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POLITICAL CHALLENGES IN A DIVIDED NATION: SOUTH KOREA'S NORTH KOREA POLICY

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The beginning of Korean history dates back to 2333 BC, when Tan'gun, the legendary figure of the ancient kingdom of Korea established Kochosŏn, a name consisting of two parts: Ko (meaning "old, ancient"), and a word for Korea, Chosŏn, which is usually translated as "Land of the Morning Calm". Tan'gun is the mythical forefather of the Korean nation and its first ruler. The earliest historical records of the Korean Peninsula attest to the existence of organized tribal communities that were similar to city-states. Only in the first century BC on the political map of the peninsula did three "Korean" kingdoms appear; Koguryŏ (37 BC - 668 AD), Paekje (18 AD - 660 AD), and Shilla (57 BC - 935 AD)¹.

Despite political sovereignty, the three ancient Korean states seem to have shared some ethnic and linguistic similarities. They formed a system of political importance, which is known as the "Three Kingdoms"². Each kingdom functioned under a political and legal system based on Confucian doctrines. Confucianism was a paternalistic system of government adopted in Korea, more than any other country in East Asia. Confucianism as a theory of the state and society created the foundations of a lasting Korean state. Confucianism came early to the kingdom of Koguryŏ, when in 372 a Confucian academy was established. Then, similar institutions, which were private Confucian academies, were also established in the kingdoms of Paekje and Shilla. The introduction of the system of Chinese state examinations called *kwagŏ* in 958 by King Kwangjong of Koryŏ signified the permanent implantation of Confucian thought and behavior patterns among Koreans³.

¹ R. E. Brueker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918–1170: History, Ideology and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty*, Brill, Leiden 2010, pp. 30-36; P. H. Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, Vol. 1: *From Early Times to the Sixteenth Century*, Columbia University Press, New York 1993, pp. 107-108; *A Handbook of Korea*, Korean Overseas Information Service, Seoul 1990, p. 59.

² J. P. Yoon, *An Application of Systems Theory to the Ancient Korean Three Kingdoms Period*, "Korea Observer" Vol. XXII, No. 3, Autumn 1991, p. 370.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 370-371; C. J. Eckert, K. B. Lee, Y. I. Lew, M. Robinson, E. W. Wagner, *Korea, Old and New: A History*, Ilchokak Publishers, Seoul 1990, pp. 32-33.

In the seventh century AD by the year 668, Shilla had conquered the neighboring kingdoms on the Korean peninsula, Koguryō and Paekje, thus making a unified state; Korea is one of the oldest countries in the world. The Korean Peninsula remained unified under a single government with a tradition of a ruling monarch during the following periods: 918-1392 at the time of the Koryō kingdom, and 1392-1910 during the kingdom of Chosŏn⁴.

The modern name Korea, used by much of the world, is derived from the Korean dynasty of Koryō. The Chosŏn dynasty was the last country in the Far East to open its borders to the West during the end of the nineteenth century. The victory of the Japanese Empire in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 prompted the trend of Korea's subjugation within the sphere of Japanese influence. In 1905, the Korean government was forced to sign a treaty making the county a protectorate of Japan. A turning point in the history of traditional Korea was 1910, when Korea under a governor general was incorporated into the Empire of Japan. Japanese colonial rule meant the cessation of what had been the continuous monarchical political system in Korea, and importantly contributed to an expansion of Korean nationalism. The Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula lasted thirty-five years⁵.

In 1945, after a 35-year Japanese occupation, Korea was divided into two zones of occupation: the Americans in the south and the Soviets in the north. Three years later in 1948, against the will of the Koreans themselves, the peninsula was proclaimed as divided between two Koreas: the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The shape of relations between the two Koreas, henceforth, could not be understood without reference to the prevailing Cold War rivalry between the Eastern bloc and Western countries, an expression of which was the three-year Korean War (1950-1953). This was the first direct conflict between the armed forces of the West and the East. During the Cold War the world order was based on a bipolar system, with the dominant positions occupied by two powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. South Korea's political identity, belonging to the camp of capitalist countries, was dominated at that time by the Cold War division of the world that prevented or at least limited mutual contacts between both Koreas as North Korea belonged to the socialist bloc of countries.

It was only with the advent of changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the then existing balance of power underwent profound changes. The end of the Cold War and the reshaping of the international order after 1989 created new perspectives and challenges for inter-Korean relations. In the face of these immense changes the policy of confrontation between the two countries on the Korean Peninsula had largely lost its ideological justification.

⁴ A. C. Nahm, *Introduction to Korean History and Culture*, Hollym Corporation Publishers, Seoul 1993, p. 67.

⁵ For more details about Korea under Japanese colonial rule, see: G. W. Shin, M. E. Robinson, eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA & London 1999; H. Y. Lee, Y. C. Ha, C. W. Sorenson, *Colonial Rule & Social Change in Korea, 1910-1945*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA 2013.

The division of Korea was not of the same nature as the division of Germany and Vietnam. Germany was divided for the purpose of weakening a defeated enemy, while the division of Vietnam was a consequence of the war against a colonial power. Korea was divided as a result of mutual ideological hostility between two world systems that met on Korean territory at the end of World War II.

The Korean Peninsula for about 1,300 years belonged to one state, one nation. After World War II, Korea was politically too weak and unable to play an independent role in the arena of international relations. The year 1948, when the peninsula was divided by the formation of two Koreas, the Republic Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was a tragic moment in the history of the Korean nation. The division of the Korean peninsula into two states was the genesis of the formation of two systems, which differ socially, economically and politically.

KOREA AS ONE NATION

Koreans have a long history as a nation and have developed a unique national identity formed as part of a national Confucian tradition in which people understood the state as an expanded form of a family. That traditional concept of the state as family can be found in the Chinese borrowed term for state pronounced *kuk'ka* in Korean. The word is a combination of two words: *kuk* (state, nation) and *ka* (family)⁶. Confucian civilization, which was spearheaded from China, greatly influenced all neighboring countries, including Korea, Japan and Vietnam. In this Confucian cultural circle, also referred to as "the Sino-centric world",⁷ Chinese culture and civilization was perceived as a universal model to be emulated. It was believed that everything that was good for China, was also good for the neighboring countries. The regional dominance of China, which called itself the Middle Kingdom, obligated sovereign neighboring countries to pay homage, at least symbolically, to the preeminence of China.

In Confucian Korea prior to the twentieth century, there was no clear boundary between different concepts such as state, government, country, or kingdom, and the terms were often used interchangeably. According to the Confucian philosophy of statecraft Korean rulers exemplified prudence and discretion in the exercise of governance. Among the central tenets of political Confucianism was the notion that the goal of government should be to establish harmony between heaven and earth, between nature and man, between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler of the country while being the

⁶ Some scholars have identified the pure Korean word *nara*, for "state" or "nation" as actually having been borrowed from an Old Chinese word *naray*, having had the meaning "prefecture" or "province". The word was similar to the Modern Korean pronunciation of the word by Middle Korean. For more information, see: C. I. Beckwith, *Koguryo. The Language of Japan's Continental Relatives*, Brill, Leiden 2004, p. 133.

⁷ For an overview of the elements of the Sino-centric world concept, see: K. H. Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korean, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles & London 1980.

son of heaven, had relatively unlimited power in order to allow for the implementation of the heavenly mandate to rule (*ch'ōnsim*), derived from the support of the people (*minsīm*), with the caveat that the king possessed the moral and ethical attributes requisite of a ruler⁸. The Korean Confucian king was the epitome of the spiritual and secular leader, lawgiver, the creator of values, and a human being who did not have an equal in Korea, and was subordinate only to the Chinese emperor.

Political Confucianism, as a paternalistic system of government adopted in Korea, created a durable foundation for the Korean state. The institutionalization of Confucian principles of statecraft developed with the establishment of the state exams. Sitings for such exams was a high honor, and the opportunity was open exclusively to candidates from the aristocratic social class, the *yangban*. In traditional Korea obedience to authority was considered a filial virtue inseparable from the Confucian hierarchical social structure, and therefore, orderly propriety occupied a tangible place in the family, the society and the state⁹.

According to professor Carter Eckert of Harvard University "There was little, if any, feeling of loyalty toward the abstract concept of 'Korea' as a nation-state, or toward fellow inhabitants of the peninsula as 'Koreans'"¹⁰. However, Koreans had already had many of the characteristics of a nationality, as we conceive the concept in a modern sense: one language, racial and ethnic homogeneity, a long and continuous history, a traditional ruling elite, a distinctive way of life and culture, a recognition of shared values, and even a sense of uniqueness, which distinguished Koreans from other peoples. During most of Korean history, people did not possess loyalty to abstractions such as the state or the nation. Loyalty to the state became more important to nineteenth century Koreans. Overwhelmingly, during most of the Chosŏn dynasty, the interests of social class, family or clan based on Confucian values being applied to everyday life seemed to be more important than national interests¹¹.

Professor Hahm Pyong Choon of Yonsei University asserts that Koreans in the past could not have had a concept of nation or state. According to the concept of nation, Hahm observes that approximate concepts of nation or state were understood as an extended family, in which lay the foundations of kinship and brotherhood. The king was regarded as the head of the extended family. The concept of the state was formulated on the basis of the category of family. This concept of familial power permeated social and political institutions and was a dominant feature of traditional Korea¹².

