



Revue Intelligence Stratégique
Journal des publications scientifiques
Volume 3, numéro 6
Janvier-Juin 2020
p-ISSN : 3006-547X ; e-ISSN : 3006-5488
<https://doi.org/10.62912/>

ENCOURAGING NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING A LIKELY REUNIFICATION

Daniel KAKESE MUNGOY

Professor and Expert in international relations at the National Pedagogical University/Kinshasa-DRC

SUMMARY

This article shows that North Korea and South Korea used to be only one country and nation. So, the people of both countries share common features in most aspects of their life in terms of culture, aspirations, beliefs, behavior and so on, especially characterised by what is known as Korean ethic nationalism, to the extent that it would be difficult for them to be kept separated forever, given that the separation that they have been subject to, has not been by their will. Rather, it was by the decision of external powers, notably, the Soviet Republic and the United States of America.

Keywords : *Exchanges and cooperation, reunification, North Korea, South Korea.*

RESUME

Cet article montre que la Corée du Nord et la Corée du Sud n'étaient autrefois qu'un pays et nation. Ainsi, les habitants des deux pays partagent des caractéristiques communes dans la plupart des aspects de leur vie en termes de culture, d'aspirations, de croyances, de comportement, etc. particulièrement caractérisé par ce que l'on appelle le nationalisme éthique coréen, dans la mesure où il serait difficile pour eux d'être séparés pour toujours, étant donné que la séparation qu'ils ont été soumis à, n'a pas été par leur volonté. C'était plutôt par la décision de puissances extérieures, notamment la République soviétique et les États-Unis d'Amérique.

INTRODUCTION

Since the division of Korea in 1948, that is, a few years after the end of World War II and following the start of the cold war, the situation of the

Korean peninsular has been a concern for the Koreans themselves and for the international community.

Actually, the separation between North Korea and South Korea has been bringing about recurring instability and problems in the Korean peninsular. This repeated state of unrest and the endless conflicts result, among other things, from factors below :

In terms of political and ideological line, both countries have different political regimes. North Korea is a dictatorship while South Korea is a democratic country. It has a competitive electoral system.

As regards the economic aspect, North Korea has centralised economy with the negative consequences that such a system can engender whereas South Korea has liberal economic system. The South Korean economy has prospered, and the country is now considered to be fully developed with a similar capital economic standing to Western Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Concerning community life, unified families that used to live together have been split abruptly and live separately and one can imagine where this state of affairs can lead to. Similarly, people sharing the same culture, habits, life style have been forced to leave in different geographical locations. Even if a small number of separated South and North Korean family members were allowed to briefly reunite in Seoul and Pyongyang in 1985.

Clearly, this unfortunate situation has never been the will of the Korean people themselves, from both sides. Rather, Koreans who were accustomed to live as one people belonging to only one nation were restricted to live in two different countries and to belong to two separate countries, that is, North Korea and South Korea, which is totally unfair and inappropriate.

As a matter of fact, the peoples of North Korea and South Korea are deemed to get together again as citizens of a reunified and united country one day. To help this happens, it is reasonable to sustain any initiative tending to get the people from both Koreas to get closer and closer again to

one another. Thus, inter Korean exchanges as initiated by South Korea should be commended and reinforced.

I. KOREA AS ONE COUNTRY

Korea claims a history that goes back to thousands of years, despite invasions, at one time or another, by all of its neighbors. Although there have been several periods of competing kingdoms -Goguryeo in the north and Silla and Baekje in the south co-existing on the Peninsula over the course of Korea's long history, Korea's last dynasty ruled over a unified and highly ethnically homogeneous state for over 500 years, until Japan annexed Korea in 1910. The modern division of the country at the 38th Parallel by the United States and Soviet Union was based on geopolitical considerations and not on any pre-existing geographic or cultural divisions within Korea. (Daniel wertz, 2017).

I. 1. Importance of blood in Koreans

In Koreans, there is a strong belief that Korean people are a pure race descended from a single ancestor. Hence, the term 'pure blood'. First invoked during the period of resistance to colonial rule, the idea of having pure blood gave Koreans an impetus for developing a sense of ethnic homogeneity and national pride, as well as a potential catalyst for racial discrimination and prejudice.

