

Won Kang was, at the time of presenting his paper, a postgraduate student at Cambridge. His paper created considerable discussion at the conference. Both papers complement—in terms of subject but not necessarily approach—the paper published in Volume 3 by Sarah Nelson. Jin Young Moon, who here writes about the welfare systems of Korea and Taiwan, recently completed doctoral studies at the University of Hull. Volume 4 is rounded-off with a contribution by Yur-Bok Lee of the University of North Dakota, author of *West Goes East: Paul Georg von Möllendorff and Great Power Imperialism in Late Yi Korea* and several other books. Lee's account of Robert Hart, the best-known British subject employed by the Chinese government in the late 19th century, complements Ian Nish's consideration of John McLeavy Brown in the *Papers* volume 2.

THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND PROSPECTS FOR KOREAN UNIFICATION

HONGKOO LEE

The Cold War has ended with the historic transformation of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, leading to changes in super-power relations. How does this affect the confrontation between North and South Korea, a confrontation which has dramatically illustrated Cold War tensions for the last four and a half decades? Does the end of the Cold War automatically ensure unification on the divided peninsula? There is no simple answer, for a change in the global system, however fundamental and wide ranging it may be, does not immediately bring uniform effects to all regions and all sub-systems. Peculiarities and particularities of different regions and different situations have their own dynamics, and interact with developments in the global system to produce a variety of changes, solutions, and problems. The Korean situation, then, has its own distinct features which tend to explain the efforts of both North and South to deal with changing times and North-South interaction.

The Korean situation seems to contain three characteristics which make it special in the general context of the changing international system. First, Korea has experienced not just the tension of the Cold War, but a hot and bloody war which left permanent fortifications along a ceasefire line, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The legacy of war, and the utmost state of alert on both sides against further military engagement has made the Korean situation distinct, for example, from the German situation prior to 1990. Change from a mere ceasefire to permanent peace is the priority among the situational requirements. Second, Korea remains perhaps the last nation still divided among those which suffered unwarranted division after the second world war. Germany and Vietnam have achieved unification. If there is one element which unites the divided peninsula it is the ardent wish of the people in both North and South to see national unification. Third, and finally, a geopolitical peculiarity of the Korean peninsula is becoming more prominent as the fortunes of the major powers undergo change in this period of great transformation. Korea is a rare case, for it has four major powers as immediate neighbours, in a neighbourhood where there are no other minor countries. The former Soviet Union has the largest land mass, China the largest population, Japan the largest cash-surplus with her neighbours. The United States, as a Pacific power and a party directly involved in the partition of the Korean peninsula, still maintains a visible presence. Restructuring, or the re-formulation of either a global order or a regional balance will acquire a special relevance as it is related to the Korean problem in its geopolitical context.

1.

Looking at the various regions and countries around the world, one can say that almost every country has its own problems. It is very difficult to determine who has the most serious problems or who has suffered most. There is a great deal of suffering in different parts of the world, and this explains why it is difficult to rank the seriousness and depth of suffering that each people has suffered or suffers.

In any case, Korea has experienced a unique history of suffering in this century. To put the matter into perspective, almost no Korean living today has experienced citizenship in a country independent and united. In 1910, Korea was annexed by Japan, so for 35 years until 1945 the nation was not an independent state but merely a colony. Immediately following liberation, Korea was divided. Until today (1992), the division has lasted for nearly 47 years. So, for the last 82 years Koreans have not enjoyed both a united and independent country. I, and all Koreans, simply do not know what it is like to be a citizen of a country that is independent and united; we do not want to claim we suffered most—because suffering seems so universal in the 20th century—but I have to say we have experienced a very peculiar fate.

Now, in looking back at the period of colonial rule, we see perhaps the last throws of what we may call the Age of Imperialism. The large powers were engaged in territorial expansion, and we were a victim. And then, from 1945 until very recently, we experienced the Cold War; we saw ideological confrontation combined with military hostility.

We may talk about unification or re-unification, but the truth of the matter is that the question we face today is not so much re-unification (as in the original title of my presentation) as unification. The reason is that "re-unification" sounds as if we have an original state to go back

to, but the last time we had a unified country was in 1910 at the end of the Chosŏn Dynasty. No one is willing to go back to the kingdom as it then was, for in 82 years so much has happened. What we want to achieve is nation-building through unification. When we talk about unification plans, formulas, and methods, we are really discussing ways to create nationhood. We are trying to create a modern nation for the first time on the Korean peninsula. Many countries have gained independence and started to modernize either early in the century or following the second world war. As far as Koreans are concerned, this is still to be achieved.