⁸ For more on the right of Confucian scholars to remonstrate and the Korean king's expected tolerance of remonstrance as a check to absolute power, see: J. B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea*, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1975, pp. 10-12.

⁹ C. J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA 1991, pp. 226-227.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹¹ J. B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea...*, op. cit., p. 178; G. Strnad, *Korea: Polityka Południa wobec Północy w latach 1948-2008. Zmiana i kontynuacja*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 2014, pp. 98-109.

¹² P. C. Hahm, *Korean Jurisprudence Politics and Culture*, Yonsei University Press, Seoul 1986, p. 293.

Confucian tradition marked by state authority existed for centuries in the mentality of Koreans. The Korean Confucian state was an extended family with related interdependencies, and ideally, all lived according to the will of the "father".

The concept of "nation" (*minjok*) for Koreans strongly connotes a special emphasis on the perceived racial qualities of the nation. This partially reflects the fact that the term was borrowed from Japan in the colonial era when all kinds of racial thinking were much in vogue as a consequence of European (especially German) influence. Yi Kwang-su (1892-1951), one of the most prominent Korean intellectuals of the colonial period, once claimed that "bloodline" (*hyŏlt'ong*), "temperament" (*sŏnggyŏk*), and "culture" (*munhwa*) were the three major elements of the nation. Yi wrote, "Koreans are without doubt a unitary nation (*tanil han minjok*) in blood and culture"¹³. Similar views were expressed by Yi Kwang-su's opponents, many of whom eventually played major roles in the founding of the South Korea state in the late 1940s.

Koreans' belief in the common destiny of the whole nation is the result of a confluence of various influences: Koreans are descendants of the mythical figure of Tan'gun, and the Korean conceptualization of the nation and state was predicated upon a Confucian idea of a family unit. Therefore, Koreans have tended to understand the term *minjok* in a narrow, biological sense. This is reflected in such terms for Koreans, such as *kyorae* (meaning the people of this same blood), or as *dongp'o* (meaning siblings from the same mother)¹⁴.

Korean collective group identity is best expressed in the idea of *taedongjuui*. Sometimes translated as "cosmopolitanism", the term articulates the notion that Koreans are one, regardless of the social, economic and regional differences. *Taedongjuui* explains the philosophy of the primacy of the group over the individual, which cannot exist in isolation from the community (group), which is formed by their participation in it. The group identity of Koreans defines social behavior. Strongly cemented social ties and group solidarity promote cooperation and mutual assistance by highlighting the social obligation of loyalty to the community and a sense of group responsibility to society as a whole. To mark its distinctiveness and uniqueness Koreans shaped the concept of a nation based on two pillars: the common blood and origin. Belief in common descent produces a strong sense of collective unity. Although the race is understood as a community defined by innate and immutable phenotypic and genotypic characteristics, and ethnicity is generally considered to be a cultural phenomenon based on a common language and history, Koreans do not distinguish between these two concepts. Instead, "race" serves as an exponent strengthening ethnic identity, which in turn plays a key role in defining the nation. The concepts of race, ethnicity and nation are equated with each other, which is evident in the multiple applications

¹³ K. S. Yi, *Chosŏn minjŏngnon*, in: Yi Kwang-su *chŏnjip*, Vol. 17, Samjungdang, Seoul 1933, 1962, pp. 326-332.

¹⁴ B. K. Kim, *Ideology, Organization and Democratic Consolidation in Korea*, in: S. Y. Choi, ed., *Democracy in Korea: Its Ideals and Realities*, Seoul Press, Seoul 1997, pp. 145-149.

of the concept *minjok*¹⁵. Koreans believe that they belong to a single nation (*tanil minjok*), denoting that the nation is ethnically homogeneous and racially distinct.

Due to its geographic location Korea was historically a target of invasion by neighboring countries. These numerous invasions and threats to national sovereignty have produced in Korea a unique national identity, which is synonymous with ethnicity. Korean identification with both nation and state have been formed in opposition to foreign influences, mainly Chinese and Japanese. Appealing to the myth of Tan'gun in times of war and sustained political crises patriotism among Koreans and national unity.

The emphasis on racial unity has survived to the present. For example, textbooks on ethics, a high school subject related to social studies, explicitly refer to "bloodline" as a major property of a nation, and the same idea is emphasized by the officially approved materials for teachers. Numerous books not only stress that Koreans share the same "bloodline", but also emphasize that this bloodline is "pure" (*sunsu*). Korea is routinely described as a mono-ethnic state, with clearly positive connotations of homogeneity and national purity. Such propaganda was an important part of indoctrination at the time of independence in 1945, and its traces still can be found in the school textbooks and everyday discourse. As a Korean journalist recently wrote, "We have been told since childhood that ours is a proud country which successfully preserved the purity of the nation's bloodlines for 5,000 years, and that we are different from other countries populated by people of different bloodlines who do not even know their origins"¹⁶.

Despite the division of the Korean peninsula between the communist North and capitalist South, the unity of the ethnic (racial) Korean nation is still recognized. Neither Korea disputes the ethnic homogeneity of the Korean nation. However, the two sides are engaged in an ongoing dispute over the which Korea best serves as model or representation of the ethnically homogeneous Korean nation.

The observations of Wei Yung, director of the Institute for Policy Studies in Taiwan, related to national division and identity are appropriate to the case of Korea when he explains that "leaders of divided nations want to (...) usually believe in the

¹⁵ The concept of a nation (*minjok*) is a relatively new word in the Korean language. The term was first appeared in a Korean language dictionary in 1904. It was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the modern idea or understanding of "nation" first was used by Koreans. The idea of the nation. In the definition of Korean people special emphasis to highlight racial characteristics. The term was borrowed from the newly coined Japanese word *minzoku*. The word *minjok*, however, gained special meaning only in 1910 with the loss of independence of Korea. The term *minjok*, read in Japanese as well *minzoku*, *minzú* in Chinese-Mandarin, was a neologism created by Miyazaki Muryū during the Meiji period in Japan. Miyazaki translated the French Assemblée Nationale as *minzoku kaigi*. Its importance is reminiscent of a nation or an ethnic German Volkschaft. This term comes from the fact *jok* denotes a family with a common ancestor. The Korean word *kungmin*, *kokumin* in Japanese, and *guōmin* in Chinese-Mandarin, was also a neologism created to identify people associated with the state or political society. See: H. Choe, *South Korean Nationhood and Chinese Nationhood: An Ethno-Symbolic Account*, "The Review of Korean Studies" Vol. 8, No. 2, 2005, pp. 142-143.

¹⁶ "Kyōngnyang Sinmun" 15 September 1996.

existence of 'one nation', 'one country', 'a single sovereignty' and 'one people'. In fact, they have, while dealing with two political systems coexisting within a single nation, two 'governments' in the context of one country, two jurisdictions within a single sovereignty. As a result, there is a practical need for dual representation for the people who live in the two separate parts of the original state"¹⁷.

From the mid-1990s, however, there has been an increasing unease about the association between the Korean "nation" (*minjok*) and the Korean "race" (*injong*). During this period there was much concern about the purity of the Korean race, when some people (especially younger people on the left) began to question the link between *minjok* and *injong*. Today there is greater unease with these concepts in South Korea, in large part, driven by the explosive growth of mixed marriages in recent decades, as well as by the arrival of foreign workers who currently number over 700,000. The campaign against the racialized understanding of nation continues to be actively waged by the Korean Left, and the need for change is widely acknowledged in the intellectual community across a broad political spectrum. A consequence of the changing concept of the nation is a new perception of North Korea. The close identification of nation and race makes it difficult to conceptualize a separate North Korean state; nonetheless, the practical reality of the existence of such a state is increasingly recognized by South Korean authorities and the people. South Korea conducts relations with the North as if it is a separate state, and this approach is almost universally shared by Koreans, though some linguistic gymnastics are still required to stress that North Korea is not quite a state like any other¹⁸.

Since the word *minjok* has had such strong racial connotations, few people in Korea would doubt that the populations of both Korean states could ultimately be identified as a single nation (*minjok*). For this reason it is difficult to argue against unification as a supreme political goal. This observation is strengthened by the fact that a similar race-based approach to the definition of "nation", but in a more aggressive and blatant form, exists in North Korea as well.

In considering the idea of nation it should be noted that the term used for the South Korean nation differs from the term applied to North Korea. In South Korea, the term for the Korean nation or Korean people is "*Hanguk minjok*". The word "*Hanguk*", meaning the "nation of the Han", began to be used as the official name for Korea in the late nineteenth century, but was not recognized by the Japanese colonial rulers. The Japanese used an earlier term "*Chosŏn*", a reference to the Chosŏn dynasty. The North Koreans continue to use *Chosŏn*. When the whole of Korea is referred to – and there is a desire to sound neutral – both North and South Koreans use the English

¹⁷ Y. Wei, *Od integracji do „wspólnoty wewnętrzznarodowej”: o pokojowym rozwiązaniu problemów podzielonych państw*, in: K. Gawlikowski, E. Potocka, eds., *Korea: Doświadczenia i perspektywy*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2001, pp. 248-249.

¹⁸ *South Korean – Minjok*, 27 May 2011, <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/blogs/languagesofsecurity/2011/05/27/south-korean-nation/>; H. H. Em, *Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography*, in: G. W. Shin, M. E. Robinson, eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA & London 1999, pp. 336-339.

term, “*Ko-ri-a*”. When Southerners use the term “*Hanguk*” for their country, this implies a sense of superiority, that South Korea represents the independent heartland of the true Korean nation, and as a corollary, that North Korea is just a part of Korea occupied by an anti-government clique. That is to say, South Korea is implied to be not merely superior, but the only Korea¹⁹.

