

North Korean Negotiating Behavior: A Cultural Approach

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INTRODUCTION

When the enigmatic dictator of the Hermit Kingdom appeared in the Western media during the historic June 2000 Inter-Korean Summit, his unanticipated behavior captured public attention. Once seen as a drunken, eccentric playboy who was obsessed with films, and even kidnapped starlets, Kim Jong-il strode into the world arena as “an affable diplomat, a congenial host and bright conversationalist.”¹⁾

During the summit and in meetings with other South Korean delegates, he hinted at changes in his long-standing hostility toward the South and the U.S., and even mentioned revising the Charter of the Workers' Party. As a result of his ostensible change of heart, plus hopeful interpretations by the Kim Dae-jung government, optimism prevailed over pessimism, especially after the June-15 Joint Declaration.²⁾ In a similar vein, it has been argued that in the inter-

1) Doug Struck, and Steven Mufson, “N. Korea’s Kim Sheds Image of Madman,” *Washington Post*, October 26, 2000, A01.

Korean dialogues, North Korea showed remarkably different negotiating behavior from past meetings such as the armistice negotiations in the 1950s, the Red Cross conferences and the Coordinating Committee meetings in the 1970s, and the high-level talks in the early 1990s.

Based on direct interviews with South Korean representatives at the inter-Korean dialogues and results of the dialogues, this paper evaluates, however, that there has been no significant change in North Korean tactics after the June-15 Joint Declaration, either in its militant negotiating behavior, or in general inter-Korean relations. By applying a cultural approach to analysis of negotiating behavior, this paper intends to discuss characteristics and styles of North Korean negotiating behavior, including distinct behaviors shown at each stage of negotiations.

CULTURAL APPROACH METHOD

With the dawn of the post-ideological international order, new theories are being applied to the study of North Korean negotiating behavior. The cultural approach studies distinct negotiation behavior of the country, irrespective of the specific agenda or the personal traits of the diplomats involved. As evidenced by the “Rambo-style” negotiations of the U.S., Japan’s adaptive negotiation style, and the Chinese style that emphasizes friendship and *guanxi* relations,³⁾ diplomats from each country, while conforming to the normal rules and procedures of international society, exhibit unique negotiation

2) In consecutive interviews with 100 Korean opinion leaders on the inter-Korean Summit, 79 people (80.6 percent) among 98 respondents answered that Kim Jong-il “crossed the Rubicon” toward regime change, while 17 (18 percent) answered negatively. *Shindonga*, Dong-a Ilbosa, August 2000, pp. 76-79.

3) Kim Yong-ho, “North Korea’s Negotiation Behavior” (in Korean), *The Korean Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2000), p. 294.

styles.

In sum, a plethora of research⁴⁾ on national negotiating styles exists. François de Callières argued in 1716 that Spanish diplomats were more patient negotiators than the French, mainly because of their different origins.⁵⁾ Harold Nicolson pointed out the fact that various diplomatic strategies of the U.S., Germany, France, and Italy were attributable to the differing characteristics and traditions of each nation.⁶⁾ From his extensive experience as a professional diplomat, Arthur H. Dean stated that those styles are based not only on official policy, but also on social and national traits affecting the personal characteristics of each diplomat.⁷⁾ Richard Solomon⁸⁾ also argued that the unique political culture of each country determines a nation's brand of negotiating behavior.

Differences were recognized in communist regimes as well. Andrei Gromyko, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Soviet Union, argued that "diplomatic policies originating from the system characteristics of each nation and the ideology of the dominant class within cannot but serve the interests of the dominant class."⁹⁾

4) Michael Blaker, *Japanese International Negotiating Style* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Political Negotiating Behavior: A Briefing Analysis* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 1985); Raymond F. Smith, *Negotiating with the Soviets* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Hans Binnendijk (ed.), *National Negotiating Styles* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Department of State, 1987).

5) François de Callières, *On the Manner of Negotiating With Princes*, tr. by A. F. Whyte (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), p. 36.

6) Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 127.

