

## **The Development of the Discussions on Unification during the Early Post-Cold War Era: Competition and Coexistence between the Government and Nongovernment Sector**

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### **Introduction**

The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the holding of the Malta Summit between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at the end of 1989 signaled the sudden end of the Cold War and onset of the post-Cold War era. Faced with this sudden and dramatic shift in global history, Korea, which was then led by the Roh Tae Woo (No T'aeu) government (1988-1992), sought to bring a change in inter-Korean relations. As part of its proposed engagement with North Korea, the Roh Tae Woo government officially announced the Nordpolitik policy, a course of action that marked an about-face with regards to the communist bloc. Viewed from the standpoint of the history of inter-Korean relations, while the inauguration of the Roh Tae Woo government was marked by the onset of inter-Korean talks, the relationship between the two halves had entered a state of impasse by the time Roh's term had come to an end. Therefore, the Roh Tae Woo government's North Korean policy can serve as a means by which to develop a better understanding of

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the political situation on the Korean peninsula and of the inter-Korean relationship during the early post-Cold War era.

The Roh Tae Woo government came to power as a result of the June Democratization Movement of 1987 and was subsequently connected to the strong trend towards democratization within Korean society. The widening of the debate over unification during the Roh Tae Woo regime to include calls for inter-Korean exchanges at the societal level as well as the emergence of pro-unification movements amongst university students created a situation in which the fervor for unification amongst the public reached a peak that had not been experienced in the aftermath of liberation in 1945. Finding itself in the position of having to coordinate between these various positions and unification groups that emerged within the public, the government set out to establish clear positions and principles that cemented its status as the main authority. In this regard, the July 7th Declaration (Special Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity) that followed the establishment of the Nordpolitik Policy and the announcement of the principle of 'single-window' negotiations with the North can be regarded as the outcome of this situation.

Based on the above mentioned points and assumptions, the present study seeks to develop a better understanding of inter-Korean relations and to shed light on the fact that the discussions over unification that took place between the government and nongovernment sector developed in accordance with the interactions that took place between the two during the Roh Tae Woo regime. Existing studies on inter-Korean relations during the Roh Tae Woo government have been based on an approach that has effectively separated the government from the nongovernment sector.<sup>1</sup> To this end, the present study seeks to show that the discussions pertaining to unification that occurred in Korea during the early post-Cold War era started to exhibit a clear public nature as the monopolistic government control of the past began to erode, and to prove that the interactions between the government and nongovernment sector constituted the most outstanding characteristic of the debate over

unification that took place during this period. Furthermore, this study also examines the attitudes adopted by the two Koreas during this massive change in the external environment known as the advent of the post-Cold War era, as well as the outcomes and limitations thereof. These events, which should be perceived within the historical context of inter-Korean relations, can serve to establish a pattern that can help us to forecast the future of inter-Korean relations. In terms of materials, the present study refers to existing studies that have dealt with inter-Korean relations during the post-Cold War era, government-led publications, memoirs prepared by pertinent figures, nongovernment sector studies, and essays contributed by unification groups as well as other related activities.

### **Inter-Korean Talks: Progress and Impasse**

The July 7th Declaration (Special Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity) and the Engagement Policy Toward North Korea

On July 7, 1988, the Roh Tae Woo government, which adopted the 'Nordpolitik policy,' officially announced its policy toward North Korea via the Special Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity (July 7th Declaration). The July 7th Declaration dealt with six issues: inter-Korean exchanges, the matter of divided families, increases in inter-Korean trade, non-opposition to North Korea's trade with South Korea's allies, the ending of the diplomatic confrontation between the two Koreas, and the actualization of the Nordpolitik policy.<sup>2</sup> Along with the concept of omnidirectional diplomacy first announced during the President's inaugural address, the contents of the July 7th Declaration became the basic logic upon which the government established its engagement policy toward North Korea. Perceiving this as being no different from existing unification measures based on the concept of the cross-recognition of two political systems, North Korea's Choguk P'yŏnghwa T'ongil Wiwŏnhoe (Joguk Pyeonghwa Tongil Wiwonhoe;

Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland) rejected the government's overture. For its part, the Democratic Alliance for the Independent Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland (Choguk ũi Chajujöök P'yöngghwa T'ongil ũl Wihan Minju Tanch'e Hyöppuihoe; Joguk ui Jajujeok Pyeongghwa Tongil ul Wihan Minju Tanche Hyeopuihoe), which was a national coalition consisted of eleven organizations including the United People's Movement for Democracy and Unification (Mint'ongnyöñ; Mintongnyeön), also identified the July 7th Declaration as a diplomatic ploy. These groups claimed that the July 7th Declaration did not make mention of the need to sign a peace treaty, resolve political and military issues, abolish laws that were anti-unification in nature, or the release of prisoners of conscience. In addition, they pointed out that the spirit of the July 7th Declaration did not mesh with the government's active opposition to and suppression of talks between the students of the two Koreas.<sup>3</sup>

Despite internal and external opposition to such a course of action, the Roh Tae Woo government forged ahead with its policy of engagement toward North Korea. In keeping with this campaign, the Hyundai Group began in November 1988 to import clams from North Korea. This intermediary trade was made possible by "Tae Puk Kyoyöök Choch'i" (Dae Buk Gyoyeok Jochi; Measures pertaining to trade with North Korea). To this end, the most salient result to emerge from these measures was the conclusion of a protocol regarding the development of tourism in the Kūmgang mountain region reached between the chairman of the Hyundai Group Chöng Chuyöng and North Korea's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, when Chöng visited North Korea in January 1989. The two parties also agreed to joint participation in the development of Siberia and the establishment of a joint investment venture. Thereafter, inter-Korean trade gradually increased following the establishment of related laws in 1990. Political dialogue was also sought. The Premier of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (Politburo), Yöñ Hyöngmuk, responded to the letter calling for high-level inter-Korean talks he received from South Korean Prime Minister Kang Yöngghun in December 1988 by

suggesting the holding of a preliminary meeting to discuss high-level inter-Korean political and military talks in January 1989. This can be regarded as having been the first step towards the actual initiation of high-level inter-Korean talks. The ensuing dialogue at the government level paved the way for various new interactions between the two Koreas, including high-level inter-Korean talks, preliminary contacts regarding possible inter-Korean parliamentary talks, talks between the two Korea sports federations, inter-Korean Red Cross talks, and inter-Korean economic talks. This government-led engagement policy was accompanied by efforts to keep a lid on the holding of private-level inter-Korean exchanges such as the holding of inter-Korean student talks and the P'yöngyang (Pyeongyang) Festival (Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students, P'yöngyang Festival). In other words, the government's policy towards North Korea during the Roh Tae Woo regime is one that can be characterized as having been based on a two-pronged strategy in which private level exchanges were rigorously controlled even while government-level negotiations and dialogue were actively implemented.