In the South, it should be stressed, the North Korean state is not officially recognized as existing. It is seen as a part of the Republic of Korea (*Taehan minguk*) and tends to be portrayed as part of Korea being controlled by an antagonistic group who happen to have assumed power. There is a similarity here to the way China views Taiwan, or North Vietnam once viewed the South. In terms of the territorial definition of South Korea the map image that is influential in the South includes the entire Korean peninsula²⁰.

Having made these points about the conceptual denigration of North Korea, however, it should be stressed that for a relatively small group in the South – largely young or middle-aged, well-educated nationalists – North Korea is seen as the embodiment of a pure national spirit. It attracts respect as a country, that does not bow to anybody and has kept itself pure or unspoiled with respect to foreign influences. In certain circumstances, it is possible to imagine this Southern group having significant influence.

One consequence of the long-held race-based understanding of *minjok* concerns the overseas Koreans – the Korean diaspora. These overseas Koreans, including the large community in the United States, are certainly considered to be a part of the Korean nation. Also, the concern for all people of Korean blood – in a sense, as members of the *minjok* – means that an attack by a foreign power on North Korea would cause great anxiety in the South. Similarly, in the debates between South Korea and Japan over the Tokdo/Takeshima islands, the South Koreans receive much support from the North²¹.

The words “*uri minjok*” or “*uri nara*” means “our nation” – sometimes the *uri* is used alone to imply “Korean”. In vending machines a type of tea might be advertised as “*uri cha*” – meaning “our tea” – and thus domestic, meaning Korean tea. The term “*uri*” alludes more to “nation” than “race” and is used in a way that does not extend beyond the demilitarized zone (DMZ) to encompass the North. Although a map of the entire Korean peninsula is imprinted on the South Korean collective mind, when asking a person where they come from it becomes clear that they believe Korea refers to only the South. There is no way to articulate “our nation” without revealing one’s political affiliation to the South. This reflects the increasing perception of South Korea as the only Korea that matters, and that the North is an external threat²².

¹⁹ J. Hoog, [Outlook] *Korea Divided by a Common Language*, “Korea Joongang Daily”, 27 July 2001, <http://korea.joongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=1892694>.

²⁰ *South Korean – Minjok...*, op. cit.

²¹ Ibid.

²² E. L. G. Campbell, *Uri nara, Our Nation: Unification, Identity and the Emergence of a New Nationalism amongst South Korean Young People*, Australian National University, Canberra 2011, pp. 245-247.

Korean nationalism is essentially ethnic nationalism. On one level everyone with Korean blood is a Korean person and there is a concern for the security of all Koreans, even those that live outside North and South Korea. For example, the term *kyop'o*, means "Korean", but a Korean who is born and raised abroad; this implies that once someone is Korean they are always Korean due to their Korean blood²³. Among South Koreans in general, it is expected that if a person has Korean blood, they should have loyalty to the South Korean state, and when South Koreans discover instances when this is not the case, it is considered an outrage. The term *kyop'o* reflects an effort to be more inclusive when defining the Korean people. Although the main focus remains the Korean unit in South Korea, *kyop'o* reaches out like "tentacles" to North Koreans and the Korean diaspora due to their Korean blood. When South Koreans talk about security, they tend to have in mind the security of "*Hanguk*" (South Korea).

Cho Young Chul, a professor at the O. P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India, observes that the North Korean nationalist discourse is virtually identical to that of South Korea's discourse. Cho explains that the nation-state is open and malleable rather than fixed and static and has a non-essentialist view of identity; that is identity that is not primordialist but constructivist, or instrumentalist²⁴. An essential difference in the two nationalist narratives of the two Koreas according to Cho is the North's insecurity. "[I]nsecurity is itself the product of processes of identity construction in which the self and the other, or multiple others, are constituted"²⁵. Within international politics, discourses of insecurity matter, since a state's identity, which affects its interests and policies, is always constituted within, not outside, these discourses. Most of all, the discourses of insecurity provide the state with a set of apparent truths about "who and what 'we' are by highlighting who or what 'we' are not, and what 'we' have to fear"²⁶.

This principle in North Korean orientation goes on to assert that Korea's reunification is the issue of reunifying the divided nation, which was originally "one" based on a shared bloodline and ancestry, and thus it is an internal affair within the Korean nation. Hence, any framework of international coexistence, such as the principle of reciprocity, must not be applied to inter-Korean coexistence. The North thus rejects the South's traditional give-and-take approach toward the North while attempting to secure economic assistance from Seoul²⁷.

²³ H. J. Kim, *National Identity in Korean Curriculum*, "Canadian Social Studies" Vol. 38, No. 3, Spring 2004, p. 5; G. Strnad, *Korea: Polityka Południa...*, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

²⁴ Y. C. Cho, *North Korea's Nationalist Discourse: A Critical Interpretation*, "The Korean Observer" Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2011, pp. 311-343.

²⁵ J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, R. Duvall, *Introduction: Constructing Identities*, in: J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, R. Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN 1999, p. 10.

²⁶ Y. C. Cho, op. cit., p. 318.

²⁷ J. Milliken, *Intervention and Identity: Reconstructing the West in Korea*, in: J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, R. Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN 1999, pp. 100-102; Y. C. Cho, op. cit., pp. 318-319.

Both North and South Korea endorse hegemonic nationalism, a form of nationalism that supports and endorses the political and economic authority and power. Hegemonic nationalism is normative, publicized and thus becomes an almost officially sanctioned "canon" in state media and foreign policy. It becomes part of the dominant discourse and representation of "us" and "them/other". Alternative versions of nationalist ideologies are silenced in states where there is little freedom in the media such as North Korea, and attempts to overshadow alternative versions of nationalist ideologies have been prominent in South Korea. Historical Korean examples include the Sunshine Policy in the South and the Our Nation First Ideology (*Uri minjokjeiljuŭi*) in the North²⁸.

The essential factors suggested as the origins of the "our nation-first concept" are: (1) the excellent personal qualities of the Korean nation (the people); and (2) the "peerless" leadership succession of the Great President (*Suryōng*) Kim Il Sung, the Great Leader (*Ryōngdoja*) Kim Jong Il, and Kim Jong Un, who by 2013 had taken one of his father's titles, Dear Leader (*Kyōng 'aeha 'nŭm chidoja*). Regarding the first factor, the North Korean narrative emphasizes that the Koreans are a homogeneous nation who have lived in the same territory with one bloodline, language, and culture for centuries. On this primordial basis, the Korean people have shown a remarkable set of personal traits and values, such as a strong sense of justice, bravery, obligation, morality, assiduity, and courtesy. The resilience of the nation is also highly acclaimed, and this is illustrated by a few examples of how ordinary Koreans were able to repel foreign invaders while preserving their national identity. In this overall North Korean way of thinking, certainly, the Korean nation is primordial rather than modern²⁹.

THE CREATION OF THE TWO KOREAN STATES

On 2 September 1945 in Tokyo Bay aboard the United States battleship *Missouri*, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Shigemitsu Mamoru and Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff, General Umezu Yoshijirō, signed the unconditional surrender of Japan. Acting on behalf of the Allies was American General Douglas MacArthur who signed the surrender document³⁰. The end of World War II in East Asia liberated Korea from Japanese occupation, but Koreans had not regained their independence. Efforts to establish an independent government in liberated Korea failed,

²⁸ H. Befu, *Introduction*, in: H. Befu, ed., *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 19993, p. 3.

²⁹ S. H. Song, *Uri minjokjaeiljuŭi-wa chogukt'ong'il*, P'yōngyang Press, P'yōngyang 2004, pp. 11-19. The "our nation-first concept" can also be translated as "our nation-first-ism" or, more appropriately, "the doctrine of our nation as number one."

³⁰ K. Hanshall, *Historical Dictionary of Japan to 1945*, Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham, MD 2014, p. 329.

because at the end of the war the great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, had not reached agreement on the independence of the Korean peninsula. The consequence of a lack of political consensus was the division of the country.

The 38th parallel became the military demarcation line. The northern part of the peninsula was occupied by Soviet troops and the southern part by troops of the United States. On 27 December 1945 in Moscow during a conference of the three foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States, it was agreed that an independent and democratic Korea would be established. To this end the United States-Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics Joint Commission on Korea was organized. The commission met twice: once in 1946 in P'yŏngyang, and a second time in 1947 in Seoul. The two meetings ended in failure³¹.

In connection with this turn of events, by late 1947 the Korean issue became a subject of particular interest to the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations adopted a resolution whereby nationwide general elections would be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations to ensure the unity and independence of the peninsula. The Soviet Union rejected the provisions of the resolution and flatly refused to let the United Nations representatives into the northern part of Korea³².

On 10 May 1948, the first general elections to the National Assembly took place in the southern part of the peninsula under United Nations supervision. On 31 May, during the first session of the National Assembly, the new name of the country, the Republic of Korea (*Taehan minguk*) was officially adopted. On 12 July 1948 the National Assembly passed the constitution of the republic, which was publicly proclaimed 17 July. After the presidential elections the Republic of Korea was established on the "principles of a democratic system" on 15 August 1948. The first president of the Republic of Korea was Syngman Rhee³³.

