

New World Environment Surrounding Korean Peninsula

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Working Paper Series Vol. 2009-14
April 2009

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Abstract

The Year of the Cow dawns signaling many changes in the world affairs as U.S. welcomes the arrival of Barack Obama Presidency. North Korea will likely face new bargaining chips from the new president, although yet there are many uncertainty on the future of the Korean Peninsula. This paper will look into new environments ahead of North and South Korea as well as the required measures for the South to take if the Big Bang occurs in the North. After many years of rapprochement efforts failed in resulting in any fruits between two Koreas, “inter-Korean cooperation and talks without conditions” encounter serious loss of confidence on their usefulness and effectiveness. The South’s economic assistance as well as DPRK-US diplomatic relations, if established, may surely ensure the Pyongyang sustain in short-term. But in the long run the outcome will either undermine North Korea or in worst case help Pyongyang manage to retain its grip for extended periods if its military can control “possible implosion” by the masses. This paper suggests that extraneous supports for quick “implosion” is preferred to “extension” of the longevity of ill-founded paranoid regime in North Korea.

Key words: Big-bang, confederation, commission, Darwin’s theory, diplomatic relations, German lesson, implosion, Perestroika and Glasnost, reciprocity, reunification.

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1. Introduction: Misty and Rugged Road to Korean Reunification

The Year of the Cow, 2009 dawned signaling the imminence of the likely changes in the world affairs while people all of the world are literally preoccupied by the hardships of the economic turmoil, as the situation seems yet worsening in all corners of the world. Above all, Barack Hussein Obama (47 years old) took his place as the 44th president of the United States on January 20, 2009, defining the problems America now faces in unsparing terms and exhorting its people to respond by taking greater responsibility for themselves, the country and the world.

The essence of inaugural address of the world's most powerful president was sure rejection of the policies and values of his immediate tolerance and sacrifice for the common good. Standing on the west front of the Capitol as the first black man sworn in as US president, Obama called his fellow citizens to change and to respond to the demands of a new age by emphasizing: "All this we can do. And all this we will do". Surely the new US president's inauguration foretells the forthcoming change of world policy tracks. Question is how the Obama administration would deviate from its predecessor on the Korean peninsula issues. Depending on new deployment and engagement of US foreign policy toward Korea as well as East Asia at large, the Korean reunification scenario would come in different type and very improbable expectation, if not distant future one. Because of the first order priority of domestic business for President Obama, South Korea as well as the North Korean nuclear issue is likely to draw far less attention from the new administration as compared to the former Bush administration. East Asia is as well less likely to draw attention from Mr. Obama given the US current preoccupation with Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the waterboarding (a form of controlled suffocation that mimics drowning) ruckus at the notorious Guantanamo Bay detention facility as well as controversial permits of abortion funding. This niche in the US regime transition appears exactly what North Korean leadership has patiently waited for by refusing to its denuclearization verification for several years in the face of George W. Bush's demonizing the North's leadership. Now North Korea may highly expect the Obama administration would positively approach diplomatic normalization with it. North Korea will be winner if the option of 'diplomatic

normalization first, then we will talk nuclear issues with you' is agreed upon with the Obama administration. This deal would be a complete up-side-down of the out-gone Bush's policy.

Various recent reports from North Korea show that the North Korean regime welcomes the new Obama administration while it still warns its *Juche-minded intelligentsia* not to loose 'watch' on American NGO activities which seek capitalistic exploitation and invasion under disguised slogans of "human-rights", and "promotion of democracy" into other sovereign nation like North Korea.¹ The North cautions its people against the dangers of so-called 'orange revolution' and 'rose revolution' which would bring a birth of pro-American regime in any sovereign state.

Meanwhile, the North's Dear Leader Kim Jong-il, who had been under water since a suspected stroke in August, 2008, met Mr. Wang Jiarui, the head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department, in Pyongyang on January 23, 2009.² This surprise meeting with the Chinese visitor intended timely to offer evidence not only that the 66-year old Kim was not yet demised without a clear successor, but also that he was still fairly well to run his dynasty so as to show up at the opportune time when U.S. celebrated its leadership transition. Kim may continuously aim to use China as a window to show the outside world as if it is willing to peacefully coexist with all sides, while still maintaining all tactical and different tracts whenever and whichever needed for its own survival.

If the Obama administration would likely expedite rapprochement with Pyongyang and if North Korea is soon willing to improve its relations with outside world with gradual adoption of *Glasnost and Perestroika* approaches, the North regime could likely continue to survive with much better living conditions than today for much extended periods of time to come. Nevertheless, the regime uncertainty will sooner or later inevitably bud up in the erstwhile isolated Kingdom as grassroots are begun to awaken to the values of social freedom and free consciousness from the outside world. Of course, it depends not only

¹ Rodong Shinmun, '*Not-to-forgetful lessons*', January 25, 2009. See also courage@fnnews.com, January 25, 2009, 05:40.

² A six-member delegation led by Wang arrived in Pyongyang on January 21 to mark the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations which are 'steadily growing stronger'.

upon the wisdom as well as political absorption capability of the regime leaderships in coping with the new wave of all changes to be accompanied by reform and opening, but also the tolerance of the people in waiting for steady and stable change. The *Chinese model*, that is, a gradual and controlled *Glasnost and Perestroika*, would likely fit best for the case, although *the social landscapes (national spirits and traits)* of (north) Koreans is not similar to those of Chinese in many ways. Would North Korea change successfully if its leadership would follow the Deng Xiaoping's program of economic reform and opening? We will never know, nor the North leadership will seem to know either. But to his credit, Deng Xiaoping and his followers have made China become an economy of unprecedented and stable dynamism. That decision taken in 1978 forever changed the direction of Chinese society with both rapid economic growth and development, not to mention the political stability yet seemingly sustained well. In 20 years since China embraced reform, China is now the world's third-largest economy with aggregate GDP of 25.7 trillion yuan (\$3.5 trillion). Reform and economic openings have lifted more than 300 million Chinese out of poverty, although the unevenness of wealth in China has grown greater across regions. Chinese leadership whose legitimacy rests on its ability to deliver increasing prosperity to its citizens focuses now on the balanced economic development so as to reduce the vast disparities of income among regions. The reform and economic openings in China have been so far well managed and documented with increased autonomy to enterprises and rapid emergence of both private production and free markets along with expanding political freedom in the society. This does not of course deny that the meaning of China's rise underestimates the reality that Chinese are yet not so rich while China as a country is rich. Nevertheless, even if the world is now suffering from deep economic recession following the global financial turmoil exploded in 2008, bulks of Chinese are coming everywhere to the global tour business and markets.

Why can't the North Korea dare to challenge new paradigm shift, say, like the Chinese reform model when it is caught in the divide between "live" and "die"? For the North self-imposed isolationist leaders are afraid that the masses, if awakened, will be tempted to get rid of them who have deceived the masses for more than a half century in the Hermit

Kingdom. If it adopts Chinese model without full precaution of sustaining social stability, the nepotism-centered regime's erosion may happen when anyone least think.

