ANALYSIS ON THE DRIVING FACTORS BEHIND THE 2000 INTER-KOREA SUMMIT

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ABSTRACT

Though the Korean peninsula finally found itself to be liberated from the Japanese colonial rule as the World War II came to an end, Korea was divided and the division became more permanent as the peninsula went through the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. The Korean peninsula remains to be the only divided country in the world; separated families still exist at each side of the peninsula; and the two Koreas still suffer from continued absence of peace on the peninsula up to this date. Though the issue of reunification has never left the two Korea’s political agenda, the two countries has found it difficult to come to negotiation tables that are set up to promote peace on the peninsula. Especially with North Korea’s constant provocations, South has had difficult times convincing the North to respond positively to suggestions for peaceful talks. Different South Korean administrations have tried approaching the brother regime with varying attitudes and methods; however, the divided peninsula today proves the difficulty and failures that each administrations had experienced.

However, despite North Korean government’s constant display of negative attitude towards South Korea’s unification policies, why did they take a positive attitude in 1999 and throughout the sunshine era versus any other time in the past? In 2000, the first inter-Korea summit was held, where the head of both Koreas met in person for the very first time after the Korean War. The day was a historical moment to remember for both sides of the DMZ and the individuals of both South and North Korea.
The research and writing of this thesis
is dedicated to everyone who helped along the way.

Many thanks,

Jihye Park
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I. Introduction

Though the Korean peninsula finally found itself to be liberated from the Japanese colonial rule as the World War II came to an end, Korea was divided and the division became more permanent as the peninsula went through the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. The Korean peninsula remains to be the only divided country in the world; separated families still exist at each side of the peninsula; and the two Koreas still suffer from continued absence of peace on the peninsula up to this date. Though the issue of reunification has never left the two Korea’s political agenda, the two countries has found it difficult to come to negotiation tables that are set up to promote peace on the peninsula. Especially with North Korea’s constant provocations, South has had difficult times convincing the North to respond positively to suggestions for peaceful talks. Different South Korean administrations have tried approaching the brother regime with varying attitudes and methods; however, the divided peninsula today proves the difficulty and failures that each administrations had experienced.

However, despite North Korean government’s constant display of negative attitude towards South Korea’s unification policies, why did they take a positive attitude in 1999 and throughout the sunshine era versus any other time in the past? In 2000, the first inter-Korea summit was held, where the head of both Koreas met in person for the very first time after the Korean War. The day was a historical moment to remember for both sides of the DMZ and the individuals of both South and North Korea.

North Korea today is still continuing its provocations through missile tests and nuclear development up to this date; and the inter-Korean relations these days seems to lack progress, or seems to be showing regression, since the year of 2000. While the unification of the Korean Peninsula revolves around the interests of not only the two Koreas but also the surrounding
major powers including the US, China, Japan, Russia, and etc, the answer to how to address the issue of unification seems to be crucial. Analyzing the situation in 2000 the driving factors behind the first inter-Korean summit will partially help to address the question, since the response of the North Korean regime was a different and unique one that could not be seen often. Knowing what really had motivated or simply shifted the North Korean government will be helpful in understanding the negotiation behaviors of North Korea, which may also lead to providing necessary information for future negotiations and methods to improve inter-Korean relations. The question of what really motivated the North Korean leader, Kim Jung-il to say yes to the idea of the first inter-Korean summit in 2000 will be addressed throughout the paper. Whether the analyzed factor for the summit can be defined as a part of the negotiation patterns that could be helpful in explaining future North Korean behavior or was it a simple coincidence that North Korea decided to respond to will be answered, providing information that future policy makers may consider when forming new policies toward North Korea.

II. Historical Background: The Sunshine Era

The sunshine policy was first proposed by the Kim Dae-jung administration when he first came into office in 1998. The main goal of the policy aims to improve inter-Korean relations and achieve peace through reconciliation and cooperation\(^1\). Instead of putting sole emphasis on the end goal of unification, it strived to seek to first establish peace and acknowledge coexistence and co-prosperity on the Korean peninsula\(^2\). The sunshine policy was welcomed and supported by the international community, including the surrounding nations such as the US, China, Russia,\(^1\)

\(^1\) *The Unification Environment and Relations Between South and North Korea :1999~2000*, (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2000)

\(^2\) *Sunshine Policy for Peace & Cooperation*, (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2002)
and Japan. Kim Dae-jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, as his policy was acknowledged with its accomplishments.

