

Committee: Special Committee

Issue: Inter-Korean Relations, Reunification and the Response of the International Community

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Introduction

How can hostility turn into amicability? How can former enemies find common ground and move towards the same goals? These are fundamental questions when the Special Committee will discuss inter-Korean relations and reunification in the start of April. The inter-Korean relations have since the division in 1945 been defined by a desire to again reunify the peninsula under one government, but, due to diametrically different opinions, this desire has led to substantial conflict - indeed even a war which now formally has lasted for over 6 decades. This has, over the last few decades, been exacerbated by a nuclear threat as the the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has sought to develop nuclear weapons to both defend its own integrity and to use these as a leverage to seek concessions from other international actors. This has caused great geopolitical and economic insecurity in the region.

At the same time, this situation is not merely a question of two countries. The People's Republic of China seeks to maintain a buffer zone between itself and allies of the United States of America, and has as such developed a strategic, if not amiable, alliance with the DPRK. The US wishes, on its side, to ensure maximum its own and minimise Chinese influence in East Asia and has therefore developed a deep alliance with multiple countries in the region, including the Republic of Korea (ROK). The question is therefore also one of regional geopolitics.

This is an entrenched conflict, but it is far from unsolvable. Although the intentions behind the DPRK's engagement with the ROK and the US from 2018 onwards has been questioned, there is no doubt that its foreign policy and agenda has changed. Together with clear domestic policy changes and alterations in its political economy, it appears that the DPRK now is more inclined towards ensuring economic growth than to continue hostilities. This has been welcomed by the international community. Since the DPRK now is showing greater willingness to negotiate, we must as international actors ensure that we move past the current impasse and move towards a solution to the inter-Korean hostility and division.

Definitions of Key Terms

Collapse. A collapse is, in our context, the failure of a system or organisation. Within international relations, we often make references to the potential collapse of fragile states. A collapse can have many different causes and can have widely different consequences.

Reconciliation. Reconciliation is a complex process of resolving conflicts and ceasing hostility and antagonism. A process of reconciliation typically includes steps to increase trust and positive reciprocity as well as transitional justice, such as through truth and reconciliation commissions (as in South Africa and Cambodia) on a national level. The formation of the European Coal and Steel

Community and the European Community (later the European Union) post-World War 2 exemplify successful attempts at reconciliation and peacebuilding on a regional scale.

Reunification. Reunification in its simplest sense refers to the state of becoming one unit after a temporary split. In the Korean context, this would then refer to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea becoming one singular nation again. As will be discussed later, there are many different theoretical paths to reunification. This is illustrated by contrasting case studies such as Germany and Vietnam, for instance.

State Legitimacy. Legitimacy is, in political science, referring to the degree of acceptance of a particular phenomenon. It then follows that state legitimacy is the degree of acceptance of the ruler among the ruled. Legitimacy is rarely a binary affair, and in very few, if any, cases would a leader enjoy absolute (lack of) legitimacy.

Statement of the Problem

After a promising development in 2018, the inter-Korean relations have yet again entered an impasse after the 2019 Hanoi summit.¹ What followed was a series of missile tests and even the deliberate demolition of a joint inter-Korean liaison office in Kaesong, the latter officially in response to leaflets sent into the DPRK by South Korean NGOs.²

At the same time, the US has recently seen a change of presidency, and Moon Jae-in is also in his last year as president of the ROK. The US is more likely to focus more on domestic policy and broader international affairs, and the world, including the ROK, are likely to be more concerned about a post-pandemic recovery. As such, there is a significant chance that the inter-Korean relations will remain gridlocked for a long period of time if the international community does not intervene. It is therefore essential that the topic of inter-Korean relations is brought back to the agenda.

The question, then, is about political and socioeconomic direction. How can we most effectively foster peace on the Korean Peninsula? Is reconciliation possible, and do we really want reunification? Let us examine the challenges and possibilities of reunification before we look more in depth into the question of reconciliation more specifically.

The Question of Reunification

Reunification is a particularly complex topic lacking true comparisons internationally. One might find oneself inclined to refer to historic stories such as the German and the Vietnamese reunifications, but neither the German nor the Vietnamese case is truly applicable to the context of the Korean Peninsula.³ Delegates must therefore develop a reflected and deep understanding of the issue.

¹ More information about the summits can be found below in the section *Evaluation of past UN and International Actions*.

² Two other causes are more plausible. Due to her rising position in the North Korean state apparatus, the action might have been an excuse to bolster Kim Yo-jong's legitimacy in the North Korean government. It might also have been a symbolic act reflecting Pyongyang's frustration with the current lack of progress. See BBC, 2020.