Alternatively, can the North regime sustain for ever with its enhancing economy when it facilitates some good relations with both new US administration and other neighboring countries? In other words, will two Koreas remain intact and politically independent and divided long one another so as to satisfy the eyes of all surrounding nations which have stakes on the peninsula? The answer to this will largely depend on choices of Korean people (North and South) in favor of unification as well as political compromise and patriotic decision of national leaders in two Koreas.

However, the road of this rapprochement approach appears to be much longer and remote in distance to go, although no body knows for sure if the approach may not work 'as gradual and peaceful' as compared to the abrupt erosion scenario of Pyongyang regime. Or two existing systems may perpetuate frustrating all Korean dreams for "one Korea". In all considerations, the fate of future Korea is not at all independent from the stakes and policies of those countries which put close eyes on the geographical and political weights of the Korean peninsula.

In terms of *time cost* of reunification, the *time-consuming rapprochement model* would be much expensive than the *quicker implosion model* of North Korea followed by national absorption taken by South Korea. Once the US administration establishes diplomatic normalization with North Korea as a more flexible approach, North Korea will sooner or later be lured to change in exchange of much economic assistance as well as political cooperation from the United States and international organizations. Will the Obama administration extend olive branch to North Korea? Depending on North Korea's responses, the Obama government will be willing to normalize bilateral relations, replace the peninsula's long-standing armistice agreements with a peace treaty, and assist in meeting the energy and other economic needs of the North Korean people. The outcome would most likely be that it may either perpetuate the division or frustrate the Korean dream for early reunification. It would then take a dozen of more decades for the two Koreas to come to unite into one nation, if not remained permanently divided. The longer

the delay of the reunification, the larger the cost would be, even though some efforts will be made to narrow the gaps of living conditions between the two states. The social cost of delayed reunification (or continued division) would reach to astronomical figures in terms of the ever-widening disparity in all aspects of life, social perceptions and thoughts piled up respectively in the two ideologically divided systems, not to speak of per capita average income gap. Until the country integrates into one common political and economic entity, lingering conflicts, struggles and agonies would remain with a “destroyed and unfinished dream” in the minds of all Korean grassroots. Who shall or can pay for the psychological and social costs and sacrifices imposed on Koreans due to delayed unification? Maybe (north and south) Korea’s political leaders and hard-headed national ideologists must assume the responsibility first of all, or foreign stakeholders are also somewhat responsible. Maybe imported alien political systems and Korean inharmonious perceptions on them do matter too. There may be yet many other factors in the politics among concerned parties who would be either preventing Korean unification or constituting the misty and rugged road to the unification process, despite of their words of nonintervention principles.

This does not of course intend to assert that decisive military action would be the most preferable and quick option ahead of Koreans and also the least headache short-cut to the unification. But from the standpoint of sure and least headache way to the unification, if not large war casualties, military option might be considered in order to make possible the unconditional absorptive take-over by the South which will be assumed to win the war. But military action can work if and only if other neighboring power like China would stay away. This is the least likelihood.

The North regime’s legitimacy is still keeping on the brink, while their deep-rooted problems would not easily likely resolved in the absence of both Washington’s and Beijing’s tutelage. South Korean authority must look into all possible least cost predominating ways in controlling North Korea in such a situation as the North implodes.

For this, South Korea’s diplomacy is so important in assuring its neighbors that a unified Korea will remain as “a land of peace, cooperation and friendship” in the region. A unified Korea must secure international trust and seek for “comprehensive promotion of mutually

beneficial strategic relations” particularly with China and Japan. If China, Japan, and Korea could be assured to cooperate for peaceful and jointly cooperative coexistence in a better friendly East Asian regional environment, Korean unification would proceed much easily and peacefully. The South must secure full supports from both China and Japan for holding a firm lead in traffic control when North Korean regime implodes unexpectedly into its own collapse.

2. The DPRK and Obama Administration

North Korea might have sighed deep to see off the conservative and hard-headed George W. Bush administration and now shows a very constrained but hopeful expectations from the liberal new Barack Obama administration. Making use of visiting Chinese Communist Party senior official Wang Jiarui’s meeting with its state leader, North Korea showed evidence that Kim Jong-il is still healthy enough to work with foreign visitors as well as with Obama’s flexible administration. Pyongyang is believed to be preparing to open negotiations with the new administration of U.S. President Barack Obama. Perhaps, Kim Jong-il is seriously weighing if the Obama administration is less concerned or less obsessed with Pyongyang’s ultimate goal of holding nuclear weapons than its predecessors.

Under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, Washington insisted that Pyongyang must give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons before it would agree to diplomatic ties. Any clear message for new foreign policy toward North Korea has yet come from the Obama administration, except that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton indicated in her Senate confirmation in January 2009 that diplomatic relations would not be established with North Korea until North Korea ended serious human rights abuses and a clandestine uranium-enrichment program. Hillary Clinton also said that the six-party talks would be useful if an agreement North Korea signed with China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States in 2005 would be maintained. She added a room to hold U.S-DPRK bilateral talks under the six-party talk framework, if necessary. Hillary Rodham Clinton as Obama administration Secretary of State, offered on February 13, 2009, North Korea a peace treaty, normal ties and aid if the North eliminates its nuclear arms program and she stressed her

desire to work more cooperatively with China. The offer that appears inclined to North Korea and China arises some concern about the US reliability in Japan and South Korea. The decision to take North Korea off the list of state sponsors of terrorism by former Bush administration already antagonized many Japanese and South Koreans, given that the promised quid pro quo- a denuclearization verification regime – was never achieved. The likely twists in U.S. policy does not reveal if Washington is seriously questioning that Pyongyang might have bought sufficient time to hold nuclear weapons in its hands while dragging out the six-party talks with the outgoing Bush government. Such unclear line of Washington is adding unreliability and untruthfulness to the eyes of many formerly pro-American people in Korea and Japan.

North Korea has recently been cranking up its bellicose rhetoric, declaring that it would maintain its “status as a nuclear weapons state”, and “smash” South Korea’s government in an “all-out confrontation” for tying aid to disarmament.³ In less than a month since the year 2009 started, North Korea threatened several times to scrap all political and military agreements with South Korea, accusing Seoul of pushing relations to the brink of war by having already reduced all the agreements to dead documents.

This kind of North Korean childish actions has often been used whenever it attempted new plots either to raise the stakes or to improve Pyongyang’s bargaining leverage as it prepared to open negotiations with South Korea or the United States. The North would like to raise more enhanced voices to draw attentions from South Korea and the U.S., whenever it is not sure if its saber-rattling has yet drawn no major reactions. It will attempt further to cause tensions to ensure that it remains a diplomatic priority for the new Obama administration and that South Korea comes to renewing aids of food and other goods.

Nevertheless, North Korea will never likely abandon its position to hold onto the “status of a nuclear weapons state”, since it has already secured both its nuclear bombs or weapon technology. If North Korea keeps its atomic weapons even after ties are established with Washington, the six-party talks itself or the bilateral talks between Pyongyang and

³ Michael Richardson, *North Korean crisis heating up*, The Japan Times, January 28, 2009, p.10.