7) Arthur H. Dean, *Test Ban and Disarmament: The Path of Negotiation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 34, quoted in Louis J. Samelson, *Soviet and Chinese Negotiating Behavior: The West View* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1976), pp. 10-11.

8) Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests Through 'Old Friends'* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), p. xiv.

In 1997, the U.S. Institute of Peace began the Cross-Cultural Negotiation Project to help diplomats better understand their negotiation counterparts, and find other, more satisfactory solutions than military ones. The project has focused on two aspects: a wide range of research on the impact of cultural factors on international communication;¹⁰ and a more detailed study of negotiation styles of specific countries such as the former Soviet Union, China, North Korea and Japan.¹¹

As the leading scholar of the cultural approach, Raymond Cohen defines culture as follows: (1) the characteristics not of individuals but of the society to which each individual belongs; (2) something to be learned from the society through individual adaptation or socialization; and (3) a distinct combination of traits of all parts and ranges of social life.¹² Based on Cohen's definitions, i.e., that culture is learned from a variety of sources and is deeply immersed in values or ideology, it follows that individual traits and cultural behaviors result in a distinct negotiating style.¹³

9) O. B. Borisov, et al., *Modern Diplomacy of Capitalist Powers*, with a Foreword by Andrei A. Gromyko, tr. by Y. S. Shirokov and Y. S. Sviridov (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. vii.

10) Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating across Cultures: International Communication in an Inter-dependent World*, revised ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999); Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998); Charles W. Freeman, Jr., *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

11) Jerold L. Schecter, *Russian Negotiating Behavior: Continuity and Transition* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998); Solomon, *op. cit.*; Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1999); Michael Blaker, Paul Giarra, and Ezra Vogel, *Case Studies in Japanese Negotiating Behavior* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001).

12) Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

13) Lee Dal-gon, *Negotiation Theory: The Process, Structure and Strategy* (in Korean), (Seoul: Beobmoon-sa, 1995), pp. 48-49.

NORTH KOREAN POLITICAL CULTURE AND NEGOTIATING STYLE

North Korea's political culture is believed to be a factor in the militant negotiating style of the North Korean delegates. It differs markedly from South Korea's style, despite a variety of other similarities such as national history, language, Confucian influence, and Japanese colonialism. What follows will examine the impact of political culture on the characteristics of the North Korea's negotiation style.

North Korea's Political Culture

A. Negotiations Based on Revolutionary Ideology

Negotiation is a process of compromise. Western countries, as well as South Korea, deal with a variety of conflicting interests based on give-and-take between the parties.¹⁴⁾ In contrast, North Korea is founded upon the same revolutionary view as in the former Soviet Union and Communist China, which sees negotiations as "another form of war," or "a struggle against imperialism."¹⁵⁾

Similarly, Korean dictionaries in North Korea define *concession* as "unconditional surrender to the opponent."¹⁶⁾ In 1968 at the 20th anniversary of the founding of North Korea, Kim Il-sung proclaimed, "Our goal of peaceful unification has nothing to do with any kind of 'compromise' with the enemy, or any social theory related with the

14) On the Western view of negotiations, refer to Song Jong-hwan, *North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (in Korean), (Seoul: Orum, 2002), pp. 63-64.

15) On the Soviet view of negotiation, refer to V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniya*, 3rd ed., Vol. 26 (Moscow: Institut Marksa-Engelsa-Lenina pri TsK VKP(b), Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literaturi, 1928-37), p. 6, quoted in Nathan Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, The RAND Series (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), p. 88. On the Communist China's view of negotiation, refer to William E. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964), p. 386.

'peaceful transition' of social system."¹⁷⁾ Delivering the military order to build infiltration tunnels under the demilitarized zone, he also argued that "the purpose of holding dialogue with the South is to bide our time and weaken our enemies, as well as to obtain favorable international opinion. Furthermore, it can be considered a revolutionary offensive tactic for driving the enemy into a corner."¹⁸⁾ It is clear that North Korea still follows the teachings of Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. Negotiations with the South are a means to an end: Revolution.