³ Unless the reader desires a second war on the Korean Peninsula, the Vietnamese case does not provide a good model though lessons learnt post-reunification would be educational. The German case is often referenced in relation to a hypothetical reunification of the two Koreas, but, as Frank (2016a;

One pitfall any delegate should be aware of, as alluded to earlier, is the idea of a singular concept of reunification. The word reunification carries different connotations and encapsulates widely different actions to different people. The original idea of peninsula-wide elections leading to the selection of one common leader is one such concept that was formed in 1945 but subsequently failed. The Korean War (1950-1953) was, as another example, a deliberate and violent attempt by the DPRK to unify the country under their own regime.

Governments both north and south of the border have sought reunification under their own rules. Although colloquial discourse in the ROK and the West are quick to assume that reunification will be under the democratic rule of the South, this cannot theoretically be assumed without further deliberation. Likewise, it is common among some experts to assume that the DPRK will at some point collapse (see below), which then will lead to reunification. This too cannot be assumed.

It is also important, as will be underlined below, to reflect on what a unified Korea will look like. How will the economic institutions work, how will North and South Koreans integrate into a common society? What, if any, benefits will there be for North Koreans to remain in the North? How will a unified Korea balance the comparative advantage South Koreans will likely enjoy over North Koreans, and avoid potential exploitation?

Following this, a debate must first conceptualise reunification - for there are indeed many possible variants. To exemplify this point, consider more aggressive forms of reunification through war and national collapse with more non-belligerent paths such as the establishment of a confederation or through a joint political decision. Although this is not an exhaustive list of all the different scenarios, let us examine some of the potential forms of reunification.

War. This implies that the Korean Peninsula is unified through violent action. Many lives will be lost as a consequence. A second Korean War could potentially also develop into a proxy war, as China and the USA fight over influence in the region. Due to the high costs associated with a new war for all parties involved, this is highly unlikely.

Collapse. This implies that either the DPRK or ROK government collapses and creates a power vacuum that is filled by another government. This too could result in elevated levels of violence, as one cannot assume that the collapsed country automatically wants to be unified with the other. If North Korea collapses, it is also not inconceivable that China would be involved, as it directly affects their strategic sphere of influence. A collapse is, though, rather unlikely.⁴

2016b) notes, such a comparison is also very flawed. Other case studies, such as the Yemeni unification, have gathered less interest. See also Kohnen, 2020.

⁴ Although the ROK government is stable, many observers have argued since the 1990s that the DPRK is nearing a collapse (see Eberstadt, 1999; Huh, 1996; Chun, cited in the US Embassy in Seoul, 2010). Without going into excessive detail here, collapse theorists often invoke morality, which is not directly relevant to a country's legitimacy, or confuse Western/South Korean legitimisation processes with that of the DPRK, ignoring the fact that North Korean legitimisation processes operate within a different framework by nature of being a socialist dictatorship with a self-defined political philosophy (see Falck-Bilden, 2019). Another element to note is that, similarly to the term reunification, collapse is not a singular term. See Galtung (1996) for a broader deliberation.

Confederation. This implies that the two countries remain separated with different governments, united by a super-governmental confederation which works towards common goals and broader integration across the peninsula. Although the two countries have disagreed on the exact implementation of such a confederation, both have argued at different points that a confederation would be the desired goal, either as an intermediary goal or as a final state (Kim, 1980; Jacobson, 1999; Hanssen & Woo, 2020). However, to reach such a state, current hostilities must cease, and sufficient trust must be established. As per now, that is unlikely.

Political Decision. This implies that the two countries jointly agree to form a unified state. For this to be actualised, great levels of trust must have been achieved. As per status quo, this is highly unlikely.

As should be obvious to the reader at this point, each of these (and all other) variants carry different implications and require different forms of preparation. Yet, there are several considerations that should be made regardless of the reunification path one seeks. We will now explore these considerations by first looking at the economic factors, before we will move on to international security, political, legal, and social factors.

Economic Factors. The up-front costs of a reunification are considerable. This is primarily due to the great disparity between North and South Koreans. Comparing the purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita, the South Korean economy was 22 times the size of DPRK's economy in 2015 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). Germany, which still struggles with a huge economic inequality between east and west three decades after their reunification, saw a PPP per capita rate of "only" 3:1 in 1990 (see Sleifer, 2006). One should therefore not be surprised to learn that a reunification in the status quo would lead to massive economic inequalities within a unified Korea.

Bringing both sides of the border to an adequate and comparable economic standing will require colossal investments into DPRK's hard infrastructure, such as roads and railways. Due to decades of neglect and lack of funds, the hard infrastructure is in poor condition and incomparable in both extent and quality to that of ROK (Lankov, 2015: 79). To support the potential growth of modern industries in the DPRK post-reunification, the entire infrastructure network in the territory must be upgraded. Huge investments must also be dedicated to soft infrastructure to elevate the quality and accessibility of education, healthcare, and financial institutions (Ji, 2019; Shim, 2020; Noland, 2016).