Washington would no longer relate with the North Korea's denuclearization issue. North Korea announced on January 17, 2009 that normal relations with the U.S. would not be enough to persuade it to give up its nuclear weapons. This statement implies that the "North's solid status as nuclear weapons state" would be maintained unless South Korea is removed from the protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Furthermore, the North insists to hold simultaneous nuclear disarmament talks among "all nuclear states", including itself.

Such a Pyongyang's harder line will be the Obama administration's first Asian homework. To accept internationally Pyongyang as "nuclear weapons state" family or not, that is the question for President Barack Obama to answer. The new U.S. government still needs to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue with urgency, although the North rhetoric often sounds childish and stupid enough to draw laughing. Domestic issues will be the first order of business for the new administration. However, the North Korean nuclear issue is nothing to be left idle, as the nuclear backdrop to this political psycho-drama is still menacing to both the United States and other countries. President Obama must learn from the past history that Kim Jong-il's regime is never easy to deal with at all. Past mistakes the US has made with regard to North Korea can be still the best guiding map for the new administration, despite major differences in the approach of new President's policy exist.

Caught in the middle, the Obama administration is likely to need a more active cooperation with China to find ways to persuade the saber-rattling North Korean regime. The U.S. would seek a close cooperation with Beijing on Northeast Asian policy, in particular to sway the troublesome North Korea. But bilateral relations are apt to change depending on new developments of events involving the relevant parties. In the beginning of 2009, China is surpassing Japan as the Obama government's largest creditor. But strains between the two economic powerhouses will emerge any time growing with any possible changes in their mutual perceptions on one another. There could always arise any dramatic shift in how one party manages its most pivotal relationship with the other.

So it is very hard to draw any predictable path of the future linking any two countries in the rapidly evolving economic and political circumstances. For example, at a global leaders forum in Davos, Switzerland on January 28, 2009, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao

blamed China's economic woes on U.S.-led Western financial institutions, suggesting "a lack of self-discipline" and "blind pursuit of profit". Against to the Chinese attack, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner fired back to Beijing of manipulating its currency. What's more, Geithner further claimed that the Chinese manipulation was the most important cause of the financial crisis. China's cheap currency led it to run a massive trade surplus. The earnings from that surplus poured into the U.S. The result was the mortgage bubble. The U.S. mortgage bubble reached its craziest extreme in 2005-07, when China was flooding the world with cheap capital out of its trade surplus earnings. The U.S. said that faced with a deluge of cheap money, no regulatory regimes could be expected to prevent bubbles.

Whoever is right or wrong is no matter. One party may like to hold the other party culpable for any related risks and problems on international theater whenever necessary. This is a sort of realism in the international politics among competing powers, revealing that any bilateral relations among countries are capricious depending on nerve-racking shifts any time. This is to say that Washington-Beijing relationship could be cooperative one day and rival on the other day with regard to the Korean Peninsula as well. Nevertheless, in the long run Washington may continuously tilt toward China to delegate regional problems, if observing that this tendency had already begun during Bush's second term and is likely to increase in the new administration.

It is too early to conclude here for sure if the Obama administration will soon embrace North Korea. But it is very likely for the Obama administration to eventually seek expediting rapprochement with Pyongyang if North Korea is willing to make some international concession in nuclear non-proliferation measure, while the U.S. would not be too obsessed with demanding the North's dismantling of "existing" nuclear weapons.

If the bilateral relations between Washington and Pyongyang improve any time from now, it can, in turn, cause a security nerves in both Japan and South Korea, which will still face both serious threats from the North and new challenges posed by the cold reality of waning alliance with the United States. The East-Asian structure of pivotal alliance and

security will be re-aligned, and there will exist no longer a traditionally shared perception or concept of the erstwhile enemy or friend among former allies and foes.

The traditional 'friend and enemy equation' as well as the 'power equation' in East Asian region will change depending on the choices the new Obama administration will make with regard to North Korea and China. Despite Washington would seek prioritizing ties with China and later with North Korea, the U.S. will not likely allow to weaken the trilateral Japan-U.S.-South Korea relations so soon. Nevertheless, as the U.S. moves closer to China as its chief Asian ally on political and economic fronts while embracing Pyongyang with a new diplomatic relation, this shall surely be a cause for growing doubts in the hearts of both South Koreans and Japanese about U.S. reliability in the region.

If North Korea obtains international recognition as a nuclear weapon state, South Korea and Japan as well need to develop their grand new strategy that can assure their security and peace, either jointly or individually. This will bring forth competitive drive of deadly weapons in the East Asia. Such a situation is not wanted above all by China among others. To prevent such domino dissemination of nuclear weapons in East Asia, China should now come to play its due and solid role to make North Korea first abandon its plans to hold the deadly toys. USA needs Chinese hands to deal with many Northeast Asian problems as well.

Sooner or later, however, the Obama administration may likely start to draw stark policy differences with its predecessor on North Korea. As predicted above, President Obama will use diplomatic normalization with Pyongyang as a more flexible bargaining card. It may well consider offering a basic treaty on normalization with the North in return either for a 'complete elimination' of nuclear weapon programs or simply granting it as a member state of nuclear weapons under some conditionality. This may contain the promise that the North agrees not to export its nuclear weapons and related technology to other rogue countries. There will be, however, no guarantee that such promise will be genuinely observed. Certainly the need for caution is yet strong. North Korea remains unpredictable and potentially dangerous. But the U.S. budgetary burdens to increase military confrontations beyond status quo in Northeast Asia will require a more dynamic policy, one that is more

forward looking and that seeks to help shape the inevitable changes in the region rather than resist them. The U.S is at a cross road to rethink what it can do and can not do in Asia.

3. Will Kim Jong-Il's End Differ from Ceausescu?

The Obama administration will consider what U.S. interests in the region truly are, and its relevant leadership role in fashioning a strategy to meet shared interests. Above all, it will likely seek to deviate from the Bush administration by accommodating the status quo of on-going nuclear projects if they are to be used for the North's energy production, not for further nuclear weapon proliferation. In order to secure an acceptable verification protocol involving sampling, forensic activities, Obama said during his presidential campaign period that his administration would pursue "aggressive diplomacy", instead of "no talks unless you eliminate first" which failed under Bush. This tells that the Obama government will put its priority on "direct and aggressive talk diplomacy" with Pyongyang. Meanwhile, to the extent possible, it will still be the U.S. responsibility to assure South Korea and Japan that the current environment for security will be maintained.

For a while, Asian-Pacific region will still remain vital to U.S. security and wellbeing. But all success of Obamas's new policy paradigm for the region will greatly depend on how tactful Pyongyang will respond in a way to reduce tensions that still linger.

At this important juncture, one useful tip for the new Chief Executive of the United States is the lesson that 'communists will never surrender their all means and ways in order to attain their ultimate objectives'.