As a way of resisting colonial rule, Shin Chaeho, proclaimed that Korean descent is based on the Goguryeo kingdom, formed from the intermingling of the descendants of Dangun Joseon with the Buyeo kingdom. This raised a sense of ethnic homogeneity which persists as a major element in the politics and foreign relations of both Koreas. A survey conducted in 1986 showed that 68.2 per cent of respondents considered 'blood' the most important criterion of defining the Korean nation and 79.9 per cent agreed

that « Koreans are all brothers and sisters regardless of residence and ideology ».¹

I. 2. Korean ethnic nationalism

Under the Japanese colonisation, Korean people developed what is known as Korean ethnic nationalism, or racial nationalism. Ethnic nationalism emphasised descent and race. Among many Koreans both in the North and South, ethnicity is interpreted on a racial basis, with 'blood', and is usually considered the key determinant in defining 'Koreanness' in contemporary Korean nationalist thought.²

This is a political ideology and form of ethnic (racial) identity that is widely prevalent in modern North and South Korea. It is based on the belief that Koreans form a nation, a race and ethnic group that shares a unified bloodline and a distinct culture. It is centered on the notion of *minjok* (Korean, Hanja), a term that had been coined in imperial Japan (*minzoku*) in the early Meiji period on the basis of Social Darwinian conceptions. *Minjok* has been translated as 'nation', 'people', 'ethnic group', 'race', and 'race-nation'.³

This conception started to emerge among Korean intellectuals after the Japanese-imposed Protectorate of 1905, when the Japanese were trying to persuade Koreans that both nations were of the same racial stock. Shin portrayed the *minjok* as a warlike race that had fought bravely to preserve Korean identity. During the period of Japanese rule (1905-1945), this belief in the uniqueness of the Korean *minjok* gave an impetus for resisting Japanese assimilation policies and historical scholarship.⁴

In contrast to Japan and Germany where such race-based conceptions of the nation were discredited after World War Two because they were

¹ GI-WOOK S., « The principle of bloodline or 'jus sanguinis' still defines the notion of Korean nationhood and citizenship, which are often inseparable in the mind of the Koreans », Retrieved from <https://wikipedia.org>, 2006.

² YIN SEOW J. « Pride of the People : South Korea and North Korea Nationalism' (PDF) », .ISIS, 2013.

³ KELLY, disponible in www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/koreanethnicnationalism, 2015.

⁴ GI-WOOK S., « Ethnic Nationalism in Korea », Stanford University Press, California, 2006.

associated with ultranationalism or Nazism, postwar North and South Korea continued to proclaim their ethnic homogeneity and pure bloodline. In 1960s, President Park Chung-hee strengthened this 'ideology of racial purity' to legitimate his authoritarian rule, while in North Korea official propaganda has portrayed Koreans as the cleanest race. Moreover, Korean contemporary historians continue to write about the nation's unique racial and cultural heritage. This shared conception of a racially defined Korea continues to shape Korean politics and foreign relations, gives Koreans an impetus to national pride and feeds hopes to the reunification of the two Koreas.

Despite statistics showing that South Korea is becoming an increasingly multi-ethnic society most of the South Korean population continues to identify itself as 'one people' united by a common bloodline. In South Korea Korean racial nationalism has been described as constituting a civic religion of sorts.

I. 3. Korean nationalism and national resistance movements

Korean nationalism refers to nationalism among the Korean people. In the Korean context, this encompasses various movements throughout history to maintain the Korean cultural identity, history and ethnicity (or race).

Historically, the central objectives of Korean nationalist movement were the advancement and the protection of Korean's ancient culture and national identity from foreign influence and the fostering of the independence movement during Colonial Korea. In order to obtain political and cultural autonomy, it first had to promote Korea's cultural dependency. For this reason, the nationalist movement demanded the restoration and preservation of Korea's traditional culture. The Donghak (Eastern Learning) peasant movement, also known as the Donghak Peasant Revolution, that began in the 1870s, could be seen as an early form of what would become the Korean nationalist resistance movement against foreign influences, it was succeeded by the Righteous Army movement and later a series of Korean resistance movements that led in part to the current status of the two Korean nations.

In late 19th century Korea was a form of resistance movements. Since the intrusion by foreign powers by the end of this same century, Koreans had had to build their identity in ways that pitted them against foreigners. They have witnessed and participated in a wide range of nationalist actions over the past century, but all of them have been some form of resistance against foreign influences. During the colonial period, the Korean nationalists carried on the struggle for independence, fighting against imperial Japan in Korea. They formed 'governments in exile', armies, and secret groups to fight the imperial Japanese wherever they were.