The inter-Korea summit meeting, held in June 2000, was a historical event that marked the very first relatively open and official meeting of the leaders of South and North Korea in 55 years since the division of the peninsula. This unprecedented event in post-Korean war history is one of the greatest and the earliest accomplishments of the Kim administration’s sunshine policy. The significance of the meeting lies mostly on the fact that it had shifted the previous South Korean government’s strong emphasis on the ultimate goal of achieving reunification of the peninsula in the end to the process of reconciliation. The two leaders, Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il, met in the North Korean capital Pyongyang between 13 and 15 of June 2000 to bring forth guidelines for future directions in which the inter-Korean relations should be headed to. They both committed themselves to promoting the peninsula’s reconciliation, cooperation, and unification. The five ‘tasks for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula’ that were the main achievements of the dialogue included the implementation of the 1991 inter-Korean Basic Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Cooperation; the improvement of Pyongyang’s relations with the United States and Japan; increased interaction between South and North Korea; elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The summit, though may seems to be lacking in tangible materials that suggest changes or progresses in inter-Korean relations, holds its significance in a symbolic sense that it serves to be the evidence of a major change in the North Korean attitude in treating the South Korean government’s offer for negotiations and talks. Furthermore, the summit holds another significance in marking the beginning for many other achievements that were achieved during the sunshine era under Kim Dae-jung administration.
However, the intent that North Korea had in mind can only be better analyzed through closer scrutiny of the clauses of the sunshine policy and the North Korean reactions to the matter.

III. Main Argument: Change in South Korean Attitude towards Reunification Shown through Sunshine Policy

During the sunshine era, the North Korean leader sensed a different perspective coming from the South Korean government in viewing unification of the peninsula. Kim’s proposal of the sunshine policy seemed to indicate a different perspective of the South Korean government in viewing inter-Korean relations and attitudes towards reunification; and such indication effectively attracted Kim Jong-il to respond to the call for the very first inter-Korean summit in 2000. Unlike the previous attitudes on unification coming the South Korean leaders which largely seemed to be zero-sum game, Kim Jong-il saw a different version that embraced a positive-sum view on reunification. As soon as Kim Dae-jung came into office, he emphasized the need to drop the word “unification” from all descriptions of his government’s policies to the North, highlighting that his administration would like to make reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea a top priority as political agenda. The administration rather chose to substitute the word “unification” with terms such as “constructive engagement policies,” basically to prevent North Korea from fearing to be “absorbed” by the South. Such clear display of its policy intentions and political stance by the South Korean government was able to convince North Korea to believe that the South is not intending to debilitate the North but rather is truly trying to engage to establish a “friendly” relationship between the brothers. Such attitude was definitely a new approach that cannot be detected from unification policies or North Korean policies from previous administrations.

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3 Norman D. Levin and Young-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea, Center for Asia Pacific Policy*, 2002
However, this is not to say that North Korea was genuine about taking such changed attitude of the South wholly for the purpose of intending to achieve unification. Just because the North under Kim Jong-il sensed a different attitude from the South Korean government in viewing unification that was slightly more desirable or favorable, it is a hasty generalization to believe that the North Korean government had the same intention to cooperate and step a step closer to unification. Responding to a suggestion does not necessarily mean to have the intent to agree with the offeror’s goal or vision. That is to say, understanding something and sharing future vision and goal are two different matters. Understanding that South Korea was willing to shift its policies on North Korea and unification does not mean North Korea was responding to the summit as a form of agreement. North Korea, while understanding that South Korea had clearly changed its policies and also knowing that the South is open to more room for acceptance for North Korean behaviors.

