

The Illusion of Victory

North Korea's War of Liberation Offensive and China's Nuclear Rise, 1962~1966

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During the 1960s, North Korea trumpeted war of liberation with added intensity and elevated unification as the nation's top priority. This was intended to preclude Park Chung Hee's political consolidation and obstruct Seoul's diplomatic penetration in the Afro-Asian bloc. Previously, the accelerated promotion of Pyongyang's war of liberation has been associated only loosely as a function of its longstanding ideological affinity with China. The present study aims to establish a more specific relationship by demonstrating that China's nuclear status, anticipated throughout the early 1960s and finally confirmed in October 1964, emboldened North Korea by putting South Korea on the defensive and forcing Seoul to launch a reluctant search for re-fashioning anti-communism. The expansion of Chinese influence in the uncommitted parts of Asia and Africa, along with heightened prospects for membership in the United Nations, allowed North Korea to operate from an inflated sense of ideological superiority to win the Third World and defeat the Park regime. For South Korea, China's nuclear rise further compromised Seoul's standing in the Third World, potentially threatened to erode international support for "one Korea" policy, and

sparked for the first time a wide-ranging domestic debate on the need for new strategies to engage the nonaligned countries without prejudice to anti-communism.

Keywords: Kim Il Sung, war of liberation, unification, Chinese nuclear test, Park Chung Hee, Hallstein Doctrine, neutral countries

1. Introduction

Since the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea(DRPK, hereafter used interchangeably with North Korea), a self-proclaimed mandate to rule the entire Korean peninsula has stood at the center of its socialist revolution. Whether couched in terms of peaceful unification or propagandized in militaristic hyperbole, the North Korean regime has pursued the strategy of overthrowing the incumbent government in the Republic of Korea (ROK, hereafter used interchangeably with South Korea) by enlisting the anti-government, pro-democratic, and pro-nationalist forces in Seoul. Since 1960, Kim Il Sung's central theme for the unification drive has been "to effectively wage a national liberation struggle" by forming a "united front encompassing all the patriotic forces in North and South Korea."¹⁾ The underlying premise was that Pyongyang was well positioned to take advantage of the progress

made in economic construction in the north in overthrowing the incumbent regime in the south. However misled and inflated it might have been from the present standpoint, Kim Il Sung and his lieutenants truly believed themselves to be on the right side of history, whereas the supposedly illegitimate and dysfunctional government in the southern half of Korea was eventually doomed to collapse.

As South Korean political, diplomatic, and economic consolidation became evident following Park Chung Hee's military coup d'état in May 1961, however, it progressively became far more difficult for North Korea to bank on the success of the above strategy. In particular, South Korea's normalization of diplomatic relations with Japan, dispatch of combat troops to South Vietnam, and visible progress of the First Five-Year Economic Plan(1962~1966) now threatened to jeopardize North Korea's economic lead.²⁾ The predicament was compounded by an open friction in relations with the Soviet Union in the latter years of the Khrushchev era(1962~1964), visible signs of economic stagnation in the middle of the First Seven Year Plan(1961~1970), and increasing alienation from China from the mid-1960s after the launch of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the escalation of the Vietnam

1) Soon Sung Cho, "The Politics of North Korea's Unification Policies, 1950~1965," *World Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 2(Jan., 1967), p. 236.

2) For a comprehensive treatment of the Park Chung Hee era in English, see Ezra Vogel and Byung-Kook Kim, eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

War. Put together, the 1960s represented for North Korea a crisis period of unprecedented magnitude, necessitating a fundamental shift in national goals from economic reconstruction to militarization.³⁾

Yet, it was at this hour of maximum perceived danger that the top hierarchy of the Korean Worker's Party(KWP) launched its most vocal campaign for war of liberation and focused on unification as the most urgent national task. The twin drives of national liberation and unification prevailed throughout 1964, leading to a key public endorsement in the celebrated speech given by Kim Il Sung in Indonesia in May 1965, and reconfirmed Kim Il Sung's report to the Conference of the Korean Worker's Party (KWP) in October 1966. How did the war of liberation offensive reach the height of its ideological bellicosity at a time of an unparalleled security and economic crisis? Earlier explanations tended to highlight North Korea's longstanding ideological affinity with China in repudiating the Soviet doctrine of peaceful coexistence and jointly advocating the more aggressive war of liberation line.⁴⁾ In particular, Pyongyang staged an intense public

3) Tong-man Suh, *Pukchosōnsahoejuüich'ejesōngnipša*[History of the Establishment of the Socialist System in North Korea](Seoul: Sōnin, 2005), p. 845.

4) Soon Sung Cho, "The Politics of North Korea's Unification Policies, 1950~1965," p. 236; Chin O Chung, *Pyongyang Between Peking and Moscow: North Korea's Involvement in the Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1958~1975*(Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1978), p. 159; Robert Scalapino and Chongsik Lee, *Communism in Korea: Part I The Movement*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); M. T. Haggard, "North Korea's Interna-

campaign against Soviet revisionism from 1962~1964, marking a clear departure from neutrality in the Sino-Soviet conflict to an alignment with Beijing. The war of liberation offensive would be reinforced throughout the 1960s as the increasingly militarized KWP leadership grappled with the urgent task of preventing further South Korean political, economic, and diplomatic consolidation. Based on the war of liberation line, Kim Il Sung and his lieutenants wanted to create the equivalent of what Ho Chi Minh had done in South Vietnam — build up a political and military apparatus capable of exercising actual control over portions of South Korean territory and of presenting a growing challenge to Seoul’s control over the South Korean population.⁵⁾

The recognition of Chinese influence notwithstanding, the previous scholarship has only loosely defined the weight of Chinese power and ideology on both the evolution and consequences of North Korea’s war of liberation offensive and unification policy. The present study aims to establish a more specific relationship by demonstrating that China’s nuclear status, anticipated throughout the early 1960s and finally confirmed in

tional Position,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 5, No. 8(Aug., 1965), pp. 375~388; Bernd Schaefer, “North Korean Adventurism and China’s Long Shadow,” Cold War International History Project, Working Paper #44, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars(October 2004).

5) “Kim Il-Sung’s New Military Adventurism,” Intelligence Report, Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency(26 November 1968), p. vii, <http://www.foia.cia.gov/document/intelligence-report-kim-il-sungs-new-military-adventurism-26-november-1968>(accessed 16 January 2016).