From the perspective of the worst-case scenario, North Korea's leadership might still consider to renew its brinkmanship any time as a way for survival, if the Obama administration delays its positive and aggressive diplomatic action to favor North Korea. The *Juche* Kingdom in the year of Cow (2009) keeps taking new long-range missile tests threats, renewal of nuclear showdown, and a satellite launching scheme, whether real or fake, on the world.

Will such new North Korea's childish threatening and brinkmanship trigger serious sense of fear and crisis to immunized South Koreans and the world? Will Pyongyang's

return to brinkmanship under serious conditions of its food and energy shortages, the worst human right suppression, not likely lead to any possible anarchic process involving the total collapse of the power structure in North Korea? In other words, can a sudden, disorderly and bloody collapse similar to the Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu regime downfall in December 1989 happen likely toward possible end-game ahead of North Korea?

Today's life in North Korea under Kim Jong-il is much worse than the life in Romania under Ceausescu in the late 1980s. The December 1989 popular revolution in Romania brought the swift downfall of the iron fist as well as the demise of communist dictatorship, what ultimately ensured the success of the civilian movement and avoided a colossal bloodbath thanks to the wise decision made by Romanian military. The then Romanian military *de facto coup* shall have a lesson for North Korea when a wide spread anti-communist unrest would result in Kim's collapse.

After dozens of protesters were killed on December 16-22, 1989, many of them by army bullets, General Vasile Milea, the then minister of defense, died of a gunshot wound, under suspicious circumstances. Ceausescu promptly appointed General Victor Stanculescu as new minister of defense, but the general refused to carry out an order issued by Ceausescu, his direct superior as commander-in-chief of the military, to step up the armed repression, and ordered the troops back to their barracks instead. The Romanian anti-communist revolution would certainly have failed if the military had not fraternized with the civilian protesters.

Likewise, in North Korea, the military may like to ensure the demise of the Kim Jong-il's regime if a popular demonstrations break out, although the revolution probability seems very low. However, just as the rise and fall of a nation is in the hands of the Almighty God, so will the longevity of any individual and any nation as well depend upon not on human thought but on God's will. When North Korea will come to ruin at last, the very negative aftermath that may be created by the replacement of one type of dictatorship with another in the North must be sought to prevent at all expenses. This can only be possible if the North Korean military, if yet completely not dissolved simultaneously along with the would-be collapse of political leadership, is to closely side with South Korea instead of

Chinese army or other aliens. This may sound very unlikely from common sense, but “nothing is impossible”, as was demonstrated in the German reunification case.

At the time of this writing, North Korea declared its past military agreements with South Korea to be effectively dead. On January 30, 2009, the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, the North Korean agency in charge of relations with South Korea, accused South Korean president Lee Myung-bak of not holding to the South’s end of the agreements, thereby, rendering them no longer valid in their entirety. The accords the North has declared invalidated include a 1991 agreement on reconciliation and non-aggression, which incorporated the promise that it would honor the western (yellow) sea border claimed by South Korea. The North also repudiated the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War, calling it a “useless piece of paper”. The committee said, “relations between the north and the south have worsened to the point where there is no way or hope of correcting them”. “They have reached the extreme point where the clash of fire against fire, steel against steel, has become inevitable”. Despite of all such antagonistic rhetoric full of childish tempers, no one can predict there will be a new bloody war ahead of the two Koreas. Just as is the case between any two well-known persons, a sort of childish expression of extreme hatred by one side could often be interpreted as an indirect sign of extreme ‘attention calls for help’. The North’s ramping voice appears like an attempt to gain attention from ever cooler South Korean brethren, while the new Obama administration delays its approach to the North. The hypertonic hysteria could be just a mirror of overly excessive call for ‘love’ or at least ‘attention’, given the North’s uncultured mind-sets. Nevertheless, the two sides must seek to explore faithfully both “reciprocal” cooperation and “real” heart-to-heart talks instead of catastrophic clash if their shared common objective is truly a peaceful “national reunification.” Their joint priority must target not only overcoming all possible external interference factors but also shooting their bolt to get out of ideological clefts.

The national goal must be that Koreans ultimately unite to put in place a system that is liberal and democratic under one national flag. The road to such a transition and

transformation toward one unified state may sound “not-so-complex”, but in fact it would be “very long, uncertain, misty and rugged journey” ahead of all Koreans.

Back to backbreaking reality, the first important question is how North Korean regime will use its nuclear weapon programs to trade with the U.S. new administration, which is yet to set up its new policy toward North Korea. The second question is whether the provocative remnant of an ideological cul-de-sac in the North will continue to survive on the Korean Peninsula.

4. Will Korean Unification Be Helped?

Before Washington comes into a new love affairs with Pyongyang, China may need preemptively to cut in between, if necessary. China may like to play a “soft balancing role” to lure its North Korean ally to abandon nuclear weapons in exchange of more aggressive baits and comforts, while proposing a regional security cooperation, say, a *multilateral China-Japan-US-Russia commission* for the Korean Peninsula.

China does no longer have more time to excuse for neglecting its role by saying the world that North Korea does not listen to China, while Beijing has in fact supported Pyongyang without any reciprocity whether or not the North expresses gratitude. Since the earliest days of the Kim Il-sung, Pyongyang has been famous for going its own way. Beijing leaders, therefore, have been telling outside world and especially anxious Americans, that they cannot control Kim’s wily son.⁴

But Chinese are by far the North Korea’s largest source of foreign food and energy, which help sustains the Korean People’s Army. Kim Jong-il is still ruling today thanks to Chinese material and diplomatic support. If China really wants, it can enable the blinking Kim’s regime “neither bark nor bite”. The starving North Korea is desperately relying on China today to attract food and goods which are in short supply. North Korea is setting up in January 2009 new free trade zone on Wi-Hwa Island in the Yalu River, which separates

⁴ Gordon G. Chang, *Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes on the World*, (Hutchinson, 2006), p.134.

the country and China, to bring food and other goods from China by strengthening border trade with its neighbor.

China appears to have leverage in persuading Pyongyang in its favor until a fundamental shift in the DPRK-U.S. relations occurs in time. In fact, Beijing has the power to bring the North leadership down since China can force Kim Jong-il to act when it sees the need. However, if China will not do any of these things soon from now, it will lose both time and its leverage when friendly relation is established between North Korea and USA. Maybe, North Korea will soon come to argue why it cannot have nuclear arsenal while China is still accelerating the building of its nuclear and conventional combat strength.⁵

Likewise, the South Korea-US alliance will also face its own challenges as a shared perception of a common enemy and threat would be dissolved once DPRK-USA relation is established. The *nation-to-nation relation equation* is subject to remodel depending upon the new developments in the Northeast Asia. As Obamas's new foreign policy on North Korea in particular begins afloat on the surface, the regional political environment would be reshaped in due time.

