

# Chinese Foreign Policy and the Korean Peninsula

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China faces on its east the Tumen River and the Western Sea, located in the north and the west of Korea, respectively. China's Shandong Province is only 190 miles across the Western Sea from Korea. Chinese culture has affected Asian nations for 2,000 years, with Korea serving as a geostrategic intersection linking continental with maritime countries, and allowing the transmission of Chinese ideas. Thus, we can say that China has had a special relationship with Korea.

China was forced to open itself to commerce after the Opium War of 1839-42 and M. C. Perry's demonstration of American men-of-war in Japan in 1853-54. Later, the French and American ministers to China asked the Ch'ing emperor to cooperate with them in opening up Korea during their expedition of 1866-71. However, the Chinese Foreign Office repeatedly declined to cooperate on the grounds that, although Korea was a dependent state of China's, it was completely autonomous in both internal and foreign affairs. China thus expressed definitively its non-interference policy toward Yi-dynasty Korea. Finally, when the United States tried to open the doors to Korea with its "gunboat diplomacy," it failed due to the firm traditional and reclusive policy of the Yi dynasty.

Through its invasion of the Liewchieu Islands in 1871, its expedition to Taiwan in 1874, its invasion of the Kangwa Islands in 1875 (where Koreans had expelled the French and the Americans in 1866-71), and finally its annexation of the Liewchieu Islands as

Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, Japan emerged as a aggressive power in the Northeast Asian region. At that time, the Chinese Superintendent of the Northern Ports, Viceroy Li Hung-chang, sent a letter to a former prime minister of Korea, Lee Yu-won, describing the relationship between China and Korea as being "as close as lips and teeth."<sup>1</sup> He strongly urged Korea to enter into treaty relations with the Western powers, particularly the United States, in order to check the ambitions of Japan and Russia.

The Korean-American diplomatic and commercial treaty of 1882, facilitated by Viceroy Li Hung-chang, meant that China had changed its position regarding Korea from a policy of non-interference to one of cooperation. With the Imo military revolt of 1882 and the Kapsin coup d'etat of 1884 in Korea, without seeking a formal request from King Kojong China immediately dispatched military forces, its first intervention into Korean affairs. After these incidents, the viceroy recommended to the Korean government a German diplomat, Paul George von Moellendorff, as the first official Western adviser on Korean domestic and foreign affairs.<sup>2</sup> Li's unprecedented intervention, a decade before the Sino-Japanese War (1894), ended the political reform and modernization movement of Korean Progressive party leaders and instead accelerated Japan's colonization of Korea.

Fifty years later, in 1950, fearing that Korea would enter the sphere of American domination, China sent volunteers to help North Korea, under the slogan "Saving one's neighborhood is saving oneself," and with the stated intention of "resisting American aggression and aiding Korea." China was isolated from Western countries for twenty years, while at the same time Korea lost its chance to unify the country.<sup>3</sup> From the viewpoint of modern historical experience, China's influence over the peace and security of the Korean peninsula is obvious.

Half a century has elapsed since Japan unconditionally surrendered in World War II and Korea was divided into North and South. Though the Russian communist system has ended, European communist countries have also abandoned their systems, and East and West Germany were unified in the late 1980s, South and North Korea have continued struggling over political matters, with their armies facing

each other in a standoff.

To be sure, since the peace of Korea depends on the interests of its neighboring countries, and because Chinese foreign policy is the most influential factor determining the balance of power on the Korean peninsula as well as in the Northeast Asian region, we may say that the Chinese role is very important for the peace and security of Korea and the unification of the peninsula.

This paper will explain the development of past Chinese foreign policy toward Korea and analyze the changes in Chinese foreign policy according to the international environment, the effect of the modernization of China, the role of China in the Four Party Talks for the peace and unification of the Korean peninsula, and the reason why China should change its two-Koreas policy to one of cooperation.