Attention should also be paid to the international environment that prevailed at the time of the launching of this engagement policy towards North Korea. The advent of the post-Cold War era not only led to talk of measures to mitigate tensions on the Korean peninsula, but also to discussions on the readjustment of the levels of U.S. forces in Korea. As early as June 1989, a bill that proposed cutting U.S. troop levels by 10,000 in South Korea had already been submitted to the U.S. Congress. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate demanded that the U.S. administration submit a report regarding its plan to withdraw U.S. forces from South Korea within five years. This turn of events was met domestically by calls from some quarters for measures to prevent the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea. While Kim Yöngsam and Kim Chongp'il opposed such a withdrawal, Kim Dae Jung (Taejung) called for security mechanisms to be drawn up to offset the impact of the possible reduction of U.S. troops in Korea.<sup>4</sup> As the Korean government was inevitably aware

of the push to withdraw U.S. troops from Korea, its engagement policy towards North Korea can rightfully be viewed as part of its strategy to bring stability to inter-Korean relations. In this regard, inter-Korean talks were viewed as an effective means to restrain a North Korea that might have been buoyed by the possibility of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from engaging in any dangerous military provocations, and to bring political stability to the Korean peninsula. This line of reasoning was reminiscent of the Park Chung Hee (Pak Chŏnghŭi) government's decision during the early 1970s to initiate inter-Korean talks, an avenue which at the time was perceived as the best means to dissuade North Korea from taking advantage of the Nixon administration's proposed withdrawal of U.S. troops made amidst the prevailing atmosphere of détente.<sup>5</sup>

The government's announcement on September 11, 1989 of "Han Minjok Kongdongch'e T'ongil Pangan" (Han Minjok Gongdongche Tongil Bangan; Korean National Community Unification Plan) can be construed as a sign of its desire to transform its policy toward North Korea into a unification policy. Although by and large an extension of "Minjok Hwahap Minju T'ongil Pangan" (Minjok Hwahap Minju Tongil Bangan; National Reconciliation and Democratic Unification Plan) put forward by the Fifth Republic in 1982, this plan, which continues to serve as the official unification plan of South Korea, differed in that it included a Korean commonwealth stage. More to the point, this plan called for the separate entities of the North and South to recognize the other's political system and to facilitate national homogeneity and integration as part of a period of coexistence and joint prosperity that could be defined as a middle stage toward unification.<sup>6</sup> As it was geared towards the gradual mitigation of political and military conflicts between the two Koreas through socio-cultural and economic exchanges and cooperation, this plan in effect inherited the functionalist social integration theory that had served as the core notion behind South Korea's unification plans since the 1970s. The positive aspects associated with the notion of a Korean commonwealth were reflected in the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration of 2000, thus indicating that North Korea had to some extent accepted it.<sup>7</sup>

The Roh Tae Woo government's North Korean policy was based on the establishment of a single-window for negotiations. On June 2, 1988, or just as the clamor for the holding of inter-Korean student talks was reaching its peak, the minister of the Ministry of Culture and Information (Mun'gongbu) announced the position of the government regarding the discussions on unification. To this end, while the government was open to discussions on unification, it and it alone should be responsible for engaging and interacting with the North. In this sense, the establishment of such a single-window was understood to mean that while the government and nongovernment sector each had their own roles, the decisions would ultimately be made by the government. However, a series of incidents involving proposed visits to North Korea soon emerged to directly challenge the government's stance. The rush amongst private sector unification activists to unilaterally visit North Korea without the permission of the government placed the Roh Tae Woo regime in an embarrassing position. In this regard, Mun Ikhwan's visit to North Korea provided the government with an opportunity to declare that the political situation had now become detrimental to national security. The Roh Tae Woo government regarded such proposed visits to North Korea as anarchic actions that ran contrary to the very notion of the state. President Roh regarded the unification campaign being waged by the nongovernment sector as all but useless.<sup>8</sup> It was based on such a mindset that all discussions on unification and the unification campaign emanating from the nongovernment sector were ultimately refused. Those who were involved with such actions were identified as dangerous elements that served to advance the North's policy toward South Korea. Thus, while the government had no problem with Pak Chŏlŏn's participation in the Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students held in P'yŏngyang, Im Sugyŏng's participation in the same event was regarded as problematic. Meanwhile, while Pak received permission from the president and participated in the festival as a representative of the government, Sŏ Kyŏngsŏk was naturally punished for having visited North Korea without the permission of the President. Such events paved the way for debates

within society as to whether under the legal system individuals had to seek permission from the president before visiting the North.

#### The adoption of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement and the two Koreas Simultaneous Ascension to the UN

High-level inter-Korean talks started in September 1990. The model for these high-level inter-Korean talks was the North-South Coordinating Committee (Nam Puk Kowigūp Hoedam; Nam Buk Gowigup Hoedam), which was set up to oversee political talks between the two Koreas during the early 1970s. While the director of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) served as the representative for South Korea, the then deputy prime minister represented the North Korean side. However, the high-level inter-Korean talks took the form of a consultative body of ministers from the two Koreas who attended as prime minister-level envoys. In the immediate aftermath of the First Inter-Korean Summit in 2000, the high-level inter-Korean talks evolved into inter-Korean minister-level talks. As such, the framework for political talks between the two Koreas moved from the North-South Coordinating Committee to high-level inter-Korean talks and then inter-Korean minister-level talks. The two sides engaged in high-level inter-Korean talks for three years and five months, or from the first round of talks in September 1990 until the North's refusal to participate in the ninth round of talks slated for December 1992. The actual talks were preceded by eight rounds of preliminary talks, which took place from February 1989 to July 1990. Thus, one year and five months of preliminary talks was followed by two years of actual talks.<sup>9</sup>

The most significant achievement made during these high-level inter-Korean talks was the conclusion of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement (Nam Puk Kibon Hapūisō; Nam Buk Gibon Hapeuiseo). On December 13, 1991, the two parties adopted the "South-North Basic Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation" (Inter-Korean Basic Agreement), an agreement that came during the fifth round



of the high-level inter-Korean talks. In this basic agreement signed by Prime Minister Chŏng Wŏnsik of South Korea and the Premier of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (Politburo), Yŏn Hyŏngmuk, the two Koreas agreed to recognize each other's existence but not to recognize each other as a state. Thus, a new definition of inter-Korean relations was derived. In other words, they identified inter-Korean relations not as a relationship between states, but rather as a unique relationship that was temporarily formed during the process of moving towards unification. The two parties did not perceive their relationship as being similar to the generally accepted relationships between states within the international community, but rather as a unique one.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the basic agreement also specifically called for mutual acceptance and respect for each other's political systems and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The final agreement between the two parties, which also covered various matters pertaining to non-aggression, exchanges, and cooperation, consisted of four chapters and twenty-five articles. The Inter-Korean Basic Agreement officially came into effect in February 1992.<sup>11</sup> The Roh Tae Woo government's participation in the establishment of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement was so widespread that it is believed to have prepared the majority of the text of this agreement.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, the two Koreas also inked the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (Hanbando Pi Haekhwa Kongdong Sŏnŏn; Hanbando Bihaekhwa Gongdong Seoneon) on January 20, 1992. This joint declaration should be perceived from within the context that prevailed during the period that led up to the adoption and coming into effect of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement. The Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was influenced by the rapid dismantling of the Cold War order characterized by the reaching of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in July 1991, an agreement that came on the heels of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) inked between the United States and Russia in December 1989. The above-mentioned two agreements were significant in that they were

reached as the two Koreas found themselves faced with a changed external environment known as the post-Cold War era that forced them to establish new milestones in inter-Korean relations.