However, there is no absence of long-term economic benefits should the two Koreas reunify. As a 2009 report from Goldman Sachs illustrated, with appropriate policies and planning, a unified Korea would be able to surpass most other G7 countries' absolute GDP by 2050 (Kwon, 2009). Although this might be an optimistic scenario, it is certain that a unified Korea will be able to, in the long-term, enjoy great economic benefits. There are large untapped deposits of rare earth metals in the DPRK, many of which would be invaluable to the South Korean technological industry (Kim, 2019). The potential revenue of these resources is estimated to a value of 10 trillion USD, which is more than 5 times the current size of the South Korean economy. The aging population in ROK is another important economic factor. The North Korean population does not suffer from similar demographic issues, a unified Korea would benefit from the influx of working-age North Koreans as it would help mitigating the financial costs surrounding ROK's aging population. Additionally, the initial influx of low(er)-skilled workers will provide a boost to sectors which are not typically favoured by South Koreans, such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing.

International Security. A reunification will have important implications for regional security. Currently, the North-East Asian geopolitical security is chiefly defined by the DPRK and its nuclear and missile ambitions. During the Hanoi summit in 2019 the high-level discussions between the USA and the DPRK broke down. This failure was reportedly due to the fact that the US wanted the DPRK to provide access to all nuclear facilities and weapon systems before they would receive anything in return, whilst the DPRK desired a more gradual approach that included partial sanctions relief for partial access to the nuclear programme (Brown, 2019).

Solving these issues is, as history has shown, difficult. However, at least in the case of peaceful reunification, the management and destruction of the DPRK's nuclear arsenal and ballistic missiles will result in a far more stable and secure Northeast Asia.

Politics. The two political systems south and north of the 38th parallel are very different, which can cause issues for a reunification. The most pressing question, assuming that the DPRK is absorbed into a political system akin to the current ROK system, is how to sufficiently educate the 25 million North Koreans about democracy and other liberal values. Following this comes questions surrounding the process of dismantling propaganda and prejudice emanating from both sides of the border.

Another pressing matter prior to a reunification relates to the public support for a reunification. Although most South Koreans would prefer their system to be the guiding political system post-reunification, the actual support for reunification is dwindling (Lee & Lee, 2019; Petricic, 2018). Although no comparable and reliable data exists for North Koreans, it cannot be assumed that they will completely accept the South Korean system without opposition.

Justice. Violations of international law, crimes against humanity and human rights violations must not go unpunished. The question of how this is to be implemented practically, though, is a question that needs examination prior to a reunification. Ensuring transitional justice will be a cornerstone to heal trauma and provide justice, and as underpinned by research by Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (2018), many North Korean defectors desire severe punishments for North Korean human rights abusers.

Yet, there exists no universal way of achieving such justice. Post-World War 2, the Nuremberg Trials exemplify one such attempt, where everyone who were responsible for German war crimes were put on trial. The Farc-Cambodia peace treaty sought another approach. Instead of seeking to punish the guerrilla fighters, the peace treaty instead granted them amnesty, and turned the guerrilla force into a political party and guaranteeing their security. This way the hostilities could end peacefully, whilst the previous guerrilla could legitimately work towards their goals within the political system (Deutsche Welle, 2016).

At the same time, the legal system in place after a reunification must also prevent and punish revenge actions against people who are accused of violations. The principle of innocent until proven guilty must be maintained, and the human rights of the defendants must also be protected.

Social factors. A reunification also comes with a series of social considerations. The first, which relates in part to previous points, is the ability of North Koreans to adapt to a new political and economic system. Although the DPRK has seen large economic changes and broad privatisation since

the 1990s famine, many of the more liberal socioeconomic principles surrounding economic activities that underpin South Korean life remain underdeveloped in the DPRK (see Falck-Bilden, 2019).

Secondly, due to the large difference in living standards between the DPRK and ROK, it is not inconceivable that many defectors would desire to migrate to the south (Hanssen & Woo, 2020). However, such a mass migration would cause great challenges to the socioeconomic system and quality of life, as the necessary resources required to assist the settlement of these migrants do not currently exist.

Third, in a unified Korea, important positions are likely to be held by South Koreans, possibly causing significant social inequalities between the two populations. This is not least because a number of North Koreans with human and social capital are implicit in human rights abuses and other crimes and risk punishment post-reunification. The human and social capital of South Koreans are also exponentially better and more international than those of the average North Koreans, which will make it substantially easier for South Koreans to succeed both politically and economically in a unified Korea.

There are, as such, many challenges that need to be solved prior to and after reunification, yet also great benefits for the regional economy and security. Regardless of whether reunification is desired or not, the easiest step towards a more peaceful status quo on the Korean Peninsula would be to reconcile the two sides. This is also a prerequisite for a non-violent reunification. As such, the section that follows will examine the question of reconciliation.

The Question of Reconciliation

While reconciliation certainly must precede discussions on specific modes of reunification, several political and societal constraints and setbacks present in the Peninsula confound the reconciliation efforts between the Koreans. 70 years have passed since the division of the nations, and huge political and societal rifts have formed and only grown larger ever since.

