Korea without undermining deterrence in a highly volatile situation.

Should North Korea take the course of peaceful coexistence with South Korea, and should both the Soviet Union and China develop their substantive relations with South Korea, it will be possible for the United States to open some form of informal or formal relations with North Korea. When this happens, it will legitimize what may be called “cross-contact,” which will lead eventually to “cross-recognition.”

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Since the United States tends to see North Korea in terms of its global and regional interests, North Korean relations with the United States can be best understood in this perspective. It should be recalled that North Korea was the first belligerent for the United States in its global confrontation with the Soviet Union in 1950. The Korean War had the effect of quickening the formation of the U.S.-Japanese alliance. After the Sino–American rapprochement ushered in the era of détente, however, North Korea became an issue of concern for both the United States and China.

North Korea in U. S.–Soviet Relations

The foundation of the North Korean regime in 1948 was itself a result of U.S.–Soviet disagreement over the future of Korea after World War II. Since then, both powers have regarded North Korea as an important arena for their global rivalry. While the Cold War held sway, North Korea was often an issue of conflict in their strategic interaction. But since the advent of détente in the 1970s, when both superpowers were busy recasting their bilateral relations in terms of global balance, North Korea has rarely been discussed in negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

By all accounts, North Korea was a Soviet creation and remained a Soviet satellite until 1956, with the Soviet Union serving as North Korea's diplomatic surrogate. Hence, the United States dealt with the North Korean question in terms of its confrontation with the Soviet Union. Inevitably, these powers clashed over the issue of North Korea, for the Soviet Union regarded it as a buffer against U.S. advance whereas the United States saw it as a “Soviet republic” in 1948.¹

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the United States took it as a proxy war by the Soviet Union and decided to apply the containment policy with military power. Stalin approved of Kim Il Sung's plan for invading the south, probably to take U.S. pressures off the Korean peninsula and thereby to exert some leverage over Japan. According to Khrushchev's memoirs, in 1949 Kim pressed Stalin to endorse his plan by assuring him that the U.S. forces would not be brought back. For fear that the Soviet Union might confront the United States, Stalin pulled Soviet advisors and technicians out of North Korea immediately before the war started. But the United States saw this war as part of the Soviet design for world domination. Therefore, the Truman administration decided to blunt such an attempt by immediately involving U.S. forces. Thus, North Korea, hitherto regarded as a peripheral interest, had become a vital area if American credibility elsewhere was not to be questioned. The Korean War in this sense marked the globalization of containment policy as defined in the U.S. National Security Council memorandum 68.

After U.S. intervention in the war, the Soviet Union tried to avoid being dragged into a confrontation with the United States. When the war reached a stalemate, it proposed a ceasefire. As the Soviets opted for achieving détente with the Americans during the 1960s, therefore, the North Koreans could no longer rely on the Soviet Union for their diplomatic activities toward the United States. Instead, they began a series of provocations against the United States, as shown in such events as the Pueblo incident in 1968 and the shooting down of an EC-121 in 1969. Not only did Moscow show a cautious reaction to these actions but actually cooperated with Washington in salvaging the remnants of the EC-121. As long as there were some parallel interests in at least not disrupting the precarious global balance of power, the Soviet Union's attitude toward North Korea was prudent. This is why Moscow has not given any new weapons to Pyongyang since 1973.

When the U.S.-Soviet relationship turned increasingly tense after the Reagan administration assumed office, however, there is evidence that Moscow renewed its interests in North Korea as one of its strategic posts against the U.S. military presence in East Asia. Especially when China was fostering expanded relations with the United States, Japan, and even South Korea,

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Moscow and Pyongyang began to perceive a common threat posed by what they called a “U.S.-Japan-South Korea military alliance” coupled with some Chinese involvement. Against this background, Moscow extended an official invitation to Kim II Sung for the first time in twenty-three years. Konstantin Chernenko and Kim II Sung were said to have agreed to strengthen their defenses in the Far East and the Pacific to counter what they characterized as the “intensified militarist policy” of the United States and Japan. There are reports that Moscow agreed to provide Pyongyang with economic and military assistance. If this is true, the Soviet Union apparently aims at using North Korea as a counterweight to the U.S. military presence in South Korea and Japan.

Thus, whenever the Soviet Union finds its global interests identical with North Korea’s local interests against South Korea, it does not hesitate to help a peripheral state like North Korea. Despite such strategic agreement, however, there is little evidence that Moscow has supported Pyongyang’s attempts to have direct talks with Washington in the form of a tripartite conference involving Seoul as well. Since Beijing has actively promoted this idea, Moscow fears that its influence may be excluded should such a conference materialize. Given its primary interests in global issues and given the strained state of its relations with Washington, Moscow is unlikely to actively take up North Korean interests in its bilateral dealings with Washington.

North Korea in U.S.-Japanese Relations

The United States regards Japan as the key to its East Asian policy. As a result, it has regarded North Korea as posing a direct threat to Japanese security. This makes it inevitable that the U.S. and Japan take up the Korean question in general and North Korea in particular in their bilateral relations. By the same token, North Korea has perceived the U.S.-Japanese security relationship as an important security threat, especially when it is linked to the U.S. defense treaty with South Korea.

In fact, North Korea’s invasion of South Korea in 1950 served to cement the U.S.-Japanese alliance, prompting the United States to terminate its occupation and to sign a security treaty in 1952. Under this treaty, the United States is permitted to use its bases in Japan not only for the defense of Japan but also for “the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.” Since the Far East in this provision clearly includes the Korean peninsula, North Korea sought to weaken U.S.-Japan security ties and also to prevent the normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan in 1965. In so doing, Pyongyang relied on the Japanese left

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6 Ibid., June 19, 1984, p. 2.
including the Japanese communist and socialist parties, charging that "militarism" was being resurrected in Japan.7

After announcing the Guam Doctrine, the Nixon administration set out to strengthen U.S. security ties with Japan in 1969. As a result, the so-called Korean clause in the Nixon-Sato communique of November 1969—that is, that the security of South Korea is essential to the security of Japan—was included at Nixon’s insistence. Prime Minister Sato at this time indicated that Japan would decide "positively and promptly" if and when the United States would request using some military facilities in Japan for an emergency situation outside Japan. This prompted Pyongyang to carry out virulent attacks on Tokyo's security relations with Washington.

The fact that Japan maintains some economic and informal relations with North Korea offers certain chances for Pyongyang to cultivate Tokyo as a conduit in its efforts to establish direct relations with Washington. Such organizations as the Dietmen’s League to Promote Friendship Between Japan and North Korea, which was headed by Dietman Chuji Kuno until 1983, and Chochungnyon, the General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan, often served as front organizations for Pyongyang in facilitating trade and fishery negotiation. But the Japanese government under the Liberal Democratic Party has generally followed the U.S. lead insofar as security and political issues are concerned. Tokyo sometimes found itself in conflict with Washington when U.S. policy rapidly shifted from one pattern to another. For example, the Fukuda government firmly objected to President Carter's plan for phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea when it was suddenly announced in 1977. From December 1982 on, therefore, the Reagan administration began to conduct contingency planning with the Japanese government in case a crisis should break out outside Japan in an area like Korea.

As for Pyongyang's quest for establishing some sort of semiofficial relations with Tokyo, the Japanese government has often exhibited positive responses. For example, it admitted a North Korean delegation to the Twenty-Third Asian-African Legal Consultative Conference held in May 1983. But the Rangoon incident in October of that year caused Tokyo to put a halt to this attempt and to take some light sanctions against Pyongyang by suspending visits of North Korean and Japanese officials between the two countries. Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung conveyed his wish to improve relations with Tokyo through deposed Prince Sihanouk of Kampuchea, who visited Japan in June 1984.8 When President Chun made his historic visit to Japan in September 1984, Prime Minister Nakasone reiterated the prin-

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8Korea Herald, June 3, 1984.
ciple that direct talks between Seoul and Pyongyang were the key to resolv-
ing the Korean question. After Japan’s socialist leader Ishibashi visited
Pyongyang in September 1984, however, Prime Minister Nakasone indicated
that Tokyo would lift the sanctions as of January 1, 1985, and this was
done. When he met with President Reagan in January, Nakasone and Reagan
agreed to encourage the continuation of the dialogue between Seoul and
Pyongyang, thereby avoiding any unilateral action in approaching Pyong-
yang when Washington remained hesitant to do so.

North Korea in U. S.–Chinese Relations

North Korea was the first country for which China fought against the United
States in 1950, and at one point the United States even considered using
nuclear weapons against China to induce the latter to the armistice in 1953.9
After the Sino–American rapprochement was established in 1972, however,
North Korea became an important question again in the newly developing
U. S.–Chinese relationship.

The more the Sino–American relationship improves, the more North
Korea seems to have relied on China in advancing its assumed responsibility
as North Korea’s diplomatic spokesman, especially in exploring the possi-
bilities of direct contact between Washington and Pyongyang. Since Beijing
supports North Korea’s unification and domestic policy, including the
succession plan for Kim Jong Il, Pyongyang naturally leans toward Beijing.
For no other reason than to defuse tension and to keep stability on the
Korean peninsula, Beijing also has to search for ways of direct contact be-
tween Washington and Pyongyang as a means of supporting Pyongyang’s
diplomatic activities.

In the Shanghai Communique of 1972, the United States and China
agreed, in a way, to disagree on the Korean question, for this important
document included both China’s support for North Korea and the U. S.’s
support for South Korea. Inclusion of these diverging positions in the
communique demonstrated their common concerns for Korea; also implicit
is their acceptance of the Korean status quo as a given reality. Another
example was the result of Kim Il Sung’s visit to Beijing in April 1975, shortly
after Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese. The Chinese leaders at that time
apparently discouraged Kim from taking any military action against South
Korea even though they endorsed North Korea as “the sole legal sovereign
state of the Korean nation.”10 Their overriding concern for preventing
another Vietnam in the wake of Saigon’s fall paralleled American concerns
for stability in Korea. While visiting Pyongyang in May 1978, Hua Guofeng
even dropped the words “immediately and totally” in supporting Pyong-

9 International Herald Tribune, June 9–10, 1984, p. 3.
yang’s call for withdrawal of U.S. troops. After Vietnam occupied Kampuchea, Hua went further by saying in Tokyo in June 1980 that North Korea would not invade South Korea.\textsuperscript{11}

While not wanting North Korea to wage another war against South Korea, China also does not want North Korea to join the Soviet orbit. Hence, as Deng Xiaoping professed to Carter in January 1979, Beijing was reluctant to use its influence in North Korea.\textsuperscript{12} There is reason to believe, however, that Beijing had had a hand in the joint proposal for a tripartite Seoul–Pyongyang–Washington conference made by Presidents Park and Carter in July 1979. That Pyongyang rejected this immediately has not made Beijing abandon such efforts. After the U.S. State Department revealed some minor measures of “smile diplomacy” directed at North Korean diplomats in March 1983, and after Seoul handled the hijacking incident of the Chinese airliner in May 1983, Beijing slowly asserted its interests on the Korean question. The development of warmer relations between the Chinese leaders and Kim Il Sung, as demonstrated by the mutual exchange of visits in 1982, also had some effect on this development. On September 28, 1983, for example, when Deng met with U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, he reaffirmed Beijing’s support for Pyongyang’s unification policy. At the same time, however, he expressed his willingness to explore ways of reducing tension on the Korean peninsula, in stark contrast to his reluctance to do so when he met with U.S. President Carter in 1979.\textsuperscript{13}

After the Rangoon incident, Beijing has increased its serious talks with Washington on the Korean question. It should be emphasized that Beijing acted as a messenger between Washington and Pyongyang for the latter’s proposal for a tripartite conference in October 1983. Since then, Beijing has consistently supported this idea in its negotiation with Washington, as Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang did in their talks with Reagan in April 1984. It was reported that while Reagan’s entourage was in Beijing, Chinese leaders conveyed Kim Il Sung’s wish for secret talks with Washington, but the American side refused it. Of significance here is the fact that both Washington and Beijing have not only begun active discussions but also have probed the other side’s views. No less important is the phenomenon that the focal point of this diplomacy is China, as both the United States and North Korea seek to rely on China for promoting their respective interests. This makes China perhaps the most influential power as far as North Korea is concerned.


\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Washington Post}, October 20, 1983.
China is in a delicate position between the United States and North Korea. In balancing Soviet power and deterring war in Northeast Asia, China shares certain common interests with the United States and its allies. But in maintaining a buffer state and political influence against the Soviet Union and other powers, it also shares common interests with North Korea. North Korea's reliance on China for diplomatic and political support and the strengthening of Sino-American relations increase the chances for discussing the North Korean question in the ongoing talks between Washington and Beijing. They agree, for example, on the need for lessening tension and keeping stability; they disagree, however, on proper methods of achieving this goal, for China supports North Korea's call for a tripartite conference whereas the United States supports South Korea's call for direct talks with North Korea and a quadrilateral conference including China instead of the tripartite formula.

There is another point on which China seems to agree with the United States. This concerns the argument for opening North Korea to the outside world. While expanding unofficial and even semiofficial contacts with South Korea through international and sports events, Beijing is cautiously urging Pyongyang to widen its contacts with the West. Pyongyang has seized upon this opportunity to advance its case for engaging in direct talks with Washington. In deference to Seoul's views on this matter, the United States has rejected such talks but instead has tried to get Beijing involved in discussing the Korean question.

Since the economic and Red Cross talks opened in November 1984, Beijing has welcomed these and urged Pyongyang to continue them. Only after Pyongyang delayed the talks by citing the "Team Spirit" exercise of 1985 did Beijing also attack the American-South Korean joint military maneuvers for the first time. In some indirect ways, however, quadrilateral discussions have already been underway because Washington, Beijing, Seoul, and Pyongyang have exchanged information and messages through the channels of Sino-American relations. This is a most significant development that will continue for some time, and what will emerge from it remains to be seen.

In this global and regional perspective North Korea has rarely been regarded as important in itself. It has been perceived as important as a side issue or ancillary to U.S.-Soviet global, U.S.-Japanese, and U.S.-Chinese bilateral relations. As far as these powers are concerned, they have tried to preserve the balance of power on the Korean peninsula. The Soviet Union in particular is interested in maintaining this balance in its favor; hence it does not want to be alienated from the international relations involving the Korean question.

North Korea is currently joining the Soviet efforts while relying on China for establishing some contacts with the United States. However hard North Korea attempts to gain recognition from the major powers, the latter
are not likely to favor a drastic change in the Korean status quo that may adversely affect their own interests. To the extent that they cannot reach any agreement on an ultimate settlement of the Korean question, they have little choice but to leave the matter to the Koreans themselves. In this limited sense one can point to the phenomenon of "Koreanization of the Korean question." What the major powers can do to diffuse tension is to open contact with both North and South Korea; this is what we mean by "cross-contact," which will lead eventually to "cross-recognition" of the two Korean states by the major powers. In fact, North Korea's efforts to achieve official contacts with the United States accord with these trends and are tantamount to its version of a "two Koreas policy." Its main aim, however, is to undermine the U.S.-South Korean alliance. Hence we must analyze the role of North Korea in U.S.-South Korean relations.

NORTH KOREA IN U.S.-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS

North Korea has been a common adversary of the United States and South Korea since the Korean War. Because the United States has stationed a contingent of troops in South Korea as a deterrent, North Korea has persistently demanded their removal, sought to have official negotiations with the U.S. government to undermine legitimacy of the South Korean government, and cultivated opportunities of private or semiofficial contacts with American citizens to elicit their support for its foreign policy. When American global and regional interests accorded generally with South Korea's local interests, the United States ignored these demands, but when they somewhat diverged, such demands often became controversial in U.S.-South Korean relations.

By and large, the Reagan administration has lent active support to the South Korean government under President Chun.

Legacy of the Korean War: The U.S.-South Korean Alliance

The U.S.-South Korean defense treaty signed in 1953 was a legacy of North Korea's aggression. Since then, the United States and South Korea have maintained a security treaty against North Korea. To bolster its commitment to this treaty, the United States has left ground troops stationed in South Korea. But North Korea sees this relationship not only as a direct threat to

14 For this perspective, see Byung-joon Ahn, "North Korea's Proposal for a Tripartite Conference and Changes in Four Power Relations in East Asia," *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 17-47.

its security but also as an obstacle to its quest for reunification on its own terms, including military means as shown in the 1950 invasion.

As another legacy of the Korean War, the United States has exercised operational command not only over its own forces but also over the South Korean forces, as it did under the United Nations Command in 1950. The role of about 40,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea is threefold: to deter aggression by honoring the defense commitment, to carry out surveillance of North Korea's military activities, and to symbolize U.S. determination to balance Soviet power in East Asia. Their primary purpose is to prevent another war. Since the balance of forces between the north and the south currently favors the potential aggressor in the north, the defender must be able to detect the moves of the attacking force as early as possible, but South Korea lacks these capabilities. Only when U.S. foot soldiers are present will the United States continue to perform these surveillance activities in Korea. The ground forces are a vindication of credibility for U.S. commitment to remain an Asian power in this strategically important area.

For these reasons, the United States and South Korea are collaborating in their joint defense efforts against North Korea under the Combined Forces Command, which was created in 1978. Since the armistice in 1953, the United States has also represented the U.N. Command, including the South Korean forces at the Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjom. This is the only direct contact between the U.S. and North Korea.

**North Korea's Calls for Troop Withdrawal**

In stark contrast to the view held by the United States and South Korea, North Korea claims that the United States started the war in 1950 and since then has colonized South Korea. According to this view, the war was fought mainly between the United States and North Korea, and South Korea was a U.S. puppet. Based on this justification, Pyongyang has called for "immediate and total withdrawal" of U.S. troops from South Korea as one of the preconditions for dialogues with South Korea, along with its demands for changes in the South Korean government and its anticommunist laws.

To force U.S. withdrawal, or at least to dramatize the danger of another military confrontation, North Korea has from time to time challenged the United States with military provocation. One of these challenges was the seizure of the U.S. spy ship *Pueblo* and its crew in January 1968; to obtain the release of the crew, the United States conducted secret negotiations for eleven months with North Korea through the Military Armistice Commission. In April 1969, North Korean MiGs shot down a U.S. Navy EC-121 reconnaissance plane and its three crew members over the Sea of Japan. At this time President Nixon ordered two aircraft carriers to sail toward the site of the incident, regarding it as a first test for his administration.

Pyongyang often coupled these provocations with diplomatic maneuvers aimed at U.S. troops withdrawal. At the U.N. General Assembly in 1975,
it had its allies sponsor a resolution calling for dissolution of the U.N. Command and the withdrawal of foreign troops. But the diplomatic race at this time turned out to be a tie, for another resolution in favor of Seoul, calling equally for such measures but at the same time advocating an alternative arrangement for the existing armistice, was also adopted. In August 1976, however, another serious accident occurred when North Korean guards at Panmunjom axed two American soldiers who were cutting a tree in the joint security area; the United States immediately made a show of force and Kim Il Sung issued a semiapology, saying that this was a genuine accident.

President Carter's announcement of the plan for phased withdrawal of U.S. troops in March 1977 gave much hope to North Korea but created a crisis in U.S.-South Korean relations. This hope was short lived, though, because Carter suspended his plan in July 1979, not only because the rationale for his policy had been severely challenged by the Congress and the military but also because the U.S. intelligence community revealed that the North Korean forces exceeded the South Korean forces to a far greater degree than had been known. From that time on, North Korea renewed its attacks on the United States and called for troops withdrawal. President Reagan invited President Chun as his first guest at the White House in February 1981 and made it clear that the United States had no plan for troop withdrawal. Then in August 1981, North Koreans fired a surface-to-air missile at a U.S. SR-71 high altitude reconnaissance plane flying over international waters. The United States promised prompt retaliation if such an incident recurred, and since then no major provocation has occurred.

Since 1981, the U.S.-South Korean security tie has been consolidated. After Pyongyang perpetrated a terrorist bombing at Rangoon, President Reagan visited Seoul in November 1983 and reaffirmed U.S. commitment by stating that the security of South Korea was "pivotal to the peace and stability of the Northeast Asian region and in turn vital to the security of the U.S." It should be clear that North Korea's unremittant hostility toward the United States and South Korea has actually helped these allies further strengthen their cooperation and coordination in working out a common strategy. When President Chun visited Washington again in April 1985, President Reagan agreed to help South Korea's efforts for raising an independent deterrence capability against North Korea.

North Korea's Calls for Direct Talks with the United States
Since 1973, North Korea has called for direct talks with the United States, allegedly to negotiate the replacement of the armistice with a peace agreement while refusing to talk with South Korea. According to this claim,

since South Korea declined to sign the armistice that the United States signed in 1953, the United States is the only legal party entitled to negotiate the armistice with North Korea. Clearly, Pyongyang's aims for advancing this argument is double edged: to force U.S. troops withdrawal and to undermine the legitimacy of the South Korean government.

To disseminate this message more widely, Pyongyang mailed open letters to the U.S. Congress in 1974 containing these familiar claims. The United States refused to have direct talks with North Korea unless South Korea fully participated and unless China and the Soviet Union acted in a similar fashion toward South Korea. At the Thirtieth U.N. General Assembly in 1975, then U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger proposed a quadrilateral conference involving the United States, South Korea, North Korea, and China to discuss ways of recognizing both Koreas—that is, "cross-recognition"—but North Korea rejected this proposal, calling it a device for perpetuating two Koreas. In July 1979, Presidents Carter and Park proposed a tripartite conference of the United States, South Korea, and North Korea, but Pyongyang rejected even this compromise since it was made directly after President Carter decided to shelve his plan for troops withdrawal until 1981.

On an unofficial level, North Korea began to mount a campaign to invite American citizens to Pyongyang in 1979. A U.S. table tennis team and several U.S. reporters visited Pyongyang. In June 1980, Congressman Stephen Solarz and former State Department spokesman Tom Reston also visited North Korea. In August 1981, a number of Korean scholars living in the United States made a study trip to North Korea. The purpose of cultivating this "people's diplomacy" is to rally American public opinion for Pyongyang's demands and to form a pro-Pyongyang organization in the United States.

There has been a move in the United States toward advocating the necessity of widening these contacts. Some people openly endorse not only these exchanges of private citizens but also direct talks between the two governments, contending that such moves may serve as "triggers" to cross-recognition. According to this view, such an opening up will contribute to educating North Koreans about the outside world and in Congressman Solarz's words, to "the emergence of a more realistic and responsible attitude on the part of North Korea toward the prospect and possibilities for unification." If this effect can be produced, it will be for the good. But many South Koreans fear that Pyongyang would use such contacts mainly for attacking the South Korean government and damage the chances for productive dialogues between Seoul and Pyongyang, however inadvertent they may be.

In line with this view, the U.S. State Department exhibited a cautious sign of "smile diplomacy" toward Pyongyang in 1983. In March of that year, the department disclosed new guidelines for U.S. diplomats in certain capitals so that they can have informal contact with North Korean counterparts; it also relaxed some rules on issuing visas to North Korean scholars who want to attend bona fide academic conferences in the United States. Reflecting this change of attitude, if not policy, the United States did not veto the U.N. Development Programme loan of $8 million for North Korea allotted for improving Pyongyang's railway facilities in 1983.

After Beijing and Seoul had direct negotiations on the hijacked Chinese plane in May 1983, more views were expressed that supported Washington's contact with Pyongyang. For example, the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs in Washington, D.C. sponsored a seminar in which a group of prominent former officials suggested that the United States might initiate some indirect trade with North Korea. Testifying before the Asian-Pacific Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives in July, such scholars as Ralph N. Clough and Allen S. Whiting also argued that the U.S. might lift its trade embargo on North Korea and try contact so that China and the Soviet Union could further expand their contacts with South Korea.

An incident occurred, however, that put a halt to the further development of this "smile diplomacy." This was the protection by the North Korean mission at the United Nations of a North Korean diplomat charged with sexual abuse of an American citizen. The State Department discreetly carried out secret discussions in the United Nations from July through August 1983 before they reached an agreement on a formula by which the charged person would admit his guilt and then would be expelled from the country. When this settlement was completed in September, the State Department's negotiating team apparently gave some impression to the North Korean counterpart that smile diplomacy would soon be resumed. The State Department reportedly informed the North Koreans in September 1983 through the Chinese that the United States "would be willing to participate in any talks in which the South is represented on an equal basis."18

It is important to note here that by calling upon Washington to accept direct talks, Pyongyang is seeking to achieve U.S. troop withdrawal and, at the same time, to destabilize the South Korean government. This double-edged approach was well reflected in the manner in which Pyongyang proposed to the U.S., through China, the convening of a tripartite conference of the United States, South Korea, and North Korea on October 8. It is important to note that the Rangoon massacre took place the very next day. On January 10, 1984, just as Chinese Premier Zhao was about to deliver the same message to President Reagan in Washington, Pyongyang broadcast

two letters containing the proposal for a tripartite conference to the U.S. government and the "Seoul authorities." In these letters it called for "a three-party conference whereby South Korean authorities can participate between us and the U.S." This conference was supposed to discuss replacement of the armistice with a "peace agreement."

The United States supported South Korea's call for direct talks between Seoul and Pyongyang. Should an international conference be held for the purpose of reducing tensions, the U.S. preferred a four-party conference including China, since the latter was also a party to the armistice. When Pyongyang's letter reached Seoul, South Korean Premier Chin Ui-chong had liaison officers at Panmunjom forward a letter containing Seoul's stance to North Korean counterparts in February 1984. In a letter North Korean Premier Kang Song-san forwarded in March, Pyongyang said that it was refusing to talk with Seoul because the latter did not have operational command over its own army. For the United States to accept North Korea's proposal for a tripartite conference under this circumstance would result in damaging both deterrence and the legitimacy of the South Korean government. This is why Washington has shunned such a formula and instead has supported resumption of Seoul-Pyongyang contacts.

Against this background, President Reagan called for "confidence-building measures for the two Koreas" in his address to the U.N. General Assembly in September 1984. Immediately after this, Pyongyang's Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam, who also attended this U.N. session, stated that North Korea was willing to discuss these measures "in three-way talks of our side, the U.S. and the South Korean side." Subsequently, Washington made it clear that these measures meant such specifics as prior notification of military maneuvers and the exchange of observers for military exercises and discussions about them at the Military Commission at Panmunjom. Thus, there are diverging views on what these confidence-building measures should be.

On the other hand, Seoul and Pyongyang had a brief period of resumed dialogues from September 1984 through January 1985. When Seoul accepted, perhaps unexpectedly, an offer from Pyongyang to provide assistance to victims of flooding in the south in September, Red Cross representatives from both sides negotiated the procedures necessary for delivery of goods. Probably prompted by China's successes in attracting foreign capital at this juncture, Pyongyang enacted a law on joint venture encouraging

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20 Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Asia/Pacific, Daily Report, March 7, 1984, D1.
21 International Herald Tribune, October 9, 1984, p. 1.
foreign investments. In November, it accepted Seoul’s proposals for economic and Red Cross talks, thereby paving the way to the reopening of official contacts.

But Pyongyang abruptly canceled these talks scheduled for December when a Soviet citizen crossed the demarcation line at Panmunjom on November 23, for this unexpected happening triggered a shooting incident that killed four North Korean soldiers. Pyongyang had to suspend the talks to please Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa, who was in North Korea at this time to negotiate a border settlement. In late December 1984, however, the North Korean side proposed to resume these talks in January 1985. As a result, North Korean delegates to the eighth Red Cross talks were scheduled to come to Seoul on January 22 for the first time since 1973. But after the South Korean government called upon North Korea to send some observers to the annual “Team Spirit” exercise with the U.S. which was to begin on February 1, Pyongyang again unilaterally delayed both the economic and the Red Cross talks on January 9, contending that the military exercise laid “artificial obstacles” to the renewed talks. Once again, Pyongyang may have taken advantage of this occasion to alleviate Soviet anxieties about being excluded from discussions on the Korean question.