October 1964, emboldened North Korea by potentially weakening South Korea's standing in the Third World, eroding international support for "one Korea" policy, and sparking a domestic debate on the need for new strategies towards neutral countries. The period from 1965~1966 poses particular difficulty for gauging China's influence in North Korea because their bilateral relations visibly deteriorated as a result of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, differences about the post-Khrushchev leadership, and perceived ambiguousness in Beijing's policy towards the Vietnam War, all which cast doubts over the China's revolutionary essence from North Korea's standpoint.⁶⁾ This is also a time when North Korea's war of liberation campaign was yet to be accompanied by actual armed violence against the United States/South Korea⁷⁾ and Kim Il Sung resisted Mao Zedong's admonition for opening a

6) Although it is true that North Korea, as did China, adopted a cautious approach prior to October 1966, the political elites of the KWP began to harbor some serious doubts about the essence of Chinese revolutionary commitment. Apart from the Cultural Revolution and the new post-Khrushchev leadership of the Soviet Union, their differences about the nature and immediacy of the American threat increasingly divided the two former ideological allies further. See, Jeon Do, "The Fall of Ideology in Fraternal Socialism: Sino-North Korean Divergence over the American Threat, 1965~1966," *Korea Journal*, Vol. 55, No.2(Summer 2015), pp. 88~112. Various sources, first by the Yugoslavs in Moscow in January 1966 and the Czechs in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea, reported that the Chinese challenged the North Koreans to open a new front in Korea, which Kim Il Sung refused to comply. See, "Kim Il-Sung's New Military Adventurism," p. 3.

7) Balazs Szalontai, "In the Shadow of Vietnam A New Look at North Korea's Militant Strategy,1962~1970," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall 2012), pp. 122~166.

second front on the Korean peninsula, opting for a cautious approach.⁸⁾ The downward path in Sino-North Korean relations and the lack of armed violence on the part of Pyongyang notwithstanding, China's newly confirmed nuclear status strengthened North Korea's case for war of liberation because it could potentially deal a serious blow to South Korea's standing in the Third World, erode the foundation of Seoul's "one Korea policy," and generate pressures for moderating a strict anti-communist position toward neutral and certain non-hostile communist countries. The South Korean government, together with some sections of the informed public opinion, increasingly began to see this policy reorientation as necessary in order to pre-empt the UN debate on the Korean question from favoring North Korean positions, and reduce the appeal of Pyongyang's declaration of "independence" in the uncommitted areas of the Third World.

8) According to the CIA, it was the U.S. airstrikes against targets near Hanoi and Haiphong in mid-July 1966 that spurred Kim Il Sung to reconsider acting on provocative Chinese challenge to open a second front in Korea. It would not be until after October 1966, following the second KWP Representatives' Conference that clashes at the inter-Korean border would be dramatically increased, along with guerilla infiltration into South Korea. It was also at this conference that Kim Il Sung added the concept of engaging U.S. forces directly on every front. From late 1966, North Korea increasingly portrayed Kim Il Sung as an ultra-revolutionary who was willing to take greater risks than *either Moscow or Beijing* in creating a direct confrontation with 'imperialist' armed forces. Assuming this preeminent role in October 1968, he propounded the view, similar to Castro's and Ho's, that small countries can effectively roll back the U.S. on every front, provided that they pool together strength and do not depend on big countries to supply the motivation for their individual revolutions. See, "Kim Il-Sung's New Military Adventurism," p. i, pp. 5~6.

As the following sections will demonstrate, the increasing influence of China in the Third World and heightened prospects for membership in the United Nations following the first nuclear test in October 1964 strengthened North Korea's claim to national liberation and ultimate victory of socialism. Thus for North Korea, this was not only a time of vulnerability; it was also one of an unabated sense of moral and ideological supremacy to win neutral countries of the Third World, pre-empt South Korean diplomatic penetration, and enlist anti-government forces in Seoul based on economic and diplomatic superiority as well as historical legitimacy. For South Korea, this period marked perhaps the boldest phase of its anti-communism, by sending its own troops to defend another country. But this was also a time of differentiation in Seoul's anti-communist strategy, as policy makers began to incorporate, albeit on a highly selective basis, some flexibility in practicing the Hallstein Doctrine and engaging neutral countries. Each side assigned increasing importance to "independence" in foreign policy as the race for diplomatic and political recognition intensified. China's nuclear rise had a varying impact the mutually conflicting claim to independence advanced by the two Koreas. Beijing's nuclear success reinforced for the time being North Korea's misconceived moral and ideological supremacy, rendering the political elites in Pyongyang to overestimate its ability to effect revolutionary change. Meanwhile, China's nuclear rise prompted South Korea to incorporate more flexibility in diplomacy toward

neutral and communist countries. Therefore, China's nuclear rise would prove to be a mere a pyrrhic victory for North Korea, while serving as an impetus for pragmatic changes in South Korean strategies of anti-communist containment.

2. North Korea's War of Liberation Offensive and China's Nuclear Rise, 1962~1966

1) From Peaceful Unification to War of National Liberation

Although continued military-build up in anticipation of future conflict with South Korea remained a key feature of North Korean policy, the KWP hierarchy after the Korean War ostensibly claimed to advocate peaceful unification. In this connection, the political elites in Pyongyang proposed inter-Korean dialogue, economic aid to South Korea, and the creation of a confederation and all-Korean elections without outside intervention. Kim Il Sung made these proposals official in his speech on August 14, 1960.

The nominal promotion of peaceful unification throughout the postwar reconstruction period of the 1950s gave way to an increasingly more hostile and aggressive campaign to overthrow the South Korean regime and step-up military preparedness.⁹⁾ The

9) B. C. Koh, "Dilemmas of Korean Reunification," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 11, No. 5(May 1971), p. 483.

ascent of a militant line starting in the early 1960s was partly a reaction to Park Chung Hee's military coup d'état in May 1961; partly a consequence of North Korea's open repudiation of Soviet peaceful coexistence and alignment with China's war of liberation line; partly a function of the near exclusive political dominance of the Kim Il Sung-centered Manchurian guerilla group, which signaled the end of factional politics in North Korea by the time of the KWP Fourth Congress in September 1961. By the year's end, the KWP Central Committee proclaimed the so-called "Four Military Guidelines," placing the entire country on a virtual war footing and gearing up for military self-reliance. This policy was announced in the wake of the Soviet-North Korean military talks from November 29 - December 5, during which the Soviet side refused Pyongyang's request for submarines, MIG-21s, and an estimated 100 million rubles worth of aid to raise the number of surface-to-air missile divisions from 2 to 14.¹⁰⁾

The new militant strategy called for not only a steady increase in the number of North Korean agents to be dispatched to the South but also stepped-up military preparedness in the North. Immediately after the military coup d'état, the KWP decided to concentrate on national defense, and slowing down development of

10) "Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung," November 14, 1962, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 18, papka 93, delo 5, listy 152~154. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110490>(accessed March 23, 2013).

the national economic plan.¹¹⁾ This meant, among other things, that the KWP would reduce references being made to peaceful proposals for unification, including the confederation issue. The Soviet embassy in Pyongyang at the time noted that materials and decisions of the Fourth KWP Party Congress did not contain peaceful proposals concerning the South and the confederation issue. In talks with the North Korean counterparts, the Soviet side inquired why the Fourth Party Congress concluded this way. According to the North Korean officials, an appeal for a confederation would certainly have triggered positive reactions in South Korea, and then those people would have been arrested by the military junta.¹²⁾

The earlier peaceful proposals were replaced by an intense campaign to enlist the anti-government forces in Seoul. After characterizing the Korean revolution as “a national liberation revolution against imperialism” and “a democratic revolution

11) “Cable from the Chinese Embassy in North Korea, ‘Contents of the May 18th North Korean Party Central Standing Committee Meeting,’” May 21, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 106-00581-06, 32-33. Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110055> <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110055>(accessed March 23, 2013).

