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FOR THE U.S., A NEW POLICY FOR KOREAN REUNIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no communist country dug in its heels against the tumultuous wave of economic and political reform sweeping through the communist world more than has the repressive regime in North Korea. Indeed, North Korea openly has spurned any moves toward a Soviet-style *glasnost* or *perestroika*. In Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, the globe's longest ruling communist tyrant, President Kim Il Sung, imposes what is probably the world's most isolating and repressive political system upon his people.

He commands a formidable military force of over one million men, whose forward deployment and offensive capability pose a continuing threat to its neighbor, the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea). About 40,000 American soldiers are stationed in South Korea to deter the North's aggression. All this makes the Korean Peninsula one of the last remaining Cold War hotspots and an area of growing concern to American military and foreign policy planners.

Signs of Progress. The most pressing issue for the United States probably is how to respond to signals that North Korea finally may be willing to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Two weeks ago, for example, in the highest level contact ever between the two Korean governments, South and North Korean prime ministers met in Seoul. While they made no significant progress, the meeting itself is a sign that perhaps the North is feeling the effects of growing international opposition to its intransigence and militarism and may be willing to do something about it.

Washington should watch these developments with close attention and great interest. While it would serve American purposes for the hostile division of the Korean Peninsula to end, the U.S. must move cautiously. In response to the talks between the South and North Korean leaders, Washington should continue to make it clear that it is not willing to improve ties with Pyongyang significantly until the North maintains a good faith dialogue with Seoul and reduces tensions on the Peninsula. Specifically, Washington should:

- ◆ ◆ Press North Korea to continue regular negotiations with Seoul over a range of issues including such basic “confidence-building measures” as citizen exchanges and trade relations as well as more significant areas such as arms control and national reunification;

- ◆ ◆ Demand that North Korea return all the Korean War era remains of American servicemen. While more than 8,000 Americans are listed as missing in action in Korea, the North has only this year returned the first five sets of remains;

- ◆ ◆ Press North Korea to demonstrate that it is not developing nuclear arms as some experts fear. Pyongyang as a first step should adhere to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s inspection requirements, which include on-sight inspection of nuclear facilities.

In the event that Pyongyang is forthcoming in these areas, Washington could respond by:

- ◆ ◆ Upgrading the currently limited contact between U.S. and North Korean government officials;

- ◆ ◆ Expanding U.S.-North Korean cultural and academic exchanges;

- ◆ ◆ Gradually ending restrictions on U.S.-North Korean commerce.

In the meantime, the U.S. should continue its strong support for close security cooperation between America and the ROK. In response to budgetary pressures, the Pentagon has announced that the 40,000 U.S. troops in Korea will be reduced by 7,000 over the next three years. This is acceptable because of increased South Korean defense capabilities. What is not acceptable is withdrawing so many GIs that the American military presence no longer deters the North’s massive military force from attacking.

FROM HERMIT KINGDOM TO COLD WAR FLASHPOINT

The Korean Peninsula today is separated into two heavily armed camps with opposing political and social ideologies. Although it has been more than forty years since Cold War conflict led to Korea’s division, little significant progress has been made in narrowing their differences and achieving the goal surely cherished by nearly all 62 million Koreans: reunification.

Until the start of this century, Korea was an isolated, agrarian nation characterized by its ethnic homogeneity and 5,000-year-old culture and history.

Because it shunned the turbulence of the industrial revolution and prized its privacy, it was known during the nineteenth century as the “Hermit Kingdom.”

Early twentieth century Japanese expansionism led to forced annexation of Korea in 1910. When Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, signalling the end of the war that Tokyo had begun in the Pacific, Korea was liberated by Allied forces from 35 years of repressive Japanese colonial rule. The Soviet Union accepted the surrender of Japan’s troops north of Korea’s 38th Parallel while the U.S. accepted the surrender of the troops below that line. To buy time to construct the foundation for a communist government, Moscow stalled negotiations with Washington that were aimed at paving the way for free elections and the withdrawal of occupation troops. In August 1948, with the blessing of the United Nations, the Republic of Korea was established in the south. A month later, in defiance of the U.N., Kim Il Sung was installed as head of a communist government in the north.