Now that North Korea has indicated its interest in continuing these talks with South Korea and at the same time in obtaining access to Western capitalist economies, how to deal with this new North Korean gesture becomes an important concern for the United States and South Korea. Thus far, Washington has shared Seoul’s view that direct talks between the two Korean governments must take first priority in easing tension and making progress toward reunification. From now on, the United States and South Korea must find better ways for realizing deterrence and détente simultaneously. To do so requires close consultation and cooperation. The third summit meeting between President Chun and Reagan in April 1985 demonstrates the importance of such cooperation in dealing with North Korea.

WHITHER U.S.–NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS?

Now we come to the prospects for U.S.–North Korean relations. Under what circumstances can there be direct and constructive U.S.–North Korean dialogues? Based on the foregoing analysis we can say that the United States can carry out such dialogues if North Korea shows its sincerity in conducting direct talks with South Korea and if China and the Soviet Union do likewise.


23 International Herald Tribune, January 10, 1985, p. 4.
When they do so, their action will result in *de facto* cross-recognition—or at least cross-contact, should Pyongyang continue its objection to the idea of cross-recognition for domestic reasons.

While Pyongyang has not shown its seriousness in talks with Seoul and while both Beijing and Moscow have also closed their doors to Seoul, Pyongyang’s attempts to achieve direct talks with Washington can only be construed as a scheme to drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington. Thus far, the timing of the tripartite conference proposal and the way in which it unilaterally calls the renewed dialogue with Seoul on and off make us suspect Pyongyang’s true intentions. For the United States to accept the tripartite talks as they are currently requested by Pyongyang may well harm chances of sustaining productive dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang from which an ultimate solution on Korean reunification must emerge. If the United States accepts the idea and meets Pyongyang’s outstanding demands for withdrawing troops and for replacing the armistice with a “peace agreement,” it will surely destroy deterrence by removing the most effective shield against aggression. Needless to say, it is unlikely that the United States will take any of these drastic measures, given the increased strategic importance of the Korean peninsula in its global and regional interests with respect to the Soviet Union, China, and Japan.

This is not to rule out all other possibilities of U.S. relations with North Korea, however. If certain relations do not compromise the U.S. security commitment to South Korea and weaken deterrence, and instead contribute to channeling North Korea’s behavior into more peaceful directions, as some Western observers expect, by all means they should be tried. To test Pyongyang’s sincerity, Washington may explore possible areas of cross-contact; in so doing, however, it should stay in intimate consultation with Seoul and apply a carrot-and-stick policy.

Finally, it should be noted again that North Korea has become an important issue in recent Sino-American discussions. One of the reasons why China has widened her semiofficial contacts with South Korea may well be to encourage the United States to show similar behavior toward North Korea. If Beijing succeeds in persuading Pyongyang to take more realistic attitudes toward Seoul and Washington, they may serve to bring about some kind of détente between Seoul and Pyongyang. It is incumbent upon the United States to ensure that such détente be achieved without adversely affecting deterrence on the Korean peninsula.
Polemics and Realities: U.S.-North Korean Relations

Robert A. Scalapino

In a three-session conversation with a visiting Peruvian group in the early summer of 1983, Kim Il Sung provided us with a fascinating glimpse of the version of modern history that he wants recorded and his appraisal of the contemporary global scene. Kim's remarks, taken in their totality, underlined the central principles that have governed his rule: political aloofness—certain alliances and dependencies notwithstanding—and economic autarky, now exacting an ever-heavier price from the North Korean people. These policies have been sustained by a near-fanatic nationalism, unprecedented internal mobilization, and the omnipresent cult of personality surrounding the Great Leader.

To capture the highlights and basic themes of his conversation may serve as a fitting introduction to DPRK foreign policy in general and, more specifically, its attitudes and policies toward the United States. Yet in evaluating Kim's remarks, one should be aware that while this public recital faithfully reflects many of the attitudes and perceptions underwriting North Korean policies, Kim and other DPRK leaders must grapple with more complex realities than can be revealed publicly. Current economic problems in particular appear to be forcing a searching reexamination of past policies, with potential implications for future foreign as well as domestic policies. Before surveying recent developments, however, let us summarize Kim's

*In preparing this paper, I am indebted to the research assistance of Kong Dan Oh.

1 The talks took place with a delegation of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance of Peru in Pyongyang on June 30, July 1 and 5, 1983. They were published under the title, "On the Korean People's Struggle to Apply the Chuch'e Idea," in Nodong Sinmun (hereafter NS), October 29, 1983, 1-3.
extended remarks before the Peruvians and other statements setting forth the public position of North Korean authorities.

For Kim, the history of Korea can be understood as a struggle between "flunkeyists"—those who were prepared to prostrate themselves before some foreign nation—and true nationalists—those who insisted upon placing their confidence in the Korean people and pursuing a Korean Way under the banner of chuch'e, "self-reliance." This key theme is posited at the outset of his remarks. Some countries "are so affected by flunkyism and a fear of technology" that they do not believe in the strength of their people and nation, but pin their hopes only on developed nations. Independent new societies, he continued, cannot be built in that manner.

Geography and history were then enlisted to underwrite this thesis. Korea, a small, peninsular country situated between large countries and possessing a high culture and great resources, was coveted by all the major nations, including the United States, which "had long tried to swallow Korea and spread Christianity here." In late nineteenth-century Korea, "many flunkeyists" of Russia, China, and Japan emerged, all trying to introduce the ideology and culture of some external force. As a result, nationalists were divided and the country was ruined, becoming a colony of Japan. In the struggle for liberation that followed, the same divisions persisted. Some sought to achieve Korean independence with the aid of China; others turned to the Soviet Union; some harbored illusions that Japan would grant independence voluntarily; and still others worshipped Wilson's doctrine of "self-determination."

He and his father, however, were never parties to such errors, according to Kim. "I keenly felt that the struggle should be waged on the strength of our own people and that our own problems should be solved on our own responsibility." A brief, highly selective account of his father's activities and his own youth and guerrilla exploits followed. "We did not receive foreign aid in our fight against the Japanese imperialists. . . . I put up the slogan: As fish cannot live without water, so the guerrillas cannot live without the people" (thereby expropriating one of the most famous maxims associated with Mao Zedong, and undoubtedly original to neither Mao nor Kim).

Certain remarks of Kim on the post-1945 period are especially interesting. We sent many students to foreign countries after liberation, he asserted, so we could build a new Korea, and we also called many Koreans back from life abroad (in the North, almost exclusively from Russia and China). But "flunkyism and dogmatism found expression among them." Both groups "preferred foreign things to ours, trying to copy foreign things mechanically." Even in the "Fatherland Liberation War" (the Korean War), Kim noted, some trained abroad favored the use of large numbers of tanks "despite the fact that our country has few plains but many mountains."

For these reasons, he continued, in 1955, I spoke of the need to make chuch'e the foundation of our ideological work. While we must not become
narrow-minded nationalists" and must learn from "good foreign experiences," we should make certain that all ideas and programs relate to our own capacities and needs. With chuch’e as our guide, Kim averred, we are conducting three revolutions. The most important is the ideological revolution, which provides our people with an independent ideological consciousness and collectivist spirit of working one for all, all for one. The organizational revolution strengthens discipline, advances solidarity, and enhances the collectivist attitude. The technical revolution promotes the people’s material welfare, with reliance upon 1.2 million technicians and specialists, virtually all trained through our newly developed higher education system.

In Kim’s recital, strands of truth are interwoven with major omissions, distortions, and oversimplifications. Recent research serves to make us aware of how dependent Kim himself was upon Chinese and Soviet support during his youth and early guerrilla exploits. Indeed, he came to communism through involvement with the Chinese communist youth and party movements, and served under Chinese communist commanders as a guerrilla leader. When Kim and his tiny band of guerrillas retreated into Siberia in 1941 under heavy Japanese pressure, moreover, the Russians provided both sustenance and training until he and his comrades came to Korea in the wake of the Soviet occupation in 1945. Kim is also fully aware that he owes his advent to political power solely to the Russians, since without their support neither he nor any other communist would have risen to power in North Korea after 1945, and certainly not a young, virtually unknown expatriate whose “army” had never consisted of more than two to three hundred men.

Heavy dependence upon external sources continued. When Kim made the mistake of believing that he could “liberate” the South in a few weeks, it was the Chinese who saved him from total defeat. Without their aid, neither he nor the Korean Workers’ Party would be in Pyongyang today. And without Soviet and Eastern European assistance after the war, rapid economic reconstruction would have been impossible. Nor could the DPRK military structure have been built to such formidable proportions, granting the heavy sacrifices demanded from the Korean people in this connection. Aid continues. The Russians have made it clear that they have recently been involved in support of some sixty major industrial projects, and Kim’s May–June 1984 visit to the USSR and Eastern Europe had as one of its major aims the securing of additional aid for North Korea’s troubled economy.

Nevertheless, there can be no question that Kim’s strategem for survival has relied heavily upon aloofness and autarky. In part, this is the product of personal experience. Kim came to deeply resent being subject to Russian fiat during his early years as “leader,” and there can be no doubt that at certain points, particularly in 1956–57, he faced an internal challenge from rival factions oriented toward the Soviet Union and China. The option of an inward-looking strategy was also sanctioned by Korean history and culture. It is ironic that relations between Burma and North Korea were
recently ruptured over the Rangoon bombing because of all nations, only Burma and Albania have, in their respective ways, paralleled the DPRK course.

North Korea, to be sure, has engaged in selective "internationalism," for both political and economic reasons. Military sales have recently constituted its chief export, with arms and training provided both governments and movements. The Third World, moreover, has been assiduously cultivated. Yet neither the average North Korean citizen nor the great majority of elites within the society, including the intelligentsia, are parties to such activities. They are subject to sustained isolation. Even DPRK representatives abroad are permitted no intimacy with foreigners, "fraternal comrades" or otherwise.

Kim's remarks to the Peruvians have been amplified countless times by various North Korean organs and spokesmen, and specifically with reference to the United States. At this point, one example will suffice. From a Nodong Sinmun (Daily Worker) editorial of March 10, 1981, the following excerpt is typical: "We must make them [our workers] recognize that the atrocity, viciousness, slyness and rottenness of American imperialism is the source of the reactionary forces of the world and an irreconcilable enemy of our people. The American imperialists, who have been invading our country since 1900, still urge on us the painful separation of the Korean people, and constantly pursue the wicked ambition to colonize all of Korea."^2

Before exploring the implications of these views on U.S.-North Korean relations, let me turn briefly to the opposite side of the coin, namely, official U.S. attitudes and perceptions of the DPRK. In the course of his speech before the Korean National Assembly in Seoul on November 12, 1983, President Reagan put his views forward in forceful terms. After condemning "the despicable North Korean attack in Rangoon" and pledging to work within the international community "to censure North Korea for its uncivilized behavior," Reagan capsulized the American government's views on the DPRK in the following passage: "North Korea is one of the most repressive societies on earth. It does not prosper; it arms. The rapid progress of your economy and the stagnation of the North have demonstrated perhaps more clearly here than anywhere else the value of a free economic system. Let the world look long and hard at both sides of the 38th Parallel and then ask: 'Which side enjoys a better life?'"^3

^2"Let's Arm Party Members and Workers with a Solid Struggle Spirit Against Imperialism," NS, March 10, 1981, 1. All italicized words and passages in this and other quotations from North Korean journals are to be found in the Korean source unless otherwise indicated.

Seven months earlier, in an address to the San Francisco World Affairs Council, Secretary of State Shultz, coupling North Korea with the Soviet Union and Vietnam, had asserted, "The North Koreans, who spend 20 percent of their gross national product on their armed forces, threaten their southern neighbors with an armed force of over 700,000, one of the largest armies in the world. When you visit the DMZ in Korea, as I did recently, the tension is palpable. You know what it means to confront real danger, as American soldiers and their South Korean allies do every day."^4

Despite the caveat issued earlier, there is no reason to believe that the statements emanating from official North Korean and U.S. sources regarding each other are substantially different from the genuine attitudes of the respective leaders. Nor is it logical to assume that the expressions of leaders diverge in any significant fashion from the sentiments of the great body of elites or opinion makers in each society, whatever variations in proposed tactics. In analyzing recent developments, these facts should be kept clearly in mind. The hostility on both sides is deeply rooted.

When the Reagan administration came into office at the beginning of 1981, it inherited a thin and wavering line of contact between the United States and the DPRK. The one continuous interaction that had taken place since the Korean War had been the periodic meetings of the Military Armistice Commission. These meetings, held at Panmunjom, have never been fruitful. They are usually characterized by pro forma sessions or by polemic confrontations. At various points in the 1970s, the North Koreans appeared interested in inviting certain Americans to make brief visits to the DPRK, a development that will be discussed later.

The more significant U.S.-North Korean contacts, however, had been somber. When the 1970s dawned, the Pueblo episode lay in the immediate background. There followed the discovery of the tunnels that had been dug under the DMZ; the continued North Korean efforts to infiltrate agents into the South, some of them with assignments to engage in sabotage; and the infamous axe murders when two Americans were cut down by North Korean soldiers in the demilitarized zone in August 1976. One development during the Carter administration seemed to hold promise as far as the DPRK was concerned, namely, Carter's decision to engage in a staged withdrawal of American forces from South Korea. When this policy was tabled after vigorous opposition within the United States and expressions of deep concern from both South Korea and Japan, the North Koreans attacked Carter with the same fury as had earlier been leveled against previous U.S. administrations. Another American initiative, that of a trilateral conference involving

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South Korea, North Korea, and the United States as equal partners, with a free agenda, was rejected by Pyongyang—to Seoul's private relief.⁵

Thus, there was no reason to believe that relations between the United States and North Korea would improve as the Reagan administration took office in early 1981. Early indications of Pyongyang's attitude toward the new leadership came in the context of denouncing the visit of President Chun Doo Hwan to Washington at the end of January. Nodong Sinmun quoted a Pravda article which asserted, "It is very apparent that the new administration will outspokenly support the dictatorial regime with no restrictions, and without having mentioned American concern for human rights which the former administration advocated with regard to policy towards 'South Korea'."⁶ On the following day, the Party organ gave full coverage to a statement issued by the Central Standing Committee of the Chochongnyon (Federation of Korean Residents in Japan). Characterizing Reagan as "the notorious warmonger" and Chun as "a hunting dog of the American imperialists and rare military gangster," the statement charged that the joint U.S.–ROK communique issued at the conclusion of Chun's visit was a document of "military aggression and war that perpetuates the division of Korea, maintains South Korea eternally as a colonial military base for American imperialists, and increases dramatically the danger of a new war on the Korean peninsula. It is the very document that sells out the motherland and the welfare of the Korean people completely."⁷

In these passages are contained the central themes transmitted to the North Korean people and the outer world, including those below the 38th parallel, concerning the current policies of the U.S. government. Three key points are endlessly repeated. The first is that the Reagan era presents Korea—and the world—with the most dangerous policies yet advanced by any American administration. The following two selections will suffice to illustrate this theme:

⁵While this proposal was advanced as a joint initiative of Presidents Carter and Park, South Korean authorities never evidenced enthusiasm for the proposal since it provided North Korea quasi-official recognition from the United States without reciprocal benefits to the Republic of Korea in its relations with the People's Republic of China and the USSR.

⁶"The World Strongly Denounces Traitor Chun Doo Hwan's Visit to the United States," NS, February 6, 1981, 5. It is interesting to note that the attacks upon Chun's visit came from North Korea and the USSR. Chinese comment was muted.

⁷"With Surging National Anger, We Denounce and Condemn the Villainous Clown-Game between the American Imperialist Master and His Servant," ibid., February 7, 1981, 5. The Chochongnyon statement had been issued on February 2.
The Reagan administration is the most tyrannical and bellicose of all past administrations that have made a profession out of aggression and war.8

After the Reagan regime appeared in the U.S.A., American strategy toward Korea and Asia became more aggressive and bellicose. In his Korea policy, Reagan has even completely given up the plan to withdraw American soldiers, which was in any case a deceitful plan of the former administration. He has announced straightforwardly the permanent military occupation of South Korea; and under the name of a so-called fulfillment of commitment, he has strengthened American military forces on a large scale. While doing this, he is busily engaged in preparing a new war against the Korean people.9

The second theme is closely integrated with the first: American imperialism totally dominates South Korea, controlling the South Korean economy, political institutions, and military forces, and systematically destroying Korean culture, substituting in its place the decadent values of the West. Thus, it is impossible to regard South Korea as an independent entity; it can only be treated as a colonial appendage of American imperialism. To put this theme in the words of North Korean propagandists, note the following passages:

The basic characteristics of the neo-imperialism of the American imperialists towards South Korea are to practice colonial rule through a puppet government created by them, not to control directly themselves. . . . The real governing apparatus that in fact rules South Korea politically is the American Embassy in South Korea.10

When the Syngman Rhee puppet regime was destroyed by the April 19th revolution of the South Korean people, and when America's colonial rule faced unmanageable crises, the American imperialists invented the May 16th military coup d'état. By establishing a cruel military fascist-dictatorship, they controlled the crisis. After the fascistic Yushin regime of the traitor Park Chung Hee collapsed, they support such a military gangster as Chun Doo Hwan. Through the December 12th military purge-coup d'état and the fascistic violence of May 17th, they established a vicious fascistic military dictatorship after they had made Kwangju city a bloodbath.11


10 Han Ung-ho, “The Real Political Rulers of South Korea Are the American Imperialists,” NS, November 14, 1982, 5.

According to North Korean polemicists, "South Korea is a perfect colony of the American imperialists." They completely subordinate all fields of South Korean politics, economics, military affairs and culture in accordance with their aggressive goals. . . . The prerogative of supreme command over more than 700,000 puppet soldiers of South Korea and controlling power over various military strategies are held by the American imperialist aggressors. South Korea is also totally subordinated to American imperialists in the economic field. They are forcibly selling surplus goods under the guise of providing aid. They . . . are squeezing excess profit from the colony by pushing monopoly companies into South Korea in order to subdue the country. The American imperialists employ the puppet soldiers as cheap cannon fodder. By doing this, they are reducing their military expenditures while the South Korean people are carrying the heavy burden of military costs. South Korea is an American colony in ideology and culture. The American imperialists are spreading a rotten life style both by eliminating the national and independent consciousness of the people and implanting such ideas as those of worshipping America, flunkiness and respect for America in order to make people their spiritual slaves. Because of this, the brilliant, glorious culture and honored, valuable customs of our nation have been violated by them. . . . national nihilism has emerged together with growing social disorder. 12

While the central themes that the North Korea authorities wish to convey are sharply delineated in these passages, the distortions of fact require brief comment. Relations between Rhee and the United States were scarcely those of puppet and master. A staunch nationalist and highly independent leader, Rhee was never an American favorite and was frequently at odds with American policy. Indeed, so desperate did U.S. authorities become over Rhee's actions and attitudes at one point during the Eisenhower administration that plans for his removal were drafted, but fortunately such intervention did not take place.

Far from engineering the Park coup, U.S. officials vigorously opposed it and only recognized Park when presented with a fait accompli. This was also true with respect to the December 12 (1979) incident. American author-

12 "Let's Raise Our Flags High for Anti-Americanism and Independence," NS, June 6, 1983, 5. Another article strongly playing upon the theme of the U.S. seduction of South Korea by cultural means is that of Han Ung-sik, "The Reactionary Nature of the Flunkeyism of U.S. Worship and the Idea of Fear and Servility before the United States Being Spread in South Korea," Kulloja, No. 7, July 1983, 59-64. "In the 1980s, as U.S. imperialist, colonial rule began to be cracked and the anti-fascist struggle for democracy expanded into an anti-U.S. struggle for independence, the machinations of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys to spread flunkeyism and the ideas of fear and servility have advanced to a more cunning and vicious stage. . . . Education thoroughly copies that of the U.S. system in idea and content . . . the Christian community, dominated by U.S. missionaries, believes in a U.S. god and U.S. preachings. The American style carries the day in literature and the arts, and even in the spoken and written language, etiquette and way of life."
ities were furious with the use of United Nations forces for internal political purposes, and some advocated direct intervention to halt the activities of Chun and his associates.

Nor did the United States engineer or direct the military response to the Kwangju uprising, although on this occasion, Korean troops were moved to Kwangju after U.N. command authorization. In connection with these various episodes, one should note that most criticism of U.S. policies from South Korean dissidents has been that the United States did not intervene at certain points to block the independent actions of current leaders in power rather than that it controlled those actions.

The third theme pertaining to the United States passed by North Korean organs follows directly from the first two: in its preparations for war, the U.S. government has made the Pacific-Asian region—and more particularly, the Korean peninsula—the focal point of its ambitions and strategy. Having proclaimed the coming era that of the Pacific, American authorities are in the process of consolidating their power by drawing the “Japanese militarists” and the “South Korean puppets” into a trilateral military alliance with the United States as the leader. This move, abetted by the Nakasone and Chun governments, and given concrete form through such events as joint military exercises, poses a dire threat, not only to North Korea but to all “peace-loving states.”

Once again, one need select only a few samples from the many available in official state and party organs to illustrate this theme in the precise language of the North Korean spokesmen.

In the aggressive global strategy of the American imperialists, Asian strategy forms a most important link; the Korean peninsula in particular is becoming an important object for their new military adventure. The American imperialists’ constant ambition towards Asia consists of the following: controlling South Korea permanently via its military forces; attacking our republic; controlling and ruling Japan; gaining supremacy over Asian revolutionary capabilities through force; and by doing these things, maintaining and strengthening their sphere of power in this region. The so-called theory of a Pacific Community of Nations and the plan for a Pacific Era are the political elements in this scheme. The forceable occupation of South Korea and America’s war policy constitute the pivot of American imperialists’ military strategy in Asia.\(^\text{13}\)

A second article provides a slightly different emphasis, pointing the initial spearhead at Japan:

Availing themselves of the American imperialists’ policy of aggression towards Asia, the reactionary Japanese are pursuing expansionist ambitions. Consequently, they appear increasingly as a dangerous aggressive power against people in this

\(^{13}\)”The War Policy Advocated by Reagan is the Root of the Danger that Threatens the Peace of Asia,” AS, December 4, 1982, 2.”
region. Historically, aggressive cooperation between the USA and Japan has been the source of disaster for the Korean people and for other Asian peoples.

American imperialists are connecting the military alliance of the U.S., Japan and the South Korean puppet government with ANZUS [Australia, New Zealand and the United States] plus bringing together other nations, so that they can hurriedly create a new aggressive military bloc, a so-called Pacific Collective Security System. This is a vicious conspiracy to bring about collective military interference, confronting the Korean people and [all] Asian peoples."

Once again, some comment on these polemic thrusts is warranted. The two articles cited here, and countless others written in similar vein, have been skillfully constructed to appeal to a variety of South Koreans, including those opposed to the Chun government, advocates of lowered military expenditures, students attracted to dependency theory—a theory with an earlier vogue in certain American circles—protectionists within Korean industry, and diverse individuals who resent the "excessive Westernization" of Korean culture. Once again, however, the distortions implanted in these essays should be patently clear.

In both the Warsaw Pact community and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), joint command involves some derogation of control over certain military weapons and policies.

South Korean economic interaction with Japan and the United States has scarcely been to the disadvantage of the Korean economy or the livelihood of the Korean people, and the primary issue currently on the horizon, far from that of American domination, is the huge trade imbalance in favor of South Korea. On the other hand, North Korea's autarkic economy is in such serious trouble that Kim and his associates are now shopping for both aid and greater economic interaction with the advanced, industrial nations, as will be discussed shortly.

Despite heavy South Korean military expenditures undertaken in an effort to come abreast of the North (thereby reducing the need for an American presence), U.S. military expenditures have scarcely been reduced, even in the Korean theater. As for the "Westernization" of Korean culture, this is a complex issue that goes far beyond South Korea. In all developing societies today, and especially those where the pace of socioeconomic change is rapid, the mix between the indigenous, traditional culture and that derived from the universal stream largely reflective of the industrial world becomes a controversial issue. One might note, however, that there is a conspicuous silence here and elsewhere in DPRK literature on the extensive "Sovietization" of North Korea in certain cultural as well as economic and political aspects, Kim Il Sung's strictures notwithstanding.

Returning to North Korean accounts, how is the American global and regional “conspiracy” to be countered? One basic requirement, according to North Korean organs, is the unity of all “threatened” nations and, most especially, the socialist community. In certain respects, North Korea has clearly gained from the Sino-Soviet cleavage. Presumably, Kim Il Sung can never forget that immediately prior to the split, a joint Soviet–Chinese démarche forced him to cease temporarily his efforts to purge internal opponents. It was only at the end of the 1950s that Kim was able to exercise a degree of independence by playing off Moscow against Beijing. His has never been a position of pure “equidistance” since that is impossible. He has feinted first toward one, then toward the other, but taking the period since 1959 as a whole, he has tilted for the greater portion of the time toward the People’s Republic of China.

In recent years, however, Kim has had recurrent concerns about Chinese policies, notwithstanding the fact that the Chinese have gone to considerable lengths to assuage and reassure him. In repeated exchanges of high-level visits, they have pledged support for Kim’s “Koryo Confederation” proposal, called for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea, paid homage to Kim Jong Il as heir apparent, and supported Kim’s version of trilateral talks. They have also rendered economic and military assistance to the extent of their means. Yet the evidence suggests that Kim has not been wholly reassured. Apart from whatever may trouble him about China’s current domestic reform program (aspects of which North Korea appears to be adopting), on balance, Kim cannot be happy about the current Chinese leadership’s relations with and attitudes toward Japan and the United States.

Until recently, North Korean organs have assaulted Nakasone as the worst Japanese leader since Kishi, whereas Chinese leaders have hailed Sino-Japanese relations as presently the best in modern times. North Korea continues to rail against Reagan and American policy, defining the current scene as one requiring the vigilance of all peace-loving peoples so that American aggression can be warded off. Reagan, however, received a cordial welcome in Beijing, earlier Sino-American tensions are somewhat alleviated, trade and cultural relations appear on an upward trend despite continuing problems, and the Chinese negotiate for American military technology. Thus, while the Chinese have dropped the policy of urging a united front against Soviet hegemonism in favor of a policy emphasizing nonalignment and independence, from the vantage point of Pyongyang (and in reality), it is a decidedly tilted nonalignment.

To these developments, moreover, must be added the recent interaction between China and South Korea involving negotiations over the hijacked Chinese airplane, unofficial trade, the visits permitted Koreans living in China to go to South Korea, and sports exchanges. Again, Pyongyang can only view these developments with deep concern, symbolizing as they do a “two Koreas” policy.
Thus, when North Korean journals call for the unity of all socialists, their hope is for a unity based more closely on Soviet rather than Chinese policies, at least with respect to the United States, Japan and South Korea. Whenever they can, DPRK sources provide equal coverage for Chinese and Soviet news, both to show North Korea’s even-handedness in dealing with the two powers and to illustrate the unified support given DPRK policies. In recent times, however, Nodong Sinmun and Kulloja have often been forced to quote only Soviet sources on such issues of vital concern to North Korea as the dangers of an American-Japanese-South Korean trilateral military alliance, the menace of American global strategy, and American plans for hegemony over Asia. On these matters, there has been a growing convergence of views—and interests—between the USSR and the DPRK, the main reason that Kim could return to Moscow after so many years’ absence. On some key issues, the Chinese stand conspicuously aloof. Even when they are critical of U.S. policies, which is not infrequent, Chinese spokesmen can only be quoted selectively in North Korean journals, with their attacks on Soviet policies omitted. And on occasion, North Korean organs have come close to criticizing the current Chinese “turn to the West” openly. Using terminology earlier expressed by Kim Il Sung himself, the North Korean author just quoted warned, “The revolutionary peoples of the world must not be caught up in the delusions of imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, nor must they bargain with imperialists on matters of principle.”