In order to prove this point, analysis on how there was a clear sign of change in Kim Dae-jung administration’s policies on North Korea and unification, so called the sunshine policy, that marked eminent differences from the ones by previous administrations will be provided first.

a. South Korea’s Unification Policies Prior to the Kim Dae-jung Administration

The previous administrations before Kim Dae-jung had North Korean policies that were different and inconsistent with the one of Kim administration. They tend to focus on quicker and effective ways to weaken the North regime to achieve reunification. The policy direction under Kim Dae-jung could be distinguished easily from other periods. Studies on South Korea’s unification policies before Kim Dae-jung administration show how all six of the republics that have operated in South Korea since the year 1948 shared a commonality that expresses “one-Korea” that basically calls for reunification through absorption as the desirable unification
direction⁴. It was not until after the Rhee administration that South Korean reunification policy explicitly ruled out war or violence as a method to achieve unification.⁵ All six of the republics emphasized, either implicitly or explicitly, the strategic goal and ideal form of unification that the South Korean government desires would be a hegemonic reunification where either the South Korean system or another system that is based on democratic values prevails the North Korean system⁶. None of them showed trust towards the North Korean regime or its system operating under communism. For instance, Park Chung-hee made clear that the only way to reunify the Korean peninsula is by “prevailing over communism,” namely through sunggong tong il, even when the administration was engaging in negotiations with North Korea⁷.

Under President Chun Doo-hwan and President Roh Tae-woo, South Korea did not choose to explicitly express the goal of prevailing over communism; however, they both did express their distrust towards the North Korean regime, claiming that the North always has had the intent to communize South Korea. Such display of distrust towards the North regime was prevalent up until the Roh Tae-woo administration.

During the Roh Tae-woo administration, the South Korean government showed the greatest commitment to unification, assigning it a high priority among government tasks. He had formulated the “Korean national Community Unification Formula” that contained several new different aspects that the previous administrations failed to include as part of their unification policies- the formula had a much clearer outline of interim steps toward reunification, also envisaging an interim stage in which north and South Korea will form a loose union called the

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⁵ B.C. Koh, “South Korea’s Unification Policy”.
⁶ B.C. Koh, “South Korea’s Unification Policy”.
⁷ B.C. Koh, “South Korea’s Unification Policy,” pp78-79
Korean Commonwealth. Roh’s unification policy was much more well-outlined with efforts to include North Korean participation through clear guidelines. However, Roh also mentioned the possibility of reunification through absorption, also referred to as hupsu tong il in Korean, in the long term. He stated that though it may not happen exactly under his administration, hupsu tong-il which means reunification by absorption, is the desirable form of unification envisioned by the Sixth Republic’s unification formula.

To look at how the North Korean government viewed the unification policy and the South Korean government’s attitude during Roh Tae-woo administration helps us to understand how the North changed its view on the intent of the South Korean government during in the year 2000. Though Roh had made relatively new and greater effort to involve North Korea in its new unification formula, KNC, North Korea has rejected the idea. The North argued that it could not distinguish it from the previous administrations’ unification policies, furthermore accusing it as being “unrealistic.” Firstly, the North Korean government argued that the very idea that South Korea’s new proposal for KNC is the exact idea of how Seoul is trying to “prevail over communism,” considering the fact that the KNC requires the holding of general elections to elect representatives within the KNC reflects democratic ideas. Pyeongyang criticized Seoul as being “deceiving,” as trying to hide its “real” intention to absorb the North. Furthermore, Pyeongyang also denounced the KNC formula for ignoring the two fundamental barriers to unification, which are the US troops in South Korea and South Korea’s National Security Law that defines North Korea as an “anti-state organization.” This has always been two of the biggest concerns of North Korea when addressing inter-Korean relations. Though President Roh did make greater effort in building a “new” unification policy, it did not seem much different from the previous ones in the

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8 B.C. Koh, “South Korea’s Unification Policy,” pp. 86-87
eyes of the North Korean leader. The fact that unification by absorption was still mentioned as the desired form of unification angered North Korea and prevented the North from showing trust towards the other parts of the policy that may not exactly be against its interest.

The situation during Kim Young-sam administration was not so much different. during the Kim Young-sam administration, though the South Korean government did emphasize a policy that was future-oriented and that promotes peaceful coexistence, joint prosperity, and common welfare, it at the end was designed to ultimately build a single nation-state after going through interim stages of integration. After the three-stages of integration that Kim Young-sam’s administration laid out to achieve reunification, the end goal of creating a single nation through absorbing North Korea was emphasized, which did not play in favor of the North Korean side.

As such, the other administration’s unification policies prior to Kim Dae-jung seemed to indicate much more inconsistent and unfavorable, rather against, the North Korea’s desired form of unification or inter-Korean policies.

b. Kim Dae-jung Administration’s Sunshine Policy

Unlike the unification policies by the previous administrations described above, the one Kim Dae-jung had proposed was clearly different. Not only in terms of the contents of the sunshine policy were taking different directions and strategies from the ones by other administrations, but also the reactions that the Kim administrations had shown in response to unexpected incidents illustrate the genuine intention of the South to engage constantly with the North.

