

## Panel III

### Inter-Korean Dialogue and the DPRK's Relations with Allied Countries

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**Chair:** *James Person*

**Provocateurs:** *Bernd Schaefer, Ryoo Kihljae*

**PERSON:** On to discussion about North Korea's relations with its allies. But before I turn things over to our two provocateurs, there were some questions about the 1971 election.

**STUECK:** From the documents, I was impressed how comfortable the Americans appeared to be with Kim Dae-jung in the early 1970s, especially in light of later developments. So I'm wondering if we could hear from the Americans about perceptions of Kim Dae-jung at that time and also perhaps from the Koreans as to their perceptions of the American perception of Kim Dae-jung at that time.

**O'DONOHUE:** I was not there for the election itself. Of course, later events were much more dramatic in terms of his kidnapping. The Americans always had a very relaxed and very positive view of Kim Dae-jung. We saw him as a politician who probably more than any other opposition politician had a politically creative mind. We didn't see policies he espoused as being very harmful. We were always content, I mean, with President Park winning. It was not an issue of us favoring him over President Park. When they moved to the *Yushin* Constitution,<sup>3</sup> we saw that as being driven in some part by President Park's desire not to run against Kim Dae-jung again. To say that we "accepted" the *Yushin* Constitution would be wrong; we were told about it about twenty-four hours in advance and in effect it was done.

We played an immensely active role in the immediate aftermath—I'm talking about in the hours—of Kim Dae-jung's kidnapping. Indeed, we probably played the key role in trying to save his life initially. After that, it was more the Japanese. At every level of government, and at the senior levels of the military, we had one message which was: he must be alive. Ambassador Habib's instruction was "don't argue about the facts," just have a very simple message. In the first 12 or 18 hours, we were extremely active. Later the Japanese became more active, since it was an incident in Japan and the Korean-Japanese relationship came to the fore. From my perception, from the Japanese point of view, if Kim Dae-jung had been kidnapped anywhere but Japan, it wouldn't have bothered them.

After Kim was back in the country, our approach was what you might call an implicit *quid pro quo* in that we did not try to see him in that period. That came only later. But we always saw him as a political leader and opposition leader, and we were struck that if you looked at the Korean domestic political scene from 1971 to, wherever you want to pick it, the end of the Chun [Doo-hwan] [President of South Korea, 1980-1988] or the Roh [Tae-woo] regime [1988-1993], how preoccupied the Korean leadership was with barring Kim Dae-jung from power. Until at least Kim Young-sam, whether it was President Park or the brief inner period before the Chun government came in, there was a lot of hand-ringing that went into "how do you hold an election that Kim Dae-jung won't win," and then Chun of course putting him back in the pokey and threatening him.

In that whole period we saw Kim Dae-jung, as you might say, the indigestible political element on the scene, but a man with whom we always maintained—whenever he was available—friendly and good relations. This had nothing to do with the fact that President Park and others saw a relationship that would threaten their legitimate hold on power. We did feel that it would be a lot better if they tried keeping him out of jail. So that is where we were and when he later came to power, he was an older man and once again we essentially supported the efforts with the North. I would say the United States' relationship with him had always been one of some admiration for his personal qualities. We viewed of him as Korea's most creative politician, and at least twice we were the protectors of his life.

**LEE:** You know Kim Dae-jung ran against Park Chung Hee in 1971 and lost to Park Chung Hee by a margin of 1,000,000 votes. It was definitely a milestone event in the evolution of the inter-Korean relations in the context that in the immediate aftermath of the military takeover in 1961,<sup>4</sup> General Park made any debate, any talk about reunification a taboo. He literally banned any discussion in any manner on the reunification issue because of his belief that any discussion on this reunification issue was a distraction, posing hindrances to his effort to make economic development. So much so that until 1971 South Korea was practically without any debate on North Korea, nor on reunification, but Kim Dae-jung broke that taboo by coming out and raising several issues on reunification like a four power guarantee for reunification and public debate on the issue of reunification and things like that. The fact that he lost that election by a margin of only 1,000,000 votes meant that the ban on debate on reunification was lifted and that opened the door for progressive political forces to come up with alternative voices about the issue of reunification. In the years following the 1971 election, the issue of reunification became one of the top issues in South Korea. So the 1971 presidential election in a great way altered the whole landscape and that is the significance of the 1971 election that I think we should pay attention to.

**PERSON:** We now turn to the topic of North Korea's relations with its allies. In a conversation I had with Mr. Thompson, he used an expression that stuck with me. He said that constructing an understanding of the history of this period using these documents is like crossing a river using small stones. I thought that was quite interesting. This is particularly the case when looking at North Korea's relations with its communist allies. We do have some 60,000 pages of documents from the archives of North Korea's former communist allies but it's still a challenge to write the history of North Korea's relations with those allies.

**SCHAEFER:** I'll try to be as provocative as I can be. We have a lot of questions now for Mr. Mitov and I want to make it short to give you a lot of time to respond. I would just choose a few questions regarding the motivation of North Korea to engage in inter-Korean dialogue and then ask a few questions about the dialogue itself. With regard to the motivation, I would like you to address the role of China

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and the Sino-U.S. rapprochement in 1971 and how you and your other colleagues, the other socialist ambassadors in Pyongyang, viewed Chinese-North Korean relations in 1971.

Another question on motivation is connected to Vietnam. Did you see any role for the events in Vietnam and Indochina with regard to progress for socialist revolution in South Vietnam compared to a lack of progress of revolution in South Korea and how did this serve as a reference, as a contrast or even as a competition for North Korea and Kim Il Sung that as a socialist country North Korea had to gain some resolve in the South and how this came in with regard to motivation for inter-Korean dialogue to achieve Korean reunification?

Finally something which has been addressed many times here, did you see any North Korean perceptions of a widening economic gap between South Korea and North Korea, making it urgent for North Korea to try almost everything to achieve reunification in this period? I remember many East German files where you have references to the fact that the North Koreans didn't want to admit that South Korea had achieved economic successes by itself. They claimed that the Japanese were building up South Korea. They clearly saw this as a major threat to reunification was this to continue because the economic gap was widening.