### **Chinese Foreign Policy and Changes in International Environment**

In June 1954, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En-lai and Indian Prime Minister P. N. Nehru announced joint statements that articulated five foreign policy principles: (1) respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) non-aggression, (3) non-interference in domestic affairs, (4) equality among nations, and (5) mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. These principles have been the cornerstone of Chinese diplomacy in settling international disputes and in maintaining friendly relations with neighboring countries.<sup>4</sup> A diplomatic policy is based on domestic policy. As foreign policy is basically the key to national security, to economic gain in world trade, and to enhancing national prestige in the world, China has changed its foreign policy according to the changes in the international environment, as follows:

First, as the world became divided into two ideological blocs between Western democratic capitalism and Russo-Chinese communism after 1950, the superpowers competitively produced nuclear weapons, devoting their resources to the expansion of armaments. The chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, believed that a third world war was inevitable, for his political ideology was based on the conception of friend versus enemy, especially by the strategy of mutual contradictions, power struggles, alliances, checks and balances, class struggle, permanent revolution, and overcoming capitalism by

communism.<sup>5</sup> However, after 1956 China realized that nuclear weapons were capable of eliminating all human beings in the world, and when Russia fired its first satellite, *Sputnik*, China changed its foreign policy to one of "peaceful coexistence."<sup>6</sup> After 1958, Sino-Russian relations had stood opposed on ideological and foreign affairs matters, and finally their armies clashed at their common border. After a battle between Chinese soldiers and a Soviet patrol, the two former allies finally became enemies in 1969.

Second, when President Richard Nixon visited Beijing in 1972, China and the United States signed the so-called Shanghai Communique, declaring that they would oppose hegemonism in the Asia-Pacific for the sake of world peace and that the United States would pursue a policy of only "one China." With this reconciliation, again based on the traditional Chinese strategy of "checking barbarians with barbarians," China could use the United States to keep Russia in check. After Deng Xiaoping solemnly declared China's nonalignment policy before the United Nations General Assembly in 1974,<sup>7</sup> ensuring that China would never become a superpower, China concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with Japan in 1978 and normalized full diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979. Thereafter, China discarded its belief that a third world war was inevitable.<sup>8</sup>

A third change came when Deng Xiaoping announced his ambitious Four Modernizations program and at the same time the Reagan administration and the Republican party in the United States Congress began to support a two-Chinas policy, contrary to the spirit of Shanghai Communique. Sino-American relations quickly deteriorated.

The Chinese foreign policy of 1982 stipulated three important tasks: (1) the acceleration of constructing modernized socialist states, (2) the struggle to secure the realization of one China, including unification with Taiwan, and (3) the opposition to hegemonism and power politics, with the pursuit of peaceful coexistence. Based on these diplomatic principles, China belonged to the third world forever, as one of the nonaligned nations. It adopted an economic development policy as the key to solving its domestic and foreign affairs and then made efforts to improve its friendly relations with other countries,

according to the five principles of peaceful coexistence.<sup>9</sup>

The independent foreign policy that Deng Xiaoping disclosed in 1984 aimed at maintaining world peace and achieving the modernization of China, based on four main approaches. First, as a nonaligned country, China opposed hegemonism and power politics and tried to preserve peace. China belonged to the third world. Second, China proposed that South-North problems should be solved by dialogue between the two sides, and that mutual cooperation, intercourse, and study should be strengthened with the third world. China tried to talk about unification with Taiwan and to communicate with other non-aligned nations. Third, China would utilize neither the "U.S. card" nor the "Russia card," nor would it permit other nations to make use of China's "card." Fourth, China would not enter into alliances with other nations but would develop economic relations with the third world, so that China would acquire the support of other third-world nations to keep peace in the world. Further, China would take an independent diplomatic line to settle international matters and would aim at promoting its own national interests and economic prosperity.<sup>10</sup>

Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in May 1989 subsequently cleared away the hostile relations between China and Russia, which had endured for thirty years, allowing the recovery of diplomatic relations for maintaining peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and trust between the two countries. China had the opportunity to create a peaceful environment of international relations and to develop its economic program. Due to restoration of friendly relations with Russia, China finally gave up its "inevitability of war" policy.<sup>11</sup>

China has turned from preserving its communism to using pragmatism to solve its national problems, in political, economic, and social areas, and to succeed in its Four Modernizations program. China has introduced foreign capital, technology, and management from the developed countries, and has made efforts to settle international disputes.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Modernization of China And Its Impact on Korea**

In December 1978, at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee Meeting of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Deng

Xiaoping changed the basic direction of Chinese policy and emphasized that the success of the Four Modernizations — of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense — was the most important task of the CCP. At this meeting, Deng declared, "As far as economic growth is concerned, the Chinese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person should increase up to \$800 by the end of 2000 so that the life of the people can become more tranquil."<sup>13</sup> The modernization of China became the most important goal for the Chinese Communist Party at that stage.