In the northern part of the peninsula Korean communists began organizing state power by relying solely on the socialist model. To this end, the people's committees fulfilled the role of "democratic" authority. The central authority of the people's government was considered to be the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. The committee, as the highest legislative authority in the northern occupation zone, implemented a number of laws. These included, among others: the Agrarian Reform Act (3 May 1946), and the Act on the Nationalization of Industry, Transport, Communications and Banks (8 October 1946). After the socio-economic reforms in the years 1946-1947 in the northern part of the peninsula, popular elections were held for numerous other committees. In February of 1947 in P'yŏngyang, the congress

³¹ A. C. Nahm, *Korea, Tradition and Transformation: A History of the Korean People*, 2nd Edition, Hollym International Corp., Elizabeth, NJ & Seoul 1996, pp. 341-342.

³² *South Korea Under United States Occupation, 1945-48*, in: A. M. Savada, W. Shaw, eds., *South Korea: A Country Study*, Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 1990, <http://countrystudies.us/south-korea/9.htm>.

³³ C. N. Kim, *The Korean Presidents. Leadership for Nation Building*, EastBridge, Norwalk, CT 2007, p. 41.

of delegates approved the reforms and the laws that enabled the establishment of the People's Assembly, the chief representative body in North Korea. The People's Assembly approved the establishment of the People's Committee in place of the Provisional People's Committee³⁴.

In August 1948 elections were held for representatives of the Supreme People's Assembly, which on 9 September 1948, held its first session. This was the body that passed a resolution establishing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (*Chosŏn minjujuŭi inmin konghwaguk*), and the same governing body that adopted the first North Korean constitution. At the head of the communist government in North Korea was Kim Il Sung³⁵.

The Korean peninsula for about 1,300 years belonged to one country. In 1948 Korea was divided into the communist North and the capitalist South. In the post-World War II years, the location of Korea was a place where there was an intersection of the geopolitical interests of four powers: the Soviet Union, China, Japan and the United States. Amidst the resulting power struggle of these countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Korea proved itself unable to play an independent role in the international arena. The prevailing ideological conflict and bipolarity of the era of the Cold War caused a division of the world, and Korea was a nation that painfully felt the effects of the emerging world order. It can be suggested that the division of Korea was a triumph of ideology over the international rule of law.

THE KOREAN WAR

On 25 June 1950, the army of the Democratic People Republic of Korea crossed the 38th parallel, the border separating the two Koreas, and conducted an armed attack on the Republic of Korea. Immediately after receiving the news, the United States government convened an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, which unanimously condemned the North Korean aggression.

On the basis of a Security Council resolution, it was decided that United Nations member states would provide military aid to the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in order to restore peace on the peninsula. This resolution was the legal basis for the deployment of United Nations forces in Korea³⁶. At the same time the United Nations authorized the United States to designate the commander of United Nations forces in the person of American General Douglas MacArthur, the hero of the Allied defeat of military forces of the Empire of Japan in the Pacific during World War II. An armed

³⁴ B. M. Banaszak, *Ustrój Koreańskiej Republiki Ludowo-Demokratycznej w latach 1948-1980*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, „Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis” 1981, nr 108, pp. 3-4.

³⁵ A. Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung. The Formation of North Korea, 1945-1960*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ & London 2002, pp. 46-47.

³⁶ R. Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY & London 1985, pp. 110-111.

conflict on the Korean peninsula was thought to be particularly dangerous in the summer of 1950 because it was feared that such a conflict could turn into a global conflict between the world powers, with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China on the one hand, and the United States and its allies on the other. Thus, international security was assessed to be seriously threatened³⁷.

The political essence of the fighting consisted of the ideologically contradictory concepts related to the unification of the two Koreas. President Syngman Rhee wanted unification of the country under the "democratic government" of the South. North Korean leader Kim Il Sung desired that a unified and communist Korea would be part of the socialist bloc of nations. The months prior to the outbreak of the war were filled with belligerent rhetoric. Rhee frequently made references to "marching North". Kim Il Sung, however, believed in the efficacy of a military unification of Korea, and the complete communizing of the South. The preponderance of the North Korean army, which fielded some 130,600 soldiers in June 1950, was better equipped and had more combat experience than the South Korean forces. The Republic of Korea Army at that time had approximately 95,000 troops³⁸.

The North Korean forces routed the South Koreans along the 38th parallel and quickly advanced south. It appeared that only the intervention of the United Nations forces could save the South from a communist unification of the Korean Peninsula. In July 1950 American troops under the command of General MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Occupation Forces in Japan, joined the military action in Korea. On 15 September 1950, the successful landing of United Nations troops at the port of Inch'on radically changed the future course of the Korean War. On 26 September, United Nations forces captured Seoul³⁹.

Crossing the border north of the 38th parallel was a political decision. However, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 83, which defined the scope of hostilities, limited the legitimacy of the actions to the defense of the South. The Security Council resolution contained a directive to bring peace to the peninsula and maintain the border of South Korea along the 38th parallel⁴⁰. United States President Harry S. Truman refrained from issuing a formal, explicit command to the armed forces of the United Nations to enter the territory of North Korea. When the United Nations Security Council passed another resolution calling for the independence and unity of Korea, General MacArthur took it as a mandate to continue the offensive in the North. On 30 September 1950, South Korean army units crossed the 38th parallel, although

³⁷ M. Doyle, *Endemic Surprise: Strategic Surprises in First World-Third World Relations*, in: K. Knorr, P. Morgen, eds., *Strategic Military Surprise: Incentives and Opportunities*, National Strategy Information Center, New York 1983, pp. 77-86.

³⁸ *The Korean War, 1950-1953*, Revised Edition, Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C. 1989, pp. 546-547, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH/AMH-25.htm>.

³⁹ C. A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam*, The Free Press, New York 1986, pp. 48-50; B. Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost*, Hippocrene Books, Inc., New York 1986, pp. 194-206.

⁴⁰ UN Security Council, *Resolution 83 (1950) of 27 June 1950*, 27 June 1950, S/RES/83 (1950), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f20a2c.html>.

a resolution from the United Nations General Assembly authorizing the United Nations troops to enter the territory of North Korea was not passed until 7 October. P'yŏngyang, the capital of North Korea, fell to United Nations forces on 19 October⁴¹.

In connection with the unfolding developments on the Korean Peninsula, it seemed reasonable to the Chinese to fear an attack on the part of the United States. A large number of American military personnel stationed on the Republic of China (Taiwan), accounted for an elevation in the Chinese threat perception. In November 1950, the Chinese leadership headed by Mao Zedong decided on the accession of China into the Korean War. China began a military intervention against the American troops, and together with the North Koreans, forced a retreat of the United Nations forces toward the south. In January 1951, army units of the North Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army occupied Seoul⁴².

On 21 February 1951, the United Nations forces launched its largest military offensive of the Korean War codenamed "Ripper". On 4 March the South Korean capital once again was reoccupied by United Nations forces. Ground combat generally stabilized along the 38th parallel by July 1951. For the next two years, the two sides struggled back and forth along an axis, which would become, more or less, the military demarcation line at the time of the armistice two years later.

On 10 July 1951, the first negotiations were commenced at Kaesŏng. The second round of peace negotiations continued on 25 October at P'anmunjŏm. Negotiations continued throughout 1952. The subject of the negotiations were *inter alia*; there were such matters as the establishment of a military demarcation line, the settlement of prisoner of war issues, and mechanisms of monitoring and control over mutual compliance with the terms of the agreement. Finally, on 27 July 1953 the armistice agreement was signed between General William K. Harrison, Jr. representing the United Nations, and General Nam Il, representing the North Korean side⁴³. Combat ended, but this was only a theoretical end to the war. Both North Korea and South Korea conducted espionage operations on one another, and have launched various programs to improve the warfighting capabilities of their respective militaries since 1953. The establishment of the armistice was not synonymous with the establishment of peace; a peace treaty has never been signed. Therefore, the two Korean states have remained technically at war for over 60 years.

The Korean War ended without a peace treaty and without a clear winner or loser. The war resulted in mistrust and hatred, and the separation of nearly ten million Ko-

⁴¹ Y. F. Hao, Z. H. Zhai, *China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited*, "The China Quarterly" No. 121, March 1990, pp. 94-115.

⁴² W. J. Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen. Dzieło i polityczne wizje*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa 2000, p. 168; W. Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ & Woodstock, Oxfordshire 2002, pp. 102-111; S. N. Gončaro, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 1993, pp. 192-199.

⁴³ S. Sandler, *The Korean War: No Victors, No Vanquished*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 1999, p. 261.

reans from members of their family. Estimates of casualties vary greatly; the highest estimates place the total number of deaths and injured (wounded) at approaching six million, three million of whom were Koreans⁴⁴. The implications of the Korean War were significant, not only on the Korean peninsula, but throughout the bipolar post-World War II world. In the United States, the years after 1953 saw a rapid development of the military-industrial complex. American military bases were established in many countries of the world. The Soviet Union pursued a policy of deconstructing the American monopoly on nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Although the Korean War did not change the political status quo on the peninsula, it did remind the world of the potential threats to the fragility of international peace and security.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH KOREAN INTER-KOREAN POLICIES

Inter-Korean relations consist, in part, of unresolved conflicts to be found in the remnants of Cold War rivalry between the great powers. Membership of the two Korean states to opposing political blocs, South Korea to the camp of capitalist countries, while North Korea being a member of the community of socialist states, imposed restrictions on inter-Korean dealings and gave impetus to South Korea's authoritarian state-centered paradigm. The Korean War, which was fought at a time when President Syngman Rhee was, not only was a symbol of a divided world, but also solidified the artificial division of the Korean nation⁴⁵. It was not until the end of the Cold War did a real opportunity to change inter-Korean policies in the South and North become evident; from policies of confrontation to policies of reconciliation, dialogue and cooperation, guided by a nation-centered (ethnicity-centered) paradigm. The first contacts between the two Koreas have been established only in the early 1970s⁴⁶.