And finally a few questions about the dialogue itself. How did you and your colleagues in Pyongyang rate the information policy of North Korea? To what extent did you feel informed by the North Korean leadership and the North Korean Foreign Ministry about the policies of North Korea with regard to reunification and inter-Korean dialogue? Another question, how would you assess the North Korean confidence in achieving reunification through those reunification talks? In documents I have seen, North Korea comes across at least for a while in 1971 and 1972 as extremely confident if not over-confident that they will achieve unification on its own terms. I would like to hear your impression whether you shared that impression, or whether you had a different impression.

Finally, did you see any major concern that North Korea was conducting a sort of "bourgeois" reunification policy and was in grave danger of giving up Marxism-Leninism and trying to achieve non-socialist reunification which might put the socialist system in North Korea in danger, or did you see it differently?

**RYOO:** I think there were some concerns that perhaps the conflict on the Korean Peninsula would actually expand into a broader region of Asia. Towards the end of the 1960s, we had the Pueblo and other incidents, and these provocations gave a lot of concern to the many who were involved. In a 2008 critical oral history conference, held here at the Wilson Center, we were able to look at some Soviet documents. One of these Soviet documents was a record of a Central Committee meeting where Mr. Brezhnev asked “What are our comrades doing in North Korea?” So there was some amazement on their part as well.

After having passed through this period of aggression in the late 1960s, we come to the early 1970s where we had inter-Korean dialogue. This seems to bring about a somewhat better relationship between the two Koreas. I would think that the Soviet Union and other countries in Eastern Europe would have welcomed this better relationship between the Koreans. I wonder if that was indeed true. Mr. Mitov, when you look into the interest that the Eastern European countries had taken in the Korean Peninsula, what were your thoughts as you saw the dialogue take place between the two Koreas?

In the 1970s, we have seen, South Korea expanded its economic relationship with Western European countries as well as Japan. North Korea was expanding its economic relationship with Western European countries as well as Japan and also the same holds true for the Soviet bloc countries, including Bulgaria, Poland, and East Germany. In 1975 North Korea pronounced a moratorium on its debts and this was apparently targeted towards Western European countries. I wonder if that also included Eastern European countries.

And the third question that I have would be, in March of 1974 a meeting of the Supreme People’s Soviet was held in North Korea and at the time the decision was made to make the offer of a peace treaty offering with the U.S. My question would be, was the Soviet bloc aware of this offering or suggestion?

**PERSON:** Before Mr. Mitov answers his questions, I know Dr. Lee has an additional question.

**LEE:** I have two questions. It was during a meeting between Kim Il Sung and Lee Hurak in November 1972 that Kim Il Sung first mentioned the idea of a Korean



LEE HURAK

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confederation. Then in 1980, at the time of the KWP [Korean Workers' Party] Sixth Party Congress that North Korea made an official proposal for a confederal unified democratic Korea as a formula for unification. That said, I'd like to ask Mr. Mitov if, in your personal view, this idea of confederal unified Korea can practically be the basis of negotiated settlement of the unification between the two Koreas?

**MITOV:** I would like to point out that I have brought with me a shorthand summary that was dictated and personally approved by the then leader of Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov.<sup>5</sup> Immediately after his visit to North Korea in October of 1973, this shorthand summary was disseminated to a limited number of people for official use. Now this document is accessible to you in its entirety of twenty-one pages. And I would like to mention that answers to four of the questions that were proposed can be found in this conversation between the Bulgarian leader and Kim Il Sung.

The question was whether the embassies in the North Korean capital were informed of the conversations with the South Korean side. We were not informed in advance. I was the only person at my embassy to know because I listened to Radio Seoul using a portable radio and earphones on a regular basis. I listened to Radio Seoul all the time, so I was informed and our embassy knew about the discussions. So I received information that way. The situation was a little different a few years before, at the time of the Pueblo incident, when we were informed by the North Koreans and assured that this issue would be resolved in a peaceful way and that there would be no intervention. At that time too, I was in Pyongyang. Some of the embassies indeed evacuated the families, the wives and the children of the staff working in the embassies because they felt that an attack was imminent. Our embassy was the only one that did not evacuate the women and the children.

The idea of unifying the peninsula in the form of a “confederation,” was discussed between Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il Sung in 1973. As the record of the meeting indicates, the desire of the North Korean leader was to achieve this following the North Korean model. As you can read in the transcript, during the meeting, he expresses the opinion that South Korea “must be plucked from Japan’s grasp.” He also said that “South Korea must reduce its army and we will reduce ours,” and concluded that “without an army, the people will rise up themselves.”

This indicates that Kim Il Sung viewed the confederation as a first step towards “revolutionary” unification with the help of the poor levels of society. The continuation of this conversation confirms this without a doubt. Kim said to Zhivkov that “our idea is a political struggle, which aims to prove to the people of South Korea who is a traitor and who is a patriot. If a more democratic power is established in South Korea, we will not put up the slogan for this confederation. We will simply call for a revolution.”

**LEE:** I find it amusing that Mr. Mitov listened to South Korean radio to be informed. I heard the same story from Chinese diplomats as well. I was speaking to the leaders of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party years ago, and they told me that while they were in North Korea stationed in Pyongyang, they had to listen to South Korean radio broadcasts and watch South Korean television broadcasts to be informed about developments both inside North Korea and outside North Korea.

**STUECK:** Did the North Koreans know you were listening to South Korean radio? That kind of surprises me. Certainly they didn’t want their own people listening to South Korean radio.

**MITOV:** This is a very interesting question because as a matter of fact it was forbidden to listen to South Korean radio and if anybody was caught there were serious consequences. All the radios were sealed in such a way that there could be no access, and I personally had a small Japanese radio with an earphone. I lived in the dormitory with two North Korean students. So every time they saw me with this little transistor radio and having the earpiece in my ear they would approach me and they would say, “our party forbids us to listen to this radio,” and then I would say in turn, “well, my party doesn’t forbid me. My party allows me to listen.” But one day the person, the student that criticized me the most, I saw him one day with the earpiece in his ear and he had fallen asleep. So I very carefully took the radio with a handkerchief and then woke him up and I told him, “Now I will go to the director, and I will tell the director what you are listening to.” So from that point onward even when I was not listening to the radio he would be the one to

take turn listening to it and he would inform me of what he had heard and he would inform me of what was going on in South Korea.