Buildup and Invasion. The U.S. withdrew all of its troops from South Korea in June 1949. At the same time, the North began a Soviet-sponsored military buildup, while the ROK received scant support from Washington. Furthermore, statements in 1949 and 1950 by American officials, including Secretary of State Dean Acheson, suggested that the Korean Peninsula was outside America’s “defense perimeter.” With this signal that America did not consider the security of the ROK to be an important U.S. concern, the North launched its massive invasion of the South on June 25, 1950. The U.S. succeeded in garnering U.N. condemnation of the attack and bore the brunt of the military burden in the U.N. force which was sent to resist the North Korean invasion. Eventually, sixteen member nations sent troops to confront Kim Il Sung’s forces, which were augmented by hundreds of thousands of Chinese “volunteers.”

When an armistice finally was signed on July 27, 1953, the cost of the war was staggering: the South Korean Army counted 415,000 dead while estimates placed combined North Korean and Chinese fatalities at 1.5 million. American casualties totalled about 105,000, including over 50,000 dead.

Had the U.S. not acted decisively, the entire Peninsula would have fallen under North Korea’s repression and Soviet domination as well. South Korea’s defeat likely would have produced a threatening balance of power for the U.S. in Northeast Asia rather than the relatively favorable one which exists today.

QUEST FOR REUNIFICATION

Despite four decades of division, reunification remains the highest national priority of both the North and South. Koreans on both sides of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), the border dividing North and South generally along the 38th Parallel, consider the partition of their land an aberration which eventually will be overcome. With this goal in mind, Seoul and Pyon-

gyang long have been involved in a risky competition to emerge as the legitimate government of the entire Peninsula.

Negotiating Principles. The first substantive negotiations between the two sides came when talks began in August 1971 aimed at identifying and reuniting the estimated 10 million Koreans who were separated from relatives by the partition and the ensuing war. In July 1972, a North-South communique was released establishing the basic negotiating principles that apply today: reunification through bilateral negotiations free from external interference, renunciation of reunification through force, and a commitment to transcending ideological differences. Talks broke down in 1973, however, before achieving any substantive breakthroughs.

After an eleven-year stalemate, Seoul and Pyongyang resumed their dialogue in 1984, focusing on four issues: reuniting family members separated by national division, opening North-South trade ties, North Korean participation in the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and national reunification. By January 1986, the talks had been suspended on all but the Olympic question. While the negotiations of 1984-1985 resulted in the first ever limited exchange of several hundred separated relatives, there has been no progress since. In 1988, the North joined a handful of nations, which included Albania, Cuba and Nicaragua, in boycotting the successful Seoul Olympics.

OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

The obstacles that keep North and South divided remain formidable. Pyongyang espouses the formation of a “confederation,” or a single nation embracing the two very different social, political, and economic systems, as an early step in the reunification process. According to this plan, the two sides, which have had scant success resolving even minor differences, somehow would form a “unified government,” combine their militaries, and forge a unified foreign policy program. Along the way a “Supreme Committee” would settle the complex cultural, political, and economic conflicts between the two regions.¹

Seoul’s formula is diametrically opposed to this approach and aims first at achieving basic “confidence building measures,” such as opening the border to citizen exchanges and expanding North-South trade ties. These fundamental measures gradually would reduce tension and allow consideration of more contentious political and military differences and, eventually, reunite the Peninsula.

Diplomatic “cross-recognition” of the two sides by the superpowers and their allies, Seoul maintains, would facilitate this process. Since 1948, Moscow and Beijing have maintained official ties only with Pyongyang while

¹ Kim Il Sung, *Proposal for Founding a Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo* (Pyongyang, North Korea, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1988), p. 44.

major Western democracies have recognized only Seoul. Under cross-recognition, Washington would recognize Pyongyang while Moscow and Beijing would recognize Seoul. Related to this, Seoul proposes full-fledged membership of both Koreas in the United Nations. Currently, Seoul and Pyongyang hold non-member “observer” status in the U.N.

Pyongyang opposes such diplomatic realignment, including joint memberships in the U.N., and paints the South’s cross-recognition policy as a plot to make permanent the division of the Peninsula.

Roadblock of Prerequisites. While Seoul generally has called for dialogue without preconditions, the North has put up the roadblock of prerequisites, insisting on direct talks with the U.S., the withdrawal of American forces from the ROK and the abolition of South Korea’s anti-communist laws which outlaw pro-North Korean activities within the ROK. Seoul has resisted these conditions, seeing them as attempts to undermine its bargaining strength, erode its defense capability and manipulate its domestic politics to foster pro-North sentiment.

