

Federalism: The Fundamental Way for Korea's Reunification

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Introduction

Legacies of the Cold War – once a byword for confrontation – gradually disappeared in the post-Cold War period. However, Northeast Asia, which had been a site of showdown between socialism and capitalism in the days of the Cold War, remained almost unchanged with the outdated structure of the Cold War.

In particular, the Korean Peninsula still remains one of the world's most volatile hot spots where the risk of war is high. The issue of Korean reunification stems from the national division that was forced on the Korean people by outside forces in the wake of the Second World War. The national division of Korea has lasted for over 60 years.

To put an end to national division and achieve reunification is the fundamental way to ease tension and ensure stable peace on the Korean Peninsula. The division of Korea is one of the key factors that stand in the way of peace on the Korean Peninsula. It creates instability which might lead to yet another fratricidal war – a catastrophe for the Korean nation.

The issue of Korean reunification has long been in the international limelight. It is an issue that has been seriously discussed both in Korea and abroad. However, discussions did not help the Korean people fulfill their long-cherished desire of national reunification. The Korean Peninsula continues to move in a vicious cycle of mistrust and confrontation.

Different ideologies and political systems exist in the north and the south of Korea; neither north nor south is prepared to give up its ideology and political system. Then, how can a peaceful reunification of Korea be achieved?

To answer this question, it is necessary to bring in the formulas and trends of federalism. Since the key features of federalism are diversity and complexity, it can be a practical and peaceful formula for Korean reunification.

Federalism

The Concept of Federalism

In general, federalism refers to a structural formula by which two or more nations and/or regions or states form a single federal state but keep their respective autonomous rights to a certain extent. Today, there are some twenty federal states of different types and sizes in the world, like Switzerland, Russia, the United States of America, Australia, Austria, Canada, Bosnia-Herzegovina and St. Kitts and Nevis. Almost all countries with large territory or large populations are federal states. More than 40 percent of the world's population live in these countries.

Today, the interest in federalism is increasing by a number of factors such as the common policies that some countries seek to pursue, new efforts to bring together a number of independent states and search for stable governance formula in post-conflict situations.

All federal states share common features, the most important of which is, probably, diversity. Then, what is the most important issue in managing diversities in a federal state? It is none other than unity based on a common notion. In other words, all members of the federal state should transcend differences in class, social strata, race, language, ethnicity and religion, and unite with the shared notion that they are citizens of one same country. In this respect, we can safely say that the advantage of federalism is that it makes it possible to establish a unified state with a common identity under different circumstances and conditions.

Federal states are based on the notion that citizens belong both to federal and regional communities. Over time, many decisions, commitments and compromises have been made to give all citizens a notion that they are members of a federal state, because the existence of federal state will be jeopardized, if separative forces rise against the unity. In a federal state with deep regional cleavages along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines, stability can be ensured only when the policy goes beyond merely tolerating the active embrace of diversity as a part of what defines the country and gives its value. In other words, there must be a broader commitment in the society to a spirit of unity.

Origin and Evolution of Federalism

To understand and design federations is not easy, because of the different and complex socio-political circumstances prevailing. With comparative knowledge of various federations, however, we can come to the conclusion that a successful introduction of the federation can be fulfilled only when we establish a federal state by ensuring regional or traditional distinctive features.

Federal states have been created in different circumstances and for various reasons, making every federation unique. A common element of every case is that political leaders have recognized the legitimacy of autonomous regions (hereinafter referred to as "constituent units") as a way to realize and reconcile their respective goals, while minimizing violence, or in some cases, in order to end it. In a broad sense, there are three reasons for introducing federalism:

- Previously separate independent states or colonies concluded that they had enough common interest and shared identity to join together in a federal arrangement because the federal structure permitted each unit to preserve some of its autonomy while pooling other resources for development in the new community.
- A unitary state, which was highly centralized, chose federalism in response to political pressures for devolution because of the country's multiple languages, regions or ethnicities, and perhaps major economic differences between two regions.
- The above factors worked together to give birth to federalism.

Historically federalism is not a completely new idea born of recent days. State structures similar to federalism, such as the Achaean League in Greece, an alliance of city-states, existed, either in Antiquity or in the Middle Ages.

