

The Russian Perspective on Korean Unification

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Abstract

The core national interests of Russia are concerned with maintaining peace and safety on the Korean Peninsula and continuing friendly relations with the states or unified state situated there. These goals are aimed at providing for the main fundamental goal of Russia, which is to prevent any threat to the security of the Russian borders and territories. The optimal variant of realizing this goal is through the unification of Korea. Compared to other key interested states, Russia is more favorable towards the perspective of Korean unification, but under the sine qua non condition that the unification is carried out peacefully.

Within its possible limits, Russia is trying to facilitate this goal both politically and economically. Therefore, Russia is possibly the only country that has actively promoted large-scale trilateral projects rather than following the bilateral formats. These projects include joining North and South Korean railways with Transsib and building a gas pipeline and power lines from Russia to South Korea across the territory of North Korea.

Thus, it is apparent that all of the large above-mentioned infrastructural projects do not only serve as a source of material dividends for their participants; they also work directly for Korean unification, forming integrated connections between important segments of North and South Korean economic structures and creating new sites for economic and political dialogue for representatives of the two countries. In such way, Moscow confirms its commitment to the prospect of Korean unification not only by word, but also by practical actions that directly assist its realization.

Key Words: Korea, Unification, Peace, Negotiation, Engagement, Absorption.

I. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the dangerous military-political crisis in the spring of 2013 severely hampered inter-Korean relations, stimulating a bitter wave of emotions among the Korean people and postponing any possible unification-related activities to more remote prospects. The reasons for this crisis were North Korea's provocations initiated by its satellite launch on December 12, 2012, its third nuclear test on February 12, 2013, and Washington's and Seoul's relatively strong and to some extent, also provocative responses. Naturally, such unfavorable conditions caused a considerable decrease in support for the engagement policy with Pyongyang from South Korea and the rest of the international community.

Nevertheless, the reality of a future unification remains constant. In a simplified view, there are only two ways in which unification can occur: peaceful and non-peaceful. Considering the opinions of many scholars including leading Russian experts, even if North Korea were to successfully preserve domestic stability¹⁾ despite various difficulties and mighty external pressure, attempting to realize a non-peaceful unification may end catastrophically for the whole Korean Peninsula.

Therefore, researchers should continue to search for and elaborate on the diverse variants of the two Koreas' peaceful coexistence and gradual movement towards reconciliation and eventual unification.

II. Why is Korea So Important to Russia?

Russia and Korea are neighboring countries this is a significant factor in Moscow's attitude toward the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Ancient wisdom states that rather than choosing our neighbors, we try to live with them in peace and friendship. This outlook has formed a constant Russian external policy towards Korea that has remained unchanged throughout the entire history of the bilateral relations, beginning in the last third of the 19th century and continuing to this day even through the cataclysms and

¹⁾ Torkunov Anatoly, Denisov Valery, Lee Vladimir, *The Korean Peninsula: Essays of the Post Second World War History* (Moscow: OLMA Media Group publishing house, 2008), p. 524.

antagonistic political regime changes that both Russia and Korea have gone through. The essence of this policy is that Russia is deeply and sincerely interested in the prosperity, peace, and stability of the Korean Peninsula. The optimal contemporary tactic of realizing these goals is Korean unification, which would forever eliminate the source of the acute conflict that has become synonymous to the Korean problem for the last 60 years. The fundamental issue is determining how to realize this long-cherished goal of Koreans on both sides of the 38th Parallel. Based on its fundamental interests, Moscow's unchanging answer for this sacramental question is to achieve unification only by peaceful means.

To explain this answer, it is crucial to recognize that Moscow's policies toward the Korean Peninsula are determined by Russia's serious and legitimate strategic interests in Korea. In other words, Moscow's Korean policies and its position on any settlement of the North Korean nuclear crisis are defined by the fundamental goal of preserving peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Russia stands firmly behind a peaceful resolution of the crisis achieved through diplomacy and negotiation, regarding it as the first practical step and necessary precondition for moving toward the unification of the peninsula.

Using military force to resolve the North Korean crisis is totally unacceptable to Russia for several reasons. First, the security of Russia's Far Eastern regions would inevitably be affected by an armed confrontation in Korea. Large concentrations of American military forces (likely similar to the number of troops involved in the 2003 invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan) on the borders of Russia and China would certainly cause elevated tensions. Combat operations would likely be fierce and sustained, further increasing

the risk of a greater conflict. As a result, three of the world's nuclear-armed powers (the U. S., the PRC, and the Russian Federation not to mention North Korea itself) might place their forces on high alert. American munitions were found across the borders of a number of Iraq's neighbors during the 2003 invasion an accident in such a situation could have catastrophic consequences. Given the complexities of combat and the region's geography, there is a high potential for spiraling tensions.

Second, taking into consideration that both of the conflict's potential belligerents (the U.S. and the DPRK) have nuclear weapons, a nuclear exchange is an unfortunate possibility. The massive radioactive clouds that such an incident would generate could easily reach Russian terrain. In addition, the flow of refugees fleeing such a conflict into Russia would create the possibility for an ecological and humanitarian disaster. A military conflict could also increase the possibility of an outflow of Russian citizens from its Far Eastern region to the west, which may dramatically affect the country's demographic situation.

Third, Russia has invested considerable amounts of capital into numerous long-term large-scale international infrastructure projects involving the Korean Peninsula, such as oil and gas pipelines and Trans-Korean and Trans-Siberian railroads junctions. These projects are crucial to the economic revitalization of the Russian Far East. Needless to say, a new Korean War would severely damage these projects and Russian economic interests.

Finally, Russia strives to avoid using force in Korea because a military conflict over the peninsula would, in all likelihood, gravely complicate Moscow's relations with Washington and Tokyo.

For these reasons, the perspective of the Russian Federation (as well as

those of China, the ROK, and partly Japan) on the North Korean nuclear issue does not fully coincide with that of the United States. While Moscow adamantly and unconditionally stands behind the realization of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and the permanent dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear development programs and weapons, it also firmly supports the peaceful resolution of the present crisis.

Based on access to unique information, a long history of interaction, and many contacts within North Korea, Russia has concluded that the widespread belief in the collapse of the late Kim Jong Il and post-Kim Jong Il regime, which is particularly prevalent among certain circles in the West, is a miscalculation. Rather, only a major foreign military intervention can achieve a short- to mid-term regime change in North Korea. Therefore, observers in Moscow are confident that the pressure and blanket economic sanctions intended to bring about a regime change will neither result in a North Korean political transformation nor erode domestic support for Kim (now Kim Jong-un) rather, they will only increase tensions and the probability of a military confrontation.