Over the years, Kim Il Sung seems to have turned dialogue with Seoul on and off for tactical reasons – to bolster the North’s tarnished international image or to score points during periods of political instability in the South. Example: the North’s first formal call for talks with Seoul came during the political turmoil in the ROK following the overthrow of ROK President Syngman Rhee in 1960.

It is also doubtful that Pyongyang seeks to reduce tension. The Kim Il Sung regime has attempted on several occasions to assassinate South Korean presidents. The most recent attempt occurred in Burma during then-President Chun Doo Hwan’s October 1983 state visit. A powerful bomb explosion killed four Burmese officials and seventeen South Koreans, including four ROK cabinet ministers. A Rangoon court convicted two captured North Korean army officers of the atrocity and the Burmese government severed diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

Sabotaging Olympics. In 1987, two North Korean agents planted a time bomb on an ROK passenger jet en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok; the explosion killed all 115 passengers and crew. A male suspect in the bombing committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule during questioning, but his female accomplice confessed that she and her companion worked for Pyongyang’s Communist Party Central Committee. She admitted that their mission was designed to raise doubts about the security capabilities of Seoul and, thus, disrupt the upcoming Seoul Olympics. Moreover, the agent claimed that she was acting under the orders of Kim Jong Il, the son and heir apparent of Kim Il Sung. This earned Pyongyang a spot on the U.S. government’s official list of terrorist countries, where it remains today.

THE MILITARY STANDOFF

Against this tense and sometimes violent backdrop, the Korean Peninsula has become one of the globe's most heavily armed regions. Over 1.5 million troops face one another in an area smaller than Minnesota. South of the narrow DMZ separating the two sides are some 40,000 American and 630,000 ROK troops. To the North is the one-million-strong North Korean force.

Pyongyang spends about 20 percent of its gross national product on its military, compared to about 5 percent in the South. In addition to its advantage in the number of troops, the North has a 2-to-1 edge in armored personnel carriers, combat aircraft, artillery guns, and tanks; and holds a 3-to-1 advantage in surface ships. The North deploys 27 Soviet-built attack submarines while Seoul has no comparable vessels. In recent years, the Soviets have supplied the North with advanced weapons including Su-25 *Frogfoot*, MiG-23 *Flogger*, MiG-29 *Fulcrum* combat aircraft, ZSU self-propelled artillery, and SA-3 *Goa* and SA-5 *Gammon* surface-to-air missiles.

Chemical and Biological Arsenal. Of great concern is the North's chemical warfare capability and long range missiles. According to defense analyst Joseph Burmudez, Seoul believes that "180-250 tons of chemical and biological munitions are stored in some 170 tunnels just north of the military demarcation line" and that Pyongyang "has developed a doctrine which includes the tactical 'first use' of chemical weapons"²

North Korea currently produces its own Soviet-designed surface-to-surface *Scud B* missiles capable of carrying chemical warheads and striking all of South Korea.

The North maintains a crack commando force of about 100,000, perhaps the largest in the world, poised for rapid infiltration and trained to strike at Seoul's command and supply infrastructure. Over the past few years, Pyongyang has redeployed large numbers of its combat troops nearer to the DMZ. Approximately 75 percent of North Korea's total combat forces are now in frontline areas, reducing attack warning time for the ROK to roughly 24 hours.

Invasion Tunnel. This March, American and ROK military officials discovered a North Korean invasion tunnel crossing the border and penetrating 1,000 yards into South Korean territory. In the 1970s, defectors from the North first alerted the South to the North's tunneling activity. This year's discovery was the fourth since 1976. Seoul believes that there may be several dozen still undetected underground invasion routes.

2 Joseph S. Burmudez, White Paper on the Korean People's Army's Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Capabilities, March 6, 1989, pp. 7-18.

According to Carl Ford, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, North Korea maintains “its relative superiority over the South despite the ROK’s continued improvements in its military capabilities”; and a strong, first-strike offensive capability appears to be its highest military priority.³

A recent development prompting great concern in both Seoul and Washington is Pyongyang’s growing involvement in nuclear technology. The North has several nuclear research facilities and at least one operating nuclear power plant. In December 1985, the Kim Il Sung government signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which requires on-site inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an agency of the United Nations. These inspections are designed to ascertain whether or not a nation’s nuclear facilities are for civilian or military purposes. Usually, an agreement on IAEA inspections is concluded within about 18 months of signing of the NPT. North Korea, however, has yet to permit an IAEA inspection.