I. 4. Division of Korea

As already mentioned, the Korean peninsula had been occupied by Japan from 1905. On August 9, 1945, in the closing days of World War Two, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and advanced into Korea. Though the Soviet declaration had been agreed by the Allies at the Yalta Conference, the US government became concerned at the prospect of all of Korea falling under Soviet control.

The US government therefore requested the S forces halt their advance at the 38th parallel north, leaving the south of the peninsula, including the capital, Seoul, to be occupied by the US. This was incorporated into General Order No 1 to Japanese forces after the Surrender of Japan on August 15. On August 24, the Red Army entered Pyongyang and established a military government over Korea north of the parallel. American forces landed in the south on September 8 and established the United States Army Military Government in Korea.

Meanwhile, the wartime cooperation between the Soviet Union and the US deteriorated as the Cold War took hold. Both occupying powers began promoting into positions of authority Koreans aligned with their side of politics and marginalising their opponents. Many of these emerging political leaders were returning from exile with little popular support. In the North, the Soviet Union supported Korean Communists, Kim Il-Sung, who from 1941 had served in the Soviet Army, became the major political figure. Society was centralised and collectivised, following the Soviet model. Politics in the South

was more tumultuous, but the strongly anti-Communist Syngman Rhee emerged as the most prominent politician.

Given this state of affairs, the US took the issue to the United Nations, which led to the formation of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) in 1947. The Soviet Union opposed this move and refused to allow the UNTCOK to operate in the North. Then, UNTCOK organised general election in the South, which was held on May 10, 1948.

The Republic of Korea was established with Syngman Rhee as President and formally replaced the US military occupation on August 15. In North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was declared on September 9, with Kim Il-sung, as prime minister. Soviet occupation forces left the North on December 10, 1948. US forces left the South the following year, though the US Korean Military Advisory Group remained to train the Republic of Korea Army.

II. INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE COLD WAR AND FACTORS THAT TRIGGERED CONFLICTS BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA

The brutality of the Korean War, over a million lives lost and much of the Peninsula reduced to rubble, intensified the enmity between the North and South. In the years after the war, the two Koreas competed for legitimacy and international recognition abroad, with a developmental dictatorship emerging in the South and a highly-centralized personalist regime in the North. For the next several decades, government-to-government contact between the two Koreas was almost nonexistent. In the late 1960s, a sharp rise in clashes along the DMZ, along with the attempted assassination of ROK President Park Chung-hee, increased inter-Korean tensions to their highest point since the war.

II. 1. Relations on an up-and-down track as regards the reestablishment for a long-lasting dialogue

With U.S.-China rapprochement fundamentally changing the security architecture of East Asia in the early 1970s, the governments of both Koreas found it in their interests to begin a dialogue with one another. Inter-Korean talks, initially held under the auspices of the Red Cross, led to the first Joint Statement on reunification, issued on July 4, 1972. Yet this détente on the Peninsula was short-lived. In 1974, the ROK's First Lady, Yuk Young-soo, was killed during another unsuccessful assassination attempt on Park Chung-hee, carried out by a Japanese-born North Korea sympathizer.

North Korean agents also attempted to assassinate Park's successor, President Chun Doo-hwan, during a presidential trip to Burma in 1983, and bombed a passenger flight, Korean Air Flight 858, in 1987. Although there were some additional periods of cautious inter-Korean engagement in the latter years of the Cold War, for example, a small number of separated South and North Korean family members were allowed to briefly reunite in Seoul and Pyongyang in 1985, these periods of dialogue did not last long.

II. 2. Impact of first democratic elections

Significant inter-Korean dialogue resumed under South Korea's first democratically elected president, Roh Tae-Woo (in office 1988-1993). Roh's policy of Nordpolitik led to South Korea's establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea's traditional major allies, the Soviet Union and China. As part of this policy, the Roh administration also reached out diplomatically to North Korea, permitting direct inter-Korean trade in 1989 for the first time and initiating inter-Korean sports exchanges. In December 1991, the two Koreas signed a "Basic Agreement" on reconciliation, nonaggression and exchange and cooperation. Shortly afterward, the two Koreas issued a Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, pledging not to possess, produce, or use nuclear weapons and prohibiting uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.⁵

⁵ Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, ROK Ministry of Unification, 1992. <http://eng.Unikorea.go.kr>

Inter-Korean relations were tumultuous under Roh's successor Kim Young Sam (in office 1993-1998). Initially taking a hard line as the first North Korean nuclear crisis mounted, President Kim changed course and planned a summit meeting with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, which would have been the first meeting of the two Korea's leaders since the country's division. Kim Il Sung died a few weeks before the summit was to take place, leading the North to lash out at the South over its failure to send a condolence message and to a halt in inter-Korean dialogue (Jim Mann).