12) “Note about a Conversation between Comrade Stark and Comrade Torbenkov, Counselor at the USSR Embassy in the DPRK,” March 29, 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA. Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110511> <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110511>(accessed March 23, 2013).

against the feudalistic forces,” Kim argued that an essential prerequisite to the twin revolutions was the organization of a “revolutionary party which takes Marxism-Leninism as its guide and represents the interests of workers, peasants, and all other sections of the broad popular masses.”¹³⁾ In the period between January and May 1962, the Korean people were called up to expel U.S. imperialism from South Korea and to violently overthrow the Park Chung Hee clique. An East German embassy document described this movement to be “bordering on adventurism,” which “reached its peak when on February 15, 1962 when a statement by the United Patriotic Front of Korea was made public.”¹⁴⁾ It contained slogans about the forceful liberation of South Korea from U.S. imperialism and coincided with military demonstrations in the DPRK. Especially the month of April saw large manifestations under the slogan of expelling U.S. troops from South Korea by “liberating the South Korean brothers and sisters.”¹⁵⁾ Pak Geum-cheol, in one conversation with the East German Ambassador in Pyongyang, identified “facilitating the overthrow in South Korea of the military junta of Park Chung Hee” as a key

13) B. C. Koh, “Dilemmas of Korean Reunification,” p. 483.

14) “The Development of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s Reunification Policy,” May 02, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/20/250. Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110113>(accessed January 2, 2016).

15) *Ibid.*

objective.¹⁶⁾ Although Pak Geum-cheol emphasized the necessity of a peaceful unification, he stated that it would not be possible before the rule of Park Chung Hee is overthrown.¹⁷⁾

2) Winning the Third World

Heightened war preparations, coupled with calls for overthrowing the Park Chung Hee regime, featured a high degree of congruence with the more aggressive Chinese line of war of liberation. Both Beijing and Pyongyang repudiated Moscow's view of nuclear weapons as the cause of war. For them, it was imperialism, led by the United States, that should be opposed first and foremost as the root of modern warfare. The Chinese and the North Koreans saw negotiations with imperialists as a violation of Marxism-Leninism and claimed themselves to be exclusively committed to ideological correctness where Khrushchev had committed the cardinal sin of revisionist heresy in the interest of preserving peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

In this connection, Soviet-American negotiations leading to the

16) "Memorandum of a Conversation between the Czech Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Moravec, with the Soviet Ambassador, Comrade Moskovskii, and the GDR Ambassador, Comrade Becker, on 23. IV. 1963," May 16, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, State Central Archive, Prague, file A. Novotny, foreign affairs, KPDR. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113714>(accessed January 6, 2016).

17) *Ibid.*

conclusion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty(LTBT) in 1963 marked a turning point in the Sino-Soviet split, and consequently the very point of contention that made North Korean nonalignment in the Sino-Soviet split difficult to sustain.¹⁸⁾ The convergence of North Korean and Chinese positions on the nuclear test ban and peaceful coexistence was confirmed at the highest levels while LTBT negotiations were being conducted in Moscow. In June, Chairman Choe Yong-gon and President Liu Shaoqi held a meeting, which produced a joint communiqué. Their joint statement date June 23, both by its timing and substance, may be seen as a Sino-North Korean statement opposing the Soviet doctrine of peaceful coexistence and stressing the need for more socialist countries to acquire nuclear capability. The statement read: “It is absolutely impermissible to reduce one-sidedly the foreign policy of the socialist countries to peaceful coexistence, to interpret peaceful coexistence as consisting merely of ideological struggle and economic competition, and to forget that peaceful coexistence will be out of the question if no resolute struggle is waged on all fronts

18) Walter Clemens, *The Arms Race and Sino-Soviet Relations*(Stanford: The Hoover Institute, 1968), p. 66. Clemens noted that four parties in Asia that attempted neutrality — North Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Japan — drew closer to China, as the test ban treaty made more difficult the possibility of nonalignment in the Sino-Soviet rift. For how the nuclear issue in the Sino-Soviet split affected the formation of North Korean nuclear independence, see, Jein Do, “Nuclear Weapons as Ideology: The Formation of North Korean Nuclear Independence, 1962~1964,” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2(December 2015), pp. 181~212.

against the imperialist policies of aggression and war.”¹⁹⁾ North Korean officials stressed that “one must not be afraid of nuclear war, as the force of revolutionary spirit is more powerful than any atomic bomb.”²⁰⁾

By the time the LTBT was signed in July 1963, China was well on its way to conducting its first nuclear test. The July 1963 U.S. Special National Intelligence Estimate(SNIE) “Communist China’s Advanced Weapons Program” predicted that the test could be conducted as early as 1964, but noted “running into even a normal number of difficulties could postpone the date to late 1964 or 1965.”²¹⁾ As President John F. Kennedy intensified counterinsurgency in South Vietnam, the imminent prospect of China’s first nuclear test added profound urgency to Soviet-American nuclear cooperation to strike a deal on the LTBT. Drawing from his longstanding misgivings about Mao Zedong’s ideological radicalism, Kennedy maintained an extremely alarmist view of China as a nuclear power, defining the Chinese nuclear test as

19) “Joint Communiqué between Chairman Choe Yong-gon and President Liu Shaoqi(June 23, 1963),” *Chosŏnjungangnyŏn'gam*[North Korea Yearbook] (P’yŏngyang: Chosŏnchungang’ongsinsa, 1964), p. 19.

20) The Influence of the Chinese Communist Party on the Policy of the Korean Workers Party,“ April 8, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/30/253. Translated by Bernd Schaefer. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110111>(accessed January 23, 2016).

21) DCI, Special National Intelligence Estimate, “Communist China’s Advanced Weapons Program,” http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0001097947.pdf(accessed March 24, 2013).