I know it is not an easy task to achieve unification, because for the last half century or so, to be more precise 47 years, Koreans have lived in two different ways: the peninsula was divided in two. In South Korea, we made progress in terms of modernization in conjunction with what may broadly be called the west. In the North, development has been very strongly tied to Communist societies. The two experiences are extremely divergent and different. Again, during our suffering, many moved from Korea. Today approximately 7% of Koreans live outside the Korean peninsula; unlike in 1910, Koreans are now spread all over the world. When Koreans talk about new nationhood, they have in mind a new meaning in the spatial sense, not just a nation restricted to the peninsula. Taken together, all of this makes the question of unification complex and special.

The same processes based on the same experiences are also tied to the development of Korean nationalism. We have seen various nationalistic tendencies develop and sometimes erupt in our world. During the days of Japanese occupation, Korean nationalism led to the movement for independence. In that sense, ours was a very exclusive nationalism that tried to reject outside influence and assert the independence and uniqueness of the Korean people.

More recently, of course, economic and social development has prompted a more international and inclusive nationalistic sentiment. How should we mix these two together as we approach the question of unification?

We must pay attention to geopolitics. The end of the Cold War—the end of superpower hegemony—has once again highlighted the importance of more traditional geopolitics. It has become more and more important to consider what kind of neighbourhood you are situated in. On the peninsula, Koreans live in a very special neighbourhood. In our part of the world you do not find small nations. We have only three immediate neighbours—China, Russia and Japan. And when these three are your immediate neighbours, you have to say that for Korea, a relatively small country, it's a pretty rough neighbourhood.

Yet Korea is not really a small country, for the combined population is something like 66,000,000—a population bigger than the United Kingdom. Everything, though, is relative: What is 66,000,000 when your immediate neighbour is China? We are a small country in terms of space, but not *that* small, as former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yu told me in response to my comment to this effect. So we have some space, but when your immediate neighbour is Russia, you still feel you are indeed small. Again, we have experienced tremendous economic development, and cannot claim to be *that* poor. Our per capita income now exceeds \$6,000. But when your immediate neighbour is Japan, you really feel you are very poor. Korea, then, has a very special geopolitical setting, which has to be taken into consideration in any talk about unification.

Given all this background, we have to ask whether the general world trend, involving the demise of the Cold War, really does apply to the Korean context. After all, the

division of the Korean peninsula was primarily the result of superpower decisions. The United States and the former Soviet Union have played major roles in maintaining the division for 47 years. The answer to my question has to be rather mixed. In some senses, the world trend does apply to Korea, but at the same time we must acknowledge that Korea, like every other geographical region, has its own peculiarities and special features. Even if my answer appears somewhat tepid, the world changes mean that for the first time the Korean unification question has become an issue to be tackled and solved primarily by the Koreans themselves. This marks the "Koreanization of the Korean question," because, ever since the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Korean question has been handled more by various involved powers than by the Koreans themselves.

Finally, as a special characteristic which influences the whole process, may I note the need to carefully study the anatomy of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism is a very special political, social, and ideological phenomenon in the modern world. We now know how the Soviet system operated; we now know how the East German system operated. Like them, most totalitarian systems have faded away, but what remains in North Korea today is basically a unique totalitarian system. This may sound like a pejorative characterization of North Korea, but I have no other way to describe the surviving system. Textbook definitions say totalitarian systems should have one leader, one ideology, one party, a total mobilization of population, total isolation of the population from outside influence, and so on. In every category, North Korea excels as totalitarian, though I evaluate their system positively: North Korea has the most effective totalitarian system in the modern world. The regime has been in power longer than any other regime (since 1945), led by Kim Il Sung. Although Kim is approaching 80, he remains relatively healthy. And his

regime is more successful, at least in terms of longevity, than either Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia.

Given the end of the Cold War, can the North Korean type of totalitarianism continue? We need to ask how any changes in the system will effect the question of Korean unification, how they will alter North-South relations.

2.

In South Korea the government has made some major decisions, developing a specific policy which reflects the activities of the last few years. By 1987, as *perestroika* was smoothly progressing, the relaxation in super-power relations became apparent. South Korea, particularly the new leadership, decided to chart a new course on both the domestic and international fronts. South Korea had already succeeded in modernization and industrialization through close linkage to the international economy and the maintenance of a high growth rate through the development of an export-led economy. Our efforts towards industrialization, however, were carried out under strong leadership, often at the risk of the government becoming a totalitarian regime. In the middle of 1987, a decision was made to immediately execute full-scale democratization with, as the opening shot, free and direct presidential elections. This decision was made with the full awareness that the end of the Cold War would be accompanied by an irreversible move towards democratization and demilitarization. The successful hosting of the Seoul Olympics in 1988 symbolized the determination of South Koreans to ride the new wave of history through a simultaneous economic internationalization and domestic democratization.

South Korea inaugurated a new foreign policy which was felt appropriate to the post Cold War era. We launched our *Nordpolitik*, fashioned after the German *Östpolitik*, to normalize relations with the Soviet Union, East European countries, and China. It is needless to add that this effort received encouragement with the transformation of the Soviet Union, as well as with the dramatic completion of German unification. It was hoped that the new policy would not only secure South Korea a more balanced global position, but would also exert indirect pressure on North Korea for greater access to reform.