Nuclear Potential. Two years ago, American intelligence sources noticed a new nuclear research facility near Yongbyun, about 50 miles north of Pyongyang. Washington and Seoul are concerned that the Yongbyun center is turning spent fuel into weapons-grade uranium and plutonium for nuclear bombs. Some American and South Korean analysts believe the North may be capable of producing nuclear weapons within five years.

By contrast, the South’s nine nuclear power plants are in full compliance with the IAEA requirements.

The Bush Administration believes that “the North Koreans’ continuing military buildup and their nuclear and missile proliferation activities pose the greatest threat to stability in the region”⁴

IMPACT OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR ON KOREA

Until the mid-1980s, the communist world recognized only North Korea and spurned any contact with Seoul. Since then, political and economic considerations have fuelled the rapid expansion of official and unofficial ties between the ROK and its traditional adversaries in what used to be the communist world. To take advantage of the reform movements sweeping many socialist nations, South Korean President Roh Tae Woo unveiled his “Northern Policy” in July 1988. He pledged to intensify his government’s efforts to ease tensions with the North and, on a parallel track, improve ties with Pyongyang’s communist allies. This broke dramatically with past policy.

The ROK’s new policy paid rapid dividends. It surely was one reason why the Chinese, the Soviets, and most other socialist nations spurned

3 Testimony before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, July 26, 1989, p. 5.

4 Prepared testimony of Ronald Lehman, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, before the House Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, March 13, 1990, p. 7.

Pyongyang's efforts to organize a boycott of the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Then, in September 1988, Hungary became the first communist country to extend full diplomatic recognition to the ROK. Since then, six others have followed: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia.

Motivating these nations in great part has been their desire for profitable trade with prosperous South Korea. Seoul's trade with communist and reformed communist European nations reached \$4.1 billion last year, double the 1988 level.

Alternative Route. A primary focus of Seoul's effort has been to improve ties with the North's closest and most powerful allies: the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. Saying that "the road between Seoul and Pyongyang is now totally blocked," ROK President Roh said that "accordingly, we have to choose an alternative route to the North Korean capital by way of Moscow and Beijing."⁵

Since the mid 1980s, China and the ROK have conducted extensive academic, cultural, and sports exchanges. About 20,000 South Korean and Chinese citizens travelled between their two countries last year. And two-way trade between China and South Korea last year totalled about \$3 billion. Still, Beijing has remained sensitive to Pyongyang's concerns and has avoided substantial political contact with South Korean government representatives.

In contrast to China's reticence is the U.S.S.R.'s open-door attitude. Moscow's links with the government in Seoul are extensive. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev met Roh in San Francisco on June 4, 1990. After their summit, Roh announced that the two presidents had agreed to seek ways to end the hostile standoff on the Korean Peninsula and would forge official relations between their two nations in due course. Although no timetable has been set for establishing diplomatic ties, the historic San Francisco meeting for the first time signaled the Soviet Union's recognition of the ROK as a legitimate government.

Gorbachev's Pragmatism. Much like his domestic *perestroika* and *glasnost* policies, Gorbachev's desire to improve relations with Seoul has been driven by pragmatism. Moscow would benefit from access to the ROK's ample supply of manufactured consumer goods and from attracting South Korean investment in major Soviet infrastructure projects. While ROK-Soviet trade amounted to just \$600 million last year, it is expected to top \$1 billion this year. Roh predicts that "when the two countries normalize their relations and secure legal and institutional foundations for their bilateral trade, [two-way trade] is expected to top \$10 billion in 1995."⁶

North Korea offers little or no benefit to Soviet planners hoping to revive their stalled economy. The North's rigid, state-controlled economy is in

5 Speech by President Roh Tae Woo, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, California, June 4, 1990.

6 *Korea Herald*, Interview with Roh Tae Woo, Seoul, South Korea, p. 1.

shambles and reports regularly surface about food rationing and widespread shortages of basic consumer goods. Pyongyang also is delinquent in payments on its estimated \$5 billion debt owed to international banks and governments.

Though North Korea, with a population of around 20 million, is only half as populous as South Korea, the North's annual gross national product of \$25 billion was only about 15 percent the South's \$170 billion 1989 GNP.

