

My Thought on the US Policy on the Two Koreas

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My Background

- My wife Mia and I were born in the year of Korea's liberation from the **annexation by Japan for 36 years** (1909-1945).
- Lived through the dreadful **Korean War (June 25, 1950 - July 27, 1953)**
- **My father was kidnapped by N. Korean army, escaped, captured by S. Korean army, imprisoned by S. Korean army** not knowing his identity, then released after heroic campaign by my mother.
- Attended Kyungshin High School and Yonsei University, both founded by an **American Missionary: Horace G. Underwood**.
- In **1969** came to the US as an exchange student from Yonsei University to Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), Teaneck, NJ, obtained my BS degree in 1970, MS degree from SUNY, Buffalo (1972).
- In 1972 got married to **Mia who came to the US in 1967, CS major at FDU**. We met at FDU. Went to UC Berkeley for my Ph.D. degree (1975) while Mia worked in SF as a software engineer.
- Since 1975, I have been in **industry (1977-1985) and academia (1975-1977, 1985- present)**
- Visited S. Korea over the years and lived in S. Korea at KAIST (2013-2017). I am **not well versed on the policy matters**. So, please take my words with a grain of salt.



+ 86,000 sq. miles
(Utah 85,000 sq. miles)



A Recent History of Two Koreas

- Following the liberation in 1945, Korea was in **turmoil**- some wanted to remain united as a single country and objected the division along the **38th parallel line (SamPal Sun)**, while others under leadership of **Syngman Rhee** (Princeton Ph.D.) were supportive of the division under the US administration, objecting “communism” led by **Kim Il-Sung** under Soviet Union. – Rhee’s political foe **Kim Goo** who had advocated for remaining as one nation was assassinated.
- During the 1950 Korean War, without the **UN force (from 21 countries, US proving 90% of the force)**, S. Korea would have been totally defeated. People in S. Korea are forever grateful for this UN help, especially the USA.
- For many Korean people (older generation who have lived through the war), “**General Douglas MacArthur is a great hero** and he should have been allowed to push the North Korean and Chinese soldiers all the way up to Manchuria (NE China).” Blame President Truman for stopping him.

Demilitarized Zone
2.5 miles wide
160 miles long

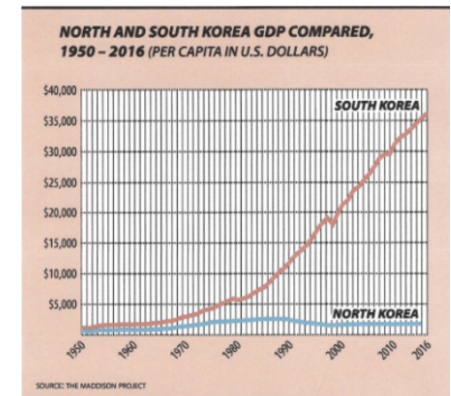


MacArthur's Intention



Two Koreas after the 1953 Truce

- Both South and North wish for **Unification of Homogeneous People**.
- **Widening gap in economies** of North and South.
- To S. Korea, **Germany** has been a role model nation -
 - **Miracle of Rhine River = Miracle of Han River**
 - Germany's **Berlin Wall** vs. **Barbed Wires and Mines** along the 38th line
- Combing **abundant natural resources** (minerals, electric power generation by big dam) in North and **world-class technology** in South would propel the economy to benefit the Unified Korea.



Korea in 2050^[50] **Projection**

	🇰🇷 United Korea	🇰🇷 South Korea	🇰🇷 North Korea
GDP in USD	\$6.056 trillion	\$4.073 trillion	\$1.982 trillion
GDP per capita	\$78,000	\$81,000	\$71,000
GDP growth (2015–2050)	4.8%	3.9%	11.4%
Total population	78 million	50 million	28 million

NK \$28.5B 2016
 SK \$1.65T 2019
 Jpn \$5.08T 2019

Trans-Korea Railroad Project- Planned but Not Realized Yet



Two Koreas after the 1953 Truce (continued)

- Quite Different Approaches to Unification:
North by Force (Byungjin Policy= Nuclear + Economy) vs. South by **North's collapse or through economic aid** for Stabilization in North first, since too much gap can cause chaos. North perceives this as an absorption.
- **North's insistence on negotiating without foreign influence.** South is much dependent on the US. for security and prosperity (North next China vs. South isolated.)
- **Nuclear Threat** may be the “only means” of North- Thus, despite its severe poverty, it spends much on nuclear programs and its military build-up.
- **China does not want to see its buffer region (N. Korea) to go away.** Japan may not see the **Unified Korea to be ahead of itself.**





Failed Attempts Thus Far



- Kim Dae-jung's **Sunshine Policy** - S. Koreans blame for his “pouring money into North, for which he received the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize.”
- Moon Jae-in's policy is “**Security Peace**”, a change from Early Unification. His attempt to give aid to North is criticized by the conservatives in S. Korea.
- **Donald Trump's diplomacy** sparked some hope for a very short time, but the spark was **short-lived** as predicted by N. Korea experts.
- The efforts for **Denuclearization of N. Korea** have not been effective. China is threatened by and has been opposing the **THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) System installed in S. Korea**. Now, many experts think Nuclear **Deterrence** is more realistic.
- In early 1970's, when **Jimmy Carter suddenly reduced the US soldiers in S. Korea** (due to human rights abuses), Park Chung-hee tried to start a nuclear program.





Unification and Korea's Strategic Choices

- Many perceive that **unification will take a long time**, as much as ***another century*** especially since China may not want to see N. Korea collapse.
- S. Korea's unification strategies should address the following

Four factors: (Ref. Korea at the Crossroads, a book chapter by Scott A. Snyder, Columbia University Press)

1. S. Korea's own domestic debate and a **strong consensus building (conservatives vs. progressives; the old vs. the young)**.
2. N. Korea's **policy choices and nature of interaction** with S. Korea. (not been trustworthy thus far) – confederation, if not unification?
3. **Balance of power between South and North** (North is vulnerable to instability and its regime collapse).
4. **The policy preference and influence of major powers**, especially China and the US. (Japan and Russia are also part of the group of six nations.)

My Personal Desire for the US Policy

Korean: 남북통일; **Chinese:** 南北統一



- **Another century until unification is too long.** The longest war since 1950 - already over 70 years. 26 million North Koreans need to be humanely cared for and helped. (Gross domestic product is estimated to be less than \$26B).
- **The US-China joint effort is the key, but must ensure both Korea's' buy-in.** Even severe economic sanctions against N. Korea have not been very effective. **Deterrence of nuclear power build-up** may happen only when North significantly loses the China's backing. Biden's administration should work with **Europe allies** to pressure China to stop its support for N. Korea. N. Korea must stop its nuclear build-up, cyber attacks, bio threats. **US-Korea-Japan alliance** and **diplomacy** to N. Korea should be pursued although Pyongyang keeps on testing the US.
- **"Rewards to the US and China" would include the Indo-Pacific Regional Peace, Removal of N. Korea's Nuclear Threat, Restoration of Human Rights, etc.**
- Can two Koreas be united and remain as a **Neutral Country like Switzerland?**