The use of propaganda through media and education is a significant characteristic of North Korean tactics to battle growing South Korean and other foreign influence within the state. The recent development of media technology largely mediated the impact of propaganda language on the overall North Korean knowledge of South Korea. The disparity and uneasiness caused by the long history of this manoeuvring tactics still remain, however, and increasing censorship on mobile phones by specialized technology developed by North Korean intelligent services imposes a greater threat of a cultural rift likely to form between the Koreans.

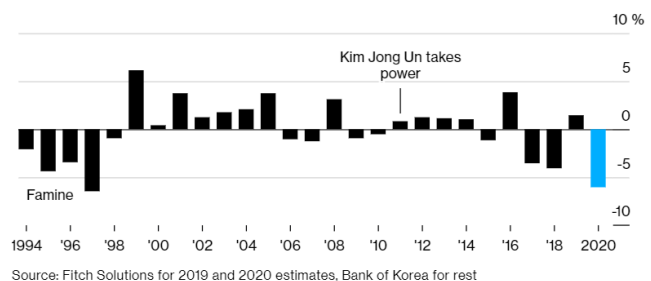
Growing disapproval concerning reunification among younger generations in South Korea also poses a challenge for creating a cohesive and united Korea. While the majority of schoolchildren in South Korea still supports the reunification of the Peninsula, 24.2 percent of elementary, middle, and high students expressed objection to Korean reunification, a constant leap from 13.7 percent in 2018 and 19.4 percent in 2019, in a survey by the Ministry of Unification and the Ministry of Education in South Korea last fall (Ministry of Unification. 2020).

According to Yonhap News agency, the students mostly cited impending economic and social problems as the biggest factors behind their disapproval. Few people who were directly affected by the

Korean War remain, and so is also the case for those who witnessed and embraced the overwhelming, stirring images depicting reunions of separated families that were televised nationally in the past. The elapsed time has only exacerbated the great fissure created by the division 70 years ago, and the concept of a unified national identity has gradually grown feeble in South Korea. The stakeholders and international coalitions must address these trends.

In recent years, hopes were high that talks between President Moon and President Kim and between President Kim and President Trump could lead to a form of reconciliation. However, the progress has essentially been reversed after the unsuccessful Hanoi Summit convention between President Trump and President Kim in February 2019, placing the East Asian region back to a state of high volatility. One question that has arisen both during and after is whether the North Korean government does desire a reconciliatory atmosphere. When faced with stern international challenges and pressure to its economic health and the regime, North Korea has often responded with hostile military actions, missile launches, and nuclear weapons testings to either reassert state legitimacy or openly protest against the economic constraints to which the state had been subjected.

President Kim has since his inauguration sought to implement economic reforms, with important regulatory changes in 2012 and 2014 (Gray & Lee, 2015). This comes in conjunction with a significant reorganisation of the political leadership and a deliberate effort to regain and meaningfully restructure its state legitimacy (Falck-Bilden, 2019: 59-68). Yet, as the country is starved for



foreign capital due to sanctions, the economy has not seen the positive development it hoped for. This spurred the DPRK to seek deliberately for sanctions relief, which resulted in the 2018 and 2019 summits. However, as this attempt fell through and the dialogue was officially frozen, the DPRK became increasingly frustrated and initiated a series of provocations. Most notably, the DPRK's decision to demolish the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Kaesong last June has sent forth quite an unambiguous, if not threatening, message to the world regarding their current stance – “either start negotiate with us, or we will return to the old days of provocations.” This, experts agree, is an evident protest from the DPRK on the impasse, and their frustration with USA's inflexibility concerning sanctions relief. The action immediately prompted discussions among South Korean envoys and US officials to find resolutions for this heightened animosity. With the Covid-19 expected to further deteriorate the economic health under the Kim regime, delegates must consider this shifting economic landscape to assemble a critical assessment of the Koreas' predicaments.

Building mutual trust and the use of non-confrontational language stand out as the fundamental features in reconciliation processes brought forth by international scholars. Despite shorter periods where these principles have been applied, there has been an overall lack of long-term consistency on the Korean Peninsula. The decades-long history of weapons of mass destruction development programs persistently undertaken by North Korea and continued failed attempts by the international communities to temper this ambition induced years of long-standing instability and imminent threats in East Asia.

Leaders of nation states more than often resorted to strong and caustic language directed towards the others in reactions to developments of belligerent actions in the Peninsula. In the past few years, especially, the series of heightened rhetoric exchanged between ex-President Trump and President Kim, familiarized as “war of words,” created a period of grave tensions and concerns in the region. International communities must observe and alleviate the nature of heated language exchanges that frustrated and even forestalled the progression of reconciliatory actions in the region.