“historically the most significant and worst event of the 1960s.”²²⁾ Based on these assessments, the U.S. Department of State created the Office of Asian Communist Affairs within the Far Eastern Bureau in November 1963 in order to deal with China’s radical and militant communism.²³⁾

Two events in 1964 stand out as major turning points in China’s leadership in the national liberation struggles and its impact on North Korea’s war of liberation offensive: France’s recognition of China in January and China’s nuclear test in October. As speculations about the timing of China’s first nuclear test mounted in the early months of 1964, the North Koreans laid further stress on the nuclear theme to buttress its case for anti-Soviet revisionism and support national liberation struggles. A prime example of North Korea’s standard critique can be found in a *Rodong sinmun* editorial entitled, “Let’s Raise High the Revolutionary Banner of National Liberation.”²⁴⁾ This article described the conditions for national liberation struggles as being “highly favorable,” but thwarted by the (Soviet) revisionist heresy of peaceful coexistence.²⁵⁾ As a direct counterargument to the

22) Gordon Chang, “JFK, China, and the Bomb,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 74, No. 4(March 1988), p. 1310.

23) Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974: from “Red Menace” to “Tacit Ally”*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 35.

24) *Rodong sinmun*, January 27, 1964.

25) *Ibid.*, January 27, 1964.

Soviet view that nuclear weapons had fundamentally changed the nature of modern warfare, the *Rodong sinmun* editorial accentuated the role of armed resistance. The obstruction of revisionists aided by imperialists notwithstanding, the statement pinned hopes on the growing national liberation struggles of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and called for the broadest possible socialist solidarity to assist them. Needless to say, these lines closely approximated Beijing's positions, as published in China's joint statements with Albania and North Vietnam at the time.

In this context, North Korea went to great lengths to magnify the significance of France's diplomatic recognition of China on January 27. Although Paris and Beijing had different ideologies, a unique alignment of interests at this particular time, the most prominent of which was a shared objection to nuclear nonproliferation, facilitated their mutual diplomatic recognition.²⁶⁾ Pyongyang portrayed the normalization of Sino-French relations as a landmark victory of the Chinese revolution, which would generate pressures for other countries to rethink their policy towards China.²⁷⁾ The North Korean media highlighted the achievements of China's modernization in agriculture, industrialization, culture, and science.²⁸⁾ The recognition of Beijing as the

26) Lorenz Luthi, "Rearranging International Relations?: How Mao's China and de Gaulle's France Recognized Each Other in 1963~1964," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1(Winter 2014), pp. 111~145.

27) *Rodong sinmun*, January 30, 1964.

sole legitimate representative of the Chinese nation was projected to be an irreversible trend, which would further isolate the “bankrupt” U.S. policy of non-recognition and “two Chinas,” and decisively empower the movements for national liberation in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.²⁹⁾

The Lop Nur nuclear facility, which was the test site used for the explosion in October, was added to the list of U-2 targets only in the spring of 1964.³⁰⁾ A Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) in August 1964 entitled “The Changes of an Imminent Communist Chinese Nuclear Explosion,” confirmed that the on the basis of new overhead photography from August 6-9, the previously suspect facility at Lop Nur in Western China was a “nuclear test site that could be ready for use in about two months.”³¹⁾ On October 16, China conducted its first nuclear test at the Lop Nur test site in Xinjiang, which Chinese statement declared, “the mastering of the nuclear weapons by China is a great encouragement to the revolutionary peoples of the world in their struggles.”³²⁾ On this occasion, Pyongyang predictably issued a

28) *Ibid.*, January 30, 1964.

29) *Ibid.*, January 30, 1964.

30) William Burr and Jeffrey Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle’: The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 3(Winter 2000), p. 84.

31) Document 43, “Special National Intelligence Estimate,” 26 August 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XXX, China, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v30/d43>(March 12, 2013).

32) *Peking Review*, 16 October 1964.

laudatory statement to mark the Chinese nuclear success as: “China’s successful nuclear test is the precious fruition of a revolutionary spirit to build a prosperous nation independently, and a product of the modern science technology and strong industrialization that the Chinese people have developed through a rigorous struggle... The nuclear test will serve as a great encouragement to those peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America who are struggling against imperialism and colonialism in order to achieve national independence and freedom.”³³⁾

Drawing from the sense of inevitable victory in winning the Third World, North Korea concentrated its attention on diplomatic penetration in the Afro-Asian bloc. These efforts were particularly noticeable since the beginning of 1963 and were highlighted in 1964~1965 when North Korea established diplomatic relations with eight countries in Asia and Africa (Yemen, Egypt, Indonesia, Mauritania, Cambodia, Congo, Ghana, and Tanzania).³⁴⁾ As of January 1965, North Korea had established ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations with twenty-four countries, consular-level relations with three countries, and set up four trade representatives in four countries. According to North Korea’s official diplomatic account, two hundred delegations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America

33) *Rodong sinmun*, October 19, 1964.

34) Pak T’aeho, *Chosŏnminjujuŭiinmin’gonghwaguk Taegwan’gyesa* [History of Foreign Relations of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea] (P’yŏngyang: Sahoewahakch’ulp’ansa, 1987), pp. 24~25.

visited Pyongyang as trade, business, and friendship representatives.³⁵⁾ Along with these intensified efforts in the nonaligned parts of the Third World, North Korea began to make some headway in establishing trade contacts with Western European capitalist countries as well. Though the total value of North Korean purchases was still relatively small, equipment and plants were bought in the Netherlands, West Germany, France and Italy.³⁶⁾ The North Koreans also carried on negotiations to buy a steel plant and heavy industrial equipment from Austria, valued in the neighborhood of \$50 million.³⁷⁾ It was in this context that Kim Il Sung made his first trip to a non-Communist country since the establishment of the DPRK when he visited Indonesia in April 1965 and gave his address entitled “On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution.”

3) Liberating South Korea

Prior to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Kim Il Sung had spent much of the previous year, against the backdrop of the Soviet nuclear test in August 1949, presenting Korean

35) *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

36) M. T. Haggard, “North Korea’s International Position,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 5, No. 8(Aug., 1965), p. 377.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 367.

unification as the most urgent national goal. This situation repeated itself in the wake of China's nuclear test. From 1964, the KWP hierarchy assigned the foremost significance to achieving unification and in this vein presented South Korea as an area where the war of liberation was applicable.³⁸⁾ This is not to say that the North Koreans were not aware of the lack of revolutionary consciousness of the South Korean masses. As Kim Il Sung acknowledged, "The revolutionary forces of south Korea are still very weak. The consciousness of the masses is low and the revolutionary ranks have not grown to any great extent."³⁹⁾ At the same time, the KWP leadership stressed that a revolution in South Korea has to be carried on by their own efforts. Nonetheless, the North Korean regime increasingly drew from their ill-conceived conception of ultimate victory in calling for the creation of a Marxist-Leninist party in South Korea and a united front of revolutionary forces including intellectuals, student youths, urban petty-bourgeoisie and conscientious national bourgeoisie.⁴⁰⁾

At the center of North Korea's intensified national liberation offensive was the claim that the South Korea side was

38) Soon Chung Cho, *The Politics of North Korea's Unification Policies, 1950-1965*, p. 236

39) Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Strengthen the Revolutionary Forces in Every Way so as to Achieve the Cause of Reunification of the Country(February 27, 1964)," *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol. 18(Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1984), p. 223.