**OSTERMANN:** Mr. Mitov, I wonder if you could just give us a sense of being part of the diplomatic community in Pyongyang in the early 1970s, who you interacted with in the North Korean government, who you interacted with closely or less closely among your fellow socialist diplomats and allies, and perhaps take us a little bit into the daily life of a diplomat in the late 1960s in the period that then proceeds immediately our period of discussion here.

**MITOV:** Before returning in 1973 as a diplomat, I was in Pyongyang as a student in 1968 and 1969. I was studying history at the time and I'd like to point out that many of the other students from the [North Korean] military leadership and political leadership had enrolled themselves as students there as well. I had just arrived when the Bulgarian volleyball team arrived and when they arrived they asked me to join them to take a picture. That picture was published in one of the leading newspapers. Until then, any time the North Koreans saw a white person they would point out to him and they would say a "Russian man," "a Russian person." So anyway, I was a foreigner, a new person, a Bulgarian, who gained prominence just by appearing in the newspaper. The reason I'm saying all this is because many of those fellow students from North Korea subsequently assumed leading positions in the military circles or in the political leadership.

During the 1970s, I returned and worked as a diplomat in Pyongyang, as Third and Second Secretary at the Bulgarian Embassy. This gave me an opportunity to take direct part in important events concerning Bulgarian-Korean relations, events and high-level meetings, which involved issues and problems of a wider context, besides the specific bilateral relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For example, the problems that were discussed and the relations between Bulgaria and North Korea also covered more comprehensive issues, such as the common, coordinated policy of the socialist countries in the United Nations, the overall security system in Asia, the cooperation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Again turning to the conversation between Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il Sung, you



B. DONOVAN PICARD

can see that bilateral meetings also included discussion about collective security in Asia, and coordinated actions and mutual foreign policy of socialist countries. Even though Todor Zhivkov pointed out [to Kim Il Sung] the advantages of developing not only the bilateral relations between Bulgaria and North Korea, but also including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in "initiatives in the international arena," and that Korea should not isolate itself from the USSR and the Socialist Community—Kim Il Sung's response was that the DPRK must "demonstrate self-reliance."

Todor Zhivkov's position on these issues was undoubtedly coordinated with Leonid Brezhnev and, one can assume, that in the case of the 1973 meeting, the Bulgarian leader played the role not only of Bulgaria's leader, but also as Brezhnev's diplomat. From the exchange of opinions it becomes clear that there was a distance between Kim Il Sung and Leonid Brezhnev, a distance that [Kim] maintained respectfully but had no desire to overcome.

This is an important detail which is significant for the unification of Korea. Pyongyang's isolationist policy and its positions did not allow a wider circle of countries and participants in world politics to influence it on the "Korean issue," to integrate it in the process of détente between the East and the West, and in the context of reducing the opposition between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in a number of regions to find a solution for Korea as well.

North Korea's policy of complete isolationism was also evident in Todor Zhivkov's proposal for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be integrated into the COMECON, which would expand the mutual economic assistance and would contribute to the development of industry in the country. This issue was left without a specific response with the explanation that the Democratic People's

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Republic of Korea would remain an observer in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

In conclusion, the opposition of both countries across the 38th parallel could not be accepted as part of the general opposition between the East and the West in the 1970s. Neither the USSR, nor the socialist countries and members of the Warsaw Pact could exert the necessary influence, or conduct a coordinated policy with the DPRK to help direct the “Korean issue” towards one resolution or another. Pyongyang’s position remained unchanged in their asserted isolationism towards all countries, including countries with identical social systems.

**XIA:** I have two questions for Mr. Mitov. During your first time in Korea from 1967 to 1969, were you aware of the severe problems in the relations between China and North Korea? The second question is during your two stays in Korea, did you have any contact with the Chinese diplomats there, any talks or things like that?

**MITOV:** There were problems between North Korea and China at the time. There was a situation in North Korea with lack of coal and China was withholding the import of coal. It was a difficult situation that was later resolved. The Korean Workers’ Party did not express a clear position on China’s disagreements with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the provocations with armed forces along the Chinese-Russian border, and the rapprochement between China and the United States. As you can see from the 1973 conversation between Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il Sung, the North Korean leader limited himself to evaluating China’s policy as “incomprehensible,” adding that even if he disagreed with it, North Korea would react by “keeping our mouths shut,” as Kim Il Sung himself put it.

In answer to your second question, while I was a student there, there were several Chinese students. I had regular contact with the students. At the time, Kim Il Sung suggested that there should be an international student body president and that president should be Chinese. However, at the time a group of twenty Albanian students arrived, so having so many Albanians they became the majority among the international students and as a result I was chosen to be president of the

student body of the international students, and following that we had a falling out with the Chinese students.

**OSTERMANN:** Can I just follow up on Bernd Schaefer's question once more whether you could tell us anything about the perception at the time of the Sino-American rapprochement that we discussed earlier today and its effect on North Korean leadership to the extent that you in Pyongyang and from Sofia were able to discern that impact?

**MITOV:** The North Korean side did not view it in a very positive light. I cannot speak about later events because I have moved away from those events. I had many face-to-face meetings with the North Koreans and ordinary people as well. I would often go hunting and I would speak with the random people that I met, but truly the ordinary people, they did not feel that unification was possible with the presence of American forces in South Korea.

**PERSON:** We have a question from Dr. Myung-lim Park from Yonsei University.

**PARK:** I have several questions for Mr. Mitov. You served as a diplomat to Pyongyang during a critical period in inter-Korea relations. This was a time of great reversals in inter-Korea relations, especially as the economies of the two Koreas had reversed. When did the North Korean leadership, including Kim Il Sung, become aware of this great reversal in their national power? I would also like to ask about the power transfer from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il. At that time, Kim Jong Il was appointed as the successor to Kim Il Sung. From the perspective of a diplomat, did you know anything about the two Kims sharing power or about the transfer of power? Also, what was North Korea's perception and understanding of the international détente? Finally, I have a question about the constitution change. At that time, North Korea revised its constitution from the prime minister system to the presidential system. Did you learn from the North Koreans their intention or some strategy behind the constitutional change?