We decided that nation-building through unification could not happen overnight, but had to be a gradual step by step process. The process involves a formula in which the two Korean states maintain individual status, yet at the same time set up joint institutions to promote development. The principle is to build a national community, which implies not simply a political decision or aggregation of political power, but much more: building one social community, one cultural community, one economic zone, and only then a suitable political structure. The one political structure will need to manage and govern the one national community. Taken together, this forms the scheme called the Korean Commonwealth. Since the Soviets have recently adopted the term, I feel that the idea has become popular in recent months, but we formally announced it as our unification plan on 11 September 1989.

This is the South's plan, and it appears a natural outgrowth of our social and economic modernization, our promotion of an open market mechanism through contact with the rest of the world. In short, South Korea felt that the existence of two states should not permanently impede the development of a unified national community. The first substantial result of these new foreign and unification

policies was the simultaneous admission of both Korean states to the United Nations in September 1991.

By the end of the 1980s, we came to the conclusion that the process of modernization and the process towards unification could not be completed without political democratization in the South, and this meant we had to institutionalize democracy. That is precisely what we have begun during the last four years, and we are still struggling on. In Britain as I prepared this paper, everybody was talking about an election, but compared to the situation in South Korea, everything is relatively calm. South Koreans have a parliamentary election in March 1992 and a presidential election at the end of 1992. Through the transferring of power in elections, South Koreans will have consolidated the process of institutionalizing democracy. Modernization and democratization, taken together, will furnish the ground for unification process which, as I said, is to build a commonwealth of North and South Korea, and perhaps also establish a viable link with all the Korean communities around the world.

3

There are a number of issues involved in the unification process; let me point out a few which relate to developments in North Korea. In many ways the North faces a much more difficult task than the South. The North is currently experiencing a difficult period as it reacts to the disintegration of Eastern Europe, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the world-wide decline of communist and totalitarian experiments. The regime has to accomplish two objectives, two immediate tasks. The first concerns succession. Kim Jong Il, the son of Kim Il Sung, is designated as heir, but to achieve a successful dynastic succession in this time and age, particularly in a Stalinist

regime, is not easy. A similar experiment in Romania under Ceausescu came to a tragic end, so the North cannot be sure that their succession will go well. In 1992, the drama is coming to its climax: The younger Kim celebrated his 50th birthday. He is already Commander-in-Chief of the North Korean Army, and most probably will become the head of state. The second concerns economic problems. The North can no longer count on the economic support of the former Soviet Union, and so are in an extremely difficult economic position. They need the help from outside. I think that North Korea has now realized that without making a major adjustment they have no way to solve this problem. They have begun to make moves which the South has welcomed. These include the decision to co-operate with the South in producing a joint declaration for peace, unification, co-operation and exchange, and the decision to co-operate in producing a joint declaration on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The creation of a commonwealth will be a further, interim step. We do not know how long the creation will take, but as we pursue our goal of creating a single nation, a structural commonwealth will help our management of the whole process.

Let me single out one specific problem in this process: the nuclear issue. The topic has recently been discussed extensively, particularly in connection to Iraq, where the nuclear programme focussed global awareness of the potential danger of nuclear proliferation. North Korea is now skillfully using the threat of the development of nuclear weapons as a major bargaining chip in dealing with South Korea, the United States, Japan, and others in the international community. In some way, Kim Il Sung feels a certain satisfaction, because he does not actually have any nuclear weapons. By saying he may soon have one, everybody else is so worried that they are prepared to make concessions to him. This is a nice way to live, but this type of threat may or may not pay off. One must handle this threat

very subtly and well, or else you get into the type of situation that Iraq did in 1990. Kim has so far handled the threat quite well. Just by signing, for example, an inspection agreement in Vienna at the end of January 1992, he gave the impression of doing a big favour to the international community, although signing was an obligation for every party to the Non Proliferation Treaty. Nonetheless, this became a bargaining chip. By engaging in this type of negotiation, by gaining concessions from South Korea and so on, Kim believes he is managing the political problems related to the succession and the economic difficulties he faces. There are now serious talks about South Korean and western capital and technology going to the North. People like the head of Daewoo Corporation have spent time in P'yŏngyang discussing setting up a series of factories. Kim Il Sung has reason to feel elated and confident. But have any concessions really been made? It was what we wanted: we wanted to see the welfare of people in both North and South increase. We wanted a breakthrough that would change our relations, for that is how we can build a commonwealth. So both sides have gained.