Additionally, there is an in congruity of interests regarding the strategic vision of the final destiny of the Korean Peninsula. For instance, American representatives repeatedly stress that a united Korea should remain a U.S. ally. Russia supports a unified Korea that will maintain friendly relations with all countries, including Russia, and opposes foreign interference in the unification process. It is not difficult to understand why Russia (or China, for that matter) would not be happy with the prospect of American troops on its borders, which would be an inevitable outcome of unification through military force.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that any attempt to use non-peaceful

means to solve the issues on the Korean Peninsula would provoke a sharp response from China. Korean unification would most likely diminish China's influence on Pyongyang and Seoul. A united Korea would have to dramatically re-consider its military and strategic priorities and would possibly choose to make its stance appear more rigid, setting off a region-wide wave of strategic reevaluation and militarization. Therefore, attempts to involve both Russia and the PRC in a scenario of military intervention do not appear likely to have great odds for success.

As noted above, Moscow's policies regarding Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula in particular have been determined by Russia's long-term national interests first and foremost, preserving peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. The baseline of Russia's modern Korean policy is the perception that for the time being, both Republic of Korea and the DPRK are independent states and close neighbors that should be treated discretely and independently.

Simultaneously, from Russia's point of view, in unconditionally supporting the national reconciliation and eventual unification of Korea today, the most important thing in inter-Korean relations is caution that is, moving gradually and achieving mutual tolerance. Russia supports the peace process in Korea considering the interests of both parties, leading to an increase in development levels for both Korean states, a decrease in military confrontation, and a lessening of tension on the Korean Peninsula and in Asia in general. Russia would not want to take any part in this complex and dramatic process, but intends to assist its main values: peace, stability and development. The eventual unification of Korea conforms to Russia's vital interests.

III. The Historical Legacy

Various historical facts prove such rhetoric statements. Firstly, the retrospective analysis of Russian politics in Korea is considered the heart of its national interests on Korean Peninsula.

More than a century ago in December 1897, Prince A. M. Volkonski stated in his secret report to the main headquarters of the Russian Army on the results of his visits to Peking and Seoul: "Russia is not interested in territorial purchases on the Korean Peninsula, which would be nothing but burdens to the State nor in economic dominance, which we would not be able to reach in these countries for a long time; but in full insulation of the kingdom in the sphere of international relationships." Translated into modern diplomatic language, the term "insulation" used by A. Volkonski means nothing but providing independence and a neutral status for the Korean state. This was the reason behind Russia's rejection of King Kojon's request to establish a Russian protectorate over Korea in the last years of the 19th century.²⁾

Thus, the main interests of Russian foreign politics regarding the Korean Peninsula were formulated at the end of the 19th century and remain practically unchanged today: the creation of a single independent state amicable to Moscow and free from foreign influence. These long-lived national interests appeared

²⁾ Kurbanov Sergey, *The History of Korea: from Antiquity till XXI Century Beginning* (Russia: Sankt-Petersburg, 2009), p. 323.

after Russia acquired a common border with Korea along the Tumangan River in 1860, and they retain their importance today although the multiple revolutions, world wars and other cataclysms of the last century made this task less important at times.

These interests are based on the main principles of geopolitics, determining the inviolability of the factor that Russia shares a land border with Korea and is interested in securing Korean peace with the Korean Republic, more so than anyone else: even more than Japan, and naturally more than the USA, which is thousands of miles away from the Korean Peninsula. This is because peace on the Korean peninsula is an integral part of and a condition for the security of the Russian Far East and consequently the national security of the Russian Federation in general.

Secondly, a possibly little-known fact in South Korea is that I. Stalin seriously supported the formation of a single bourgeois-democratic state in Korea friendly to the USSR. This is why up until 1946, he considered relying on Cho Man-Sik, who headed the People's Committee of North Korea's five provinces and local government³⁾, instead of the local communists or the group of Kim Il-Sung that arrived from the USSR, as a long-term trend. A number of his specific orders commanded the leaders of the Soviet military administration in North Korea not to carry out actions and reforms directed to the "sovietization" of the provinces under their control. The decision on the international custody of Korea, made in Moscow in December 1945 at the meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, became the divide⁴⁾. It is well-known that the idea of international

³⁾ Ibid., p. 407.

custody at these negotiations was suggested not by Moscow, but by Washington. Under the insistence of the Soviet delegation, the period of custody was cut down from ten years to five. But since this decision was made, the USSR started to gradually put it into practice, showing maximum firmness and no creativity. Americans were much more flexible they decided not to make an effort to focus their practical efforts on the custody, having seen that majority of Korean national-patriotic powers categorically denied the custody as a new form of colonialism. On the contrary, Moscow raised a question in its area of responsibility: “Who is for the custody with us, and who is against it against us?” Naturally, Cho Man-Sik and the forces that grouped around him were against it. Only communists supported the decision made at the Moscow meeting of allies. Starting from that moment, Cho Man-sik fell in disfavor and the group of Kim Il-sung came into favor. Also at that moment, the global Cold War started to gain momentum, which ultimately and fundamentally changed the USSR’s initial plans in relation to the future of North Korea and Korea in general.

IV. Current Realities

To better understand why Russia has continuously supported the peaceful

4) “The Relations between the Soviet Union and People’s Korea 1945~1980. Documents and Materials,” “Nauka” (Moscow: Publishing House, 1981), p. 19.

unification approach in particular, we should take into consideration the following factors.

The formulation of this issue is becoming increasingly relevant today, as the condition of a possibly temporary situation of unipolar peace is making the international policy archaic. First of all, we can see the essence of the process in the increase of the density of raw military force, putting other political components to the periphery: competition among ideologies, economies, and cultural traditions. Another important measurement of the “archaization” phenomenon is the tendency to simplify and unify the political picture of the world: a course to the voluntary but increasingly forced expansion of Western, if not Anglo-Saxon, model of democracy and Westernized culture. This is leading to the washing-out of national identities, narrowing the cultural and historical diversity of the world.

The temptation to use rude military force to regulate long-term complicated disputes has won in recent years, resolving conflicts in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. It is obvious that the trend of using a military force is growing rapidly. It is not impossible that this trend will, if it has not already, reach the Korean Peninsula in the near future. Changing the ratio of forces in favor of Seoul, both in the global and inter-Korean contexts, can assist in forming a light attitude in certain circles about the perspective of using forceful approaches and the permissibility of using military methods to achieve Korean unification. Sometimes, in certain circles of the Republic of Korea’s political elite there is the idea of the internal weakness of the DPRK, which is allegedly at the threshold of its inevitable collapse. There are also widespread “anti-Kim family” attitudes among the majority of the North Korean population, ready to meet the intruding South Korean troops as liberators,

with hands full of flowers. In our opinion, such an attitude is the result of miscalculations rather than harmless illusions.