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AMBASSADOR DANIEL O'DONOHUE

**MITOV:** You raise very interesting questions and very important ones. Unfortunately, I did not follow this constitutional issue, so I cannot be helpful with information on this topic. I was in North Korea until 1974, but it is wrong to assume that the North Korean leadership informed the socialist countries at the time about what was going on. This was a wrong assumption. We were isolated. We were kept in isolation, and we were not informed on the part of the North Korean leadership, and also we would get information from outside sources or through personal contacts. None of the other ambassadors or diplomats knew Korean at the time. Diplomats would gather together and they would speak about hunting and other various activities whereas I mingled with the people and I acquired valuable information. As in the Pueblo incident, I was informed by a high standing North Korean official. He told me not to worry; “don’t you worry, everything will be fine.”

I also would like to point out that while I was at the embassy there I worked as Second Secretary; I did not work as ambassador, so a lot of the information that was transmitted only reached the Ambassador. It was not transferred further down the line. And there is a Balkan trait, I don’t know if it is a Balkan trait or not, but people tended to think that if somebody knew the language that person had somehow connections with the North Korean spy organizations and Kim Il Sung and others, and they viewed him with suspicion. But many of the high-level officials at the embassy were deaf mutes without those of us who spoke the language and those of us who served as interpreters.

So again speaking about the leaders of the embassy and in Pyongyang for instance, just to give you a sense of the situation at the time, there was a case when Park Chung Hee spoke on Seoul radio about problems that were very important. Instead of the ambassador letting me listen in to what was being said on Seoul

radio in order to better acquaint myself and get more information about the problems that were discussed, the ambassador told me, “No, you don’t listen to the radio, you go with my wife and interpret for her when she goes to the dentist.” This is the type of problem we had unfortunately. Shortly thereafter, I voluntarily left my service in North Korea because I did not want to be perceived as a spy. I did not want to be perceived as a puppet in somebody else’s hands. I went to work as counsel in Odessa. Later it was determined that I had no connections and did not engage in subversive activities of any kind, it was clarified that I had no connections with North Korean secret organizations.

**PERSON:** We have some time left in this panel, so let’s perhaps turn to the breakdown of talks and reasons given for the breakdown of talks. Perhaps we can start with Dr. Lee and Mr. Kim describing the situation in late 1973 and then especially after the kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung and what effect that had. This of course is given as the pretext for the breakdown in talks.

**LEE:** As you said, the kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung was a pretext North Korea used to justify their decision to make a departure from the dialogue. But the suspension of dialogue was destined to come because of the two different objectives that the two Koreas pursued. As soon as the Red Cross Talks and North-South Korean Committee meetings began, the North Koreans began coming up with a variety of suggestions which went out of the context of the talks. For example, in the context of the Red Cross talks, the South Korean side suggested that the humanitarian issue be pursued by adopting the methodology of the [International Committee of the Red Cross] in Geneva. But the North Koreans came up with the suggestion that the issue be pursued by allowing those individuals from separated families to freely come to each other’s side and search for their separated family members on their own. Then they followed that up with the suggestion that the two sides exchange publicity personnel to explain to the people on the other side about the activities of the tracing service and to conduct searches for the separated family members being sought. And that is not even the important part; the important part was that in suggesting that these publicity personnel be dispatched to the other side, they [were to] be given full freedom of speech and

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that whereas they wanted to use these dialogues as a means to weaken the anti-communist orientation of South Korean society, on the contrary, the continuation of the dialogue was helping South Korea become more anti-communist, [ ... ] so [they] quickly began feeling disillusioned about this continuation of dialogue.”



LEE HURAK AND PAK SEONGCHEOL

freedom of movement while in the other side of Korea. And in doing that, South Korea in particular should take legal measures such as abolition of the National Security Law and dissolution of certain anti-communist government agencies and organizations, things like that, to ensure the freedom of movement of these publicity personnel while in South Korea. Then they began concentrating on issues such as the abolition of the National Security Law. So the solution to the separated families was not in itself an objective that they pursued by coming to the Red Cross talks.

On the other side of the political dialogue conducted within the context of the North-South Coordinating Committee, as soon as this Committee was started, [the North Koreans] came up with the suggestion that the Committee be reorganized and expanded. The two sides would be represented in that expanded committee by between five to thirty representatives of about sixty or so political parties and social organizations, in addition to certain individuals, on the condition that in the case of South Korea, those who had espoused anti-communist beliefs be banned from being allowed to participate in the expanded version of the committee. So in other words, their aim was to use the avenue of dialogue as a means to create certain conditions in the South conducive to the kind of revolution that they had pursued. The South Korean side, by contrast, was confining itself to pursuing the kind of rapprochement between the two Koreas in a commonsense manner.

In due course, as changes multiplied, the North Koreans began to realize that in terms of economic development, South Korea was already far ahead of North Korea. Secondly, the North Koreans began to realize that whereas they wanted to use these dialogues as a means to weaken the anti-communist orientation of South Korean society, on the contrary, the continuation of the dialogue was helping South Korea become more anti-communist, so to speak. So the North Koreans quickly began feeling disillusioned about this continuation of dialogue. That was becoming quite evident already sometime into the middle of 1972. By the turn of the year 1973, North Korea was very conspicuously losing interest in any further continuation of the dialogue. Then, in August of that year, the case of Kim Dae-jung kidnapping took place. Toward the end of the month, the North Koreans issued a statement in the name of Kim Yeongju in his capacity as co-chairman of the North-South Coordinating Committee. It said that because Lee Hurak,

who was acting as his counterpart, was the leader of a band of gangsters in South Korea, and therefore unworthy of being the counterpart in negotiation with the North Koreans, they were suspending talks both in the Coordinating Committee and in the Red Cross.

**STUECK:** I'm sorry Mr. Lee but I'm going to be a little bit provocative here. I find your description of North Korea's position to be perfectly plausible. What I find a little bit less so is that South Korea didn't have its own agenda regarding the possibility of interaction between South Korean families and North Korean families. Are you really saying that the ROK government, the Park regime, didn't have an agenda regarding the family exchanges that went beyond the humanitarian?

**LEE:** I thought we are going to discuss that subject tomorrow morning, the political dimension. I would rather reserve for tomorrow morning's session if I may.