It is a time that China 'as a mature nation' must change its traditional perceptions on an old adversary global order in favor of a better cooperative and friendly global order. In other word, the huge mainland China should now free itself from narrow-minded ultra-nationalism instead of being overly obsessed with trajectories of neighboring small countries. China must behave as an adult and mature state in both regional and global playgrounds. This is to say that North Korean territory (likewise the whole Korean Peninsula) can no longer be regarded as a buffer zone to protect mainland China from extramural invasion by any other Pacific forces. No country will dare today to attempt to invade into China; in fact, any country seldom want to put, but for some exceptional cases like century-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as 2008 Russian-Georgian crash, an adversary and coveting eye on other's territory. At the early stage of internal turmoil

⁵ Jing Zhiyuan, the commander of the Second Artillery Corps of Chinese Army said in his coauthored article for the authoritative journal Qiushi published on February 1, 2009 that "we will develop a nuclear and conventional missile force corresponding to the needs of winning a war in conditions changed by modern information and technology.

resulting from the would-be regime collapse, Chinese military might come to intervene for maintaining public order and refugees. But this engagement must be very temporal one since there will be nothing much for China to gain from international criticism by stationing for good its forces in the Korean Peninsula. Wise Chinese leadership had already set up a good model example for Vietnam after its reunification in 1975, even admitting Vietnam reunited in form of socialistic market system similar to Chinese one.

It may not be a cross analogy, but Pyongyang would often use its brinkmanship for threatening “a posture of all-out confrontation” against South Korea just as was heightened on January 25, 2009. The North Korean reasoning behind its fresh threats may be that raising military tension with South Korea would cause the United States to push ahead with the stalled six party talks or bilateral talks with it, as mentioned earlier. “Bluffing” is often North Korea’s well-exposed tactics ironically intended to do just the opposite when it needs to send off some message to the other party. This time the statement seemingly raised against South Korea was in fact directed toward the new President Obama so as not to pay less attention for the North. But South Korea as well as the United States, does not regard North Korea’s bluffing as real serious threats. In this sense, South Korea and the United States are grown quite mature in dealing with North Korea. Because the inner cards of North Korean leadership and its inferiority are no longer hidden ones.⁶

Likewise, China should not regard the United States and Japan as potential or actual threats toward the mainland across the Korean Peninsula even though two Koreas will become one state. As long as China does not intend to hold sway over the Korean Peninsula, the U.S and Japan would also be happy to shy away by helping a “neutrality” in the Korean Peninsula. China may propose its initiatives for China-US-Japan-Russia commission to

⁶ On March 6, 2009, the North’s Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland issued a threat against South Korean civilian planes that fly through the North’s airspace, criticizing the scheduled annual U.S.-South Korea joint military drill that begin from March 9 and end on March 20. On March 9, Pyongyang cut off the only remaining military hot line between the two Koreas and made a complete shutdown of all traffic across the border to protest the exercises being held in the South at a time of heightened tensions. But the North allowed South Koreans back across the border for jobs at Gaesung industrial complex Tuesday, a day after severing all communication. Pyongyang said that the military hot line would remain suspended throughout the duration of joint US-South Korean military drills. The North also warned against interference with its plan to launch a satellite and it would regard the intercept as a provocation that could trigger war.

look over the Korean Peninsula as a positive step. It could also initiate to use Korean Peninsula as a bridge to mitigate a tense rivalry between China and Japan, as well as a potential military conflict between China and the US.

When the United States establishes diplomatic normalization with North Korea, future Korean unification would track on gradualism instead of “big bang explosion model”. Given such scenario, how to approach Korea’s reunification and at what speed and through what model will be matters somewhat for much debate. This could reignite whole spectrum of discussions and debates of past decades on reunification issues. They may involve the renewal as well as re-evaluation of many past debates made in relation with Kim Dae-jung’s *sunshine policy* and *confederation approach* as well as *preemptive strike model*, etc.

With regard to rapprochement approach, both positive and negative aspects of German unification could be reflexive in such discussion, while the European Union (EU) integration approach would provide some useful lessons if we want to learn how incorporated century old enemies into an economic union that built friendship through institutionalized interdependence and trust. But it should be pointed out here that Korean reunification issue will not be like the EU integration in its very nature and will thus involve very unique foot-grounded nature (rather than hypothetically copy-after any) simply beyond institutional architecture in that two Koreas have common nationality, homogeneous ethnicity and family backgrounds, which have been artificially divided by alien conflicting ideologies and political forces.

The proposed *multilateral commission* may function to secure a peaceful and continuously unified neutral state on the Korean Peninsula like Switzerland. Korea was wrongly divided by USA and the Soviet Union after World War II. North Korea will now oppose any intervention of multilateral powers in the Korean affairs.

However, deep inter-Korean dialogue, if attempted, would bring, and it is hoped to bring, to the understanding that a unified Korea would be far feasible and better off only when two Koreas accept a form of one neutral state under the proposed common security framework. If such a smooth environment could be arranged, the reunification process

would be the least costly and best one in terms of “Pareto optimality condition” in that “no one neighbor is better off without making any others worse off”.

Unless a common concession is made among the neighboring powers, such a proposal as *Confederation Approach* for national reunification contemplated in June 2000 by both Kim Jong-il and Kim Dae-jung is far out of reach in reality. The *Commission Approach* for a neutral Korea sounds much possible, but if the neighboring countries disagree one another on the reunification issue, this approach would also be infertile and infelicitous. Those approaches must presuppose full agreements among stake neighbors

The remaining options are either “*to unite by military action*”, or “*to take over when implosion occurs in one of two regimes*”. The former is similar to the *Vietnam Model*, while the latter one is more or less reminiscent of *German Model*.

Vietnam model calls for fraternal bloods, and it is the strategy which North Korean leadership has long eyed on in its unification plot. This approach is no longer likely to get common supports in the Korean Peninsula because many Koreans still remember the past tragedy of Korean War (1950-53) that failed to reunite two states. In order for this model yet to work in favor with Pyongyang, North Korea should have planted many insurgent agents in the South to unrest further the South Korean society in politics and economy. In spite of the North’s ceaseless erstwhile efforts to breed its supporters in the South, South Korean economic strength continues to outpace the North by more than 20 times. Economic success precedes over the efforts of ideological scheme. Unless the North uses its nuclear weapons to put the South into *the sea of fire*, there is also dim probability for the North to overtake the South by military strengths. Many South Koreans do not regard North Korea as military superior power, if not the nuclear and biochemical weapons the North is suspected to hold. Recently, North Korea ramps up war capabilities amid its open bluffing against the South. Even if it continues to provoke an armed clash with the South while preparing to test-fire a version of its longest-range ballistic missile and space satellite launching, most southerners appear not shaken at all. Maybe, a majority of the South’s conservatives and military ranks may want and wait for the economically bottom-hit North military first to pull the trigger. Then the unification would be achieved relatively easy and

unequivocally fast even though much fraternal blood bleeding can not be avoided in exchange for the simpler integration process. Of course, this approach also presupposes no military engagement of Chinese forces in the war. In fact, the North knows well that the direct war between the two Koreas under the current given conditions means the tomb for the communists. Nor will the South likely attempt preemptive military action unless the North starts attack first. Thus this direct military clash model is very unlikely to occur despite of various types of recent military strains being beefed up by the poverty-stricken Pyongyang regime. The second fratricidal war must be avoided anyhow, if it were not the last card.