North-South relations has continued on an up-and-down track over the next several years over issues including food aid, North Korean submarine incursions, and regional diplomacy.

II. 3. Some Contacts aimed at the rapprochement between North and South Korea

Worthy to indicate that subsequent to the Korean war, a number of contacts that ended up by some declarations, communiqués, and agreements took place between the two Koreas, with a view to getting both countries closer to one another again or simply reunified. In 1972, the North and the South Korea governments made a South-North Korea Joint Statement that both sides had agreed to a North and South Joint Communiqué outlining the steps to be taken towards achieving a peaceful reunification of the country :

- Unification shall be achieved through independent Korean efforts without being subject to external imposition or interference
- Unification shall be achieved through peaceful means, and not through the use of force against each other
- As an homogeneous people, a great national unity shall be sought above all transcending difference in ideas, ideologies, and systems
- In order to ease tensions, and foster an atmosphere of mutual trust between the South and the North, the two sides have agreed not to slander or defame each other, not to undertake armed provocations whether on a larger or smaller scale, and to take positive measures to prevent inadvertent military incidents

- The two sides, in order to restore severed national ties, promote mutual understanding, and expedite independent peaceful unification, have agreed to carry out various exchanges in many fields such as culture and science
- The two sides have agreed to cooperate positively with each other to seek early success of the North-South Red Cross talks, which were underway with the fervent expectations of the entire people
- The two sides, in order to prevent the outbreak of unexpected military incidents and to deal directly, promptly, and accurately with problems arising between the North and the South, have agreed to install a direct telephone line between Seoul and Pyongyang
- The two sides, in order to implement the aforementioned agreed items, to solve various problems existing between the North and the South, and to settle the unification problems on the basis of the agreed upon principles for unification of the Fatherland, have agreed to establish and operate a North-South Coordinating Committee co-chaired by both countries
- The two sides, firmly convinced that the aforementioned agreed upon items correspond with the common aspirations of the entire people, who have been anxious to see an early unification of the Fatherland, hereby solemnly pledge before the entire Korean people that they will faithfully carry out these agreed upon items.

All this, despite the fact that South-North Committee disbanded because of North Korea involvement in nuclear weapons activities.

In January 1989, the founder of Hyundai, Jung Ju-young, toured North Korea and promoted tourism in Mount Kumgang. After a twelve year hiatus, the prime ministers of the two Koreas met in Seoul in September 1990 to engage in the inter-Korean summits or High-Level Talks, even if these talks collapsed over inspection of nuclear facilities. In December, the two countries reached an agreement on issues of reconciliation, nonaggression, cooperation, and exchange between North and South in The Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Cooperation, and exchange Between North and South. In 1994, after former US President Jimmy Carter's visit to Pyongyang, the

leaders of the two Koreas agreed to meet with each other, in spite of the fact that the meeting was prevented by the death of Kim Il-sung.

In June 2000, North and South Korea signed the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration, in which both sides made promises to seek out a peaceful reunification. In the same vein, both sides found common ground as follows :

- The North and the South agreed to solve the question of the country's reunification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation responsible for it.
- The North and the South, recognising that the low-level federation proposed by the North and the commonwealth system proposed by the South for the reunification of the country have similarly agreed to work together for the reunification in this direction in the future.
- The North and the South agreed to settle humanitarian issues (such as the North Korean famine) as early as possible, including exchange of the visiting groups of separated families and relatives and the issue of unconverted long-term prisoners.
- The North and the South agreed to promote the balanced development of the national economy through economic cooperation and build mutual confidence by activating cooperation and exchange in all fields- social, cultural, sports, public health, environment and so on.
- The North and the South agreed to hold an authority-to-authority negotiation as soon as possible to put the above-mentioned agreed points into speedy operation.

Still, in line with the reunification, the two countries formed a unified team in the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan and they marched together in the opening ceremonies of the 2000, 2004, and 2006 Olympics. Although not everything above-mentioned and agreed upon by North and South Korea was not or has not been necessarily achieved, it is clear enough to note that there is on both sides a real intent to maintain

permanent exchanges and to either get both of them the closest possible or reunited.