40) *Ibid.*, p. 227.

maneuvering to delay unification by pursuing an “economy first unification later” strategy and refusing to endorse inter-Korean contacts and exchanges. As Kim(2010) observed, the Park government’s policy of “economy first” had a significant meaning in the Korean unification context because embarking upon a long-range program to attain a self-sustaining economy meant a tacit acceptance of North-South division and an abandonment of any real unification policy at least for the time being.⁴¹⁾ There were some indications that this economy-first strategy was being questioned within in South Korea. According to a poll conducted on November 4, 1964 by *Chosun Ilbo*, for example, 48% supported cultural exchange, 14 rejected%, 25 % supported the idea despite their doubt about its realization.⁴²⁾ The same poll also showed that about a half of the respondents were supporting an argument that a method for Korean unification should be sought outside the UN. This was shocking to the Korean establishment which supported Korean unification through the UN.⁴³⁾ To restrain the growing debates on unification, Park Chung Hee announced on November 3 that the only way to unification was an administering of simultaneous general elections throughout Korea under UN supervision in direct proportion to the indigenous population.

41) Hakjoon Kim, *The Domestic Politics of Korean Unification: Debates on the North in the South, 1948~2008*(Seoul: Jinmoondang, 2010), p. 125.

42) *Chosun Ilbo*, November 4, 1964.

43) Hakjoon Kim, *The Domestic Politics of Korean Unification*, p. 121.

As Seoul's position on unification became more strict, Pyongyang claimed that the aspiration for unification among the South Korean masses had reached unprecedented levels, only to be stifled by the American imperialists and the Park Chung Hee clique.⁴⁴⁾ North Korean leaders seem to have misinterpreted the shifts in South Korean public opinion as a growing anti-American, anti-Park Chung Hee movement that proved the correctness of Pyongyang's unification strategy. At a time when South Korea's diplomatic normalization with Japan and involvement in Vietnam precipitously weakened Seoul's standing in the Third World, North Korea's case for self-reliance and independence in the anti-American, national liberation struggle raised its ideological appeal among anti-government elements in Seoul and countries of the Afro-Asian bloc. The demand for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea and the refusal to accept the competence and authority of the United Nations on the Korean question continued to form the unalterable basis of a strategy for peaceful unification, to be achieved after the people of South Korea overthrew the incumbent government through their own efforts. In this connection, Kim Il Sung hyperbolized the extent of the economic, political, and social crisis in South Korea. Kim Il Sung's speech given at the Ali Archam Academy of Social Sciences in Indonesia on April 14, 1965 provides the most salient

44) *Rodong sinmun*, November 10, 1964.

example. According to Kim Il Sung, the following crises made the ascent of a revolutionary situation highly probable:

South Korea's national economy is now totally bankrupt and the level of its industrial production stands at no more than 85 percent of what it was at the time of liberation. South Korea's agriculture is likewise in an acute crisis. Agricultural output has dropped two-thirds of what it was at the time of liberation. South Korea, once known as the granary of our country, has now become an area of chronic famine which has to import 800,000 to 1,000,000 tons of cereals every year. Today there are roughly seven million unemployed and semi-unemployed in south Korea, and every year more than one million peasant households suffer from lack of food during the spring shortages... The economic catastrophe and the wretched social position of the people in south Korea have produced acute social, class, and national contradictions.⁴⁵⁾

By the mid-1960s, visible signs of South Korean economic development threatened to undercut the Pyongyang's potential and actual appeal among the South Korean masses. By the end of 1966, South Korea had successfully implemented the Five Year

45) Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution(April 14, 1965)," *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol. 19(Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1984), p. 271.

Plan, increasing its real GNP at an annual rate of 8.3%.⁴⁶⁾ South Korea's military power also gained a significant boost from increased U.S. aid in return for the troop dispatch to South Vietnam. During this same time, however, the North Koreans were grappling with the first signs of serious economic stagnation. The adverse impact of the heavy allocations of manpower and resources to military buildup was palpable by 1965, when the KWP leadership started openly acknowledging that "economic development came to be delayed to a certain extent because the situation prevailing in the last two to three years required a concentration of our resources on strengthening our military capability."⁴⁷⁾ Average annual rate of growth of national income declined from 21% during the Five Year Plan(1956~1960) to 8.1% during the Seven Year Plan(1961~1970).⁴⁸⁾ The 36.6% annual growth rate in industrial output achieved during the Five Year Plan fell to 12.8% during the Seven Year Plan, industrial output actually declined 3% over the preceding year in 1966, which was the first time this happened.⁴⁹⁾ The announcement of the extension of the Seven Year Plan in the Second Representative's Conference

46) B. C. "Dilemmas of Korean Unification," p. 484.

47) Kim Il Sung, "New Year Address(January 1, 1965)," *Chosŏnjungangnyŏn'gam*, 1966~1967[North Korean Year Book, 1966~1967](P'yŏngyang: Chosŏnchun-gang'ongsinsa, 1967), p. 3.

48) Joseph Chung, "North Korea's Seven Year Plan: Economic Performance and Reforms," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 6(June 1972), p. 528.

49) *Ibid.*, p. 529.

in October 1966 represented the clearest public admission of the economic dislocation caused by the military buildup program from 1962.

North Korea's predicament was further compounded by a rupture in relations with Beijing from 1965. From this point, Pyongyang began to harbor some serious doubts about the extreme anti-Soviet radicalization of Chinese foreign and domestic policy in the lead up to the Cultural Revolution and criticized the CCP refusal to form the broadest anti-imperialist front that included the Soviet Union. The editorial "Let's Safeguard Independence" in August 1966, in particular, represented a new phase in North Korea's turn against China, for the first time publicly questioning the essence of Beijing's revolutionary commitment. Pyongyang increasingly saw China as obstructing the united socialist front against US imperialism in Vietnam and even colluding with the United States to avoid a direct military confrontation.⁵⁰⁾ North Korea no longer always supported the Chinese in issues of Afro-Asian solidarity, opting instead to advocate the unity of action of all anti-imperialist countries, including the USSR, and all the socialist countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁵¹⁾

50) Jein Do, "The Fall of Ideology in Fraternal Socialism"; Bernd Schaefer, "North Korean Adventurism and China's Long Shadow," Cold War International History Project, Working Paper #44, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars(October 2004), pp. 5~7.