Most of the unification groups in South Korea generally recognized the government's efforts in bringing about the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement.<sup>13</sup> However, the adoption of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement created issues pertaining to the amendment of domestic laws. The biggest question that emerged in this regard was whether the National Security Law should be maintained or eradicated. The fact that North Korea was no longer an enemy state but rather an entity with whom to engage in exchanges and cooperation as part of a unique relationship posed a direct challenge to the very nature of the National Security Law. This resulted in the highlighting in some quarters of the anti-unification nature of the Roh Tae Woo government, which called for the flexible management of the National Security Law rather than its abolition.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the problems in effectiveness of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement were raised. Given that the Armistice Agreement was not replaced by a full-fledged peace treaty, doubts were raised regarding the effectiveness of the attempt at reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea.<sup>15</sup> Despite these limitations, inter-Korean relations during the early post-Cold War era reached a level of development unlike anything that had been achieved in the past. Viewed from this standpoint, these agreements reached by the North and South Korean governments, namely the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement and Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, can be regarded as having transformational implications, moving the nation from conflict to reconciliation and from division to unification.<sup>16</sup>

On September 17, 1991, the two Koreas simultaneously joined the UN, a denouement that followed the holding of full-scale high-level inter-Korean talks. The Roh Tae Woo government began the process of joining the UN in earnest in 1991. Meanwhile, North Korea, which had steadfastly opposed the two Koreas' joint ascension to the UN, found itself unable to object to such a situation any longer. North Korea's

stringent opposition to the simultaneous joining of the UN was rooted in its belief that such a move would signify that the division had become permanent. The North had long asserted that there should only be one seat for the two Koreas at the UN.<sup>17</sup> However, on May 27, 1991, the foreign ministry of North Korea changed gears and announced that it was left with little choice but to take such a step in order to respond to the changes in the political situation and cope with the South Korean government's separatist scheme. North Korea's agreement to jointly join the UN can be perceived as a sign of its acceptance of the weakness of its power vis-à-vis South Korea amidst the changed environment known as the post-Cold War era. This can also be characterized as an attempt on the North's part to preserve its ruling system. Be that as it may, the end result was that while North Korea became the 160<sup>th</sup> member of the UN, South Korea became the 161<sup>st</sup>. While South Korea had been a state recognized by the UN since right after the establishment of the two governments in 1948, North Korea had been ignored for 43 years, becoming a virtual black hole in which the power of the UN did not reach. Its recognition thus provided the international foundation for discussion and determination of any future Korea-related issues within the UN and made it possible for the UN to play its role and functions in bringing about a resolution to the division issue.

### The Internal Causes of the Collapse of Inter-Korean Relations

The various issues discussed during the inter-Korean talks that had taken place during the early post-Cold War were incorporated in the high-level inter-Korean talks. The adoption of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement in effect established a track for ensuing inter-Korean talks. The Inter-Korean Basic Agreement having already come into effect, the two parties effectively entered, in February 1992, the negotiation stage for an annex agreement. Once this level of negotiations was completed, the two parties could begin negotiations to resolve individual matters based on the establishment of sector-specific joint committees. However, inter-

Korean relations reached an impasse during these negotiations and talks between the two sides eventually collapsed.

The collapse of inter-Korean talks in 1993 has generally been attributed to the standoff with the United States occasioned by North Korea's attempts to develop nuclear weapons. In particular, inter-Korean talks are understood to have finally broken down when U.S.-North Korean relations reached a new low following North Korea's announcement on March 9 of its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, an announcement that was in turn motivated by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) demand that the North submit to a special inspection on February 25. The ninth round of high-level inter-Korean talks, which was expected to convene in December 1992, was ultimately canceled. The eventual complete breakdown of inter-Korean talks became evident once the North Korean representatives proclaimed their intention not to reopen negotiations on January 29, 1993. North Korea's decision to stop inter-Korean talks was directly related to South Korea's announcement three days earlier that Team Spirit exercises would take place in 1993. The marked improvement in inter-Korean relations that followed the adoption of the Inter-Korea Basic Agreement in 1991 spurred the United States and South Korea to proclaim that Team Spirit exercises would not be held in 1992. However, the revelation of the full scope of the North Korean nuclear program spurred the United States and South Korea to announce during the ROK-US Annual Security Consultative Meeting on October 8, 1992 that Team Spirit exercises would be conducted in 1993 if no progress was made in terms of the matter of nuclear inspections in North Korea. The two countries' hard-line stance was met by stringent resistance on the part of North Korea, which decided to break off all inter-Korean talks.<sup>18</sup> However, little attention has been paid to the role played by internal factors within South Korea in undermining inter-Korean relations. More to the point, little has been reported about the moves made by hardliners within the group in charge of North Korean policy at the end of the Roh Tae Woo regime to intentionally sabotage inter-Korean talks.

1992 was a year in which a presidential election was slated to be held in South Korea. In this regard, the hard-line faction within the government perceived the cooling of inter-Korean relations as being advantageous in terms of getting the presidential candidate from the ruling party elected as president. This particular domestic political factor placed great strain on inter-Korean negotiations. The hard-line faction strongly supported a nuclear linkage strategy under which no improvement in inter-Korean relations was possible as long as the nuclear problem remained unresolved and chafed at the Roh Tae Woo government's parallel strategy under which inter-Korean relations and the North Korean nuclear crisis were to be dealt with separately. On August 15 of that same year, North Korea adopted a proactive stance by raising the possibility of holding a divided family reunion. North Korea indirectly linked the success of such an undertaking to the repatriation of Yi Inmo, an unconverted long-term prisoner. Despite the ensuing debate regarding the repatriation of Yi Inmo that emerged within the government, President Roh eventually decided that Yi Inmo as well as all of the 175 other unconverted long-term prisoners who desired to be repatriated to North Korea should be granted their wish. During a prime minister led meeting held on June 1, the government decided to proceed, on a humanitarian level, with the unconditional and unilateral repatriation of unconverted long-term prisoners.<sup>19</sup> The fact that this epochal North Korean policy was determined based on internal principles hinted at positive changes in inter-Korean relations in the future.

Nevertheless, the obstruction of the hard-line faction ensured that the repatriation of Yi Inmo demanded by North Korea and the divided family reunion long desired by South Korea never came to pass. In keeping with the nuclear linkage strategy under which no economic cooperation was possible until the nuclear crisis was resolved, South Korea rejected out of hand the pilot project for inter-Korean economic cooperation suggested by the North during a visit made by a group led by Vice Premier Kim Talhyōn to South Korea at the end of July. The inhospitality displayed towards Kim Talhyōn eventually caused this pragmatic technocrat to be

excluded from the core power group within North Korea.<sup>20</sup> These actions by the hard-line faction were motivated by their own political interests within the South Korean power structure. A clear example of such machinations occurred during the eighth round of high-level inter-Korean talks held in August 1992, when the National Security Planning Agency (NSPA) deliberately manipulated presidential directives.

In keeping with the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, the South Korean representatives who attended the eighth round of high-level inter-Korean talks held in P'yŏngyang adopted three annex agreements and also agreed on the schedule and agenda for the ninth round of high-level inter-Korean talks. In addition, they also agreed to the organization of various committees in the future. As far as the repatriation of Yi Inmo was concerned, presidential approval had already been received for such a move under the condition that steps be taken to facilitate family reunions for individuals of a very advanced age and the establishment of a permanent family reunion center in P'anmunjŏm. However, the presidential directive that was sent out to the South Korean representatives right before the final agreement was to be signed in P'yŏngyang stated that no agreement should be reached until these two matters as well as that of the repatriation of the crew of the Tongjin Twenty-Seven, who had been abducted in 1987, were effectively resolved. This presidential directive was manipulated by a member of the South Korean delegation named Yi Tongbok and the Director of the Planning & Coordination Department of the NSPA located in Seoul.<sup>21</sup> These individuals even ignored the real presidential directive, which called for an agreement to be given to the immediate reopening of contacts between the North and South Korean branches of the Red Cross and the conduct of divided family reunions as soon as the above-mentioned two conditions were satisfied. Having intercepted a request for instruction that had been submitted by members of the South Korean delegation, they proceeded to use the communication network of the NSPA to put forward a forged presidential directive that largely ignored the real one. These acts committed by Yi Tongbok and Ŏm Samt'ak can only be labeled as

criminal. These actions came as part of coordinated activities that were based on the outdated belief that prevailed amongst the members of the NSPA that the collapse of inter-Korean relations would help to foster the chances of the ruling party's presidential candidate being elected.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the collapse of the inter-Korean dialogue can also be attributed to internal discord within the South Korean government during the inter-Korean talks. Therefore, while talks developed along the time-worn pattern of initiation-development-collapse, the throwing of inter-Korean relations into a deep freeze was also seen as being in the best interest, from a political standpoint, of the conservative faction.