On one side, economic interdependence could function as an imperative measure onto which formerly confrontational governments and states can latch to adopt a compulsory period of peace amid a history of hostility (Keohane & Nye, 2001). The establishment of an intricate system of economic reciprocity among parties involved in a conflict provides mutual interests, rendering any forms of further military engagements obsolete and even obstructive to their newly generated economic motives. The Koreans have briefly experimented in these waters in the past, as observed by the 2003 construction of Kaesong Industrial Complex that permitted South Korean investment capital into the North. The industrial region has been frozen after ex-President Park’s decision to recall all staff members back to the South in response to repeated military provocations perpetrated by the North in 2016. With talks of revitalizing this complex constantly having been brought to the table since the Summits in 2018, delegates can further investigate possibilities of economic coalitions between the Koreans and other closely related stakeholders to form this wave of enforced reciprocity. Increasing foreign capital investments in North Korea could also be a way to initiate positive reciprocal loops leading to a form of interdependence. Both steps require sanctions relief or the formulation of exceptions to the existing sanctions, though, which will undoubtedly face opposition as this would arguably weaken the punitive effects of the multilateral sanctions regime.

Supporting and promoting cultural exchanges can provide additional vitality into restoring friendly relations between hostile states. Especially in relations mired in propaganda, such cultural exchanges help humanise the enemy. The 1983 national broadcast that featured dispersed families across the border and their reunions, as mentioned above, uplifted the national sentiments towards reunification in South Korea and even successfully garnered tremendous interest from the international press on the inter-Korean affairs. In recent years, the Moon Administration attempted to stimulate similar cultural attractions between the Koreans by supporting the dispatch of Unified Korea sporting teams into Olympic games and even hosting a concert by South Korean art troupe at the inter-Korean Summit in 2018. Aside from political and economic aspects of the predicament, the policy makers, international partners, and even private enterprises may strive to redeem cultural affinity between the nations by staying attentive to developing trends and sentimentality formed along generations of Koreans.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
Aug. 15, 1945	Korea achieves independence from imperial Japanese colonial rule - Korean Peninsula is subsequently divided at the 38th parallel by the United States-backed South and the Soviet Union-backed North.
Aug. 15, 1948	Establishment of the Republic of Korea.
Sep. 9, 1948	Formation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Jun. 25, 1950	Korean War begins.
Jul. 27, 1953	Korean Armistice Agreement is signed to implement temporary cessation to armed violence on the Peninsula.
Jan. 21, 1968	A North Korean commando unit attempts to assassinate President Park Chung Hee , in a failed assassination attempt known as the Blue House Raid.
Jul. 4, 1972	Both parties sign July 4th North-South Korea Joint Statement , in an effort to appease a series of hostile events initiated by the Blue House Raid. Meeting between the director of KCIA and Kim Il Sung sets in motion three principles of unification : independence, peace, and nation-wide unity.
Aug. 18, 1976	North Korean soldiers murder two U.S. Army officers at the Joint Security Area, in an incident known as the Axe Murder Incident. South Korean and U.S. forces initiate Operation Paul Bunyon in retaliation, and Kim Il-sung drafts his first official apology to the South.
Oct. 9, 1983	Rangoon bombing. The DPRK tries to kill ROK President Chun , but fails and instead kills 21 people, including South Korean and Burmese politicians, officials, and journalists. The act causes wide condemnation from the international community, including North Korea's ally China.
Sep. 21, 1985	First reunion event for separated families is held.
Sep. 17, 1991	North Korea and South Korea simultaneously join the United Nations.
Dec. 26, 1991	Soviet Union dissolves, and the Cold War ends. At the same time, China stops subsidising trade with North Korea. The loss of financial support results in the 1990s famine and a substantial increase of North Korean defectors.
Jan. 20, 1992	The Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of North Korea is signed between north and south, along with the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation, but never succeeded in the long haul to temper North Korea's nuclear ambitions.
Oct. 21, 1994	The Agreed Framework is signed. USA promises to provide fuel and build light water reactors in North Korea, whilst the DPRK promises to denuclearise.
Feb. 25, 1998	Kim Dae-jung is elected as the ROK President and subsequently promulgates his famous Sunshine Policy. Reconciliation and Cooperation Policy Towards the North is the official title given to President Kim's plan, setting forth a string of conciliatory actions and talks between the two states.
Jun. 13, 2000	The First Inter-Korean Summit is held in Pyongyang for the first time since the division. The meeting between the two leaders produces the June 15 Joint Declaration with a placatory eight-point agreement.
Jun. 30., 2003	The construction of Kaesong Industrial Complex begins in Kaesong, North