The Soviet overtures to Seoul signal a sea change in Moscow's once-reflexive political and diplomatic support for North Korea. Despite occasional and perfunctory statements in support of Pyongyang, Soviet officials admit privately that Pyongyang is not committed to good faith dialogue with Seoul. It seems also that Moscow worries that the North's growing arsenal someday may threaten Soviet security.

Embarrassment to Moscow. Soviet government officials and government think-tank analysts openly express concern about the North's development of nuclear weapons. Some Soviet government officials and scholars privately have told The Heritage Foundation they are disappointed at Pyongyang's refusal to consider economic reform and at the North's continued repressive internal policies. Compared to the reforms sweeping almost all other communist nations, North Korea must surely embarrass the Soviets.

Last month, a senior ROK foreign policy planner in Seoul told The Heritage Foundation that the Soviets hope that, by improving diplomatic ties with South Korea, they can earn Seoul's trust as a reliable diplomatic and economic player in the region rather than be perceived merely as a hostile military superpower by the ROK and the other countries of the Pacific Rim.

From August 2 to 3, the first-ever official ROK negotiating team met in Moscow with its Soviet counterpart to discuss expanding trade relations between their two countries. Leading the delegations were the South Korean senior presidential economic advisor and the Soviet first deputy prime minister. The two teams met again on September 5 to 7 in Seoul. These high level contacts have led some analysts to conclude that the nations will agree on formal diplomatic ties before the end of the year.

PYONGYANG'S SLOW RESPONSE

In hopes of capitalizing on the growing international pressure on Pyongyang to make progress in negotiations with the ROK, Seoul recently has stepped up its North-South diplomatic efforts. Earlier this year, Pyongyang proposed that a "pan-national rally" be held at a site on the border between the two Koreas. Typically, the North tried to exclude ROK government involvement in the event and hoped that only South Korean dissident political groups would be involved in planning the rally. On July 20, Roh upped the ante by proposing that for five days in mid-August the border should be open to all citizens on both sides wishing to visit the other.

As negotiations over Roh's proposal proceeded, the North made several political demands, including the repeal of the ROK's anti-communist laws and permission for a North Korean delegation to visit prisoners in South Korean jails. Seoul refused to consider the demands, and maintained that neither side should impose preconditions on the border opening. The ROK's offer to allow unconditional citizen exchanges remains on the table.

More productive, perhaps, will be the negotiations which began this month between the prime ministers of the North and South. On September 5 and 6, ROK Prime Minister Kang Young Hoon and North Korean Prime Minister Yon Hyung Muk met in Seoul and exchanged proposals on economic, political, and security relations. While there were few surprises and no breakthroughs, the meeting was the highest level official contact ever between the rival governments and a resumption of substantive dialogue after a five-year hiatus. The second round of talks is scheduled for Pyongyang in October.

PROSPECTS FOR REDUCED NORTH-SOUTH TENSIONS

The changing international environment around the Korean Peninsula bodes well for intra-Korean relations. For one thing, China and the Soviet Union clearly are not inclined to invite or support aggression by Pyongyang against the ROK. For another, the Soviets and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese, have urged the North to consider political and economic reforms and quietly pressed Pyongyang to resume substantive dialogue with Seoul. With so many traditional allies of Pyongyang openly acknowledging the ROK's legitimacy and establishing extensive political and economic relations with Seoul, international pressure on the Kim regime to reach an accommodation with its archrival is growing.

This puts the ball squarely in Pyongyang's court. But so far, North Korea gives no indication that it is prepared to moderate its policies. This is the greatest obstacle to progress in North-South relations as well as the most serious threat to peace in Northeast Asia.

Intransigent Tyrant. Alluding to the communist reforms in his most recent New Year's address to his subjects, Kim warned of a "fierce struggle going on between socialism and imperialism, between progress and reaction" and declared that, since "the road to socialism is an untrodden path...one may encounter unexpected incidents and undergo trials and tribulations." He concluded, that "there can be no change in the truth of history that mankind must follow the road of socialism."⁷

These defiant words lend credence to a conclusion reached by many experienced Korea experts: North Korea's foreign and domestic policies are un-

7 "Kim Il Sung's New Year's Statement," *Vantage Point*, Naewoe Press, Seoul, South Korea, January 1990, p. 16.

likely to change appreciably so long as Kim Il Sung remains at the helm. During his 42 years in power, the 78-year-old tyrant, who demands to be called the "Great Leader" by his people, has created probably the world's most rigid, totalitarian system.