V. Two Ways Towards Unification

The key determining factor of a peaceful or coercive approach to unification is North Korea's "accommodability": its ability or disability to transform into a more or less "normal modern state".

There a lot of adherents who are firmly convinced that under the present political regime, the DPRK is doomed to political-economic stagnation and that only a regime change can really change and finally unify the country.

Let us try to objectively consider present-day North Korea and its perspectives from this point of view. The DPRK today is a country with a backward, closed, and semi-ruined economy and a strict political regime that is based not so much on Marxism-Leninism communist principles, but on Confucian-feudal traditions and nationalism.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the leadership of North Korea has started to sequentially transfer accents from Marxism-Leninism postulates to the traditional Confucian and feudal-bureaucratic ones. In the inter-political context that appeals to national traditions, the cultural-historical heritage started to be used more and more broadly. With the aims of searching for a new basis for the legitimization of the DPRK (after the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR), a thesis grounded in North Korea's succession to the ancient Korean states, starting with

Goguryeo and Goryeo, was formed. For social consolidation on a nationalistic basis, a myth about Dangun, the legendary father of the Korean nation who lived in 2000 B.C., started to become actively exploited. Confucian-feudal norms and traditions in daily life began to become cultivated more and more openly, particularly the cult of the ancestors. A clear sign of this was Kim Jong-Il's three-year period of mourning after his father Kim Il-Sung passed in 1994, a scrupulous execution of the most important part of Confucian customs and rules of behavior. The situation following Kim Jong-Il's demise in December 2011 was definitely different from a domestic point of view and required a rapid legitimization for Kim Jong-Un. However, this case does not deny the trend towards supporting traditional Korean values. The renaissance of traditional holidays such as the Lunar New Year, as well as the formal reconstruction of rights of religion, became integral parts of the cultivation of Confucian heritage and the foundation of national-cultural individuality. As a result, the present North Korean administration is remembering socialism and Marxism less and less in its inter-political activity and propaganda, while increasingly turning to its national-historical roots and Confucian values.⁵⁾

Kim Jong-Il's ideology of "songun" (military first), which has risen into the official ranks, is more likely to become analogous with the ideology of a religious order rather than with communism. The closed and isolated nature of the North Korean society living under its own laws while reflecting influences from Stalinism and its national history, multiplied by the Eastern idolization of the higher-power people who reign with archaic administrative-command methods

⁵⁾ Alexander Vorontsov, "The DPRK Domestic Portrait against Nuclear Crisis Background," *Nuclear Proliferation*, no. 46 (January-March, 2003), pp. 14-15.

has become a system-forming factor. Notwithstanding the poverty due to the absence of resources, the irrational structure of the country's economy and isolation, particularly due to the relative homogeneity of the society, is characterized by an enviable inner stability. Along with this, the society is openly tired of the many years of stagnation and understands the necessity of change, which means that it would be quite able to modernize if a reasonable course were offered.

Considering the matter, in determining to what extent the DPRK is dangerous to its neighbors (whether or not it is carrying out predatory plans), we should take into account the following facts. Both in earlier times and throughout its thousand years of history, Koreans have never tried to conquer any other nation; further, at present the DPRK doesn't have any grounded reasons for aggression (like an attempt to dictate another ideology, or to capture territorial or economical resources). Moreover, it doesn't have the smallest chance of winning in the case of such an adventure. It is important that Pyongyang clearly understands this fact. If Kim Il-Sung could have had illusions of uniting Korea by force, then Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un, and their retinues think about preserving them. However this doesn't mean that they don't understand the necessity for change.

It is possible to believe that the current North Korean leaders understand the inefficiency of the system and the fact that the population is at the edge of patience, as a result of the poverty and absence of elementary freedom. There is no doubt that it would be better, for both the North Koreans themselves and their neighbors, if orders became more civilized and oriented toward individual interests (even though according to East Asian

Confucian understanding, individual freedoms even in South Korea are much more limited than they are in the West). So the goal declared by the USA and the West, and factually shared by all other countries, is to create a state government system in North Korea that corresponds more with the common standards overturning the regiment⁶⁾ is not the only way to achieve this task.

The evolutionary way, which appeared to be impossible in socialistic European countries, is not unrealistic for the DPRK because the country today is bureaucratic-monarchic rather than socialistic.

Changes can include creeping privatization with the blessing of the higher power of state property. The main power structures military, party, local, and special services would participate in it. This would result in the creation of economic conglomerates under the example of South Korean “chaebols,” but with a greater role for the state. It would bring the economies out of their permanent crisis, moving the absolute authoritarian political regiment further away from socialist rhetoric and closer to a national one, on the basis of attracting foreign (primarily South Korean) capital and export orientation. The life of the people wouldn’t improve drastically but it would stop the starvation, narrow the absolute power of the state, and make for a less turbulent transfer. The heir of Kim Jong-Il and young Kim Jong-Un after 15~20 years would reign over a completely different country with mixed economics and a strong state capitalistic sector it would not be very democratic, but all the same would be acceptable for the world society and closely connected economically with

⁶⁾ Bulychev Guerguij, Novikov Vladimir, Vorontsov Alexander, “What is the Essence of Change in ‘Korean Issue’?: Ways of Overcoming the Crisis on the Korean Peninsula,” *Nuclear Proliferation*, no. 47 (April-June, 2003), p. 24.

the Republic of Korea (ROK). Then, after a couple of generation changes, the y could start thinking about uniting Korea starting with the initial stage based on a confederation or a commonwealth of the states, and then continuing as life would dictate.⁷⁾

After the consolidation of his power in the second half of the 1990s, Kim Jong-Il started to look for a way out of “juche” dead-end of the development. This task was twice as difficult because he could not openly revise the heritage of his father (although at time she tried to for instance, he apologized before the Japanese for kidnapping people) and he could not risk disorder in the set system of power. However, Kim clearly showed the vector of his interest through his coming out of isolation, approaching the South, normalizing relations with Japan and the European Union, attempting at economic reforms, and creating an “open sector” in the economy. This is exactly the reason why the president of Russia V. Putin called Kim “an absolutely modern person” and started to assist him, including his efforts to act as an intermediary between the USA and the DPRK.

At this, however, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un didn't forget about strengthening the military component that is, containing the systems of their enemies who could make use of the period of changes to overthrow the regime. The conservators in the Kim's retinues constantly reminded them of this risk, fearing the repetition of Gorbachev's experience. Of course, Kim Jong-Il wanted to keep his power and country. But, he possibly could have dreamt not of barrack socialism but of a structure like that of China or

7) Guerguij Bulychev, “Two Scenarios for Korean Peninsula,” *Russia in Global Politics*, vol.1, no. 2 (2003), pp. 93-94.

Malaysia.