	Korea, to foster collaborative economic development.
Aug. 27, 2003	The first round of six-party talks is held between North Korea, South Korea, Japan, United States, China, and Russia, in response to North Korea's withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. No official agreement was made.
Oct 9, 2006	North Korea officially tests its first nuclear device following a sequence of preliminary missile launch testings.
Feb.8, 2007	The third phase of the fifth round of six-party talks takes place , and North Korea agrees to cease and terminate its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, in exchange for emergency energy assistance and fuel supply from the other five parties.
Oct. 2, 2007	The second Inter-Korean Summit is held in Pyongyang , assembling a declaration to redeem the objectives of the June 15 Joint Declaration and resolve the newly developed affairs on nuclear crises in Korea.
Apr. 14, 2009	North Korea officially announces its exit from the six-party talks , in response to official denunciation by UNSC on its satellite launch testings. North Korea resumes its nuclear programs.
Mar. 26, 2010	Underwater torpedo attack sinks ROKS Cheonan and kills 46 South Korean sailors , in the same year that the ROK President Lee Myung-bak officially abandoned the Sunshine Policy. Later in the year, North Korea launches yet another artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island in South Korea, killing four South Koreans including two civilians and further deteriorating the inter-Korean relations.
Jan. 22, 2013	United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 2087 condemns North Korea's rocket launch test in December, 2012. The event causes escalated tensions in the peninsula, eventually leading up to the 2013 Korean Crisis and several more years of hostile and bellicose actions.
Feb. 10, 2016	Kaesong Industrial Complex is temporarily closed as South Korea recalls its staff back to the homeland.
Jul. 26, 2016	The U.S. and ROK agree on the deployment of THAAD (Thermal High Altitude Aerial Defense) system in Seongju, South Korea, to counter North Korea's long-range ballistic missiles, resulting in hostile responses from the DPRK and retaliatory diplomatic measures from China.
May. 10, 2017	ROK President Moon Jae-in is sworn into office and promises a return to the Sunshine Policy.
Apr. 27, 2018	The Third Inter-Korean Summit is held at the Joint Security Area , releasing the Panmunjom Declaration that illustrated collaborative efforts to cease military actions in the Peninsula and foster reunification of the Koreas.

Feb. 27, 2019	The Hanoi Summit between DPRK President Kim and U.S President Trump is cut short and ends unsuccessfully , as the two leaders fail to reach an agreement on the adjustment of the intensity of sanctions imposed upon North Korea.
Jun. 30, 2019	Kim, Moon, and Trump convene at the 2019 Koreas-United States DMZ Summit . The attendees agree to plan on resuming denuclearization process in the North, only to be hampered in the following months due to increased hostility as North Korea continues testing missiles and the United States and South Korea arrange joint military exercises.
Jun 16., 2020	North Korea destructs the Inter-Korean Liaison Office with explosives , adhering to its previous threats to cut all ties of communication with the South in retaliation for the Moon Administration's failure to squash anti-North Korean regime campaigns carried out by the defectors.

Evaluation of Past UN and International Actions

The DPRK's nuclear ambitions initiated a new era of engagement on the Korean Peninsula. This was first marked by the 1994 Agreed Framework, which was an agreement between the US and the DPRK which dictated that the DPRK would freeze their nuclear programme whilst the US would help fund and construct light water reactors in the DPRK to support energy production. Both countries also pledged to move towards a full normalisation of political and economic relations. By the end of the century, this agreement had in essence fallen apart, mostly due to the US not upholding many of its fundamental pledges which depleted Pyongyang's patience (Sigal, 2019a; Ryan, 2017). As such, they restarted their nuclear programme, awarding them a place in US President Bush's "axis of evil" in 2001. The Agreed Framework was formally abandoned in 2002.

As the Agreed Framework broke down, it was soon replaced by the Six-Party Talks, which also aimed for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula but this time included not only the DPRK and the USA but also the ROK, People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and Japan. Also this time the DPRK was promised a normalisation of relations between the US and the DPRK in return for verifiable denuclearisation through a gradual and reciprocal process. However, the Six-Party Talks were mired in disagreements, and the US failed to follow through with their own commitments also this time, instead backtracking and reneging on many of the statements and commitments made (Sigal, 2019b). The Six-Party Talks were discontinued in 2009 following the DPRK's launch of a satellite, an action viewed as a breach of the agreements, and was subsequently denounced by the United Nations Security Council.

On the topic of inter-Korean relations and Korean reunification, the United Nations has been mostly engaged with denouncements and multilateral sanctions related to the DPRK's nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile programmes as well as the human rights situation in the DPRK. However, in 2007, the General Assembly adopted a resolution jointly submitted by the DPRK and the ROK which welcomed the 2007 inter-Korean summit and invited member states to continue supporting and assisting the process of dialogue, reconciliation and reunification (United Nations General Assembly, 2007a; see also United Nations General Assembly, 2007b).

There have been multiple top-level summits between the DPRK and the ROK. Two such summits were held in the Sunshine Policy era initiated by President Kim Dae-jung, whilst the remaining three took place after the thawing of relations in early 2018. These summits laid the groundwork for the first and second summits between the DPRK and the US, held in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Although these summits have resulted in declarations promising progress and reconciliation, they have had little practical implications. Furthermore, the 2019 US-DPRK summit was abandoned before an agreement was found. The US demanded the DPRK to hand over all nuclear weapons and equipment before the US committed to anything, which the DPRK never could agree to due to concerns that the US might exploit the situation and attack. The DPRK on its side, demanded the end to enmity and sanctions relief, the latter of which the US was particularly reluctant to grant (Sigal, 2019c).

