THE CHANGING SITUATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND ITS IMPACT ON SECURITY FUTURE

Recommended Citation

Great and positive changes have taken place on the Korean Peninsula in the year 2000, the reconciliation, to a great extent, resulted from North Korea's positive response to an external environment favorable to it. The effectiveness of this external environment lies in the two factors: one is the acceleration of economic globalization and the rising importance of regional economic integration; the other is the growing desire for regional peace and stability. With the acceleration of economic globalization and the rising importance of regional economic integration, the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the North-South conflict is greatly increased, and reducing the possibility of North-South conflict to a minimum. A new opportunity for multilateral cooperation is emerging and the Korea policies of China, Russia, the US, and Japan are being challenged. Since the late 1990s, China, Russia, the US, and Japan have vigorously promoted DPRK-US relations, and the progress demonstrates that the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and regional and international development is possible.

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the new century, great changes have taken place on the Korean Peninsula. The ralization of the tensions became the main trend in the 1990s when the Korean Peninsula transformed from the Cold War to the post-Cold War era. Some have found evidence that the Cold War remained on the Korean Peninsula and has a profound impact on the regional and international development. In the year 2000, however, such tremors have never been seen on the Korean Peninsula (actually changes in North Korea's external policy), which went beyond the expectations of many Korea watchers.

As the most important players, China, Russia, the US and Japan have been making efforts to improve DPRK-US relations since the first stage was achieved after the Berlin talks between the U.S and North Korea in September 1999. The Perry Report symbolized the change in the US North Korea policy from full containment to "Sunshine Policy." He called for the dismantling of the Cold War structure and the transformation of inter-Korean relations. The sign of such historical changes on the Korean Peninsula has been the improvement of inter-Korean relations. In spite of the tension on the Korean Peninsula, the meta relationship of the four powers of US, China, Russia and Japan has developed. The policies of the four powers of US, China, Russia and Japan have been adjusted to guide North-South relations. This is the beginning of the new round of the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula. The reasons for such changes are as follows:

1. Kim Jong Il's landmark summit meeting with Kim Dae Jung was one. This is the first meeting between the highest leaders of North and South Korea in history, marking a breakthrough after the confrontation and conflict between North and South Korea for 50 years.

2. Major changes of North Korea's policy towards the West are another. In 2000, North Korea actually carried out full-scale diplomacy: normalizing relations with Italy, Australia and Canada, and joining the ASE. Meanwhile, DPRK-US relations has developed: Kim Jong Il's special envoy Cho Myong Lok visited Washington and US secretary of State Albright visited Pyongyang in October 2000 respectively, the first high-ranking official visits between the two countries. The military confrontation between North and South Korea formed by Cold War policies did not fundamentally change. The 1.8 million modern troops from the two Koreas were gathered again along both sides of the military demarcation line, the biggest concentration of troops in the contemporary world. As a result, small-scale conflicts frequently occurred throughout the Korean Peninsula. In the year 2000, the North-South conflict became an important aspect of the inter-Korean diplomatic relationship, but it ceased to exist after Russia and China established diplomatic relations with the North in 2000. In May 2000, just before the inter-Korean summit, Kim Jong Il visited China, the first foreign country he visited before as head of state. In January 2001 Kim Jong Il visited China for the second time. Later this year, he will visit Moscow. North Korea, not only has improved its relations with China and Russia, but also attaches great importance to these relations, especially relations with China.

3. Kim Jong Il's promotion of the relations with China and Russia also played an important role. The "Northern Triangular relationship" among DPRK-China-Russia used to be the cornerstone of North Korea's diplomacy, but it ceased to exist after Russia and China established diplomatic relations with the North Korean regime. In May 2000, just before the inter-Korean summit, Kim Jong Il visited China, the first foreign country he visited before as head of state. In January 2001 Kim Jong Il visited China for the second time. Later this year, he will visit Moscow. North Korea, not only has improved its relations with China and Russia, but also attaches great importance to these relations, especially relations with China.

4. The policies of the four powers of US, China, Russia and Japan are challenged. With the reconciliation of the situation on the peninsula, every power has to adjust its Korea policy in order to guide North-South relations. The stand of the US, China, Russia and Japan on the Korean Peninsula has been adjusted respectively. The US rejected North Korea's offer to negotiate an end to its exports and the development of new missiles. After it shifted its diplomatic focus on the US in the early 1990s, North Korea tried to place its relations with the US at the center of its foreign policy and the US and South Korea's security posture towards North Korea is also changing. The US, South Korea and North Korea on June 1, 2000, the US held an informal meeting with China, Russia and South Korea. They all agreed to resolve the question of reunification independently and through the joint effort of the Korean people, who are masters of the country," making it crystal-clear that the two Koreas would aim to be free of non-Korean pressures as far as reunification was concerned. The rise of an independent sense and North-South consensus will make the Korean nation play an unprecedented role in the region.

5. The reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula, marked by the establishment of the "Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization" (KEDO) and the improvement of the four-party talks among the United States, China, North Korea, South Korea. The talks intended to establish a peace mechanism on the Korean Peninsula. There have been many preparatory and formal meetings of the four parties. One of the most important developments has been the fourth plenary session of the four-party talks, held in January 1999, the four parties announced the establishment of two groups on the establishment of a peace regime and the reduction of tension on the Korean Peninsula.

6. The rise of a new type of regional integration on the Korean Peninsula has led to the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the Korean Peninsula. The regional cooperation has made great progress in the 1990s through the establishment of "Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization" (KEDO) and the extension of a Euro-Asian Continent Bridge to the Korean peninsula will provide convenient transportation for the Tumen River Economic Developing Zone. With economic cooperation between North and South Korea and other countries concerned, the increase of common interests among these countries will help regional stability.