Now, let me turn to expectations. The question is always asked whether, by pursuing our policy, we expect the northern system to remain forever. At least in the short-term, we do not want to see a sudden collapse or disruption on the Korean peninsula; we would prefer to go step by step. In the heyday of ideological debate, the nationalistic sentiment of many Koreans led them to say they would like unification at any cost. But now we must ask whether we really mean at any cost: there are no policies and no objectives which a nation can be prepared to follow at any cost. The successful unification of Germany has taught us a lesson. Even though successful, the Federal Republic was perhaps the most resourceful system in the world. East Germany was a smaller entity than North Korea, with only 16 million people. We have learned that the process of

building a single nation is not easy, but involves very complex problems even when the process is fully prepared.

Following the nuclear treaty signing, the next step for the North is ratification. North Korea said that the ratification process was so complex it might take one month but just as easily might take one year. As long as South Korea and the international community continues to put pressure on the North and continues to show willingness to make "concessions," the process will continue because of the dire needs of the North. In the coming months and years, the South expects a gradual process towards building a single Korean national community. At least by the turn of the century we hope to lay the foundation for an independent Korean nation.

4.

Our ambitions will depend on developments in the international community. Our three neighbours are so big that a crisis in any one could affect the entire situation on the Korean peninsula. The Chinese economy is booming, but there are many political problems. The Chinese have made a successful evolution from totalitarianism to authoritarianism, but how to go further remains a big question. The difficulties of Russia are well known, and we committed \$3 billion of loans and assistance in 1990. Given the limited means we have, this sounds extravagant, but the reason we had to give so much was that Russia is our immediate neighbour: during winter, the cold wind from Siberia makes Koreans really cold. If something goes seriously wrong in Russia, we will also be in trouble. The South Korean economy is now in trouble, with a \$10 billion deficit balance. More than \$9 billion of the deficit is with Japan. It looks like the deficit will get bigger in the coming years, and this imbalance with our immediate neighbour will

certainly constitute a major problem. We are concerned, and certainly the Japanese are concerned, but the problem cannot be solved merely by applying the logic of market principles: Japan also has to make a political decision.

In these pages, I have summed up the problems facing unification. On one hand we are continuing our effort to build a unified national community, and at the same time we are doing our best to deal with our big neighbours in an effort to build a mechanism for a balance of power. New World Order is a term which is currently fashionable but may be too hopeful. What we are aiming at is a reasonable balance of power just in our neighbourhood. To achieve this end, we are trying to maintain and develop ties beyond our region, and thus both the United States and Europe are extremely important. We always feel that we face more than our fair share of problems, but we have a fatalistic outlook: you cannot pack up and move to another neighbourhood. We will try to deal with our problems to the best of our ability.

RESPONSES

*Michael Yahuda, Department of International Relations,
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First of all I must say what a wonderful presentation we have just had. I'd like to draw attention to two major issues it seems to me that arise out of the paper. One concerns, if you like, the neighbourhood, and one unification. It seems to be that there is a contradiction in seeking to establish some type of peaceful transition. Stage by stage there has been a build-up of communication between North and South in which an economic community is developing, in which the tightly-controlled totalitarian state gradually adapts itself into a free mode basically decided by the South.

If one looks at China, they sought as early as 1982 to encourage the North to follow them in setting up special economic zones and adapting to the international economy and, in particular, to the economies of the Asian-Pacific region. In some half-hearted way the North Koreans did try, but nothing came of it. There's a sense, then, in which the Chinese have been quietly putting pressure on the North to adapt, while in South Korea there is consciousness of a parallel with Germany. Of course, for the people in Beijing, the issue of comparison is Taiwan, and in 1984—specifically after the agreement with Hong Kong—Deng Xiaoping let it be known that the formula of "one country, two systems" could be applied to the Korean peninsula. But little has come of this and, indeed, the Chinese have not pressed.

The North has found itself in the last two or three years having to retreat very rapidly from declared positions. It did so over the question of the dual entry into the United Nations. And it is clear that, although nothing was said in public, the Chinese decided not to veto the decision and put pressure on the North. So there is a sense in the North of being beleaguered. Far from having this sense of confidence which Ambassador Lee suggests in the way they played the nuclear card, I think one could better describe the actions as of desperation.

Furthermore, although one can say that the collapse of communism has been primarily a European matter (East Asians look back to different kinds of cultural traditions, hence communist parties seem to have survived in Vietnam, China, and North Korea), I do not see any sign that the Chinese have sought to erect some new kind of East Asian Communist International. They seem, on the contrary, to be concerned primarily with themselves and treat both Vietnam and North Korea not as fraternal comrades-in-arms who collectively face the difficulties of the outside world, of the end of the Cold War.

This raises a further issue about the end of the Cold War and how it applies to this part of the world. I think one of the contrasts is that Europe is part of the Cold War itself, taking part in multilateral organizations, multilateral discussions and multilateral negotiations, involved in security matters as well as economic matters and so on. This has not been the case in Asia. The United States has had a series of bilateral treaties resulting from the formula of four plus two. This formula might be thought to be applied to Korea, but it does not seem to really have much life in it.