In Korea, a federation of kingdoms, named Six Kayas (Keumkwan Kaya, Dae Kaya, Sor Kaya, Seongsan Kaya, Kornyong Kaya and Ara Kaya), emerged in the first century B.C. and continued to exist up until the sixth century A.D. in the southern part. Federations that existed in the past neither met the requirements of state unification nor ensured respective regional peculiarities. Therefore, those countries that existed in the past clearly differ from the current federal formula.

The origin of modern federalism can be traced back to roughly 200 years ago. From the late 18th century, former independent units came together in a federal formula. Initially, federations with the longest history, like Switzerland and the United States – came together as confederations. The American experiment with confederation lasted for only eight years, from 1781 to 1789. Later, thirteen American states formed the first modern federation. The Swiss confederation evolved over more than five centuries, but a federal constitution modeled on the American example was adopted in 1848 after a brief civil war.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, four federations emerged in Latin America, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela. These countries won independence in the wake of the Peninsula War. The post-war break-up of the European empires saw the creation of various post-colonial federations. India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Nigeria have endured as federal systems. The small federations of *Belau*, Comoros, Micronesia, and St. Kitts and Nevis emerged after decolonialization. This period also saw new federations emerge from unitary states. Belgium is the clearest example. Furthermore, new federations emerged from post-conflict situations. Bosnia-Herzegovina is one such example.

The last case that should be mentioned in the history of federalism is European Union. The EU is a unique political institution, perhaps more confederate than federate, but it has a number of federal features and there is a continuing debate amongst Europeans about whether to move further in a federal direction or not.

All federations evolve over time. Factors such as urbanization, major demographic and economic shifts, new technologies and major global and domestic political developments have been critical in shaping federal experiences. In many federations, the characters of constituent units have changed dramatically over time. The United States and Australia were decentralized federations at the outset but have become centralized while Canada, in the opposite, accelerated decentralization. However, a number of federations have failed early in their existence. Most had had a weak sense of common identity and little history of joint management. Otherwise in some cases, failure had come from the other factors such as extreme imbalance of constituent units or fatally weak central governments. Sri Lanka and Cyprus are those examples.

Characters of Federalism

First of all, state power is divided into the central government and constituent units.

This is a major character that distinguishes federalism from a unitary state. As is well known, in the unitary state, the central government represents state sovereignty and exercises all ruling authorities, but the administrative organs of the constituent unit are at a lower level executing supreme power of the central government. This means that its exercise of power cannot deviate from the order of the central government. Therefore, the unitary state can have only one constitution and one legal system, and has a state organization system with unchallenged subordinate relationship.

Under federalism, however, each constituent units hand over special parts of state management to the federal government according to their common interests, while the government of the constituent unit exercises a number of authorities of its own. For example, the federal government exercises rights of common interests of the whole federation, such as diplomacy, national defense and currency, and the government of the constituent unit the other. This is why a federal state has a constitution and a legal system that are in effect in the whole federation, together with ones that are effective only in the constituent unit. To have such a double power structure is one of major characters of federalism. This character of federalism proves that federation is a state structure which respects distinctive features of each constituent unit. Governments of constituent units can enforce policies in line with regional interests.

Federations differ in the way power is distributed. Some federations are highly centralized, concentrating power in the federal government, while others are decentralized, with extensive autonomy and discretion allocated to constituent units. The patterns of the distribution of some powers within federations are:

- National defense, foreign policy and currency system are always under the jurisdiction of the federal government.
- Treaty ratification, foreign trade, inter-constituent unit trade, major infrastructure, customs and excise taxes are under the control of the federal government.

- Intra-constituent unit trade, primary and secondary education and health care are usually handled by the government of the constituent unit.
- There are no clear trends in other fields such as post-secondary education and research, mineral resources and agriculture.

In general, the relations between the federal government and the constituent units are usually vertical, while the relations between constituent units are horizontal. All federations have considerable interdependence between governments in the constituent units. Therefore, federations use various formal or informal institutions and processes, political and legal instruments to manage intergovernmental relations.