**SCHAEFER:** It's also a domestic dimension question. So if that's true, why did President Park in October 1972 have to come up with those emergency measures? And why did you need the *Yushin* Constitution if it was obvious that North Korea's strategy was going to fail and you said unification talks were making South Korea more anti-communist? If that's all true, why did President Park somehow feel in October of 1972 that he was losing control of certain segments or elements of society, and why did you have emergency rule and the *Yushin* Constitution? The North Korean narratives are of course different. They say the breakdown was not the Kim Dae-jung abduction, which was a pretext, but they said in 1972 that we were completely surprised by President Park instituting the emergency measures of the *Yushin* Constitution, which made no more sense because then basically it would be lost if we had no more chance to achieve what we had in mind.

**LEE:** Would you mind if I respond to that tomorrow morning?

**SCHAEFER:** I'll be looking forward to it.

**SHIN:** I have two questions for Mr. Kim Dasool and perhaps even Mr. Lee. Earlier you had spoken on this issue so I need to just confirm and verify if I heard it correctly. You mentioned that during the Red Cross talks, North Korea had insisted that these talks be held in Panmunjeom and it seems that President Park was the one who had insisted and was able to see it through that the talks would be held on a rotational basis. Can I understand it that in the beginning, North Korea and President Park actually had different perspectives as to where the meetings would be held? If that's correct please confirm. Also, as far as the Red Cross talks are concerned, there was a certain point where the talks were not going anywhere, so for a long time we were not able to make any progress. Can I say that this was basically because Pyongyang wanted to have some time to prepare the city for the talks to be held, and also to have the highway laid rather than as the excuse which was given by Pyongyang that there would be some difficulties, including circles of friends rather than just intimate relatives as the people who would be included in the reunions. Could that be true?

**KIM:** As to the first question, yes, it is correct that it was us, South Korea, who had insisted and put a lot of emphasis on having a rotational basis for the meetings. As to your second question, it's partly correct in that North Korea came out and said that there were some issues, including the circle of friends, as the people who were prospective people to be met, and also there were some concerns about freedom of movement as North Korea had suggested, but that's not the whole thing. There were some concerns about Seoul and Pyongyang being prepared for these meetings to be held. So the starting point was actually quite different from North Korea and South Korea. The agenda for our August 12 Red Cross talks was to be the reunion of the divided families, but North Korea came out and stated that the meeting should not be about the divided families, but should be a political meeting. That's what they had wanted from the beginning.

Our understanding as far as the motive that North Korea had in their political meeting talks was that North Korea was intending to have South Korea become South Vietnam, in fact, basically wanting to have North Korean agents freely infiltrate South Korean society and free infiltration required the free mobility of these people, and Red Cross talks were in fact a pretext to allow for a freedom of

movement of North Korean agents in South Korea. So basically, North Korea was looking to weaken the anti-communist stance that the South Korean society had at the time.

So the Red Cross talks stalled for quite a while because South and North Korea had different objectives. As stated earlier, South Korea wanted to have a reunion of divided families, but North Korea had their objectives of basically infiltrating South Korean society and North Korea wanted to find ways to have more underground organizations in South Korea and also their liberation front to be more active in South Korea. So when we go through the North Korean intentions, of course it was hard for us to come about having an agreement on anything. So there came certain clandestine meetings in which we had discussed how to separate the two. If you want to talk politics, we can talk politics in a separate meeting. So this is what actually had taken place and once we were able to reach an agreement—that the politics would be made a separate agenda from the Red Cross agenda—we were able to break out of the stalemate.

**SHIN:** Actually perhaps my question was not focused enough because I really wanted to ask you about the circle of friends. Why did the issue of circle of friends surface, was it because North Korea wanted to have some more time to prepare Pyongyang or was it because, just as you had stated, that they had other ulterior motives?

**KIM:** Yes, that's correct. The way I see it, buying time was not the objective when they brought up this idea of circle of friends. North Korea really wanted to turn South Korea into a South Vietnam and now that talks had stalled for about a year, North Korea was in the meantime able to build the roads that were needed and also we were able to have a separate group known as a Coordination Conference which would allow for these political dialogues to be held.

**LEE:** Let me supplement with an observation. When North Korea came to Panmunjeom, what they tried to do was not necessarily the humanitarian dialogue in the context of Red Cross talks in the pure sense of the word. They were trying to engage South Korea in a political dialogue in the context of the United Front strategy, so that was the reason why they came up with the suggestion in de-

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North Korea had an ultimate goal that was to be carried out in three phases. The first phase was to “revolutionize internationally.” The second phase was to “revolutionize South Korea.” Finally, the third phase was to “revolutionize North Korea” so that North Korea would become the hub of all revolutions.”

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termining the agenda. In addition to families, they tried to add friends in addition to relatives, and also they insisted that in determining the agenda, South Korea accept the reference of free movement in the setting of the agenda. So that was the reason why it took such a long time in having the agenda fixed in the framework of the preliminary talks. As Mr. Kim observed, it was not necessary only because of the construction of the road, but also because of the difficulties in arriving at an agreement over the agenda which took such a long time, which actually was more than a year.

**OSTERMANN:** A question for Mr. Kim on South Korean understanding of North Korean policymaking and intentions at the time. Looking back in light of what we know today, how good was your intelligence on North Korea? You suggested your understanding at the time of motives behind the talks on the part of North Korea. I wonder if you could elaborate on that and assess, looking back on how South Korea's understanding holds up today in light of what we now know and in light of the new sources and documents that have come out since. How good was your understanding of North Korea back in the early 1970s?

**KIM:** During the 1960s and 1970s, North Korea had an ultimate goal that was to be carried out in three phases. The first phase was to “revolutionize internationally.” The second phase was to “revolutionize South Korea.” Finally, the third phase was to “revolutionize North Korea” so that North Korea would become the hub of all revolutions. When I went to Pyongyang in 1972, I recall seeing this slogan hanging on the main streets that said that we should make sashimi out of the American imperialists. So from the three revolutionary paths that North Korea was pursuing, you can see turning South Korea into a communist country was one of the more important ones. So the three revolutionary paths were the objectives that North Korea was pursuing, and our objective at the time in South Korea was to break through the three revolutionary paths that North Korea had and to dispel any attempts by North Korea to achieve their objective.