Yet if North Korea has consistently sought to build a united front against the United States, it has also sought to obtain recognition from the United States while exercising its veto over similar moves toward South Korea by the USSR or the People’s Republic of China. The most promising route to American recognition—and one designed to resolve Pyongyang’s key grievances—would be U.S.-North Korean negotiations focusing upon the substitution of a peace treaty for an armistice and the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea. For obvious reasons, the United States has refused to enter into bilateral negotiations with the DPRK, insisting that the

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15 One example of the appeal for unity giving clear evidence of North Korea’s unhappiness with recent Chinese actions is to be found in Sok Ch’ang-sik, “Solidarity Is the Most Powerful Weapon of the Working Class,” Kulloja, No. 7, July 1983, 22-27. Sok hails Kim II Sung for “leading the way in realizing the unity and solidarity of the international communist movement through the practical struggle to bring about an international anti-imperialist united front and united anti-U.S. action.” (Italics mine.)

16 It should be noted, however, that a mutual wariness continues to characterize Soviet and North Korean attitudes toward each other despite the greatly improved relations of the recent past.

17 Sok, “Solidarity.”
Republic of Korea had to be a full and equal participant in any talks dealing with the outstanding issues of the Korean peninsula. With respect to the broader question, the U.S. position is that formal recognition has to be reciprocal, with the major communist states establishing diplomatic relations with South Korea at the point that the United States and Japan recognize North Korea.

For its part, as indicated earlier, South Korea was never happy over the prospect of trilateral negotiations despite the 1979 Carter-Park proposal, since the trilateral formula provided the North with a form of U.S. recognition and also shaped the agenda in a manner unpalatable to the South. Seoul has consistently desired to return to bilateral North-South talks, and to that end Chun Doo Hwan seized the initiative at an early point in his administration. Adopting a highly flexible position, Chun proposed the reopening of negotiations at any time and place, without preconditions. Meanwhile, Kim Il Sung and his associates had maneuvered the North into an exceedingly rigid position. Denouncing Chun and his government in extreme terms, North Korean spokesmen insisted that they would never talk to the "fascistic, militarist dictator." Gambling on the fragility of the Chun government and signs of substantial opposition to it within the South, the North called for the overthrow of Chun and concentrated upon a very different approach to North-South talks, one that would bring together representatives of various parties, organizations and social groups in equal numbers (with the South Korean government ignored) to discuss a "Confederation of Koryo"—an old proposal designed to ensure a communist-controlled unification plan.¹⁸

As the Chun administration survived the various storms that beset it, and amidst signs that economic recovery would further bolster the Seoul government, North Korean authorities undoubtedly realized that theirs was a disadvantageous political position. Chun was garnering wide support abroad for his call to return to the negotiating table, including support from the ASEAN community. The North, on the other hand, had been made to appear inflexible with respect to reducing tension and, indeed, seemingly prepared to abet open warfare in the South.

It was against this background that the events of the autumn of 1983 unfolded. As previously noted, China had become increasingly involved in

the affairs of the Korean peninsula. On one hand, it had indicated its willingness to pay a considerable price to woo Pyongyang and prevent any slippage toward the Russians, albeit with mixed results. On the other hand, it had moved toward informal relations with Seoul in a number of directions. Gradually, China edged into the role of broker, transmitting messages and offering suggestions with respect to methods of alleviating tension over the Korean problem. In this, Beijing had the active encouragement of the United States, and private discussions took place between American and Chinese officials. The PRC was encouraged to believe that Washington would support tripartite negotiations of the type suggested in the Carter-Park proposal of 1979.

In August 1983, Deng Xiaoping and Kim II Sung met privately in Dalian, and possibilities with respect to the United States and South Korea were discussed. About one month later, during their meeting of September 28, at the very end of the discussions, Deng indicated to U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger the importance of taking new initiatives with respect to the Korean problem, suggesting that North Korea would show flexibility and asserting in very general terms that China was prepared to play a role, along with the United States, in future developments. Ten days later, on October 8, China notified the U.S. Embassy in Beijing that North Korea was ready to participate in tripartite talks, hailing this change of policy as one offering great hope. Ironically, however, this occurred just one day before the Rangoon bombing. The responsibility for North Korean policies during this period and the rationale behind them remain mysteries. Was there a lack of coordination within the North Korean policy-making structure—or conflict? In any case, the furor over the bombing provided additional impetus for South Korean opposition to trilateral negotiations, with Seoul pushing for a resumption of bilateral talks.

Although the trilateral concept was informally broached again on December 3, North Korea did not come forth with a formal proposal for tripartite talks until January 10, 1984, after a joint meeting of the Central People's Committee and the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly. As worded, the North Korean proposal was significantly different from the original Carter-Park offer. In effect, it represented an effort to package the orthodox North Korean position in altered form. Two bilateral negotiations were to take place under a trilateral umbrella, with clearly identified and separate agendas. The January 10 proposal called for tripartite discussions "with the South Korean authorities participating in the talks between us and the United States"—an inauspicious wording.19 At this meeting, the question of concluding a peace agreement was to be discussed.

19 For details of the proposal, see Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Asia and the Pacific, Daily Report, January 11, 1984, D1-D11.
between the United States and North Korea, while North and South Korea would discuss the adoption of a bilateral nonaggression pact. The former negotiations would also include the issue of American troop withdrawal, while the latter negotiations, after agreement on a nonaggression pact, would move toward discussion of a reduction of military forces and agreement on the nonuse of force. Once these agreements had been reached, a political conference would be convened involving North and South Korean representatives to discuss the question of establishing a confederated state. All of these propositions reflected long-standing North Korean demands and represented an approach that had been consistently rejected by both the United States and South Korea.

The United States, confronted with staunch South Korean opposition to any tripartite conference, declined to test some of the ambiguities or to seek alterations in the North Korean proposal although Richard Walker, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, asserted that if South Korea were a full and equal participant in all aspects of such negotiations as took place, the United States would view a meeting of the three parties favorably—essentially a reiteration of the Carter-Park proposal. In reality, however, the United States edged away from trilateralism, indicating that its preference was for bilateral or quadrilateral (China included) negotiations. There was a certain logic in the latter proposal since China had been a signatory to the armistice agreement and hence could be legitimately expected to be involved in the conversion of that agreement into a permanent settlement. But North Korea immediately denounced the quadrilateral proposal, asserting that China had nothing to do with the issue at stake, meaning American troop withdrawal.

China also stated that it did not choose to become involved in Korean negotiations. Publicly, its position was akin to that of Pyongyang, namely, that it had withdrawn its military forces much earlier. Privately, Chinese spokesmen asserted that if they participated, they would have to support North Korea fully, a situation not conducive to future progress. This argument, incidentally, might just as well apply to the United States in connection with South Korea. In any case, the United States was not in fact enthusiastic about the concept of quadrilateral or Six Power discussions, the latter being another possibility advanced (with the USSR and Japan added to the participants). Washington placed ever greater priority on bilateral North-South negotiations, supporting the South Korean view.

By the summer of 1984, there were no indications that the impasse would be broken. While North Korea continued to push for its January 10

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20 As quoted by a South Korean source, Ambassador Walker, in a lecture sponsored by the Institute of Studies of International Politics in June 1984, said that the United States would possibly accept a North Korean proposal for a tripartite conference if it were to be held on a “totally coequal” basis. See Korea Newsreview, June 16, 1984, 5.
proposal and, in some instances, to blur the matter of the scope and nature of South Korean participation, the formula remained essentially unchanged. Hostility to both South Korea and the United States continued to pour forth from North Korean sources. Indeed, on the very day on which the formal DPRK proposal was adopted, an earlier interview with Kim Il Sung was released repeating the charges that the South Korean rulers were conducting a regime of military fascism and seeking to provoke a new war. Hence, a North-South dialogue was termed meaningless unless anticommunism in the South ceased and “democratization” took place.\footnote{I am indebted to the testimony of Professor Chong-Sik Lee before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, March 20, 1984, for calling my attention to Kim’s remarks and their publication in *Nodong Sinmun* on January 10. Kim’s statement had originally been made on November 16, 1983, in response to questions posed by a delegation of the Rumanian Communist Party.}

Such direct exchanges as occurred between authorities in South and North during early 1984 were acerbic and scarcely conducive to a softening of either side’s stance. While Pyongyang broadcast its January 10 proposal, Seoul did not receive formal notification via letter until January 24, with the message having been sent through the international postal system—a curious route for an urgent matter. The proposal had also been sent to the U.S. government and members of Congress.\footnote{For details from a South Korean perspective, see International Cultural Society of Korea, *South-North Dialogue in Korea*, Seoul, May 1984.} The South Koreans had already responded to the proposal as received over the radio, with a letter dated February 10, from Prime Minister Chin Ui-chong to North Korean Premier Kang Söng-san.\footnote{This letter is contained in *Statement on North Korean Proposal for Tripartite Meeting*, official publication of the Republic of Korea, 1984, 4.} Chin asserted that unless the Northern authorities apologized for the Rangoon bombing, “no one will accept your proposal for talks as genuine,” in effect making this a condition for negotiations. He continued by asserting that no other country (the United States) could provide solutions to the problems between South and North, hence the need was for a meeting between the “highest authorities” of the two governments, and only when such a dialogue was progressing smoothly should those countries “directly or indirectly responsible for the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War participate.” This letter was delivered to the North through the liaison officers at Panmunjom.

The northern response came via the same route on March 7.\footnote{Kang’s letter of March 7 is carried in full in FBIS, Asia and the Pacific, *Daily Report*, March 7, 1984, D1-3.} In reiterating the North’s demand for tripartite talks and rejecting a North-South dialogue, Kang asserted that while the North had long favored a
meeting of Northern and Southern authorities in which each side could come together "from an independent stand and have open-hearted talks," a necessary precondition was the tripartite negotiations, since only such negotiations would make possible Korean reunification. Kang then charged that a bilateral dialogue would be useless since "it is doubtful whether your side has the right to discuss and decide upon" the problems at hand, "given the fact that the U.S. forces occupy South Korea and the U.S. forces commander holds the prerogative of supreme command of the ROK Army."

In concluding, Kang voiced another insult. "Your side refuses to agree to the tripartite talks, saying that when they are held, we and the United States will after all participate as masters and the South Korean authorities as a guest without equal rights. This only self-exposes your side as having no real power."25

A statement from Prime Minister Chin followed on March 10, angrily denouncing the North for derogating South Korean sovereignty and asserting that having departed from Korea in 1949, U.S. forces would never have returned had North Korea not invaded the South.26 Nor had the North abandoned its schemes to use force in obtaining control over the Korean peninsula, as many events, including the Rangoon bombing, illustrated. As for U.S. forces, their presence was authorized by a bilateral treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States, and was not a matter in which North Korea could meddle. And if the North thought that the South had no competence to negotiate outstanding issues, why did it agree to the Red Cross meetings of 1971, the South–North Coordinating Committee meetings in 1972, and ten working-level meetings from February to October 1980?

With the events of September 1984, a new turn in North–South relations began to unfold. In early September, serious floods in the South left several hundred thousand people homeless. North Korea offered rice, cloth, medicine, and cement as gifts to flood victims. In all probability, Pyongyang fully expected the offer to be turned down, just as it had indignantly refused earlier offers of aid from South Korea. To everyone’s surprise, Seoul accepted the offer, saying that it was taking this action as a step toward reducing tension, not because it needed assistance. Then another unexpected event occurred. The North Korean demand that their trucks laden with supplies be allowed to proceed to Seoul was rejected by South Korean authorities, but instead of withdrawing its offer Pyongyang finally accepted a transfer of supplies at the border (and in several South Korean

25 Ibid., D2.

26 The full text of Chin's March 10 response is carried in South–North Dialogue in Korea, 40–44.
harbors). Not to be outdone in the propaganda battle, the South Korean government prepared hundreds of boxes containing transistor radios, wrist-watches, clothing, and household items as gifts for their Northern compatriots. The exchange, accompanied by smiles on both sides, might be regarded as the beginning of barter trade. Meanwhile, the North had agreed to a reopening of the hot line between the two capitals. The very fact of negotiations over the North’s offer of aid, moreover, belied Pyongyang’s insistence that it could never talk to South Korean authorities under current conditions.

Yet the North continued to appear ambivalent with respect to negotiations with the South. During the North–South dialogue over Pyongyang’s aid proposal, Ishibashi Masashi, chairman of the Japan Socialist Party, visited North Korea. At the banquet in Ishibashi’s honor, Kim Il Sung reiterated the standard North Korean theme that bilateral North–South talks would be feasible “only when the South Korean authorities have all real powers including the prerogative of supreme military command and when they cease anti-communist clamors.” The most logical interpretation of this statement was that U.S.–North Korean negotiations leading to a peace treaty and American troop withdrawal had to precede North–South talks.

Indeed, Kim again emphasized the supreme importance of trilateral discussions in his speech. On this occasion, South Korea was given equal billing with the United States, but the basic formula appeared to be unaltered: “Our party’s policy is that we should hold a tripartite talk with the United States and South Korea to conclude a peace agreement with the United States and to adopt a non-aggression declaration between North and South and thus create the preconditions for durable peace in Korea and for peaceful reunification.”

In this same speech, while Kim’s rhetoric was more subdued than that being simultaneously employed in official North Korean organs, his remarks about current Japanese and American policies were far from friendly. “The present Japanese authorities” were criticized for their one-sided support of South Korea and their willingness “to act under the U.S. baton” both with respect to the Korean issue and “in taking the road of making herself a big military power,” preparing to expand overseas under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Kim’s central appeal was for Japan to abandon its alliance with Washington, and achieve true independence under the banners of peace, democracy and unarmed neutrality, as advocated by the Japan Socialist Party.

27 For an American observer’s account, see Clyde Haberman’s article in the New York Times, October 1, 1984, p. 3.
29 Ibid.
The United States, according to Kim, was pursuing an “aggressive Asia policy,” one that threatened nuclear conflagration. If the Japanese authorities would abandon their “anachronistic policy” of following the United States, however, American policies in Asia would become ineffective, since that nation would not dare, single-handed, to provoke war.\(^\text{30}\)

Despite Kim’s remarks to Ishibashi, another major surprise unfolded in November when North Korea suddenly accepted the South’s proposals for a bilateral discussion on economic relations between the two states and parallel Red Cross talks on the question of divided families. The meeting on economic matters took place on November 15, with the Red Cross meeting five days later. A dramatic reversal appeared to have taken place in Pyongyang’s policies. After insisting for years that no dialogue was possible with the Chun government, the North had accepted a dialogue with precisely that government.

One reason lay in the North’s economic difficulties and its determination to engage in greater economic intercourse with advanced industrial societies. A reduction of tension on the Korean peninsula including a North–South dialogue might open the door more quickly to Japan, a central objective, and to the United States. It is also possible that North Korean authorities, realizing that an impasse had been reached on the proposal for trilateral negotiations, had decided that a new start on this issue might be made by opening North–South talks, thereby sending a clear signal to the United States that Seoul was acceptable as a full partner and that the agenda and format of the talks were not frozen.

Many uncertainties remain. A few days after the November 20 Red Cross meeting, a young Russian defector, racing across the line to the South at Panmunjom, triggered a fire fight in which one South Korean and three North Korean soldiers were killed. The second round of economic talks, scheduled for December 5, was cancelled, possibly out of deference to Vice-Foreign Minister M. S. Kapitsa who was in Pyongyang for discussions. The talks were rescheduled for January, but on January 9, Pyongyang announced another cancellation, this time asserting that “Team Spirit 85,” the annual U.S.–ROK joint military exercises represented a provocation—although they were an annual affair to which North Koreans had been invited to send observers. While a protest over the exercises was to be expected, it is also possible that Pyongyang wanted to see the results of the February 1985 elections in South Korea, the impact of the return of Kim Dae Jung, and other developments that might give them a sense of the strength of the Chun government. There may also be some division of opinion in Pyongyang about the new course launched in November, or at a minimum, about the speed with which developments were unfolding.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., D3.
The talks were not renewed until May 1985. In the late summer, agreement was finally reached on a limited number of visits to each side by divided families together with performances by art troupes. This took place in September, but further developments were not in evidence up to late 1985.

Four venues for discussion now exist, since in addition to the Red Cross and economic discussions, a plan for a North–South interparliamentary dialogue has been initiated at Pyongyang's insistence, and talks relating to the Olympics are taking place. The basic difficulty, however, lies in fundamental differences in the objective of the two parties. The South is committed to a gradual, step-by-step approach to North–South relations, whereas the North wants all developments related directly to political and military agreements tied to rapid reunification. While the South wants to lay the foundations, the North insists upon constructing the roof. Moreover, by one means or another, the North wants to bring the United States to the negotiation table with two primary goals in mind: the removal of American military forces from South Korea and U.S. de facto recognition of the DPRK. Despite its entry into bilateral talks, the North continues to urge a trilateral meeting, and with the same issues for discussion advanced.

The goals of the United States are naturally different. The American objective is to reduce tension and the threat of war on the Korean peninsula out of self-interest. A number of Americans in and out of government believe that only as the North is gradually moved into the world stream, acquiring new contacts and interests apart from those with "revolutionaries," will the element of fanaticism subside. In a very loose sense, China during and after the Cultural Revolution is cited as an analogy.

Pyongyang's proposal for tripartite talks, however, is unsatisfactory, at least in its present form. Apart from the question of whether the North Korean authorities intend in fact to treat the South Korean authorities as equal and full participants (and both the proposal and the subsequent rhetoric have left doubt on that score not withstanding recent developments) the insistence upon making a U.S.–DPRK peace treaty and troop withdrawal, the centerpiece of negotiations dooms the projected meetings to failure. Neither the Reagan administration nor any administration that follows is likely to repeat Carter's early policy on troop withdrawal. A strong consensus now exists in the United States, backed by Japan as well as South Korea, that the presence of American troops in Korea is the best guarantee against another Korean conflict. The U.S. government position is that, given the North Korean record, who could trust a peace treaty or a non-aggression pact?

Moreover, the U.S. position on diplomatic recognition of North Korea is well known, and has not changed. Washington has long been prepared to accept cross-recognition and the simultaneous admission of the two existing Korean states into the United Nations pending peaceful reunification. It will not unilaterally recognize the North, however. Similar actions must be taken by China and/or the USSR. The North Korean position on these issues is
riddled with inconsistencies. More than sixty nations recognize both Koreas, a condition accepted by Pyongyang. The North also sits on a number of international bodies with the South, including U.N. agencies. Nevertheless, its stance on cross-recognition by the major states is not likely to shift, and on this matter it apparently has a veto power over China and USSR policies.

Consequently, the United States is prepared to settle for cross-contact. Before the Rangoon bombing, orders were given U.S. diplomats that they could converse or exchange greetings with North Korean officials at gatherings where both were present. This so-called smile diplomacy was temporarily terminated after the bombing, but as a general principle the U.S. government in recent years has not blocked unofficial contacts between Americans and North Koreans. Such contacts, while limited, have taken several forms. Most significant have been the visits of Americans to the North. U.S. citizens making the trip have fallen into several categories. By far the most numerous have been Americans of Korean ancestry, some of whom were born in the North or have relatives there. Overseas Koreans are considered important politically by the North Korean government, and with variations dependent upon time and circumstance, it has been easier for these Americans to obtain permission to visit the North than for others.

On the whole, however, Pyongyang cannot be very happy with the results of such visits. While returnees have found some strengths in Kim's state, the general thrust of their comments has been negative. They have been decidedly unimpressed with the high degree of regimentation, the extreme cult of personality, and the combined arrogance–ignorance of their hosts. Few converts from among this group have been made. Nonetheless, American–Koreans will continue to be invited both for political reasons and because familiarity with the language, culture, and history provides a certain common bond, at least as viewed by the North Korean authorities.

A second category of Americans invited to the North are individuals presumed to have influence or capable of giving publicity to the North Korean cause. At an earlier point, North Korea provided its own media publicity in the form of full-page reproductions of Kim Il Sung's speeches, paid for by the Pyongyang government, and run in such newspapers as the New York Times. This practice was halted, presumably when it was discovered that the American reaction was a combination of incredulity and mirth (although recently, Kim Jong II's writings were publicized in a similar manner). As early as 1972, a few American journalists and scholars of Caucasian background were invited, and that practice has continued sporadically. Once again, the results cannot be terribly pleasing to the North Korean hosts.

Perhaps the most informative and objective report is that written by seven American–Korean scholars who visited North Korea in the summer of 1981. See C. I. Eugene Kim and B. C. Koh, eds., Journey to North Korea: Personal Perceptions (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1983).
Some of the invitees were initially prepared to be neutral if not sympathetic, and in a few instances, they have subsequently taken political positions in partial conformity with North Korean policies. But in virtually no case have they given the type of report—or support—ardently desired by Pyongyang. Perhaps the most significant visit from a political standpoint was that of Congressman Stephen Solarz, head of the House Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs in August 1981. Upon his return, Solarz issued a report suggesting ways in which informal contacts between the United States and the DPRK could be initiated, and reporting upon his lengthy conversation with Kim Il Sung.  

A third category of Americans invited to North Korea has been individuals who were actually or were presumed to be sympathizers. Unfortunately for Pyongyang, such individuals have been few and far between. As recently as June 1984, however, a four-man delegation of American Protestant ministers—three from the West Coast and one based in New York—returned from such a visit, with their leader, the Rev. Gustav H. Schultz, proclaiming that “while there are some limitations on freedom in the north, the south is more repressive”; additionally, living conditions in the North were reported as better, and the South Korean workers were described as being exploited by American multinational firms.  

While such individuals will be discovered occasionally, it is clear that Kim and his associates are more interested in the first and second categories of Americans. In an interview of June 5 in Tokyo, Prince Sihanouk of Kampuchea indicated that Kim wanted to establish further contacts with both Japan and the United States. Recognizing that it would be difficult to hold official talks, Kim had authorized Sihanouk to contact “influential persons in the U.S. Congress and private circles” when he visited the United States in September.  

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33 Schultz, bishop for the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and a resident of Berkeley, California, had not visited South Korea since 1974, but he had made a previous trip to North Korea in 1981, and was described as the “catalyst” of the 1984 tour. For his account and that of Will L. Herzfeld, a minister of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of West Oakland, see the Oakland Tribune, June 24, 1984, C1, C8. Herzfeld commented: “We saw DPRK soldiers in the fields with peasants helping to plant rice. They are not thinking about war; they are too busy building up their country.” (!)

34 For Sihanouk’s remarks, see his interview in Mainichi Shimbun, Tokyo, June 5, 1984, 7. Kim had sent a message to Nakasone which Sihanouk transmitted, in which—according to Sihanouk—he asserted that he wanted to establish relations between the DPRK and Japan in some form, even if they cannot be official diplomatic relations. Incidentally, Sihanouk also stated that the Soviet Union and Eastern European nations were repeatedly demanding that Kim sever diplomatic relations with Democratic Kampuchea.
persons who have power or influence in the United States to Pyongyang, and he will be happy to hold talks with such persons."

Meanwhile, another avenue of contact, much less developed, has been North Korean contacts with Americans at the United Nations, in third countries and in the context of international gatherings. On several occasions in recent years, American scholars have cautiously explored the idea of a seminar or conference that would bring academics from the two countries together. At one point, the North Koreans indicated an interest in this idea, but after the Canadian government refused to grant a visa to a North Korean academician who had been invited to the Toronto meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (an action erroneously ascribed to the U.S. government by DPRK authorities) and after the incident involving a North Korean diplomat charged with molesting an American woman in a New York park, explorations lapsed. In the past, however, the U.S. government has not viewed such efforts negatively, providing both the auspices and the scholars are bona fide. In the fall of 1985 two North Korean scholars with an interpreter finally attended a meeting in Washington, D.C. But in the same period North Korean authorities denied visas to seven American scholars seeking to go to Pyongyang for discussions.

If cultural contacts between the United States and North Korea have been scant, economic relations have been even more minimal. Suffering from an extreme scarcity of foreign exchange, North Korea's trade with noncommunist countries, although growing in percentage, is small and it has been overwhelmingly with Japan. Indeed, according to one research study, North Korean trade with Japan in 1983 exceeded that with China. It is now clear, however, that North Korea would like to expand its economic ties with the outside world, shifting from the autarkic economic system that has created increasing problems for its society. First signaled again at the beginning of 1984, the most startling evidence came in the announcement of a new joint venture law that took effect in September, aimed at attracting foreign investment and expanding trade with all nonhostile states. Given North Korea's precarious financial situation, this law is not likely to attract droves of foreign investors (unpaid debts to Japan alone total some

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35 For a recent account of DPRK trade, stressing the serious deterioration that took place in 1983, see Hiroko Kawai, "Trade of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1983," JETRO—China Newsletter, no. 50, May-June 1984, 20-24. According to Kawai, researcher in the China Section of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), overall trade between the DPRK and its nineteen or so trading partners declined 11 percent in 1983, product of the general slump in the North Korean economy and the unsolved debt problems which arose in the 1970s. Trade with Japan, however, totaling U.S. $463.27 million, dwarfed North Korean trade with West Europe ($259.89 million) and noncommunist Asia ($78.72 million), and exceeding DPRK-PRC trade. Trade with the USSR was $1,197.70 million and that with China, $387.05 million.
U.S.$205 million), but it signals a dramatic turn in North Korean policies—one for which the Chinese can take considerable credit. A number of Korean economic missions have visited China in recent times, seeking to study this aspect of the Chinese economic program, and they have obviously decided to try to emulate it. Economic relations between the United States and North Korea, however, can only develop when and if political-strategic issues have been reduced in intensity.

In any overview of U.S.-North Korean relations, one should take into consideration the general context in which these relations take place. In reality, the international position of North Korea today is not an enviable one. The most encouraging development from Pyongyang’s standpoint is the decision of the Soviet Union to upgrade both military and economic assistance, including the sale of MiG 23s to the DPRK. In exchange, the Russians have obtained permission to conduct overflights and, according to some sources, to undertake naval visits to select North Korean ports. Accompanying these developments has been a noticeable increase in warmth in various communiques and statements by both parties regarding USSR-DPRK relations. High level visits have also increased, and Kim Jong II is reportedly scheduled to go to Moscow in 1986, a sign that his succession has finally been accepted by the Russians.

Despite these trends, however, at root, Soviet policies are a response to a perceived U.S.-Japan-ROK strategic entente rather than an evidence of confidence in the North Korean regime. The Russians, moreover, do not want to be odd man out with respect to future developments on the Korean peninsula. On both sides, indeed, national interests, not intimacy are dictating current policies.

Chinese contacts with North Korea continue to be extensive, and informed sources insist that under the Sino-Soviet thaw, it is possible for Pyongyang to improve relations with Moscow while still maintaining cordial relations with Beijing. Perhaps—but there are a number of signs that Sino-North Korean relations are less than satisfactory. As noted earlier, DPRK

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\[36\] For the official Chinese position, see Hu Yaobang’s speech at a Pyongyang rally on May 6, *Beijing Review*, May 14, 1984, 17-18. Excerpts of Kim’s speech at the rally are carried in the same issue, 7-8. See also the interview with Hu in Beijing, June 13, by a *Nihon Keizai* reporter, carried in that newspaper, June 14, 1984, 6. Asked whether China was prepared to host tripartite talks in Beijing, Hu responded, “The problem is the response of the U.S. side. The U.S. has not agreed to the tripartite talks themselves. However, we are willing to act as an intermediary between the U.S. and North Korea. We have transmitted this Chinese intention to President Reagan and to Chairman Kim Il-sŏng.” In this interview, Hu sidestepped the question of whether China intended “to push” trade and personnel exchange with South Korea by saying, “My concern is the problem of the peaceful unification of Korea. If the North and the South were to establish a unified nation, while respectively maintaining their present systems, the Far Eastern situation would become stable.”
leaders cannot be happy with the extensive contacts Beijing is building with South Korea, nor with the widening network of ties with the United States. Conversely, China cannot be pleased with the increased military involvement of the USSR in and around the Korean peninsula. Differences are also apparent with respect to each nation's relations with Japan. The North Koreans continue to denounce the Nakasone government, Kim's private overtures notwithstanding. But despite recent problems, Chinese leaders have made it clear they regard good Sino-Japanese relations as important. It should be noted, moreover, that National Defense Minister Zhang Aiping, in a brief visit to Japan in early July 1984, called on Japan Defense Agency Director General Kurihara—the first such meeting—and declared that "China has agreed on the problem of Japan-U.S. joint defense as a policy."37 This visit, moreover, followed Zhang's trip to the United States to discuss the acquisition of certain U.S. weapons and military technology. Nor is there a convergence between Chinese and North Korean views on Afghanistan. Pyongyang recognizes the Babrik Kamal government; Beijing bitterly assails it. Even in Indochina, there are differences. While Kim continues to support the coalition government of Kampuchea out of deference to Sihanouk, he is much less harsh on Hanoi than are the Chinese, partly in response to Soviet-bloc pressures.