President Park Chung Hee during his increasingly authoritarian presidency called on North Korea to abandon its policy of confrontation and take up peaceful cooperation and competition in the field of socio-economic development. This created a situation in which for the first time since the end of the Korean War, it was possible to start a dialogue between the South and the North. It should be noted, however, that the then inter-Korean policies of both the South and the North were being shaped by

⁴⁴ *The Korean War*, HistoryLearningSite.co.uk., 2014, http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/korean_war.htm; M. Burdelski, E. Jendraszczak, *Perspektywy traktatu kończącego wojnę koreańską*, „Kwartalnik Bellona” 1/2011 (664), Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej.

⁴⁵ J. Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War*, University of Delaware Press, Newark, NJ 1989, s. 98-122; W. Stueck, op. cit., pp. 70-77; W. J. Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen...*, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴⁶ C. S. Lec, *The Yushin Regime and the National Division Structure: Antagonistic Interdependence and the Mirror Image Effect*, in: B. C. Lec, ed., *Developmental Dictatorship and The Park Chung Hee Era: The Shaping of Modernity in the Republic of Korea*, Homa & Sekey Books, Paramus, NJ 2003, pp. 220-221; D. Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, New Edition, Basic Books, New York 2001, pp. 14-15.

the changing balance of power in East Asia, with the most fundamental change being unambiguous signs of rapprochement in Sino-American relations⁴⁷.

The great achievement of President Park related to inter-Korean relations was the July 4 South-North Joint Communiqué signed between the two Koreas in 1972. Contained in the communiqué were declarations of political importance. The parties rejected the principle of unification by force, and at least in the language of the document, pledged their commitment to the application of the principle of peaceful reconciliation⁴⁸. However, in the mid-1970s, due to the different positions taken by the two Koreas, the dialogue between the Seoul and P'yŏngyang governments ended in failure.

The 1980s were characterized by mutual attempts at establishing inter-Korean dialogue on the part of both the South and North, as well as rejections of proposals and counterproposals. During the authoritarian rule of President Chun Doo Hwan, for the first time North Korea in an official letter sent to P'anmunjŏm used the term Republic of Korea, which was interpreted by some observers as the North's recognition of the existence of a second Korean state. The South Korean president appealed to the authorities in P'yŏngyang to end the "unnatural relations between the Koreas," and replace them with "normal contacts promoting the national treasures"⁴⁹. Chun invited North Korean leader Kim Il Sung to visit Seoul, without any conditions, and expressed a willingness to pay a visit to North Korea. Furthermore, during the Chun presidency the first meetings of families that had been separated during the Korean War took place. It was also during this time that the South and North held talks on inter-Korean economic cooperation.

From the point of view of the development of inter-Korean relations, very important were the diplomatic efforts of the Chun administration before the 1988 Olympic Games. South Korea established new international economic relations with non-aligned states and states from the socialist bloc. Being the host of the 1988 Olympic Games, Seoul invited all nations from the Western and Eastern blocs to participate in sports competition. At that time, South Korea also conducted talks with North Korea on the co-organization of the Olympic Games, which P'yŏngyang eventually boycotted. It was Chun's foreign policy, his "Olympic diplomacy", which sought to establish contacts with the countries of the Eastern camp, especially the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, in order to bring indirect pressure on North Korea to moderate its rhetoric and actions⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ J. Kukulka, *Historia współczesna stosunków międzynarodowych 1945-2000*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2007, pp. 220-221.

⁴⁸ M. G. Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*, Global Oriental, Folkstone, Kent 2005, p. 247.

⁴⁹ N. D. Levin, Y. S. Han, *Sunshine in Korea: The South Korean Debate over Policies Toward North Korea*, RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy, Santa Monica, CA 2002, p. 7.

⁵⁰ S. Radchenko, *Introduction: Sport and Politics on the Korean Peninsula - North Korea and the 1988 Seoul Olympics*, North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP), <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/sport-and-politics-the-korean-peninsula-north-korea-and-the-1988-seoul-olympics>.

The end of Churi rule also meant the end of authoritarian rule as South Korea entered a path toward democratic transition. Analysis of inter-Korean relations during the authoritarian rule in South Korea clearly demonstrates that the relations were often mired in the rivalry of the last years of the Cold War and its structural realities. Initiatives and proposals presented by both parties had no real opportunities for implementation. Additionally, mutual hostility and distrust effectively hindered the conduct of inter-Korean negotiations on reconciliation, cooperation and unification. Nonetheless, these obstacles and challenges did not stop the South and North from secret, informal contacts between high-level authorities during these years⁵¹.

The policy of confrontation of the Cold War period was evident in the total number of cases of bombings, assassination attempts, kidnappings, spy missions, acts of sabotage and provocations, engineered by P'yŏngyang toward Seoul. The most spectacular provocations of North Korea during the Cold War were: the first attempt at assassination of President Park Chung Hee by a 31-man team of special operations personnel (Seoul, 1968); the second assassination attempt on the life of President Park Chung Hee (Seoul, 1974.) at the hands of a Korean resident of Japan; the murder of South Korean and American military personnel (1976, P'anmunjŏm); the kidnapping of two South Korean actors who were husband and wife (Hong Kong, 1978); the assassination attempt on the life of President Chun Doo Hwan (Yangon (Rangoon), 1983); and lastly, the blowing up of a Korean Air plane (Bagdad-Seoul flight, 1987) in the weeks before the 1987 presidential election in South Korea⁵². Such actions of North Korea contributed to increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and reduced the chances for mutual understanding and improved relations. As a result of the changes taking place in the world in the late 1980s and the early 1990s (the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union), the South Korean policy toward North Korea began to open to new perspectives. During the Roh Tae Woo presidency, South Korea began a period of democratic change, which included attempts to settle its authoritarian past.

The government of the administration of President Roh Tae Woo was a turning point both in both domestic politics and in the South's policy towards North Korea⁵³. In a speech to the South Korean National Assembly in July 1988 (Special Declaration for National Self-esteem, Unification, and Prosperity), President Roh stated it was clearly in the national interest of South Korea to work towards national self-unification and achieve prosperity for all Koreans, both in the South and the North. Roh stressed that "there is one Korean nation, and so Korea must be united as one state. Any political system attempting to reconcile the two Koreas will not lead to a true union, if its

⁵¹ E. Haliżak, *Regionalny kompleks bezpieczeństwa Azji Południowo-Wschodniej*, „Żurawia Papers” z. 3, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2004, pp. 36-37.

⁵² For an elaboration on North Korea provocations, see: J. Bayer, W. J. Dziak, *Północnokoreańskie akty dywersji i prowokacje: Rodzaj działań i chronologia*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa 2004.

⁵³ H. J. Kim, *The Republic of Korea's Northern Policy: Origin, Development and Prospects*, in: J. Cotton, ed., *Korea under Roh Tae-Woo: Democratization, Northern Policy, and Inter-Korean Relations*, Allen & Unwin, Canberra 1993, pp. 245-246.

purpose is to maintain two countries with two different ideologies"⁵⁴. In 1990, for the first time since the division of Korea, inter-Korean talks at the prime ministerial level were held. As a result of these meetings two agreements were concluded, and these have become the basis for the development of relations between the two Koreas down to the present: The Basic Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation between the South and the North, signed on 13 December 1991, and the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed on 31 December 1991⁵⁵.

President Roh Tae Woo also urged the allies of the Republic of Korea, specifically the United States and Japan, to attempt to improve their bilateral relations with North Korea. He expressed interest in the development of duty-free trade on the Korean Peninsula, and supported the organization of meetings of families separated by the Korean War. Moreover, Roh expressed his willingness to meet with the North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung. Roh Tae Woo's declaration and later pronouncements, indicated that North Korea was no longer seen as the enemy, and the entrance of the Korean People's Democratic Republic into the international community did not constitute a threat to the Republic of Korea. The Roh government, opening a new chapter in South Korean policy toward North Korea, dubbed the new approach as the "Northern Policy" (*Nordpolitik*). This policy, in practice, sought to establish contacts with previously unrecognized countries of the socialist camp, thereby laying the foundations for solving the problem of the division of Korea⁵⁶.

However, by the end of 1992, inter-Korean dialogue and a further implementation of the South's Northern Policy was being called into question, primarily due to growing suspicions about North Korea's nuclear program. It was in such an atmosphere of tension, that Kim Young Sam was sworn in as president in February 1993. South Korean domestic politics was becoming a full-fledged democracy, and using the phrase Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, the consolidation of democracy in South Korea was becoming "the only game in town"⁵⁷. Enshrined in the constitution, which regulated the functioning of the state and society, were the guarantees of normative rules for the participation of South Korean citizens in the public space. This meant, that increasingly, South Korea's policy toward North Korea would be impacted by the dynamics of a participatory democracy. In his inaugural speech, Kim Young Sam presented his

⁵⁴ J. J. Metzler, *Divided Dynamism: The Diplomacy of Separate Nations. Germany, China, Korea*, University Press of America, New York 1996, p. 84.