B. Communist Unification Strategy and Anti-South Korea View

Asserting that North Korea is the one and only *de jure* government on the Korean peninsula, it regards South Korea as the target of revolution; that is, it must be liberated from U.S. imperialism through violent seizure of power by laborers and farmers in the South.¹⁹⁾ The North's revolutionary view of South Korea over the last 50 years has continued as the basis for its unification strategy; to build a communist South Korea through "national liberation" and a "people's democratic revolution," and then, to complete the unification of Korea through integration of the North and the communist South.²⁰⁾

In order to apply its united front tactics on inter-Korean dialogues, North Korea uses the term "united front from the upper

16) *Contemporary Korean Dictionary* (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Science and Encyclopedia Press, 1981), p. 2680; *Grand Korean Dictionary*, Vol. 2 (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Social Science Press, 1992), p. 1409.

17) Kim Il-sung, *Selected Works of Kim Il-sung*, Vol. 5 (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Korea Workers' Party Press, 1972), p. 198.

18) Kim Boo-sung, *A Tunnel I Dug: Testifying North Korean Secret Invasion* (in Korean), (Seoul: Gapja, 1976), p. 60.

19) Huh Jong-ho, *South Korean Revolution and Unification of the Farther Land Based on Juche Ideology* (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Korean Workers' Party, 1968), p. 301.

20) Lee Sang-woo, *Introduction to North Korea Politics: Characteristics and Operational Principles of Kim Jong-il Regime* (in Korean), (Seoul: Nanam, 2000), p. 183.

class,” which was first mentioned by Kim Il-sung at the 5th Congress of the Workers’ Party in 1970.²¹⁾ Realizing how difficult it would be to form a united front with South Korea’s lower class, the tactic aims at nurturing the revolutionary spirit of the upper class, and convincing them of North Korea’s goals. The tactic is, therefore applied in dialogues, with the South Korean government, in efforts to convince them to agree on the withdrawal of U.S. forces and on its unification formula, “The Confederate Republic of Koryo.”

C. *Suryung* and the Socio-political Organic Body

Directives from the *Suryung* (the Supreme Leader) and the Party mean absolute authority over the people in the North. The *Suryung*’s monolithic leadership was built upon major principles set forth by Kim Il-sung in the 15th Plenary session of the 4th Central Committee of Workers’ Party in 1967, and also by the Ten Principles for Monolithic Leadership suggested in 1974 by Kim Jong-il.

In an attempt to provide a theoretical base for monolithic leadership, Kim Jong-il proposed the Revolutionary Concept of the *Suryung* and Socio-political Organic Body theories in the 1980s.²²⁾ According to *Suryung* theory, while the masses are masters of the revolution, they cannot act as masters without the leadership of the *Suryung*, and therefore, obey his instructions without question.²³⁾ The theory rests on the assumption that all society is an organic body in which the *Suryung*, the Party and the masses are closely inter-related. Among the three factors, the most important is the *Suryung*, who serves as a brain controlling the body and coordinating its movement.²⁴⁾

21) Kim Il-sung, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

22) Lee Jong-suk, *Understanding Modern North Korea* (in Korean), (Seoul: Yoksabipyong-sa, 2000), pp. 142 and 212-220.

23) Kim Jong-il, *Works of Beloved Kim Jong-il* (in Korean), (Pyongyang: Korean Workers’ Party Press, 1992), pp. 15 and 20-21.

24) *Ibid.*, p. 167; Kim Jong-il, *Selected Works of Kim Jong-il*, Vol. 12 (Pyongyang: Korean Workers’ Party Press, 1997), p. 292.

In this context, we can characterize North Korea's power structure both as a large, socialist family, and as a totalitarian national system led by the *Suryung*. Since the people, including delegates at the negotiation table, follow Party directives issued by the *Suryung*, and are powerless to do anything in violation of the leader's directives, they are merely robots.

D. Prevailing Military Culture

Several elements characterize its military culture: the four-point military policy and military-first policy; power concentration on the chairman of the Military Commission; and the fact that more than half the population belong to the military. Since national division in 1945, and more specifically the Korean War (1950-53), North Korea has been a garrison state in which citizens were, and are, either warriors or human weapons. Given this, it can easily be seen why North Korean delegates would take a warrior-like stance in line with the commander's directives, rather than focus on compromise and concession strategies.