German model is alternatively considered to provide some positive and negative lessons for Korean reunification. Some positive lesson learned from the initial stage of German Unification will be briefly discussed in the next section. Hopefully speaking, *Romanian model* followed by German integration process is highly expected in relation with fall-down of the North leadership. Our immediate concern here is to focus among others on the possible sudden regime collapse in North Korea and subsequent measure to turn it into an opportunity of national unification by efficiently managing the aftermath of the implosion. When North Korea is to be imploded inside due to both economic backlash and social instability, the interference of neighbor country (like China) or countries (China, Russia, and USA) into the soil of North Korea to replace with a new (communist) regime would constitute big stumbling bloc to Korean national reunification as discussed earlier.

As discussed briefly earlier, however, we would assume and hope that China will not attempt to interfere in the Korean affairs for long, if not for transition periods, since any prolonged attempt to engage and to stay in the Korean Peninsula would harm to Chinese interests. China can gain much more economically as well as politically by cooperative trading with the united one Korea than with divided two Koreas.

In order for the South Korea to be able to play a leading role when a big bang occurs in the North, South Koreans should be prepared to solely assume the situation with full cooperation and initiatives with neighbors, if necessary. Nevertheless, the path leading to the national reunification might be misty and very rugged indeed.

South Korea's diplomatic arts and professionalism in the region must be core prerequisites for Korean reunification policy to put a hold. South Korea should well maintain its balances by providing new, nonpartisan, innovative and neutral position on global issues with cooperative engagement along with all concerned neighbors. The intensive readiness for bilateral and multilateral negotiations and arrangements for national integration cannot be too much emphasized from now on.

Seoul should also study to facilitate the diffusion of common, comprehensive, and cooperative security in the region, and maintaining balanced foreign policy and economic relations on the non-biased, non-ideological, global and comparative advantage principles with China, Japan, USA and Russia and others. It should seriously review its past policy and try to reshape its new sovereign policy directions so as not to be biased to any particular party, if it seeks a neutral unified state. More importantly, South Korea must also pursue the multilateral approach for national integration by maintaining close cooperation with North Korea. On the other hand, a future Korea may seek trilateral Korea-China-Japan permanent cooperation agreement to secure common prosperity and peace in Northeast Asia.

South Korean's diplomatic professionalism and well coordinated exercise of balanced wisdom and open minds in the region must be prepared in advance. By passing, Koreans, South and North alike, must know that existing 'rampant nationalism' can neither be helpful, nor a driving force to bring into one Korea. The rests of the world do now only care much about the North Korea's nuclear weapon, which is a real "Korean bomb". Either the division or the reunification of the country is not overly the concerns and matters to others, despite they are aware that the Koreans are "too hot-tempered", "too noisy", "too spicy", "too imprudent", and above all "too nationalistic".

Nevertheless, the Korean reunification will come some day when anyone least think as long as North Korea can not stop its rapid sliding into backlash. Unless Pyongyang could effectively control not only its ongoing rapid economic erosion but also its grassroots' expedite exposure to the free outside world, the end of the regime will likely be unavoidable. Possibly it may come in a *big bang mode* for which you must "*keep watch*,

*because you do not know the day or the hour”; “Be on guard! Be alert. You do not know when that time will come”.*⁷

The question is how to manage the process of reunification if it accompanies with implosive regime downfall in the North at as little sacrifices and costs as possible. For this, the Romanian-style swift regime downfall, if any, could give Koreans not only some insight for desired management of the aftermath, but also on hoped role of North (and also, South) Korean military at the initial stage of national reunification, as already briefly discussed in section 2.

With no regard to models, timings and ways, future reunification will critically depend upon firstly the concerted drive and willingness of all Koreans toward integrating onto “oneness” at all expected pecuniary and visible and non-visible costs; and secondly on the nonintervention but positive cooperation from neighboring countries to help the split North and South Koreans get united without conditions and hesitations.

On the parts of Koreans, first of all, two Koreans must wake up from their deep-rooted wrong “dogmas” full of ideologically different perceptions against one another, removing mutual mistrusts and past hatreds only to unite into one nation. All Koreans, both the North and the South alike, must recall their fathers’ teachings during Japanese colonial days, that is, *“if united, you can live; otherwise, you die”*.

To attract positive help and cooperation from neighbors, a unification-bound Korean ship should be prepared to declare “non-engagement policy” with any complicated and problematic disputes among third parties in international affairs.

Meanwhile, in order to prepare for sudden and Romanian-style total collapse of authority in North Korea, South Korea must endeavor to soon propose “a quadripartite China-Japan-U.S.-South Korea interim set-up” to deal with such imminent problems as transitory chaos, massive refugees, interstitial jobless people, hoodlums, violent riots, bloodshed, and loot-outs of nuclear and other chemical and bacteriological arsenal, as well as social security safety networking in the North, followed by integration of the fallen

⁷ Quoted from The New Testament, Matthew 25:13, and Mark 13: 32-37.

government with the South with full supports from all international organizations like the United Nations. South Korea must prepare itself to secure its leading role in controlling the ground when North's regime and society is to be dissolved any time. It should try to persuade all staked neighbors to participate in the unification process as positive helping hands to Koreans.

However, if the reunification is not immediate concern for both Koreans in favor of going with two competing systems, South Korea will be left with no alternative but for strengthening its alliance with the US and Japan, while enhancing further cooperation with China and Russia in economic and diplomatic relations. The choice of this postponed integration is also not likely to be neat, for it is just nothing but adding up the tough and rugged trembling blocs on the road of coming generation for ever extended periods. If this generation could now do anything of their own accord, good or bad, to go keeping mutual hatred and disharmony, what will this generation say they did for the nation to their people in days to come?

5. Leadership Role in German Unification Has a Lesson for Korea

As the calendar turns into the decade of 2010, a historic opportunity would appear to evolve around the Korean Peninsula. Depending on the qualities and readiness of ordinary grass-rooters as well as the core leaders of the North and the South, this invisibly approaching historic opportunity should not be wasted but turned into "a real big bang" leading to the unification of two Korea states. Historic opportunities are often wasted, however, or turned into disasters when the leaders of many countries lack necessary qualities or proper preparations. The exact happened on the Korean Peninsula in 1945-48. Unfortunately, unprepared and split Koreans frustrated the good chance when their country gained independence at the wake of 36 years-long Japanese exploitation. The consequence was more than a half century-long nation's division into two hostile entities with major bloodshed, being causes of unfinished conflicts and hatreds among the same national brethren. The Korean Peninsula is yet the remnant of ideological war victims whose

political leaders across the pre-war and post-war periods have remained responsible for failing to turn the cold war hot.

The contrasting mirror was German Unification of 1989 which no international experts predicted just a moment before the Berlin wall disappeared dramatically along with the Cold War that was planted just same as in the Korean Peninsula. Germany's Unification occurred with surprisingly ease and swiftness and, most important, without major oppositions from neighboring powers which were traditionally never friendly enough to support it at all. It was indeed a tectonic change which contributed to the breakdown of the entire postwar international order.