Political ideologies such as self-reliance, extreme egalitarianism, and collectivism during the period of Mao's regime, and the modern goal of equitable distribution, under Deng's regime, are fundamentally quite different, because the latter's economic policy was actually based on market economics, ingenuity, and human efficiency, and payment of the price for labor. This is responsibility for production, which is characteristic of the capitalist market economy. The social doctrine of "equitable distribution" became dominant, maximizing the creativity of individuals as well as the efficiency of groups. The process toward modernization started to reform China's farming, the occupation of 80 percent of the Chinese population.<sup>14</sup> A stable political and economic environment has been built due to the radically increased benefits from agriculture. The basic infrastructure of the rural farming industry was changed by allowing families to produce the crops of their choice after fulfilling contract grain obligations to the state.<sup>15</sup>

Since 1988, when Deng's "Decisions on the Reform of the National Economic System" was passed at the Third Plenum of the Twelfth CCP meeting, economic restructuring in sectors as diverse as farming and trading industries, commerce, and science, as well as in educational sectors, has been modeled on the successful experiences in the agricultural sector.<sup>16</sup> Urban reform, including in the fields of finance, taxation, goods pricing, banking, commerce, and labor, resulted in increased activity in private enterprise and industries. By setting up special economic zones, the Chinese government also attracted from foreign enterprises the capital, technology, and investment which were necessary for the modernization of China. The Chinese economy has developed rapidly due to foreign capital

investment and the introduction of new foreign management know-how. China began to allow greater autonomy in individual enterprises in order to transform them into more independent units that would be responsible for their own successes and failures. More autonomy was also given in management duties of state enterprises, and China prepared to expand trade policies which would attract overseas investment and trade.<sup>17</sup>

China's economic reform, as well as its internal and external policies, brought about critical changes in the administrative criteria, the living standards of the people, the state of mind, sense of values, and behaviors in the fields of the Chinese economy, politics, scientific technology, culture, and education. The concept of material incentives gained during economic reforms and the open-door policy were new factors which had a significant impact on Chinese policies regarding the Korean peninsula, as the Chinese government decided to cooperate with other countries which could boost their economy. At the same time, China attempted to integrate American trade and create economic interdependency with other countries and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the ABD, and APEC.<sup>18</sup>

Hence, the perception of the Chinese leaders regarding the Korean peninsula changed from one based on revolutionary ideology and strategic values to a view based economic profits, which exploited the possibility of the trade benefits Korea could provide. Therefore, Chinese policies toward the Korea have been adjusted to achieve national goals of easing and restraining the threat of military collision and the tensions of political relations between North and South Korea, as the Chinese government sought to keep the Korean peninsula safe and peaceful. To be sure, peace and security on the peninsula would affect Chinese economic reforms, which were very important to the Chinese government.<sup>19</sup>

Although the economic exchanges between China and South Korea have prompted indirect trade through Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan since 1978, direct trade between China and South Korea has only occurred since 1985. When the Chinese government decreased control by its central government and established special economic zones instead of politically protected regions, the amount of

international trade between China and South Korea during 1985 rose to \$1.2 billion - the same as the total amount of trade between 1979 and 1985. The 1988 Seoul Olympic Games accelerated cross-bloc functional cooperation between Seoul and Beijing, and the total trade volume exceeded \$3.1 billion, making South Korea one of the top ten Chinese trading partners.<sup>20</sup>

In 1988, Deng expressed his firm position: "Let's build a new order in international politics based on the five Chinese diplomatic principles of peaceful coexistence regarding mutual benefit as well as the principle of independent position." He especially emphasized policy regarding Korea, saying, "We will support autonomy, peace, the reunification line. They should restart peace talks and build mutual understanding and long-term trustworthy relationships in order to ease the military confrontation and the strained political relations between North and South Korea."<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, the South Korean government tried to improve its relationship with communist countries, including China and the Soviet Union, in order to build up a favorable foundation for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. South Korea also announced its "northern diplomacy," to develop new markets in those communist countries.

The main objective of the "northern diplomacy" endorsed by the South Korean government was to gain the support of China and the Soviet Union, with a view to stopping North Korea from initiating wars and encouraging China to play a dominant role in maintaining peace in Korea.<sup>22</sup> Hence, the "northern diplomacy" resulted in building a peaceful and safe political environment on the Korean peninsula as well as in Northeast Asia, and it also brought the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and South Korea.