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9 Young Whan Kihl, Unification Policies and Strategies of North and South Korea, International Journal of Korean Studies
In order to meet the policy objectives of improving inter-Korean relations and achieving peace through reconciliation and cooperation, the Kim administration laid out three specific basic principles as foundations for its North Korea policies. First, the South Korean government emphasized that it will not tolerate any forms of armed provocation that may threaten the peninsula’s peace. Through a strong security posture, the South Korean government tried to deter possible future armed provocation. Second, the idea of unification coming from the South Korean government under the sunshine policy did not seek to absorb North Korea or harm North Korea. Rather than to promote the collapse of North Korea, South Korea accentuated the importance of coexistence and co-prosperity. The last principle of the sunshine policy stated that the South Korean government would actively promote reconciliation and cooperation with the North based on peace. Through establishing dialogues, holding official talks, and increasing exchanges between the two countries, the South Korean government wished to improve inter-Korean relations by recovering national homogeneity.

Besides from the three basic principles that define the crux of sunshine policy, Kim Dae-jung also added two other core policy components. First, he wished to separate politics from economics. This was basically to promote economic engagement and foster investment in North Korea. The administration understood the importance of expanding economic exchanges in order to create a friendly environment for peaceful negotiations, because it knew that the North was more receptive to economic inducements. Secondly, the government decided to loosen its stance on the ‘reciprocity clause’ it originally intended to have. This will be further elaborated in the later part of the paper.

10 *Sunshine Policy for Peace & Cooperation*, (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2002)
11 Norman D. Levin and Young-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, Center for Asia Pacific Policy, 2002
Aside from the policy outline and the inherent content of the Sunshine Policy, the actions and decisions taken by the South Korean government to address unexpected incidents implied a different attitude from the one of previous administrations. Though some of the previous administration’s unification policies also contained clauses that clarify South Korean government’s willingness to address the issue by promoting peace and mutual prosperity, the Sunshine Policy was different in that it was much more persistent in carrying out its goals in the midst of conflicts between the two Koreas\textsuperscript{12}. During the previous administrations, dialogue and cooperation with the North Korean government was put to an end when an incident that seemed to break peace broke out. However, during the Kim Dae-jung administration, the government did not simply cease the policy. But rather, it chose to keep the momentum for negotiations. A North Korean submarine infiltrated into South Korea’s territorial water in 1998, and there was also a confrontation between the North Korean navy vessel and South Korean navy off the west coast in the year of 1999. Though such incidents that seemed to be a form of provocation existed during the sunshine era, Kim Dae-jung continued the unconditional humanitarian assistance and private sectors’ activities.

By looking at these aspects of the sunshine policy and South Korean government’s actions, North Korea was able to sense the difference in attitude coming from the South. This was an important aspect that North Korea had to make sure because North Korea was not willing to take any action that debilitates its legitimacy. Looking at how the North had always been so critical and suspicious of the intent of the South Korean policy had to do with its insecurity about its regime survival and the strong will to keep the legitimacy of its government principles.

i) Reciprocity Clause

The South Korean government decided to drop reciprocity as a requirement for improving inter-Korean relations. When making calculations, it was not difficult for North Korea to respond to the summit because the summit did not require giving up or sacrificing any of its interests.

Initially, “reciprocity” clause was another core policy component of the sunshine policy. The Kim administration referred “reciprocity” literally as to mutual process of “give and take,”13 which meant that both Koreas shared equal level of responsibility and are required to promote mutual benefits that assured both sides to gain something from the interaction. However, this clause failed to be implemented in reality. When the South Korean leaders required the North to establish a reunion center for separated families in exchange for South Korean fertilizer assistance, the North denounced the South Korean government as “horse traders” and cut off all interactions. Such clear demonstration for opposition towards the idea of “mutual reciprocity” led the South to revise the initial version of “reciprocity” it wished to require in the beginning stage. Instead, the administration introduced a new notion of “flexible reciprocity” that meant “flexible, relative, and time-differential14,” approach in which South Korea decided to change its original clause on reciprocity that require North Korea to carry on the same duty. Kim Dae-jung, instead of responding to North Korea’s unexpected refusal of responding to the South’s demand for establishing the reunion center for separated families equally negatively as the North did, chose to loosen the clause on reciprocity. This attitude that the South Korean government displayed was clearly different from the one shown by