Having thoroughly studied the international experience of reforms of China, Russia, and Vietnam for a long time, North Korean leaders confirmed the practical possibility of realizing the above-mentioned scenario. As is well known, Pyongyang finally started market - oriented reform in July 2002 and very gradually continues to make progress today in spite of the many difficulties, ups, and downs.

In our opinion, the meaning and the effects of these undertakings, especially remote ones, can appear considerably broader than the first, but do not render very impressive results. Moreover, we should take into account the fact that when starting economic transformations, Pyongyang counted for the perspective of continuing to improve its position in the world and not for confrontation with Washington. We believe that it is principally important that undertaking these transformations concerns every citizen of the country. This essentially means denying the orthodox plan system of economics and beginning to drift in the direction of more liberal models. North Korean leaders themselves overcame a significant psychological barrier and put the whole population in a considerably renovated system of values, orienting points, and coordinates, objectively declaring the priority of economic interests over ideological ones. At this, we have grounds to believe that the leaders of the DPRK considered the “July” as the first steps to broader economic innovations.

An abrupt unification is an alternative to gradual, slow, and often zigzag and painful “growth” of the DPRK into a state that adheres to world traditions and rules. The fall of the entire existing system can only be possible through external force, due to the absence of potential for an internal revolution. We can't count on internal oppositional movements in the DPRK all dissidence

is oppressed with an “iron” hand, and there are no conditions for dissidence to appear under the circumstances of total control over the population and informational closeness. Revolution at the “top” (that is, the physical elimination of Kim Jong-Il, which does not seem to be excluded as a possibility by the some political circles in the USA) would result either in the continuation, or even the aggravation, of the previous politics of opposition to the external world. If military people come to power (which won't resolve the contradictions), or chaos occurs, meaning the capitulation of power before external forces with all resulting consequences. The revolutionary variant, whether it is through this way or another, would mean the total liquidation of the whole management system of the DPRK and change of control on the part of “occupational” South Korean administration.

It seems that a powerful part of the South Korean establishment keeps illusions of the acceptability of such a variant, hoping for a peaceful occupation and the creation of a strict system of control and exploitation of the North Korean population. At this, the degree of the alienation of North Koreans is not fully taken into account, based not only on the “system” but also on traditional regional differences and their unwillingness to become “people of second rate” in a joint Korea. The large army (2~3 millions of people) of North Korean personnel would not only be left with nothing, but would also wait for repressions (this is quite reasonable, remembering the past legal prosecutions and severe sentences to former presidents on the part of democratic leaders of the ROK) this very well could force armed fighting, which would at least be taken with sympathy by the population. It is likely that plans for such a partisan rebel fight exists in the DPRK. Lessons of many centuries of Korean history teach that this “smouldering”

conflict with the perspective of involving neighboring countries can continue for decades, meaning we can receive the variant of the Israel-Palestinian conflict on the Far-East stage.⁸⁾ This would severely set back the currently prospering South Korea, without leaving any chance of returning to the leadership positions in world economics that it claims today, or of executing the peaceful process on the peninsula in general. This would be the price of “force using” resolution of the nuclear problem, even if they were to be able to avoid large-scale military actions with the destruction of ecologically dangerous productions.

Therefore, taking into account these present realities of the Korean Peninsula sets us up to begin thinking about and trying to learn the unification “war scenario” also.

1. The War Scenario

Neither North Korean leaders nor their opponents clearly understand what a second Korean War would mean in reality.

As is well-known, the military potential of the DPRK is rather massive. According to Russian military sources, the modern Korean People's includes 1 million 100 hundred men. Besides, there is a Red Army of workers and peasants (of 200,000 men) and a mobilization reserve (of 4 million 700 hundred men), ready to immediately arrive at collecting points. Thus, Pyongyang can have over six million people under arm.⁹⁾

⁸⁾ Bulychev Guerguij, Novikov Vladimir, Vorontsov Alexander, “What is the Essence of Change in ‘Korean Issue’?”, p. 27.

Undoubtedly, the potential of joint American and South-Korean armed force under its exceeds the qualitative and quantitative possibilities of North Korea's. But the danger, which has difficult parameters to estimate, is in the accent of the Korean People's Army's command on preparing an asymmetrical answer.

The asymmetrical strike-back military strategy includes different components:

Within the Air Force, two groups of kamikaze pilots equipped with 140 MIG-17 and MIG-19 planes are formed. Each of these planes is capable of carrying up to 2,5 tons of trotyl. Several strikes of such living bombs can destroy a large combat vessel and demolish a nuclear reactor shell. Two hundred specially selected volunteer pilots serving in the groups in a special position are already being praised as heroes. Most of them are reporting personally to Kim-Jong-Il and Kim Jong-un, and are ready to fulfill his any order at any moment.¹⁰⁾

The pride of the Korean People's Army, its smashing blades are the North Korean Special Forces. Russian military experts estimate rather high combat capabilities of this special corps of the Korean People's Army, which can become a real nightmare for the enemy in the case of war. Exceptionally trained and armed with outstanding moral and psychological qualities, the soldiers of the North Korean Special Forces are capable of fulfilling their main task: organizing the second battle line in the rear areas of the enemy, infiltrating them secretly, and practicing so-called "annoying and exhausting" tactics. It is rather possible that the North Korean Special Forces will be carrying out distant raids targeting objects situated far beyond the borders of

⁹⁾ Saakian Oleg. "Drived into the Corner Mouse Attacks the Cat," *KoRus Forum*, no. 12 (2004), p. 129.

¹⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

the Korean peninsula as well.

The Special Forces of the Korean People's Army's ground troops will be carrying out the five main tasks assigned to them: conducting combat operations in close cooperation with battle actions of the regular armed forces, performing subversive activities, organizing the "second battle line" in the rear areas of South Korea (meaning, of course, not a continuous front line but resistance areas) with the aim of creating strategic superiority, counteracting operations by American and South Korean special intelligence forces in the rear areas of the People's Democratic Republic, and fighting oppositional anti-governmental manifestations in their own rear areas. At the moment, the Korean People's Army possesses the largest Special Forces potential in the world. Clearly, the precise size of these forces is indeterminable; however, according to estimates of competent sources, it can consist of anywhere between 88,000 (according to data from researches of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation) and 121,500 (according to the South Korean military department) people.¹¹⁾

Guerilla warfare occupies a special place in the strategy of the asymmetrical answer. The leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea consider guerilla actions an important component of combat operations. Guerilla warriors are organizationally joined into groups of sizes that vary depending on the division, and achieve the staff size of a full-size regiment. Regular officers are trained to form guerilla units of skeleton staff, which are formed of private corps and noncommissioned officers of the Special Forces. Guerilla groups carry out sabotage operations, deep reconnaissance, and special operations

¹¹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

with the aim of supporting the main forces.