In comparative terms, the position of North Korea vis-à-vis the Third World has also deteriorated, a product of excesses like the Rangoon bombing, overzealous proselytizing, and perceived rigidity with respect to North-South Korean relations. In point of fact, North Korea has rarely been so bereft of real friends and supporters, especially in the councils of the major nations. Once again, one is reminded of the plight of the People's Republic of China at the close of the Cultural Revolution, when China—isolated and torn by dissension—could neither negotiate nor fight from strength. In that instance, a new foreign policy geared to negotiations with the United States was the key to improvement, as Mao himself came to perceive. There are some signs that in the aftermath of economic decline and the Rangoon bombing fiasco, Kim II Sung has come to the realization that North Korean foreign policies require major alterations.

With respect to the United States, however, North Korea does not have the leverage that China had in the early 1970s—a leverage derived from the Vietnam War and, in a more basic sense, from the very scale and significance of this massive continental nation—a nation, moreover, then in confrontation with the chief competitor of the United States. If there are to be improvements in U.S.-North Korean relations, therefore, they will require very considerable modifications in Pyongyang's policies and attitudes. Nor will they come at the expense of U.S.-South Korean ties.

37 For Minister Zhang's remarks, see Mainichi Shimbun, July 9, 1984, 1.
There is no reason to doubt that Kim would like to improve relations with the United States. If this could be achieved, in addition to disturbing South Korean authorities, it would be a powerful stimulus to advancing North Korea’s more general policy of turning outward, as was true in the case of China. North Korean overtures are becoming more open, as the Sihanouk interview (and subsequent contacts with American congressmen) indicate. Kim’s statement to Ishibashi that he wants to end the confrontation between (North) Korea and the United States as soon as possible is another sign of the times. But is North Korea prepared to alter its policies toward both South Korea and the United States in such a fashion as to make a reduction of tension and the growth of cross-contacts possible? The policies adopted by Seoul and Washington can no doubt influence that decision. The attitudes and actions of China, the USSR, and Japan can also have an impact. But the fundamental decision rests with Pyongyang. Will the harsh polemics and terrorist policies of the past gradually give way to more pragmatic policies, both toward South Korea and toward the United States, with the North Korean leaders finally reconciling themselves to the realities they must confront? One must suspect that even if progress in this direction is made, the immediate future will witness continuing contradictions as old and new policies coexist uneasily with each other. For North Korea, however, the need to abandon the stagnant policies of the past has never been more urgent, and in statecraft as in other fields, necessity is the mother of change.
North Korea and the Third World

Young C. Kim

Astounding even to North Korean watchers is the extraordinarily high level of effort and resources the North Korean leadership expends to cultivate and strengthen friendly ties with Third World countries. A review of the record of the past several years indicates that a few hundred to over 1,000 foreign delegations per year—most from Third World countries—streamed into Pyongyang, while North Korea dispatched its own delegations, numbering several hundred, to Third World countries. In addition to these invitations and visitation diplomacy, North Korea has been involved in extensive military assistance and sales programs as well as economic/technical cooperation projects with these countries.

A cursory examination of random selections of North Korean publications demonstrates a very high priority assigned to the Nonaligned Movement, the group of states supposedly committed to an independent course of action. Authoritative pronouncements abound. For example, in the Political Report that President Kim delivered to the Sixth Party Congress in October 1980, that segment concerning the international situation and North Korea’s foreign policy is devoted overwhelmingly to the importance of the nonaligned countries. More recently, in his major theoretical treatise of 1983, “Let Us Advance under the Banner of Marxism–Leninism and the Chuch'e Idea,” Kim Jong Il, President Kim’s son and successor-designate, makes clear the significance of the Nonaligned Movement.

This paper is concerned with North Korea’s policy toward Third World countries in recent years, in particular toward the nonaligned countries. First, it examines the significance the nonaligned countries have for North Korea: more specifically, what objectives North Korea has sought vis-à-vis
the nonaligned countries. Second, an analysis will be presented of the variety of policy instruments North Korea employs in its pursuit of these objectives.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NONALIGNED COUNTRIES

The accomplishments of the Nonaligned Movement are rated highly by the North Koreans. They are convinced that the Nonaligned Movement has dealt a heavy blow to imperialism. It is because of this movement, they claim, that the sphere of influence and the range of arbitrary actions available to imperialism have been drastically curtailed. Among the specific achievements of the Nonaligned Movement cited are the passage of the pro-North Korean resolution at the Thirtieth United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)\(^1\) and the dissolution of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).\(^2\)

For North Koreans, support for the Nonaligned Movement forms a part of its efforts to strengthen “international revolutionary potential.” The latter, along with the two other tasks of strengthening revolutionary potential in the south and in the north, constitutes the prerequisite for the successful revolution in the south, leading to the reunification of Korea. To strengthen and cement solidarity with anti-imperialist forces throughout the world constitutes an encirclement of the United States that would isolate and weaken imperialism and dominating forces, preventing U.S. imperialism from concentrating its power on a particular area, namely, Korea.

In his celebrated address at the Eighth Plenum of the Fourth Session of the Central Committee in 1964, Kim Il Sung called for a struggle to strengthen solidarity with international revolutionary forces in order to isolate American imperialism. He pledged active support for the peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America who are struggling against imperialism. He declared: “We must try to isolate American imperialism to the maximum extent possible and drive it to a corner everywhere in the world. This would encourage anti-American national liberation movements in the South and facilitate the reunification of Korea.”\(^3\)

What is the North Korean perception of the character of the Nonaligned Movement? “The Nonaligned Movement is a progressive movement opposed to any form of domination and subjugation and supporting independence; it is a mighty revolutionary force of our time which is opposed to imperialism.” The Nonaligned Movement is viewed as an integral

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part of the Party line and is therefore a part of the struggle for world revolution. In his political report to the Sixth Party Congress of 1980, Kim was explicit: "Strengthening international revolutionary forces and cementing solidarity with them is a revolutionary line pursued by the Party that would create a favorable international situation for the Korean revolution and hasten the victory of world revolution as a whole."^4 The members of the Nonaligned Movement, he declared, "contribute jointly to the advancement of world revolution." Elsewhere Kim declares that the Korean people regard it as their internationalist duty to render support to the people of the Third World countries in their struggle against imperialism.5

A similar call was made by Kim Jong II in 1983. In his theoretical treatise mentioned earlier, Kim Jong II declared that international revolutionary forces and all other progressive and peace-loving forces "should form an anti-U.S. united front and administer collective blows at U.S. imperialism." He declared further that "under the banner of anti-imperialism and independence the Workers' Party of Korea and the Korean people will firmly unite with the socialist countries, the international working class, the nonaligned nations and all the progressive people the world over; actively struggle for the victory of the Korean revolution and then the world revolution and creditably discharge its national and international duties."^6

North Korean publications identify the principles of the Nonaligned Movement as "opposing imperialism, old and new colonialism, Zionism and all other domination forces, holding fast to independence, thus ensuring the free development of all peoples, without partaking in any bloc, based on the principle of independence, territorial integrity, noninterference in internal affairs, nonaggression and cooperation with each other internationally."^7

North Korea has persistently called for the dissolution of all military blocs and disbandment of all foreign military bases as well as the withdrawal of all foreign troops. The North Koreans entertain high expectations for the role of the Nonaligned Movement in removing U.S. bases and troops from Korea:

The nonaligned countries... should launch a vigorous struggle to withdraw the foreign military bases and foreign troops. The struggle is fully in accord with the


^7 FBIS, Asia and Pacific, July 18, 1979, D2.
purposes and ideals of the Nonaligned Movement. The member states of the Nonaligned Movement should launch a concerted action to see that the imperialists are obliged to withdraw their military forces and troops from other countries.\(^8\)

The North Koreans see the vitality of the Nonaligned Movement in the size and material potential of member states. The North Koreans speak of the rise of membership from 25 to nearly 100 countries, encompassing a population of about 1.5 billion. They note that in terms of the number of countries, population, territories, and natural resources, the Nonaligned Movement has become the largest movement in the international community.\(^9\)

Another consideration shaping North Korea's policy toward Third World countries is South Korea's growing courtship of them. The North Korean objective is therefore to maintain and strengthen its position where it is dominant, and to weaken South Korea's dominant influence elsewhere. Generally, it seeks to prevent the establishment or the expansion of South Korea's ties with these countries. South Korea's approach to the member states of the nonaligned countries is a matter of extreme sensitivity. Notice the North Korean media's commentaries on President Chun's trips to Third World countries. As portrayed by North Korean media, Chun, through his trip to African countries in 1982, was pursuing the following objectives\(^10\):

1. To overcome the troubling situation and isolation facing him at home and abroad.
2. To win support for the 1988 Olympics in Seoul from these countries.
3. To embellish fascist rule and to secure support for "the two Koreas" line.
4. To block the ever-increasing influence of North Korea on these countries.
5. To join the Nonaligned Movement, thereby wrecking the unity of Third World peoples and disrupting the Nonaligned Movement from within.
6. To rescue South Korea's sagging economy from bankruptcy by gaining access to the raw materials and fuel of Third World countries.

The North Koreans insist that South Korea is not qualified to be a member of the Nonaligned Movement: "It is preposterous that a sordid colonial stooge of the United States should babble about anticolonialism."

\(^8\) Ibid., D7-8.

\(^9\) FBIS, Asia and Pacific, August 27, 1982, D3-5; September 14, 1984, D11.

\(^10\) FBIS, Asia and Pacific, August 24, 1982, D1: August 18, 1982, D4-5.
“No matter how much powder it may apply to make it appear beautiful, a crow can never transform itself into a white heron.”

Chun is described as a “vicious enemy of the Third World peoples’ cause of anti-imperialism and chajusong [independence].” According to the North Korean media, Chun committed atrocities when he rushed to the battlefields of Vietnam at the call of his master, the U.S. imperialists. Chun, together with his predecessor, is said to have assisted the Israeli aggressors in their war actions against the Arab people, and he attempted to stifle the struggle of the African peoples against racism. Chun is also accused of tightening political and military ties with the Israeli Zionists and the South African racist clique in order to stamp out the anti-imperialism and independence of the Arab countries and African peoples.

Third World countries and peoples are therefore being urged by the North Koreans to reject Chun’s attempts to establish ties with them. In addition to all the hostile actions committed by Chun against them, Chun is portrayed as a shock brigade for U.S. imperialism, and his pro-U.S. flunkyist and traitorous acts are considered incompatible with the anti-imperialism and other aspirations of the Third World countries. The North Korean media warn that the Chun clique should never be allowed to mingle with the people of the Third World. They do not believe Chun is even qualified to approach the nonaligned countries, and express the hope that the Third World countries will never be fooled by Chun’s cunning tactics and will reject him.

A North Korean broadcast of August 23, 1982, included the following remarks:

Chun Doo Hwan is a U.S. stooge, traitor of the nation, war maniac and an enemy of the nonaligned peoples. The very fact that such a guy, appearing in the African Continent with his blood-stained feet and poking his nose here and there, raves about peace and friendship as he pleases is a challenge to the African masses who are struggling for independence, justice and peace and an intolerable mockery to the peace-loving peoples of the world.

It is abominable that Chun Doo Hwan, who is colluding with South Africa, Central America and the Zionists of Israel while sending armed forces to such countries as El Salvador and Israel, should rave about the North’s guerrillas. What is more, Chun Doo Hwan, who is frenziedly preparing for a war of northward invasion while begging for a permanent presence of U.S. troops in South Korea, babbled about peace and prevention of disputes. This is detestable.

Chun Doo Hwan’s visit to the African countries is nothing but a pitiful last-ditch effort aimed at overcoming his troubling situation and the isolation facing him at home and abroad.

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11 FBIS, Asia and Pacific, August 30, 1982, D1-3.
14 FBIS, Asia and Pacific, August 18, 1982, D5; August 30, 1982, D3.
Through his visit to the African countries, which is being carried out in accordance with a U.S. imperialist scenario, the traitorous Chun Doo Hwan is trying to cover up his nature as a colonial stooge serving the U.S. imperialist, maniac fascist, dictatorial system, in order to win support for the 1988 Olympics in Seoul from these countries and in order to justify his maneuvers to fabricate two Koreas and driving a wedge between the countries of the Nonaligned Movement so that it splits and disintegrates. But this is a foolish maneuver of a man who tries to shovel against the tide.\(^{15}\)

As if such denunciations appearing in the mass media were not sufficient, the North Korean government went so far as to publish an official memorandum in 1982 about the colonial dependence of the South Korean regime. In the document, the North Korean government ridicules South Korea's attempt to "place South Korea on an equal status" with Third World countries and "so win recognition" from the newly emerging nations and socialist countries. The document states that Chun is "on the rampage to join the Nonaligned Movement and get recognition of the socialist and newly emerging nations," but it considers the effort nothing but a ridiculous dream. The document concludes with the expression of a belief that these machinations of South Korea will be denounced and rejected by the socialist and the Third World countries.\(^{16}\)

Another factor explaining North Korea's inordinate attention to the Third World is its apparent desire to establish, enhance, and demonstrate President Kim's prestige as a prominent leader, if not the leader of the Nonaligned Movement. Kim has been hailed by the North Koreans not simply as a leader of the Korean nation but also a revolutionary world leader. The North Korean media portray Kim as a leader of worldwide stature. A stream of high-ranking visitors to Pyongyang—especially from nonaligned countries—extoll and lavishly praise his virtues and his revolutionary credentials.

All of this, of course, is reported to the domestic audience as well as to the foreign audience. There is a constant flow of congratulatory and laudatory telegrams and letters addressed to President Kim pouring into Pyongyang, which constitute a daily staple of news for the North Koreans. The attempt to portray Kim as the "sun" not only of the Korean revolution but of the Third World as well is unmistakable.

The resultant image of Kim is that of the leader who enjoys the boundless respect, love, and loyalty of the Korean people and who commands boundless respect and admiration in socialist countries, Third World countries, and even among progressive circles in the capitalist world. Their leader possesses revolutionary credentials equal to none in the contemporary world;

\(^{15}\) FBIS, Asia and Pacific, August 24, 1982, D1.


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their leader is truly the lodestar of mankind's liberation. All this tribute is presumably the source of great joy and satisfaction to the North Koreans.

North Korea's persistent call for a summit conference on "South-South Cooperation" may be viewed as enhancing North Korea's influence in the Third World and especially that of Kim.

It is intriguing that one of the questions a foreign visitor to Pyongyang raised during his interview with President Kim included the following:

"The chuch'e idea holds an important place in the world and is spread especially to the Third World countries. Some intellectuals affirm that the chuch'e idea will become the philosophy of the Third World. What do you think of this affirmation, Comrade President?"

President Kim's response is equally intriguing:

"Our people's brilliant victory in the building of a new society is graphic proof of the correctness and vitality of the chuch'e idea.... Although the chuch'e idea is our own proposition based on the requirements of the Korean revolution and our people's experience, it has the sympathy of the people throughout the world because it reflects the trend of our time. You said that the chuch'e idea is popular with the people of the Third World. I think this is because the idea is in accord with their aspirations and needs, too...."17

It is significant to note that the North Koreans have been making strenuous efforts to host the Eighth Nonaligned Summit Meeting of the Nonaligned Movement in Pyongyang. To host the summit meeting in Pyongyang would have particular significance for North Korea and might serve as a countermeasure against Seoul's hosting of the Asian Games and the Olympics. Also, such a meeting would provide President Kim an opportunity to play—and project the image of—a dominant and towering leader of the Nonaligned Movement.

As of 1983, there were 519 friendship groups operating in 88 countries. These included "study groups on chuch'e ideology" as well as friendship associations. Is their work designed merely to provide friendship and regular diplomatic goals on behalf of North Korea? What about the advertisements that intermittently appear in foreign newspapers about President Kim's thoughts and achievements? It is assumed that a complex mixture of motives is operating here. The North Korean leaders must be conscious that a series of actions that may be considered as measures designed to enhance Kim's reputation as the leader of the Third World would also serve to enhance his legitimacy among his own people. A number of conferences have been held in Pyongyang in recent years in which the participants were almost exclusively from Third World countries. The conferences on journalism, agricultural problems, and education are cases in point. The primary

17Kim Il Sung, Answers to the Questions, pp. 4-5.
motivation may have been to cultivate and strengthen ties with these countries for political and diplomatic gains, but the impression persists that the North Korean hosts were behaving as if North Korea were the center of the Nonaligned Movement and that President Kim’s credentials and his significant contributions to the successful development of the Nonaligned Movement have made him uniquely qualified to assume a leadership role for the movement. The North Koreans appear to arrogate for themselves the role of the most legitimate and authoritative spokesmen and defenders of the cause of the Nonaligned Movement.

The level of attention devoted to nonaligned countries appears to be related to economic considerations as well. The desire to develop markets and sources of supplies also influences North Korea’s approach to the Third World. The potential of nonaligned countries as markets for arms sales is particularly noteworthy. We will return to this question later, when we examine the extent of North Korea’s foreign military sales.

INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY

North Korea’s relations with the Third World countries may be classified in terms of the primary instruments employed: politico-diplomatic, economic, military, and cultural. These categories are not mutually exclusive. More than one instrument may be used simultaneously and the use of one instrument may be followed by the use of other instruments.

The politico-diplomatic instrument encompasses two categories: visits and invitations.

The Politico-Diplomatic Instrument

Visit and Invitation Diplomacy

The extraordinary attention devoted to Third World countries is clearly shown in the volume of foreign delegations invited from these countries to Pyongyang and the North Korean delegations dispatched to them. Before we examine the patterns of visit and invitation diplomacy that have taken place during the past few years, a brief review of the North Korean record during the 1970s is in order.

The number of North Korean delegations sent abroad, especially the number of countries visited by these delegations, increased noticeably beginning in 1972 through 1975. Aside from Soviet bloc countries, North Korean diplomatic activities centering on the Third World countries, particularly those in Africa and the Middle East, account for the bulk of North Korea’s visitation diplomacy, both in terms of number of delegations and countries visited.
Invitation Diplomacy During the 1970s

During the 1970s, 115 delegations, mostly led by heads of state or heads of government, from a total of 101 countries were invited to Pyongyang. This summit-level diplomacy was most active during the period 1973-1975, which was probably related to the great expansion that occurred in the establishment of diplomatic relations.¹⁸

In terms of geographic distribution, foreign delegations represented the following areas: the Middle East (52); communist countries (43); Asia (8); Western Hemisphere (2); Western Europe (1). These data again indicate a measure of North Korea's diplomatic efforts directed toward Third World countries. In terms of the level of foreign delegations visiting Pyongyang, 46 were led by a head of state, 10 by a vice-president, 17 by a premier, and 42 by a vice-premier.

These high-level foreign delegations would be received by President Kim and banquets would be given, in some cases with welcoming mass rallies and the bestowal of medals and honors. Working-level sessions would be held, resulting in agreements. During the 1970s, North Korea's invitational diplomacy produced 32 joint communiques and 90 agreements on cooperation in economic, technical, trade, fishery, and cultural areas.

Following the establishment of a permanent observer mission in New York in 1973, North Korea's invitation diplomacy became highly pronounced, aimed as it was at obtaining support for its position on the Korean issue at the United Nations.

For the period 1973-1975, a large number of delegations from the Nonaligned Movement visiting Pyongyang was particularly noteworthy. It should be recalled that North Korea was accepted as a member of the Nonaligned Movement in August 1975, and the pro-North Korean resolution at the United Nations was adopted along with the pro-South Korean resolution in September 1975. North Korea was subsequently elected as the member of the Coordinating Committee of the Nonaligned Movement. It was during this period that North Korea established diplomatic relations with 49 countries.

From 1970 to 1979, a total of 87 North Korean delegations visited 239 countries on different occasions, of which 29 delegations visited 113 countries in the Middle East and African countries. These statistics are a measure of North Korea's concentrated diplomatic activities during the period.

A few notes on the level of North Korean delegations dispatched: Of 87 delegations, a vice-premier headed 61 delegations; another vice-premier, 20; the premier, 5; and President Kim himself, one. These visits as a rule resulted in courtesy calls on the leadership of the recipient countries, consultations at the working level, issuance of joint communiques, and the conclusion of agreements.

Visit/Invitation Diplomacy, 1982–1984

Let us now review North Korea’s invitation and visitation diplomacy of the past few years. During 1981, North Korea dispatched 74 delegations to 72 countries. Over 20 of these delegations visited over 20 countries in Central and Latin America.¹⁹

The North Korean objective was to establish diplomatic relations with countries in these regions and to press for the opening of residence embassies in those countries with which North Korea has diplomatic relations. Because North Korea falls behind South Korea in terms of diplomatic ties, North Korea has been making serious efforts to compete by expanding its ties with Central and South American countries.

During 1982, 131 foreign delegations representing 85 countries were invited to Pyongyang, and 90 North Korean delegations were sent abroad to visit 80 countries. These figures represent a substantial increase over those of the previous year: 30 percent in invitations and 20 percent in visits.²⁰

A few indications of a South Korean diplomatic offensive may have given a stimulus to North Korea. South Korea was selected as the venue for 1988 Olympics in September 1981, and President Chun of South Korea toured ASEAN countries in 1981 and African countries in 1982. Also, the Seventh Nonaligned Movement Summit Meeting, originally scheduled for Bhagdad in September 1982, became the focus of North Korea’s diplomatic activities. North Korea wanted to ensure the adoption of the Korean issue at the summit meeting and the selection of Pyongyang as the venue for the Eighth Summit Meeting of the Nonaligned Movement. Beginning in January, North Korean delegations led by the prime minister or the vice-premier descended on Nonaligned Movement countries. At the Foreign Ministers’ Conference of the Coordinating Committee of the Nonaligned Movement in Havana, Cuba in June 1982, the Korea clause was adopted. In October 1982, however, it was decided that the Seventh Summit Meeting, to be held in New Delhi, would be postponed until March 1983.

Besides considerations regarding the Seventh Summit Meeting, the celebration of the seventieth birthday of Kim Il Sung probably explains the increase in invitation diplomacy in 1982. It is also noteworthy that as many as

¹⁹ Naewoe Tongsin, no. 253 (November 11, 1981).
²⁰ Naewoe Tongsin, no. 309 (December 10, 1982); Naewoe Tongsin, no. 312 (December 31, 1982).
thirteen heads of state and one premier were invited to Pyongyang during this year, the largest number ever since the founding of the Republic. Of thirteen, ten represented countries that maintain diplomatic relations exclusively with North Korea and those with which North Korea has maintained close economic cooperation.

During 1983, North Korea sent a total of 307 delegations abroad while receiving 1,176 delegations to Pyongyang. This dramatic increase in the area of invitation diplomacy was due to North Korea’s hosting of several international conferences and the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Republic. About 600 “delegations” were invited to take part in the anniversary celebration. Several conferences—such as a conference of journalists of “anti-imperialist and friendly nations,” a conference of ministers of culture and education of nonaligned countries, and a regional meeting of WHO—accounted for a large proportion of the volume of invitations.\(^1\)

As for visitation diplomacy in 1983, Third World countries (Asia, Africa, and Central America) accounted for about 48 percent of the total countries visited by North Koreans. These, together with visits to Eastern Europe, accounted for over 90 percent of North Korean’s visitation diplomacy. These figures include delegations in the so-called “social” and “cultural” fields. If we count only political, diplomatic, and economic sectors, the proportion claimed by the Third World countries become even more pronounced.\(^2\) Third World countries (Asia, Africa, and Central America) also account for 44.4 percent of the delegations invited to North Korea. If figures on the Middle East are added, the proportion becomes higher.

In terms of types of delegations invited to North Korea, two categories represent a large share: “socio-cultural” and “pro-North Korea social groups and individuals.” In terms of status level, foreign visitors included ten heads of state from Congo, Egypt, Seychelle, Rwanda, Central Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Guyana, and Maldive.

During March–June 1984, several high-level North Korean delegations toured Africa. A delegation led by the president of the Supreme People’s Assembly, Yang Hyung-sop, visited Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Cameroonian, and Seychelle. Another delegation headed by Vice-Premier Jung Jung-ki visited Somalia, while Vice-Foreign Minister Kim Young-sup visited Ethiopia and Guinea-Bissau. Ho Dam, formerly foreign minister, also visited Ethiopia. Their efforts appear to have been directed toward obtaining support for North Korea’s policies for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea, the proposal for tripartite talks, the promotion of “South–South Cooperation,” and the blocking of South Korea’s penetration into the Nonaligned Movement.\(^3\)

\(^1\) *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 363 (December 23, 1983).

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 390 (June 29, 1984).
At the same time, numerous foreign delegations were being invited to Pyongyang. During the months of March and April, visitors came from Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Congo, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Togo. Some of these delegations were there to participate in President Kim’s birthday celebration. All expressed solidarity with North Korea in its struggle against imperialism, reaffirming their support for the withdrawal of U.S. forces and for tripartite talks.

North Korea’s visit/invitation diplomacy has continued unabated. During the single month of August 1984 alone, North Korea invited 116 delegations representing 48 countries. Of these delegations, Asia accounted for 29 percent; Africa, 28 percent; Eastern Europe, 20 percent; the Middle East and Central/South America, 0.5 percent each; and Western Europe, 12 percent. Altogether, 58 percent of these delegations came from Third World countries.\(^{24}\)

During the same month, North Korea’s delegations visited 10 countries. Of 17 delegations, four visited Asia; nine, Eastern Europe; two, Central and South America; one, Africa; and one, Western Europe. Third World countries accounted for about 40 percent of total visits.\(^{25}\)

The Military Instrument: Training and Sales\(^{26}\)

A total of about 8,000 military personnel were sent abroad to 38 countries during the period 1966–1983. Their mission included participation in combat operations, management of equipment and forces, and training of local forces. As of late 1983, North Korea maintained about 1,200 military personnel in about 20 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South America.

During the same period, North Korea provided training in North Korea for about 7,000 military personnel representing about 30 countries. As of late 1983, about 800 were in training.

North Korea provided combat support in Vietnam (1966), Egypt (1973), and Syria (1973). A sizable air force contingent was dispatched to Libya in 1979 to provide support for Libyan air defense.

During the same period of 1966–1983, North Korea provided arms to some 40 countries. Arms included small arms, field artillery, rockets, tanks, and a limited quantity of more sophisticated weapons.

Between the mid-1960s and 1983, North Korea was involved in supplies of arms to, and financial support for, antigovernment groups in some

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\(^{24}\) *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 402 (September 21, 1984).

\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) The data for this section are drawn from: *Chikyuson no Narazumono* [The villain of the earth] (Tokyo: Jiyu Hyoronsha, 1984); *Gunji Kenkyu*, August 1982; *Naewoe Tongsin*, nos. 335, 346, 352, 379, 381, 359, 397.
20 countries including India, Panama, Guyana, Venezuela, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Argentina, and Chile. North Korean agents were also involved either directly or indirectly in attempts to overthrow existing governments. A Japanese journal, *Gunji Kenkyu* (August 1982), gives a figure of 16 such cases occurring in 14 countries. North Korea had been active up to the mid-1970s, but the level of their activities has been on the decline, probably reflecting financial strains and the international notoriety that North Korea's involvement has aroused.

North Korea also provides training for guerrilla activities. This involves both (1) dispatching North Korean specialists abroad, and (2) inviting foreign personnel to North Korea for training purposes. From the mid 1960s to the early 1980s, North Korea sent 150 specialists abroad and trained 2,800 foreign personnel from 33 countries in North Korea. (Another source indicates that North Korea sent 2,000 specialists abroad while receiving 5,000 foreign personnel for training from 35 countries.)