51) "Excerpts from the Report of the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, 'Some New Aspects of Korean-Chinese Relations in the First Half of 1965'," June 04,

Despite the foregoing economic difficulties and degeneration of bilateral relations with Beijing, North Korea continued a full-fledged campaign for unification, pervaded by an unabated sense of superiority and immediacy. In his report to the Second KWP Conference in October 1966, Kim Il Sung stated that the “reunification of the country is the supreme national task of our people and an urgent question whose solution brooks no further delay.”⁵²⁾ The propagation of Marxist-Leninist ideology was presented as a key means by which the South Korean masses could shake off the influence of “anti-communism” and subject them to the “essence and superiority of the socialist system in the northern half of the Republic.”⁵³⁾ Unlike this preoccupation with unification and the unaltered illusion of victory, however, South Korea at the time was in the middle of a serious policy debate to refashion anti-communism.

1965, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 21, papka 106, delo 20, listy 14-27. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110503> (accessed January 24, 2016).

52) Kim Il Sung, “The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party(October 5, 1966),” *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol. 20(Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1984), p. 395.

53) *Ibid.*, p. 393.

3. Refashioning Anti-Communism: South Korean Counter Responses

The French recognition of the PRC and China's nuclear test in 1964 placed South Korea on the defensive, magnifying the China threat and serving as a *déjà-vu* of the pre-Korean War situation when the Soviet nuclear test in August 1949 appeared as a harbinger of a major communist military offensive. China's nuclear rise stood to de-legitimize some of the most nonnegotiable principles of South Korean diplomacy, the most important of which was the "one Korea" policy of denying North Korea's claim to legitimate representation. Consequently, circumstances before and after the Chinese nuclear test in turn, sparked a serious and revitalized debate on the question of unification in South Korea starting in 1964.

Since the early 1960s, the government as well as informed opinion in South Korea had begun to raise concerns about the potentially ominous ramifications of the Afro-Asian solidarity manifested in the Bandung Conference of 1955 and increased representation of Asian-African countries in the United Nations after 1960. Prior to the military coup in 1961, the ruling Democratic Party, while firmly rejecting any proposals for the neutralization of Korea or North Korea's confederation scheme, recognized the need for a more assertive policy towards the newly liberated countries of Asia and Africa. On January 19, 1961, for

example, the Democratic Party noted that given the inevitability of China's entry into the United Nations, it might be necessary for the South Korean government to recognize communist Chinese presence in the United Nations, but only on the condition that Beijing supports Seoul's unification policy of "elections supervised by the United Nations."⁵⁴) After the military coup in May 1961, the new government sought to distinguish itself from the previous administrations of Syngman Rhee(1948~1960) and John(Myon) Chang(1960~1961) by accentuating the need for a more pragmatic and pro-active foreign policy toward neutral countries in Asia and Africa. In this vein, a restoration of self-reliance, move away from an exclusive dependence on the United States, and increasing contacts with the Third World gained increasing salience in official discourse about the future path of the new regime's diplomacy.

But it was the French diplomatic recognition of the PRC and the Chinese nuclear test in 1964, which as described above, boosted North Korea's war of liberation offensive, that finally drove home the need for an actual policy alteration towards the nonaligned countries. To be sure, China's nuclear rise worked in favor of the South Korean government policy to a certain extent. The Chinese nuclear test raised fears about China's ideological influence and military threat to new heights in the wake of the Tonkin Incident

54) *Donga Ilbo*, January 19, 1961.

in August and ROK-Japan negotiations for diplomatic normalization. Predictably, officials appropriated the occasion to rally support behind the hugely controversial matter of establishing diplomatic relations with Tokyo, underscoring the need for bilateral security cooperation.⁵⁵⁾

At the same time, China's nuclear rise cast further urgency to approaching left-leaning countries of Asia and Africa based on pragmatism and flexibility in order to counter Pyongyang's projected offensive. The South Korean government had to acknowledge that it was no longer sufficient to just oppose or fight against communism; it was now time for a more effective and nuanced containment, one that would allow for engagement with the nonaligned countries as a countermeasure to the North Korean war of liberation offensive but without prejudice to anti-communism. This position closely approximated the arguments raised from some sections of the informed opinion in the intellectual community. One prominent scholar at Seoul National University, Yi Yong-hui, who later would assume the leadership of the Board of National Unification (present day Ministry of Unification), argued that South Korea in the past had isolated itself diplomatically by treating leaf-leaning neutral countries as hostile.⁵⁶⁾

55) *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, October 26, 1964.

56) *Donga Ilbo*, October 31, 1964.

From 1964, the question of moderating anti-communism while maintaining the “one Korea” policy became the center of policy and intellectual debates in South Korea. Officials in Seoul saw South Korea to be the most negatively and directly affected by the ascent of a “two China policy” around the world. In one parliamentary hearing in the Foreign Affairs Committee on January 21, for example, lawmakers and foreign policy officials discussed, in a tone bordering panic, the potential ramifications of France’s recognition of the PRC. Key lawmakers, including chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Kim Dong-hwan(Democratic Republican Party), Pak Chun-kyu(Democratic Republican Party), Kang Mun-bong(Democratic Justice Party), and etc., were unanimous in warning that France’s recognition of China would be certain to catapult Beijing to the status of a major power in the United Nations, which in turn would lead to the appalling consequence of elevating North Korea’s international position.⁵⁷⁾ This would compromise the chances of South Korea’s sole representation in the United Nations. To diminish the negative impact of China’s empowerment, lawmakers stressed the need for adopting a more flexible anti-communist approach and bi-partisan cooperation to ensure that the anticipated American turn towards a “two-China policy” would not be translated to a “two-Korea policy.” In the discussions about China’s new might, Korean government officials

57) *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, October 21, 1964.

underscored the primarily psychological and ideological aspect, rather than the military danger itself. Prime Minister Chŏng Il-gwŏn stressed that the significance of the Chinese nuclear test primarily rested on strengthening solidarity within the in the Asian-African bloc, and leading North Korea to bluff by free-riding on Beijing's elevated international status. Minister of Defense Kim Sŏng-ŭn tried to downplay the military usefulness of China's nuclear device, describing it as "rudimentary," and projected the continued operation of guerilla warfare in Beijing's intervention of overseas internal conflict.⁵⁸⁾ General Hamilton H. Howze, commander of the United States Forces in Korea(USFK), expressed similar views, stating that China's detonation of a nuclear device had no impact on the military situation on the Korean peninsula.⁵⁹⁾ In addition, Hamilton did not anticipate China's acquisition of nuclear capability to propel North Korean action against South Korea.⁶⁰⁾

The note of caution aside, the government began to take some concrete measures to pre-empt further North Korean penetration in Asia and Africa. Seoul organized a diplomatic delegation to travel to Africa throughout October and November. Headed by the celebrated Korean War hero General Paek Sŏn-yŏp, then ambassador to France, this delegation was to visit twelve countries

58) *Donga Ilbo*, October 26, 1964.

59) *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, December 30, 1964.