## **The Expansion and Divergence of Nongovernment Sector Unification Groups**

### Popular Unification Movements and 'Visit North Korea' Incidents

The new level of intensity reached by the fever for democratization in the aftermath of the June Democratic Movement of 1987 led to a massive expansion within society of discussions on the heretofore taboo subject of unification. 1988 can rightfully be regarded as the year of university student-led unification movements. Calling for the convocation of 'inter-Korean student talks' and the joint organization of the Olympics, students and opposition figures joined hands in their struggle against the government. On May 11, 1988, thirty-five opposition figures, including Ham Sökhön, Mun Ikhwan, and Song Kõnho, published the "Letter to the North and South Korean leaders" (Nam Puk Chõngsö ege türinün p'yõnji; Nam Buk Cheongseo ege durineun pyeonji) in which they urged the two sides to engage in inter-Korean talks and exchanges. On May 15 of that same year, a university student named Cho Sõngman published his will in which he highlighted his desire for unification before committing suicide via disembowelment in front of Myõngdong Cathedral. In the wake of this incident, sixty-five social organizations, including Mint'ongnyõn,

released the so-called “Urgent Statement” in which they urged the government to move ahead with the joint organization of the Olympics and the holding of inter-Korean student talks on June 10.<sup>23</sup>

While the prosecution made it clear that it would not tolerate any reckless discussions on unification, the students marched to the Eighth U.S. Army Headquarters, where they requested an interview in order to secure the permit needed to enter P’anmunjŏm and take part in the June 10 Inter-Korean Student Talks. Although these students were arrested for their efforts, they effectively, by drawing attention to the fact that the U.S. exercised jurisdiction over P’anmunjŏm, reminded the public that the United States lay at the heart of inter-Korean relations and the unification issue. On June 10, 890 people who took part in demonstrations were hauled away by the police, with thirty-two of them arrested under suspicion of violation of the National Security Law. The June 10 Inter-Korean Student Talks in P’anmunjŏm having been dispersed, the students once again resolved to implement student talks, this time on August 15. In addition, they also vowed to have a “National March” arrive in P’anmunjŏm by August 15. The student-led unification movement that emerged in 1988 created an opportunity to break the social taboo regarding discussions about unification by inducing and activating such discussions. They also greatly influenced the July 7th Declaration.<sup>24</sup> Although the student talks in the end were never held because of government interference, these students nevertheless managed to derive support from within political circles and all sectors of society for their endeavors. Their efforts helped to shine a light both domestically and internationally on the attempts that were being made to use the Olympic Games to create reconciliation between North and South and an atmosphere conducive to unification.<sup>25</sup>

The efforts waged by the unification movement in 1988 served as an opportunity to enhance awareness of North Korea within society. Interest in the North Korean system, ideology, and history rapidly increased. The massive increase in the intellectual desire and interest in North Korea was given concrete form in the “Movement to Develop a Proper



Understanding of North Korea” (Pukhan paro algi undong; Bukhan baro algi undong). The publication and distribution of domestic works about North Korea in Korea, as well as of facsimiles and theoretical works emanating from abroad, caused conflicts within society as the existing common sense regarding issues such as the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War was thrown into question.<sup>26</sup> In September 1988, the Minister of Culture and Information announced that materials related to North Korea and the communist bloc would be made available to the general public. In the same spirit, the Minister of the Ministry of National Unification (T’ongilbu; Tongilbu), Yi Honggu, revealed that the “Act on Special Measures Related to Inter-Korean Exchanges and Contacts” (Nam Pukhan kyoryu mit chöpch’ok e kwanhan t’ükbyöl pöp; Nam Bukhan gyoryu mit jeopchok e gwanhan teukbyeol beop) would be enacted. Meanwhile, the Supreme Prosecutors Office (Kömch’al; Geomchal) let it be known that it would not object to any non-politically minded attempts to objectively describe the actual state of North Korea, the federal system of Koryŏ, *chuch’e* ideology, or Marxism and Leninism. However, they still made it clear, through an outline on reporting on North Korea and the communist bloc distributed to the press and media, that they intended to control the flow of any such conversation. These measures, which were adopted after the July 7th Declaration, did not properly reflect the public’s growing interest in North Korea.

“The Movement to Develop a Proper Understanding of North Korea” was a struggle to remove the one-sided anti-Communist and Cold War myths created by the military regimes of the past. However, this campaign also encompassed a significant move in the opposite direction. It created an overly-friendly perception of North Korea and further developed an affirmative phenomenon in which the merits of the North Korean system were blindly accepted. Given the excessive nature of authoritarian Korean society at the time, it is only natural that the methods used to overcome the one-sided perceptions of North Korea also tended towards the extreme. “The Movement to Develop a Proper Understanding of North Korea”—which sought to remove one-sided and distorted

perception of North Korea that prevailed during the Cold War era in an objective, reasonable, rational, and fraternal manner—was also volatile in nature. Rather than developing a proper perception of North Korea, this movement indulged, admired, and regarded the North Korean system and ideology as being of the highest value. This result can be regarded as the product of the inherent limitations of this period.<sup>27</sup>

Discussion pertaining to unification emerged from within all sectors of society as student-led unification movements actively clashed with the North Korean policy established by the government. In particular, individuals from the religious sector emerged to play a leading role in the discussions on unification and inter-Korean exchanges. The “Declaration of Korean Churches on National Unification and Peace” (Minjok ũi T’ongil kwa p’yonghwa e taehan Han’guk Kiddoyo Sŏnŏn; Minjok ui Tongil gwa pyeonghwa e daehan Han’guk gidokkyo seoneon) adopted by the National Council of Churches in Korea (Han’guk Kidokkyo Kyohoe Hyŏpŭihoe; Han’guk Gidokkyo Gyohoe Hyeopeuihoe) during the Thirty-seventh General Assembly held in February 1988 is an important document that highlighted the interests and unification theory put forward by Korean churches.<sup>28</sup> In 1988, the Korean Catholic Church established the Unification Apostolate Institute (T’ongil Samok Yŏn’guso; Tongil Samok Yeon’guso) and North Mission Council (Pukbang Sŏn’gyo Hyŏpŭihoe; Bukbang Seon’gyo Hyeopeuihoe) and actively pursued the unification movement in a manner that revolved around the Catholic Priests Association for Justice and the Catholic Conference for Social Movements (Ch’ŏnjugyo Chŏngŭi Kuhyŏn Sajedan; Cheonjugyo Cheongeui Guhyeon Sajedan).<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, Buddhist circles established the Buddhist Center for the Joint Implementation of the National Harmonic Olympics (Minjok Hwahap Kongdong Ollimp’ik Ch’ujin; Minjok Hwahap Gongdong Ollimpik Chujin) in June 1988 and organized a committee to implement inter-Korean Buddhist exchanges and the Buddhist Council for National Independent Unification (Minjok Chaju T’ongil Pulgyo Undong Hyŏpŭihoe; Minjok Jaju Tongil Bulgyo Undong Hyeopeuihoe).<sup>30</sup> In addition, public-led unification and exchange

movements emerged from within all sectors of society. The suggestion of inter-Korean laborer representative talks put forward by the labor poet Pak Nohae in August 1988 was followed up by similar calls for inter-Korean exchanges by the Preparation Committee of National Farmers Movement Union. It was during this period that the National Union of Mediaworkers (Nam Puk Ŏllon Kyoryu T'ŭkbyŏl Wiwŏnhoe; Nam Buk Eollon Gyoryu Teukbyeol Wiwonhoe) set up a special committee for inter-Korean press exchanges designed to improve the Cold War oriented reporting on North Korea. Founded in May 1988, *Han'gyŏre sinmun* immediately set out to actively report on issues related to unification. Members of the cultural and artistic circles such as Korean-born German musician Yun Isang and the Association of Writers for National Literature (Minjok Munhak Chakkahoe; Minjok Munhak Jakkahoe) also began to take up the calls for inter-Korean exchanges.