Stakeholders

North Korea has long been instrumental in the major developments in inter-Korean relations, constantly fluctuating between peaceful and hostile vantage points in the course of modern history. Following the deterioration of the Soviet Union and severance of all military and economic aids from its previous ally, the North Korean regime resorted to development of asymmetric warfare tactics and weapons of mass destruction, most notably highlighted by its long affiliation with nuclear weapons development programs. North Korea, however, sporadically provided positive responses to peace talk requests and had contributed to generations of brief placatory mood between the Koreas, including its Red Cross emergency aid to the South in the mid-1980s and involvement in a series of Summit meetings with the South that brought forth amicable, though short-lived, agreements.

Currently, North Korea primarily seeks relief from heavy economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the international coalitions, as the current economic health of the state has reportedly been debilitated in recent years. However, the motives behind North Korea's action remain ambiguous and under constant debates, made obscure by limited insider information.

North Korea formally desires a loose confederation following generally the principles that were stipulated by Kim Il Sung in the 1960s. The confederation model that he suggested outlines includes free border crossings and transportation, a common foreign and domestic policy, and a federal assembly consisting of both North and South Korean politicians (Hanssen & Woo, 2020: 6-7). This confederation is in North Korea viewed as the end goal. It is unlikely that the DPRK wants a complete reunification, as the repercussions a reunification would have for the North Korean elite are considerable.

South Korea has generally shifted gears on its Northern policies accordingly to the series of regime changes between its two major political parties. President Moon seeks to revert to the Sunshine Policy famously propounded by ex-President Kim Dae-jung and has created spaces for a number of peaceful inter-Korean conventions, including the reconnection of Seoul-Pyongyang hotline and the 2018 Inter-Korean Summit held at the Joint Security Area.

One more year of presidency remains for the Moon Administration, and the progression of recent events spurred by the destruction of Inter-Korean Liaison Office spells danger for President Moon's political grounds that are based on the promise to recover a peaceful atmosphere in the Peninsula. The outlook on Northern policy has traditionally been a critical factor in determining voting turnouts for the past presidential elections in the Republic of Korea, and it certainly will remain so for the 20th

Presidential Election scheduled to take place in March, 2022. The political shape constructed by the impending election will therefore present key determinants to the inter-Korean relations in the coming years and potentially signal major shifts in international political structure in the region.

South Korea, much like North Korea, pursues an official policy that suggests the creation of a confederation (Hanssen & Woo, 2020). However, this confederation differed in many key ways, not least due to it being viewed as a transitional process towards complete reunification rather than the end goal. This transitional process would start with an increased cooperation and exchanged to increase trust between the two parties, before a confederation would work towards more complete integration of the two Koreas.

The United States has predominantly led its discussions with North Korea around the issues of dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs and imposition of economic sanctions that typically intensified or loosened according to North Korea's compliance with the United States' disarmament plans. More importantly, however, the United States has also traditionally viewed the Korean Peninsula as an instrumental buffer region to check the growing influences springing from the Eastern powers, previously from the Soviet Union and currently from the People's Republic of China.

The United States has constantly clashed with North Korean and Chinese governments with regards to its military presence in the Korean Peninsula. The US joint military drills with the ROK forces have historically generated negative responses from both the Chinese and the North Koreans, as evident from North Korea's strong rhetoric to respond to the 2019 US - ROK joint military drill, to which the DPRK officials referred as a "grave provocation." The decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense, better known as THAAD, in 2016 likewise engendered hostile diplomatic environment in East Asia as the Chinese government initiated an unofficial boycott of all South Korean products as means of diplomatic retaliation. The Biden Administration assumed power in early 2021, and the new president assumed to continue the firm position against nuclear development programs in North Korea and the heightening Chinese influence in East Asia.

The US is unlikely to desire a reunification, or possibly even a reconciliation, between the two Koreas. The main reason for this reluctance is the US military presence in South Korea. Without a conflict, the *raison d'être* for military deployment in South Korea is substantially weakened. This is important to the US for various reasons, not least due to its competing balance of power with China. The military bases in Korea are situated strategically vis-à-vis China. Reconciliation would also entail a substantial decrease in the arms trade with South Korea, hurting the military-industrial complex (Galtung, 1996).

China is often considered as the most critical and closest ally to North Korea. The two states share a long border that runs over 1,400 kilometers in length. The Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty signed in 1961 is still in effect, standing as the sole defense treaty that the DPRK has signed with any nation.