E. Risk-Taking Behavior

Lucian Pye states that risk-taking is inherent in the decision-making process, and indeed, a part of the unique political mindset of modern South Koreans.²⁵⁾ And North Koreans demonstrate even more boldness than their Southern counterparts. Their nerves of steel can be attributed to past experience: North Korean guerilla activities against imperial Japan galvanized the strong will to survive even in extremely difficult situations.²⁶⁾ Today, the propensity for risk-taking is still seen in the North's defiant negotiating style, not only against South Korea but even against the U.S.

25) Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985), pp. 216-217.

26) Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Characteristics of the North Korean Negotiation Style

Harold Nicolson divides modern diplomacy theories into two categories: (1) The “warrior” or “heroic” theory, which draws on the military and political hierarchy found in feudal systems, and (2) The “mercantile” or “shopkeeper” theory focusing on the bourgeois concept of contracts. While the former regards diplomacy as another war resorting to another means, the latter regards it “as playing the role of helper for peaceful commerce.”²⁷⁾

In the heroic or warrior theory, diplomacy is likened to military tactics. Arguing that the goal of negotiations is complete victory, it regards any compromise or contract with the counterpart as either a defeat or as an unfinished task. The mercantile or shopkeeper theory is based on the belief that compromising with enemies is, in general, better than complete defeat. Thus, negotiations are considered attempts to reach agreement, not a means for battling the enemy; seeking a common basis for understanding based upon rationality and confidence.²⁸⁾ Over the years, North Korean delegates have shown they are warriors, not shopkeepers.

A. Military-Style Negotiations

Delegates from the North, who are well-versed on the revolutionary-style negotiations of the Soviet Union and Communist China, regard negotiations as another means of battle. They see themselves as “fighters” rather than “compromisers.” Hence, they conduct negotiations like military operations in order to reach their goals. They insist on one-sided concessions rather than common gains, and are sometimes even willing to get tough with their counterparts, especially when they cannot get what they want.²⁹⁾

27) Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp, 51-52.

28) *Ibid*, pp. 52-54.

29) Moon Kwang-kun, “Prospects for Change in North Korean Style of Negotiation

A close look reveals that North Koreans go into battle over the agenda from the very beginning of negotiations. At the mid-point, they command a variety of tactics to achieve their goals, demonstrating trenchant warrior-like behavior. When the North judges that the South will not accept a proposal, it will often suspend talks after receiving an outside directive.³⁰⁾

Worth noting, North Korea's negotiation tactics are dominated by the logic of power politics: The North employs different tactics against the U.S. and South Korea.³¹⁾ Their tactics also vary, depending on the counterpart's stance. Since the North proceeds on the basis of power, any courtesies or polite words from the South result in more extreme demands by the North. Conversely, more inflexibility from the South elicits more courteous negotiation behavior from the North.³²⁾

Kim Jong-il has strengthened his view that international relations are power relations. In August 2000, he told leaders of South Korea's press, "I have two sources of power. One is all of the people strongly united under my leadership, and the other is military power," adding, "small countries have to be stronger in their fights against the superpowers."³³⁾

B. No Compromise, No Concession

Back in 1980 at the 6th Congress of the Workers' Party, Kim Il-

Behavior and Negotiation Principle Toward the North," *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 26 (1994), pp. 184-185.

30) Interview with former Deputy Unification Minister Song Yong-dae on April 16, 2002, and with participants of the 5th and 6th Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks on April 23, 2002.

31) Lim Dong-won, "Inter-Korean High-level Talks and North Korean Negotiation Strategy," (in Korean), in Kwak Tae-whan, et al., *North Korean Negotiation Strategy and Inter-Korean Relations* (Seoul: Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University, 1997), pp. 117-118.