13 Norman D. Levin and Young-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, Center for Asia Pacific Policy, 2002
14 Norman D. Levin and Young-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, Center for Asia Pacific Policy, 2002
previous administrations, which allowed the North to assume that there would be larger ground for “negotiations” to meet its own demand under Kim Dae-jung administration. The decision of the Kim Dae-jung administration of loosening the standard on reciprocity in response to North Korea’s provocations meant two important things to the North regime. Firstly, the content of the clause itself provided a much more favorable environment for North Korean government to play around, since the requirement for reciprocal responsibility was taken off by the South. When one makes a decision that is not followed by any consequences, it is much easier for one to make the decision without much contemplation. It is when one knows the cost for the decision requires one to make sacrifices of one’s own interest that the process of decision making becomes difficult. In this case, when the North finally attained the status where not much sacrifices were required to reap the benefits in the long term, it said yes to the summit, believing that such response would lead to further future benefits that did not accompany any costs. But more importantly, another significance that the South Korea’s decision to loosen the clause on reciprocity carried was about future implications for North Korea. Through looking at South Korea’s response, specifically the South under Kim Dae-jung, when North disagreed with the South’s suggestion, the North Korean government was also aiming to analyze the new administration’s true attitude. When Kim Jong-il was told to establish the reunion center for separated families and rejected the idea, he was in a way setting a negotiation table to better suit North Korea’s interest and testing the new administration’s policy towards North Korea. Kim Dae-jung government’s lenient approach to respond to dissatisfaction displayed by the North meant positive future implications for the North. This meant that the new government of the South had greater
willingness for suiting to the North’s interest under Kim Dae-jung, which also meant that further possibilities for future benefits for North were high. This is to say that the North’s decision to agree to the holding of the first inter-Korea summit was not simply calculated as a one time thing, but rather it was a decision made to reach out to ample future benefits that North Korea was able to sense through testing South Korea’s true attitude. In a sense, the demand for canceling the clause on reciprocity was a negotiation skill that the North utilized to reap future benefits.

Such negotiation skill was not an unprecedented one. It was one of the negotiation techniques that North had been taking during the Kim Il-sung regime as well. The idea of this negotiation tactic is basically to leave and delay meetings or negotiations when the demands of the North were not met. When North also saw remarks that were contrary to its basic principles during meetings, the North has been known to “pass the buck,” creating a worse situation for the other party of the negotiation, or instead simply unilaterally choosing to walk out of the negotiation or cut off conversation. For instance, in October 1990, Yon Hyng-muk, head of the North representative to participate in the second round of inter-Korea high-level talks held in Pyongyang, left the meeting, screaming and pointing his finger at Kang Young-hoon, the South Korean delegate, when he demanded the abandonment of the North’s anti-South strategy. Then, the North unilaterally decided to resume the suspended talks later. As such, the way the North handled and displayed its position regarding the reciprocity clause could be seen as just another negotiation strategy the North had taken to better fulfill its own interest.

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15 Moon-Young Huh, Huh, North Korea’s Negotiation Behavior toward South Korea: Continuities and Changes in the Post Inter-Korean Summit Era, Korea Institute for National Unification, 2006
This also proves the point that the North Korean government lacked the genuineness in agreeing to cooperate to improve relations with the South and step towards reunification. If North was truly willing to work towards unification with South through sunshine policy’s proposal, then the reciprocity clause should not have been such a big problem for the North. However, the responsibility to pay back came as much bigger burden in the perspective of the North because the North’s main priority was to reap benefits through the summit without paying the cost for it.

North took this change as a positive sign that allowed them to take much less burden of “giving back” or fulfilling as much responsibilities as the South. This allowed Kim Jong-il to calculate the cost of the first inter-Korean summit more easily and respond to it. Furthermore, the Kim Jong-il regime saw that since the South Korean government had truly changed its attitude towards the North, the possibility for future benefits that North Korea could negotiate for became much more available.