⁵⁵ D. Oberdorfer, op. cit., pp. 260-261; H. J. Kim, *The Unification Policy of South and North Korea, 1948-1976*, Seoul National University Press, Seoul 1977, p. 270; B. C. Koh, *The Inter-Korean Agreements of 1972 and 1992: A Comparative Assessment*, "Korea and World Affairs" Vol. 16, No. 3, Fall 1992, pp. 472-474.

⁵⁶ D. C. Sanford, *ROK's Nordpolitik: Revisited*, "The Journal of East Asian Affairs" Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter/ Spring 1993, pp. 1-31.

⁵⁷ J. J. Linz, A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD 1996, p. 5; G. Strnad, *Południowokoreańska droga do demokracji*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2010, pp. 270-271.

plans "to build a new Korea"⁵⁸, and declared the fight against corruption, revive the economy, and mindful of the growing power of people in the new democratic environment, stated that "none of the foreign allies are as important as our ethnic brethren in the North; no ideology can bring more happiness than this national bond"⁵⁹.

Kim Il Sung had proposed a summit meeting, any place and any time. However, in March 1993, due to North Korea's announcement of its decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, inter-Korean relations were at an impasse. This first nuclear crisis heightened South Korean domestic political debate on the wisdom of continuing inter-Korean dialogue. Kim Young Sam believed that the development of inter-Korean relations, including economic cooperation, was no longer possible without solving the nuclear problem⁶⁰.

In the face of growing tension on the Korean peninsula, former United States President Jimmy Carter went on a peace mission to P'yongyang. As a result of these discussions, it was agreed that North Korea would return to disarmament negotiations, and that an inter-Korean summit between Kim Il Sung and Kim Young Sam would be held on 25 July 1994 in P'yongyang. Unfortunately, Kim Il Sung died on 8 July 1994. Nonetheless, Carter's mediation did ultimately contribute to the signing in October 1994, of the Framework Agreement between Washington and P'yongyang⁶¹. However, South Korea refused to send official condolences to the authorities in P'yongyang; this angered the North Koreans. Inter-Korean negotiations and dialogue stagnated. During the administration of Kim Young Sam, South Korea's policy toward North Korea was dominated by two issues: the nuclear issue, and the food crisis in the North⁶². In this context, it is important to highlight the significant role of non-governmental humanitarian organizations, which called for the provision of food aid to North Korea regardless of the political situation. The activities of these organizations were an expression of an important South Korean value being manifested in societal behavior: that is, the still pervasive sense of collective identity as the "Korean nation".

Due to the catastrophic food situation in North Korea in December 1996, Seoul established the Humanitarian Cooperation Office, an office subordinate to the Ministry of Unification. In 1997 South Korea also provided food aid through the World Food Program and the United Nations Fund for Children. During the Kim Young Sam presidency numerous actions were undertaken to enhance inter-Korean economic cooperation. Representatives of South Korean corporations were able to visit North Korea,

⁵⁸ B. Y. Ahn, *Korea's Democratization: Achievements and Issues*, "Koreana" Vol. 13, No. 2, Summer 1999, p. 48.

⁵⁹ S. Y. Yoon, *South Korea's Kim Young Sam's Government: Political Agendas*, "Asian Survey" Vol. 36, No. 5, May 1996, pp. 512-513; I. C. Shin, *First Year of Civilian Government*, "Korea Focus" Vol. 2, No. 1, January-February 1994, pp. 33-36.

⁶⁰ J. S. Wit, D. B. Poneman, R. L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 2004, p. 27.

⁶¹ J. Carter, *Report of Our Trip to Korea, June 1994*, (Carter Center), Atlanta, GA; W. J. Perry, *It's Either Nukes or Negotiation*, "The Washington Post" 23 July 2003.

⁶² P. French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula – A Modern History*, Revised Edition, Zed Books, London & New York 2007, p. 130.

which expressed a growing interest in the creation of a special economic zone⁶³. In politics, Kim Young Sam governmental policy initiatives and rhetoric toward North Korea experienced frequent changes, which were reflections of the problems with the "identity" of the South Korean state. South Korean policy toward North Korea has oscillated, and to some degree, still oscillates, between two paradigms: a state-centered and the other nation-centered. On the one hand, North Koreans are conceptualized as our hungry and malnourished brothers in the North, while on the other hand, North Koreans pose a substantial security risk to South Korea because of their nuclear weapons development program⁶⁴.

Kim Dae Jung ascended to the presidency in February 2008. This marked the beginning of a particularly significant period in the development of South Korea's policy toward the North, as well as inter-Korean relations. In his inaugural address, President Kim Dae Jung announced that his office wanted to be a "government of the people", who must be prepared for a period of "sweat and tears"⁶⁵. Kim presenting the three main goals of his administration as: economic recovery, support for democratic institutions, and a warming of relations with North Korea. Kim Dae Jung proposed a summit between himself and the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. In the historical context of inter-Korean relations, Kim Dae Jung's policy towards North Korea was a turning point, a breakthrough, the basis of which suggested a shift from a state-centered paradigm to a nation-centered paradigm. The most important goal of the Sunshine Policy was to improve inter-Korean relations in an effort to achieve national reconciliation, cooperation and peace⁶⁶. President Kim Dae Jung believed that the peaceful coexistence of two states of the Korean Peninsula was a more realistic goal than the immediate reunification of Korea. He stressed the need to create an environment conducive to change and to open up North Korea to the outside world. The watershed event of the Sunshine Policy was the inter-Korean summit, which took place in June 2000. For the first time in the history of inter-Korean relations, the two leaders of the South and North met⁶⁷.

The leaders of the two Korean states publicly assessed that the talks were of a groundbreaking character in the interest of the development and enhancement of inter-Korean relations, with the eventual goal of national unification. South Korea's engagement policy towards North Korea, however, was a source of internal political disputes, forming the so-called "South-South Conflict". The politics of the Sunshine

⁶³ M. Noland, S. Robinson, T. Wang, *Famine In North Korea: Causes and Cures*, "Economic Development and Cultural Change" Vol. 49, No. 4, 2001, pp. 744-745.

⁶⁴ D. R. Yoon, K. J. Kim, *Beyond Mt. Kumkang: Social and Economic Implications*, in: C. I. Moon, D. I. Steinberg, eds., *Kim Dae-jung Government and [the] Sunshine Policy: Promises and Challenges*, Yonsei University Press, Seoul 1999, pp. 106-110.

⁶⁵ C. N. Kim, op. cit., pp. 318-319.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Unification, *Policy towards North Korea for Peace, Reconciliation, and Cooperation*, Ministry of Unification, Seoul, 1999, pp. 1-28.

⁶⁷ D. J. Kim, *Don't Take the Sunshine Away*, w: *Korea and Asia: A Collection of Essays, Speeches and Discussions*, The Kim Dae Jung Peace Foundation, Seoul 1994, p. 33.

Policy continued to divide the South Korean political scene into two main camps: the progressives, identified with the Left, who were labeled as "pro-unification", and the conservatives, identified with the Right, who were labeled anti-unification. Security risks involving North Korea's development of a nuclear weapons program and South Korea's relations with the United States were also the subject of inter-party debates and political disputes⁶⁸. The second nuclear crisis, spawned by the North Koreans admitting that they had nuclear weapons in October 2002, placed the Sunshine Policy in peril⁶⁹.

Research on South Korean ideologies conducted by Kang Wontaek, a professor at Seoul National University, has suggested that ideological conflicts in South Korea are fundamentally different from those in the West. According to Kang, there are four dimensions which delineate conservative and progressive orientations in South Korea. The first three are right/left, authority/liberalism, and modern values/post-modern values. Kang concludes that these three dimensions are universally applicable in defining political orientations. Kang argues that the fourth dimension, the South Korean conflict over anti-communism issues, meaning policy toward North Korea, is the most crucial difference. It could be argued that this remains a vestige of the Cold War⁷⁰.

Inter-Korean relations had become even more complicated at the beginning of 2002, when United States President George W. Bush referred to North Korea, along with Iran and Iraq, as constituting an "axis of evil". Controversy over the North Korean nuclear program, however, did not prevent the Kim Dae Jung administration from developing inter-Korean cooperation and exchange. According to the June Declaration from the summit in 2000, the two Koreas declared their support of expanded cooperation in the spheres of economics, cultural exchange, sports and other fields. Having been operational since September 1998, the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation was established to achieve national reconciliation, to stimulate and coordinate the inter-Korean exchange and cooperation at different levels⁷¹. Adopted in 1990, the Inter-Korean Law on Trade, Exchange and Cooperation between the South and the North had defined the parameters of inter-Korean economic cooperation as being conducted within a single country. During the Kim Dae Jung presidency, the most visible achievement in economic cooperation was the inter-Korean tourist project implemented by the South Korean corporation Hyundai at Kŭmkangsan, within the borders of North Korea. The years of the engagement policy of the Kim Dae Jung administration was a period of continued humanitarian aid and assistance to the

⁶⁸ H. Juang, *Foreign Policy and South Korean Democracy: The Failure of Party Politics*, "Taiwan Journal of Democracy" Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2005, pp. 54-55; H. S. Chae, S. Kim, *Conservatives and Progressives in South Korea*, "The Washington Quarterly" Vol. 31, No. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 78-79; N. D. Levin, Y. S. Han, op. cit., pp. 100-104.