Secondly, a federal state constitutes one unified country although it includes states or regions with a certain degree of sovereignty and independence.

A federal state resembles an organization of states with a number of sovereignty and independence traits in its appearance, but constitutes one country in the sense of being a federation. This is the essential difference compared to a confederation.

In a confederation, there is no supreme organ of power that represents sovereignty of member states. Member states exercise by themselves their own ruling authorities. Hence, a confederation cannot be viewed as a single country. Today, there are no confederations in the real sense of the word. However, in a federation, there is a unified central government that represents the sovereignty of the constituent units, and the powers of the governments of both the federal and the constituent units are derived from one state power. That is why each constituent unit cannot become a totally independent sovereign state within the federal state. Only the federation as a whole can be a unified state with complete independence. This is another major character of federalism.

Although only the federal government represents the unified state, it might bring about a division of federalism if it fails to reflect the interests of constituent units in making decisions for the federation. Therefore, almost every federation has an upper house whose membership is in some way representative of the constituent units in that the interests of both governments are reflected in the central institutions. Upper houses have often been

seen as federal assemblies, in that their composition in some way reflects regional factors.

Representation in the upper house is frequently based on equal representation for each constituent unit, but, in many cases, differences in population are taken into account. For countries like Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Nigeria, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States, the constituent units have an equal number of members in the upper house, while countries like Austria, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany and India have unequal representation for constituent units, with weight given to population differences.

As seen above, federations exhibit a few common factors. There is no simple cookbook approach that fits all federations, however, which means that it is important to establish and manage the federation taking into account subjective and objective circumstances and conditions.

Reunification of Korea by the Federal Formula

Is it possible to reunify Korea through federal system in the light of the global experience of federalism? As mentioned above, the greatest advantage of the federal system in uniting different nations and regions in one state resides in tolerating their differences. In this respect, there is no reason why the north and south of Korea, which belong to one nation but have suffered from division for more than 60 years, cannot decide on and bring about a reasonable way of reunification in line with the common interests of the nation. It is quite possible to reunify the Korean Peninsula using the federal formula, if the north and the south give top priority to the common interests beyond the differences of ideologies and systems, political views, isms and doctrines.

The Korean people is a homogeneous nation, which had lived in harmony for fifty centuries on one and the same territory with the same blood, language, customs and culture. The territorial partition and national division for over 60 years imposed untold misfortunes and sufferings upon the Korean people. It is a hard fact that the separated families and relatives do not know if their relatives are living or death or where they are living, neither are they aware of their parents, wives, children and relatives. Even common features of the nation which have been shaped during its long history are vanishing. The homogeneous Korean nation cannot avoid misfortunes and disasters caused by division. The reunification by the federal formula is the only way to achieve sovereignty and prosperity of the nation.

The Federal Formulas Presented by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

It has been consistent stand of the DPRK government to improve north-south relations in line with the national interests and to bring about the reunification of the country independently and peacefully on the basis of reconciliation and unity.

In August 1960, President Kim Il Sung initiated a plan to institute a north-south federation as a transitional step to promote peaceful reunification of Korea, since the south Korean authorities refused to accept the

DPRK's proposal of holding general elections in both north and south of Korea.

In June 1978, he presented a proposal for achieving national unity by convening a Grand National Conference and then instituting a north-south federation that would leave the existing systems intact and join the United Nations as a single state named the Federal Republic of Koryo.

In October 1980, he proposed that the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo should be founded in order to reunify the country by instituting a north-south federation on condition that the north and the south recognize and accept each other's ideas and social systems. This is a way for reunifying the country by founding a federal republic on the basis of one nation, one country, two systems and two governments.

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo

The proposal to found a federal republic is based on a number of principles. In the unified state of a federal type, a supreme national federal assembly is formed with an equal number of representatives from north and south and an appropriate number of representatives of overseas nationals. This assembly organizes a federal standing committee to guide the regional governments in north and south and to administer all affairs of the federal state. The head of federal state could rotate between the north and the south.