32) Moon Kwang-kun, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

33) *Joongang Ilbo*, August 14, 2001, pp. 3-4.

sung commented, "Socialist nations or non-aligned countries can hold diplomatic relations with imperialists, and develop economic and cultural exchange with them. But we should not sell the fundamental gains of revolution to imperialists by making any kind of compromise with them,"³⁴⁾ North Korea continues to stand firm against violating any principles of revolution and fundamental interests. Thus, in negotiating with capitalist countries like South Korea, the North has never made a concession on its fundamental principles or revolutionary stance.

To North Korean negotiators, any concessions to the counterpart means either defeat or surrender, witness numerous marathon parleys in which the North has hammered away at the same proposal, and quibbled over minute details. Even when they are forced to reach a compromise with their counterparts, they try to emphasize the legitimacy of their original proposal and conceal their concession. Another ploy: After making a minor concession, they then try to gain even more concessions from the other side.

C. Strict Centralized Control

As in the former Soviet Union and China, a long-standing characteristic of Communist delegation has been the lack of discretionary authority even on minor matters. As for North Korea, every detail on what to say and do during negotiations with the South has been fed to negotiators. The North has a unilateral, consistent chain of command: Based on the Supreme Leader's policy, secretaries and the United Front Department under the Workers' Party devise the plan and send it to the delegates through the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland that conducts inter-Korean talks.³⁵⁾

34) Kim Il-sung, *Works of Kim Il-sung*, Vol. 35 (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Korean Workers' Party Press, 1987), pp. 361-362.

35) Yang Young-sik, *North Korean Negotiation Tactics: 20 Years of Inter-Korean Dialogue* (in Korean), (Seoul: Unification Training Institute, National Unification Board,

In fact, delegates are monitored through CCTV and VTR, and receive real-time, direct orders.³⁶⁾ They are also watched closely by agents (usually the deputy chief delegate) and cannot express individual opinions.³⁷⁾ This can be seen in the way they repeat the same statement over and over, while waiting for a new directive via their headphones.

D. Concomitant Use of Negotiation and Propaganda

Since press activities in North Korea are strictly controlled by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Party, the press merely delivers official government policy to the general public.³⁸⁾ Thus, in keeping with Party directives, journalists focus on providing a more favorable environment for negotiations results of the North. *Rodong Sinmun* and the *Central News Agency* carefully deliver the news to induce public support for the government. At the same time, they try to convince the South of their unswerving commitment.

It is claimed that the concomitant use of negotiations and propaganda was learned from Soviet negotiators. In an attempt to propagandize the inevitable victory of communism based on Marxist-Leninism, the Soviet negotiators have used negotiations with Western counterparts as a very useful forum for their propaganda.³⁹⁾ According to *Diplomatic Dictionary* published by the Soviet Union, "Disclosing imperialists' aggressive plans and acts is a very useful method of socialist diplomacy to marshal worldwide democratic opinion and recruit people who will resist imperialist

1990), pp. 27-29 and 33.

36) Interview with Lim Tae-soon. He was South Korean leader of South-North Athletics Talks and a member of the military subcommittee of a South-North High-level Meeting.

37) Moon Kwang-kun, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

38) North Korea distributes Western-style newspapers, that are not available to the public, *Chango Tongsin* and *Chango Shinmun*, to cadre members.

39) Louis J. Samelson, *Soviet and Chinese Negotiating Behavior: The Western View* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1976), p. 43.

governments' hostile policy."⁴⁰⁾

In addition, the North has attempted to direct world opinion both by showcasing pro-Pyongyang figures, and by excluding anti-Pyongyang individuals or groups; They approved a visit by Selig Harrison and certain CNN correspondents,⁴¹⁾ while refusing to grant a visa to a reporter of the South Korean anti-communist daily *Choson Ilbo*.