The question, therefore, really turns on the adaptability of the North. There is an issue of asking Japan to introduce political change so that Japan will adopt an approach to Northeast Asia in which it sees not simply its own short-term self-interest but also looks at regional good. In this, Japan will have to pay a short-term cost for a long-term gain. So far there is no sign of political

structures within Japan that lend themselves to this. For Japan, international questions have really centred primarily on their relationship with the United States. In so far as Japan seeks to assert a greater sense of national identity, it does so in the sense of antagonism *vis-à-vis* the United States. Even in South Korea there is an element of the same thing.

I think what we have seen not just the Koreanization of the Korean issue, but also a sense in which the Chinese, for one, still have an important role to play in seeking to distance themselves from the links they used to draw with Taiwan. From Beijing's point of view, it is alright for countries to recognize both Koreas, and it is alright for both Koreas to be represented in the United Nations. I suppose they would favour not so much the idea of commonwealth but the Kim Il Sung idea of confederation. This is really a question of how do we get from where we are now to the future that all the neighbours of North and South Korea seem to want. This will clearly involve a dismantling of the political system that exists in the North.

Jin Park, Lecturer in Politics, University of Newcastle.

First of all thank you very much for inviting me to this excellent forum to discuss the Korean issue. As a Korean myself, I always have difficulty balancing my sensible approach to the Korean issue as a political scientist on the one hand with my position as a Korean who was born after the Korean War on the other. I myself am basically optimistic as a Korean, but as a political scientist I always have to remain cautious.

Perhaps I can add some footnotes to the major points made by Ambassador Lee today. Let me start with North Korea. I'd like to discuss further the implications which follow from the notion that the North can be described as the most successful totalitarian system in history. I entirely agree with the argument. It is, however, precisely because of that success that North Korea faces a critical economic problem because, in terms of domestic political control, *chuch'e* ideology (the self-reliance approach) has made one of the most stable and long-surviving hardline communist regimes. Now it has reached a point where it has to shift its domestic and international approach, and Kim Il Sung has perhaps to undermine his own achievement in order to move forwards. Therefore, I think the succession process has been accelerated in recent months, in a sense to partly help solve the problems faced.

Secondly, and more important perhaps for us to discuss here, would be what sort of developments can occur after Kim Il Sung disappears, and in that case, what would be the most desirable

Southern approach to North Korea. I think perhaps we can make an analogy between the Korean and German cases. The Ambassador mentioned the Koreanization of the Korean problem. Comparing the Korean with the German case, perhaps in the case of Germany a different dimension—that is, the Europeanization of the German problem—might have helped stabilize the situation. In the course of the integration sought by many European countries, settlement of the German problem can be noted for the conspicuous early lack of nationalism. Perhaps all of us were rather surprised to see German nationalism erupt after the crumbling of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. I think as far as nationalistic sentiment is concerned, Korea is no less strongly nationalistic, as the Ambassador pointed out, because of the history of imperialism.

In the case of Korea, however, anything similar to the Europeanization of the German problem doesn't exist. Therefore, in this post-Cold War era, Korea has to localize détente without a regional framework. Perhaps a compromise solution to the lack of regional involvement in the process would be the two plus four idea as Dr. Yahuda has suggested. Two plus four again, according to our viewpoint, has different implications. We know that when American Secretary of State James Baker mentioned this idea, there was a rather sensitive reaction from the Korean side precisely because of nationalism. Korea is our own problem, the problem of two not four.

Perhaps, then, we need to re-define two plus four to address the particularities of the Korean case. In other words, two plus four exists in a different context: it can be divided into two plus two plus two. That is, two Koreas, the U.S. and China, and Russia and Japan, giving an inner circle and an outer circle of outside powers. It is very logical to me that the two members belonging to the outside circle—Japan and Russia—would normalize their relationships with the two Koreas much more easily than the inside members. We know that North Korea would demand that Deng Xiaoping that before Japan normalizes its relations with North Korea China should not open its doors to South Korea. That is perfectly logical.

Here, as the Ambassador has pointed out, we have to pay costs in three dimensions: the domestic cost of democracy, the inter-Korean cost for unification—giving concession to the Northern side so it can move towards a more liberal position—, and finally, the cost for building a more friendly environment in the Pacific community—to make Japan approach North Korea. Of course, there are a lot of problems. In a way we can equate the situation between North Korea and Japan and China to that of the situation a century ago. I think Martina Deuchler has written an excellent book on this. Korea, trying to maintain its traditional sense of friendship and identity with China on the one hand, as economically Japan becomes strong. I do not mean that there will

be a Sino-Japanese War again before the year 2000, but the situation is very similar. Therefore, what South Korea should do in order to localize détente, I think, is to first secure a more stable transition of political change in North Korea. The Southern government announced several years ago in its so-called "Seven-seven Declaration" that Japan and the United States should begin to talk seriously with North Korea. Japan is already doing so and the U.S. is now opening up a channel for dialogue.