Once the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo has been founded, the supreme national federal assembly, as the unified government of the federal state, and the federal standing committee, its permanent organ, should discuss and decide on political affairs, national defense problems, foreign affairs and other matters of common concern related to the interests of the country and the nation as a whole, on a fair principle and in accordance with the desire for national unity, cooperation and reunification; and push forward the work of uniform development of the country. The federal government will not allow one side to force its own ideas on the other side. Under the leadership of the federal government, the regional governments in north and south should follow an independent policy within the limits consistent with the fundamental interests and demands of the nation as a whole, and strive to narrow down the differences between north and south in all spheres and to achieve a uniform development of the country and the nation.

The supreme national federal assembly and federal standing committee should elect co-chairman from north and south, respectively, so that they can administer the unified government in a most fair manner by separating the power of the unified state impartially.

The federal state should be neutral which does not participate in any political-military alliance or bloc. Reflecting the common political aspirations of the north and the south for democracy, it would be a good idea to call the federal state the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo, since “Koryo” was the name of an ancient unified state which existed on the Korean Peninsula from 918 to 1392 and is still well known to the world.

Low-level federation formula

The June 15 North–South Joint Declaration announced in Pyongyang in June 2000 by the governments in north and south Korea includes the following article: “The north and the south, recognizing that the low-level federation proposed by the north and the commonwealth system proposed by the south for the reunification of the country have similarity, agreed to work together for the reunification in this direction in the future.”

In his New Year’s address on January 1, 1991, President Kim Il Sung clarified that the DPRK was willing to discuss the matter of accomplishing the reunification by federation step by step in the direction that would give more authority to the regional governments temporarily in order to facilitate the nation-wide agreement on federation and gradually strengthen the function of the federal government in the future.

Low-level federation can be considered as a temporary initial stage of the federation. To give more authority to the regional governments in the low-level federation seems to contain common elements with the south’s commonwealth system. In the low-level federation, the regional governments and the federal government can divide the power as follows:

- Legislative power: The regional autonomous governments of the north and south can enact laws on the principle of not impeding the process of reunification by federal formula, whereas the federal government legislates on the affairs related to overall interests of the country and nation.

- **Judicial power:** The regional autonomous governments of the north and south can exercise their own jurisdiction on the principle of common interests and in view of the national aspiration for reunification, whereas the federal government will exercise jurisdiction related to the sovereignty of unified country and safety of the nation.
- **Diplomacy:** The regional governments of the north and south sustain existing relations with individual countries and conduct independent foreign activities in consultation with the federal government, whereas the federal government represents the unified country in international organizations such as the UN and necessary international conferences.
- **Command of armed forces:** The regional governments can temporarily exercise command of the armed forces of their own regions on the principle of promoting peace and stability, while federal government has full command of the armed forces in the north and south and exercise unified command to defend the country from the invasion of the outside forces.
- **Economic management:** The regional governments manage their own regional economies independently, while the federal government promotes independent development of national economy by enhancing joint exploitation and use of natural resources, cooperation and exchange between the north and south.

To realize the reunification of Korea by federal formula is the most reasonable and ideal way to end the history of division and to peacefully solve the issue of reunification.

Originality of the Proposal for Founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo

The originality of the proposal for Founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo lies in that it launches a new type of federation that is based on national homogeneity and systematic characteristics of the regions. So far, the fundamental factor for unification of a country in all theories of federalism is the commonness of social systems. Therefore, a federation of different systems was beyond anyone's imagination. Needless to say, the commonness of systems can be of great importance in order to unify different nations or states into one state system. It does not mean that only the commonness

of the systems can be the fundamental factor for a unified state, however. If the commonness of the systems is the fundamental factor for combination which can transcend national or traditional differences, the differences of the social systems are none other than regional characteristics, which can be overcome and united by national homogeneity – which is fundamental factor for unification.

Federalism is a structural formula of a state which meets the requirements of unity of the states while ensuring regional characteristics. Therefore, although regions that demand unity are confronted by peculiarities, it is quite possible to realize the state unity by federal formula if there is a factor for unification that transcends those peculiarities. That factor for unification must be selected differently according to specific features. In other words, the commonness of systems should be the main factor for state unity when different nations and states form the federation, but national homogeneity should be the main factor when one nation with different ideas and systems – like Korean nation – forms a federation.