After fulfilling the tasks, the Special Forces soldiers return to their places of regular disposition. Guerilla groups are trained to multi-task; they are obligated to carry out political, propagandistic and de-organizational actions while organizing armed actions and sabotage. Guerilla soldiers avoid contacting with superior enemy forces and aim to eliminate the enemy by small groups or one by one.

In general taking into account the forces and means of the North Koreans and the quantitative and qualitative ratio of the opposing groups on the peninsula, we can expect the Korean People's Army command to attempt to carry out military actions under the following scenario.

The first stage consists of causing as much damage as possible to the enemy during the first hours, maybe days before American high-precision air strikes destroy the main artillery: the missile and air force means of conducting battle. This stage would likely attack areas to the south of the Demilitarized Zone as well as Seoul and its suburbs with long-range guns and valley fire fortifications systems, and use missile strikes and planes piloted by kamikaze pilots to destroy cities, industrial objects, electric stations, including atomic, airfields, train stations, munitions warehouses, military barracks, military and civil ships in ports, bridges, tunnels, and dikes. It would imply the general mobilization of manning holding divisions, military brigades, and separate units into a full-sized Youth Red Guard and armed Workers and Peasants Red troops.

The second stage consists of a massive landing by the main part of the Special Forces onto the back areas of the Republic of Korea by air and sea, as well as land by infiltrating the battle line and using tunnels. Activating

the agents infiltrated in advance to the territory of the Republic of Korea, as well as, possibly, underground groups, left extremist groups. They would carry out large-scale sabotage operations against American troops blowing power lines, disrupting communications and troop controls, blocking roads, spreading rumors, creating panic, capturing representatives of the military command and civil administration, attempting to organize local opposition, carrying out battle actions in densely populated city centers, taking hostages, and conducting acts of sabotage in Japan and the USA.

The third stage consists of organizing defense, supporting a continuous battlefield line, directing actions by multiple mobile troops, destroying enemies, landing troops, creating and arming guerilla groups, using long-term firing points prepared in advance, protecting covers, stocking warehouses with weapons and armaments, forming several large areas of rebellion in the rear areas, and preparing to hold off enemy landing troops.

The fourth stage uses all available arsenals and weapons of mass destruction on the native territory, including in the case of a large-scale intrusion by enemy forces. This stage includes refusal to support a continuous battle line withdrawal of combat effective units to the areas of local rebellion and destruction of bridges, tunnels, blowing dikes, and mining roads in the native territory. It concentrates the remaining forces and means into the main and auxiliary areas of defense, creates new areas of defense, moves mobile groups between the centers of forces, and concentrates and secures centers of battle management.

Further on, in the case that this damage to the enemy does not stop its actions, the fifth stage will begin after scattering the main forces of the Korean People's Army and liquidating the unified organized rebellion. This

stage moves on to mainly underground and guerilla methods of fighting; it includes the possibility of a long-term preservation of separate areas of armed resistance using underground communications, continued guerilla actions in mountain areas, and underground fighting in the cities. This stage also consists of the relocation of a large number of refugees, including into South Korean territory rebellions in camps for war prisoners and higher leaders of the country going into hiding or partially being evacuated abroad into countries where underground resistance continues to operate. In this scenario, new authorities are sabotaged, “betrayers” and administration functionaries sent from Seoul are destroyed, and sporadic resistance continues for many years.¹²⁾

It is not difficult to imagine what huge human and material losses, destruction, and ecological damage both territories on the Korean Peninsula and all over the Northeast Asia would suffer from in the case of the above-mentioned events. The economy of the Republic of Korea would undergo giant losses, losing its competitive edge for a long time. Further, infrastructure would be virtually nonexistent, and the majority of agricultural lands, internal water reservoirs, and neighboring seas would likely become intoxicated and unfit for practical use. Antagonism between the winners and the defeated would become a dominant social issue for many decades. Hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of refugees would leave the country. Such a victory is commonly called a Pyrrhic victory.

¹²⁾ Ibid., pp. 136~137

2. The Peaceful Scenario

In actuality, we can state in simplified terms that the current aggravation that is connected on the surface with both inter-Korean relations and the DPRK's nuclear program is caused by the conflict between the followers of evolutionary and revolutionary approaches. Although they could disagree with some particularities of the evolutionary approach, China and Russia, Seoul's former Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun administrations (following China and Russia's lead), as well as the European Union to some time and extent saw its realistic nature and advantages. We can suggest that irreconcilable conservatives in Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo didn't want to accept the existence of a "pariah-regime" and made a stake at overturning it.

In Russia, it is understood that the unification of Korea whenever and in whatever form it will eventually take place will be realized under the guidance or dominating role of Seoul. From the point of view of our interests, let us repeat that it is important that the process passes in a peaceful and relatively voluntary variant. In Moscow it is understood that the regime in the DPRK in its existing form is archaic, not viable, and to be transformed in the direction of a more or less contemporary state. It is also well-known in Moscow that Pyongyang shares the same understanding. Moscow is confident that the optimal way to reach this goal, which is the most effective and least dangerous and traumatic approach, is through the policy of engagement. There are serious reasons and grounds for such confidence. The first is Moscow's own experience of a peaceful transition from socialism to a democratic market economy in the powerful USSR and the Eastern European "socialist community" in control. Russia reoriented the

ideological attitudes and preferences of its political elites, underwent the hidden formation and expansion of a shadow market-oriented economic sector, and successfully reached the aims of the original accumulation and the other most important prerequisites of the future global system shift. These feats were possible only under the conditions of the socialist countries' confidence in their safety from external danger, as well as their active and constantly broadening cooperation with the external world, especially with the Western democracies.

In case of inter-German relations, such historical results were reached due to the policy of engagement and not the strategy of Cold War the course of "building bridges" this fact confirms the success and efficiency of the policy of engagement in the most spectacular way.

Surely this process, as well as the triumphant unification of Germany, was long-term progression that demanded among other things a considerable amount of patience on the part of the participants.¹³⁾ Based on such a foundation of empirical data, as well as knowledge and understanding of the North Korean reality that is long-term, detailed, and more accurate than most other countries', Moscow believes that the DPRK has a political order and social and economic systems that are rather similar and related to those of the former Soviet. Based on this information, Moscow can also deduce that it is highly possible that the DPRK can turn out to be sensitive to the post-Soviet model of transformation within the framework of the large-scale

¹³⁾ Kim Dae-jung, "The German Experience and a Prospect for Korean Unification," in *The Korean Problem: Nuclear Crisis, Democracy and Reunification, A Collection of Essays, Speeches, and Discussions* (Seoul: The Kim Dae-jung Peace Foundation Press, 1994), pp. 116~117.

policy of engagement. In this connection, it is necessary to underline that Russia's experience of transition from socialism to the market economy is extremely important and potentially attractive to North Korean leaders, as it demonstrated the possibility to carry out such grand system changes peacefully without political repression of the old political establishment. But, along with this, the above-mentioned epochal events once more confirmed an ancient truth: the basis of success in such grand actions consists of a strategic vision, careful preparation, and a gradual but consistent approach to the long-term aims rather than conjuncture, short-term interest, haste, and rush.

