

SYSTEM DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO KOREAS UNDER THE ROH MOO-HYUN ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

Under the Roh Moo-hyun administration, two Koreas continued improvement in relations begun by the previous Kim Dae-jung administration. The flow of the matter-energy and information between two Koreas had consistently expanded during these administrations. Comparing growth rates in information and matter-energy, we find that the growth rate in information ran faster than that one in matter-energy from 1989 to 1994; since 1995, both have run at a similar rate. This shows that two Koreas recognized the relative advantage of information in relation to matter-energy, but focused on the flow of matter-energy.

The two Korean governments recognized the significance of the state of affairs in the region surrounding the Korean peninsula. At the same time, external pressure had a significant influence on the two Koreas' relationship. Historically, the two Koreas' relationship has been dependent on external pressure from the big powers. This pressure, which produced heterogeneous societies on the Korean peninsula, has made it difficult to improve relations between the Koreas in emerging areas and the traditional sphere of subsystems.

Keywords: Subsystems, matter-energy, information, relation, South-North Korea.

Since the late 1960s, the two countries on the Korean Peninsula have periodically attempted to reduce conflicts and tension. In the Cold War period, the two Koreas confronted each other ideologically and militarily. From the time of national division in 1948 until the early 1970s, South and North Korea continued an intense confrontation against each other while denying the legitimacy of the other regime. But as the Cold War confrontation eased, the two Koreas started to improve their relationship. A new mood of peaceful coexistence started to develop in the international arena.

This dialogue between the two countries originated from outside pressure rather than from the countries themselves. Inter-Korean relations were sometimes in a reconciliatory mood as dialogue was maintained, but, at other times, tensions increased after a provocation by North Korea.

In the late 1980s, with the end of Cold War, South Korean President Roh Tae Woo began seeking diplomatic ties with China, the Soviet Union, and East European communist countries. Although these new bilateral relationships had the potential to isolate North Korea, Roh's "Nordpolitik" policy, initiated in 1988, included a thaw in relations with North Korea and promotion of inter-Korean economic relations.¹

¹ [http://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/mt.-kumgang-and-inter-korean-relations\(search 2010.5.9\)](http://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/mt.-kumgang-and-inter-korean-relations(search 2010.5.9)).

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Reflecting a new mood of reconciliation and cooperation across the world, the Roh Tae-woo administration pushed for passage of the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act on August 1, 1990, thereby opening a new era of exchange and cooperation between the two Koreas.

During this period, an historic high-level inter-Korean meeting was held in Seoul on September 4, 1990. This dialogue process yielded a set of historic agreements, including the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation (the Basic Agreement²) in 1991, the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in 1992, and the Agreement on Creation and Operation of Joint Commissions, which came into effect during the sixth round of high-level talks held in Pyongyang on February 19, 1992 (White Paper 2001, 19). The two sides agreed to respect each other's political systems and to never use force or threaten military action. Also they agreed to promote inter-Korean cooperation, exchange, and travel.

At the second threshold, confronted by catastrophe or improvement, the two Koreas made a breakthrough toward repairing relations by signing the Basic Agreement in 1991.

At that time, the two Koreas had laid the basis for the improving relations, but the Basic Agreement was not enforceable in domestic law. The improved relations between the two Koreas were the result of overwhelming outside pressure. From 1995 to 1999, dialogue and meetings between the two Koreas were not held on the Korean peninsula but in countries outside Korea.

Acts of provocation, such as the infiltration of a North Korean submarine into South Korea's East Sea on June 22, 1999, signified an escalation of the confrontation between the two Koreas. North Korea's problems, such as its worsening economic situation and food crisis, were driving the regime into a confrontational posture toward the South. If the two Koreas could not conduct exchanges with each other, the Koreas had to conduct exchanges with foreign countries for their survival.

The Kim Dae-jung administration, which came to power in 1998, endeavored to promote a policy of reconciliation and cooperation toward North Korea. This "sunshine" policy was based on three principles: (1) no tolerance for armed provocation that would destroy peace on the Korean peninsula, (2) elimination of the goal of achieving unification through a unilateral takeover or absorption, and (3) reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas aimed at ending the Cold War on the peninsula and converting inter-Korean relations from mutual distrust and confrontation to mutual reconciliation and cooperation. The Kim Dae-jung administration believed that South Korea should secure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and take a leading role in achieving coexistence and co-prosperity between the two Koreas.

Actively promoting the policy of reconciliation and cooperation toward North Korea, the heads of South and North Korea met for the first time in June 2000 and announced the June 15th South-North Joint Declaration to improve relations between the two Koreas. At that time, the South Korean government believed that economic cooperation would expedite the recovery of mutual trust as well as national homogeneity between South and North Korea.

□

² often refer to the Basic Agreement. This agreement constitutes one of the most significant documents in the history of inter-Korean relations.

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The two Koreas' relations substantially expanded following the joint declaration, and the sunshine policy of peace and prosperity continued under the Roh Moo-hyun administration. But the North Korean regime would not abandon nuclear weapon development, which put the brakes on further improvement in relations between the two Koreas. Even though South Korea successfully hosted the 2002 World Cup, the North Korean nuclear issue became a serious security issue in October 2002. Despite the North's actions, the Roh Moo-hyun administration continued to push ahead with the policy of peace and prosperity for the stability of the Korean peninsula; the administration's goal was to manage both the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and improvement in relations between the two Koreas.