The following gives a partial picture of military sales and assistance provided by North Korea to selected countries of the Third World as of 1983:

1. **Seychelle.** In 1983, North Korea dispatched a military advisory group of over 100 members to provide training for the military police and the presidential protective service. Some are now involved in safeguarding the security of buildings, airports, and broadcasting stations.

2. **Libya.** North Korea has exported weapons worth about $600 million since the mid-1970s.

3. **Madagascar.** North Korea provided training for internal security forces and provided military assistance to all three services.

4. **Lesotho.** North Korea provided a small quantity of arms and training for internal security forces.

5. **Zimbabwe.** North Korea has transmitted a large quantity of small arms and a military advisory group of over 100, thus providing military training for members of the armed forces and paramilitary forces.

6. **Uganda.** A sizable military advisory group has been engaged in training internal security and artillery forces.

7. **Ethiopia.** North Korea's military advisory group exceeding 100 personnel provided training for the armed forces.

8. **Zambia.** North Korea provided training for Zambian pilots as well as ground forces and paramilitary forces. A sizable group of military advisors is present.

9. **Iran.** Since the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq War, North Korea exported U.S.$1.5 billion worth of weapons and supplies to Iran. A portion of the payment was received in the form of oil.

In addition to the preceding countries, North Korea has exported arms to Rwanda, Somalie, Guyana, and Grenada. A North Korean–Grenada
Agreement called for North Korea’s grant in aid of $12 million of arms supply for 1983-84.

North Korea’s military assistance program may be said to be rewarded when the nationalist liberation movement it supports successfully seizes power and remains supportive of North Korea’s policy line. In Africa, Mozambique, Angola, and Zimbabwe are the cases in point. North Korea was deeply involved in the independence movements for those countries. For example, before the independence of Angola, North Korea had supported MPLA (in English, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), and its head, dos Santos, had been invited to Pyongyang in 1968 and 1971. In 1981, he visited Pyongyang as head of state. During his visit, dos Santos declared that the Angolan cadres trained in North Korea participated in the revolutionary task of the Angolan people.

North Korea is currently providing military support for Namibia’s Southwest Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) and for South Africa’s African National Congress. The head of SWAPO was invited to Pyongyang in January 1983, and the head of the African National Congress of South Africa was invited to Pyongyang in May 1983.

The Economic Instrument

Here we are concerned with the economic instrument that North Korea uses to realize primarily political objectives. At the outset, it must be stated that the North Korean leadership is quite aware of the political implications of its economic policies. The North Korean premier himself stated candidly in his speech before the Supreme People’s Assembly in January 1983 that economic cooperation measures are necessary to strengthen political relations.27

We will now review selected examples of North Korea’s use of economic instruments in recent years. In most cases, North Korea provides economic assistance to developing countries in the Third World. This assistance typically is in the field of agriculture, especially in the construction of irrigation facilities, model farms, and training of agricultural technicians. According to figures published in March 1984, North Korea has in the past provided 22 countries with assistance in building various factories. North Korea has also assisted in the construction of irrigation works in 20 countries and sent about 5,000 technicians and specialists to 50 countries.28

During the first half of 1983, the heads of state or government of nine countries visited Pyongyang. Generally these visits resulted in the conclusion of agreements governing economic, scientific, and technical cooperation. Some delegations called upon North Korea to implement promptly the

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27 For example, see the speech Premier Kang gave at the Supreme People’s Assembly, January 26, 1984, *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 370.

28 *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 373 (March 2, 1984).
earlier agreements made and/or to expand economic cooperation. The visits of Lesotho's premier and Rwanda's president appear to fall into this category.

The month of January 1984 witnessed three developments in succession: A high-level economic mission from Ethiopia arrived in Pyongyang, presumably to discuss specific proposals of economic cooperation agreed upon in October 1983 when the head of state visited Pyongyang.

North Korea promised to extend assistance that included hydraulic power plants, irrigation, water pump factories, and a shipbuilding yard. It also agreed to provide without charge materials and machinery necessary for the construction of these projects. North Korea further agreed to provide free technical cooperation in agriculture and mining.


In July 1983, Andre Kolingba of Central Africa visited Pyongyang, which he had visited about eight months earlier, apparently interested in strengthening programs of economic cooperation. The North Koreans, however, seemed more interested in political objectives: to expand North Korean influence in the Nonaligned Movement; to dissuade Central Africa from participating in the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) meeting in Seoul; to promote "South-South Cooperation" and to hold a summit meeting on the subject; and to realize the goal of hosting the Eighth Nonaligned Summit Meeting in Pyongyang.29

During the same month of January, a delegation from equatorial Guinea arrived in Pyongyang to strengthen economic cooperation, even though the agreement on economic and technical cooperation had long before been signed. The third delegation to appear in Pyongyang was from Central Africa, a mission that followed the visit of the head of state in the summer of 1983. The January mission was to discuss concrete measures to implement economic cooperation agreed upon earlier. North Korea has dispatched technical personnel in the area of agriculture and provided some agricultural equipment.30

In August 1984, the president of equatorial Guinea arrived in Pyongyang. President Mbasogo expressed his hope that further expansion in economic cooperation in such fields as housing construction would occur, and his visit resulted in the strengthening of economic cooperation in these sectors. It is noteworthy that during his stay in Pyongyang, Mbasogo failed

29 Naewoe Tongsin, no. 341 (July 22, 1983).
30 Naewoe Tongsin, no. 368 (January 27, 1984).
to voice explicit public support for North Korea’s position on the Korean problem as other heads of delegations visiting Pyongyang had done before him. President Kim expressed his appreciation for equatorial Guinea’s active support for the Korean people’s struggle for independence, peace, and unification. President Mbasogo evidently chose not to respond explicitly, in sharp contrast to the behavior of the former president, who in September 1977 called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces and bases from South Korea. Instead, the two presidents confirmed their belief in the further development of the Nonaligned Movement and in the struggle for the realization of South-South cooperation.31

In late July of this year, the president of Mozambique arrived in Pyongyang. North Korea had been providing Mozambique with assistance in agricultural and fisheries fields. In his speech, President Kim called for a continued joint struggle for anti-imperialism and the promotion of “South-South Cooperation.” Kim also noted with gratitude Mozambique’s support for North Korea’s policy line, terming Mozambique’s opposition to the creation of two Koreas as the obligation of revolutionary comrades. President Samora M. Machel responded by thanking North Korea for its assistance, terming the economic relationship between the two countries as a model in economic cooperation. He went on to voice his support for North Korea’s policies, including the proposed tripartite talks, and also for measures to strengthen the Nonaligned Movement.32

In the same month President Dominic Mintoff of Malta arrived in Pyongyang, which resulted in two agreements, one on economic and technical cooperation and the other on cultural cooperation. In his banquet speech, President Kim expressed his appreciation for the decision Malta made in 1983 to close down the Consultate General of South Korea.33 As Kim put it, Malta’s decision to “sever whatever little contact it had with South Korea” indicated “a positive support for our people and an important contribution to the struggle for world peace.” He and the visiting president traded expressions of support for the struggle against imperialism and for the strengthening of the Nonaligned Movement. Mintoff expressed his support for North Korea’s proposal on tripartite talks and the establishment of a confederate system of government for Korea. It is noteworthy that Mintoff’s speech included an expression of his gratitude to North Korea for its generous assistance and a statement that good political rela-

31 *Naewoe Tongsin*, no. 399 (August 31, 1984).


33 Economic and military aid totaling about U.S.$1.5 million was reportedly provided to Malta in 1983.
tions between the two countries should serve as a solid basis for expanding economic cooperation.\textsuperscript{34}

The Cultural Instrument

North Korea's diplomacy also makes use of pro-North Korean groups operating in foreign countries. As of December 1983, such pro-North Korean groups numbered 1,430 and are located in 115 countries: 399 Friendship Associations in 101 countries devoted to cultural exchange and promotion of friendship; 388 Committees on Solidarity in 71 countries, engaged primarily in propaganda regarding the North Korea's reunification policy; 643 Study Groups on Kim Il Sung's Thought, operating in 83 countries for the purpose of propagating chuch'e ideology.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1983 alone, North Korea helped organize at least 40 pro-North Korean groups in 22 countries, with special emphasis on the Study Group on Kim Il Sung's Thought (26 groups in 17 countries). The major theme and targets in their propaganda activities in 1983 were:

1. To express opposition to the evolving cooperative relationship among the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Numerous meetings were held and statements were issued denouncing the scheme to establish a triangular military alliance to invade North Korea. Occasions included Nakasone's visit to Korea, Shultz's visit to South Korea, "Team Spirit" exercises during 1983, and President Reagan's visit to Korea.

2. To reiterate the theme of rising tensions on the Korean peninsula; to portray South Korea as unfit as the venue for the Interparliamentary Union meeting and to urge nonparticipation.

During the month of the so-called anti-U.S. Joint Struggle (June 25-July 27), these groups held various meetings and press conferences, adopting anti-South Korea and anti-U.S. statements. According to one computation, altogether these groups committed anti-South Korean and/or anti-U.S. actions 551 times in 92 countries during the month.\textsuperscript{36}

3. To advocate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea.

4. To denounce South Korea for its alleged lack of chajusong (independence) and legitimacy and for its subservience to the United States.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34}Naewoe Tongsin, no. 400 (September 7, 1984).

\textsuperscript{35}Naewoe Tongsin, no. 360 (December 2, 1983). Another source indicates that there are approximately 519 pro-North Korean groups operating in 88 countries.

\textsuperscript{36}During the same month, the World Journalists' Conference for Anti-Imperialism, Friendship and Peace was taking place in Pyongyang. Pyongyang claimed that 169 media representatives from 118 countries took part. Among other themes, opposition to holding the Interparliamentary Union meeting in Seoul was voiced at the conference.

\textsuperscript{37}Naewoe Tongsin, no. 360 (December 2, 1983).
North Korea and the International Community: The Search for Legitimacy in the United Nations and Elsewhere

Chongwook Chung

Ever since the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established on September 9, 1948, one of the most important foreign policy objectives it has persistently pursued has been the search for legitimacy. The Republic of Korea (ROK) was established almost one month earlier in Seoul under the auspices of the United Nations. That the government in the south was born with the blessings of the world organization presented North Korea with what appeared to be an insurmountable disadvantage in the competitive claim to legitimacy. In fact, the major thrust of Pyongyang's foreign policy efforts since then has been concentrated on overcoming this disadvantage—taking the halo of the United Nations away from South Korea and establishing itself as a legitimate government representing the Korean peninsula.

For North Korea, recognition by the world community is more than a symbolic issue. If the three most important goals of North Korea are international recognition, security, and unification, they are all interrelated. Pyongyang was not accepted into the United Nations mainly because the Republic of Korea, with American support, was recognized as the only lawfully constituted government in Korea. Also, with the Korean War, the presence of U.S. forces in the southern half of the peninsula has been perceived by North Korea as both a serious threat to its security and a hindrance to its ultimate goal of unifying the country.

Pyongyang's search for recognition in the United Nations went through many phases, and the strategies it adopted varied considerably over time.
Initially, it tried to challenge the authority of the world body to deal with the Korean question, arguing that, among other reasons, any decision by the United Nations without the full participation of the party concerned, namely, North Korea, should be invalid. When its efforts to challenge U.N. authority from within the organization failed, Pyongyang then went outside the United Nations, attempting to use the political forces more susceptible to its cause in meeting its needs for legitimacy and recognition in the international community.

This tactic was obviously quite successful. By the early 1970s, with the influx of new members from the Third World, support for North Korea in the United Nations increased to such an extent that the General Assembly adopted two contradictory resolutions, one in favor of the South Korean position and the other backing the North Korean position. With this, one may argue that North Korea has finally achieved the goal it set some thirty years before of taking away the U.N. stamp of approval from South Korea. Yet serious doubt remains as to how much North Korea has actually gained by this move in terms of international recognition, security, and unification.

These questions aside, the manner in which Pyongyang conducted its quest for recognition and legitimacy in the international community, we believe, constitutes an interesting and illuminating aspect of North Korean foreign policy. By looking into this particular aspect of Pyongyang's foreign policy, we hope to shed light on the external behavior of one of the most unique political systems in the world.

THE COLD WAR PERIOD

During most of the Cold War years, from the latter part of the 1940s up to the late 1960s, Pyongyang's attitude toward the United Nations was extremely negative. It challenged and defied the latter's authority to tackle the Korean question. This attitude reflected the circumstances under which the two competing systems in Korea came into existence, and the changes in their external, as well as internal, relations in subsequent years. The end of World War II saw the intrusion of Cold War politics of the two superpowers into the Korean peninsula, and both Koreas quickly locked themselves into the competing alliance systems, charting out separate paths in the nation-building and legitimacy-seeking process.

After initial efforts by the United Nations to conduct a nationwide election had failed, the Temporary Commission of the United Nations supervised the election in the area south of the 38th parallel, and a government headed by Syngman Rhee was declared on August 15, 1948. The U.N. General Assembly, in turn, adopted on December 12 of the same year, by a vote of 48:6:1, a resolution recognizing the South Korean government as "a lawful government having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of
Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult.”\(^1\)
The resolution also added that the Seoul government was based on “elections which were a valid expression of the free will of the electorate” and that “this is the only such Government in Korea.”\(^2\)

Before the outbreak of the Korean War, however, North Korea did not seem to pursue the absolute legitimacy of representing all of Korea, as it did later. In October 1948, for instance, North Korea sent two separate letters signed by its foreign minister Pak Hyun-yong to the Secretary General and the President of the Third U.N. General Assembly requesting that it be invited to the debate on the Korean question in the world forum. In these letters, Pyongyang stated that the government in the north had been created as a result of “a general election conducted in August 1948 throughout South and North Korea and in which 82.5 percent of the eligible voters had participated,” a very doubtful claim in view of the fact that the communists were not in a position at that time to hold elections in the south. Nobody, the letters argued, would deny the principle that the debate and the resulting decision about a nation’s destiny should be made with the participation of the “lawful” representatives of the people concerned.\(^3\) In short, the DPRK was the “lawful” government of Korea with a right to participate in the U.N. debate on Korea.

These letters, however, did not challenge the legality of the U.N.-supervised election held in the south in May of the same year that gave birth to the Republic of Korea and on the basis of which the United Nations supported the latter’s legitimacy. The letters conveniently ignored the existence of the government in the south and the role played by the United Nations in bringing about its existence. Furthermore, in a telegram sent by Pyongyang to the Secretary General on February 9, 1949, in which North Korea made a formal application for membership in the United Nations, no claim was made that Pyongyang was the only legitimate government representing the whole Korea. It only argued that “the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea representing the will of the Korean People is willing to cooperate with other peace-loving states in the work of maintaining peace and international security.”\(^4\) North Korea, it further added,


\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) *Pukhan tae’oe chongchaek kipon charyochip* [Collection of Basic Documents on North Korea’s Foreign Policy], vol. 2 (Seoul: Dong-A Ilbo, 1976), pp. 456-78.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 461.
“fully upholds the principles and purposes of the United Nations organization and is ready to accept the obligation to cooperate with all the countries, members of the United Nations, in effecting these principles and purposes in accordance with the charter of the United Nations.”

With the onset of the Korean War and the decision by the U.N. Security Council to condemn North Korea as an aggressor, however, Pyongyang’s attitude toward the United Nations changed quite considerably. In a statement published in the Nodong Sinmun (Worker’s Daily) a few days after the outbreak of the war, the United Nations was criticized as a tool serving the imperialistic designs of the United States. Also, according to the statement, the Security Council decision to name North Korea an aggressor and call upon the member nations for contributions to repel the aggression was invalid since it was done without the participation of both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China as well as of North Korea. Although Pyongyang occasionally made conciliatory gestures toward the United Nations, as in the case of its reapplication for membership in 1952, since the Korean War it basically perceived the organization as a hostile force controlled by the United States and obstructing Pyongyang’s efforts to obtain what it considered a rightful place in the world community and the ultimate goal of unification.

Viewed in this light, it is not surprising that North Korea after the conclusion of the Korean War began to circumvent the world organization in its search for legitimacy. After all, it was a time when the United States had enjoyed a predominant position in the world, and this predominance was easily translated into repeated victories by South Korea in the annual contest for competitive claims to legitimacy by the two Koreas at the United Nations. Thus, realizing that its efforts to influence the political processes at the United Nations from within would not succeed in the foreseeable future, Pyongyang decided to go beyond the framework of the world institution and reach for the forces that lay outside it, hoping that at a later date this move would be translated into the support for its position at the United Nations. What it could not achieve within the organization, it hoped might be obtained by working from the outside. Perhaps it was not a difficult choice for Pyongyang to make, for there was no other viable alternative at a time when the race for competitive legitimacy was regarded as a zero-sum game and the legitimization of South Korea was automatically interpreted as the delegitimization of North Korea.

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 465-469.
SEARCH FOR AN INDEPENDENT WORLD

The first official indication that North Korea had embarked on a new foreign policy line of emphasizing the importance of the forces independent of the United Nations came in April 1956. In a report delivered at the Third Party Congress, April 23–28, 1956, Kim Il Sung noted that the Bandung conference held just one year earlier was the "unanimous expression of the desire by hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Africa to oppose colonialism and work for peace." Pointing out that the first gathering of the twenty-nine nonaligned nations also demonstrated the growing strength of these newly independent states, he suggested that from now on North Korea should strive to form political and other substantive relations with countries with different social systems on the basis of the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect for self-autonomy, and equality.

Of course, the major thrust of Kim's report was to emphasize the decline of the Western imperialist forces headed by the United States, the defeat of colonialism, and the imminent victory of the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and China. His analysis of the international situation was orthodox Marxist-Leninist, and he paid particular attention to praising both Moscow and Beijing. His reference to the countries in Asia and Africa was rather short and lacked any noticeable enthusiasm. Yet it was the first time that North Korea officially recognized the significance of developing ties with countries outside the socialist camp.

Although Kim's remarks constituted a turning point in theory, it was not until a few years later that North Korea made its first diplomatic debut in the noncommunist world. In fact, if the establishment of diplomatic relations can be taken as an indicator, during the entire period between 1950 and 1957, Pyongyang's search for legitimacy made no progress. The Soviet Union was the first country to set up formal diplomatic relations with North Korea, to be followed quickly by Mongolia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, the People's Republic of China, Bulgaria, Albania, and East Germany. North Vietnam joined the other communist countries in setting up diplomatic relations with North Korea in January 1950. A total of twelve countries, all in the communist bloc, entered into formal diplomatic relations with Pyongyang. Then, after seven years, Algeria became the thirteenth, and first noncommunist, country to recognize North Korea in September 1958.

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8Ibid., p. 293.
The time gap between the official announcement of the new policy and the actual implementation of it is not difficult to explain. Domestically, the announcement came at a time when an intense power struggle among pro-Soviet, pro-Chinese, and indigenous factions was about to start. It was not until 1959 that the indigenous group led by Kim Il Sung emerged victorious in this struggle, establishing itself in a dominant position beyond challenge.9 Externally, the year 1956 marked the beginning of the Sino-Soviet rift and Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful coexistence with the West. In other words, North Korea needed time to figure out the implications of these new developments in the policies of and relations among its major allies. Also, certainly, the domestic issue had to be settled first before the search for legitimacy and support began outside the United Nations in the region that did not belong to either the socialist or the capitalist world.

During the 1960s, the number of countries that established diplomatic relations with North Korea increased slowly but steadily, and most of the increase came from Africa and the Middle East. Of the twenty-two countries that extended diplomatic recognition to North Korea in the 1960s, nineteen were Middle East and African states (see Tables 1 and 2). Although this figure may not look like a spectacular feat, it was not a meager achievement for a country that was disturbed by the continuing and ever-intensifying conflict between its two major allies, Moscow and Beijing. Dissatisfied with the soft-line approach of the Soviet leadership toward the United States in particular and the West in general, North Korea in the early 1960s tilted toward Beijing. This meant that North Korea could not expect substantial help from Moscow in its search for new friends in the Third World, and China was not a big help, either.

By the mid-1960s, Pyongyang’s relations with Moscow became much warmer than earlier in the decade. Beijing was about to plunge into unprecedented political turmoil alias the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, whereas Moscow under the new leadership of Leonid Brezhnev began to turn a conciliatory face toward Pyongyang, as exemplified in Kosygin’s visit to Pyongyang in October 1965.10 Furthermore, Kim Il Sung in his speech to the Eighth Plenum of the Fourth Central Committee of the Korean Workers’ Party emphasized the importance of strengthening solidarity with international revolutionary forces. As Wayne S. Kiyosaki pointed out, following Kim’s speech, efforts were stepped up to provide Kim Il Sung with instant recognition as “one of the outstanding leaders of the inter-


national communist movement” and to put forth his views on revolution as models for revolution in the small countries of the Third World.\textsuperscript{11} North Korea’s efforts to pursue recognition and legitimacy in the Third World seemed to have been greatly increased in a short span of time.

As it turned out, however, North Korea was too preoccupied with the intra-Korean problem to concentrate on the Third World. At the Party con-

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{COUNTRIES ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE DPRK}
\begin{tabular}{lccccccc}
\hline
Year & Asia & Middle East & Africa & Oceania & Europe & America & Suspend Relations & Total  \\
\hline
1948 & 1 &  & 6 &  &  &  & 7  \\
1949 & 1 &  & 3 &  &  &  & 11  \\
1950 & 1 &  &  &  &  &  & 12  \\
1958 & 1 & 1 & 1 &  &  &  & 14  \\
1960 & 1 &  &  & 1 &  &  & 16  \\
1963 & 2 &  &  &  &  &  & 18  \\
1964 & 2 & 3 &  &  &  &  & 23  \\
1965 & 1 &  &  &  &  &  & 24  \\
1966 & 1 &  &  &  &  &  & 25  \\
1967 & 2 &  &  &  &  &  & 27  \\
1968 & 2 & 1 &  &  &  &  & 29  \\
1969 & 1 & 4 &  &  &  &  & 34  \\
1970 & 2 &  &  &  &  &  & 36  \\
1971 & 1 &  & 1 &  &  &  & 38  \\
1972 & 1 & 7 &  &  & 1 &  & 47  \\
1973 & 4 & 1 & 4 & 5 & 1 & (1) & 61  \\
1974 & 2 & 2 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 4 & 76  \\
1975 & 3 & 1 & 8 & 1 & 1 &  & 90  \\
1976 & 2 & 1 &  &  &  & (1) & 92  \\
1977 & 1 &  & 1 &  &  & (1) & 92  \\
1978 & 1 &  &  &  &  &  & 93  \\
1979 &  &  & 4 &  &  &  & 97  \\
1980 & 3 &  & 1 &  &  & (1) & 100  \\
1981 & 1 &  & 1 &  &  & (1) & 102  \\
1982 & 1 & 1 &  &  &  &  & 105  \\
1983 &  &  &  &  &  & (4) & 101  \\
Total* & 17 & 12 & 42 & 6 & 17 & 16 & (9) & 101  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

*As of December 1983.


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 78.
Table 2

NONALIGNED NATIONS HAVING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SEOUL AND PYONGYANG, BREAKDOWN BY YEARS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Subtotal</th>
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<td>1981</td>
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ference in October 1965, a decision was made to the effect that a new hard-line policy would be adopted toward the south. The failure to achieve unification through such soft-line tactics as the proposal for dialogue in the wake of political upheaval in the south made Pyongyang change its strategy in the latter part of the 1960s to a more violent one. The attempt on the life of President Park Chung Hee in early 1968, the capture of the U.S. intelligence-gathering ship *Pueblo*, the shooting down of the U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane, the hijacking of a Korean Airline plane, and the bombing of the national cemetery in Seoul—all these incidents were concrete manifestations of the new violent tactics of unification.

**SEARCH FOR ABSOLUTE LEGITIMACY**

In the race for competitive legitimacy at the United Nations, the objectives North Korea pursued included participation by its representatives in the debate on the Korean question, the dissolution of the United Nations Com-
mission for Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) and the United Nations Command in Korea, joining the United Nations, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Korean peninsula, and ultimately the unification of the country in a manner favorable to itself. Of course, these objectives were interrelated, and the strategies North Korea adopted to achieve them were also interrelated. Yet up to the late 1960s, Pyongyang concentrated on pursuing two goals: the dissolution of UNCURK and the United Nations Command and the right to participate in the Korean debate without necessarily denying the equal right of South Korea to participate. Later, however, as Pyongyang became more confident of the support of its position at the United Nations, it began to aim at obtaining other goals that were less conciliatory.

By a resolution at the Fifth General Assembly, UNCURK was required to submit to the General Assembly an annual report on its activities in Korea. This report then became automatically an item on the agenda of the Assembly session, subject to debate and roll-call vote by the whole membership. It was during the debate on this report that representatives of the countries concerned could be invited to participate. During the 1950s, the Western proposal to invite only the representative of the Republic of Korea could obtain the majority vote without much difficulty. Yet as time passed, and with the influx of new members from the Third World into the United Nations, it proved increasingly difficult and costly for Seoul and its Western allies to achieve the same result.

As early as in 1961, for instance, the Indonesian delegation submitted a proposal to invite both South and North Korea to the debate on the Korean question at the Political Committee of the General Assembly. Sensing that many nonaligned countries might cast affirmative votes on the proposal, the U.S. delegation submitted a revised proposal suggesting that North Korea be invited on the condition that it accept beyond doubt the authority of the United Nations to take measures on the Korean question. At that time, the United States still enjoyed sufficient influence in the United Nations to pass a resolution that could turn out to be unacceptable to North Korea, and Pyongyang's response to this revised proposal was noncommittal, saying only that the attachment of any condition to the participation was against the principles of the world organization. Furthermore, North Korea realized that to accept the condition would amount to its admitting that it had in the past challenged and defied U.N. authority to deal with the Korean question. But whatever the result of the roll-call vote was, the important point here is that only through parliamentary maneuver

and well-coordinated diplomacy before the session could the proposal to invite North Korean representatives be defeated.

As to Pyongyang's efforts to dissolve UNCURK and the U.N. Command in Korea, or what Pyongyang called taking the U.N. cap off the head of the U.S. forces in Korea, by the late 1960s it was only a matter of time until the U.N. Commission was dissolved. Although there were slight variations in the content of the report over time, the Commission largely supported the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea and its position on unification, which was to hold free elections throughout Korea, south and north, in proportion to the indigenous population. Thus, for North Korea, UNCURK was a symbol of the support by the world body for the Seoul government and a spokesman for a unification formula obviously disadvantageous to itself, since its own population was much smaller than that of South Korea. Furthermore, Pyongyang regarded the continuation of the U.N. Command in Korea as another sign of the recognition of South Korea’s legitimacy in the community of nations, as well as a reminder of the U.N. decision in 1950 to condemn North Korea as an aggressor. As long as U.S. forces were stationed in South Korea, Pyongyang seemed to believe, the unification of Korea could only be an impossible goal to achieve.

Thus, as early as 1954, directly after the Geneva conference, the Soviet Union submitted a resolution demanding that UNCURK be dissolved. The resolution was defeated by an impressive vote of 5 in favor and 48 against. But the issue did not die there; in fact, it returned to the General Assembly year after year, and in 1968 Seoul, in consultation with its Western allies, made a historic decision that the UNCURK report should not be automatically submitted to the General Assembly. The decision reflected the awareness by the Western nations that efforts to adopt the report at the General Assembly would be increasingly difficult, would outweigh the benefits, and would prove divisive for Western unity.

The first phase of North Korea's search for legitimacy ended in 1973 at the Twenty-Eighth General Assembly session. By this time North Korea had joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and as a member of its specialized agency had set up a liaison office at the United Nations. This allowed North Korea for the first time in its history to participate in the U.N. debate on the Korean question. Of course, the North Korean delegation, like its counterpart from the south, did not have the right to cast a vote; it had only observer's status. Yet this was exactly what North Korea had sought for such a long time. Also, at the same session, South Korea, in consultation with its Western allies, decided voluntarily to dissolve UNCURK, thereby avoiding another round of unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive battles for competitive legitimacy.