It is worth mentioning here the setting of the liaison office in Kaesong on the North Korea side, built with South Korea fund to ensure permanent dialogue between the two countries, no matter the fact that it has been very recently destroyed by North Korea, which accuses South Korea of not keeping promises, among other things.

III. REUNIFICATION STRATEGIES

Despite being now politically separated entities, the governments of North and South Korea have proclaimed the eventual restoration of Korea as a single state as a goal after the Nixon's Shock' in 1971 that led to détente between the United States and China.

The nature of unification, i.e., through North Korea collapse or gradual integration of the North in the South, is still a topic of political intense debate and even conflict among interested parties, who include both Koreas, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

III. 1. The Sunshine Policy and the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation

Among the different strategies used, one can mention the Sunshine Policy that was launched by Kim Dae Jung, a South Korean President (in office 1998-2003) as a promise of his electoral campaign. Kim Dae Jung instituted the "Sunshine Policy" in 1998 to promote reconciliation with the DPRK. The Sunshine Policy was intended to create conditions of economic assistance and cooperation for the reunification, rather than sanctions and military threats. The plan was divided into two parts : increased cooperation through inter-Korean organisations (while maintaining separate systems in the North and the South), national unification with two autonomous regional governments, and finally, the creation of a central national government.

South Korea had adopted a sunshine policy towards the North that was based on the hope that one day, the two countries would be re-united in 1990s. The process towards this was started by the historic June 15 North-South Joint Declaration in August 2000 where the two countries agreed to

work towards a peaceful reunification in the future and this, despite the fact that this policy was eventually a failure by the the South Korean Ministry of Unification in November 2010 over issues of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

III. 2. Some noticeable impacts of this policy are as follows

Kim approved large shipments of food aid to the North Korean government, lifted limits on business deals between North Korean and South Korean firms, and even called for a stop to the American economic embargo against North Korea. In June 2000, the leaders of North Korea and South Korea met in Pyongyang and shook hands for the first time since the division of Korea.

The ROK government began allowing South Korean NGOs, businesses, and private citizens to have contact across the DMZ and ramping up bilateral food and fertilizer aid to the North, which was recovering from a devastating famine.

In 1998, an arm of South Korea's Hyundai Group began operating tours of Mt. Geumgang in North Korea.⁶

In June 2000, Kim Dae Jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il met in Pyongyang for the first presidential summit for the first time since the division of Korea, leading to a dramatic shift in South Korean attitudes toward the North as well as in policy. The two sides agreed to begin family reunion meetings and decided to establish the inter-Korean Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) near the the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

The Sunshine Policy was premised on separating humanitarian and economic cooperation from political issues; the administration continued engagement even as the two Koreas faced off in naval clashes near the Northern Limit Line – the disputed maritime boundary between the two Koreas – in 1999 and 2002, and as the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework on North Korea's nuclear program fell apart in late 2002.

⁶ <http://www.ncnk.org> Inter-Korean relations.

Roh Moo Hyun (in office 2003-2008), who succeeded Kim Dae Jung as President of the ROK in 2003, continued and intensified reconciliation efforts with North Korea under the "Policy for Peace and Prosperity." This policy saw increased bilateral aid and humanitarian assistance from South to North as well as substantial government-sponsored investment in the KIC.

In the fall of Roh's first year in office, the first round of Six Party Talks a series of multilateral negotiations to dismantle North Korea's nuclear program was convened. With the Six Party Talks process showing some progress the next year, Roh met with Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang for a second inter-Korean Summit in October 2007, during the waning months of Roh's presidency. The Summit outlined multiple new inter-Korean economic development projects, such as creation of a West Sea Economic Center in the North Korean port city of Haeju. The next administration did not implement the ambitious projects outlined in the Summit agreement, though.

III. 3. Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation (1971-2018) : Sample of events

The economic cooperation between North Korea and South Korea began late in the 1980s but took off when the then president KimDae-jung initiated the Sunlight Policy in 1998.

Not until the 1970s did South and North Korea engage in exchange and cooperation. It was only after the Korean Red Cross proposed an inter-Korean Red Cross meeting on August 12, 1971 that exchange of business people and goods was proposed through the South-North Coordinating Committee in 1973. After the DPRK Red Cross Society provided relief aid to South Korea following a flood, a number of inter-Korean economic talks were held from November 1984 to November 20, 1985. Overall, the 1970s and 1980s was a period seeking the possibility of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation.