Shut Off from the Outside. Some observers have begun to speculate whether conditions in North Korea may be ripe for a popular uprising. After all, the seemingly stable regime of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, a close friend of Kim, collapsed quickly last December. But, unlike Romania and most other communist countries, including China, average North Koreans know little or nothing about the outside world. All radios and television sets are manufactured in the North and pick up only authorized channels. Few citizens, apart from a limited number of government elite and businessmen, are allowed to travel abroad. Even the estimated 1,700 North Korean university students who were allowed to study in several communist countries recently were forced to return home.

It seems that, at least for now, the extreme regimentation imposed by Kim continues to insulate his country from the transformations occurring elsewhere. While there undoubtedly is some degree of popular opposition to Kim's harsh rule, most observers conclude that no one could currently challenge Kim Il Sung and survive.

Kim's advancing age, of course, requires some preparation for political succession. For more than a decade, Kim has groomed his son, Kim Jong Il, to be the next North Korean leader. The junior Kim already is considered the second-in-command of the government. Upon the senior Kim's death or incapacitation, however, Kim Jong Il may face vulnerabilities that never confronted his father, and disgruntled government or popular elements might then be able to take their cue from Eastern Europe and press for reform.

Deceiving the People. In the meantime, to maintain their tight grip on the North Korean political system and to safeguard their rule, the Kims likely will remain obstinate at the bargaining table. After all, any political accommodation that leads to significant economic or social exchanges with the South quickly would reveal to the North Korean people that they have been masterfully deceived by their "Great Leader" and his heir apparent. The Kims may consider this revelation as too high a price to pay for progress in North-South relations.

Last year's Tiananmen Square demonstrations in Beijing and the fate of one-time invincible communist leaders in East Germany and Romania no doubt fortify the North's hardline stance and confirm the Kims' conviction that dabbling with reform or moderation would court disaster.

Still, simply because of Kim Il Sung's age, the end of an era is approaching in North Korea, and there is no guarantee of a smooth transition to the post-Kim Il Sung period. The changes could be years in coming or could begin overnight. They could be accompanied by severe political unrest or violence. As such, the ROK and America should be wary that any promises made by

Pyongyang must be viewed in the context of increasing political instability and unpredictability.

CURRENT AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

Washington has been showing increasing flexibility toward North Korea. The point of this, it has been made clear, is to support Roh's initiatives toward Pyongyang. To do so, explained Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Desaix Anderson recently to the House Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, America has taken "four unilateral actions." These are:

1) Broadening American diplomatic contact with North Korea. From 1989 through July 1990, eleven meetings between embassy political counselors have taken place in the "neutral setting" of Beijing.

2) Encouraging North Korean private citizens to visit the U.S. Since 1988, some 23 North Koreans have come to America for religious and academic gatherings.

3) Allowing travel to the North by Americans. In January 1989, U.S. regulations were amended to "permit specific license travel service providers to facilitate unofficial, non-governmental exchanges with North Korea." To date, three licenses have been granted and two are under consideration.

4) Allowing limited export of American food and medical products to North Korea that "meet basic human needs." While a trade embargo on most U.S. products remains in place, last year the American government approved the export of "humanitarian" goods to North Korea worth \$8.4 million.

In response to these measures, the Bush Administration has called on Pyongyang to take several "positive actions." Among them:

1) Achieve "real progress" in North-South talks on confidence-building measures such as citizen exchanges;

2) Accept International Atomic Energy Agency inspection requirements of its nuclear power plants and research facilities;

3) Give "credible assurances," such as North Korean government statements, that Pyongyang opposes terrorism;

4) Begin the regular return of the Korean War era remains of killed American servicemen. More than 8,000 Americans still are listed as missing in action in Korea. This year, Pyongyang has returned the first five sets of remains.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Anderson also pointed out that any significant broadening of official contact between Pyongyang and Washington could come only "at the end of a series of reciprocal moves to improve relations."

Added Anderson: the two nations "are now only at the beginning of that process."⁸

HOW THE U.S. CAN PROMOTE KOREAN REUNIFICATION

Changes in American policy toward Pyongyang should be made only in close consultation with Seoul, and in tandem with positive steps taken by North Korea. Specifically, the Bush Administration should:

◆ ◆ **Compel North Korea to submit to the International Atomic Energy Agency on-site inspections of nuclear power and research facilities.**

Washington should continue to stress that it will not consider significant upgrading of U.S.-North Korean official contact until Pyongyang dispels growing concern that it has been developing nuclear weapons. The U.S. should state that such a program would be considered by Washington as a serious threat to stability in Northeast Asia and to American security.