⁶⁹ M. Chinoy, *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2009, pp. 123-125.

⁷⁰ W. T. Kang, *Ideological Clash of Progressives and Conservatives in Korea*, "Korean Party Studies Review" Vol. 4, No. 2, 2005, pp. 2-3.

⁷¹ N. D. Levin, Y. S. Han, op. cit., p. 77.

North⁷², and continued meetings of families separated during the Korean War through the efforts of the Red Cross organizations in the South and the North. Despite many successes in developing inter-Korean dialogue in the last year of the Kim Dae Jung presidency, the situation grew tense with the North Korean admission of conducting a secret nuclear research program, and P'yŏngyang's announcement in early 2003 that the North intended to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty⁷³.

In February of 2003, Roh Moo Hyun assumed the highest political office in South Korea. In his inaugural address he stated that his presidency would be a "participatory government". Roh signaled his support of the Republic of Korea becoming the business center of Northeast Asia, and his desire to carry out many social reforms, and to fight against corruption. He also declared that his administration would be a continuation of the policy of engagement towards North Korea: Roh called his North Korea policy the Peace and Prosperity Policy. Because of the second nuclear crisis, the progressive Roh administration from the very beginning faced criticism concerning its engagement of the North, and the political opposition continued to demand an explanation for the "cash-for-summit" of 2000, which revealed that the South Korean government had "compensated" North Korea some 500 million dollars as part of the summit arrangements⁷⁴.

The Peace and Prosperity Policy embraced two objectives: to promote peace on the peninsula and the pursuit of mutual prosperity of both Koreas, combined with actions to develop prosperity for the entire region of Northeast Asia. The Roh Moo Hyun administration also took diplomatic actions on the international scene for a peaceful solution to the problem of North Korea's nuclear program. In order to restore security in the region of Northeast Asia and address the North Korean nuclear issue⁷⁵, six nations participated in the Six-Party Talks starting in 2003: the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia.

South Korea worked to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis through dialogue, and also sought to establish a peace agreement on the Korean peninsula. The Roh administration made great efforts to normalize Inter-Korean relations by developing various forms of inter-Korean cooperation and exchange. Despite the setbacks caused by the second North Korean nuclear crisis and internal political disputes between progressives and conservatives, resulting from the South Korean engagement policy towards North Korea, the Roh Moo Hyun administration continued a policy of dia-

⁷² K. Y. Moon, *The Role of Humanitarian NGOs: Impact on South Korean Food Aid Policy towards North Korea from 1995 to 2007*, Cranfield University, Cranfield 2011, pp. 56, 265, 405.

⁷³ Yonhap News Agency, 2 January 2003; H. K. Lee, *The US Policy and Strategy toward DPRK: Comparison and Evaluation of the Clinton and Bush Administrations*, "Pacific Focus" Vol. 17, Issue 2, September 2002, pp. 61-87; K. Y. Son, *South Korean Engagement Policies and North Korea: Identities, Norms and the Sunshine Policy*, Routledge, New York 2006, p. 174.

⁷⁴ C. N. Kim, op. cit., p. 348.

⁷⁵ G. Rozman, *Turning the Six-Party Talks into a Multilateral Security Framework for Northeast Asia*, in: *Towards Sustainable Economic & Security Relations in East Asia: U.S. & ROK Policy Options*, The Korea Economic Institute (KEI), Washington, D.C. 2008, pp. 164-165, <http://www.keia.org/sites/default/files/publications/08Rozman.pdf>.

logue and negotiation, both bilaterally with North Korea, and multilaterally within the framework of the Six-Party Talks⁷⁶, as an example.

During the Roh presidency, there was an intensification of inter-Korean cooperation in different spheres. Cooperative economic and transportation successes included: the connecting a two main railway lines between North and South: the Kyōngūi and Tonghae rail lines between the two Koreas; further development of the tourist zone in Kūmgangsan; and, construction and development of the Kaesōng Industrial Complex⁷⁷. The socio-cultural front included numerous artistic, educational, and scholarly exchanges. South Korean humanitarian aid to the North occupied an important centerpiece in Roh's policy strategy, and increased significantly during the Roh administration. The South supplied North Korea with humanitarian aid, food in particular, both directly, but also through international organizations, such as UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. A major role in the transfer of humanitarian aid from South Korea was played by South Korean NGOs (for example, The Korean Sharing Movement and Good Friends). This assistance was, however, a source of domestic political discord in South Korea as reports of human rights violations in North Korea increased, especially during 2006, and thereafter⁷⁸.

At the beginning of October 2007, the second inter-Korean summit took place in P'yōngyang. South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun, crossing the demarcation line on foot, and compared it to a wall that divides the Korean nation. The most important achievement of the second summit was the Declaration on the Advancement of South-North Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, signed on 4 October 2007. In P'yōngyang, the leaders of the South and the North declared, among other things, that they would take action to implement the Joint Declaration of June 15, solve the problem of national unification, develop dialogue and cooperation at various levels, and would strive to replace the armistice with a peace treaty. Both sides expressed an interest in convening a summit of the two Korean states, with the United States and The People's Republic of China in order to conclude a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War. Both leaders, Roh Moo Hyun and Kim Jong Il, declared that they would work to resolve the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, and implement the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, and the Agreement of 13 February 2007, both signed within the framework of the Six-Party Talks⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ P. Evans, *Constructing Multilateralism in an Anti-Region: From Six Party Talks to a Regional Security Framework in Northeast Asia?*, in: G. W. Shin, D. C. Sneider, eds., *Cross Currents: Regionalism and Nationalism in Northeast Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 2007, pp. 99-100.

⁷⁷ R. Frank, *North Korea: Domestic Politics and Economy, 2007-2008*, in: R. Frank, J. E. Hoare, P. Köllner, S. Pares, eds., *Korea Yearbook, Vol. 2, Politics, Economy, Society, 2008*, Brill, Leiden & Boston 2009, p. 39.

⁷⁸ J. E. Hoare, *Relations between the Two Koreas, 2007-2008*, in: R. Frank, J. E. Hoare, P. Köllner, S. Pares, eds., op. cit., pp. 45-49.

⁷⁹ C. I. Moon, *Comparing the 2002 and 2007 Inter-Korean Summits: From Symbols to Substance*, "Global Asia" Vol. 2, No. 3, Winter 2007, pp. 76-88.

During the years 1998-2007, South Korea provided North Korea with substantial economic assistance, and Seoul attempted to halt the North's development of a nuclear program and encouraged P'yŏngyang to adopt the policy of reform and open up to the outside world.⁸⁰ However, there was a widespread perception in South Korea by the end of 2007 that the engagement policies of the successive governments of Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun, had been largely ineffective. Given the fact that in October 2006 North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, even many South Korean supporters of engagement were disappointed; the North's provocation led to criticism of the Northern policies of two "progressive" presidential administrations (1998-2008)⁸¹. The end of the Roh Moo Hyun administration also meant an end of the progressive policy, the basis of which was a more or less unconditional support of North Korea, and a separation of inter-Korean economic policy issues from issues of security.

The election of Yi Myung Bak to the presidency of South Korea in December 2007 signaled a return of conservatives to power and a North Korean policy of pragmatism, meaning a shift to a harder line toward the North, known as the Policy of Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity⁸². Responding angrily to the United Nations Security Council's Presidential Statement issued on 13 April 2009 that condemned the failed North Korean satellite launch, P'yŏngyang declared on 14 April 2009 that it would pull out of the Six Party Talks and that it would resume its nuclear enrichment program in order to boost its nuclear deterrent. The Six-Party Talks ceased in 2009. North Korea also expelled all nuclear inspectors from the country. The North's official news agency, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), announced, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea successfully conducted one more underground nuclear test on 25 May 2009 as part of the measures to bolster up its nuclear deterrent for self-defense in every way as requested by its scientists and technicians"⁸³.

On 26 March 2010, the 1,200-ton South Korean naval vessel *Ch'ōnan* with a crew of 104, sank off Paengnyŏng Island in the Yellow Sea. Seoul said there was an explosion at the stern, and was investigating whether a torpedo attack was the cause. Out of 104 sailors, 46 died and 58 were rescued. South Korean President Lee Myung Bak convened an emergency meeting of security officials and ordered the military to focus on rescuing the sailors. On 20 May 2010, a team of international researchers published results claiming that the sinking had been caused by a North Korean torpedo; North Korea rejected the findings. South Korea agreed with the findings

⁸⁰ H. N. Kim, *The Lee Myung-Bak Government's North Korea Policy and the Prospects for Inter-Korean Relations*, "International Journal of Korean Studies" Vol. XII, No. 1, Fall/Winter 2008, p. 3.

⁸¹ D. Y. Yoon, *Vision 3000: Denuclearization and Openness*, "East Asian Review" Vol. 20, No. 2, Summer 2008, p. 6.

⁸² A. Foster-Carter, *North Korea-South Korea Relations: Back to Belligerence*, "Comparative Connections", Vol. 10, No. 1, April 2008, pp. 1-2, http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/0801qnk_sk.pdf; S. Snyder, *Lee Myung-bak's Foreign Policy: A 250-Day Assessment*, "Korean Journal of Defense Analysis" Vol. 21, Issue 1, March 2009, p. 1.

