

Korean Perspective of the Role of Knowledge-Sharing in ROK-DPRK Bilateral Relations after the Summit

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The 2007 North-South summit was a meeting to discuss more practical and specific issues on the basis of progress so far made in North-South relations. The summit meeting produced the eight-point Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Relations, Peace, and Prosperity." It includes the core issue of unification (Article 1), mutual trust (Article 2), easing tensions (Article 3), a peace regime (Article 4) and mutual prosperity (Article 5). It also deals with practical issues such as social and culture exchanges (Article 6), humanitarian projects (Article 7) and cooperation on the international stage (Article 8).

Assessment

First, the 2007 North-South summit declaration revives the framework of the "North-South Basic Agreement" that took effect in February 1992. It contains commitment to maintain and actively implement the 15 June joint declaration under Article 1 and closely resembles the reconciliation, non-aggression, and exchanges and cooperation sections of the North-South Basic Agreement in its contents from Article 2 to Article 8. The pledge to treat each other with mutual respect and not to interfere in internal affairs by transcending differences in ideology and systems is the same centerpiece of the reconciliation section of the North-South Basic Agreement. The pledge to reduce military tension, resolve disputes peacefully, oppose war, and abide by non-aggression obligations is the same centerpiece of the non-aggression section, and the pledges for economic cooperation for the balanced development and common prosperity of the national economy, socio-cultural exchanges and cooperation, reunions of separated family members and relatives, and cooperation on the international stage are the same centerpiece of the exchanges and cooperation section.

Second, it adds fresh details to the outlines of North-South relations promotion laid down under the North-South Basic Agreement. North and South Korea will hold prime ministers' talks to implement the 2007 North-South summit declaration, upgrade the "Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation Promotion Committee" to the "Joint Committee for Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation" at the deputy prime minister level, and open defense ministers' talks to discuss military trust building measures. In addition, the leaders of both Koreas will meet on a regular basis for the betterment of North-South relations. It involves effectively activating subcommittees and the joint committee provided by the North-South Basic Agreement only in new formats.

Third, the 2007 North-South summit declaration sets the direction that North and South Korea should move toward from long-term perspectives. It goes beyond the declaratory statement of "resolving the issue of unification on their own initiative" to attach particular importance to practical issues on easing military tension and building trust, establishing a

permanent peace, and promoting economic cooperation. Today's European Union (EU) started from the Treaty of Rome of 25 March 1957 that established the European Economic Community (EEC). The historic lessons taught by the European experience suggest that North and South Korea, divided for more than 60 years, can find a way toward peaceful coexistence and integration in promoting economic cooperation and resolving the issue of establishing a permanent peace supporting it.

Fourth, the 2007 North-South summit declaration contains North and South Korea's commitment to play a leading role in establishing a Korean peninsula peace regime. North and South Korea are direct parties to the Korean peninsula problem, which also concerns the international community including the four regional countries with their interests deeply related to the Korean peninsula problem, as evidenced by the North Korea nuclear issue. In the past, mutual distrust and confrontation between North and South Korea and attempts to keep each other off often prevented North and South Korea from playing a leading role as parties to the Korean peninsula and made them more susceptible to the influence of international factors. However, the declaration shows North and South Korea's resolve to become the one playing a leading role by agreeing to "meet on the Korean peninsula" to promote the issue of declaring that the war is over. It can be actively interpreted on the part of South Korea to mean that North Korea is making a shift from its stance for keeping off South Korea as much as possible during the process of changing the armistice agreement regime into a peace pact regime.

Fifth, it approaches economic and security issues as closely related issues rather than mutually exclusive issues. Agreement has been reached to promote military trust building and economic cooperation on a mutually complementary basis by linking the prevention of accidental military clashes in the West Sea to the designation of a joint fishing zone and by linking cooperation projects to military guarantees. Of course, given North Korea's existing stance on the Northern Limit Line (NLL) issue, it is still open to question whether the agreement to establish a "special peace and cooperation zone in the West Sea" means a complete change in North Korea's stance. Nevertheless, the effectiveness and feasibility of the economic cooperation projects contained in the declaration will increase, if the three-passage issue concerning travel, communications, and customs, and military trust building move forward.

In addition, the 2007 North-South summit declaration contains specific pledges to begin Mt. Paektu tourism, open a direct route between Mt. Paektu and Seoul, promote video letter exchanges, and allow separated family members and relatives to meet in regular reunions after the completion of the Mt. Ku'mgang reunion center.

The Korean government evaluates the 'special peace and cooperation zone in the West Sea' as the core agreement in the second inter-Korean summit. North and South Korea have agreed to hold talks between the South's Minister of Defense and the North's Minister of the People's Armed Forces in Pyongyang in November. Of interest to these discussions will be ways of designating a joint fishing area in the West Sea so as to avoid accidental clashes, and to turn the zone into a peace area. A further discussion topic will

be to discuss measures to build military confidence, including security guarantees for various cooperative projects.

Tasks: the Role of Knowledge-Sharing

The 2007 North-South summit declaration is viewed as a reflection of progress made in North-South relations since the 15 June North-South Joint Declaration and a compilation of results of specific discussions on issues that either saw limited progress or caused friction in the area of peace, common prosperity, and exchanges and cooperation and issues that have to be further promoted, all at once on the basis of the North-South Basic Agreement put into effect 15 years ago. In that sense, it is the "2007 version of the North-South Basic Agreement."

It is safe to say that the implementation and realization of the declaration hinges on how we understand and approach the urgent need of the North Korean leadership to gain access to resources for an economic recovery. In other words, the sense of urgency among the North Korean authorities is reflected in the contents of this declaration. Kim Jong Il has maintained his power grips by relying on the military (military-first politics). But the military-first politics alone cannot guarantee system maintenance in the longer term. For North Korea, it is essential to take new policies to revive its crumbling economy. North Korea will desperately need South Korea's assistance and cooperation to make its regime stable by securing food and economic aid. And In order to accelerate the normalization of the US-North relations, it is necessary for North Korea to create a favorable environment.

There is also a need for an approach that sees making steady progress in North-South relations, establishing a solid permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, and laying the foundations of economic prosperity as instrumental in promoting our national interests, regardless of the debate on the process that led to the declaration.

The contents of the 2007 North-South summit declaration are not something entirely new but things that have been discussed all along in various ways and on various occasions. The task laid down before us is to realize them under systematic and specific ideas consistent with changing domestic and international circumstances, that is, the task of making and executing action plans.

The Korean peninsula still remains under the Cold War structure. It is one among those factors that have exerted a negative impact on the shaping of a new order on the globe, as well as in Northeast Asia. It is, therefore, essential that the two Koreas be determined to establish a durable peace regime on the Korean peninsula. It requires a paradigmatic shift concerning the ways of resolving the Korean question in accordance with worldwide trends of globalization and information. For its part, North Korea has belatedly turned its positive stance to the outside world as well as to South Korea. The momentum came with the second inter-Korean summit. North Korea has actively pursued exchanges and cooperation with South Korea. It reflects the converging interests of both Koreas in seeking rapprochement by expanding economic and socio-cultural exchanges and

cooperation. However, the overall status of inter-Korean relations will reach a fundamental turnaround if South-North exchanges and cooperation are given heightened credibility, and if there is some progress in security matters. As in the past, there will be ups and downs in inter-Korean relations in the coming years. It is critical for both Koreas to remain truthful to what they have agreed and will agree. In the process of expanding interactions in all fields, it is South Korea to provide North Korea with new ways of thinking and new values that are alien to North Koreans but necessary for North Korea to become a responsible member of the international society.