At the Seventh Plenary Session of the Third National People's Congress, Chinese Prime Minister Li Feng showed how flexible Chinese foreign policy was regarding the Korean peninsula by reporting, "China will support the proposal of the People's Democratic Republic of North Korea to achieve peaceful reunification and also hopes that the parties concerned would make efforts between North and South Korea to help keep the Korean Peninsula safe and



peaceful."<sup>23</sup> This meant the Chinese government had changed its policy from one supporting only North Korea - which had been based on their ideological, military, and political relations of their "blood alliance" since the Korean War - to the support of both North and South Korea. In 1991 China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, strongly supported the joint admission of the two Korean states and finally proposed that North and South Korea join the UN General Assembly as two separate nations.

On February 6, 1992, a meeting of high-ranking officials was held in Pyongyang. Representatives of South and North Korea signed an "Agreement of Reconciliation, Mutual Non-Aggression, and Intercourse," to build a peaceful relationship by preventing any military invasion or provocation on the part of North Korea toward South Korea. Furthermore, in August of the same year, South Korea established formal diplomatic ties with China, a turning point in dissolving the hostile relationship between China and South Korea which had existed since 1950, a promising step in achieving a stable and peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula after many years of political tensions.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, the modernization programs of the Chinese government resulted in the "northern diplomacy" of the South Korean government, which accelerated the establishment of a formal diplomatic relationship between China and South Korea.

In 1992, China and South Korea agreed to establish mutual trade representatives in each country and built diplomatic systems regarding trade agreements, a partial tariff levy, investment guarantees, and the prevention of a duplicate tariff treaty. Chinese and South Korean foreign ministers visited one another's capitals to conclude navigation treaties as well as environmental protection treaties in May and October of 1993.

In March 1994, President Kim Young-sam visited the Chinese capital, and Prime Minister Li Feng visited the South Korean capital at the end of October 1994. The two leaders implemented an agreement for duplicate tariff prevention and also agreed to cooperate with each other in four major economic areas, such as motor vehicle, electronics, high-quality TV, and heavy aircraft production. (This was later

cancelled by the Chinese government without a full explanation.)

Motivated by the changes in Chinese foreign policy regarding the Korean peninsula, the leaders of each country made historical visits to one another's capitals. Thereafter, China gave up its one-sided support of North Korea in relation to political matters such as peace talks between North and South Korea, reunification policy on the Korean peninsula, and protocol, and China initiated a policy which treats North and South Korea equally.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, China adhered to a principle of separate political and economic policies, contending that Chinese economic cooperation with South Korea was a different matter from Chinese political cooperation and the issue of military security with North Korea. Conscious of the Sino-North Korea treaty of friendship concluded 36 years ago, the Chinese government became concerned about the North Korean reaction to the new direction of Chinese economic policy. Even though China's separation of political from economic policies was based on Zhou En-lai's dictum, "Do not betray old friends to make new friends,"<sup>26</sup> it was not entirely attributable to the traditional position of China. Rather than totally ignoring North Korea, the Chinese government apparently adopted the above-mentioned policy due to the changes in international environment regarding the Korean peninsula, after consultation with North Korea.

### **The Chinese Two-Koreas Policy And Four Party Talks**

The Korean peninsula is surrounded by four powerful countries, the United States of America, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan, and has historically been the strategic and geopolitical center of power struggles among them in international politics based on national interests and conflicting political ideologies over the past century. At the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese Viceroy Li Hung-chang persuaded Yi-dynasty Korea to conclude a treaty with the United States, in order to shift the balance of power in Korea in China's favor. The viceroy's policy toward Korea was based on preparation against Russia and opposition to Japan and was the Chinese traditional war strategy of "checking barbarians with barbarians."

However, Viceroy Li's policy of cooperation toward Korea

changed to a policy of intervention, allowing Ch'ing-dynasty China promptly to send 2,000 troops under Admiral Ting Ju-ch'ang and adviser Ma Chien-chung to Korea in order to suppress the military rioters during the Imo military revolt at Seoul in July 1882. This incident gave a golden opportunity to China to intervene the internal affairs of Korea. The Ch'ing emperor invaded the Korean national sovereignty and abducted the regent Taewongun, who ruled the country with the king's decree.