The key factor that directly ignited the breakdown of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was the overall failure of communist economies in the East that attributed to increasingly destitute East Germans' uprisings against Erich Honecker, not to tell a mass exodus of its citizens to the west. And the least important was the unlimited contagion of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* (economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) across eastern Europe that helped enhance "the right of all peoples and states to determine freely their destiny." Also the contributed factor was the constellation of political leaders (inclusive of Germanys and four powers) of unusual experience and their exceptional capacity to cooperate in what became the most intensive phase of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy in European history. But not even the wisest leaders could have produced German unification less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall had it not been the truly gigantic effort of the officials working in individual nations and in the European Community. German unification was brought about by a multitude of bilateral and multilateral negotiations and arrangements. It was indeed to be remembered as one of the greatest triumphs of leadership and diplomatic professionalism in the postwar period.⁸

The U.S. 41st President George H.W. Bush did want German unity to end the Cold War. He used America's influential resources wisely in helping united Germany develop into a successful democracy and market economy. In the Soviet Union, President Mikhail S.

⁸ Karl Kaiser, *Germany's Unification*, Foreign Affairs, Vol.70, No.1 (1990/91), p179.

Gorbachev was determined against much internal opposition to change the erstwhile orthodox communism to construct fundamentally new relations with the West.

British Prime Minister Thatcher and French President Mitterrand perceived the potential of a united Germany more of a problem than did Washington. But the two Germany's neighbors, after initial reservations about the prospect of a powerful united Germany, gave their indispensable support to German unification with understanding that the shared "free world values" and cooperative "partnership in leadership" along with them could be realistically sustained in the united Germany.

Indeed, West German Kohl administration employed the art of diplomacy very cautiously to ensure respect its established relationship of cooperation with the West as well as Germany's right to self-determination by closely communicating with the Four Powers. Karl Kaiser (1990) describes as: "In Germany, a chancellor with an astute sense of strategic opportunities, and a knack for timely and decisive action, steered the process in symbiotic cooperation with a foreign minister with a keen tactical sense in the context of the long-term design that had helped fashion for many years".⁹

Indeed, Germanys were exceptionally lucky with both indigenous and exogenous developments of internal as well as global environments that helped the unification process easy and swift. What is a lesson for Korea is "the art of diplomacy" employed by German leaders and their capability to overcome issues "seemingly difficult-to-compromise".

The international environment faced by two Koreas today is not exactly the same as two Germanys had in 1989-90. But history now moves in creating similar chance in favor of "a big bang on the Korean Peninsula", as did in Romania and East Germany about a decade ago. The approaching environment will demand South Korean leaders for the "art of diplomacy and politics" that would shift even externally difficult conditions to work favorably to the needs of the nation, not to mention the importance of turning seemingly impossible circumstances to nation's potential resources. The historical wisdom that German leaderships conducted in the initial course of the unification will be what Korean

⁹ *Ibid, 1990/91, p.180.*

leaders have to take account. Even more, to the extent of possible circumstance, Koreans must seek to ensure a joint security system well harmonized and arranged along with all its neighbors including the United States, Russia, China and Japan. Korean leaders require more imagination and new ideas in fashioning a national strategy to meet newly to-be-structured power balance surrounding the peninsula and the would-be new security circumstances of the region. It will be Korean responsibility to build trusts with other concerns and thus to turn all wild winds or tumbling obstacles ahead in favor of their national reunification. More importantly, Koreans had better not to waste their resources further in exchange with fratricidal provocation and blasphemy which foreign watchers would be laughing at. Korean next generation can neither understand nor overlook why their ancestors were so silly, stupid and divided as to consume one another in the bloody hostility and provocations for such long periods.

6. Timely Conditions for a Paradigm Shift for Korean Unification

The past lesson shows that national division will be only fostered further if inter-Korean economic cooperation keeps maintaining in such a way as heavily biased to pour money into the North from cocky South Koreans. That was practice evidenced under a decade (1998-2007) of ‘sunshine policy’. The 2009 Pyongyang’s high-pitched whining provocations and threatening against Seoul government shows that cocky sunshine entertainment from the South would turn out any time into a “total failure” if North Korea is not happy at all with the healthy enemy in the South. Just the gesture of shaking hands of the South’s leader with the North’s dear leader turned out like a cartoon picture to easily tear down. The overflow of aids into the North under the sunshine policy was based on the assumption that the South had already won the battle of ideology and the struggle for control of the peninsula. Has the North not come to recognize this truth even belatedly? If Pyongyang does not want to admit frankly that its system is no long be capable of competing with the South, it will find difficult its rational to ask for non-reciprocal aid money from the South. Nor can it be able to persuade its own cadets and people. The only option for the North must be to close its operation.

From the standpoint of the South, it should also consider which is the best way and approach to resolve the issue of a divided Korean Peninsula, unconditional aids or reciprocal transaction. Since 1971 when the South initiated the two Koreas' talks via Red Cross Societies, various contacts, functional meetings, and rapprochement efforts have been tried resulting in some fruitful results occasionally but failures and frustrations mostly by wasting time and money. Park Chung-hee who seized power through a military coup on May 16, 1961, sought to devote his efforts to peaceful reunification and in 1973, he presented the "6.23 Principles," which stated that South Korea did not oppose North Korea's participation in international organizations. He proposed competitive coexistence in the open atmosphere of the international community. The Park administration policy targeted at more practical "construction first, unification later," instead of "victory over communism". Ever since then, all subsequent South Korean administrations continued to believe that once mutual reconciliation and peaceful-coexistence was firmly in place, an increase in cooperation would lead to political unity. But no actual bilateral economic cooperation nor visible rapprochement had ever been made until 1998 when the North's Kim Jong-il responded to shake hands with the South's Kim Dae-jung request, who did not spare to overflow aids into the North under his so-called "*sunshine policy*". Kim Dae-jung might have thought that his *sun-shine* would lead to unclot the North's winter garments.

However, the "*sunshine policy*" has only contributed to undermine the South while it did not help the North Korean leadership change its overall hostility against the South, although many talks and meetings under the pretext of coexistence flourished between one another. Nor did the North's regime thank really for the '*money from cocky South Korean helicopters named as sunshine*'. The North Korean leadership is not so stupid as to overlook that inter-Korean cooperation and aid from the South will eventually undermine Pyongyang: the fact that things will play out differently in the long run. Meanwhile, the *sunshine policy* only planted such a wrong perceptions among South Koreans as if the life-and-death struggle between the two Koreas was over when in fact it was not. The *sunshine policy* has induced a considerable number of South Korea's evangelical Christian church leaders have been vying competitively to transfer the large amount of church offerings to

North Korean agencies namely for the purpose of missionary base buildings. For illustration, Seoul's two largest Presbyterian churches named "So-Mang Church" and "Sarang Community Church" are known to have poured astronomical amount of money into building "Pyoungyang University of Science and Technology" and others. Some pastors and leaders of rich churches in South Korea today are "too proud" and "too divine-like" to listen to any faithful and constructive advices from laymen. It is indeed a lamentable benevolence for those evangelical church leaders to wrongly dance and sleep with the enemy (North Korea communist group) who has executed so many Christians and is still suppressing religion activity brutally. The *sunshine policy* has thus made many South Koreans including Christians and Buddhists as well overflow with wrong sentiment in favor of the North's communists after the June 2000 summit between Kim Jong-il and Kim Dae-jung, which was matched by a torrent of South Korea's anti-Americanism after the death of two girls run over by an armored American vehicle on training maneuvers near Seoul. The outpouring of sentiment and money in favor of the North is getting widespread among many progressive South Koreans who are pushing political changes that harmonize with the North.