So what is my conclusion? I think that the most striking difference in the German and Korean cases is that the two Germanies agreed on the modalities of division. That is, they were committed to the *status quo*, but differed on the principle of unification. In contrast, in the case of Korea, the two countries agree on the principle—that is, unification—but differ on the modalities. This is exactly because of the existence of the Korean War and because of the different international contexts covering the Korean peninsula. We may need to approach the issue in three different ways, paying three different costs, but I think the process will be very rewarding and we might see the visible results before the end of this century.

I can imagine a sort of triple crisis when Kim Il Sung departs. The first stage would be a crisis of identity, to be applied to the North Korean people in general, resulting from the psychological vacuum left after the disappearance of the kingpin from their highly indoctrinated society. To the extent that the elder Kim has succeeded in establishing an unparalleled personality cult around him, the post-Kim Il Sung North Korea might have to suffer an equally serious identity crisis. So the next stage would be a crisis of authority. The younger Kim, Jong Il, would want to preserve at least the surface stability of the North under the inherited banner of *chuch'e* ideology. But that would not be an easy job, because of his questionable leadership qualities, and because of growing economic hardship, embarrassing diplomatic isolation, and emerging political opposition in the state. North Korea at this stage could be compared to China in its post-Mao chaos.

Third, there would be a crisis of ideology. Although it might take some time for the North to reach this last stage, given the expanding economic gap between the two Koreas and the inevitable penetration of the capitalistic and liberal influence, plus information—whether from Japan, China or South Korea—fundamental doubts about the validity of the centralistic Stalinist approach encapsulated in the *chuch'e* principle will unavoidably creep into the disoriented minds of North Koreans. This is the same as the critical stage which the Soviet Union passed through under Gorbachev's reforms.

The three stages of crisis could come one after another or could be experienced all at the same time. If the former happens

the new North Korean leadership, providing they are convinced that the only sensible way out of the crisis is to move towards reform, can aim to change their society gradually by loosening their tight political grip and allowing limited economic freedoms to the people. This may prolong the timespan of the reunification process, but would offer a more predictable path of inter-Korean integration like that of the two Germanies before. If the latter occurs, the potential for a radical political transformation will be significant. The extreme case will be along the lines of the Romanian model. Whether this proves conducive to a stable Korean reunification, however, is open to question. The reason for this is that South Korea, despite its apparent economic advantages and democratic flexibility, is not at present fully prepared to absorb North Korea without intolerable economic, socio-political, and cultural disruptions.

Given the current situation, the first scenario looks more plausible and desirable for the South Korean regime. For the time being this looks best in terms of securing a stable transition of the Northern society to make it internally more positive about the idea of gradual integration. But, because of the peculiar nature of the Northern society, the South cannot afford to disregard the necessity of having to prepare for a contingency scenario, which would include the political collapse of post-Kim Il Sung North Korea. This may possibly lead to the surprising emergence of a unified Korea like that of unified Germany.

Beatrice Heuser, War Studies Department, King's College, University of London

When Germany was united, the newspapers were full of speculation about the possibility of Korea becoming united. And of course there are striking similarities. We've heard some mentioned already. I will just run through a couple.

Both countries were divided as a result of the second world war with Allies prepared to fight for the independence of one half in the case of West Germany, and with Allies actually fighting for the independence of one half of Korea. The West German state is a Western-style liberal democracy, just like South Korea, and was concerned during the entire period of division that the people living in the other half should have better living conditions. There is also a parallel here, as we have just heard. In the last stages before German reunification, there was also talk of a confederated structure between the two Germanies. There was some speculation whether it might be possible to preserve two states that would somehow be linked, but which would still preserve two governments in East Berlin and Bonn. So, there again, similar

intellectual exercises were gone through though this, I think, is where the similarities end.

For, if you look at the reasons for the reunification of Germany you find that one half of the country was dominated by Moscow under a Brezhnevite regime in East Germany. It was, in fact, always Moscow that had the last say, as was shown by the fact that the German question was never Germanized. This is unlike the Korean question, which we hear has been Koreanized. The final decision to bring the two countries together was made by the leader of the West German government and the leader of the then Soviet Union. East Germany was always short-circuited. So, in a way, I think one of the most important questions is which outside power has control of North Korea. If no outside power has much influence we are really talking about a very different constellation.

A very important element in the reunification of East and West Germany was the pressure that built up in the East German population for reunification. In fact, this was probably the most important factor. The fact that immigration, first via Hungary then, with the crumbling control of Moscow, over the various borders of Eastern Europe, was the first element of a series of chain reactions. It led to a massive flow of migrants from East to West which in turn led everybody in the West German government to conclude that there was no way that they could simply accept all the immigrants without changing their policy towards East Germany, which meant ceasing to look at East Germany as a state.