For example, in their first path of international revolution, North Korea pursued Asian and African countries as well as South American countries that were part of the non-aligned movement and through alliances with these non-aligned

countries, North Korea tried to overcome the imperialism of the U.S. South Korea, of course, had to counterattack the North Korean path that was taken. This was symbolized in our June 23 Declaration [of 1973].<sup>6</sup> Through this June 23 Declaration, we indicated to the world that South Korea was willing to open its doors to other communist countries including, North Korea and countries in Mideast, in other parts of Asia as well as Africa, and that South Korea was ready to normalize relations with any of these countries should they choose to.

**OSTERMANN:** Maybe this was just the diplomatic answer to my question. It was really more methodologically about how you derived the information and your assessments of North Korean motives in the early 1970s. If you can speak to that in a general sense it would be of interest.

**LEE:** Let me respond to your question. To a large extent, we had to rely upon the North Korean publications, documents, and materials which had a lot of North Korea's intentions and strategies and tactics. In addition to that, we had to rely upon the information that we were collecting through the pro-North Korean communities in Japan, as well as through other countries friendly to North Korea, which mostly belonged to the non-aligned movement. Also, we had other means of obtaining information through North Koreans captured by us or North Koreans who defected to us. So these are the roots through which we were collecting this information which we later corroborated into our evaluations of North Korea's intentions and strategies.

And to supplement some of the explanations that Mr. Kim gave to you a while ago, which is an officially proclaimed North Korean strategy in dealing with not only South Korea, but also the United States, which is "a strategy to tear limbs away from the body." This was a strategy that North Korea used to describe their intention to isolate the United States from the rest of the world. They regarded Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa as the limbs of the United States. Their strategy of tearing limbs apart from the body meant somehow isolating the United States from the rest of the world, including Asia, South America, Africa, and Europe. That also had the application to South Korea as well, which meant they were trying to isolate the South Korean government from other societal forces.



RYOO KIHILJAE

That is where their concept of the United Front strategy figures in. When they came up with the Red Cross talks, their intention was to use the Red Cross dialogue talks as a means to isolate the South Korean government from international society. That was mostly their intention, but in due course, they had to begin to understand, to realize, that that strategy was not paying off. Then they began to quickly lose interest in going any further with the dialogue.

**HONG:** I think we've come quite a bit on the topic of allies of North Korea. During this time period, North Korea was reaching out to the U.S. and Japan to establish contact with them, and at the same time, South Korea was reaching out to China and also towards the Soviet Union. According to the documents that we were able to review, and not just the June 23 Declaration, the South Korean government had reached out to China and to the Soviet Union. To a certain extent, South Korea sought some help from the U.S. in reaching out to China and the Soviet Union. The interesting thing is that the two countries had reacted to South Korea's overture rather differently. The Soviet Union seemed somehow more receptive of the South Korean overture. In fact, there are some records in the Korean government which indicate that in Sweden there were contacts between South Korean diplomats and Soviet diplomats and this apparently had occurred on multiple occasions. However, China seems to have been rather negative in reacting to the overture by South Korea. My question would be open to the floor to all the diplomats; why was it that there was such a disparity in the reception by the two countries to the overture by South Korea?

**LEE:** Let me comment on that. Between the United States and China, there used to be what was referred to as Warsaw talk or Warsaw Dialogue between Alexis Johnson and Wang Bingnan which lasted between 1954 or 1955 through 1970-something. It was not actually a dialogue at all. Sometimes they met and they remained silent until they departed, or sometimes one side talked only while the other side simply listened. And other times they sat down for a couple of hours without anybody speaking at all. So it was not necessarily anything which we may refer to in the context of a dialogue. That was something which is quite typical of the Cold War era. So what you are explaining in terms of those contacts between South Korea and Russia, USSR and China was something which could be likened to those type of encounters.

To a certain extent, in its initial stage the North-South dialogue was also quite similar to that. It was falling short of being referred to in the context of a dialogue. So at the time of the Warsaw meeting there was reference of talking to the world and during the initial stage of the inter-Korean dialogue we talked about speaking on different wavelengths. It's not a two-way dialogue; it's sort of a one-way dialogue, because the two sides had respectively their own objectives which did not actually need to be together. So until the event of Nordpolitik, or northern diplomacy, of the Roh Tae-woo government, I don't think there had been any meaningful interactions between South Korea and the USSR, nor between South Korea and China. So trying to make a comparison between those two sets of encounters appears to me to be rather meaningless. It was only after the 1988 Olympics that meaningful dialogue began being developed between Seoul and Moscow and between Seoul and Beijing. I think that should be how we should understand the context of those relationships. I am feeling quite negative to giving that much significance to whatever encounters that had transpired during the timeframe in the 1970s or earlier than that.

**OSTERMANN:** Could I follow up with this thought? A further question on this would be, how did you assess at the time China's role with regard to North Korean policymaking?

**LEE:** China's role in that timeframe was giving full-hearted support to North Korea. China was struggling very hard to establish itself diplomatically. China did not have that much leverage to figure it into that context of international diplomacy. China was literally unprepared to respond to approaches if there were any coming from Seoul. I think that is how things stood at that time.

**XIA:** I just want to add some footnotes to the dialogue that you just had. I received a number of recently declassified Chinese documents two days ago. There's one which might add something to this panel because this panel discusses the DPRK's relations with allied countries. This document is actually the minutes of the conversation between Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung during Kim Il Sung's April 18, 1975 visit to Beijing. Let me read a little bit. It's Chinese, but I'll try to translate it into English. Kim Il Sung was having a conversation with Mao when he went to visit Mao at his residence. Kim Il Sung said, "After I return to Korea in May I will go to Romania, Algeria and Mauritania. There might be other countries, but I'm not sure at this point."

Then they engaged in small talk, and Kim Il Sung basically says, "I am going to Algeria because the President of Algeria, [Houari] Boumediène, is the chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement." So Mao said, "Boumediène is a very clever guy" and Kim Il Sung responded, "Well, he has been very supportive of us."

Then Mao asked, "Why don't you go to Albania?" China had a problem with Albania by this time because Albania was against China's rapprochement with the United States.