Hence, the biggest driving factor behind the North Korean government’s unusual response that permitted the holding of the first inter-Korean summit can be seen as the fruit of the changed attitude of the South Korean government in handling North Korea and the issue of unification that allowed the North to create environment conducive to future benefits and meeting its own interest in the long term. Though it is true that Kim Jong-il had sensed the true change in attitude from the South Korean government and that this had prevented the North’s legitimacy from being undermined even after responding to summit, it is not be assumed that North Korea had agreed to the summit because it also had the true intention of cooperating with the South based on the content of the sunshine policy to achieve unification. The fact that the North had first rejected the clause on reciprocity helps us to understand how reluctant North was
in making any form of sacrifices, which implies that the North’s priority was more about playing around with the policy to create an environment that is more favorable and that better suit its own interest. Such method that the North took can also be considered as a form of negotiation tool that aided the Kim Jong-il regime to test the South’s new administration. Shortly put, North Korea’s “yes” to the summit was not necessarily a “yes” of approval of South Korea’s request for cooperation towards unification but rather a simple “yes” to the first idea of benefits coming from the South that did not accompany costs but only consequent benefits that seemed attainable following the summit.

IV. Alternative Explanations

a. Monetary Incentives

The economic incentives arose due to the Sunshine Policy’s guarantee for humanitarian assistance and a separate monetary incentive provided specially for the summit all could be a way to explain how the North was simply responding to material gains rather than to be drawn by ideological shifts. Since the incentive created by Sunshine Policy’s humanitarian assistance was addressed as a part of South Korean government’s change in attitude towards the idea of providing unconditional aid to North Korea, this part of the paper will focus on the monetary incentive that Kim Dae-jung had proposed specially for holding of the summit and explain why this money alone could not have drawn a positive response from the North Korean government.

Three years after Kim Dae-jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with the implementation of the sunshine policy, it turned out that the Kim administration had “bought” the summit by paying the North Korean government 500 million dollars. This political scandal broke out on February 2003 and is also referred to as “Cash-for-
summit.\textsuperscript{16} in 2006, the head of a South Korean conglomerate has acknowledged giving North Korea millions of dollars as an incentive to draw North Korea to agree to the first 2000 inter-Korean summit\textsuperscript{17}. It was revealed that the Kim administration had funneled 500 million dollars to North Korea through Hyundai Asan, who were the original operators of the Kumgang project.

While North Korea’s economy had been having a difficult time, such suggestion handed out by the South Korean government could have enticed the North Korean leader. North Korea’s economy has been continuously suffering from systemic and chronic difficulties. Especially around the era when sunshine policy was implemented, North Korea had registered negative growth in its economy for nine consecutive years from 1990 to 1998\textsuperscript{18}. Though there was a slight signs for growth of 6.2 percent in 1999, the year’s GDP still only accounted for 75 percent of 1989’s GDP. Such economic struggle was partly due to repeated flood damage and droughts that affected the harvest of crops, which is significant to the maintenance of North Korea’s domestic economic situation. Due to these economic struggles, North Korea was put in a more dire situation than ever in the era when the quest for the summit was made. The exiting writings that argue monetary incentives funneled by Kim being the greatest reasons behind the summit reason that the situation around the time made the offer of 500 million dollars specially attractive since it best suites the North Korean need.

While monetary incentives could have contributed to enticing Kim Jong-il to a certain degree, it is a misjudgment to believe that money played the biggest factor in


\textsuperscript{18}Sung Chul Yang, “South Korea’s Sunshine Policy,” 2000
drawing the two countries together. Closer scrutiny reveals that North Korea does not always respond to monetary incentives alone even in the situation when its economy is in an unstable situation, not to say that the North Korean economy was never really well-performing anyways. An instance when North was not convinced successfully by money proves this point. For instance, Chung Joo-young led a convoy of 100 trucks containing 1,000 cows to North Korea, crossing the demilitarized zone. Chung had sent this in request for making a visit to the North, open possibilities for economic activities in the North, and contribute to addressing the issue on separated families. Though Chung was able to make the visit to Pyeongyang, North Korea still maintained its negative attitude towards South Korea. Incursions by submarine, spying incidents, and failure of the second family reunion, which goes against what Chung had intended, all may be considered as examples that show how monetary incentives alone cannot change the behaviors of North Korea.