60) *Donga Ilbo*, December 30, 1964.

including Senegal and Central Africa, two countries that had just recognized communist China. The mission was to prevent the ascent of a “two Korea policy” akin to the increasingly salient “two China policy” in the newly liberated uncommitted parts of Africa. These efforts, however, stood little chance of affecting the future course of the policies of the Afro-Asian bloc, since France had already recognized China, and the newly elected U.K. government under the Labour Party also stated an interest in exchanging ambassadors with Beijing and supporting its entry to the United Nations. In this situation, Prime Minister Chŏng Il-gwŏn and President Park Chung Hee reiterated the official line that unification must be achieved through all-Korean elections supervised by the United Nations. This, as noted in the previous section, was categorically rejected by the Pyongyang, which at the time was in the middle of an intensified campaign to present unification as the most urgent task of the KWP and actively expanding its diplomatic presence in the Third World.

As the recognition of two Chinas gained more traction after the nuclear test, it became harder for the South Korean government to sustain its one-Korea policy and the Hallstein Doctrine. According to one editorial in *Donga Ilbo*, the government reportedly was searching for a way to accommodate the new situation by “effectively excluding” a two-Korea policy rather than “opposing” it.⁶¹⁾ Where previously the government had severed diplomatic ties with countries that exchanged ambassadors with North Korea,

Seoul would merely encourage these countries to reconsider their ties with Pyongyang. This reorientation was warranted, as the editorial recognized, as South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War was already deepening its diplomatic isolation in the Afro-Asian bloc and raising the chances that North Korea would capitalize on this weakness. However, the editorial cautioned that the new measure of flexibility in the government's policy towards the neutral countries should in no way lead to the official recognition of a two-Korea policy.

By the time South Korea had sent the first of its combat troops to South Vietnam in the spring of 1965, however, Seoul's efforts to counter Pyongyang's parallel intensification of diplomatic and unification offensive stood to reap very little success, if at all. South Korea's application to participate in the second Asia-Africa Conference was turned down precisely because of the widening involvement in Vietnam. In this situation, top South Korean officials began to publicly acknowledge the need for a new policy towards nonaligned countries. Officially, there was to be no change to the Hallstein Doctrine, but this no longer precluded actively engaging countries that had established diplomatic relations with North Korea through economic and cultural exchanges.⁶²⁾

61) *Ibid.*, January 20, 1965.

62) Hakjoon Kim, *The Domestic Politics of Korean Unification*, p. 135.

The year 1966 marked a new highpoint of such policy reorientation. On 13 January, Foreign Minister Lee Dong-wŏn, in a press conference, made these exact remarks. Interestingly, he made a direct reference to the need for an “independence” in Korean diplomacy to justify this shift, which bore a stark resemblance to the North Korean line of “independence.”⁶³⁾ Although the Foreign Minister maintained that the Hallstein Doctrine remained a strong principle, lawmakers from both the ruling and opposition parties were quick to note that a subtle and quiet reorientation was in fact underway. Shin Dong-jun, spokesperson for the ruling Democratic Republican Party, stressed the need for flexibility in the application of the Hallstein Doctrine.⁶⁴⁾ Kim Dae Jung, spokesperson for the opposition Democratic People’s Party, likewise commented that it was time to rethink the Hallstein Doctrine since it would result in isolation rather than pragmatic results given the emerging new environment in international relations.⁶⁵⁾ However, Kim Dae Jung also questioned the abrupt way in which the government announced this rather fundamental change in the foreign policy principle of the past twenty years, which he said was done without adequate discussions within the National Assembly.

By March 1966, the government had announced, for example,

63) *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, January 14, 1966.

64) *Donga Ilbo*, January 15, 1966.

65) *Ibid.*, January 15, 1966.

that it would lift travel restrictions on Eastern bloc communist countries including the Soviet Union, in order to allow for South Korean participation in nonpolitical academic conferences. In this connection, two Korean scholars had filed a visa application in order to participate in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting on oceanography in Moscow. Informed public opinion in South Korea was shifting favorably towards the relaxation of travel restrictions on communist countries.⁶⁶⁾ One prominent literary critic, Paek Ch'öl, made a telling reference to the wave of liberalization in the Eastern European communist bloc, and stressed that it would be “more advantageous to find out for ourselves what the other side of the world [communist countries] is like rather than fixating on vigilance alone.”⁶⁷⁾ In a similar vein, many opined that it was necessary for the South Korean scholars to actively redress the “distorted” views prevalent in the field of Korean studies in communist countries, which had been disseminated by North Korean propaganda.⁶⁸⁾ In the end, the controversy was settled as the Soviet Union did not approve the visa application. In April, North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol asked his Soviet counterpart Andrei Gromyko to not grant entry visas to South Koreans wishing to participate in the UNESCO conference.⁶⁹⁾

66) *Donga Ilbo*, March 19, 1966; *Donga Ilbo*, April 4, 1966.

67) *Ibid.*, March 16, 1966.

68) *Ibid.*, March 28, 1966.

However, a note of caution remained in many major editorials, amidst a flurry of reports on North Korea's proposal for an inter-Korean soccer match, potential participation of Korean lawmakers in the General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union(IPU) scheduled to be held in Moscow, and visa application to the Soviet Union by a young promising cellist identified only as Ms. Chung to enter the International Tchaikovsky Competition.⁷⁰⁾ It was certain that the communist would use such occasions to propagandize their cause; there was no such thing as "elected" lawmakers in the totalitarian system of the Soviet Union; hasty participation alongside communists in international conferences would give effective credence to a "two Korea" view.⁷¹⁾

The cautionary warnings notwithstanding, the government in Seoul announced several notable changes in the strategy for anti-communism. On April 22, the cabinet decided that the government would not oppose sending official and civilian delegation to academic and technical conferences held in communist countries, and also allow communist representation in the event of such occasions in South Korea.⁷²⁾ An unidentified Foreign Ministry

69) "Record of Conversation between Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol," April 9, 1966, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 22, papka 107, delo 4, listy 1-5. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110504>. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110504>(accessed January 4, 1966).

70) *Donga Ilbo*, April 1, 1966.

71) *Ibid.*, April 1, 1966.

official acknowledged that in making this decision, U.S. Ambassador to Korea Winthrop G. Brown's persistent encouragement played an important role. It was also around this time that the Foreign Ministry decided that it could no longer afford to ignore the China question. Foreign Minister Lee Dong-wŏn confirmed that the ministry intended to install a bureau specifically dedicated to the issue of communism, including China, as a direct reaction to its first hydrogen bomb test on May 9, 1966.⁷³⁾ In addition, Park Chung Hee, on July 17, announced that the government would lift trade restrictions on foreign companies that had engaged in trade with communists. Due to this decision, it now became possible for a Korean company to trade with foreign counterparts in the U.K. or France, for example, even if they had travelled to or conducted trade operations with communist countries. This change would be applicable with the exception of China and North Korea.⁷⁴⁾ Thus economics now became integral to the refashioning of anti-communism and began to produce a new mode of thinking that separated economics from politics.