After pacification of the Imo military revolt, Li Hung-chang took an even more active intervention in the kingdom of Korea by sending his trade commissioner, Ch'en Shu-t'ang, according to the regulations for maritime and overland trade between Korean and Chinese subjects in 1882, and he also recommended von Moellendorff as an official Western adviser to the king of Korea.

However, Korean political leaders determined to shake off Chinese control and at the same time to implement their political goals of preserving the national sovereignty, especially with a view of carrying out their ambitious programs of political reform and modernization after the fashion of the Meiji Restoration. The Kapsin Coup, led by the Progressive party leader Kim Ok-kyun, broke out on December 4, 1884, for the purpose of soliciting the support of the Japanese armed forces. But this coup failed, largely because of Chinese intervention, in the form of 1,500 Chinese soldiers led by Yuan She-k'ai, without the official request of King Kojong. If the Chinese had not intervened and the coup leaders had been able to accomplish their political objective, the destiny of Yi Korea might have developed in a way quite different from the present situation.

After this incident, Viceroy Li dispatched Yuan to the capital of Korea and had him exercise effective control over Korea's politics, economy, and diplomacy, ignoring its traditional non-interference and cooperative policy toward Korea. He was the de facto ruler of Korea for a decade. The assassination of Kim Ok-kyun, the leader of the Kapsin Coup, by another Korean, Hong Jong-woo, happened at Shanghai Foreign Settlement in March 1894, and it so excited the Japanese that they used it as an international incident on whose basis they declared the Sino-Japanese War five months later. Ch'ing China

was defeated, and Japan isolated China from Korea. After winning the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, Japan began substantially to colonize the kingdom of Korea.<sup>27</sup>

China became involved in the Korean War in 1950, fighting against United Nations troops. This resulted in a hostile relationship between China and the United States of America and between China and South Korea. Once again, Chinese intervention policy greatly affected the peace and unity of Korea. Since full normalization of relations with Seoul would have the effect of promoting and developing the Chinese Four Modernizations program and foreign policy, as well as increasing trade between China and South Korea, Chinese leaders later changed their stand regarding the role of Korea in international politics and began building a new, harmonious relationship with South Korea. The peace and security of the Korean peninsula could be kept during the 1980s and early 1990s, through the collapse of communist systems and the end of the cold war, and China and South Korea could begin trading with each other.

After China established a diplomatic relationship with South Korea in August 1992, according to the changes in the international situation, the president of the Chinese Communist Party, Yang Shangkun, said, "The establishment of a diplomatic relationship with South Korea is profitable for both Chinese and South Korean peoples. . . . Besides, this relationship will bring peace and security in the Asia Pacific region."<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, to protect the North Korean communist regime China adopted separate foreign policies regarding Korea by sustaining its political and military alliance with North Korea and at the same time establishing an economic relationship with South Korea. The Chinese political attitude toward Korea can be also seen in this policy statement: "The truce agreement must be observed until a new structure of peace and security can be established in the Korean peninsula." The Chinese government supported the U.S. step to implement the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.<sup>29</sup> China also made efforts to persuade North Korea to halt its development of nuclear weapons and to remain a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in October 1994, after three years of negotiation with the United States. This is known as Geneva Agreed Framework

between the United States and North Korea.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, China contributed to the establishment of the fundamental structure and framework to build security, peace, and prosperity in Northeast Asia by playing an important role in persuading North Korea to sign the NPT, which is vital to maintaining the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula by minimizing the risk of nuclear war in Northeast Asia.<sup>31</sup> This is to say that China's non-interference policy now shifted to a policy of cooperation in regard to the Korea peninsula.

One result of the NPT was the establishment on December 15, 1995, of the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which is responsible for building and supervising the construction of light-water reactors (LWRs) in North Korea.<sup>32</sup> KEDO is mainly funded by South Korea, Japan, and the United States. The formation of KEDO was an important event in international politics and the maintenance of the peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, as it was a forum where North and South Korea could have dialogue and cooperate each other in order to exchange the necessary human resources and materials to build the reactors.

Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng visited Seoul in November 1994 and disclosed the Chinese fundamental position regarding Korea by saying, "I hope North and South Korea can resolve important matters by understanding each other and by building a trustworthy relationship."<sup>33</sup> Chinese officials have given their best efforts to avoid isolating North Korea from international politics by providing support such as food aid during a disastrous famine and alleviating shortages of fuel and consumer goods, in order to forestall political chaos and economic crisis in North Korea, which would affect China.<sup>34</sup>

When South Korea suggested dispatching a representative to the Najin-Sonbong Free Trade Zone in North Korea by way of the UN Development Plan (UNDP), North Korea objected. The DPRK refused to allow the South Korean representative to attend the meeting and trade exhibition, on the grounds that South Korea was not a contracting party of the truce agreement. The North Korean rejection short-circuited the South Korean government's effort to strengthen the exchange of trade and economic cooperation with North Korea.<sup>35</sup> In this political situation, China agreed to support talks of the four

countries as suggested by South Korea and the United States in April 1996. First, China believed that the South Korean policy regarding North Korea was very reasonable, as South Korea did not want to pursue the isolation, destabilization, or collapse of North Korea. Second, if the talks of the four countries were successful, it was possible for North Korea to gain political security and economic benefits by continuously negotiating with the United States and South Korea.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the talks of the four parties would coincide with the five principles of the Chinese foreign policy on the Korean Peninsula, to the effect that the problems of North and South Korea must be solved by themselves and that the talks between the two regimes could be a communications channel through which both sides could build the foundation for peace on the Korean peninsula.

Thus, China chose a positive role in the establishment of the denuclearization zone, emphasizing reconciliation, non-aggression, guarantees of joint exchanges, and unification of Korea. The reasons for China's efforts are, first, because the Four Modernizations of China required peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, and both China and South Korea were eager to cooperate economically as they greatly depended on each other for trade. Second, it was possible for China to be persuasive or to affect North Korean policies as China was the socialist state adjacent to the Korean peninsula and had greatly assisted North Korea in providing food at a time of economic crisis. Third, unlike those of Japan and Russia, the Korean and Chinese peoples have a common historical background, as they both were victims of two wars initiated by Japan.<sup>37</sup> Also, China wishes to bring peace to the Korean peninsula as it was a contracting party in the truce agreement at the end of the Korean War. Finally, China believes it is its burden to handle Korean matters reasonably and impartially, as China has a similar problem in seeking unification with Taiwan.<sup>38</sup>

Further reasons for the very active Chinese role in resolving Korean problems were, first, that China disagreed with North Korea in its unreasonable insistence on negotiating only with the United States and excluding South Korea from the Four Party Talks, which were being held to change the truce agreement into a peace treaty.<sup>39</sup> Second, China kept its basic diplomatic principles on the Korean peninsula,

holding that the problems between North and South Korea must be solved by Koreans themselves, without the interference of other countries. China believed that the core of a new world order should be established equally by each country, not by a handful of dominant superpowers.<sup>40</sup> Third, as a member of APEC and the standing committee of the UN Security Council, China has maintained the basic position that it opposed any type of "hegemonism" or "power politics,"<sup>41</sup> and it regarded the Four Party Talks and the activities of the Red Cross in North and South Korea as systematic contributions towards the peace and security of Korea. Fourth, China has shown its flexibility in foreign policy in handling matters such as the stranding of the North Korean submarine<sup>42</sup> and the political asylum of Hwang Jang-yeop.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, North Korea refused the proposal of establishing a special organization, suggested in the Four Party Talks held in Geneva in March 1999, and repeated their longstanding demand for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea and the changing of the truce agreement to a peace treaty.<sup>44</sup> In response, the new South Korean government submitted to North Korea unprecedented "sunshine" proposals in order to assist China in its cooperative policy. These included promises of supplying 50,000 tons of grain; handing over lists of people for separated family reunions; establishing a transport system between Shokcho, Najin and Sonbong; dispatching of a special envoy; unconditional permission for members of separated families over 65 years old to visit North Korea; a decision to permit separated family members over 60 years old to meet their North Korean relatives in a third country; reducing regulations for economic investments; increasing the scope of investments; and allowing the heads of large South Korean companies to visit North Korea.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, at the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM) in England at the beginning of April, the Chinese prime minister, Zhu Rong-ji, and the president of South Korea, Kim Dae-jung, agreed to cooperate by sending officials to each other's country. On April 3, through grain expert Kim Sun-keun North Korea proposed talks with South Korea in Beijing, after 3 years and 9 months of non-communication, in order to discuss the supply of 200,000 tons of fertilizer. This