In January 2003, a South Korean presidential special envoy visited North Korea, and in April 2003, three-way talks convened involving the United States, China, and North Korea, which began the multilateral process regarding North Korea's nuclear weapon development. Based on this meeting, the first round of the Six-Party Talks—including North and South Korea, the United States, China, Russia, and Japan—was held in August 2003 in Beijing. But North Korea was to abandon possession of nuclear weapons and its long-range missiles without USA' treating in a hostile and friendly manner against North Korea. North Korean processing in nuclear development raised tension on the Korean Peninsula. Even if North Korea emphasized the importance of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and peaceful resolution achieved through dialogue, North Korea many times had expressed that if the United States did treat North Korea in a hostile manner, the North had reason to possess nuclear weapons, and if the United States were to establish diplomatic relations and become friendly towards North Korea, the North would be willing to abandon its long-range missiles.

On the one hand, North Korea had engaged in efforts to improve relations with the South Korean government for outer matter-energy inflow need³ to sustain his closed system; on the other hand, the North had secretly developed weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons and long-range missiles that could reach the United States, Japan, and South Korea because of insecurity to these countries and his incapability about national security, due to his inner untrust to openness and systematic incompetence.

In 2004, the system dynamics of the relations between the two Koreas were influenced by the practical benefit from economic cooperation and the security dilemma. Inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation in various fields⁴ continued during this period. In 2004, 25 rounds of talks (over 61 days) were held, and 19 agreements were signed. In particular, as a result of inter-Korean General-level Military Talks and Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks, the two Koreas signed the Agreement on the Prevention of Accidental Naval Clashes in the West Sea and the Cessation of Propaganda Activities in the Military Demarcation Line Areas. These agreements were intended to reduce military tension and build confidence, while maximizing each country's national interest. There were also dialogue and exchanges on economic

³ Inter-Korean economic cooperation, with its three major economic cooperation project had been promoted steadily to the point where an institutional framework for operating the projects is taking hold; the Gaeseong Industrial Complex project, inter-Korean railroad and road reconnection project, Mt. Geumgang tour.

⁴ inter-Korean ministerial talks, inter-Korean general-level military talks, Inter-Korean economic cooperation talks, reunion visits of separated families (Red Cross talks), talks for fertilizer and food, rehabilitation efforts, government and private organization's aid, etc.

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cooperation⁵ and humanitarian assistance⁶ in that year, excluding the enlargement and exchange of media, personnel threatened North Korean regime.⁷

However, the cooperation between the two countries was threatened by a number of incidents, including the cancellation of a condolence visit by a South Korean delegation to the North on the 10th anniversary of the death of Kim Il-sung, the U.S. House of Representatives passing the North Korean Human Rights Act, and a large group of North Korean defectors (468 people) escaping to South Korea. Even if there were 20 occasions talks cut short by the political problems from the June 15 South-North Joint Declaration to 2004, there was a momentum to maintain the relations between the two Koreas apparently different from the past for two Koreas to push forward the economic cooperation as well as exchanges in social and cultural area.⁸

Specifically, the normalization of diplomatic relation between the United States and China encouraged peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas. The leaders of the two Koreas could not officially meet with each other until the normalization of diplomatic relation between the United States and China, except for informal visits of secret agents and humanitarian relief activities (talks between the South and North Korean Red Cross). After the joint communiqué of July 4, 1972, between South and North Korea, the two Koreas began to consolidate their political regimes.

In a May 2005 press conference, a spokesperson for the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the country had successfully finished the uploading of 8,000 spent fuel rods from its five-megawatt pilot nuclear plant in Yeongbyeon (Joseon Central News Agency, May 11, 2005). In addition, North Korea criticized South Korean authorities on the move to strengthen and modernize their military forces in response to the reduction of U.S. forces in South Korea. The North asserted that the maneuvers to strengthen military forces would only increase the risk of war (Pyeongyang Broadcasting Service, December 9, 2005,). North Korea declared itself a nuclear weapon “have” state, but the relationship between the two Koreas continued.

South Korea played a role in restarting the Six-Party Talks. In May 2005, South Korea suggested restarting the talks to North Korea through inter-Korean vice ministerial level talks.⁹ The South Korean proposal offered economic and security support to North Korea, if it abandoned nuclear weapon development. Through confidence building measures and the South Korean Minister of unification's positive interview with Kim Jeong-il on June 17, 2005, South Korea hoped that it could gain North Korea's commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs at the conclusion of the fourth round of Six-Party Talks.

New system dynamics of matter-energy and information flow between the two Koreas diffused into subsystems. The two Koreas tried to expand from unilateral aid to reciprocal aid in their relations through the principle of comparative advantage. The two Koreas promoted the first-stage development of the one million ‘pyeong’ (3.3

⁵ 13 rounds of talks on economic cooperation.

⁶ Talks on the Yongcheon Train Explosion Disaster Relief, the 4th Inter-Korean Red Cross Working-level Contact, etc.

⁷ **reunion visits of separated families on a regular basis**, the need to expand confirmation of whereabouts and exchanges of letters by separated families as well as of those lost in war, Settlement of North Korean Refugees, etc.

⁸ Working-level Talks for South-North Joint March in the Opening and Closing Processions at the 28th Olympic Games in Athens, etc.

⁹ This policy is connected to the present South Korean Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy. Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea, The Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy(2010.4), p.6.

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million m²) of the Gaeseong Industrial Complex and actively cooperated in developing 10,000 'pyeong' (33,000 m²) of the complex as a pilot project. The two Koreas communicated with each other by telephone and produced goods for mutual profit through the Gaeseong¹⁰ Industrial Complex as evidence of the reciprocity in their relations and a symbol of peace and prosperity.

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¹⁰ situated in North Korea.