In the late 1980s, the R.O.K. government sought to shift inter-Korean relations of distrust and conflict to one of trust and cooperation, in line with great changes following the collapse of the Communist bloc and an end of the Cold War system. The government announced the Special Declaration for

National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity on July 7, 1988. As follow-up measures, an institutional foundation for effective inter-Korean exchange and cooperation was laid within the legal framework of South Korea. These include the Measures to Open the Economy toward North Korea (1988.10) to allow inter-Korean trade, the Basic Guidelines on Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation (1989.6.12), the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act (1990.8) and the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund Act.

Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation proved much more difficult than expected through the years as North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (1993.3), and South Korea suspended Mt. Geumgang tours (2008) and implemented the May 24 Measures (2010). Nonetheless, inter-Korean trade increased steadily, especially through the Gaeseong Industrial Complex (GIC), and the two Koreas continued social and cultural exchanges as well as humanitarian assistance projects including that of religion, sports and those concerning the restoration of a sense of unity.

However, as North Korea continued to conduct missile and nuclear provocations in early 2016, the R.O.K. government temporarily suspended inter-Korean exchange and cooperation projects to pressure the North into denuclearization, including the announcement of the complete shutdown of the GIC, and imposed sanctions on the North in cooperation, with the international community. The government has since provided support to companies that have suffered losses due to the extension of the May 24 Measures and the closure of the GIC.

The Government, within the international community's framework of North Korea sanctions, continues to promote non-political inter-Korean cooperation projects carried out by civic organizations. Furthermore, upon the successful hosting of the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Paralympics as well as inter-Korean summits, the Government is making efforts to invigorate inter-Korean exchange and cooperation at all levels.

Exchange of personnel between South and North Korea increased from one person in 1989 to 186,000 persons in 2008. Trade between South and North Korea increased from USD 19 million in 1989 to USD 2.714 billion in

2015. Yet, due to strained inter-Korean relations, inter-Korean exchange of personnel decreased to 14,000 persons and trade plummeted to USD 333 million in 2016.

IV. REUNIFICATION-CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITIES

No success is reached with no challenge. South and North Korea do not constitute an exception to this principle. It is true as indicated previously that Koreans share some common ground which militate in favor of their reunification. But it must also be said here that the shared ground maybe subject to challenges. This should not appear as being obstacles to the reunification, though. Thus, the foreseeable challenges as regards the reunification would be in terms of money, cultural, industrial, security, and society issues.

Concerning money, there would be a number of monetary challenges to address, starting with currency integration due to the fact that each country has its own currency.

Having an impact on life in society, the reunification and conversion of North Korean currency would also highlight the discrepancy in living standards between the North and South Korean populations, and both South Korea and the international community would have to commit to significant investment in infrastructure and welfare.

As regards the industry issue, North Korea would also undergo a significant privatization of previously state-owned businesses and property. In the case of German reunification, East German businesses were rapidly bought up and restructured as subsidiaries of West German businesses. In the case of the Koreas, it is likely South Korean industries would similarly buy up North Korean businesses, while the South Korean government would inherit non-business related public property with the option to sell it or use it for infrastructure projects.

IV. 1. The cultural issues

As far as the cultural issue is concerned, the cultural challenges for the Koreas are unique. North and South Korean populations have been

separated for over 70 years, enough time for multiple generations to be born with no memory of a unified Korea, and for those who do remember, the memory of a brutal civil war in which thousands on either side were killed may dominate. Furthermore, the North Korean population has lived in a state of cultural isolation, while South Korea has made leaps and bounds in modernization, with Seoul serving as a global hub for everything from tech industry to fashion to food.

The inevitable influx of North Koreans into South Korean cities would throw those differences into stark relief and increase tension on all sides. While many North Koreans undoubtedly resent the current regime and wish for its overthrow, many are devoted to their leader and have no access to information that would inform them otherwise. As a result, while some friction may come from basic differences in North and South Korean culture, South Korea might also face outright resistance from North Koreans who maintain loyalty to their leaders and ideals, even if the regime falls.