This example shows how North Korea does not always respond positively to tangible incentives, which strengthens the claim that there was something else besides the money that had changed the North Korean behavior. However, at the same time, it is also difficult to prove the summit would still have taken place without the involvement of the 500 million dollars, since it is a counterfactual situation. Also, as monetary incentives are often times given unofficially without public notice at the moment when it is given, that also makes it hard for more scrutinized analysis to be given on this factor.
b. International Society’s Atmosphere

Since 1990, North Korea has faced much economic difficulties, with continued negative growth and shortages in energy, food, and foreign currency. Such condition created an environment where North Korea could not completely ignore the views of its surrounding neighbors.

Some existing writings point out that with the U.S.-Soviet détente, improved relations between Japan and China and the United States and China, South’s pursuit of the sunshine policy that promotes peaceful unification and economic growth, and its own poor economic performance with the “7-year Plan to Revitalize the Economy” all had contributed to creating an environment where the best choice and calculation could be made by North Korea was to respond to the first inter-Korean summit.

The writings that support international atmosphere as the biggest driving factor for the summit argue that during the time when the summit took place, a climate of reconciliation was taking root on the Korean Peninsula. As the Cold War came to an end, a peaceful environment where neighboring countries all were seeking for peace was created in East Asia. As the sole remnant of the Cold War, South Korea along with the international society tried to promote policies for reconciliation and cooperation to improve relations between the two Koreas. The International society has continuously called for peace and stability by emphasizing more dialogues between leaders of the two countries.

Meanwhile, North Korea has expanded its participation in the international community and has displayed some changes in its attitude within the international arena.

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19 Sunshine Policy for Peace & Cooperation, (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2002)
20 Moon-Young Huh, North Korea’s Negotiation Behavior toward South Korea: Continuities and Changes in the Post Inter-Korean Summit Era, Korea Institute for National Unification, 2006
Since the beginning of the implementation of the sunshine policy, the North Korean government has established diplomatic relations with 19 nations as well as the EU and has participated in various international organizations.

The fact that North Korea participated in meetings with the Red Cross and South-North Coordination Committee in the early 1970s show how the North Korean government had decided to respond to changes both internationally and in its relationship with the South. In the 1980s, North Korea saw its revolutionary capacity strengthened in the international arena but weakened in South Korea due to the new Cold War Era between the United States and Russia, China’ decision to pursue independent diplomacy, and South Korea’s Miracle of the Han River. North Korea sensed its regime’s survival possibly being threatened by economic and security problems in late 1980s largely due to its foreign exchange reserve drying up after the Pyongyang Festival of 1989 that was held in response to South Korea’s 1988 Olympics.\footnote{Moon-Young Hug, North Korea’s Negotiation Behavior toward South Korea: Continuities and Changes in the Post Inter-Korean Summit Era}

Furthermore, some writings also point to the newly established normalization of diplomatic ties between South Korea and the Soviet Union in 1990, normalization of relations between South Korea and China, and the unification of West and East Germany by absorption as important factors contributing to driving North Korea to say yes to the summit. As South Korea’s president Roh Tae-woo’s signature foreign policy Nordpolitik led the two countries to sign a formal diplomatic treaty, this had threatened North Korea as Soviet Union was the closest ally and the source of economic aid of the North. As the diplomatic relations proposed the interim development of a “Korean Community” that was just another version of the North Korean proposal for a confederation, North Korea
was very much against the idea of the Nordpolitik, which had led to protests about normalization act from September 4 to 6 in 1990.\footnote{Christoph Bluth, Korea, Cambridge: Polity Press.} This diplomatic initiative reached by Roh created a sense of insecurity in North Korea, fearing that it may lose its closest partner to its brother. Right after the Nordpolitik when Soviet Union came to a collapse, South Korea and Russia established diplomatic ties in 1991, signing a protocol providing for regular visits. Such normalization of relations between South Korea and Russia/Soviet Union may have pushed the North to also consider establishing a peaceful relationship with South and respond to the suggestion of a peaceful talk as many existing writings argue. In addition to this, the diplomatic normalization of South Korea and China in 1992 may have worsened the sense of insecurity of losing an ally to South Korea. Lastly, the unification of the West and East Germany through absorption may have created the atmosphere pushing for unification that led to the fear of North Korea thinking such case might also be the future of itself, which had pushed the North to accept the offer that seems far from unification through absorption.