The year 1989 was one marked by unauthorized visits to North Korea. In this regard, Mun Ikhwan and Im Sugyŏng's visits to P'yŏngyang proved to be particularly thorny. Mun's visit to P'yŏngyang came in response to the call for inter-Korean political negotiations made by Kim Il Sung (Ilsŏng) during his New Year's address. In conjunction with the director of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, Hŏ Tam, Mun announced on April 2 a joint statement that consisted of nine articles. In this statement, the two sides agreed to the pursuit of unification via the establishment of a confederation system. In his New Year's address for 1991, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung called for the formation of a loose confederation. This concept, which he had first broached with Mun during the latter's visit to the North, became the basis for Article Two of the June 15 Joint Declaration of 2000.<sup>31</sup> The government identified Mun's visit to North Korea as an act of unlawful entry and clamored that this action in effect exposed North Korea's duplicitous goal of creating disharmony within South Korea.<sup>32</sup> Mun's visit to North Korea caused serious internal conflicts when it was compared by some to the case of Chŏng Chuyŏng, who had visited North Korea a mere two months earlier, only with the permission of the government. Mun's

visit to North Korea was even criticized by some leading members of the democratization movement for having taken the focus off of the efforts to clean up the Fifth Republic. Disputes also emerged regarding the nature of the relationship between the democracy and people's movements and the unification movement.<sup>33</sup> The revelation of author Hwang Sökyöng's visit to North Korea created another shock within Korean society. On April 23, Hwang Sökyöng (in his capacity as the spokesperson for the Korea National Artists General Federation) and the Deputy Director of the General Federation of Korean Literature and Arts Unions, Ch'oe Yöngghan, announced that the two Koreas had reached a seven-point agreement on the development of national literature and arts in a unified manner. Then on June 27, Assemblyman Sö Kyöngwön of the Peace and Democracy Party (PDP) was arrested after his visit to North Korea came to light. Sö was revealed to have secretly visited P'yöngyang for three days two nights in August 1988 to meet Kim Il Sung. The very nature of the incident, an assemblyman being caught illegally entering North Korea, created quite a stir within society. The fervor to visit North Korea reached a new peak in 1989 with Im Sugyöng's participation in the Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students (P'yöngyang Festival) held in P'yöngyang as a representative for the National University Students' Representative Council. While North Korea had officially invited the representative of the National University Students' Representative Council to take part in the event, the government refused to grant permission to such a dispatch. The National University Students' Representative Council responded to the government's refusal by secretly dispatching Im to North Korea. On July 7 Im Sugyöng, who participated in the P'yöngyang Festival held from July 1 to July 8, announced her agreement to the joint declaration of inter-Korean youth and students regarding the independent peaceful unification of the fatherland. This incident, along with Mun Ikhwan's visit to North Korea, sparked disputes regarding the validity of the government's single-window concept. It also touched off a heated debate within society regarding the students' approach to North Korea.

## The Concentration and Reorganization of Unification Groups

One of the characteristics of the unification movement that emerged during the early years of the post-Cold War era, namely from 1988 to 1989, was that the two Koreas and overseas Korean organizations sought to form a united front through which to implement relevant activities. This phenomenon was given concrete form with the establishment of the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification (Choguk T'ongil Minjok Yŏnhap; Choguk Tongil Minjok Yeonhap; hereafter PKAR). The PKAR was organized during the process of preparing for the events commemorating national liberation on August 15 for the years 1989 and 1990. The August 15 Pan-Korean Rally was born out of an announcement of plans to initiate a pan-Korean national conference signed by 1,014 opposition figures in August 1988. At this time, they claimed: "All 40 million South Koreans, 20 million North Koreans and 10 million overseas Koreans should unite together . . . to bring forth the key public figures who will oversee the unification of the fatherland."<sup>34</sup> In December 1988, the North Korean-based Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland announced its support for such an endeavor. The National Democratic Movement Union (Chŏn'guk Minjok Minju Undong Yŏn'hap; Jeonguk Minjok Minju Undong Yeonhap; hereafter NDMU) was inaugurated in South Korea in January 1989, with preliminary working level talks on the holding of a pan-Korean rally suggested to North Korea shortly thereafter. In March of that same year, overseas Korean organizations responded positively to this suggestion. However, the government's refusal to cooperate with this venture ensured that no actual contacts with North Korea were made. Twenty-one organizations, including the NDMU and the National University Students' Representative Council, organized the headquarters of the implementation of a pan-Korean unification festival on August 15, and held a ceremony on August 15, 1989 marking it as the 'Day of National Independent Unification.' They released an eight-point "Pan-Korean Declaration" (Pŏm Minjok Sŏnŏn; Beom Minjok Seoneon), the main contents of which revolved around the actualization of

unification based on the three principles contained in the South-North Joint Communiqué announced on July 4, 1972, the conclusion of a peace agreement and the adoption of a declaration of non-aggression, the abolition of anti-unification laws and organizations, the release of those who had been arrested under such draconian laws, the destruction of nuclear weapons and gradual disarmament, and the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea.<sup>35</sup> A seven-point resolution adopted during the closing ceremony of the First Pan-Korean Rally on August 15, 1990 was based on similar principles.<sup>36</sup> The core players within the PKAR in South Korea included the NDMU, inaugurated in January 1989 as a unified front for opposition figures, and the National Alliance for Democracy & Reunification of Korea, established in December 1991.

Although the first pan-Korean rally of 1990 did not manage to bring together Koreans from North Korea, South Korea, and overseas, the three parties did in fact hold talks in Berlin on November 20, 1991, during which time an agreement was reached to establish a permanent organization called the PKAR.<sup>37</sup> However, the debate over the characteristics and roles of the PKAR evolved into a full-fledged dispute during the early 1990s. This dispute was rooted in the different perceptions of North Korea that existed with regards to the issue of how inter-Korean relations should be approached within the unification movement.<sup>38</sup> The key point in this dispute was whether it was in fact desirable for the nongovernmental unification groups in South Korea and North Korea to form a unified unification organization. While progressive unification groups had been able, during the Cold War era, to call for unification negotiations with North Korea or to agree with North Korea on certain issues, the thought of implementing a unified unification movement with North Korea was nothing short of unimaginable. Of course, the groups that blindly accepted North Korea's strategy toward South Korea did not face similar qualms. Thus, the concept of a tripartite cooperation based organization was a new trend that emerged as the unification movement moved into the post-Cold War era and a change in perceptions of North Korea took root amongst unification groups in South

Korea. The rapid changes in perceptions in South Korea also caused internal conflicts within the unification movement. More to the point, steps began to be taken by some to form a new organization that was critical of unification groups that were based on a North Korea included tripartite alliance. In this regard, unification groups that followed the lead of Mun Ikhwan recognized the necessity to establish a new unification system that reflected the rapid changes in the domestic and international circumstances. They regarded the diversity of the unification movement in South Korea as being more important than tripartite (North and South Korea and overseas groups) cooperation mechanisms such as the PKAR.<sup>39</sup> Their efforts eventually resulted in the inauguration of the Korean National Congress for Reunification (Chaju P'yŏnghwa T'ongil Minjok Hoeŭi; Jaju Pyeonghwa Tongil Minjok Hoeuei) in July 1994, an organization in which seventy opposition figures, as well as religious and civil organizations, participated. However, instead of engaging in discussions on a new unification movement system, the headquarters of the PKAR in South Korea made clear its continued adherence to the principle of tripartite cooperation by establishing itself as an official organization in February 1995, a move that had been postponed since the inauguration of the preparation committee in January 1991.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that the unification movement was led by university students in 1988 made it possible for the nongovernmental unification movement to identify unification as the biggest social issue after democracy during the post-Cold War era. The leaders within the nongovernment unification movement at the time sought to establish an organization in conjunction with North Korea. However, their attempts to obtain the cooperation of the government proved to be futile, and they instead found themselves becoming a target of government suppression. Most of all, different opinions regarding the concept of tripartite cooperation were raised, which eventually led to divergence within the organization. This phenomenon can be perceived as one that has repeatedly occurred within the unification movement in South Korea whenever discussions on unification and the nature of the unification movement emerged.<sup>41</sup> Much

like other rituals, this became an inevitable problem that inevitably had to be resolved whenever unification related issues emerged. The fierce disputes and discussions surrounding the PKAR and the new unification movement system were followed by the advent of two factions in terms of the unification groups within Korean society: one was a pro-North Korea line that pursued unity with North Korea, while the other was more critical of North Korea.