The facts that the transition from one political system to the other took place virtually under the management of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and that the majority of the Soviet elite became integrated into the political and economic structure of new democratic Russia as well as other CIS countries generally painlessly and without losing their status, doubtlessly attracts the close attention of Pyongyang.

Let's add that in the eyes of the North Korean elite, under the condition of a transition to democracy, apparently the Russian experience differs favorably from the South Korean one that was accompanied by political and legal repressions of the representatives of the displaced military and autocratic leaders including several former presidents of the state.

Along with this, Moscow proceeds from the fact that in the case that the North Korean regime realizes the above-described transformation, new conditions principally favorable for the practical unification of Korea would form. Thus, Russia has vigorously supported the efficient policy of inter-Korean reconciliation that Republic of Korean presidents Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun carried out. We know that presently in Seoul, the

actions of the above-mentioned leaders are seriously but in our opinion, just partially reasonably criticized for excessive idealism, insufficiency of pragmatism, etc. But at the same time, we still believe that the basic concepts of “sunshine” and “reconciliation and cooperation” were worked out and aimed at forming practical and realistic prerequisites for Korean unification. We cannot agree with currently rather common but in our opinion, propagandistic, thesis. Its essence comes down to the following: the result of their activity is that the considerable economic assistance provided by the South during that period only helped Pyongyang to create nuclear weapons and has not achieved any other positive aims. To claim that Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun invested only in the development of the DPRK’s nuclear potential and not in the process of North Korea’s transformation and perspectives of unification would be to excessively simplify, and even distort, the real situation.

The credit of the two above-mentioned presidents is that they correctly chose the main field of interaction with the North as the economy, and transferred it to the center of gravity of inter-Korean relations.

First of all, in the economic field South Korea is undoubtedly many times stronger and more experienced than the North, which guarantees its undisputable leadership in the process of inter-Korean reconciliation within the framework of this strategy. To a certain extent, the current leaders of the Republic of Korea attempting to return relations with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea into the military and political areas weakens the potential for Seoul’s leadership. This is because Pyongyang is rather strong, experienced, sophisticated, and competitive in the political, diplomatic, and military spheres.

Secondly, the way to form the most reliable, efficient and non-reversible foundation for a peaceful and generally voluntary unification of Korea is through successful economic cooperation and the gradual integration of the economic bodies of South and North Korea. They have already started the practical realization of these historical tasks.

The successful pilot project of creating the North-South Korean industrial complex in Kaesong has become a reality, notwithstanding all of the multiple difficulties, and has confirmed the feasibility of this strategy.¹⁴⁾ If the two Koreas had realized the ambitious aims and programs of the second inter-Korean Summit accepted in October 2007, then the integration of economic complexes would have already become a reality in the scale of the two provinces of South and North Korea the most powerful economic region Seoul, and the province of South Hwanghae. Thus, in practice, the real way of forming the inevitable interdependence of the North's and South's economies was routed (and with account of the colossal difference between the scales of economic potential and the dependence of the North), leading to their gradual integration, then finally the natural and peaceful takeover of the North by the South.

We believe that it would be unfair to deny the fact that during the period under consideration, considerable positive changes took place due to the policy of engagement on the part of Seoul into the DPRK; most importantly, a market-oriented economical reform started, albeit rather cautiously and gradually.

¹⁴⁾ Dae-Kyu Yoon, "Republic of Korea-DPRK, 'Sunshine Policy': Outcomes and Prospects," *Asia and Africa Today*, no. 4 (2003), p. 47.

VI. Do North–South “Reunification”–related Conceptions Have a Common Ground?

The theoretical heritage of Kim Dae-Jung on the part of developing the program of Korean unification represents an important value in this context. As is well-known, both Pyongyang and Seoul have made scores of variants of propositions for unification. However, most of them were inevitably of strongly propagandistic bias and were meant to fair-facedly cover and promote the aims of unification under their own conditions - that is, takeover of one party by the other which made them mutually unacceptable.

Also, as far as we know, the concept of Kim Dae-Jung only included important points of contact with the last editions of the unification project by Kim Il-Sung.

We are talking about the “10-Point Programme of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Reunification of the Country” formulated in 1993 by Kim Il-Sung. It was developed in the DPRK government’s Memorandum dated August 11, 1994 on issues connected with the plan for founding the federal state of the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo, and Kim Dae-Jung’s plan represented in the book *Korean Problem: the Nuclear Crisis, Democracy and Reunification*, published in Seoul in 1994.

The essence of the North Korean idea comes down to the formation of the Confederative Republic, providing for the existence of two social systems and two governments within the framework of one nation and one state.

We also find this formula quite logical for the first stage of coexistence of the two parts of Korea within the framework of the general state formation in the circumstances, when “none of the parties wants to give in its social system to the other”, as is underlined in the Memorandum. We also find interesting the suggestion to use the nations’ cohesion and homogeneity as a common denominator, allowing them to rise above their ideological differences and political disagreements. More so, it takes into consideration that this nation has “lived over 5,000 years in a common territory and is connected by the blood of common ancestors.”

Kim Dae-Jung’s plan for unification, which he developed for over 20 years, includes “three principles and three stages.” The three principles are “peaceful coexistence, peaceful exchanges and peaceful unification.” The three stages are: 1) The confederation of two independent Korean states within the broad framework of a flexible common confederation structure; 2) the federation of two autonomous regional governments of the North and the South; and 3) Unification under the principle: one country, one nation and one government.¹⁵⁾

It is not difficult to note that the first stage of the project, which the former president of the Republic of Korea sees as rather long both in form and, more importantly, content is rather close to the DPRK’s suggestions to form the Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo. Surely there are differences, particularly in the consequence of the stages of rapprochement and gradual integration. But, both programs undoubtedly have a broad foundation for

¹⁵⁾ Kim Dae-jung, *The Korean Problem: Nuclear Crisis, Democracy and Reunification*, pp. 121~125.

mutual work on their integration, improvement, and compromise on solutions for disputable issues. In our opinion, both approaches reflect similar vision of inter-Korean problems by their authors in many ways.¹⁶⁾

We are not inclined to overestimate the meaning of philosophical doctrines in the unification process, underlying the decisive role of the gradual economic integration the North and South, but reaching a certain mutually acceptable ideological compromise and integration of conceptual approaches will surely simplify the movement towards the unification of Korea.