As some existing studies argue, the international society’s environment may had contributed as the underlying cause for the 2000 summit to a certain degree; however, it cannot be biggest factor that fully explain the North Korean behavior in 2000. The international society up to this date has always wished for the peninsula’s peace; and the situation of the status quo explains how international atmosphere alone cannot direct North Korean behavior. The international trend that seeks to promote peace and establish friendly relations with neighboring country has been continuing ever since the end of the Cold War. International rules and norms where majority of countries support denuclearization has been the dominant trend for decades, and North Korea has
continuously chosen to ignore such international norm, which refutes the idea that North Korea responded to the summit simply because of the international trend that promotes peace at the moment. Furthermore, even when North Korea was faced with situations of possibly losing an ally, there were instances when North Korea chose not to be influenced so much by the factor when making decisions. For instance, due to North Korea’s constant missile testing and reluctance to give up its nuclear weapons, China decided to agree to the United Nation’s decision to impose sanction on North Korea. With North Korea’s continuous provocations, China’s estrangement from North Korea has been deepening continuously. After Pyongyang’s fourth nuclear test and subsequent satellite launch, the United Nations Security Council has imposed a harsher sanction that restricts North Korean trade, finance, and maritime activities. The resolution was passed on March 2nd 2016, with China as the key drafter. China has unequivocally acknowledged that the North Korean actions pose a direct threat to Chinese security interests for the first time and that Beijing would no longer tolerate or ignore the threat coming from the North. However, even with the deteriorating North Korean economy, China, as North Korea’s one of the closest ally, failed to create the fear or alter the behavior of the North. Lastly, even when a country makes a movement to join certain international organizations or treaties, one cannot conclude that the country is willing to abide by the norms and will stick to the rules of that community.

V. Conclusion

The first inter-Korean summit in 2000 could be said to be the result of changed South Korean government’s attitude towards reunification that better suited the North Korean interests.

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However, this is not to say that we can therefore make a precarious judgment to define sunshine policy as the ideal way to approach North Korea. As the paper has addressed, the positive response to the summit does not necessarily mean that the sunshine policy was a success in achieving its original goal of cooperating with the North and building a reconciliatory and peaceful relations with the North. Looking at how the North utilized its usual negotiation tactic to alter the provisions that seemed less favorable to itself, it can be inferred that the utmost priority for the North Korea regime was to create an advantageous environment where it did not have to pay any costs. For the North Korean regime, it was less about being genuine about agreeing to carry out the goals laid out by the Kim Dae-jung administration, but rather more about establishing groundwork to reap possible future favorable negotiations or benefits. Since the North sensed a true change in South Korea’s attitude towards the regime and the idea of unification, it made the judgment call to believe that the Kim Dae-jung administration is much more open and flexible in providing pure benefits to the North without asking for things in return. As such, the content of the sunshine policy was effective in a sense that it did “convince” the North to respond to the summit, though the true intent of the North cannot said to be align with the one of the South.

Though as many existed writing argue, the monetary incentives provided to allure North into the summit and the international society’s situation at the moment partially help to explain the North Korean behavior, the main argument uniquely assesses the fundamental difference of the sunshine policy and the North Korean psychology by looking at its negotiation behaviors. Despite the difficulties to always be keen of the true North Korean intent, the analysis provided throughout this paper at least helps us to understand what factors are proven to be effective in shaping North Korean behavior. The North regime seems to care a lot about whether South
possesses a hostile attitude intending to “absorb” or change its regime, which means that any signs of hostility or provocations would only backfire any progress made so far. It will rather provoke the Kim regime, where peace on the peninsula would only be put at stake.

By reaffirming the fact that demonstrations of true willingness for engagement towards inter-Korean relations help to evoke positive response from the North, the South and that such attitude plays an important factor in shaping the North behavior, the South Korean government may assume greater need to take this into consideration when positioning itself in negotiation tables and engagement strategies. Furthermore, being aware that the North makes deceptive short-term calculations that may not always promise future cooperation would also be helpful in forming strategies toward the North. Knowing that certain unexpected actions that the North takes during a negotiation or a meeting play as a part of the negotiation tactics for the North would also help to better deal with such situations, rather than being alarmed by such unanticipated actions.

Lastly, it is also important to consider that there has been a leadership change, which puts us in a different situation when making predictions about the regime. The South Korean government needs to remember that all the above factors have contributed to North Korea’s decision in 2000 and that there were certain things that were unique to the time period’s circumstances. A blind application of the lessons we’ve learned in history would not be so effective in dealing with the situations today.
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