◆ ◆ **Continue to press Pyongyang to resume extensive negotiations over basic confidence-building measures.** The North should show its good faith by taking simple steps, as reuniting families separated by the Korean War and broadening trade relations with Seoul. Also building confidence would be Pyongyang's unconditional return of bodies of Americans killed during the Korean war. North Korea's continued refusal to take such basic steps calls into question its willingness to bargain in good faith over such sensitive and complex issues as arms control and eventual reunification of the Peninsula.

◆ ◆ **Support Seoul's call for arms control discussions with North Korea.** Seoul proposes basic steps, such as exchange of military observers and mutual notification of planned military exercises. The North, by contrast, calls for sweeping moves like significant troop reductions as an early step in the reunification process. Seoul's gradual approach is a more realistic way to prepare for actual troop and arms reductions.

◆ ◆ **Continue citizen exchanges with the North and substantive discussions between American and North Korean diplomats in "neutral settings."** American officials should make it clear during these meetings that the appropriate forum for detailed negotiations over military and political issues affecting the Korean Peninsula is North-South bilateral talks. Until the North assuages the concerns over its nuclear intentions and allows progress in negotiations with Seoul, Washington should refrain from upgrading official political contacts with Pyongyang.

◆ ◆ **Consider the merits of ending the American economic embargo and of allowing the trade of nonmilitary goods with North Korea.** Because North Korea already trades with Japan and some Western European nations, the American embargo has little, if any, economic impact on the North. It is dif-

8 Prepared testimony before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, July 25, 1990, p. 10.

ficult, moreover, politically to justify the embargo since Seoul now encourages ROK-North Korean trade. This intra-Korean trade, which did not begin until the mid-1980s, amounted to \$29.7 million from October 1988 to May 1990.

Though Pyongyang has little foreign exchange reserves to buy American goods, lifting of the U.S. embargo nonetheless might open up new lines of communication and information between the U.S. and the North and open somewhat the shrouded North society. Coaxing North Korea out of its isolation is an important facet of the tension reduction program advocated by both Seoul and Washington.

◆◆ **Remain committed to close security cooperation with Seoul and to keeping sufficient U.S. troops in the ROK.** Improving East-West relations and American budgetary pressures have resulted in a U.S. decision to reduce its forward deployment in Asia by 10 to 12 percent. About 7,000 U.S. troops will be withdrawn from South Korea over the next three years, bringing the total down to about 35,000. Washington should make it clear to Pyongyang, however, that this adjustment does not signal a diminution of America's military commitment to South Korea. Only when the military threat posed by North Korea is eliminated, will it be time to consider further reduction of American troops in the ROK. This course not only sustains adequate deterrence and protects peace on the Peninsula but also allows Seoul to continue bargaining with Pyongyang from a position of strength and confidence.

American support for U.S. troops stationed on the Peninsula remains strong. Representative Stephen Solarz, the New York Democrat, told the House on June 12, 1990: "We have managed to preserve a fragile peace on the Korean peninsula...because of the clear and unequivocal character of the American defense commitment to South Korea." In June, Solarz introduced House Concurrent Resolution 325, which highlights the continuing threat posed by North Korea and expresses support for U.S.-ROK military ties and the presence of American troops in Korea. The resolution passed unanimously.⁹

CONCLUSION

The changing international environment together with bold policy initiatives by the Roh Tae Woo government in Seoul are bringing enormous pressure on North Korea to resume productive negotiations with the South and to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula, one of the last bastions of Cold War conflict. Impending German reunification has raised hopes for national unity among Koreans on both sides of the demilitarized zone. So far, however, there is no reliable evidence suggesting that the Pyongyang government soon will temper its hardline stance toward relations with the ROK.

⁹ For the full text of the resolution, see *Congressional Record*, June 12, 1990, p. H3466.

America thus should keep up the pressure on North Korea to abandon the use of force as a means of achieving reunification and encourage further warming in the North-South relationship which began this month. In the event that Pyongyang is forthcoming in these areas, the U.S. should be prepared to upgrade its political contact, cultural exchanges, and trade ties with North Korea. In the meantime, Washington should make clear its support for Korean reunification, a goal the ROK government has vowed to achieve by the end of the century.

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