A nation refers to a social collective formed on the basis of commonness of ancestry, language, territory, culture and economic life, acquired through a long period of struggle for sovereignty. Thus, for building a unified country, national homogeneity is a fundamental element rallying all sociopolitical forces into one united body. While national commonness is unchangeable and permanent, the system is variable and ever-developing. It takes almost thousands of years to form a nation. Therefore, if a country is built based on the national homogeneity, it will be more durable.

The Korean nation is a homogeneous nation of the same ancestry that has kept its national identity for more than half a century on one territory. With Tangun as its founding father, the Korean nation has a history of 5000 years, while the two different systems in the north and the south have existed only for 60 years. It means that, either from a historical viewpoint or from an arithmetic viewpoint, the homogeneity of the Korean nation can overcome the differences of the systems in the north and the south.

Consequently, the proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo was launched based on the fact that if there is a national homogeneity, which is a fundamental factor, it is possible to found a federation which includes and accepts the different systems – it shows clearly the way for an independent and peaceful reunification of our country.

The Validity of the Proposal for Founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo

The proposal for the foundation of the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo is the right way to reach the reunification of Korea that accurately reflects the specific conditions on the Korean Peninsula and fully conforms to the requirements and interests of the entire Korean nation. That this proposal thoroughly ensures fairness is proven not only by the way a unified government is formed with an equal number of representatives from north and south and an appropriate number of representatives of overseas nationals, but also the functions of the federal state and power distribution but also by naming the reunified country the "Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo."

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo is a realistic one as it is based on coexistence.

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo is based on the theoretical and practical viewpoint that different ideologies and systems can coexist in one country; north and south of Korea have different ideologies and systems and neither of them is willing to give up its ideology and system.

If different ideologies and systems can coexist in one country, it means that the possibility of founding a federation of different systems in the north and south is also being assured theoretically.

An obsession of "one state, one system" or "one system, one state" is the main obstacle to founding a federal republic. In other words, we should re-examine the old idea that it is impossible for different systems to coexist in one country.

In general, a state is not a passive organization, whose existence is prescribed by social system. It is a tool which the people resort to in order to establish and change their order of public life – i.e. it is a social system. This means that the people who manage the state can accept different ideologies and systems even in one country and that consequently we can get rid of the obsession of "one state, one system" or "one system, one state."

Actually, in the present world, people with different ideologies, political views and religions not only live together in the same territory of one country but also form political organizations of different ideas and pursue

legitimate socio-political activities. In some countries, people of different political beliefs form and maintain one government as well as discuss and decide on uniform policies concerning internal and external matters.

If people with different beliefs can live together in one country, different systems can also coexist in one country. The return of Hongkong to China is a good example. The world observes that the capitalist system has been preserved in Hongkong, even after its return to China. This proves that different ideologies and systems can coexist.

The proposal to found a federal republic ensures safer coexistence of the two different systems on the Korean Peninsula, since it does not require one side to come under the jurisdiction of the other but allows two regional governments of the north and south to seek regional autonomy on an equal footing.

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo is the best way for peaceful reunification because it can prevent war.

Historically, federalism has in most cases been chosen not only to reduce violence as much as possible or totally put an end to it, but also to let all regional autonomies fulfill their own goals and compromise with each other. In this aspect, it is quite important to approach the Korean reunification issue from the realistic viewpoint that two different systems exist in the north and the south. If one side clings to its own argument and seeks to defend its own interests, it will generate an array of problems, even leading to a war. This way, reunification will never come.

When the north and the south refrain from forcing their own ideologies and systems on each other and subordinate everything to national unity and reunification, a federation can be founded and peaceful reunification of Korea can be achieved. Reunification by the federal formula will ensure permanent security on the Korean Peninsula. The federal government – a unified government of the new federal state – will have a political structure that allows the two systems in the north and south to coexist; it will ultimately root out the cause of conflict and war by ending military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula. Hence, it follows that, in the true sense of word, the most reasonable way to avoid forceful reunification by war and achieve peaceful reunification is none other than to use the federal formula, which allows coexistence of two systems.