E. Change of Attitude in a Blitzkrieg

Considering these factors, one can easily conclude that compromise with the North is impossible. However it can be said that North Korea, by calculating the gains and losses of negotiation, also intends to achieve practical benefits for its security and economy, not only for the long-term goal of building a Communist country on the Korean peninsula, but also for the immediate goal of system stability⁴²⁾ In other words, when North Korea thinks there won't be any more concessions from the South, or that they have managed to achieve their goals to some degree, they suddenly change to blitzkrieg tactics in order to reach an agreement.⁴³⁾

Their swift moves can be explained first, by the North's calculating stubbornness and also by the flexibility learned from the former Soviet Union and China. In 1905, Lenin argued, "the Party must know how to adapt itself to all changes in its environment" and "flexibility is necessary to avoid catastrophe and to ensure victory," as the path to Communism is not straight and simple but tortuous

40) *Diplomaticheskii Slovar* [Diplomatic Dictionary], Vol. 1 (Moscow: State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1960), quoted in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations, *The Soviet Approach to Negotiation: Selected Writings*, 91st Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 80-81.

41) Kim Yong-ho, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

42) Song Jong-whan, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-125.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 150.

and complicated.”⁴⁴⁾ In the same vein, Joseph Stalin commented in 1925, “What we need now is not to carry on unbendingly, but to show a maximum of elasticity...In the absence of such elasticity we shall not be able to...keep our place at the helm.”⁴⁵⁾ As early as 1940s, Mao Tse Tung also stated, “We should stop at the proper moment and bring that particular fight to a close...Then we should on our own initiative seek unity with the [enemy] and...conclude a peace agreement with him.”⁴⁶⁾

Echoing remarks made by Lenin that the Communist Party should be able to adapt itself to situational changes, Kim Il-sung also stated at the first plenary session of the 9th Supreme People’s Assembly in 1990, “We must continuously modify our methods for building a socialist country in accordance with the changing situation since the road to socialism is untrodden, and numerous obstacles could lie ahead.”⁴⁷⁾

NORTH KOREA’S NEGOTIATING BEHAVIOR BY STAGE

Over the past 30 years, inter-Korean dialogues can be clearly characterized by the following four stages: (1) Opening stage, friendly chatting before the discussion of the agenda; (2) Mid-Stage, discussions to find counterpart’s bottom line; (3) Agreement stage, reaching an agreement; (4) Implementing stage.

Whenever the inter-Korean talks have been held in Pyongyang,

44) Nathan Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, The RAND Series (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951), p. 32.

45) Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. 1 (London: Modern Books, 1932-33), p. 250, quoted in Leites, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

46) Gerald D. Steibel, *How Can We Negotiate with Communists* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1972), p. 28.

47) Kim Il-sung, *Works of Kim Il-sung*, Vol. 42 (in North Korean), (Pyongyang: Korean Workers’ Party Press, 1995), p. 319.

high-ranking officials of North Korea always hold a welcoming party for South Korean delegates. Therefore, in the opening stage, the North usually creates a festive mood either at a dinner party or an inspection tour for the delegates, playing up the importance of brotherly affection. Then, North Korean delegates attempt to take the initiative in matters such as venue and date of the meeting in order to make the agenda more favorable to the North,⁴⁸⁾ at the same time trying to marshal the personal support of South Korean delegates whose hometowns are in the North.

During the mid-stage which takes a little bit longer than other stages, the North relies on a variety of tactics in order to find out the proposals, goals, and levels of flexibility of the South Korean delegates. Based on their findings, they attempt to promote an overall settlement or a partial agreement, especially through unofficial or secret meetings. But, they also resort to delay and pressure tactics especially by continuously increasing their demands,⁴⁹⁾ and even resorting to scolding criticism of Southern counterparts or sudden postponement of meetings. At the same time, they launch personal attacks against certain Southern delegates who are critical of the North,⁵⁰⁾ or simply decline to meet with them.

After a long and tedious mid-stage, the sides reach the agreement stage. A relatively easy agreement is only possible when the North

48) North Korea has generally insisted on holding talks in North Korean area. The only exception were the opening talks at "the House of Peace," south of Panmunjom, and in Seoul during Preliminary Meetings and the main session for High-Level Talks (February 8, 1989-September 18, 1992). This reflects North Korea's acute need to hold talks given the rapidly changing international circumstances, i.e., German Unification and the demise of the Eastern Bloc.