### **Conclusion: Interactions and the Respective Roles of the Government and Nongovernment Sectors**

The early post-Cold War era was a period in which the government and nongovernment sectors engaged in the first discussions on unification since the division of the nation into North and South Korea. It was a period in which the two sectors, in their capacity as the main actors involved in the discussions on unification, both coexisted and competed with one another. Although the Roh Tae Woo government did not ban private level discussions on unification and the unification movement, it clearly sought to control such discussions by insisting that its approval be given before any inter-Korean exchanges. Viewed from this standpoint, rather than the two sectors coexisting as equal competitors in the discussions on unification and the unification movement, the nongovernment sector can be understood to have pursued relative independence amidst a situation in which the government exercised control. However, the independent discussions and actions undertaken by the government and the nongovernment sector paved the way for the development of a relationship in which both sides had to be keenly aware of each other. To this end, this period can be seen as one in which both sides to some extent pursued mutual communication.

The relationship that existed between the government and nongovernment sector makes it possible to evaluate the Roh Tae Woo government's North Korean policy as having been relatively more



positive and active than those of other government regimes. The Roh Tae Woo government contributed to a better understanding and conceptualization of the uniqueness of inter-Korean relations and propelled the unification issue to a new stage by establishing a confederation based unification method in which the two Koreas' systems would be accepted. This attitude on the part of the government was the result of the government's active, positive, flexible, and forward-minded response to the global change known as the advent of the post-Cold War era. Nevertheless, the attempts of the hard-line faction to intentionally derail inter-Korean relations indicates that the conservative (right-wing) power used inter-Korean conflicts to create a political environment that was conducive to its own ends and had thrived under such an environment. While hawk and dove factions existed within the government, certain variables associated with inter-Korean relations became dependent on the political interests of the hard-line faction within the South Korean government. Meanwhile, multilateral discussions that revolved around the PKAR and the search for a new unification movement system were carried out within the nongovernment sector. Within this sector as well, individual power bases were created. Here, the dynamicity of politics can be seen as having been embedded in the conflict phenomenon. By creating internal competition within the nongovernment unification movement, these changes resulting from differing perceptions of and attitudes toward North Korea functioned as factors that helped guarantee the presence of elasticity and dynamicity in all discussions and movements pertaining to unification. The reorganization and diversification of the nongovernment unification groups was accompanied by differing opinions and conflicting elements within the government over North Korean policy, which in turn interacted to form an asymmetric competition that was rooted in the dualistic characteristics of the relationship between the government and nongovernment sectors. In other words, one can conclude that the relationship of coexistence and competition that existed between the government and nongovernment sectors led to the establishment of a

basic framework known as the two-track unification movement during the early post-Cold War era and also to the emergence of the dualistic characteristics known as the emergence of differing opinions within the government and nongovernment sectors and organizational diversification. Thus, both sectors were marked by the emergence of a diversity of opinions regarding the unification debate and movement. To this end, while it became impossible for the government to pursue its unification strategy in a unilateral manner, nongovernment unification groups were able to move beyond the established perceptions of North Korea. Thus, while a point of contact started to be formed between the government and nongovernment sector, a new structure known as that of mutual competition and restraint was also established.

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#### Notes :

- 1 For a chronological study on inter-Korean relations during the post-Cold War era, please refer to T'ongil Noryök 60 Nyön Palgan Wiwönhoe, ed., *T'ongil noryök 60 nyön: hanülgil ttanggil padatkil yölö t'ongillo* (Sixty years of Efforts for Unification: Toward reunification via the opening up of sky, land, and marine routes) (Seoul: T'ongilbu, 2005).

The relationship between the two governments is dealt with at length in the collection of essays included in the Special Issue of *Yöksa pip ýöng* published in fall 2011. Prominent essays found in this issue include, Kim Yöñch'öl “*No T'aeu chöngbu üi pukpang chöngch'aek kwa nambuk kibon hapüisö* (The Roh Tae Woo government's Nordpolitik Policy and the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement); Yi Chöngch'öl, “*Kim Ilsöng üi nambang chöngch'aek kwa nambuk kibon hapüisö – naengjön haech'é üi pidaech'ingsöng kwa tongmaeng chaep ýön chölyak üi chwajöl* (Kim Il Sung Sudpolitik Policy and the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement – The asymmetry occasioned by the collapse of the Cold War and the frustrated attempts to restructure alliances).

For an in-depth discussion on unification from the standpoint of the nongovernment sector, please refer to Kim Chihyöng, “T'ongil undong” (Unification Movement), in *Han'guk minjuhwa undongsa 3*, ed. Minjuhwa Undong Kinyörm Saöphoe Han'guk Minjujuüi Yöñ'guso (Seoul: Tolbegae,

2010). In addition, see Roh Tae Woo, *No T'aeu hoegorok II* (Roh Tae Woo's Memoirs II) (Seoul: Chosŏn Nyusŭ Pŭresŭ, 2011), and Im Tongwŏn, *Pisŭ meikŏ: Nam-Puk kwangye wa puk haek munje—Im Tongwŏn hoegorok* (Peacemaker: North-South relations and the North Korean nuclear problem—memoirs of Im Tongwŏn) (Seoul: Chungang Puksŭ, 2008)'s should also be seen as quite informative.

- 2 Roh Tae Woo, 145.
- 3 Minjok Minju Undong Yŏn'guso, ed., *Mint'ongnyŏn, minju t'ongil minjung undong yŏnhap p'yŏnggasŏ (I)- charyop'yŏn* (Documents on the United People's Movement for democracy and unification: a comprehensive assessment of democratic, unification, and public movements) (Seoul: 1988), 286-288.
- 4 Kim Dae Jung, *Kim Taejung ūi 3 tan'gye t'ongil ron* (Kim Dae Jung's three stage approach to Korean unification) (Seoul: A T'ae P'yŏnghwa Chaedan, 2009), 120.
- 5 Kim Chihyŏng, *Tet'angte wa Nam Puk kwan'gye* (Détente and Inter-Korean Relations) (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2008), 297.
- 6 T'ongilwŏn T'ongil Chŏngch'aeksil, ed., *Nam Puk kibon hapŭisŏ haesŏl* (Explaining the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement) (Seoul: T'ongilwŏn T'ongil Chŏngch'aeksil, 1992), 113-126.
- 7 In Article Two of the text of the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration, both parties agreed that there was a common element in the South's concept of a confederation and the North's formula for a loose form of federation. Both the South and the North agreed to pursue reunification based on this direction.
- 8 The following passage is taken from President No's memoirs: "I regarded private level discussions on unification as being very dangerous. I also tended to see their goal of achieving unification without ever developing a precise understanding of North Korea as being facile and romantic in nature. The clamor amongst politicians, opposition figures, students, and academics in South Korea to visit P'yŏngyang and engage in exchanges and dialogue with North Korea allowed the latter to seize the upper hand by making it possible for it to decide whom they would meet and when they would do so." Roh Tae Woo, 360-361.
- 9 T'ongil Noryŏk 60 nyŏn Palgan Wiwŏnhoe, ed., *T'ongil noryŏk 60 nyŏn*, 167-171.
- 10 Former President Roh Tae Woo revealed that the expression 'specific

relations' had a two-pronged meaning. Thus while North Korea was accepted as an entity, it was not accepted as a separate state. In other words, because the dealings between the two Koreas were perceived as internal matters, concrete benefits could be gleaned.