This was doubtless a victory for North Korea, a victory for the diplomatic efforts it had made for almost two decades in search of recognition.
and support in the countries of the Third World. At the Thirtieth General Assembly, when two contradictory resolutions were adopted—one in favor of South Korea's position and the other in favor of North Korea's position—forty-one nonaligned nations voted for the pro-Pyongyang resolution, whereas only fourteen voted for the pro-Seoul resolution (see Table 3). Also, in the two years of 1973 and 1974, twenty nonaligned nations established diplomatic relations with North Korea, as against only seven with South Korea (see Table 4). Obviously, Pyongyang could not have achieved what it did in the United Nations during the mid-1970s without the help of the Third World countries.

Table 3

VOTES BY NONALIGNED NATIONS ON THE KOREAN QUESTION AT THE THIRTIETH U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

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<th>Pro-Pyongyang Resolution</th>
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</table>

Table 4

NUMBER OF NONALIGNED NATIONS ESTABLISHING FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SEOUL AND PYONGYANG

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<th>South Korea 1960s</th>
<th>South Korea 1970s</th>
<th>North Korea 1950s</th>
<th>North Korea 1960s</th>
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<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Data obtained from the National Unification Board.
The second phase in Pyongyang's search for legitimacy began sometime in the mid-1970s, when it refused to be admitted to the United Nations together with Seoul. In June 1973, the South Korean government announced a new policy in which Seoul in fact suggested that both south and north join the United Nations as members. Pyongyang's response was negative, saying that the admission of two Koreas separately into the world organization would only perpetuate the division of the country. Instead, it suggested that two Koreas join the United Nations as a single unified country under the name of the Confederal Republic of Korea.

North Korea had never previously proposed that the two Koreas join the United Nations simultaneously as separate members. But the wording it used to phrase its application for membership and the actual behavior it exhibited in and out of the United Nations suggested that Pyongyang would not oppose simultaneous membership by the two Koreas. This was perhaps a well-calculated tactical move on North Korea's part, first trying to wipe out the disadvantages it suffered initially in the race for competitive legitimacy and then, when this task was accomplished, pursuing the final goal of establishing absolute legitimacy.

The manner in which Pyongyang pursued this second goal—of establishing absolute legitimacy and thus unifying the country in a manner favorable to its own position—was indirect and quite sophisticated. Realizing that the prevailing balance of power at the United Nations would not yet allow its being admitted as a sole representative of Korea, Pyongyang proposed that all foreign troops in Korea should be withdrawn and that the armistice agreement be replaced by a peace treaty through negotiation by the parties involved, namely, North Korea and the United States. The issue of withdrawing foreign troops had great emotional appeal for Third World countries; furthermore, the proposal to negotiate a peace treaty between North Korea and the United States was partly designed to ignore the existence of the government of the Republic of Korea and to make the presence of U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula the major source of military tension in the region. For Pyongyang, the presence of U.S. troops in the south was, and still is, the major obstacle in unifying the country.

THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF COMPETITIVE LEGITIMIZATION

With the beginning of this second phase in its search for absolute legitimacy, North Korea stepped up its diplomatic activities in the Third World, as well as in the international organizations. After joining the World Health Organization in 1973, North Korea has become a member of two United Nations

organs, the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), eight specialized agencies, and seven intergovernmental organizations (see Table 5 and Appendix 2). Pyongyang also engaged very actively in the politics of international conferences sponsored by the United Nations. During the ten-year period between 1974 and 1983, for instance, it participated in 317 U.N.-related meetings (see Table 6). Although this number still represents less than one-third of South Korea's participation in similar meetings, the trend indicates that North Korea's involvement is on the increase—in the 1970s, the average frequency per year was about 21, whereas in the early 1980s it jumped to almost 50.

Among North Korea's Third World activities, most noticeable are the numerous visits by the Third World delegations, including heads of state (see Tables 7 and 8). During the 1970s, for instance, thirty-eight heads of nonaligned states visited Pyongyang, a more than sixfold increase over the 1960s. During the same period only nine heads of nonaligned states visited Seoul. Also, during the eight-year period between 1975 and 1982, North Korea invited 1,264 delegations from the Third World, the great majority from the nonaligned countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. North Korea in return sent out 883 delegations to these Third World countries.

Table 5

NORTH KOREA'S MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BY TYPES

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*The two U.N. organs of which North Korea is a member are the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

† Figures in parentheses are the number of international organizations of which both North and South Korea are members.
Table 6
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION BY THE TWO KOREAS IN U.N.-RELATED MEETINGS

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NOTE: Number before the slash = South Korea; number after the slash = North Korea.

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organization
IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ITU: International Telecommunication Union
UNESCO: U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPU: Universal Postal Union
WHO: World Health Organization
WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO: World Meteorological Organization
ILO: International Labor Organization
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
IBE: International Bureau of Education (UNESCO)
### Table 7

PYEONGYANG’S DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES WITH NONALIGNED NATIONS, 1975–1982

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<td>51</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


NOTE: I = diplomatic missions invited by North Korea.

V = visits paid by North Korean diplomatic missions to other countries.

### Table 8

AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND NONALIGNED COUNTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Nations</th>
<th>Trade Agreements</th>
<th>Economic, Scientific, Technical Agreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20(31)*</td>
<td>10(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16(25)</td>
<td>13(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19(29)</td>
<td>39(57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1(1.5)</td>
<td>1(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1(1.5)</td>
<td>2(2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South America</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8(12)</td>
<td>3(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Data are obtained from a National Unification Board publication, *Pukhan koe pitongmaeng* [North Korea and Nonalignment], 1983.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

A careful examination of the agreements concluded between North Korea and the nonaligned countries reveals an interesting pattern in Pyeongyang’s approach to the Third World. As Table 8 shows, by early 1983 North Korea had concluded a total of 133 agreements with 70 countries, of which 65 were trade agreements and 68 were agreements for economic, scientific, and technical assistance. In the case of trade agreements, 31 percent were
made with countries in Asia and the Pacific, whereas in the case of economic, scientific, and technical assistance, 57 percent were with African countries. This seems to imply that North Korea poured most of its aid into Africa. With countries that are relatively better off economically, on the other hand, Pyongyang’s approach was more or less of a give-and-take variety. A similar pattern seems to exist in military assistance. As Table 9 shows, of the total of 161 military assistance North Korea provided to 40 nonaligned countries, 23 were sent to Africa, with 45 percent of the total military aid.

Another interesting aspect of North Korea’s diplomatic initiatives since the mid-1970s is the establishment of pro-Pyongyang organizations and the holding of international conferences. The frequency of pro-Pyongyang international conferences had increased from one per year in 1971 to eleven per year in 1981. According to statistics compiled by the National Unification Board in Seoul, as of the end of 1982 there were 1,401 pro-Pyongyang organizations worldwide cultivating friendship and support for the DPRK. These organizations were of three types: Kim II Sung research committees, friendship associations, and solidarity committees. Of these three types, the Kim II Sung research committee was by far the most numerous, 624 organizations in eighty-three countries, or about 45 percent of the total (see Table 10). In terms of regional distribution, Asia is the most concentrated, with about a half of the total number of organizations. In terms of the number of the countries where such organizations were set up, there were only thirteen countries in Asia. By contrast, in Africa there were 185 such organizations scattered around thirty-one countries. No exact data are available that break the figures into different years and different countries, but it would not be too unrealistic to believe that most of these organizations, perhaps with the exception of those in communist countries, have been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Nations</th>
<th>Cases of Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>72(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South America</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Data are obtained from a classified National Unification Board publication, *Pukhan koe pitongmaeng*, 1983.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are percentages.
Table 10

DISTRIBUTION OF PRO-PYONGYANG ORGANIZATIONS, BY REGION
(as of the end of 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Kim II Sung Research Committee</th>
<th>Friendship Association</th>
<th>Solidarity Committee</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>218 (8)*</td>
<td>218 (13)</td>
<td>239 (7)</td>
<td>675 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>88 (11)</td>
<td>23 (13)</td>
<td>16 (9)</td>
<td>127 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>129 (24)</td>
<td>27 (22)</td>
<td>29 (20)</td>
<td>185 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Europe</td>
<td>124 (16)</td>
<td>54 (17)</td>
<td>56 (16)</td>
<td>234 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>48 (17)</td>
<td>48 (22)</td>
<td>35 (16)</td>
<td>131 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Countries</td>
<td>17 (7)</td>
<td>25 (14)</td>
<td>7 (3)</td>
<td>49 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>624 (83)</td>
<td>395 (101)</td>
<td>382 (71)</td>
<td>1401 (115)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Figures in parentheses indicate number of countries.

set up since the early 1970s. This may especially be the case with the Kim II Sung research committees.

One of the most important functions of this committee is to propagate the gospel of *chuch'e* ("self-reliance") ideology in the country in which the committee exists. In the early 1970s, *chuch'e* ideology was made the centerpiece of North Korea's foreign policy. With its emphasis on independence and self-autonomy in the process of building a socialist state, *chuch'e* held considerable appeal for countries in the nonaligned world as well as to "progressive groups" in Western countries. North Korea also began to use *chuch'e* in the latter part of the 1970s as an effective means of enhancing its own status as a leader of the nonaligned community—which was being rapidly engulfed in a factional strife between the hard-line, pro-Soviet group and the moderate, independent-minded group.

North Korea officially joined the Nonaligned Movement in 1975 when a meeting of foreign ministers of nonaligned countries was held in Lima, Peru. And in 1979 it became a member of the Coordinating Committee at the Sixth Summit Conference held in Cuba. In 1983, at the Seventh Summit Meeting held in New Delhi, India, it was reelected to the executive organ, a body endowed with such powers as the setting of the agenda, the approval or disapproval of the admission of new members, and other important matters related to the nonalignment course. Pyongyang's voice in the Third World, in other words, is quite substantial (see Tables 11 and 12).

In fact, beginning in the late 1970s, Pyongyang tried to play a dominant role in the nonaligned world. It tried to host the Eighth Nonaligned
Table 11

NORTH KOREA'S DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES
WITH NONALIGNED NATIONS BY REGIONS AND
BY FUNCTIONAL AREAS, 1955-1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Diplomacy</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East, Africa</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>1,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>2,137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


NOTE: I = diplomatic missions invited by North Korea.
V = visits paid by North Korean diplomatic missions to other countries.

Table 12

NORTH KOREA'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION, BY REGIONS
(as of December 1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Embassy</th>
<th>Consulate General</th>
<th>Liaison Office</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summit Meeting in 1986 in Pyongyang, and a flurry of strenuous diplomatic activities were launched before the opening of the New Delhi meeting, where a decision was supposed to be made. The New Delhi meeting failed to produce a consensus on the site of the next summit meeting, with the decision postponed until the 1985 foreign ministers' meeting in Angola. It is not yet clear whether Pyongyang will succeed in hosting the next summit meeting in 1986. But if it does, the summit meeting, as a kind of United Nations of nonaligned countries, will be an excellent opportunity for North Korea to strengthen its own legitimacy in the community of nonaligned countries, whose number was more than one hundred at the New Delhi meeting, with about sixty heads of states attending.
By hosting the nonaligned summit in Pyongyang, North Korea hopes to establish its leadership position within the organization, portray Kim Il Sung as a symbol of the movement just as Tito was in the 1960s and the 1970s, and in the process establish its own absolute legitimacy to represent the whole of Korea. Also, Pyongyang's decision to obtain the right to host the next nonaligned summit might be motivated in part by the success Seoul has experienced in the past few years, including its successful bid to host the 1986 Asian Games and the Olympics in 1988. Whatever its motivations and hopes might be, North Korea still does, and will increasingly in the future, look to the Third World and the nonaligned countries as the major source of support for its pursuit of absolute legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

In a peculiar way, the DPRK confronts a dilemma in its foreign policy toward international organizations and other communities of nations. Until the late 1960s, when the primary goal of its diplomatic initiatives was to seek recognition and support for its legitimacy, Pyongyang was able to secure what it set out to achieve without much difficulty. Nonaligned countries in the Third World, especially those in Africa, responded to its appeals quite willingly. In addition to its own initiatives, the fact that both Moscow and Beijing had made considerable inroads into the nonaligned world helped Pyongyang in its approach to these countries.

With the changes in the overall international political structure that became obvious by the early 1970s, North Korea was able to translate the support of these nonaligned nations into a powerful weapon in fighting for its own legitimacy at the United Nations. UNCURK, long regarded by North Korea as a symbol of the international discrimination it suffered at the United Nations, was voluntarily dissolved in 1973, and Pyongyang's right to participate in the world organization as an observer was finally granted the same year. In a sense, one may argue that by the mid-1970s North Korea had attained equal legitimacy at the United Nations.

As it turned out, however, the success Pyongyang achieved at the United Nations had only a symbolic significance. The attempt it made to establish absolute legitimacy within the organization by becoming a full member at South Korea's expense proved futile. Furthermore, to raise the Korean question at the annual meetings of the organization, either in the form of a proposal to withdraw all foreign troops from Korea or to support its own version of unification policy, only emphasized the reality of division and the existence of two diametrically opposed systems in the country. In short, North Korea's pursuit of absolute legitimacy at the United Nations reached a point of diminishing returns.

Realizing this, North Korea since the mid-1970s has begun even more active diplomatic activities than before. The areas in which these activities
were concentrated included those countries that were traditionally con-
sidered to be supporters of the Republic of Korea, such as the United States, 
Japan, and other Western European countries. Yet North Korea still places 
top priority on Third World countries. Both ideologically and realistically, 
these countries continue to be most receptive to Pyongyang's renewed initia-
tives.

Yet it is exactly in this regard that North Korea finds itself in a 
dilemma. More than anything else, the geopolitical emphasis that North 
Korea intends to stress in the politics of nonalignment does not accord well 
with the ecopolitical concerns of Third World countries. Issues such as the 
withdrawal of foreign troops and the formation of a common front to pro-
tect independence and oppose colonialism have long disappeared from the 
central stage of world politics. It is now the issues of development, economic 
cooperation among the less developed countries, and the establishment of a 
new international economic order and informational system that most 
attract nonaligned countries in the 1980s.

So the real question becomes whether North Korea can adjust itself to 
the new priorities of the international community. This may not be an easy 
task for a country whose official ideology of chuch'e sasang is peculiarly 
geopolitical in orientation. But there seems to be no way for North Korea 
to ignore the reality, now and in the future, that the competition for legiti-
macy between itself and South Korea is conducted on a global scale, not 
just in and out of the United Nations.
## Appendix 1

### ROLL-CALL RESULT AT THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE KOREAN QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Abstention</th>
<th>Absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>11/14/1947</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>12/12/1948</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>10/21/1949</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>10/7/1950</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>2/7/1952</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>8/28/1953</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/8/1953</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/11/1954</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>11/29/1955</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>1/11/1957</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>11/29/1957</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>11/14/1958</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/9/1959</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16*</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/20/1961</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/19/1962</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/13/1963</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/21/1965</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Aye</td>
<td>Nay</td>
<td>Result</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21†</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/19/1966</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22‡</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>11/16/1967</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/20/1968</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>11/25/1969</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/7/1970</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Postpone debate</td>
<td>9/25/1971</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Postpone debate</td>
<td>9/23/1972</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Consensus §</td>
<td>11/28/1973</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>unanimous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Korean question</td>
<td>12/18/1974</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>pro-Seoul resolution</td>
<td>11/18/1975</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pro-Pyongyang resolution</td>
<td>11/18/1975</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Another resolution to invite North Korea conditionally was carried 63:18.
†A resolution to invite South Korea only was carried 63:24, while another resolution to invite both Koreas was defeated 34:53.
‡A resolution to invite South Korea only was carried 67:28, while another resolution to invite both Koreas was defeated 40:55.
§Roll call was not conducted through consensus.
## Appendix 2

**LISTS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS JOINED BY NORTH KOREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Year North Korea Joined</th>
<th>Year South Korea Joined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.N. Organs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialized U.N. Organs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Telecommunication Union (ITU)</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Postal Union (UPU)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO)</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Meteorological Organization (WMO)</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intergovernmental Organizations</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Bureau of Education (IBE)</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organization Legal Metrology (IOLM)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Sugar Organization (ISO)</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1963</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nongovernmental Organizations</strong></td>
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LISTS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS JOINED BY NORTH KOREA

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North Korea's Strategic Relations: Pyongyang's Security Cooperation with Beijing and Moscow

Young-Koo Cha

Since the establishment of its own government in September 1948, the Pyongyang regime has given prime emphasis to its military strength. This effort did not wane even after the costly failure to reunify the peninsula during the Korean War. In 1961, Pyongyang signed a treaty of military alliance with both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China; the following year, Kim Il Sung initiated the so-called "Four Military Guidelines," which comprised (1) arming the North Korean population; (2) fortifying the entire country; (3) "cadre-izing" through political indoctrination all members of the armed forces; and (4) modernizing the military. These guidelines were formally approved by the Fifth Plenum of the Fourth Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Congress held in December 1962, which produced a resolution emphasizing the necessity of "postponing economic development and gaining sufficient military capabilities to launch an attack toward the South without any Soviet assistance."¹

The continuous emphasis on a military buildup has inevitably created a heavy burden on the North's economy. It contributed to a three-year

The opinions expressed in this monograph do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Ministry of Defense or other agencies of the Korean government.

extension of the Seven-Year Economic Development Plan (1961-1967). In a meeting of KWP representatives held in October 1966, however, extension of the economic development plan was justified by Kim II Sung on the basis of the “current situation.” The desired military buildup seemed to be achieved in 1970, when Kim stated in the Fifth KWP Congress that “by now the North has been completely fortified, and all the people, from small child to old man, are capable of handling rifles, and are actually armed.”

It has been reported that Pyongyang currently allocates approximately 24 percent of its gross national product to military expenditure. As a result of its sustained efforts to acquire military strength, the number of North Korean regular troops is estimated to be well over 4 percent of the country’s total population, reaching approximately 780,000. In terms of overall military capabilities, some estimates place the North’s capabilities as double those of the South. The North’s military superiority is in part a result of its early start; Pyongyang began to make a heavy investment in the military industry some ten to fifteen years before Seoul, and received massive and continuous security assistance, mainly in arms transfers, from both Moscow and Beijing.

The purpose of this essay is to probe the characteristics of Soviet-North Korean and Sino-North Korean military cooperation, and to predict future changes in this relationship. To do so, we will analyze North Korea’s threat perception as an important background factor operative behind the changes in its military policy; then a multidimensional analysis of Pyongyang-Moscow and Pyongyang-Beijing strategic relations will be presented. Finally, Moscow’s and Beijing’s policies toward Pyongyang will be assessed, with special reference to the nature and scope of arms transfers.

NORTH KOREA’S PERCEPTION OF ITS OWN SECURITY

The domestic socioeconomic and political situation, unification policy, domestic conditions in South Korea, four-power relations among the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union, and China, as well as the policy of each of these countries toward the Korean peninsula—all these factors influence Pyongyang’s military and foreign policy decisions. An analysis of how

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3 Pukhan Ch’ongnam, p. 143.


5 Pukhan Ch’ongnam, pp. 1553-1566.
Pyongyang perceives the changes in these factors as affecting its strategic environment, therefore, should precede a more rigorous assessment of North Korea’s security relations.  

**Pyongyang's Perspective on Unification**

Despite public pledges of peaceful reunification, “Liberation of the South by military means” has been a recurrent theme of Pyongyang’s unification policy since the establishment of the communist regime. This basic theme was reiterated by Kim Il Sung on February 28, 1968, in his article on the national unification published in *The Unification of Homeland*.  

> Political power is to be gained through military struggles; it can never be gained by “the election gaming.” . . . Among the ways of struggle, the most active and decisive one is the national liberation struggle in the form of organized violence, armed struggles. . . . If the South Korean people try to gain power through peaceful means, without violence, it is nothing more than a silly fantasy.  

In fact, most of the North Korean military activities toward South Korea have been in one way or another directed toward the goal of “liberating the South Korean people from American Imperialism and its Fascist politics by military means.”  

Pyongyang intended to achieve its goal of national liberation when North Korea invaded the South in 1950. Some would question whether the North really wants national reunification or whether its unification policy is nothing more than a political campaign to sustain sacrifice and support for the current regime. In any case, “liberation of South Korea by military means” has been a persistent theme in Pyongyang’s foreign as well as domestic policies, and stands as a basic proposition in its strategic thoughts.  

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7 *Pukhan Ch'ongnam*, p. 3369.  

Threats from the South

Yet it also appears that the Pyongyang leadership perceives their relative strategic position as disadvantageous vis-à-vis the South and, accordingly, displays an "encirclement phobia." More specifically, North Korea’s leaders are aware of the adverse geostrategic environment in which they must operate, especially in conducting naval warfare; it is very difficult for them to connect their eastern and western naval theaters. Also, Pyongyang has been increasingly dismayed by South Korea’s far stronger economic capabilities and its own troubled diplomatic relations. In addition, there is no indication whatsoever at this time of an early withdrawal of U.S. ground forces, totaling 40,000, from the South.

Seoul’s far superior socioeconomic capabilities are likely to produce increasing pressure on Pyongyang. There is a danger that the real picture of the South’s domestic situation, severely distorted in the past to ensure the legitimacy of Pyongyang’s leadership, may be disclosed to the North’s population. Thus, Pyongyang is under “dual pressures,” one the direct threat posed by South Korea’s ongoing military buildup, and the other the danger of domestic instability.

Perceptions of East Asian International Relations

Since the establishment of Kim Il Sung’s regime, both Beijing and Moscow have consolidated their status as strong and powerful allies of the North. Especially during and after the Korean War, massive military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China saved Pyongyang from oblivion. Behind the seemingly cordial relations strengthened by massive Soviet and Chinese assistance, however, a strain has continually existed between North Korea and the two communist superpowers. This uneasy relationship came about, in part, because Kim Il Sung, in order to secure his own power base, had to remove from the inner political circle a substantial number of politico-military elites strongly supported by either Beijing or Moscow. Also, Kim’s initiation of the idea of chuch’e, or self-


10 Although North Korea maintains military superiority over the South, South Korea surpasses the North in terms of total national power. In 1980, one statistic shows that the population of South Korea is almost double that of the North, while the South-North ratios are 4 to 1 and 2 to 1 in gross national product and GNP per capita, respectively. If the present trend continues, time factors will work favorably toward South Korea as the South-North gaps in socioeconomic spheres gradually widen. Kukt’ot’ongilwŏn [National Unification Board], Nambukhan Ch’ŏngnyŏk Ch’use Pikyo, 1948-1979 [A Comparison of the Total National Power Trend of South and North Korea, 1948-1979] (Seoul: 1981).
reliance, claiming independence from his two "big brothers," was another important source of tension.

Considering the North's strategic situation, characterized by territorial proximity to China and the Soviet Union, political purges and efforts to achieve chuch'e were perhaps the only ways available for Kim II Sung's regime to maintain its political integrity. Historically, the Soviet Union has pursued a "southward policy" to secure icefree naval ports. Manchuria, China's industrial heartland, is situated just north of the Yalu River, thereby creating justifiable Chinese concerns for Soviet and North Korean behavior in the region. Furthermore, the deepening Sino-Soviet split since the 1960s has caused both Beijing and Moscow to maneuver for advantage with North Korea in repeated attempts to prevent Pyongyang from falling under the exclusive influence of the other party. For Pyongyang, then, the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union remain important supporters but also dominant neighbors who could pose, if they so intended, a serious military threat to the independence of North Korea.11

Perhaps the most direct threat to North Korea's security arises from the strong U.S.-South Korean military alliance. Pyongyang's efforts to reunify the peninsula during the Korean War were nullified by massive U.S. involvement, and it is Washington's firm commitment, including the presence of U.S. ground and air forces in the South, that effectively deters any North Korean military adventure.

Although Washington's South Korea policy has changed several times, the basic theme of preventing a rupture of the military balance on the peninsula has remained unchanged; American interests in the region have risen with the ever-increasing strategic and economic importance of Japan, as well as the steady growth of U.S.-South Korean economic interaction. The U.S. forces stationed in South Korea, together with South Korean armed forces, have been able to counterbalance North Korean forces and furthermore have substantially reduced the scope of Pyongyang's freedom of action toward the South. In other words, Pyongyang's diplomatic edge over Seoul, which might be gained on the basis of its military superiority, cannot materialize as long as U.S. troops remain stationed in the South and deter any North Korean military campaign. Accordingly, Pyongyang is unable to make

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11 It is very difficult to identify the exact nature of Soviet and Chinese economic and security assistance to North Korea. It has been reported, however, that the major Soviet assistance included: the equivalent of U.S.$1.5 billion in economic assistance from 1948 to 1979; long-term loans for the current nine plant construction projects; investment in the construction of the Supung hydroelectric power plant and Sôngjin steel mill. China provided $1 billion of economic assistance until the mid-1970s, and also invested in various construction projects such as the Bonghwa chemical factory. See Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News], May 23, 1984.
use of its strong military power, gained at the sacrifice of economic growth, as a political leverage in any negotiation with Seoul or Washington. In addition, North Korea’s attempt to gain additional assistance from the Soviet Union and China by “showing off” its capabilities to destroy the status quo on the peninsula has turned out to be an obvious failure.

Under these adverse conditions, Pyongyang’s policy toward the United States has centered around efforts to create tension between Washington and Seoul, thereby weakening Washington’s commitment to South Korea. More specifically, Pyongyang has taken what might be called a “dual approach” to Washington. On one hand, it has tried to create a negative image of America among the Korean populace by instigating direct but limited anti-U.S. terrorism by a few antigovernment radicals. It has also intensified its political campaign among Third World nations, calling for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea. On the other hand, Pyongyang continues to propose direct negotiations with Washington, which are regarded as obvious attempts to weaken Washington’s commitment to South Korea’s security.\footnote{In-Young Chun, “North Korea’s Foreign Policy Behavior Toward the United States,” \textit{Journal of East Asian Affairs}, 1:1 (January 1981), pp. 49–117.}

In addition to the present U.S.-South Korean military alliance, direct threats to North Korea could come from a possible security cooperation between Seoul and Tokyo. Since the normalization of formal diplomatic relations in 1965, Seoul and Tokyo have substantially expanded the scope of their political, economic, and cultural exchange, and the expansion of these multidimensional contacts may develop into some kind of security arrangement. Furthermore, Washington continually urges the expansion of Tokyo’s role in safeguarding the security of Northeast Asia, and Japanese military capabilities have gradually increased in response to the American proposal. Also, a new relationship is emerging that suggests some degree of tripartite military cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea against Soviet expansionism in Northeast Asia. All these changes in East Asian international relations pose a serious threat in the minds of the North Koreans and increase their “encirclement phobia.”

Although no concrete and direct security cooperation system has yet emerged, South Korea and Japan maintain a channel of indirect security cooperation through the United States. Also, as the United States has deployed its military forces in South Korea as well as in Japan, it is likely that Japan would be drawn into any future Korean conflict by providing logistic support to the United States. The potentially significant role of Japan, and the relative weakness of North Korea if China and the USSR do not provide logistic support, partly explains why Pyongyang expressed so much concern.
about Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone’s visit to Seoul, and about Japan’s growing military power as well as the expansion of its security role in North-east Asia.\textsuperscript{13}

Assessment of Pyongyang’s Perception of Threat and Military Policy

How the Pyongyang leadership perceives its strategic environment is decisive in the formulation of North Korea’s security policy. It is all the more important, therefore, to have an accurate assessment of their perceptions. Pyongyang leaders see their strategic environment as quite disadvantageous vis-à-vis South Korea. Accordingly, their security policy is characterized by an attempt to minimize the strategic weakness stemming from the adverse international environment, and to secure national independence.

Because of their perception of threat, Pyongyang leaders have chosen a military buildup as the most effective way to ensure national survival. In this context, one may say that North Korea’s hard-line military policy toward the South, and its “export” of terrorism, are attempts both to sustain their totalitarian political system and to gain Soviet and Chinese recognition of their strategic importance. Thus, the maintenance of close security relations with Beijing and Moscow, along with Kim’s idea of chuch’\textquotesingle e, is a logical decision for Pyongyang. In their opinion, this is the only way in which they can counterbalance the military threat from tripartite security cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTH KOREA’S SECURITY COOPERATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA

Factors Deciding North Korea’s Military Cooperation Policy

Pyongyang’s relations with Beijing and Moscow have changed significantly since the Sino-Soviet split occurred in the late 1950s, and the factors operating behind these changes may be classified into two groups.