It was, most importantly, the crumbling of the East German regime's claim to leadership, and the collapse of its authority under pressure from Moscow from above and rebellion from below, which made reunification possible. So, again, linking into the comments that have been made by the last two commentators, it appears that the German issue was very different from what could possibly be the Korean issue. For reunification to take place in Korea, the totalitarian regime may also have to be swept aside first—the East German state had to be totally dismantled. It was not the case of two sovereign entities negotiating among each other and with each other in order to reunify.

Very important differences are also there on a different level. There has never been a hot war between East and West Germany. Germany is—or was—at the centre of a NATO-Soviet conflict that was only ever political, never a war, and therefore was very much in the centre of the interests of rival powers; it was never peripheral, it was always at the centre of clashing interests. Germany was occupied on both sides by troops of these different entities, obviously by the Allied Occupation forces that increasingly were forces defending West Germany more like friends than occupation forces. That is quite similar to the situation of South Korea, but the direct confrontation of Eastern and Western troops (that is

American, British, and French, versus Soviet troops on the other side along the inner German border) made for a very special case.

A further very important difference is the fact that, as we have heard, Korea's history this century has been very much the history of the victim. Germany in the first half of this century was the aggressor, the villain. So, historical precedent meant Germany's neighbours were worried about reunification and had a lot of reason to think that this might bring along with it dangers. I cannot see that Korea's neighbours could have similar worries. So, in fact, you have a total inversion of problems from the point of view of Korea's neighbours.

In the German case, I would argue that the re-education of the Germans by the Allies has been successful. And I think that these worries of Germany's neighbours are not particularly valid any longer. Nevertheless, one can see that the Europeanization of the German question was necessary from the point of view of Germany's neighbours. It wasn't something absolutely necessary for reunification from the German point of view.

The final point I would like to make is the nuclear issue which, of course, was entirely absent in the German question. Neither of the German partners ever tried to use nuclear weapons in any sort of blackmail attempt against the other side to achieve certain political ends. The two Germanies did not threaten each other outside the context of the Warsaw Pact versus NATO confrontation—which again is part of that context of saying that there never has been a hot war between East and West Germany—so that any sort of direct confrontation and animosity between North and South Korea was never there in Germany.

I would like to finish with the point that was made about the cost of reunification. The West German government had, of course, decided relatively early on that if there were a hierarchy of priorities it would always be freedom before reunification, that it would always choose democracy—being members of the Western alliance and Western democracy—before insisting that there should be a reunified state. All efforts that were made on behalf of the East Germans were always made in order to alleviate their lot and make it easier for them to live under their oppressive totalitarian regime. So that was the aim of *Östpolitik*, a policy which recognized the division of East Germany before proceeding to negotiate. Bonn was always trying to make things easier for the other side, but did not insist on reunification for the sake of nationalism at the cost of democracy and freedom. I think this list of priorities was also very strongly reflected in the reactions in West Germany when reunification suddenly became a possibility, and on the whole it was shown in opinion polls. West Germans thought it was their duty to help their countrymen, their fellow Germans in East Germany and that the only way to stop mass migration from East Germany was

somehow to unite the two states and pay for it. The Westerners would do it, but they were determined not to make any political concessions. I myself, and French colleagues who have been studying Germany and who spent much time in Germany during the critical months (and whose judgement I trust), did not see much of an outburst of nationalism on the eve of, or after, reunification.

REPLY: Hongkoo Lee

Thank you very much for your very useful and enlightening comments. I cannot really find a single point of disagreement. The comments really add up to further issues on points I have made. So may I just make a few additional statements to illustrate some of the points I made earlier.

You can see my position. I am someone who represents a government, and in the past I have negotiated with North Korea. Therefore, I am doing my best to refrain from making any comment that could be taken by the North as somewhat less than friendly. I will just try to make some statements which generally sound good. In this sense, I am trying to encourage North Korea to do certain things. As for exactly what will happen I have my own judgement, but I am not making a statement about that.

It is true that I would like to see North Korea follow the example set by China. China is certainly not an ideal model for either freedom or democracy. Nevertheless, I think it has evolved from the Leninist totalitarian base of Mao Zedong to a much more authoritarian system today. Take, for example, the Chinese farmer. If he works on his farm, as long as he does not make political comments, he is free to go about his own work. But, if you are in a totalitarian system, just engaging in your work is not enough. You have to attend sessions to denounce American imperialists, you have to attend sessions to denounce the South Korean government. Mobilization is involved. I would very much like to see North Korea move in the Chinese direction. In other places, this might seem like a very small improvement, but from my viewpoint it's a very major change, and I think it would provide a better atmosphere for negotiation. In other words, I would like to see the North Korean regime move from totalitarianism to authoritarianism.