Roh Tae Woo, 324.

- 11 T'ongilwŏn T'ongil Chŏngch'aeksil, ed., *Nam Puk kibon hapŭisŏ haesŏl*, 171-176.
- 12 Don Oberdorfer, *Tugae ūi Han'guk* (The Two Koreas), trans. Yi Chonggil (Seoul: Kilsan, 2002), 395.
- 13 Minjujuŭi Minjok T'ongil Chŏnguk Yŏnhap Chaju T'ongilguk, "Pŏm minjokchŏk t'ongil pangan ūl chaengchw'ihaeya" (Achieving a pan-national unification plan), *Sahoe p' yŏngnon* (April 1992), 41.
- 14 Paek Nakch'ŏng, "Minjung undong kwa t'ongil undong" (The *minjung* and unification movements), *Sahoe p' yŏngnon* (April 1992), 56.
- 15 Ch'oe Sŏng, "Pundan sidae Nam-Pukhan ūi chŏngch'i kujo wa t'ongil sidae chŏngch'ijŏk kwaje" (The political structures of North and South Korea in the division era and political tasks during the unification era), in *Pundan 50 nyŏnŭi kujo wa hyŏnsil*, ed. Kisayŏn T'ongil Yŏn'gu Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1994), 119.
- 16 Chŏng Haegu, "Taehwa wa kaldŭng ūi Nam Puk kwan'gye (Inter-Korean relations: dialogue and conflict)," in *Pundan 50 nyŏn kwa t'ongil sidae ūi kwaje*, ed. Sa Munje Yŏn'guso (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 1995), 300.
- 17 Unification groups in South Korea, including university students, also regarded joint ascension to the UN as a dangerous attempt to justify the permanent division within the international community and actively objected such a move.
- 18 The negative assessments of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement within North Korea should also be regarded as one of the reasons for the collapse of the inter-Korean talks.  
Kim Yŏnch'ŏl, "No T'aeu chŏngbu ūi Pukpang Chŏngch'aek kwa Nam Puk kibon hapŭisŏ," (The Roh Tae Woo government's Nordpolitik and the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement)," *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* 97 (November 2011), 98.
- 19 Im Tongwŏn, 266
- 20 *Ibid.*, 272.
- 21 In an essay written in 1992, Yi Tongbok stated that North Korea had set the resolution of the Yi Inmo issue as a precondition and that it took the family

reunions for individuals of a very advanced age and the establishment of a permanent family reunion center off the table after the South refused to address this matter. However, Yi's memoirs do not reflect what really happened as he makes no mention of the manipulation of presidential directives in which he was involved.

Yi Tongbok, "Nam·Puk taehwa – 1993 nyŏn ūi chŏnmang" (The inter-Korean dialogue – the outlook for 1993), in *T'ongil ūi supkil ūl yŏlŏ kamyŏ II* (Seoul: Salm kwa Kkum, 1999), 156-157.

- 22 Im Tongwŏn, 284-293; "Hullyŏng chojak sasil p'anmyŏng, Kamsawŏn" (The Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea- The presidential directive was manipulated), *Han'gyŏre*, Dember 22, 1993. 1993.
- 23 No Chungsoŏn, *Yŏnp'yo, Nam Pukhan t'ongil chŏngch'aek kwa t'ongil undong 50 nyŏn* (Chronological table, the unification policies of the two Korean governments and the 50-year history of the unification movement) (Seoul: Sa Kyechŏl, 2006), 298-30.
- 24 Yi Changhŭi, "Haebang hu min'gan t'ongil undong ūi p'yŏngga wa kwaje" (Evaluation of the nongovernment sector unification movement after liberation and future tasks), in *Min'gan t'ongil undong ūi naagal kil* (Seoul: Asayŏn, 1999), 46.
- 25 Han'guk Kidokkyo Sahoe Munje Yŏn'guwŏn, *Kisayŏn Rip'otŭ 8: choguk t'ongil undong ūi chinjŏn* (The Report of the Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development 8: The progression of the movement towards the unification of the fatherland) (Seoul: Minjungsa, 216).
- 26 T'ongil Noryŏk 60 nyŏn Palgan Wiwŏnhoe, ed., *T'ongil noryŏk 60 nyŏn: hanŭlgil ttanggil padatkil yŏlŏ t'ongilro*, 188.
- 27 Kim Chihyŏng. 2010. *Minjuhwa undong sedaebyŏl pundan kŭkpokronŭi ch'ui* (The trend towards moving closer to the overcoming of the division with every generation of the democratization movement). *Yŏksawa hyŏnsil*. Vol. 77. Han'guk yŏksa yŏn'guhoe. 132-133.
- 28 Yi Sanggyu. 2005. *Minjokkwa kyohoe: han'guk kyohoe t'ongil undonge taehan pokŭm chuŭijŏk p'yŏngga* (The nation and the Church: an evangelical evaluation of Korean churches' unification movement). *Sŏnggyŏnggwa sinhak* (The Bible and Theology). Korea Evangelical Theological Society. 138.
- 29 Kang Inch'ŏl, "Chonggyo wa t'ongil undong: Han'guk ch'ŏnjugyo ūi sarye" (Religion and the unification movement: the case of Korean Catholic churches), *Chonggyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 1 (1999), 46.

- 30 Sindonga P'yŏnjipbu, *Sŏnŏn ūro pon 80 nyŏndae minjok minju undong* (The national and democratic movements during the 1980s as viewed through the July 7 Declaration) (Seoul: Tonga Ilbosa, 1990), 190.
- 31 Yi Yuna, "Mun Ikhwan ūi t'ongil ron kwa t'ongil undong e taehan yŏn'gu" (Mun Ikhwan's unification theory and the Unification Movement) (Ph.D. Dissertation, Sungkyunkwan Taehakkyo, 2008), 206.
- 32 Roh Tae Woo, 289.
- 33 Hong Sŏngnyul, "Min'gan t'ongil undong ūi chŏn'gae wa chaengjŏm" (The development of the civilian unification movement and related issues), *Naeil ūl yŏnŭn yŏksa* 21 (2005), 104.
- 34 No Chungŏn, 327-328
- 35 *Han'gyŏre sinmun*, August 16, 1989.
- 36 Choguk T'ongil Pŏm Minjok Yŏnhap, ed., *Pŏmminyŏn charyojip* (Collection of materials pertaining to the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification) (Seoul: 1994), 66.
- 37 Chŏn Sangbong, *Saech'ŏnnyŏn ūl yŏnŭn t'ongil undong ron* (The unification movement at the dawn of a new millennium) (Seoul: Sallimt'ŏ, 1999), 134.
- 38 Min Kyŏngu, "1980-90 nyŏndae t'ongil undong, t'ongil undong ūi paecka chaengmyŏng sigi" (The unification movement during the 1980s-1990s and the era of discordant thoughts regarding the unification movement), *Minjok* 21 (October 2005), 118.
- 39 Chaju P'yŏnghwa T'ongil Minjok Hoeŭi, *Chaju p'yŏnghwa t'ongil minjok hoeŭi ch'angnip taehoe* (The founding of the Korean National Congress for Reunification) (Seoul: 1994). 27.
- 40 Pŏmmillyŏn, ed., *Pŏmmillyŏn charyojip 4 – 95 nyŏn choguk t'ongil pŏm minjok yŏnhap namch'ŭk ponbu kyŏlsŏng charyo* (The Materials of the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification – Materials from the headquarters in South Korea pertaining to the pan-Korean national alliance for unification in 1995) (Seoul: 1995), 8.
- 41 For example, the split into the National Autonomous Unification Central Council (NAUCC) and the General League for Neutralized Unification of Korea that took place right after the April 19 Democratic Revolution was also caused by differences in how North Korea should be perceived and how inter-Korean negotiations should proceed.