49) On each party's stance on sharply conflicting issues during the South-North Basic Agreement negotiations, refer to Lim Dong-won, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

50) For instance, in the wake of the failed 6th inter-Korean ministerial talks (November 8-14, 2001), North Korea released a strongly-worded statement condemning "rash behavior" of the Southern chief delegate, Unification Minister Hong Soon-young. It denounced Hong as hostile and self-righteous for causing the meeting to collapse. *Rodong Sinmun*, November 15, 2002, p. 4.

either realizes that it cannot get any more concessions from South Korea, or it concludes that they have already gotten enough from the South. And, more often than not, agreement is reached through direct involvement of *Suryung*, the Great Leader. For example, the Joint Communiqué on July 4, 1972, the South-North Basic Agreement, and Inter-Korean Joint Declaration on June 15, 2000.

Worth noting is that the North usually documents only concordant views, while for others, it includes a provision in the form of an annexed document that “unsettled clauses will be discussed in the future.” A case in point: It reserved a clause on advisory members’ questioning opportunity in the Agreement on Procedures for Red Cross Talks and Other Matters on August 11, 1972. Another example, during Political Subcommittee and Exchange and Cooperation Subcommittee of High-Level Talks held on September 15-18, 1992, North Korean delegates insisted on inserting unsettled controversial clauses into two auxiliary agreements (i.e. protocols on the implementation and observance of chapters 1 and 3 of the Basic Agreement).

Generally, there should be an implementing stage in order to carry out the matters agreed upon. However, no such stage has ever been reached in negotiations between the two Koreas. At the stage where they are supposed to discuss ways to carry out the agreement, the North typically responds with indifference by postponing or canceling the meeting. It has also insisted on holding future meetings in the North, rather than the South raising all kinds of excuses. Even when meetings are held, they are soon ended by the Northern delegates who interrupt, speak harshly or suggest unrealistic conditions for resumption of talks.

CONCLUSION: EVALUATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Several indications point to general crisis in the North: Deepening isolation from the international arena after the

disintegration of its socialist network; increased dissatisfaction among the people over lack of food, energy and hard currency since the 1990s; the sudden death of Kim Il-sung; the expanded gap between its economy and South Korea's. Faced with such crises, Kim Jong-il has had to modify his priorities. His two goals, stabilizing the system stability and building a communist country in the South, now form a single goal; that is, securing regime stability.

As a result, we have witnessed changes, not only in domestic economic policies, but also in international relations since the inter-Korean summit in June 2000. New tactics were apparent in inter-Korean dialogues: (1) more active participation in economic talks, (2) less emphasis on militarism, (3) fewer personal attacks against South Korean delegates, (4) fewer sudden interruptions at meetings.

However, it is important to remember that the Pyongyang has never changed its long-time strategy of liberation and revolution, evidenced by the fact that it has rejected any serious military talks with South Korea, and has shielded North Korean citizens from the outside world. Any changes are merely temporary tools for protecting their *Suryung* and the hermit regime.

Considering the fact that the political culture and negotiation style of the North won't easily change under Kim Jong-il's rule, it is unrealistic to expect huge success in inter-Korean dialogues. However, despite their ineffectiveness to date, inter-Korean negotiations and dialogues are the only alternative for peaceful inter-Korean relations, and ultimately, for Korean unification. Therefore, the following suggestions are necessary to achieve successful negotiations with North Korea.

First, given the widening gap between two Koreas and the disintegration of communism, South Korea is in a better position than ever. It has no reason to rush into any agreements. Rather, it must have a clearer goal before sitting down at the negotiation table.

Secondly, South Korean authorities should seek to broaden the common ground of the two Koreas in all sectors, including economy, society and culture through inter-Korean dialogues.

Thirdly, in order to enhance its negotiating power, the South should not stir up public opinion by providing excessive support for North Korea. South Korea should neither entreat nor bully. Rather, it should approach North Korea with confidence.

Finally, given the complexities of the Korean issue and the conflicting interests of neighboring countries, South Korean authorities need to find ways to strengthen diplomatic support from the international arena through strengthening trilateral cooperation with the U.S. and Japan, as well as through collaboration with China.