VII. Moscow's Practical Policy and Perspective on Korean Unification

A complex of these factors strengthens the opinion in Moscow that a peaceful unification of the North and South on the way of their gradual rapprochement and cooperation is feasible. Based on such calculations, Moscow has formed a practical policy in relation to both Korean states.

In this connection, we consider it necessary to point out the most important characteristic of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Most countries of the world focus their attention on the development of separate bilateral relations with the ROK and the DPRK (if any), which objectively

¹⁶⁾ "Korea should be United," *Asia and Africa Today*, no. 8 (1996), p. 39.

assists status-quo fixation, i.e. split in Korea. On the contrary, Russia is possibly the only country that actively promotes large-scale trilateral projects instead of following the bilateral format. It is well-known that Moscow considers its so-called “three large-scale trilateral projects” the core and the main priority of its economic strategy on the Korean Peninsula: joining railways North and South of Korea with Transsib, and building a gas pipeline and power lines from Russia to South Korea across the territory of North Korea. These are not just plans, but real economic actions. For many years already, Moscow has actively developed, updated, promoted and realized these programs, investing considerable financial means into them. Although they are not being realized as quickly as we would wish due to native Russian and non-Russian factors, the matter is advancing.

In the context of our research, it is necessary to underline the following: all of the large above-mentioned infra structural projects do not only serve as a source of material dividends for their participants. Rather, they work directly for the unification of Korea, forming integrated connections between the important segments of economical structures of the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, creating new sites for economic and political dialogue of representatives of the North and the South. Thus, Moscow confirms its commitment to the idea of Korean unification not only by word, but also by practical actions that directly assist its realization.¹⁷⁾

Nevertheless, it is necessary to be realists. Statements that Russia views the prospect of Korean unification more favorably than do other interested

¹⁷⁾ Russian Ambassador A. Timonin's interview with the Kommersant Daily (November 30, 2011); <<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1827381>>.

states do not deny a presence of serious national interests, which should be reliably secured, and certain concerns that should be taken into account and provided for beforehand. One of them is a guaranteed inviolability of the existing interstate borders. As far as we know, Seoul has not yet showed readiness to take up the responsibility of respecting the border between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has been recognized by agreement, in the case of unification.

Another important issue is security protection. Russia wants to be sure that the new joint Korean state would definitely remain friendly to Russia. Also, its military force a possible ally will not be drawn to the borders of the Russian Federation. Many Russian researchers believe that the ideal variant that would eliminate all of Moscow's corresponding doubts would be that the joint Korea chooses a policy and the status of a neutral state.

Undoubtedly, a large circle of issues referring to the agenda of security should become an issue of comprehensive and constructive discussion. Diplomats of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea should approve of and carry out the agreement in advance. The success and timeliness of such negotiations could make Moscow support specific plans of the Korean Peninsula's unification more firmly.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore some essential geopolitical and historical axioms.

Let us to repeat that from the viewpoint of the nearest prospects of strengthening peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, Russia which has a common land border with Korea, together with China, is more interested in the success of the peace negotiations between Seoul and Pyongyang. Russia is even more interested than Japan and needless to say than the USA,

which is situated thousands of miles from the Korean Peninsula. This is because security on the Korean Peninsula is an integral part of and a condition for the security of the Russian Far East. Consequentially, it is also essential to the national security of the Russian Federation as a whole. Such an approach objectively paves the way for Korea unification.

The same can be said about more distant prospects. In Korean and international political science, interests and approaches of the leading powers to the prospect of the unification of Korea have been analyzed and allotted many times. At the same time, many if not all experts have agreed that at the level of real, not declarative, politics, most powers “involved” in Korean affairs are not interested in Korean unification. Russia remains the one state out of four whose interests do not come in conflict with a united Korea appearing on the world map.

At the same time, it is often pointed out and quite accurate that Tokyo is cautious about the idea of a reunited state of Korea, viewing it as both a dangerous economic competitor and a country whose armed forces largely exceed those of Japan. For Peking, the disappearance of the DPRK is inadmissible in any variant of unification, as it is an important albeit difficult ideological military-political ally. More importantly, North Korea is also a vitally important “buffer” protecting the Chinese borders from direct contact with the USA, including military strategic contact. Washington is worried by the prospect that the united Korea can possibly become economically independent of foreign countries. The leadership of such a Korea raises the possibility that at some point, it will be able to raise the question of withdrawing American troops from its territory given that there is no logical basis remaining for their stay. We can add that each of the three countries

have, to different extents, a “complicated” history of relations with Korea at different stages.

Together with this, it turns out that Russia is the only state in the Far East that territorially borders yet does not have disputes with Korea, has never committed aggressive actions against it, and most importantly has never fought against it.

At the same time, we also remember in Russia that Korea is historically the only Far Eastern state that has never committed aggression against its neighbors, which gives us grounds to believe that the traditional peacefulness of the Korean people will continue after unification as well.

From the point of view of modern economic reality, the economies of Korea, Japan and China are already in a state of harsh competition that will inevitably grow in the condition that Korea’s economic potential strengthens. Furthermore, the structure of the Russian economy is much more compatible with Korea’s, so it possesses large reserves for cooperation.

Today, from the point of view of political prospects, after normalizing relations with Pyongyang and preserving high rates of development for many-sided ties with Seoul, Moscow can assess its positions on the Korean Peninsula with more satisfaction than, say, five years ago. It now has a stronger ground to expect that its voice will be listened to in both Korean capitals. This allows Russia to encounter an unexpected initiative of both Korean presidents with more optimism, facilitate the new stage of inter-Korean dialogue and more fully manifesting its peacemaking potential, and play a constructive role in the process of Korean regulation.

Kremlin is, with more optimism than other international players, ready to encounter the success of this inter-Korean Summit and provide for the

further rapprochement of Seoul and Pyongyang. This is because the stable, thriving Korea will be able to play an economic-political counterbalancing role in the future, a kind of a balance of the economic force of Japan and China.

Maybe it would be useful to note once more that the very different reactions of Moscow and Washington regarding the results of the inter-Korean Summit testified to the above-mentioned difference in their approaches towards the Korean Peninsula. The Russian Foreign Ministry greeted the strengthened role of an independent inter-Korean factor, and it supported the results of the meeting between Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Jong-Il without any reservations. On the contrary, the USA expressed some concerns dealing with the too-fast pace and possible direction of the development of inter-Korean rapprochement. American Secretary of State M. Albright's urgent visit to Seoul to get an unconditional guarantee from the ROK's leadership for an American military presence in South Korea for an unlimited period of time was an obvious manifestation of the USA's anxiety regarding the prospect of lowering its control over the Korean situation.