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo is a reasonable way of reunification in full conformity with interests of the region and neighboring countries, since it presupposes neutrality of the federation.

In general, neutrality refers to a foreign policy, which stipulates that the state will not participate in war, will not join a military alliance in time of peace, and will not or militarily assist warring parties. Permanently neutral states are duty-bound to renounce war (self-defense is an exception), pursue a peace-loving foreign policy in time of peace, not enter into any military alliance and refrain from concluding a treaty that might lead to war.

The proposal for founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo defines the character of federation as a permanently neutral state, which does not join any political and military alliance or bloc. If this proposal is realized:

- The federal state will not become a satellite state subjected to anyone but adhere to an independent and neutral policy without being affected by any specific country, correctly manage foreign relations of the north and the south that have been established before reunification, coordinate external activities of the regional governments in a unified manner and pursue a peace-loving foreign policy.
- The federal state should encourage the north and the south to abrogate all treaties and agreements that are against national unity, including military treaties signed with other countries before reunification, and maintain external relations including economic relations which are not against the common interests of the nation.
- The federal state will accept that the north and the south cooperate with other countries in the field of economy regardless of social systems and not harm capital from abroad that has been invested before reunification but continuously protect rights and interests
- The federal state will develop friendly international relations and make the Korean Peninsula a permanent nuclear-free zone.

Such a neutral country will function as a buffer area which will promote reconciliation, cooperation and security in northeast Asia. It will also reflect the interests of neighboring countries as well as European countries that pay great attention to security in East Asia. In the long run, the Korean Pen-

insula will shed its vestigial image of being a hot spot and contribute to the efforts aimed at making the twenty-first century an era of peace.

“The Unification through Absorption” Strategy of the south Korean Authorities is an Obstacle to Reunification.

The south Korean authorities have taken ill-boding moves to disseminate the idea of “unification through absorption” in the international arena. Right after Lee Myung-bak took office in 2008, south Korea broke off north-south dialogues and cooperation projects one by one, adhering to the confrontation policy of the slogan of “no nuke, opening and 3000 dollars.” At the same time, the south Korean authorities have openly sought to achieve “unification under the liberal democratic system,” aiming at dealing with “contingency in the north” while insisting that the DPRK should abandon its nuclear program first” and “open itself to the world.”

In August 2010, Lee called for instituting a “unification tax” and proposed “three-phase unification” based on the so-called “peaceful community, economic community and national community.” This was nothing but a poor justification of his anti-national policy of “unification of system,” while openly rejecting the June 15 North–South Joint Declaration in which the north and the south agreed on ways to realize reunification.

In April 2011, the south Korean authorities invited ambassadors of neighboring countries to participate in the debate on unification in Seoul and staged a farce of advertising the theory mentioned above.

In May 2011, during his junket to Germany, Lee blustered that the north’s nukes are an obstruction to unification, urging the north to “dismantle” them. He also indulged in a string of invectives inciting despicable confrontation of systems, talking about the pull down of the Berlin Wall. It clearly proves that the south Korean authorities dream of a similar contingency in the north.

There is a sinister aim lurking behind the moves by the south Korean authorities. The so-called “waiting strategy” pursued by the south Korean authorities in inter-Korean relations is now going bankrupt. The international community is aware that the tense situation on the Korean Peninsula reached the brink of war in 2010, entirely because of the confrontation policy of the south Korean authorities. It is becoming increasingly assertive for resuming the inter-Korean dialogue to defuse confrontation.

Much upset by this, the south Korean authorities are busy stepping up the debate on unification in a bid to create the impression that "contingency" is imminent in the DPRK and "unification under liberal democracy" led by them is drawing near. It is a base scenario for them to justify their "waiting strategy" and bar their allies from coming out for dialogue with the DPRK or feeling any need to give humanitarian aid to it. And this is a major hindrance to the peaceful reunification of Korea.

The proposal for achieving "three-phase unification" is an undisguised theory of "unification through absorption."