In early 2009, however, North Korea renewed to declare its hostile provocations again, creating the worst state of relations between the two Koreas. North Korean leadership may believe there are many his supporters in South Korea, who will arise when a time comes for him. It will be nothing but his worthless dream.

It is historically hoped, of course, for the two Koreas to unite peacefully with new change of international environment. Toward this objective, there must be no question about the importance that the two states need to build, first of all, mutual trust on the basis of mutual coexistence. This approach has been persistently maintained through on-and-off proposals for talks and cooperation since 1973 mainly by the South, forcing the North also to comply with the South on the common strategy. The principle of coexistence and common prosperity between the South and the North has been observed at least by the South although there has been the life-and-death competition and struggle. "Continued efforts to talk without conditions" is, however, today understood or hoped by many

opportunists in the South who believe yet that policy will only help open door for eventual unification. It would be so if and only if the two rivals' mind-sets have common ground in both "perception" and "thought". The possibility of holding successful "heart-to-heart talks without conditions" is, however, very low and unlikely between the capitalists and communists. Whether "many-talk-efforts" could induce harmonious unity between the North's communists and the South's capitalists is still very doubtful and not sure, given the two different rival perceptions on existing political and economic systems.

On-going assertions to favor unconditional cooperation for mutual coexistence are mostly based on the assumption that two Korea systems are to be maintained *the status quo*. But they must know the irrevocable truth that "men may plan and do just as they hope in their heart, but God determines their steps" (quoted from The Old Testament: Proverbs 16:9). In other words, the inter-Korean cooperation efforts and talks would not necessarily guarantee the harmonious rendezvous for national peace and security. It is worth while to note that whatever inter-Korean rapprochement effort is likely today has already been and what will be has been before; and nothing much will likely to be fruitful, given the North's stick to its brinkmanship and closed door policy. Those who insist that "inter-Korean cooperation and talks will be 'the only option for peaceful unification' are like those who believe as if Charles Darwin's theory of Homo Sapiens evolution is "unshakable truth" but "without understanding the biblical view of creation". They do not see that Darwin made a critical mistake that has in many ways affected how people see the world. In fact just as Darwin did not correctly understand the human genome, so neither do the South's advocates of the "unconditional-talks for national unity" understand the communists in the North. The South's ill-masterminded advocates have to learn that "only reciprocity and conditional talks" will tame the communists..

Most of the past aids unilaterally poured into the North under pretext of inter-Korean cooperation turned out to be sheer fruitless, if not used to help developing nuclear weapons as well as sustaining the regime's longevity in the North. No one can repute the fact if he or she is concerned with recent Pyongyang's return to its serious provocation against Seoul.

Instead of supporting its survival, therefore, what if the South just chooses to induce Pyongyang's illegitimate regime to collapse? A continued ignorance may be one option that would contribute to the saber-rattling provocative regime to come to its end. In fact, Seoul has now no other option, not only because the North declared to cut off all relations with the South, but also because the South still cannot quite understand what the North communists amidst of rumors of their starvation want to achieve with their whimsical arsenal programs targeting against the South. Of course, South's ignorance policy to serious provocative bite from the North needs to implant all neighboring nations to cooperatively participate in a concerted economic sanction against North Korea, virtually the last state remnant of an ideological end corner. Stopping the supply of even humanitarian foods and shortage goods may sound very irresponsible and heartbreaking for many starved innocent people in the North, but ending the stubborn regime would only be a sure short-cut to save those poverty-stricken and suppressed populace in North Korea.

Very often many political jargons and verbal feasts, that favor 'coexistence and cooperation' projecting to eventually arrive at a peaceful reunification, would mostly contain nothing but a gibberish hokum that lacks any serious realistic matter of fact. Most of them are futile arguments just for the sake of both laymen's discussion and politician debate based on very hypothetical propositions mostly apart from both the domestic and international reality.

Looking back at the past 60 years, the reunification policies have been based on the assumption that national unification could only be pursued in a cooperation mode via talks between the two conflicting states. And the inter-Korean relations were developed within the backdrop of the discourse on unification. Although the last two decades of inter-Korean exchange were deliberately promoted by the South under the aim of narrowing income gaps to reduce costs of unification, the inter-cooperation cannot be evaluated as having been "successful". Unless the North adopts a policy of reform and opening, bilateral economic cooperation will not succeed in future too. Neither can it also be expected to produce remarkable result for national unification in the absence of the participation of the international community. It is getting clear that the stubborn economy can not be fully

rebooted; even the officials seem to care about seeking their safety havens when the regime explodes.

From the standpoint of those wishing early national reunification, the best option must be helping the North's regime implode as soon as possible. South Koreans need to review seriously if the reopening of inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation aimed to live "divided, but in fragile peace" is really preferred to the early collapse of the Kim's regime followed by a unification in the direction of liberal democracy and free-market economy.

The North Korean regime would repeatedly attempt to irritate even military provocation any time with no regard to inter-Korean cooperation accompanied with the South's generous economic assistance for the North's stability.

In concluding, it must be emphasized that the South's unconditional further economic assistance as well as the DPRK-U.S. establishment of diplomatic relations will either contribute to undermine North Korea or in worst case help Pyongyang manage to retain its grip for further extended periods. The North's regime would sustain for a while if its leadership could yet use its military to control possible "implosion" that the masses may ignite sooner or later. We conclude that "policy" to induce quicker "implosion or explosion" is much preferred to "any efforts to extend the longevity" of ill-founded paranoid regime in the North. The "*implosion model*" demands South Korea to prepare an extensive "*contingency plan*" in close cooperation with all neighbor countries. The effective management of the transition turmoil is ever more important responsibility South Koreans have to prepare for. In order for the South to take a leading role in national unification, the South's administration must firmly establish a determined goal-oriented principle which promotes 'real and reciprocal' inter-Korean relations in advance with shared eye with the North Korean masses on future unity. At the same time, South Koreans must employ wise foreign policy so as to secure full international cooperation for the South to lead the unification process when something big bang (implosion) occurs in the North. It cannot be too much to emphasize that South Korea must bear a sense of responsibility for the fellow citizens in North Korea who have been exploited for more than 60 years under

the state-run economy dressed-up with loud paeans to self-reliance. It is a time to rethink how to search for the best way for national interests as well as ultimate national unification.

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time to war and a time for peace”.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 3:5-3:8.

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