⁸³ "The New York Times" 25 May 2009; J. Medalia, *North Korea's 2009 Nuclear Test: Containment, Monitoring, Implications*, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R41160.pdf>.

from the research group. Only two months after the *Ch'ŏnan* incident, on 24 May 2010, the Lee Myung Bak administration announced sanctions against the north. The "May 24 Measures" on North Korea included five types of sanctions, including: (1) a complete suspension of all north-south trade; (2) suspension of all new investments in North Korea; (3) a ban on South Korean travel to the north (with the exception of Kaesŏng and Kŭmgangsan); (4) postponement of all aid projects (with the exception of humanitarian aid); and (5) a ban on encroachment of North Korean ships in South Korean waters. These measures were a retreat an unambiguous South Korean retreat from the 2002 and 2007 inter-Korean summit agreements⁸⁴. North Korea denied all the allegations and responded by severing ties between the countries and announced it was abrogating the previous non-aggression agreement⁸⁵.

On 23 November 2010, North Korea fired approximately 170 long-range artillery rounds at South Korea's Yŏnp'yŏng Island in the Yellow Sea and South Korea returned fire. Two South Korean marines and two civilians were killed, and more than a dozen South Koreans were wounded, including three civilians. The population on the island was evacuated and South Korea warned of a stern retaliation, with President Lee Myung Bak ordering the destruction of a nearby North Korea missile base if further provocation should occur. The official North Korean news agency, the KCNA, stated that "Despite our repeated warnings, South Korea provoked us by firing artillery shells into our territory". South Korean analysts have speculated that the demonstration of military prowess was Kim Jong Un's attempt to consolidate his standing with military elites in the North⁸⁶.

According to Lee Myung Bak's recently published memoirs, North Korea repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, pushed for a summit meeting with the former South Korean leader, demanding a huge aid package, including \$10 billion in cash as an incentive. Lee recounts that he rejected the repeated overtures, which began in 2009, because he wanted to break the pattern of rewarding what he has called "the recalcitrant government" in P'yŏngyang, simply for agreeing to talk⁸⁷.

During the presidential campaign, Park Geun Hye attempted to distance herself from the inter-Korean policies of Lee Myung Bak, given his decreasing popularity in late 2012. Park criticized previous administrations for choosing an excessive reliance on either benefits or intimidation. Specifically, she noted that the progressive administrations of Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun had emphasized "accommodation and inter-Korean solidarity have placed inordinate hope in the idea that if the South

⁸⁴ The Joint Civilian-Military Investigation Group, *Investigation Result on the Sinking of ROKS "Cheonan"*, 20 May 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/20_05_10jigreport.pdf; *The Unended "Cheonan Incident"*, Zoom in Korea, 29 March 2014, <http://zoominkorea.org/un-ended-cheonan-incident/>.

⁸⁵ S. Snyder, S. W. Byun, *Cheonan and Yeongpyeong: The Northeast Asian Response to North Korea's Provocations*, "Rusi Journal" Vol. 156, No. 2, April/May 2011, pp. 74-81.

⁸⁶ B. Powell, *Behind the Koreas' Artillery Fire: Kim's Succession*, "Time" 23 November 2011.

⁸⁷ S. H. Choe, *North Korea Sought Talks and Attached a Hefiy Price Tag, South's Ex-Leader Says*, "Asia Pacific" 29 January 2015.

provided sustained assistance to the North, the North would abandon its bellicose strategy toward the South. But after years of such attempts, no fundamental change has come". Similarly she argued that conservatives were trying to put pressure on P'yŏngyang and had not yet been able to influence the North's behavior in a significant way. The new North Korean policy, known as the Trust-building Process (on the Korean Peninsula), or *Trustpolitik*, is based on retaining robust deterrence and defense capabilities with the simultaneous promise of unparalleled assistance to the North provided that P'yŏngyang "makes the right choices"⁸⁸.

On 12 December 2012, consistent with the North's history of testing new South Korean governments prior to or shortly after presidential elections, North Korea launched the Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3 Unit 2, a scientific and technological satellite, and it reached orbit. North Korea's first-ever successful launch of a satellite into the earth's orbit demonstrated that P'yŏngyang was much closer to building a nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile⁸⁹. The United States moved warships to the region. During the period January-September 2013, there were increasing tensions between North Korea and South Korea, the United States, and Japan that began because of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2087, which condemned North Korea for the launch of Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3 Unit 2⁹⁰. The crisis was marked by extreme escalation of rhetoric by the North Korean regime and the North "suggested" actions or plans for an imminent nuclear attacks against South Korea, Japan, and the United States.

In the midst of tensions between the two Koreas, North Korea closed the Kaesŏng Industrial Complex to South Koreans on 8 April 2013. The industrial area, which had opened in 2005, had been a primary mechanism of inter-Korean economic cooperation. The Kaesŏng Industrial Complex, which is considered to be an important source of hard currency for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's regime, sits just a few kilometers north of the DMZ, which divides the two Koreas. Its closure followed a sustained escalation of tensions on the Korean peninsula, set off by North Korea's long-range rocket launch in December 2012 and the North's third underground nuclear test on 12 February 2013. The subsequent tightening of sanctions announced by the United Nations Security Council resulted in increasingly menacing rhetoric from the North, who threatened to attack the South with a pre-emptive nuclear strike. The industrial complex was reopened on 16 September 2013 after tense negotiations⁹¹.

On 21 March 2014 a crashed North Korean unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) was found near P'aju, some 36 kilometers north-northeast of Seoul. The onboard cameras

⁸⁸ C. M. Lee, *The Park Geun-hye Administration's Foreign and Security Policy Challenges*, Korea Chair Platform, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 1 May 2013, http://csis.org/files/publication/130501_The%20Park%20Geun-hye%20Administration%27s%20Challenge.pdf.

⁸⁹ "The Washington Post" 12 December 2012.

⁹⁰ United Nations, *Security Council Condemns Use of Ballistic Missile Technology in Launch by Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in Resolution 2087 (2013)*, 22 January 2013, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc10891.doc.htm>.

⁹¹ K. J. Kwon, *North and South Korea Reopen Kaesong Industrial Complex*, CNN, 16 September 2013, International Edition, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/asia/kaesong-korea-complex-reopens/DC>.

contained 193 pictures of the South Korean presidential compound (*Ch'ōngwadae*), and Kyōngbok Palace, and South Korean military installations near the DMZ. On 31 March, following an exchange of artillery fire into the waters of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), a second North Korean UAV was found crashed on Paengnyōng Island, located 210 kilometers northwest of Seoul⁹². On 15 September 2014, wreckage of a third suspected North Korean UAV was found by a fisherman in the waters near Paengnyōng Island. The drone (UAV) was reported to be similar to one of the North Korean drones which had crashed in March 2014.

On 1 January 2015, Kim Jong Un, in his New Year's address to the country, stated that he was willing to resume higher-level talks with the South despite recent controversy over the film *The Interview*, an American-made comedy that is a political satire negatively directed towards North Korea.⁹³ Later in January, the South Koreans proposed a test-run of an inter-Korean railway connecting Seoul and P'yōngyang, with its two other major cities, Sinūiju and Rajin. Additionally, the South indicated it would try to set up inter-Korean cultural centers in Seoul and P'yōngyang to encourage better cultural exchange. These projects were included in briefings made by the unification, foreign affairs, defense, and veteran affairs ministries to President Park Geun Hye on their policies for 2015, a year which marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule. The briefings designated 2015 as a starting point that would lead to inter-Korean unification. The year 2015 seems to suggest more twists and turns in inter-Korean relations.⁹⁴

An analysis of the history of South Korean policy toward the North, and a review of the process of dialogue, and attempts at cooperation and reconciliation from the time of the end of the Cold War, suggest a relationship between South Korea and North Korea that is both very complex and characterized by periods of discontinuity. The first two decades of inter-Korean dialogue was dominated by external factors, such as the global struggle for power and dominance between the then two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Within this "Cold War structure", specific examples of external factors were the Sino-American rapprochement of the 1970s, and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The end of the Cold War caused a change in the dynamics of inter-Korean dialogue, and therefore, South Korea altered its policies toward the North, a policy increasingly based on domestic political pressures that have become more prominent since the early post-democracy transition period (the late 1980s). Since the early 1990s, attempts at cooperation and reconciliation have been impacted increasingly by internal factors. While this trend can be described as the "Koreanization of the inter-Korean problem", given the many geopolitical interests of powerful states surrounding the two Koreas, it seems likely that external factors will continue to have an impact on Korean people, in the South and North.

⁹² J. S. Bermudez Jr., *North Korea Drones On*, "38 North" 1 February 2015, <http://38north.org/2014/07/jbermudez070114/>.

⁹³ C. I. Moon, *What's New in Kim Jong Un's New Year's Speech?*, "38 North" 5 January 2015, <http://38north.org/2015/01/cmoon010515/>

⁹⁴ "The Korea Times" 19 January 2015.

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Keywords: Korean peninsula, Korean nation, inter-Korean relations, national identity

Abstract

This article focuses on the political challenges in a divided Korean nation and South Korea's policy toward North Korea. In 2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II is being commemorated, and the 70th anniversary of the division of Korea is being remembered. The division of Korea resulted in two states: the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. At the core of inter-Korean relations are issues of national identity common to all Koreans. The history of inter-Korean politics consists of complex intertwined currents of confrontation and contested legitimacy, as well as attempts at dialogue, cooperation and reconciliation. Despite changes in world politics, the divided Korean nation still struggles with remnants of the Cold War.