Lee Myung-bak's proposal for achieving a "three-phase unification" is, in essence, an undisguised theory of "unification of system," which puts up "dismantlement of nukes" of the DPRK as a precondition, as it denies the coexistence of different ideologies and systems in the north and south. It is none other than a sophism that has added an anti-DPRK confrontation policy of "no-nuke, opening and 3000 dollars" to the "Korean community unification proposal" of a former military fascist dictator, which had been denounced and rejected by the entire nation.

The "Korean community unification proposal" initiated by Roh Tae-woo on September 11, 1989, set up a transitional "intermediate stage," which will materialize as a "confederation of south and north" by "recovering and developing national community" and a "final stage" in which a "democratic republic of unitary state" shall be established by holding a "general election" following the adoption of "unified constitution." In other words, it was meant to achieve reunification not by a federation but by the establishment of a unitary state.

This is a plan of permanent national division to legalize existence of "two Koreas" by infinitely dragging the solution of reunification issue and fixing the current division status. It is a plan that is impossible to realize. Since this proposal is based on a "unified constitution" of a unitary system, which anticipates the abolition of one system among two contrary systems in the north and the south and the establishment of a "unified state," it will not work unless one side prevails over the other. This proposal does not bring about national unity and reunification but only permanent division, acute north-south confrontation and fratricidal war.

As far as the so-called “no-nuke, opening and 3000 dollars” of the current conservative ruling forces in south Korea is concerned, it is an anti-reunification declaration, which sets the north’s “complete nuclear abandonment” and “opening” as preconditions for the improvement of the north-south relations; it fosters confrontation and war and will drive north-south relations into a dead end. This proves the ignorance of the south Korean authorities about the background of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and its essence, the root cause of the nuclear threat and the agreements adopted at the Six-Party Talks.

As is well known, the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula stems from the introduction of nuclear weapons into the south of Korea by the United States – a move to threaten the DPRK with nukes. The United States has seriously threatened and blackmailed the DPRK by gradually expanding nuclear military exercises against the north and has gone so far as to pursue a policy of “nuclear pre-emptive attack.” Under such circumstances, the DPRK had no other choice but to acquire a nuclear deterrent in order to defend its supreme dignity and prevent national security. The south Korean authorities, who connived at and patronized the U.S. introduction of nuclear weapons and danced to the tunes of the nuclear war maneuvers, are also responsible for creating the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. The successive south Korean authorities have not shown any worries about the fact that the United States openly deployed dangerous nuclear weapons in south Korea but supported it.

The first thing done by the current south Korean ruling forces after they came into power was to agree to that the United States brought into south Korea its large nuclear-powered carrier, nuclear submarines and other ultra modern nuclear hardware and staged nuclear war exercises for invading the DPRK.

The current south Korean ruling forces do not even have a proper understanding of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It does not refer to one half of the peninsula but to both the north and the south. It is not an issue between north and south but an issue between the DPRK and the United States and an international issue involving south Korea. That was why the Six-Party Talks came into existence. The September 19 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks laid down that south Korea should not bring in nuclear weapons and that the United States should not threaten the

DPRK with nuclear weapons; it also referred to the "principle of simultaneous action." It is preposterous to cry out only for the abandonment of the DPRK's nuclear weapons, while ignoring the duties of the United States and south Korea for denuclearization.

The word of "opening" is another intolerable provocation to the dignity and system of the DPRK. As far as "opening" is concerned, the DPRK has never closed its door but keeps its door open even to the United States so as to improve the relations. It is none others than the United States and south Korea that are bent on the moves to suffocate and isolate the DPRK.

In conclusion, the proposal for achieving "three-phase unification" is the mode of "unification of system" in which one side prevails over the other; it entails the danger of confrontation and war. Furthermore, to set forth "dismantlement of nukes" and "opening" of the DPRK as preconditions for improving the north-south relations and move towards reunification is an open revelation of the sinister intentions of the south Korean ruling forces to deny the ideology and system in the north and realize their ambition of invading the DPRK together with outside forces after disarmament.

The proposal for achieving "three-phase unification" only results in an aggravation of the north-south confrontation over the way to reach reunification.