The hostile military actions and provocations by DPRK, however, have historically elicited mixed responses from the Chinese government. The Rangoon bombing attack perpetrated by DPRK officials in 1983, for example, resulted in an official statement of censure from the Chinese. More recently, the underwater torpedo attack aimed at ROKS Cheonan that killed 46 South Korean sailors in 2013 likewise deteriorated the relations between China and North Korea. The two states, however, shared

similar stances against the installation of THAAD equipment in South Korea by expressing lament and words of denunciation towards the growing US military presence in the region.

While China remains North Korea's biggest trading partner, DPRK only ranks in 82nd biggest trading partner of China, a significantly lower placing compared to South Korea's 5th. Despite North Korea's languishing economic health and trade volume, however, the intensifying power struggle between the US and PRC in recent years can prompt the Chinese government to further support North Korea to adequately adjust to and contest American influence.

Although China welcomes reconciliation and the decrease of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, it is unlikely that Beijing will support a reunification if it entails that the US will have direct or indirect access to its border regions. North Korea is a strategic ally to China in the sense that it creates a buffer zone between China and US allies.

Japan has not established formal diplomatic relations with North Korea, with the exceptions of a few sporadic talks that developed in responses to North Korea's nuclear development programs and kidnapping incidents of Japanese citizens. Japan, in fact, reportedly demonstrated the most negative perception of North Korea in the world according to a 2014 poll's actions conducted by BBC service, with 91% of Japanese participants responding negatively to North Korea in contrast to only 1% that responded positively (World Service Poll BBC, 2014). Repeated missile launch testing and nuclear development programs largely contributed to this outlook, as Japan falls dangerously within the range of North Korea's ballistic missile ranges.

Japanese relations with South Korea have drastically gone sour in 2019 with a series of events that led to trade disputes and the eventual 2019 boycott of Japanese products in South Korea, an endeavor that entailed sharp decrease in Japanese exports sales to Korea. The current affairs and the long intertwining history filled with animosity between the Koreas and Japan undeniably afflict the trilateral relations between the states.

Japan's position on reunification and reconciliation is ambiguous. On one hand, reunification and reconciliation would both entail a substantially easier geopolitical situation, but a unified and integrated Korea would also become economically stronger in the long-term and potentially challenge Japan's economic and political status in the region. It is also not inconceivable that an united Korea would refocus on Japan as a common antagonist (Hanssen & Woo, 2020).

Non-Governmental Organizations and International Institutions have asserted their presence in the Peninsula even before the Koreas joined the United Nations simultaneously in 1991. Most notably, the Red Cross guided much of the thawing process between the North and South Korean nationals since as early as the 1970s. The dispatch of emergency aid supplies from the North Korean Red Cross in 1984 to aid South Korea's flood relief, for example, created space for a brief period of peace and reconciliation between the Koreas. Concurrently, the Red Cross also facilitated a series of reunions of families separated by the Korean War. The events were televised on Korean Broadcasting System and reached a viewing rate of stunning 78% in its peak, with as many as 100,952 applicants to the program, of which 53,536 cases were aired and 10,189 families were reunited (Cultural Heritage Administration, 2014). The broadcast sent across riveting and heart-warming images of families in tears, greatly affecting the perceptions among South Koreans regarding themes of reconciliation.

22 United Nations bodies currently operate within North Korean territory, including WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, and UNEP, all of which undertake their missions in South Korean turf as well. South Korea enjoys a more extensive membership status within UN organizations, having been registered to various trade and finance-oriented organizations such as WTO, World Bank, and IMF and other arms control institutions including IAEA, from which North Korea withdrew in 1994.

North Korea has been reluctant to join institutions and international contracts that promoted non-proliferation movements and arms control. This behavior is best highlighted by the state's withdrawal from IAEA in 1994 and the nation's noteworthy absence from major arms control institutions including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the Wassenaar Arrangements.

The two nations, however, commonly engage in interactions with several regional international institutions, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). North Korea participated in the ARF in 2000, joining South Korea, who has been extensively communicating with this economic union. In 2017, South Korea sought means to urge North Korea back onto the negotiation process for the nuclear disarmament by using this regional forum as a platform, aiming to leverage international pressure onto the DPRK. The absence of North Korea from the East Asia Summit, however, presents challenges for regional state leaders to appropriately involve the North Koreans into top level discussions on a regular basis. This history of North Korea's general disinclination to join major international pacts within the region provides yet another challenge for the delegates to consider.

Questions a Resolution Must(should) Answer

- How can global state-actors stimulate peaceful inter-Korean dialogue? Which lessons must be learnt from previous experiences?
- How can the international community best assist solving the challenges related to securing a pathway to Korean Reunification (or, alternatively, inter-Korean reconciliation and peace)?
- How can member states alleviate the economic burdens of development in the DPRK?
- How can the international community best address the greater geopolitical tensions in the region and ensure that the tensions between China and the US do not compromise efforts on the Korean Peninsula?
- If the delegates consider economic interdependence and cultural exchanges viable trust-building initiatives, then how are member states going to balance such interactions with the sanctions regime aimed to punish the DPRK's for its nuclear and missile programmes?

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