Our relation to China is very pragmatic. I think both sides recognize the benefits which come from it. As for the normalization of relations, we are prepared to wait. To some extent it is very much up to China to decide because, in a sense, the old world picture has somewhat changed. We do maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan and we do not take the issue of two Chinas too lightly. Taiwan is a long-standing friend and, if I may, I will just

say a little bit about the history because some people here may like to know.

During our 35 years of Japanese Occupation, our government-in-exile was in China. It was not recognized by anybody but by the then Chinese government, the Kuomintang government under Chiang Kai-shek. This was a government which gave shelter to us to maintain our government-in-exile. We have a lot of complex feelings toward our friends in Taiwan. It is not that we have any ill feelings toward the people in Beijing. They, in their own way, have provided shelter for Koreans engaged in the independence movement. The internal issues are problems the Chinese themselves have to work out, but what we are saying is we are taking a very pragmatic attitude and will just let the Chinese make their own decisions. We will move along on both the Korean question and our regional problems.

About Japan, I agree with Professor Yahuda's comments. The problem gives me a little bit of concern at the moment. As I say, it is basically a Japanese problem, but in some sense, by accumulating an enormous amount of wealth, what Japan does now and in the future will have a large rippling effect globally. Their decisions have to be based on political considerations, not just economic criteria. The question we have to pose to specialists on Japan today is: Does the Japanese political leadership have a capability to make a long-term political commitment and lead the people in that direction? This is a very serious question and, as an immediate neighbour, we are very much worried.

In respect to the commonwealth and North Korean confederation proposal. In fact, when we came out with the commonwealth scheme, we had very carefully studied the North Korean problem. Our proposal is geared toward a future compromise: It is open to negotiation. The problem is that the North Koreans are not clear about their own plan. We asked them if they wanted to have a confederation or federation. They say, "confederation, federation—we don't know what this is all about." Basically, that is what they are saying. It is the changing situation and the dynamics that make the North Koreans somewhat confused because for many decades they have believed they had the upper hand in ideological warfare and propaganda, the manipulation of symbols. So they were moving towards federation, not confederation. But, as I said, in terms of population, it is 2-to-1 in favour of the South. In terms of the economy, it is at least 10-to-1. In any merger of two systems, North Korea will be weaker. Nevertheless, what we are really guaranteeing in the commonwealth proposal is that all future decisions will be made by a 1-to-1 relationship. In other words, we will give a 50% share. If they do not like this, that is alright. I think finally North Koreans are beginning to admit that, in fact, this is what they want: a guarantee of the continued existence of the North Korean system.

So, they have to rely on such a confusing expression as "confederal republic." I do not know if they want to have a republic or a confederation, but I think it is best left somewhat confused so that they can make a decision without losing face. Face is very important in all these matters.

I totally accept Dr. Park's suggestion that it is really important to prepare for the post-Kim Il Sung era, but again, because of my own position, I cannot make any statements along that line because we are very much willing to settle all these issues with Mr. Kim Il Sung, so we do not talk about post-Kim Il Sung. That would be rather impolite. In fact, our view is that if the elder Kim does not make the necessary decisions while he is alive he will leave such a heavy burden on the shoulders of the younger Kim that as soon as the elder passes away the weight is such that the younger will collapse. Given this, we are urging and persuading the elder Kim to make moves while he is in good health, and I have reason to believe that he is moving along that line. That's why I am partly optimistic.

Dr. Heuser made a number of interesting comments comparing Germany and Korea. There are lots of similarities and, quite frankly, we have learned a great deal from the German case. Also, we have a very good working relationship with the government of the Federal Republic and have utilized their materials. The differences really are so great that, in many parts, the parallel does not really apply, and so we do have to rely on our own course of action.

My last comment is that there is one thing we learned, which I alluded to earlier. That is, there is no such thing as reunification at any cost. I do not think that the people of South Korea are prepared to sacrifice their freedom or their democracy. That is why I have told many Koreans, particularly students: "Do not say unification is the utmost priority, because it may take five or ten years to realize, when we cannot wait five or ten years to realize democracy." So, there are certain priorities we have to think about.

THE SECRET OF KIM IL SUNG

JOHN GITTINGS

Kim Il Sung celebrated his 80th birthday in April 1992, the last surviving dictator of a "communist" country with the last surviving cult of personality. Fragile though North Korea's future may be, and hard though life continues to be for many of its people, his was still a considerable achievement. Certainly he had used the tools of repression with ruthless skill. Certainly he owed much at the start to the supporting hand of the Soviet Union. And certainly China saved him from extinction at an early stage.

For the past two decades and more it has been hard to see Kim's real features through the clouds of a suffocating cult. Yet there must have been more to his career than the mere use of force and the secret police. It will be suggested here that Kim was able to tap and exploit a deep vein of insecurity and self-doubt among the Korean people arising from their historical subjugation first by China and then by Japan. He appealed to the sense of shame of the Korean nation. He denounced his enemies as "flunkies" to a foreign power—it did not much matter which one.