The incorporation of pragmatic elements, however, had no impact on Seoul's relations with Pyongyang and Beijing. As seen in the above, North Korea and China were specifically ruled out in communist engagement. This shows that the crux of policy

72) *Ibid.*, April 26, 1966.

73) *Ibid.*, May 23, 1966.

74) *Ibid.*, July 28, 1966.

reorientation did not signal any moderation of anti-communism but a refashioning in order to achieve more pragmatic results. For all the recognition of the changed environment, South Korean officials did not see the nature of the North Korean threat as having been reduced despite of the apparent distance between Beijing and Pyongyang due to the Cultural Revolution, increasing North Korean criticism of Chinese policy towards the Vietnam War, and a manifest anti-Chinese bent in its declaration of independence in August 1966. At the same time, North Korea's rapprochement with the Soviet Union after 1965 was not projected to influence Pyongyang to adopt peaceful coexistence—it was merely a reflection of the dire need to secure more military and economic aid from Moscow, whose leadership under Leonid Brezhnev happened to assign more significance to alliance solidarity based on a return to a “Stalinist world view.”⁷⁵⁾ But even if a rapprochement with Moscow had disposed Pyongyang to a line of peaceful coexistence, this was also taken as dangerous since the North Korean political elites might wage a peace offensive. For example, North Korea might launch a wedge strategy to separate American and South Korean positions by raising some repugnant concept like neutral unification.⁷⁶⁾

75) Zubok, Vladislav and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

76) *Donga Ilbo*, August 23, 1966; *Donga Ilbo*, August 25, 1966.

4. Conclusion

The history of North Korea's war of liberation and unification offensive from 1962~1966 demonstrates that Chinese influence on the Korean peninsula manifested itself in complex ways that blurs a clear distinction between victory and defeat. As discussed above, North Korea's bilateral relationship with China drastically fluctuated from the height of ideological solidarity(1962~1964) to unprecedented open friction(1965~1966). However, such ebbs and flows in Sino-North Korean bilateral relations are not by themselves sufficient to explain the full weight of Chinese influence on the Korean peninsula. Rather, what is truly key to appreciating this relationship is how China's fundamental national interests at a given time shape the state of affairs on the Korean peninsula in ways that results in strengthening Pyongyang's position regardless of the ups and downs in Sino-North Korean bilateral relations. That Chinese national interests favor North Korean policy, however, should not be taken as necessarily always beneficial for Pyongyang in the end. For this reason, the consequences of China's nuclear rise for North Korea were ambivalent and contradictory at best.

The war of liberation and unification offensive, intensified against the backdrop of China's nuclear rise, escalated to the most militant phase of North Korea's adventurism from 1967-1968. The most violent of North Korean actions since the Korean War, this

phase saw a dramatic increase in inter-Korean border skirmishes, infiltration of guerillas, attempted assassination of Park Chung Hee, and the seizure of the USS Pueblo. But North Korea's subversion and infiltration tactics received no explicit encouragement from neither Beijing nor Moscow. This is because by 1968, the Soviet Union and China had identified each other as the primary adversary, and consequently their contradictions with the United States had receded in importance relative to the antagonism against each other. Therefore, what illusion of victory North Korea harbored would prove to be unsustainable in the long run. The Soviet Union continued to stress the defensive nature of their alliance, and China gave no explicit support to North Korean adventurism even after they patched up differences in 1969. Thus, North Korea's war of liberation and unification offensive proved to be self-defeating.

Ironically, however, China's nuclear test helped to improve South Korea's position, though this was not always immediately clear. By reinforcing North Korea's misplaced sense of superiority, China's nuclear rise inadvertently helped to blind the leadership in Pyongyang to the strength and efficacy of the South Korean government. For Seoul, China's nuclear status occasioned the ascent of diplomatic pragmatism towards neutral countries. The policy and intellectual debate regarding this reorientation progressed in earnest from 1965~1966. Coupled with the absence of explicit Soviet and Chinese support for North Korean

adventurism from 1967~1968, the refashioning of South Korean anti-communism disposed the government in Seoul to a new mode of containment, one that tacitly acknowledged that communist countries could be non-hostile, and that a guarded acceptance of engagement with not only neutral countries but communist countries as well could strengthen South Korea's position diplomatically. Thus the wave of policy changes, both actual and pronounced, during the period of détente in the 1970s drew substantially from Seoul's policy reorientation towards neutral and communist countries in the 1960s and therefore should not be taken as a mere reaction to the Nixon Doctrine alone.

The dynamics set in motion by China's nuclear rise in the 1960s are recurrent in present day North and South Korea. Beijing's reaction to North Korea's nuclear program provides the most salient example. Since the first North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 1990s, the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang experienced varied fluctuations. Regardless, China's remarkably consistent and fundamental interest in limiting American influence and maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula has allowed North Korea's fixation with nuclear independence run largely unopposed by Beijing. In the meantime, South Korea still finds itself embroiled in a debate regarding China's actual and potential influence in North Korea. The marked similarity between the situation today and the foregoing history demonstrates the intractability of Cold War conflicts on the Korean peninsula and

East Asia.

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북한의 민족해방전쟁 공세와 중국의 핵보유국 부상, 1962~1966

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북한은 1960년대에 들어와 민족해방전쟁을 강조하고 통일을 가장 긴급한 과제로 제시하였다. 이를 통해서 박정희 정권의 정치적 안정과 아시아 아프리카 블록에서의 외교적 침투를 방해하고자 했다. 기존 연구에서 이 시기 북한의 민족해방전쟁 공세는 중국과의 강화된 이념적 연대와 관련이 있는 것으로 보았다. 본 연구는 보다 더 구체적으로 1960년대 초반부터 예상되었고 1964년 확인된 중국의 핵 보유국 지위가 북한의 민족해방과 통일 공세에 미친 영향에 주목한다. 핵 보유국으로서의 중국의 부상은, 일정 시기 북·중 양자관계의 악화에도 불구하고, 한국을 수세에 놓이게 함으로써 북한의 민족해방과 통일 공세가 강화될 수 있는 조건을 조성하였다. 아시아 아프리카의 중립국에 대해 중국의 영향력이 강화되고 중국의 유엔 가입이 핵실험 이후로 가시화되는 환경에서 북한은 제3세계에서 한국에 대해 우위를 점하고 박정희 정권을 약화시킬 수 있을 것으로 보았다. 이에 비해 중국의 핵실험은 제3세계에서 한국의 입지를 좁히고, “하나의 한국”

정책에 대한 국제 지지를 약화시키고, 중립국과의 관계를 강화시킬 수 있는 새로운 반공정책의 필요성에 대한 논의를 본격적으로 착수하게 만들었다.

주제어: 김일성, 민족해방전쟁, 통일, 중국 핵실험, 박정희, 할슈타인 독트린, 중립국