〈Abstract〉

The Development of the Discussions on Unification  
during the Early Post–Cold War Era:  
Competition and Coexistence between the Government  
and Nongovernment Sector

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This study analyzes the discussions pertaining to unification and the characteristics of the unification movement during the Roh Tae Woo regime, in power during the early post-Cold War era. More to the point, this article examines the competition and coexistence that existed between the government and nongovernment sector with regards to this issue. Amidst the onset of the post-Cold War Era, the Roh Tae Woo (No T'aeu) government undertook an active engagement policy towards North Korea that can be characterized by the establishment of the Nordpolitik policy and the July 7th Declaration (Special Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity). The advent of a wide range of North-South Korean talks, including high-level ones, paved the way for the two Koreas to establish a new milestone in their relationship in the form of the adoption of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, an agreement that highlighted the uniqueness of the inter-Korean relationship. The North's attitude during the process that led up to the establishment of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement can be regarded as one based on the posture of defensive coexistence. This came as part of their attempts to overcome the post-Cold War crisis marked by the collapse of the socialist bloc. On the other hand, South Korea played an active leadership role and served as the driving force behind this process. All of

this led to the development of a new international paradigm known as the simultaneous ascension of North-South Korea to the UN taking root on the Korean peninsula. However, internal and external factors associated with the erosion of the inter-Korean relationship, in the form of intentional attempts by the hard-line faction within the government to derail the inter-Korean relationship as well as the nuclear standoff between the United States and North Korea, were also clearly exposed during this process. Here, special attention should be drawn to the fact that the intentional stress placed on the inter-Korean relationship by those who adopted a hard-line towards the North was closely related to the presidential election strategy endorsed by conservative political forces.

This period also saw an explosive growth in nongovernment sector led discussions regarding unification and related unification movements, as well as in inter-Korean exchange campaigns within all classes of society. A series of events, including the campaign for the holding of inter-Korean student talks and for the joint organization of the Olympics, had the effect of making exchanges with the North a key issue within society. At the same time, this growing interest in North Korea resulted in the emergence of the phenomenon known as the “Movement to Develop a Proper Understanding of North Korea.” Doubts started to be raised about the logic of the conservative power, which during the Cold War Era had propped up the authoritative dictatorship in the name of anticommunism. There was also an exponential growth in intellectual curiosity regarding North Korea, curiosity that was rooted in the notion of *silsa kusi* (實事求是, *silsa gusi*, seeking truth from facts). Nongovernment sector-based unification movements eventually splintered into those that were friendly towards North Korea and those that were critical of it. The emergence of the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification (PKAR), which adopted tripartite cooperation (two Koreas and the international community), and of the search for a new unification structure that respected the values of various unification movements in Korea, was in fact the result of conflicting understandings of North Korea that existed within the various unification movements. As such, the discussions over unification carried out by the various nongovernment unification groups, which began to exhibit a multi-layered structure, became an internal competition of sorts. During this process, the government, which intended to curb discussions on unification within the



nongovernment sector based on the principle of 'single-window' negotiations with the North, maintained strained relations with nongovernment unification groups. Thus, the discussions on unification between the government and nongovernment sector during the post-Cold War era entered a new era in which both sides found themselves having to compete in an attempt to influence the other amidst an environment in which they were increasingly conscious of each other.

**Keywords:** post-Cold War, discussions on unification, inter-Korean relationship, Nordpolitik, July 7th Declaration, Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, North-South Korea's simultaneous joining of the UN, manipulation of presidential directives, Movement to develop a Proper Understanding of North Korea, visits to North Korea, principle of a 'single-window,' emergence of the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification (PKAR), new unification structure

〈국문초록〉

## 탈냉전 초기 통일논의의 전개와 수렴: 정부와 민간의 경쟁과 공존

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탈냉전 초기, 즉 노태우 정권기의 통일논의와 통일운동의 특징을 정부와 민간의 공존과 경쟁이라는 관점에서 분석하였다. 노정권은 탈냉전을 맞이하여 북방정책과 7.7 선언 등을 내세우며 적극적인 대북 접근전략을 구사해나갔다. 남북고위급회담을 비롯한 각종 남북대화가 전개되는 가운데 남북기본합의서를 채택함으로써 남북관계의 새로운 이정표가 마련되었다. 남북기본합의서를 통해 남북관계의 특수성이 확인되었으며, 이 과정에서 남측의 적극적인 리더십이 동력으로 작용한 반면 북측은 사회주의 권 해체를 동반한 탈냉전이라는 위기 타개의 일환으로 방어적 공존을 추구한 것으로 볼 수 있다. 그 결과 남북 유엔 동시가입이라는 한반도문제의 새로운 국제적 패러다임이 펼쳐졌다. 그러나 핵문제를 둘러싼 북미간의 마찰과 함께 정부의 대북 강경과에 의한 고의적인 남북관계 파탄 시도가 확인됨으로써 남북관계 단절의 내외적 요인이 뚜렷이 드러났다. 특히 대북 강경과들의 인위적인 남북관계 경색화는 보수정치세력의 대통령선거전략과 밀접한 연관성을 반영한다는 점에서 주목된다.

이 시기는 민간 통일논의 및 운동이 폭발적으로 나타났으며 각계각층의 남북교류 운동이 분출하였다. 남북학생회담운동, 남북공동올림픽 개최 주장을 비롯하여 일련의 방북사건이 벌어짐으로써 사회적 주요 이슈를 형성하였다. 동시에 북한에 대한 관심이 증폭됨으로써 북한바로알기운동이라는 현상이 나타났다. 냉전시기 반공을 필미로 권위주의적 독재를 유지하던 보수권력의 논거가 의심받기 시작하였으며 북한에 대한 실사구시적 지적 호기심이 비등해져갔다. 민간 통일운동세력은 좀더 북한 친화적인 조직과 일정한 비판을 전제한 조직으로 분화되어 나갔다. 남, 북, 해외의 3자 공조를 내세운 범민련과 국내의 다양한 통일운동의 가치를 존중한 새통체의 출현은 사실 통일운동세력 내부의 북한 이해를 둘러싼 인식의 차이가 반영된 대립적 구조물이었다. 이같은 현상에 따라 민간 통일운동세력의 통일논의는 중층적 구도를 보이며 내부로부터 경합을 펼치기 시작하였다. 이 과정에서 정부는 민간 통일운동세력과의 긴

장관계를 지속하였으며 '창구 단일화' 원칙 하에서 민간 통일논의를 제어하고자 하였다. 따라서 탈냉전기 정부와 민간의 통일논의는 서로 의식하는 가운데 영향을 주고받으며 상호 경쟁하지 않을 수 없는 새로운 시대에 진입한 것으로 이해된다.

**주제어:** 탈냉전, 통일논의, 남북관계, 북방정책, 7·7선언, 남북기본합의서, 유엔 동시가입, 훈령조작, 북한바로알기운동, 방북, 창구 단일화, 범민련, 새통체