Kim Il Sung responded, "Well, I have not decided yet. Albania has normal relations with us. We improved our relations recently."

Mao then said, "Well, that's good. Albania doesn't like Vietnam. They don't like us either. We invited Nixon. They don't like that. They are unhappy."

Acting surprised, Kim Il Sung then asked, "Albania?"

And Mao said, "Yes."

Kim Il Sung said, "Is Vietnam not happy either?"

Mao responded, "Vietnam is very unhappy."

Kim Il Sung said, "I believe that the Vietnamese don't understand your revolutionary diplomacy."

Mao said, “We invited Nixon. We invited Kissinger. Kissinger is a very bad guy. Nixon is good.”

Kim Il Sung said, “Maybe Kissinger is a little cunning. You invited Nixon. We actually support you. Later I also delivered a speech supporting the Chairman’s revolutionary diplomacy.”

Mao said, “We basically want to use Nixon in order to get in touch with the American people.”

Kim Il Sung said, “Very good. They have embargoed China for several dozen years. Now this is a great victory. We understand. Why are they unhappy? I don’t understand.”

Mao said, “They are not happy but now a little better.” Kim Il Sung responded, “I said at that time that this is a great victory for China. China didn’t go to ask America. It’s a great victory.” Mao said, “I told Nixon to come to us.”

Kim Il Sung said, “This is a great victory. Your victory is our common victory. We should celebrate. I don’t know why they don’t understand you. I actually talked about this issue with Premier Zhou.”

**LEE:** What year was that?

**XIA:** This is April 1975.

**LEE:** In July 1975, Kim Il Sung spoke to Tokuma Utsonomiya, a member of the Japanese diet. During this meeting, he said that now that the war in Indochina war was coming to an end with Vietnam the victor, it is now the turn of the Korean Peninsula; we may follow-up with a war of national liberation. That was the timeframe when Kim Il Sung was very upbeat, relishing the aftermath of the victorious Vietnamese winning the war.

**SCHAEFER:** Actually when Kim Il Sung went to Europe, he also went to Bulgaria. He had a long talk there with Todor Zhivkov. His conversation with Zhivkov no longer reflects the sentiments that you just told us about, because apparently when he was in China, Kim Il Sung got the impression that China would not support Korea’s military adventurism to follow the example of

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Indochina. When he is in Bulgaria, Kim explains in detail why Korea is not Vietnam, why South Korea does not work like South Vietnam. He provided a lot of reasons, including geography, strategy, etc., and explains that it makes no sense for North Korea to carry out an armed struggle in South Korea. This is the summer of 1975, so it's a few months after his visit to Beijing when he apparently realized this, and makes it pretty clear. He actually apologizes because it was impossible. Still, it was impossible to replicate the Vietnamese triumph in South Korea.

**PARK:** The Inter-Korean rivalry at that time was a microcosm and condensed symbol of the East-West bloc confrontation. Did you have close consultations with the United States both before and after meetings with the North?

**LEE:** Well, in those days we continued to have dialogue with American diplomats both in Seoul and in Washington. It was about the time when North Korea was already into several years of playing games of one against another between China and Russia. So by the time the Vietnamese War was coming to an end in 1975, North Korea was very close to China. North Korea was rather cool with the Soviet Union. So as was pointed out, in April, Kim Il Sung was invited to Beijing where he almost openly sought Chinese support for another war of national liberation conducted in the Korean Peninsula, but China was very reluctant. But later in Bulgaria, Kim Il Sung appears to have begun changing some of his remarks.

**SHIN:** I would like to add further to what Mr. Lee had stated earlier. It is correct that on April 18 1975 Kim Il Sung had visited Mao Zedong along with O Jinu. And at the time, Kim Il Sung had indicated to Mao Zedong that the timing was ripe for us to unify the Korean Peninsula by force. However, two months after this meeting had taken place from June 2 to June 5 1975 in Bulgaria, in a meeting with Mr. Zhivkov, Kim Il Sung states that we will not be the one to first attack South Korea because of certain issues involving the geography and the military preparedness of South Korea. So Kim Il Sung at this point concedes and says that there will not be unification by force.

So this is the same person making two different remarks and the two remarks are quite opposite of one another, very paradoxical you could say. But I think actually the latter, the second one was closer to the truth. If I may take a guess as to why Kim Il Sung had made these two statements, I would say this was really a strategic statement made to China, because if Kim Il Sung were to let China know that he had given up on unification by might, then perhaps the leverage that North Korea was able to exercise or have towards China, and also towards the Soviets, may have become shorter and not as strong as before. So my guess would be that this was a politically motivated strategic statement.

**LEE:** Well, I don't think Kim Il Sung was that contradictory in speaking to different audiences in that timeframe. Even when he was speaking at the Chinese State Council dinner, he did not directly refer to armed aggression of the South. What he said was there was going to be a situation becoming more favorable for the revolutionary upheaval in South Korea. And he said that when this occurs in South Korea, we are not going to be standing by; we will intervene. And then he followed up with the remark that if a war is going to occur on the Korean Peninsula again, the only thing that we will lose would be the military demarcation in exchange for unification.

So if we take all the context, he was clearly referring to the military solution for the unification of Korea when he was speaking not only to Zhivkov, but he was also speaking to [Nicolae] Ceaușescu of Romania and also to Tokuma Utsonomiya. And he kept on speaking about the South Korean situation where he saw the revolutionary situation becoming riper, so much so that he was looking forward to seeing a revolutionary upheaval in South Korea, at which time North Korea was not going to be idly standing by. So I think that is a very consistent remark that he kept on repeating in that timeframe.

**PERSON:** What would have suggested to Kim Il Sung that the situation was becoming ripe for revolution?

**LEE:** On a number of occasions Kim Il Sung was very specific in remarking that now that the war for national liberation in Vietnam was coming to a close, where

North Vietnam is turning out to be victorious, achieving unification, it's now the turn of the Korean Peninsula where this war for national liberation can be fought for the ultimate accomplishment of unification.

**PERSON:** So there's no real evidence of the situation becoming ripe for revolution in the South?

**LEE:** No, in his conversation with Zhivkov and Ceaușescu he was very explicit about the reason why he thought so favorably about the ripening of the situation in South Korea.