Korea's reunification should be achieved by way of not harming the other. Therefore, it is necessary for the north and the south to discuss the reunification issue along this line. To decide on the correct reunification formula is a crucial choice that will either ensure peaceful reunification or drive the nation to catastrophic war.

For the north and the south to achieve a peaceful reunification, while removing the current confrontation and championing each other's interests, both must try to find a way for reunification based on coexistence. This is none other than the federal formula.

As mentioned above, the north and the south agreed in the historic June 15 Joint Declaration that the low-level federation proposed by the north and the commonwealth system proposed by the south for the reunification of the country have similarities. They have also agreed to promote reunification in this direction. The agreement on the way of reunification between the north and the south opened a bright vista to Korean nation's efforts to

realize the reunification in an independent and peaceful manner by pooling efforts of Korean nation itself.

The way of reunification agreed between the north and the south is a unique choice of the Korean nation to remove confrontation, secure peace on the Korean Peninsula and achieve peaceful reunification. To reject reunification by the federal formula will only bring about an aggravation of confrontation and escalate the risk of war.

During the period in which the June 15 Joint Declaration was respected in south Korea, north-south relations improved through dialogue and cooperation. All were convinced that the Korean nation had a bright future. At that time, no one was worried about north-south relations aggravating; no one thought of a war.

The proposal for achieving “three-phase unification” denies coexistence of different ideologies and systems in the north and the south; it is utterly opposed to the concept of reunification by the federal formula. In a word, it aims at achieving “unification under the liberal democratic system” by extending the ideology and system of south Korea into the DPRK.

“The unification tax” which the south Korean ruling forces try to introduce is a very unsavory idea launched in order to prepare “unification of system” with “contingency” in the north. Consequently, it is self-evident that distrust and confrontation between north and south will be aggravated and a war may even result, since the south Korean authorities oppose the coexistence with the north and are trying to realize “unification through absorption” and “unification of system.”

This was why many south Korean experts were seriously critical and argued that it proved vividly the current south Korean ruler’s ignorance of and indifference to the issue of the Korean Peninsula as his “proposal” was a mere retrograded one than those of former rulers. Meanwhile, major press of the world and experts forecasted that the DPRK would never accept the proposal of Lee Myung-bak, since his idea was a mere copy of the German model by which former East Germany was absorbed into West Germany. Therefore, his proposal was unrealistic and doomed to failure right from the beginning. They also mentioned that Lee’s real intention was to show off his “consideration” for the reunification issue and to escape from criticism for pursuing only confrontation that resulted in aggravating tension between the north and the south. They expressed deep concern that north-south

relations could deteriorate even more as the "unification tax" could be interpreted as being a preparation of the current south Korean regime for "unification through absorption" with a "regime collapse" of the DPRK.

Those at home and abroad who study the Korean reunification issue would be well advised to pay due attention to the truth about the debate on unification taking place in south Korea. The south Korean authorities must abandon its policy of "unification through absorption" at an early date and make moves to respect and implement the historic June 15 North South Joint Declaration in which the north and south agreed to achieve reunification by the federal formula.

Conclusion

Few countries might have existed for thousands of years as a homogeneous nation like Korea among lots of countries in the world. Therefore, national feeling of Koreans for motherland and native place is stronger than any other people and custom and blood-sealed relationship are also firmer than the other nations.

Although Korea is divided contrary to the desire of our people, all Koreans in the north, south and abroad are linked together in minds and feelings as parents, wives and children, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends who share the same blood. It is the very reason that the Korean nation cannot be separated. Korea's reunification is a must not only from the national and humanitarian viewpoint but also from the viewpoint of world peace and security.

If the north and the south sit together to have an open-hearted discussion on the national issues it is quite possible to remove difference of views and move towards the peace and reunification.

In order to save the north-south relations from catastrophe and achieve safety and peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, we must definitely depend upon proposal for reunification by federal formula based on coexistence. It is the only reasonable and realistic way to easily overcome difficulties laid before our nation and open the way for national reunification.

Korea's neighbors and European countries should also extend full support to the reunification proposal of federal formula through which the Korean nation can achieve independent and peaceful reunification by concerted efforts and should do useful things to help Korea's reunification.

About the Author

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