had been suggested by North Korea in January. The South Korean government agreed to attend the official talks. On his return from the ASEM conference, President Kim expressed his intention to accept the suggestion of North Korea, especially to discuss the subject of non-aggression on the Korean peninsula in the Four Party Talks and economic, cultural, and trade exchanges with North Korea.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the new South Korean government's reunification policy is to create the necessary preconditions through three steps, preventing the collapse of North Korea.<sup>47</sup> The first step is to build a unified national system without destroying the existing political systems of North and South Korea. The second step is to build a federal government under a unified system which can handle all matters related to internal politics, defense, and diplomacy for the two governments of North and South Korea. The final step is to attain the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea.

It is important for China to change its two-Koreas policy of separation into a cooperative policy which will help North Korea avoid isolation, become a member of the international community, and complete the peaceful reunification of Korea. That is why the South Korean government needs to strengthen its relationship with China by enlarging the volume of trade and interacting in areas such as culture, arts, education, science, sports, and social events by exchanging specialists in these areas and by organizing various cooperative research projects, symposiums, and cultural programs. Leaders of both countries need to allow leaders of social and private organizations whose aims are aligned with government policy to visit each country in order to stabilize the relationship between South Korea and China.

## **Conclusion**

With various motivations, China has adapted its intervention policy to the internal and external affairs in the Korean peninsula since the period of the Imo military revolt, the Kapsin Coup, and the Sino-Japanese War. China again intervened in Korea in 1950 and fought against UN troops, including those of the United States, during the three years of the Korean War, which it won. Therefore, we can say China has had one defeat and one victory in pursuit of its policy.



To develop its economy, to maintain its communist structure, and also to gain hegemony, China has played an important role on the Korean peninsula from the 1890s to the 1990s and the end of the cold war.

Chinese foreign policy and its Four Modernizations have shifted according to changes in Chinese internal politics, its economic situation, and the environment of international relations. China has kept separate political and economic policies toward the Korean peninsula in order to maintain peace and security. China has played and is expected to continue to play a decisive role in maintaining peace and stability in Korea. China was able to persuade North Korea to sign the NPT and to accept the formation of KEDO. However, the establishment of cooperative reunification efforts between North and South Korea is more important than anything else in order to change the cease-fire agreement into a peace treaty. That is why the South Korean government has suggested diplomatic policies to help North Korea build its economy and industries through trade exchanges and cooperation.

The policies issued by the South Korean government relating to the peninsula conform to the five principles of foreign policy followed by China, since they are based on the idea that the problems between North and South Korea must be resolved by Koreans themselves. Both the Chinese and the South Korean governments have a common purpose in encouraging North Korean cooperation with South Korea in peace talks, cooperative trade, and exchanges. For this reason, there is a good possibility of building a foundation for the reunification of Korea.

According to Hu Jin-tao, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Politburo, who visited South Korea recently, China expects to play a significant role in a new world system of international politics since China is a member of the UN Security Council and is responsible for the improvement of international relations. The purpose of the Four Party Talks is to build a peaceful atmosphere on the Korean peninsula for the future of the East Asian-Pacific region.

Therefore, it is time for China to change its dual policies regarding Korea to support the South Korean government's "sunshine

policy" and the U.S. government's engagement policy, as all parties agree that Korean reunification should be done not by military force, but in a peaceful and realistic way, alleviating North Korean isolation.

In the time of Ch'ing China and Yi Korea, Li Hung-chang's cooperative policy made Korea a member of the international community, leading it into the Korean-Japanese Kanghwa treaty of 1876 and the Korean-American friendship treaty of 1882. However, the Korean Progressive party leaders later lost their opportunity to modernize their own country due to Chinese intervention. If Ch'ing China had adopted a noninterventionist policy and had concentrated on strengthening the weak government, industry, and army of Korea during that period, then the Japanese domination and isolation of Yi Korea and Ch'ing China from the rest of the world might not have happened, and both Korea and China could have avoided being colonized by Japan or dominated by Western powers for the following decades.

From the standpoint of the modern Sino-Korean political and diplomatic history we can see why it is so important for South Korea to build a strong relationship with China. They have been in the same boat for a long time and have experienced the same destiny.

## Notes

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