The first group of factors appeared as the three communist states’ domestic and foreign policies began to diverge as a result of their changing domestic environments. The second group of factors emerged when changes in U.S.–Soviet and Sino–U.S. relations produced substantial differences in

\textsuperscript{13}North Korea’s perception of Japan’s security role in Northeast Asia was well reflected in its recent statement on Japan’s sealane defense idea: “[It] is a criminal act which endangers the security of the Asian region, an indication that Japan’s military expansionism has reached a very dangerous level. . . . It is an attempt to find a rationale for sending her military forces abroad, and ultimately, to realize an old dream for the “Grand Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Naewoe T’ongsin [Naewoe Press], no. 2497 (August 26, 1982).
the direction of the three states' foreign policies. Taking several examples of the effects of domestic changes, the new Soviet political environment after Khrushchev's "anti-personality cult" campaign against Stalin not only influenced Sino-Soviet relations but also created a strain between Moscow and Pyongyang. Also, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, started in the mid-1960s, caused a further deterioration in Beijing's relations with both Moscow and Pyongyang, while North Korea's plan for Kim Jong Il's political succession has become an important source of strain between Moscow and Pyongyang since the late 1970s.

Turning to the effects of changes in foreign relations, Moscow's détente policy toward Washington in the early 1960s obviously caused a cooling off of Pyongyang-Moscow relations, and in the latter part of the 1960s North Korea's adventuristic military policy toward the South created a new source of tension in Soviet-North Korean security cooperation.

Among the various factors that have produced changes in North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union and China, perhaps the most important "variables" include (1) differences in the strategic interests of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea; (2) the Sino-Soviet split; and (3) shifting patterns of Sino-U.S. and U.S.-Soviet relations.

Differences in the Strategic Interests of Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang

We may now identify a few distinctive aspects of the Pyongyang-Moscow and Pyongyang-Beijing security agreements. First, Soviet strategic interests are not confined to a certain region but are global in nature. And although it is certainly a communist state, the Soviet Union does not share a common cultural background with North Korea. The People's Republic of China, while its economic and military capabilities are far inferior to those of the United States and the Soviet Union, is still able to exercise a strong political influence as a regional power with a certain global thrust. Therefore, Pyongyang's need for military assistance from the Soviet Union and China is much greater than the Soviet or Chinese need to maintain close security relations with Pyongyang. Accordingly, Pyongyang does not have as much economic-military leverage in its security relation with the two communist states as the Soviets and the Chinese have toward North Korea. While military assistance from the Soviet Union and China is crucial to North Korea's survival, the role that Pyongyang can play in lending military support to Moscow and Beijing is very marginal.

14 These two groups of factors are so closely interrelated that it is very difficult to distinguish the effects of one group of factors from another. The first group of factors, however, comes from the nature of the domestic and foreign policy of each nation, while the second group focuses on interstate relations that influence North Korea's attitude toward the Soviet Union and China.
Second, the necessity for having influence over Pyongyang is greater for the People’s Republic, since the threat from a Moscow–Pyongyang alliance is far more serious for Chinese security than a Beijing–Pyongyang alliance is for the Soviet Union. China’s leverage over North Korea is, accordingly, weaker than that of the Soviet Union.

Third, neither China nor the Soviet Union wants North Korea to engage in independent military adventurism toward the South—a risk when Pyongyang’s national power reaches a certain level.

Fourth, while the Soviet Union desires from North Korea the type of military bases it now uses in Vietnam, Pyongyang needs Moscow’s economic and military assistance. Therefore, the “Vietnamization” of North Korea is an optimal goal for Moscow; its minimal goal is to prevent Chinese satellization of North Korea and to avoid a direct military clash with the United States by deterring any Pyongyang move to challenge the status quo on the peninsula by force. North Korea, on the other hand, hopes to gain as much Soviet assistance as possible, because the Soviet Union is the only nation that can provide Pyongyang continuing large-scale military and economic aid. However, Pyongyang does not want to become a ward of the Soviet Union of the Eastern European type. Accordingly, substantial differences in national interests exist between Moscow and Pyongyang.

Fifth, because of the perceived threat from the Soviet “encirclement” strategy and because of its prime national goal of economic development, Beijing does not want a disruption of the power balance on the Korean peninsula by Pyongyang that might lead to China’s unavoidable involvement. Also, China is attempting to block a Moscow–Pyongyang alliance that might isolate it strategically in the region. What Pyongyang wants from the People’s Republic is for Beijing to play an intermediary role in its effort to open a direct communication channel with Washington, thereby weakening the Seoul–Washington military alliance. Also, Pyongyang has desired China’s recognition of Kim Jong II’s political succession as well as an increase in military assistance, with both goals now attained. Therefore, it appears that currently the range of “common interests” is larger in the case of Beijing–Pyongyang relations than in Moscow–Pyongyang ties.15

Sixth, Pyongyang’s goal in its relations with Moscow and Beijing has shifted since the late 1970s, when Washington–Beijing relations were normalized and the commitment to the succession of Kim Jong II became publicly known. Before the late 1970s, Pyongyang’s prime concerns were (1) whether Beijing and Moscow would continue to support its anti-American stance, and

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how it could maintain Kim Il Sung’s totalitarian leadership and its “chuch’e road.” From the late 1970s on, however, major issues in Pyongyang’s relations with Beijing and Moscow have included: (1) whether Moscow and Beijing would recognize Kim Jong Il’s succession; and (2) whether it is still possible to expect Moscow’s and Beijing’s active political role in weakening the U.S.-South Korean security relationship and in arranging a direct communication channel between Pyongyang and Washington.16

U. S.-Soviet-Chinese Tripartite Relations and Pyongyang’s Security Cooperation with Beijing and Moscow

The Sino-Soviet split has produced both positive and negative consequences for Pyongyang. In positive terms, Pyongyang could maintain a “minimum line” in seeking and obtaining Soviet and Chinese military assistance; it had to promise relatively little. More specifically, both Beijing and Moscow were concerned about each other’s attempt to put Pyongyang under its exclusive influence. Accordingly, they had to maintain at least a reasonable level of economic and military relations with Pyongyang, even when their mutual relations deteriorated. Another positive aspect for Pyongyang was that the Sino-Soviet split provided a favorable environment for its “equidistance policy” toward Beijing and Moscow, and through this it could pursue its independent road more easily.

Pyongyang’s “equidistance policy,” however, has also produced some negative effects.17 Since North Korea has been unwilling to commit itself exclusively to either Beijing or Moscow, it has been impossible to build a genuine relationship of trust with either of them. Pyongyang has thus not been able to gain large-scale assistance from Beijing and Moscow as Seoul has obtained from Washington.18

Considering both the positive and negative effects of the Sino-Soviet split on Pyongyang, we find that there has been a limit to Soviet and Chinese

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16 Pyongyang’s anti-American policy orientation had already experienced an obvious deadlock as Sino-U.S. cooperations developed speedily.

17 See Helen-Louise Hunter, “North Korea and the Myth of Equidistance,” in Tae-Hwan Kwak, Wayne Patterson, and Edward Olson (eds.), The Two Koreas in World Politics (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1983), pp. 195-209. In this article Hunter shares the opinion that North Korea has never been able to play the so-called “equidistance” diplomacy, while it was modestly successful in refraining from becoming totally dependent on either of the superpowers, as in the case of Vietnam and Cuba. Also, Hunter asserts that the Sino-Soviet split did not produce any positive effects for North Korea.

18 This might be supported by the fact that Soviet Union has not yet provided the MiG-23 to North Korea as it already has to Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Lybia, or that most of the China-supplied weapons systems were of poor quality. It is not yet clear what new military commitments were made by the Soviet Union as a result of the visit of M. S. Kapitsa to Pyongyang in December 1984.
support to Pyongyang, but these two competing superpowers have maintained at least a minimum or basic level of assistance to North Korea in order to counterbalance the influence of their rival.

Turning to the dynamics of security relations among the three communist states, it appears that Pyongyang does not have the leverage toward Beijing and Moscow that it has in the case of diplomatic-political relations. Sino-U.S. and U.S.-Soviet relations have functioned as the most important factors in defining Beijing’s and Moscow’s security policies toward Pyongyang. In other words, the dynamics of Pyongyang’s security relationship with Beijing and Moscow have been conditioned by the changes in Beijing-Washington and Moscow-Washington relations.

To Beijing and Moscow, the strategic importance of North Korea is significant, especially because of its growing military capabilities and belligerency that have threatened the possibility of a military campaign in the South, where U.S. troops are still stationed. Thus, China is providing military assistance to North Korea mainly because of a necessity to propitiate Pyongyang as the PRC attempts to develop a closer relationship with the United States. Soviet assistance to Pyongyang has also continued, because Moscow appreciates the strategic value of North Korea in weakening U.S. influence in the region, as well as in challenging the tripartite security cooperation among the United States, Japan, and China, or among the United States, Japan, and South Korea, the threat of which has gradually increased in the environment of the revived Cold War.

**ASSESSMENT OF BEIJING AND MOSCOW’S ARMS TRANSFER TO PYONGYANG**

It is difficult to identify the changing nature of Moscow’s and Beijing’s arms transfer to North Korea due to the paucity of relevant data. However, it may be possible to delineate some general patterns, as follows:

- **Period 1 (1950-1956): Unilateral Soviet assistance**
- **Period 2 (1957-1960): Massive Chinese assistance**

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19 In the summit conference with Kim Il Sung, held on May 25, 1984, Chernenko alleged that military cooperation among the United States, South Korea, and Japan was posing a serious threat to their common security interests in the region, and the two acknowledged a necessity for consolidating a mutual military alliance against the perceived threat from the tripartite security cooperation. *Chosun-Ilbo* [Chosun Daily News], May 26, 1984.

20 See Richard J. Cassidy, *Arms Transfer and Security Assistance to the Korean Peninsula, 1945-1980: Impacts and Implications* (Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, 1980), pp. 315-318; included here are the data up to 1977. According to the 1978-1983 issues of *The Military Balance*, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, major arms transfer from the Soviet Union and the PRC includes: (1) **Army.** (a) Tanks: During 1978-79, the total number of T-54/55/59s North Korea currently
Period 3 (1961-1964): Low-level assistance from China and the Soviet Union
Period 5 (1973-Present): Increasing Chinese assistance

During the first period (1950-1956), China was unable to provide any significant amount of security assistance to North Korea because of domestic political instability and the substantial human and material losses from its involvement in the Korean War. The role of the People’s Republic was very important, however, since Chinese troops were still stationed in North Korea.

The second period, 1957-1960, is characterized by an increase in Chinese security assistance to Pyongyang and a decrease in the amount of Soviet arms transfer. This was partly due to the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split over the Soviet adoption of the peaceful coexistence paradigm and Khrushchev’s attack on Stalin’s “personality cult,” which consequently brought about Moscow-Pyongyang tension and the subsequent reduction of the Soviet assistance to Pyongyang. Other reasons were the recovery of the Chinese economy and Beijing’s attempt to compensate for the withdrawal of its troops from North Korea by providing massive military assistance to Pyongyang.21

Throughout the third period, 1961-1964, the amount of security assistance to Pyongyang from both Beijing and Moscow was sharply reduced. Moscow-Pyongyang political tension reached its peak, while the Chinese domestic economy faltered and political instability again prevailed. It was

possesses increased to 800. Judging from the North’s production capability of 100-200 tanks per year, the majority appear to have been provided by China. Also, a portion of the increase is perhaps due to reevaluation of North Korean military power in 1979; mass production of tanks in the North began in 1975. Four hundred T-62s were supposedly provided by the Soviet Union during 1979-1980. (b) FROGs (ground-to-ground, or “Free Range Over Ground,” missiles): Thirty during 1979-80, fifteen during 1981-82; all provided by the Soviet Union. (c) SAMs: Since 1981, an unknown number of Soviet-made SA-7s have been provided. (2) Navy. (a) Submarines: During 1979-80, one Romeo-class submarine, and an additional three during 1980-81 were provided by China. (b) FACs (guns): During 1982-83, two Soviet-made FACs were provided. (3) Air Force. (a) Fifty MiG-19s during 1979-80, an additional eighty-five during 1980-81, and forty MiG-21s during 1982-83; a portion of the increase was domestically produced through technical cooperation with China. (b) Seventy AN-2s during 1982-83; also manufactured from the Chinese model with technical assistance. (c) During 1982-83, a small number of SA-3s were provided by the Soviet Union.

21 This is comparable to Washington’s compensatory assistance to Seoul after the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from the South in 1971.
also during this period that Pyongyang, detecting an obvious limit in Soviet and Chinese assistance, made a significant shift in its military policy, namely, toward an uncompromising hard line.22

The fourth period was characterized by revived Soviet assistance, and, thanks to massive Soviet support, Pyongyang was able to achieve absolute military superiority over Seoul. During this period, President Nixon’s Guam Doctrine was proclaimed, followed by a reduction (one division) of U.S. ground troops in South Korea. China’s domestic situation was ever worsening because of the Cultural Revolution, and Sino-Soviet relations further degenerated after the military clash along the Usuri River in 1969.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Seoul’s military policy also changed, from total dependence upon the United States to a more independent military buildup. U.S. security assistance to Seoul also increased when South Korean ground troops were sent to Vietnam at Washington’s request. Considering the strategic environment created by these factors, it seems that the Soviet Union, as a supporter of North Vietnam, found a rationale for supporting Pyongyang in weakening the relative military posture of South Korea in South Vietnam and crosscountering U.S. support to Seoul on the Korean peninsula. It was also during this period that Pyongyang launched a double-edged strategy of a peace offensive and simultaneous military pressure toward Seoul. Its hard-line military strategy toward the South in the late 1960s was well reflected in such incidents as the shootdown of an American reconnaissance aircraft EC-121 and a guerrilla attack on the Blue House, South Korea’s presidential mansion. The North’s hard-line policy was coupled with its peace offensive of 1971, culminating in the North–South dialogue.

In the fifth period, specifically after 1973, Chinese support to North Korea steadily increased while there was a leveling off or decrease in Soviet assistance. The Soviet restraint in its support to Pyongyang was perhaps an outcome of its reassessment of North Korea’s strategic value; Pyongyang had already achieved military superiority over Seoul, and the Soviet design for an Asian collective security system, based on primary influences over North Korea, was doomed to failure because of Pyongyang’s policy of an “independent road.” Furthermore, North Korea launched a series of military cam-

22 Pyongyang made a substantial shift in its military policy in December of 1962, when there occurred such events as (1) the deepening Sino-Soviet split; (2) a crisis in the Soviet–North Korean military alliance; (3) withdrawal of Chinese troops that created a necessity for gaining independent military capabilities; (4) changes in external and internal conditions, such as the consolidation of Kim Il Sung’s power base. Accordingly, in the early 1960s, North Korea had already experienced the same environmental pressures to shift direction in its security policy that other Asian countries, including South Korea, would face after the proclamation of U.S. President Nixon’s Guam Doctrine.
campaigns using Soviet-provided weapons, such as the shootdown of the EC-121 and the seizure of an American intelligence-collecting vessel, the *Pueblo*—actions obviously detrimental to the Soviet interests.\(^{23}\) In addition, the U.S.-Soviet détente after the termination of the Vietnam War, as well as President Nixon's Guam Doctrine, induced the Soviets to restrain their support of Pyongyang.

Meanwhile, China has continued to provide a significant amount of military assistance to Pyongyang. Chinese support was an outcome of changing international politics and Chinese domestic politics; Pyongyang-Beijing relations remained close except for a brief period of strain from 1979 to 1980 when the normalization of Washington-Beijing relations was realized.

In addition, the Chinese domestic political situation was stabilized again. Considering these changes in the international scene as well as China's domestic environment, Beijing found it desirable to respond positively to Pyongyang's request for continued assistance. Also, Beijing played an active role as an intermediary in direct contacts between Washington and Pyongyang. Chinese support to North Korea around 1975, especially, was an obvious attempt to deter Pyongyang's military adventurism toward South Korea.\(^{24}\)

**Assessment**

The factors operating behind Soviet and Chinese assistance to Pyongyang include: (1) the Sino-Soviet split; (2) diplomatic relations among Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang; (3) the respective domestic situations and foreign policy goals of Moscow, Beijing and Pyongyang; (4) North Korea's military policy toward South Korea; (5) U.S.-Soviet and Sino-U.S. relations; and

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\(^{23}\) In May 1969, shortly after Pyongyang had conducted a series of bold military campaigns toward the South (1968 and 1969), Podgorni visited North Korea to discuss measures for handling the aftermath of the North's action. In April 1970, there was a Moscow-Pyongyang talk over the extension of the Soviet-North Korean security alliance and an increase in Soviet security assistance to Pyongyang. In May 1970, O Chin-u, chief of general staff of the North Korean armed forces, visited the Soviet Union for one of a series of high-level official exchanges between the Soviet Union and North Korea. All these events indicate that North Korea's military campaign toward the South in the late 1960s was an attempt to induce the withdrawal of South Korean troops from Vietnam, thereby creating tension in the Washington-Seoul security alliance. Another purpose of the North's military campaign was to instigate political turmoil in the South, which might provide an opportunity to launch an all-out military attack. Also, it seems that Pyongyang tried to pay back Soviet assistance by creating additional pressure for the United States, then suffering from the "Vietnam quagmire." Pyongyang's attempts, however, turned out to be an obvious failure and led to the Soviet Union's reassessment of its relations with North Korea.

military cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea. These factors have had different effects, according to the differences in Soviet and Chinese national interests, on Soviet and Chinese support to North Korea. For the Soviet Union, the most important factor in its support to Pyongyang was U.S.-Soviet relations and the magnitude and scope of military cooperation between Washington and Seoul, while North Korean-Soviet political relations played a secondary role. The Sino-Soviet split and North Korea's military policy toward the South, which functioned as an environmental background for Moscow-Pyongyang diplomatic relations, were the least important factors. From this perspective, one may say that Moscow's support of Pyongyang was conditioned by Washington's support of Seoul.

There were obvious differences in the priorities given by Beijing and Moscow to the factors determining their respective support of Pyongyang. For Beijing, the prime goal was the prevention of Soviet satellization of Pyongyang, and therefore the Sino-Soviet split functioned as the most important factor. Second, whether Chinese domestic conditions allowed it to provide security assistance to Pyongyang was another important factor for Beijing. Third, it was important to maintain the status quo on the Korean peninsula, which by then was considered possible by helping Pyongyang to achieve a relative military superiority over Seoul. All these considerations were an outcome of Beijing's assessment that stability on the Korean peninsula was a necessary precondition for developing economic cooperation with Washington and Tokyo, and such stability could be achieved by assisting the North to maintain a favorable military balance vis-à-vis the South. Finally, Washington-Seoul military cooperation also influenced Beijing's decision to provide support to Pyongyang. Compared to the other factors mentioned, however, Beijing gave no more than minimal or at most, average attention to U.S.-Korean security cooperation. It was Beijing's assessment that close Washington-Seoul ties could be instrumental in maintaining a status quo on the Korean peninsula.

In sum, the most significant factor in determining Soviet and Chinese security assistance to North Korea was the attitude of the United States, although Beijing-Moscow, Beijing-Pyongyang, or Moscow-Pyongyang relations also functioned as "environmental factors." Second, Soviet and Chinese support to North Korea cannot in general function as a decisive instrument for controlling Pyongyang's behavior. Accordingly, in the future, Pyongyang will continue to pursue its chuch'e foreign policy while attempting to consolidate the Kim dynasty's totalitarian leadership domestically. Also, North Korea will not abandon its prime national goal—communist reunification of the peninsula by military means, whatever pledges may be made. It remains to be seen, however, whether Kim Jong II will be able to
maintain equidistant relations with both Moscow and Beijing after his father's death until he can successfully consolidate his own power bases.

CONCLUSION

At present, North Korea has a very strong military capability, almost double that of the South quantitatively in terms of ground, air, and naval forces. The North was able to achieve this superiority over the South mainly because of the early start in its military buildup, characterized by heavy investment in military industry at the sacrifice of the livelihood of the citizenry and balanced growth. In addition, massive Soviet and Chinese security assistance under favorable conditions was also indispensable in achieving its military superiority vis-à-vis the South. The weapons systems provided by these two superpowers played an especially decisive role.

The current four-power relations around the Korean peninsula are likely to produce a further consolidation of Pyongyang–Moscow and Pyongyang–Beijing military cooperation. Within the new Cold War atmosphere, Washington–Beijing–Tokyo tripartite cooperation has rapidly developed, and this gives North Korea a rationale for requesting assistance from both Moscow and Beijing. The development of Washington–Beijing ties, as already indicated, facilitates China's security assistance to North Korea. Also, tripartite cooperation increases the Soviet "encirclement phobia," thereby strengthening Moscow–Pyongyang ties that had formerly cooled. Hu Yaobang's visit to Pyongyang last May, accompanied by Xu Xin, deputy chief of the General Staff, People's Liberation Army, and Yang Shangkun, vice-chairman of the Military Commission, the party Central Committee, revived the significance of mutual security cooperation. Also, Kim Il Sung's recent visit to Moscow, the first since his participation in the Twenty-Second CPSU Congress in October 1961, was aimed at the revival of Pyongyang–Moscow security cooperation, as well as gaining Soviet recognition of Kim Jong Il's political succession.

Therefore, we may conclude that North Korea's strategic importance has been increased by the changes in current Moscow–Beijing–Pyongyang relations, and accordingly, the mid-1980s will be the best time for Pyongyang to start a renewed effort for the qualitative improvement of its military forces.

North Korea’s Strategic Relations

Norman D. Levin

"Strategic relations" are defined in this chapter as those a nation has with states that have the capability to favorably or adversely affect its fundamental national interests, particularly those of a military or national security nature. In the case of North Korea, three sets of relations fit this definition: those with South Korea; the United States and Japan; and the Soviet Union and China. This paper seeks to identify the basic pattern of North Korea’s past approach to these relations and to assess the prospects for change in the remainder of this decade.

BASIC PATTERNS

National Interests

North Korea has pursued four broad but fundamental national interests throughout the postwar period:

- preserving the ruling (i.e., Kim Il Sung) regime
- maintaining North Korean independence
- furthering the objective of “reunification” on North Korean terms
- within the political stricture of chuch’ e (“self-reliance”), generating support for other North Korean policy objectives, especially economic development and military modernization.

The views expressed in this paper are the personal views of the author. They do not represent those of either the Rand Corporation or any agency of the United States government.
The pursuit of these interests has influenced virtually all of North Korea's external policies. Internally, it has inclined Pyongyang to move in a generally autarkic direction and to give priority to the military, at the expense of the civilian sector.

The aspiration for independence has been a particularly important factor in North Korea's strategic relations. Although this issue is common to most countries, its importance is often overlooked in the case of North Korea given its general bellicosity and close association with China and the Soviet Union. In fact, however, except for preserving the Kim Il Sung regime itself, North Korea has had no higher national priority. This priority is rooted in Korea's historical experience as a tributary of China, a target of Russia, and a colony of Japan. It is bolstered further by the postwar division and military occupation of Korea by the respective great powers, as well as being sustained thereafter by Soviet efforts (described later) to integrate Pyongyang as a satellite in the Soviet orbit.

Another major factor, however, has been the interest in reunification on North Korean terms, to which North Korea has maintained an unwavering commitment throughout the postwar period. The strength of this commitment stems from North Korean ideology and its peculiarly virulent brand of nationalism. It also has a political dimension, however, in that over the years reunification as a policy objective has become linked to the basic legitimacy of the ruling regime. Together with the maintenance of independence, the definition of reunification on North Korean terms as a fundamental national interest has played a crucial role in North Korea's strategic

1 In a previous publication, I distilled from the multiplicity of policy objectives relevant to North Korea's military buildup what I called a "minimalist" and a "maximalist" orientation. Although such a distinction can probably be made, and broad movement seen from one to the other orientation, the fundamental national interests underlying and cutting across these policy objectives have remained remarkably consistent. For description of the two orientations, see my report Management and Decisionmaking in the North Korean Economy, N-1805/1-NA (The Rand Corporation, February 1982), especially pp. 24-32.


relations and has been a particularly important motivating factor behind its high level of military effort.

Based upon this definition of national interest, North Korea’s approach to its strategic relations has consisted of three broad, parallel efforts: to develop the indigenous capability to subvert, and ultimately subjugate, South Korea; to undermine South Korea’s relations with Japan and the United States and achieve the removal of the U.S. military presence; and to maintain the support of China and the Soviet Union without sacrificing its national independence. The nature of these efforts have collectively given North Korea’s strategic relations their particular character.

The Republic of Korea

Since its establishment in the late 1940s, the Republic of Korea has been Pyongyang’s principal strategic concern. To North Korea, South Korea represents not only a rival claimant as the representative of Korean nationalism but a potential threat to the security of the DPRK itself. The central strategic issue for North Korean planners throughout the postwar period has been how to deal with this situation.

Broadly speaking, North Korea has tried three different, although by no means mutually exclusive, approaches. The first was military conquest. Between 1948 and 1950, North Korea built up its army to between 150,000 and 200,000 men. It augmented this massive manpower buildup with large shipments of heavy arms, tanks, and first-line fighter aircraft from the Soviet Union. North Korea then launched a direct military invasion of the Republic of Korea in June 1950 in an effort to unify the peninsula under North Korean control. The failure of this effort and the active reinvolvement of the United States in the defense of South Korea thereafter cast serious doubt on military conquest as a viable option for North Korea.

The second approach, which characterized North Korean efforts between the end of the Korean War in late 1953 and the mid-1960s, has been political and economic competition. During this period, North Korea concentrated on reconstruction, reducing its armed forces by roughly 30,000 men and its military expenditures, according to North Korean figures, from 15.2 percent of total North Korean spending in 1953 to 2.6 percent a decade later. The hope was to overwhelm and demoralize South Korea through rapid industrialization. So concentrated was the focus on reconstruction that


5The spending figures are from Rodong Shinmun as cited in Vantage Point, July 1978, p. 21.
North Korea was unprepared militarily to take advantage of the widespread turmoil in South Korea when student revolts toppled the government of President Rhee in 1960.

A series of developments in the early and mid-1960s, including the solidification of civilian rule in South Korea and the normalization of South Korean-Japanese relations, made this hope increasingly suspect. With the onset of rapid economic growth in South Korea in the mid- to late 1960s, North Korea decided it could no longer rely on political and economic competition as the principle for dealing with its central strategic problem.

The third approach, generally characterizing North Korean policies from the mid-1960s to at least the end of the 1970s, has emphasized military expansion and heightened efforts at subversion. Beginning in 1963, North Korea dramatically boosted its military efforts, increasing military spending almost threefold as a share of the gross national product in the following three years. This buildup was given a further boost in October, 1966 by a decision to have "national defense and economic construction advance together." By 1972, North Korea's military expenditures had increased fourfold as a share of gross national product (GNP) compared to that of a decade earlier and, according to official North Korean figures, to over 30 percent of the national budget. Over the next several years, actual North Korean military spending is generally believed to have climbed even higher, reaching as much as 20-25 percent of the gross national product.

This extraordinary military buildup was accompanied by an expansion of efforts in a number of other areas as well. Beginning in the mid-1960s, North Korea began extensive efforts toward developing an indigenous arms industry in line with its increasing emphasis on "self-reliance." It expanded its military and ideological training of the general populace. And it vastly stepped up its infiltration of the South, including an attempted assassination of President Park, in an intensified effort to precipitate social unrest and political instability. North Korea also significantly increased the size of its army during this period and strengthened its offensive orientation, as reflected in its force deployment pattern, high level of concealment, and the preparation of large infiltration tunnels appropriate for a massive-assault, blitzkrieg type of military strategy.

6 North Korea News [Naewoe Press], April 20, 1981, p. 4. Despite widely divergent estimates of North Korean military spending, both United States and South Korean sources are agreed on the clear trend in this period.