In terms of security issue, Security issues are the final and potentially most pressing challenge for Korean reunification. In the event of reunification, North Korea's nuclear program would need to be dismantled and its materials safely secured, requiring international collaboration and cooperation from the North Korean military. Additionally, North Korea's inventory of chemical and biological weapons will need to be located, and disposed of by the international community. North Korea has developed a robust black market for everything ranging from foreign currency to South Korean movies to weapons over the past few decades, and any unsecured nuclear, chemical, or biological materials could rapidly fall into the wrong hands

IV. 2. The Potential

There is no clear path to regime change in North Korea, and any potential ensuing Korean reunification would be a massive undertaking. However, after the initial growing pains of integration and readjustment, a unified Korea could have the potential to become an economic global

powerhouse by leveraging the modern economy of the south and the influx of manpower and resources from the north.

If South Korea and North Korea managed the flow of people and capital between the two regions and mitigated the cost of reunification, in combination they could surpass major Western powers within a matter of decades. The road to a unified Korea is challenging, but not impossible, and it is worth considering the logistics of reunification given that it is one of the few viable paths for North and South Korea going forward.

CONCLUSION

The nature of unification, that is, through North Korea collapse or gradual intergration of the North and South, is still a topic of intense political debate and even conflict among interested parties, who include both Koreas, China, Japan, Ruassia, and the United States, resulting in a number of hurdles that have been making, the relation between North Korea and South Korea on an up and down track since the division Korea, which have not been facilitating the said rdeunification. Here, one can cite, among other things, the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, the failure to implement at any level of the exchanges and cooperarion, the agreements reached, the provisions of the contacts made, and of the commuinqués issued, no mention the very recently of the blowing up of the the Kaesong liaison office by the North Korea.

However, it is essential to remind that the modern division of the country at the 38th Parallel by the United States and Soviet Union was based on geopolitical considerations and not on any pre-existing geographic or cultural divisions within Korea.

Likewise, we have highlighted the Korean ethnic nationalism also called Korean racism, which indicates that Korean people are strongly linked by blood. Viewed in this light, it is unimaginable to keep them separated forever with such strong ties. In other words, whatever the reason may be, Koreans are deemed to leave together as people belonging to one country, one nation. As a matter of fact, with regard to Korean nationalism, the

reunification of the two Koreas is a highly related issue. Ethnic nationalism that is prevalent in the Korean society should play a significant role in the unification process, in case it has to take place. Gi-Wook Shin claims that 'ethnic consciousness would not only legitimise the drive for unification but it could also a common ground, especially in the early stages of the unification process, that is needed to facilitate a smooth integration of the two systems.

It transpires from the foregoing that despite the fact the different exchanges and cooperation attempts already mentioned have not so far led to the achievement of the ultimate goal of the reunification, the said attempts have to be seen as a contribution to the advent of the unification sought and should undermine the Koreans hope and determination to getting again together again in a unified Korea.

In this context, following the blowing up of the liaison office of Kaesong, President Moon was not discouraged. Rather, he said 'the path that two Koreas must walk is clear. Like the river that twists and turns but eventually reaches the sea, the South and the North must keep their optimistic faith and take each step towards national reconciliation, peace, and unification, however slow it may be'. Based on what has been argued in this article, it would be ideally reasonable to favor the Korean unification in whatsoever terms that would suit both Koreas. And the easiest way of making this possible is by encouraging, accompanying, and reinforcing inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation in all aspects.

REFERENCES

- BRIAN R.M., « On that Marsh First Speech », in *Steele Press*, 2019, Retrieved June 26, 2019).
- COCKRELL, « Korean Nationalism », Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org> ;
- COLIN M., « How Korea got coom. The continued Rise of a country named Hanguk », in *The times literary supplement*, 2017. Retrieved June 24, 2019 from <https://wikipedia.org>.
- GI-WOOK S., « The principle of bloodline or 'jus sanguinis'. still defines the notion of Korean nationhood and citizenship, which are often

-
- inseparable in the mind of the Koreans », Retrieved from <https://wikipedia.org>.
- GI-WOOK S., *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, Stanford University Press, California, 2006.
- JIANWEI W., « Territorial Disputes and Asian Security' ». in *Asian Security*, Stanford University Press, 2003.
- KOO M.G., « Economic Dependence and the Dokdo/Takeshima Rocks Dispute Between South Korea and Japan », in *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, 9/(4), 2005.
- RENAN E., « The Nationalism Project- Ernest defining the Nation », Delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882, 2010.
- SCHMID A., « Rediscovering Manchuria : Sin Ch'ae-ho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea' », in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56(1), 1997.
- SEOW J.Y., « Pride of the People : South Korea and North Korea Nationalism », ISIS, 2013.