But everything stated above does not mean that Moscow is ready to accept any variant of Korean unification without reservations. The leadership of the Russian Federation has repeatedly explained that the appearance of a united and independent Korea that is friendly to Russia, is free from foreign influences (implying freedom from unproved foreign military presence as well), and respects the lawful interests of its neighboring countries, would maximally conform to Russia's national interests.

Going back to the beginning of our paper, we should note that Russia's modern approach toward the Korean Peninsula substantially coincides with the proposals of Prince A. Volkonski, and that the recent results of inter-

Korean dialogue create better opportunities for its realization.

VIII. Conclusion

Summing up the results of our research, we believe it necessary to underline the following: due to its core national interests, Russia is concerned with maintaining peace and safety on the Korean Peninsula and continuing friendly relations with the states, or the unified state, situated there. These goals are aimed at providing for the main fundamental goal of Russia, which is to prevent any threat to the security of the Russian borders and territories. The optimal variant of realizing this goal would be the unification of Korea. Compared to other key interested states, Russia is more favorable towards the perspective of Korean unification, but under the sine qua non condition that the unification is carried out peacefully.

If Moscow were to be asked a hypothetical question of what it would support: the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula within the frameworks of the existing status-quo with two Korean states, or a military-forced unification of Korea, Moscow would definitely choose the first option. By the way, Russia would give the same answer if the question were to be reformulated into this choice: peace on the peninsula within the frameworks of preserving the nuclear potential in the DPRK and even perspectives of the nuclearization of the Republic of Korea, or a forced denuclearization of North Korea by a military action. Both in the first and in the second case, the Kremlin would follow its all-time rule that states, “of

two evils choose the lesser”.

Why does Russia decidedly go against a forced liquidation of the DPRK by way of an armed intervention, instruments of a “color revolution”, stimulating collapse, etc.? Because Moscow is convinced of the following:

1) The North Korean regime is rather stable and it is not realistic that it will be destabilized from the inside in the near and mid-term perspective - that is to say that the task of changing the regime can only be realized by military means. Pyongyang will fight for its survival by all possible means, including nuclear, firmly and to the end. There is a high probability that both military intervention and a large-scale use of “color revolutions” technology will lead to a large-scale second Korean War.

2) This war will most likely develop into the scenario of Afghanistan, not that of Iraq or Libya. Natural and geographical factors speak in favor of such a forecast: Unlike the two above-mentioned Arabian countries, North Korea is not made up of deserts and plains instead, like Afghanistan, it is a mountainous country with ideal conditions for carrying out a long guerilla war. Also, like the Kabuli Regime, it is neighbored by a strong ally that would provide support in all areas (let us note that the PRC is incomparably more powerful than Pakistan in this comparison). Like in Afghanistan, the population in the DPRK (at least the larger part of it) is ready for all possible losses and sacrifices in a continuous struggle to preserve its chosen lifestyle. Some Russian experts even consider such a scenario a threat that the second Korean War will continue into the model of the endless Middle Eastern conflict.

3) Moscow sees a real perspective of a peaceful transformation of the North Korean regime into a normal state moving toward developing its market economy,

using the past experiences of the post-Soviet space, China, Vietnam, and such. Engagement policy is necessary for this possibility to become a reality. It is the “engagement” into international cooperation that will assist the development of Pyongyang’s economic reform, which started in 2002 and still has not ended regardless of the contemporary extremely unfavorable external conditions. On the contrary, cultivating the policy of international economical sanctions and isolation, the international community alone would not be able to reach its proclaimed final goals: to lead North Korea to its final economic collapse and make it abandon its nuclear weapons, to internally consolidate Pyongyang’s regime on the most conservative positions, and to dramatically slow down the processes of economic reform and the transformation of the social-political system under the post-Soviet variant.

4) At that, Moscow sees that the peaceful unification of the Republic of Korea and the DPRK is feasible under the modernized scenario based on the model described in the above paragraph: one with the basis of gradual rapprochement, reconciliation, and cooperation, which were outlined during the two inter-Korean Summits.

Russia rejects the scenarios described in the first and second paragraphs as dangerous and fatal to its own national interests, as well as to the Korean people.

Russia firmly supports the scenarios represented in the third and fourth paragraphs of the conclusion, and it is ready to actively assist their realization by practical actions.

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한반도 통일에 대한 러시아의 시각

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국문요약

러시아의 핵심 국익은 한반도의 평화와 안정을 유지하고 남한과 북한, 혹은 통일된 국가와 우호관계를 지속하는 문제와 연관되어 있다. 이는 러시아 국경과 영토의 안보에 대한 위협을 방지한다는 러시아의 핵심 목적과도 부합하는 것이다. 이러한 목적을 달성하기 위한 최적의 변수는 한반도의 통일에 있다. 다른 이해당사국들과 비교할 때 러시아는 한반도 통일에 대하여 좀더 우호적인 시각을 갖고 있다. 물론 이는 통일이 평화롭게 이루어진다는 것을 전제로 한 것이다.

할 수 있는 범위 내에서 러시아는 정치적으로 그리고 경제적으로 이러한 목적 달성을 촉진시키기 위해 노력하고 있다. 그런 점에서 러시아는 양자 형태보다는 삼자 형태의 대규모 프로젝트를 적극적으로 추진해온 유일한 국가일 것이다. 이 프로젝트들은 시베리아 횡단의, 러시아에서 북한을 거쳐 남한에 이르는 가스관과 전력라인을 건설하는 사업으로서 남한과 북한의 철로를 연계시키고 있다.

이러한 인프라구축 프로젝트는 단지 참여국들에 대한 물질적 이익배당의 원천으로서만 이해될 수 없다. 이것은 남북의 경제 구조의 주요 부문들을 통합적으로 연결시키고 남북 대표들 간의 경제적, 정치적 대화를 위한 새로운 장소를 제공한다는 점에서 한반도 통일에 직결된 사업이기도 한 것이다. 이러한 방식으로 러시아는 수사적 차원을 넘어서 통일의 실현을 직접적으로 돕는 실천적 행동들을 통해 한반도 통일의 전망과 관련한 의지를 확인하는 것이다.

주제어: 한반도, 통일, 평화, 협상, 관여, 흡수

알렉산더 보론초프 (Alexander Vorontsov).....

러시아연방아카데미 동방학연구소에서 박사학위를 취득했으며, 현재 동 연구소에서 한국 & 몽골학과장으로 재직하고 있다. 주요 연구실적으로는 *Republic of Korea: Social-Economic Structure and Commercial-Economic Relations with the CIS countries, Retrospects and Perspectives on the Relations between Korea and Europe* (공저), "Is Connecting the Railroad Networks of Russian and the Korean Peninsula Realistic Projects?" 등이 있다.