The general characterization of North Korea's approach during this period as having emphasized military expansion and heightened efforts at subversion is not meant to overlook periodic indications of North Korean willingness to engage the Republic of Korea in certain kinds of discussions. The principal example is the 1972 Red Cross dialogue and the immediately preceding secret exchanges between high-level North and South Korean officials. Other examples are: proposals in 1979 and 1980 to have meetings with South Korean leaders; proposals in 1983 to have “tripartite” talks with the United States and South Korea; and, most recently, offers to provide flood relief and engage in a North–South dialogue.

Most of these proposals, however, appear designed as tactical means to achieve larger political and strategic objectives. It is probably no coincidence, for example, that the proposals came when the United States was carrying out a major military retrenchment in Asia—including a withdrawal of one of the two divisions (nearly 20,000 troops) in the Republic of Korea—in line with the dictates of Nixon's Guam Doctrine (1970–71), when the Carter Administration's public commitment and private plans to withdraw all U.S. combat forces from South Korea was encountering strong congressional and other opposition both within the United States and from key Asian allies (1977–78); and when the Republic of Korea was undergoing serious internal difficulties in the wake of the assassination of President Park (1979–80). Similarly, North Korea's proposal for tripartite talks came coterminously with the attempt in Rangoon to assassinate President Chun and the negative international reaction to the terrorist attack on the South Korean leadership. Whether Pyongyang's recent interest in economic talks and North–South dialogue reflects different North Korean calculations and intentions remains to be determined.

Whatever the intentions behind the North Korean proposals, they have not been matched by other changes in Pyongyang's policies. North Korea has continued its extraordinary military buildup; it has shown no inclination to reorder its domestic priorities and reallocate resources away from the military to the civilian sector; and it has refused to take concrete steps toward building greater confidence between Pyongyang and Seoul and reducing the high level of tension on the Korean peninsula. Most importantly, it has shown little indication of a willingness to come to terms with the existence of South Korea as an independent state. For these reasons,

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8 The United States reduced its authorized level of military personnel in East Asia from 740,000 in January 1969 to less than 420,000 in June 1971. The withdrawal of one division from South Korea as part of this larger retrenchment reduced the U.S. ground force level to some 33,000 men. For further details on developments in this period, see the chapter Richard Sneider and I wrote entitled “Korea in Postwar U.S. Security Policy” in Gerald Curtis and Sung-joo Han, eds., *The U.S.–South Korean Alliance* (Lexington Books, 1983), esp. pp. 45–47.
the general characterization of North Korea’s approach during this period as having stressed military expansion and heightened efforts at subversion appears appropriate.

The United States and Japan

North Korea’s second set of strategic relations concerns the United States and Japan. The reasons for North Korean concerns are not difficult to discern. In North Korean eyes, the United States represents the latest in a long line of great power oppressors: the occupying power who impeded the “liberation” of Korea from Japanese colonial rule; obstructed “independence” by fostering separate elections in the South; and prevented “reunification” by physically intervening in Korea’s civil conflict. American efforts thereafter to support South Korea and deter another North Korean attack are perceived in Pyongyang not as measures to preserve peace but as potential threats to North Korea. This perception is bolstered by the North’s ideological conviction that U.S. “imperialism” requires the permanent subjugation of South Korea as a base for further “aggression” in Asia.

Even if North Korea does not really expect an unprovoked U.S. attack, it clearly perceives cause for concern in the context of its unwavering commitment to “reunification.” Because of the firm U.S. commitment to South Korea’s defense, Pyongyang must assume that any conflict with Seoul would also involve the United States. As suggested by its extensive and costly efforts to put underground or otherwise harden its military sites and major industrial facilities, this assumption induces considerable anxieties concerning North Korea’s security.

Japan is perhaps an even more neuralgic issue to North Koreans. Although this is true of many Asians who had prewar experiences with Japan, it is particularly true of North Korea, given Korea’s long history of attempted and actual subjugation by Japan and the mutually strong cultural and racial antipathies. In strategic terms, North Korea’s contemporary concerns are twofold in nature: first, that Japan’s increasing economic penetration of South Korea will bolster the latter’s economy and defense industry and significantly heighten its technological capabilities; and second, that Japan, as a neighboring nation and potentially dominant regional power, will inevitably

9 The notion that U.S. behavior constitutes a “threat” to North Korea is regarded as ludicrous by many Americans and South Koreans. Whether the United States actually is a threat or not, it is clear that North Korean leaders perceive it so. As Kim Il Sung himself put it in his conversation with Congressman Solarz, “Even if I said here that we will not invade the South, you would not believe me. If you said you would not invade us, we would not believe you . . . If we continue to suspect each other there will be no end to it” (italics added). See Solarz’s report cited in n. 3, p. 8.

go beyond its current economic-oriented relations with South Korea and establish major political and military ties as well.

Between these two concerns, the latter appears to be greater. From the North Korean perspective, a significant expansion of the Japanese role in Korea would not only seriously hinder realization of the North's reunification objective it would also represent a potential threat to Pyongyang. The sense that this development is "inevitable" is heightened by North Korean ideology, which interprets Japanese indications of the importance of the Korean peninsula to Japan's security as masking malevolent intentions.

For these reasons, the state of South Korea's relations with Japan and the United States is of great concern to North Korean leaders, and the removal of the American presence and the undermining or weakening of the ROK's alliance relationships have been priority North Korean policy objectives throughout the postwar period. These objectives underlay periodic North Korean attempts to engage the United States and Japan in expanded dealings, although North Korea's economic difficulties are probably a contributing factor. In strategic terms, Seoul's close ties with the United States and Japan represent the principal barrier to the achievement of North Korea's fundamental national interests. Removing this barrier has thus been the focus of North Korea's efforts.

China and the Soviet Union

North Korea's third set of strategic relations concerns the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Notwithstanding the general portrayal in the literature of a skillful North Korea successfully manipulating the Sino-Soviet rivalry to its own advantage, this has been a difficult set of relations for North Korea. Both the amount of "leverage" it derives as a result of the rivalry and its "skill" in playing one of the Communist powers off against the other tend to be exaggerated.

On one hand, Pyongyang is in a fundamentally weak and disadvantaged position vis-à-vis its powerful neighbors. It needs much from them but has little to offer in return. Although its geostrategic importance affords North Korea a certain amount of influence, it has not been able to translate this importance into anything more than very cautious and conditional support from its two principal patrons. Similarly, North Korea has had only limited success at trying to manipulate the Sino-Soviet competition. Although it has probably benefited from the fact that the rivalry has prevented the two powers from uniting in such a way as to be able to dictate North Korean behavior, the negative consequence of the rivalry have been more notable: North Korea has not been able to acquire the economic and military assistance it has desired (e.g., MiG-23s) by "tilting" first one way and then the other, and at times has suffered serious damage (e.g., complete
cutoff of Soviet aid, border conflicts with China). On balance, North Korea has not been able to use the rivalry to much of its own benefit.

North Korea has had most difficulty with the Soviet Union. From Pyongyang's perspective, the Soviets have never shown much concern for its four fundamental interests. Although they installed Kim Il Sung and a few of his "Kapsan" faction followers in important positions when they occupied North Korea at the end of World War II, the Soviets have demonstrated little enthusiasm for the Kim Il Sung regime, at least not since the mid- to late 1950s, when it purged the other competing factions and consolidated its political power. They have been unsympathetic to North Korea's official ideology of chuch'e upon which the legitimacy of the Kim regime has heavily rested. And they have been critical of the cult of Kim Il Sung, which Kim has relied on to sustain his virtually total political dominance. Clear Soviet apprehension over some of the regime's more extreme actions (e.g., the capture of the Pueblo, the shooting down of a U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane, the raid on the South Korean Blue House, the Rangoon bombing) has reinforced the awareness in North Korea of limited Soviet enthusiasm for the ruling regime.

North Korean leaders similarly see little Soviet enthusiasm for their fundamental interest in national independence. Although the Soviets frequently lay claim to having "liberated" North Korea from Japanese colonial rule, much more salient from the North Korean perspective were their pervasive efforts in the early postwar years to establish North Korea as a satellite state. These included attempts to: secure political control through an elaborate network of Soviet "advisors" and, until 1948, the presence of Soviet military forces; acquire control over the North Korean economy in an effort to subordinate it to Soviet economic needs and priorities; and "Russify" North Korea through extensive programs of cultural penetration. Such efforts were designed to form a Soviet satellite regime that would be "'voluntarily' responsive to its dictates," and resulted by 1950 in a North Korea that was "already well advanced toward becoming a republic of the USSR."

Thereafter the Soviets intervened on a number of occasions in North Korea's internal politics while manipulating economic and military assis-

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11 For detailed treatment of this point and related issues, see the report Harry Gelman and I prepared entitled The Future of Soviet-North Korean Relations, R-3159-AF (The Rand Corporation, August 1984), from which much of this section is drawn.


13 U.S. Department of State, North Korea, pp. 119-120.
stance in an effort to compel certain kinds of North Korean behavior. In the process, North Korea came to see the Soviets as more interested in its subservience than in its aspiration for independence.

This perception has probably been the most important determinant of North Korea's approach to its Soviet relations. The limited Soviet support for the other fundamental North Korean interests, however, has also been a factor. Although the Soviets have, for example, paid lip service to the DPRK's consistent objective of reunification on North Korean terms, Pyongyang is acutely aware of the limitations to this support. The Soviets refused to participate directly in the Korean War, despite North Korean hopes for Soviet infantry divisions and air strikes in retaliation for U.S. attacks on the North. Moreover, after initially encouraging Kim Il Sung in his effort to unify Korea militarily, the Soviets then pressured him to end the conflict far short of realizing his objective. Since then, they have carefully avoided any actions that involve a risk of being drawn into a conflict with the United States. Coupled with Soviet actions in the Cuban missile crisis and its "peaceful coexistence" and détente policies thereafter, such behavior has convinced North Korea of the cautious and conditional quality of Soviet support for Pyongyang's reunification objective. The refusal of the USSR to endorse the DPRK as the sole legitimate sovereign state on the Korean peninsula has undoubtedly driven this point home further.

From the North Korean perspective, Soviet support of other North Korean policy objectives has been similarly qualified. Clearly, the USSR has provided a substantial amount of economic assistance, particularly in the first two decades of the DPRK's existence, including credits, grant-in-aid funds, and supplementary economic and technical assistance. It has also canceled or deferred payment on certain loan obligations. Moreover, throughout the DPRK's history the Soviet Union has been the primary foreign supplier of military equipment. Although such assistance has declined substantially since the early 1970s, the Soviets have apparently continued to provide some selected technology which has contributed to modernizing North Korea's military forces.

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15 The Soviets have publicly referred to "both Korean states" and alluded to the precedent of the German experience. For this and other useful points, see Ralph N. Clough, "The Soviet Union and the Two Koreas" in Donald Zagoria, ed., Soviet Policy in East Asia (Yale University Press, 1982), p. 180.

From the North Korean perspective, however, the value of this assistance has been mixed. The USSR has increasingly tied its economic aid to elaborate timetables for Korean repayment while denying Pyongyang advanced, new-generation military technology. North Korea has criticized the USSR for never providing all it requested, and for limiting much of what it did provide to second-rate and outdated equipment. It has also criticized the Soviets for "having sold equipment for a much higher price than the international market price, while acquiring gold and other materials for a much cheaper price."17 The implication that the Soviets have required North Korea to use its gold reserves to cover shortfalls in their bilateral economic dealings suggests a considerably less benign approach than the sheer magnitude of Soviet assistance might imply.

In addition, North Korea sees the Soviets as having sought to use their economic and military assistance as a means for exerting political pressure on Pyongyang. They have delayed and temporarily embargoed exports of contracted equipment to express displeasure with particular North Korean policies, going so far as to cut off aid completely for several years in the mid-1960s. The Soviets also refused to bail North Korea out a decade later when it became the first communist country ever to default on its debts.18 Their refusal over the past fifteen years to provide Pyongyang with the advanced airplanes and missiles it feels it badly needs—much of which the Soviets have long ago provided to other, seemingly less important allies—clearly rankles the North Koreans and feeds their general image of the Soviet Union as a "big, threatening neighbor that would like to dominate North Korea as it does Mongolia."19

In contrast, the Chinese have been far more supportive of North Korea's fundamental national interests. With the exception of a brief period during the Cultural Revolution, they have been highly sensitive to and solicitous of the Kim Il Sung regime in Pyongyang. They have endorsed Kim's emphasis on "self-reliance" and carefully avoided anything that would smack of interference in North Korean internal affairs. They have maintained throughout the postwar period a firm commitment to North Korea's position on "reunification" and backed up their commitment with both the


18 Ralph Clough quotes a senior Soviet specialist on Northeast Asia as having told him that when the North Koreans asked the Soviets for hard currency to help them pay off these debts, they were turned down with the advice: "You're always talking about self-reliance, why don't you practice it?" Clough, "Soviet Union and the Two Koreas," n. 16, p. 184.

19 Ibid., p. 187.
direct participation of combat forces in the Korean War and the public endorsement of North Korea as the sole legitimate sovereign state on the Korean peninsula. And, given their limited capabilities, they have provided significant amounts of economic aid, including free grants and concessionary trade terms, as well as military assistance. Such efforts attest to the open identification by the People's Republic of China with the stabilization and perpetuation of the North Korean regime.

As a result, until very recently at least, basically good relations with China and basically bad, or at least difficult and strained, relations with the Soviet Union had become the normal pattern. This is not to imply that the North Korea-China relationship has been trouble free. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that the Chinese have found Pyongyang a difficult ally. Seen from the North Korean perspective, however, China has been an essential counterweight to a big and threatening neighbor.

This perspective has imparted a strategic logic to North Korean's relations with its communist neighbors: the "swing" toward China has been both historic and "strategic" in nature; "tilts" toward the Soviet Union have been more "tactical" and temporary, and have been generally designed to express North Korean displeasure with particular Chinese policies. It remains to be seen whether recent trends on and around the Korean peninsula will significantly affect the basis of this "strategic logic," and whether recent efforts by both Moscow and Pyongyang to improve their strained relations will alter in any fundamental way the basic pattern.

FACTORS FOR CHANGE

Although these have been the basic patterns in North Korea's strategic relations, a number of important developments in the past few years suggests that we are entering a rather fluid and dynamic period. Some of the major

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20 This endorsement came in the joint communique issued at the end of Kim Il Sung's visit to China in April, 1975. The relevant part of the communique reads as follows: "More and more countries in the world have established diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As the sole legal sovereign state of the Korean nation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is enjoying an ever higher international prestige and playing an ever greater role in international affairs" (italics added). For the full text of the joint communique, see Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), People's Republic of China, Daily Report, April 28, 1975, pp. A15-A20. Some scholars see this endorsement as an implicit promise on China's part not to recognize the Republic of Korea. For this interpretation, see Harold C. Hinton, "China and the Korea Question," Journal of Northeast Asian Studies, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1982), p. 96.

21 For this point and further details, see Chin-Wee Chung, "North Korea's Foreign Relations—A Study of Pyongyang's Attitude in the Sino-Soviet Dispute" in Chung and Kim, eds., North Korean Communism (Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1980), p. 351 and passim.
dynamic elements are: the Korean leadership succession; secular changes in
the relative political, military, economic, and international positions of
South and North Korea; the evolution of Soviet and Chinese policies toward
the Korean peninsula; and the intensification of the strategic competition
between the Soviet Union and the United States. In such a period, the possi-
bility for significant changes in North Korea's strategic relations is likely to
increase. This section identifies some of the major factors that could pre-
cipitate such changes.22

Political Succession

In the past few years, North Korea has entered a period of transition. Kim
Il Sung has made clear his intention of passing the baton to his son, Jong Il,
and a number of people allegedly close to the younger Kim have begun to
appear in key positions. Jong Il himself has taken on many of the day-to-
day responsibilities of running the Party and the country, especially in
directing the economy. He is portrayed in the media as a great leader and
theorician and attributed with making virtually all of North Korea's plans
and decisions.23

Kim Il Sung appears to have two primary motivations in trying to
effectuate a hereditary succession: to avert a potentially serious struggle for
succession that could undermine stability in the North and endanger North
Korean independence; and to forestall the possibility of "de-Kimization"
and guarantee the continuation of Kim's policies after he dies. Whether he
will succeed or not in this effort is at this point problematic. Should succe-
sion succeed, however, it would suggest the continuation of a regime in
North Korea committed to Kim's "revolutionary tradition." This intention
is openly acknowledged by Pyongyang. As one discussion of the "decisive
role of the leader's successor in connection with the question of the revolu-
tionary tradition" put it:

Only the leader's successor can thoroughly defend, inherit, and develop the revolu-
tionary tradition—one of the most important questions in inheriting the leader's

22 For more elaborate treatment of these and other issues, see the report Harry Gelman
and I did on the future of Soviet-North Korean relations cited in n. 11.

23 In the words of one report, "The guidance of Comrade Kim Ch'ong-il, the dear leader,
who is making the great leader's plan of communist construction fully blossom on this
earth, has become the prime mover and the decisive factor in bringing about, today, the
grand golden age of the Republic." See "The Fatherland of Chuch'e Flourishes and Pros-
pers Forever Following the Guidance of the Party!" Nodong Ch'ongnyon, translated in
North Korean Central Broadcasting Station on October 10, 1983, was one of many assert-
ing that North Korea has already "resolved the problem of succession and is now ready
to carry on the revolutionary task initiated by great leader Kim Il Sung under the leader-
revolutionary cause. The leader’s successor, above all, thoroughly safeguards and defends the revolutionary tradition from the maneuvers of the betrayers of the revolution and all kinds of opportunists and he firmly ensures its purity. He also brilliantly inherits and develops the revolutionary tradition by embodying it into all fields of state and social life. As in the above, the leader’s successor plays a decisive role in inheriting the already provided revolutionary tradition.²⁴

A regime led by such a successor would presumably be at least equally inclined to identify North Korea’s fundamental national interests along the lines laid out by Kim II Sung, perhaps even more so given its lack of demonstrable revolutionary credentials. This would suggest rather limited potential for major departures in North Korea’s strategic relations stemming from political succession. The apparent absence of any “line struggle” in North Korea associated with the question of succession further heightens this possibility. So, too, does the apparent absence of a North Korean Deng Xiaoping—a leader with genuine revolutionary credentials and a strong personal power base in the Party and bureaucracy who could more or less unilaterally redefine North Korean interests and guide the succession along the lines of the redefinition.

A smooth transition to Jong II is not the only potential outcome, however. At least four other possibilities are conceivable: a coalition government including Kim Jong II; an agreement between the Party and the military on someone else; dictation, in the absence of an agreement, by the military; and turmoil, including, perhaps, outside intervention. Although the first three of these would appear likely to result in a regime dependent on the power centers—the military and the Party—most committed to North Korea’s traditional definition of national interest, each would open up greater possibilities for change than would hereditary succession.

One exception to this would be if Kim II Sung effectively ratified significant changes in North Korean strategic approaches before he hands over power. This may, in fact, be happening. Jong II is prominently linked in the North Korean media with calls for greater attention to consumerism and worker incentives. His emergence at the center of the stage coincides with increased North Korean willingness to participate in discussions with the Republic of Korea, heightened interest in China’s economic reforms, greater efforts to attract foreign capital and technology, and stepped-up attempts to improve relations with the Soviet Union and establish contacts with the United States. It is possible that these developments reflect an effort by Kim II Sung to initiate the kinds of policy changes his son would probably find impossible to effectuate. Such an effort, if it materializes, could be utilized by Jong II to carry out significant policy changes.

Military Threat

A second factor would be the perception by North Korea of an impending military threat. Such a perception could develop in several ways: by the actual or prospective attainment of military superiority by the Republic of Korea; by changes in U.S. policies that signaled an intention to support an unprovoked effort by South Korea to bring the entire peninsula under its control; and by a major Japanese military presence in South Korea and direct military role on the peninsula.

South Korean military superiority, until recently at least, has not been a prospect about which North Korea has appeared to be genuinely concerned. Perceiving itself as militarily superior to South Korea, it has concerned itself not with establishing defensive military and diplomatic arrangements but with developing offensive capabilities for creating and exploiting opportunities to achieve reunification on North Korean terms. Should the North come to perceive South Korea as militarily superior, however, it could make some major alterations in its strategic policies, particularly those concerning the Soviet Union.

The other two possibilities are clearly nothing more than theoretical in nature. Barring dramatic changes in the international milieu, neither the United States nor Japan are likely to modify their policies so radically in the foreseeable future. Given the rather distorted ideological prisms through which Pyongyang views the world, however, it is important to be sensitive to the possible development of such a perception.

Economic Difficulties

A third factor would be serious and sustained economic difficulties. Many people, apparently in China and the Soviet Union as well as in the West, see this as the principal hope for altering North Korea's behavior. All sides may be disappointed. Although there is no question that North Korea is experiencing economic difficulties, there is little evidence of a looming "crisis." Moreover, until recently at least, North Korea has tended to respond differently to economic difficulties than one might think: not by moderating its behavior and looking outward for assistance—although at different times and in different ways it has done this as well—but by placing greater emphasis on national sacrifice and ideological exhortation. Economic difficulties in and of themselves do not appear to translate necessarily into major changes in North Korean policies, particularly in the strategic area.

Nevertheless, it is certainly possible that such difficulties could generate important changes, particularly were they accompanied by what North Korea perceived as adverse trends in the prospects for reunification on North Korean terms. In such a case, North Korean policies could be altered in a number of ways ranging from an opening to the West to a major turn toward the Soviet Union. How North Korea would respond would be dependent on
a variety of factors, most of which would be beyond North Korea's ability to significantly influence (e.g., the policies of the major powers).

Changes in "Reunification" Prospects

Major changes in North Korea's perceptions of the prospects for reunification on North Korean terms would be another significant factor. These perceptions revolve around trends in four main areas: South Korea's political, economic, military, and diplomatic situation; South Korea's relationships with the United States and Japan; Soviet and Chinese policies toward South Korea; and Soviet and Chinese policies toward the United States. Among these, North Korean perceptions of the situation in the Republic of Korea and Soviet and Chinese policies toward Seoul appear particularly important.

Because of the sharp ideological prisms through which Pyongyang views all developments south of the 38th parallel and the extravagance of its rhetoric, real North Korean perceptions concerning the situation in South Korea are difficult to know. North Korean pronouncements describe life in South Korea as a "living hell" resulting from the "oppressive" rule of its "reactionary" dictators. South Korea's status as a "semifeudal colonial society" exacerbates this situation by allowing the introduction of decadent bourgeois foreign culture and the perpetuation of "fascist" rule. The fragility of its economy, built on foreign capital and sustained by foreign assistance, and gross social and economic inequalities guarantee only abject poverty and the enslavement of the masses. In this situation, if North Korean propaganda is to be believed, revolt is inevitable. The task for North Korea, therefore, has been not to make alterations in its strategic relations but to develop on its own the "base" for reunification and to be prepared when the "inevitable" sets in.

25 Focusing on South Korea's foreign debts, alleged export problems, and financial and monetary difficulties, articles in the North Korean media have denounced the notion of stable growth in South Korea and derided its economic prospects. "It is an elementary principle," one asserted, "that the South cannot guarantee stable operation of existing enterprises because it cannot direct foreign loans to current production, and that it cannot expect growth because it cannot invest in facilities . . . This indicates that the South Korean economy is being ruined because of foreign debts, not to speak of ability to expand." Coupled with the "sluggishness in exports" associated with the economic recession in the West and the "financial and monetary disorders" associated with several financial scandals in South Korea, such developments in 1983 "drove the South Korean economy to irreversible bankruptcy." "Behind the curtain of propaganda of growth on the basis of stability," the article concluded, "the economic crisis in South Korea will deepen this year, and the people's dissatisfaction will increase. This will serve as a time-bomb to destroy the puppet regime." See the "special article" entitled "The Theory of Growth on the Basis of Stability Is a Fantasy That Cannot Be Realized," in Rodong Shinmun, January 8, 1984.
Although the extent to which these views are genuinely held is uncertain, it is clear that North Korean leaders have been disdainful of South Korea’s system in the past and genuinely preferred their own. Even allowing for rhetorical excess, they have made clear their belief that North Korea is superior to the Republic of Korea and their conviction that trends are moving generally in their direction. As Kim Il Sung said in his 1984 New Year address to the nation, 1983 was a year in which North Korea “demonstrated the unconquerable strength of our people... as well as the genuine superiority of our socialist system... Although the present world situation is very complicated and tense, the general trend is changing still more in favor of our revolution.”

To an objective North Korean observer, however, the actual trends must look considerably more ominous. In fact, its rhetoric notwithstanding, there are signs that North Korea’s confidence has been considerably shaken. North Korean media reports, for example, allude more openly to the “very complicated and tense” situation facing the DPRK, and call for aggressive efforts to “overcome the rising difficulties” with an awareness on the part of the people that “they face a heavier revolutionary task and more complicated situation.”

South Korea’s success in expanding its foreign relations has dealt a blow to the North’s traditional optimism. Whether such trends have fundamentally altered basic North Korean perceptions of the situation in South Korea or not, however, remains to be determined. Should such an alteration occur, it could heighten North Korea’s incentive to make important concessions to Moscow in exchange for increased support.

Soviet and Chinese relations with South Korea are also important. As suggested earlier, the refusal of the Soviet Union to endorse Pyongyang as the sole legitimate sovereign state on the peninsula and its occasional flirtations with the possibility of a “German solution” to the problem of Korea’s division have been contributing factors behind North Korea’s distrust of the Soviets and its historic “tilt” toward China. In the last few years, however, the Soviets have sought to take advantage of China’s opening to the West, criticizing China for paying only lip service to North Korea’s aspirations for “reunification” and portraying itself as Pyongyang’s true supporter. The Soviet invitation for Kim Il Sung to visit Moscow, which


27 “The Entire People Vigorously Accelerate Socialist Construction in Firm Unity Around the Party,” Rodong Shinmun, January 2, 1984. “The main tasks of the socialist economic construction and other related tasks which we must accomplish this year are very heavy and difficult... If demanded by the party and the revolution, all tasks must be swiftly and unconditionally accomplished without any excuse and condition, and the intent of the party and the leader implemented not in words but through the struggle of deeds.”
Kim had futilely sought for many years, should probably be seen in this context.

Although China had until recently lagged behind the USSR in official and semiofficial dealings with South Korea, this has changed in the post-KAL shooting incident environment. Unofficial exchanges, especially in the economic area, are increasing at a rapid rate. China has demonstrated its determination to go ahead with these exchanges even at the risk of North Korean disapproval. Should China get too far out in front in its relations with Seoul, Pyongyang could very well seek to modify its policies with a more definable “tilt” toward Moscow. For its part, the Soviet Union could heighten this possibility by adopting more forthcoming policies toward Pyongyang.

**Superpower Policies**
The final factor would be major unilateral changes in the policies of the two superpowers toward the Korean peninsula. These changes could result from the evolution of the Soviet-American strategic rivalry and occur irrespective of North Korean policies. Here it is important to note that the importance of Asia in general, and Northeast Asia in particular, has grown considerably for both the Soviet Union and the United States. This is reflected in the remarkable Soviet military buildup over the last two decades and the more recent U.S. efforts to strengthen its own position. Although Korea has thus far remained largely exempt, or at least separate, from this intensified competition, there may be increasing incentives for both the Soviet Union and the United States to try and use the peninsula more directly against the other.

The Soviets might offer North Korea significantly increased military and economic assistance, for example, in exchange for military benefits similar to what they have in Vietnam. The United States could respond to the Soviet nuclear buildup in the Far East by using South Korea for strategic deployments against the Soviet Union. Although neither of these developments appears likely at the present time, they would undoubtedly occasion substantial changes in the nature of North Korea’s strategic relations should they occur.

**FUTURE PROSPECTS**
The safest course in making future projections is to posit a continuation of the past. In the case of North Korea’s strategic relations, there are good reasons for making such a projection. For one thing, the basic patterns have persisted for a remarkably long time, despite dramatic changes in the external environment. If nothing else, a tremendous amount of inertia would have to be overcome to engender significant alterations. More importantly,
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