**SCHAEFER:** Unfortunately, the only source we have about Kim Il Sung's visit in April of 1975 to Beijing is this banquet speech where he said exactly that sentence: "If war breaks out we have nothing to lose but the DMZ." And also this line, "the revolutionary tide in Asia is high." But, of course, what is suspicious is the timing of the visit. It was a very unusual, a very high profile visit to China, which hadn't happened for many years before, takes place after the fall of Phnom Penh and before the impending fall of Saigon. What we can say at least is certain is that they were trying to explore with China options for the Korean Peninsula. Unfortunately in these snippets of conversations, we don't have anything about that in there. But if at some point, the transcript or more snippets from the talk between Mao and Kim Il Sung came out, we might know more about that.

I also agree with Mr. Lee, it's not quite contradictory, but when he is staying in these Eastern European countries, he elaborates, and I think if you read the text he almost apologizes for why he has not actually succeeded. This is something which you'll find in many of the Eastern European documents, that Kim Il Sung really felt under some pressure, and I think it's true that he was under pressure to explain to himself and maybe also to his leadership why South Korea was no South Vietnam. So South Vietnam really was a major challenge in that the Vietnamese were successful and Kim Il Sung was not successful, so he really had to come up with all kinds of reasons why it would not work. And in his talk with Zhivkov, we have a lot of arguments outlined.



GEORGI MITOV

**STUECK:** Just two points. Number one, during this period, there was a reassessment going on in United States intelligence circles regarding the military strengths or the military balance on the peninsula. It doesn't culminate until 1978 or 1979, but it certainly had begun in 1975. According to the early 1970s assessment in the United States, there was pretty much a balance between the two sides. But by 1975, there was a reevaluation that had begun in the United States that led to the conclusion that there in fact was not a balance; North Korea had a distinct advantage over South Korea.

The second point is, if all of this is correct, and if the KCIA knew something of this [the U.S. reassessment] at the time, it makes their response to the turmoil of 1979, both before and after the assassination of Park, much more explicable in terms of their desire to repress it [the U.S. reassessment].

**LEE:** Correct me if I'm wrong, but to my recollection, the reevaluation of the military balance of power in the Korean Peninsula by the U.S. administration began after the inauguration of President Carter. It was what we call "bean counting," which had begun being used as a means of reevaluating North Korea's military strength, and that began after the inauguration of President Carter because the U.S. military establishment was in opposition to Carter's troop withdrawal commitment. So the Pentagon began undertaking this reevaluation of the military balance of the Korean Peninsula with the use of bean counting which resulted in assessing North Korean military capability to be a lot stronger than the previous result of reevaluation. That's the way I recall.

**O'DONOHUE:** Well, I think we're talking about overlapping events. They had started the bean counting. One thing to remember is that this was premised on

North-South Korea. The American component still gave the advantage. In other words, it wasn't that North Korea could beat South Korea with American forces. So its focus was on an abstraction, but an important one. I think what we then had with Carter coming in was part of the approach in terms of withdrawing the division and compensating South Korea militarily. And so you did go into this other thing which was putting together a package which would be a part of the withdrawal. As I remember, a reasonable amount of the package was delivered despite the fact that the second division hadn't yet withdrawn.

**LEE:** Are you referring to the composition package?

**O'DONOHUE:** For the Second Division, yes.

**LEE:** I mean the composition package for, vis-à-vis Second Division pullout?

**O'DONOHUE:** Yes.

**LEE:** That took place in 1977.

**O'DONOHUE:** Yes.

**STUECK:** I'm sorry, I was involved in the memoir of a person who was directly involved in the intelligence study in Washington. His name is James Young and at the time he was the assistant military attaché in Seoul, but in 1975, he was with DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and he was one of the key figures in doing the bean counting. And it's clear that although the study was ongoing, it began well before Carter, it was very far along, and then Carter of course wasn't aware of this before he got into office and the final report didn't come until maybe sometime in 1978 and maybe in 1979, but the trend was already towards—

**O'DONOHUE:** They were overlapping events.

**STUECK:** Yes, right. And the other thing you have to understand too is that the discussion of the possible withdrawal of the Second Division preceded Carter. We tend to forget this, that really there was a discussion either in the summer of 1975 or 1976 in which Kissinger was involved, in which Philip Habib actually proposed the withdrawal of the Second Division and Kissinger blocked it, so this all preceded Carter.

**O'DONOHUE:** Yeah, actually the proposal was to go to a brigade originally. You're right. The idea of withdrawing the Second Division was viewed as sort of inevitable over an indefinite timeframe and the study related to what it would mean.



KIM DALSOOL

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## Panel IV

### Inter-Korean Dialogue and the Domestic Politics of the Two Koreas

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**Chair:** *Ryoo Kihljae*

**Provocateurs:** *Shin Jong-dae, James Person*

**RYOO:** In this session, we will hear the veterans speak about the domestic politics of both Koreas during the 1970s. Both Koreas underwent dynamic and significant political changes [during this period]. First I will give the microphone to Shin Jong-dae of the University of North Korean Studies.

**SHIN:** I would like to start by referring to a document from the Bulgarian Embassy in Pyongyang which shows that on October 15, two days prior to the announcement of *Yushin* on October 17, South Korea notified North Korea that the *Yushin* Constitution would be announced. So there were two meetings that apparently took place on October 16 and October 18. In one of these meetings, Director Lee Hurak sent a message to Kim Yeongju of North Korea. In this message, delivered through Director Lee, President Park suggested that he would like to see unification happen on the Korean Peninsula. However, it was apparent that most, or a large portion of the Korean populace did not want unification, and as such, it was necessary to take emergency measures in South Korea. The message went further to state that President Park would like to see the dialogue continue and the measures that were being taken by the South Korean government should not be mistaken as a sign that South Korea did not want any further talks. That was how the message was sent.

So the way I read the situation is that as far as *Yushin* was concerned, it was important that the inter-Korea dialogue continue before and until *Yushin* became more of a fixture in South Korea. And for the South Korean government, inter-

Korean dialogue was, in a way, a tool for ensuring that *Yushin* could become a success. So given this situation, it seems that the joint communiqué that was produced as a result of South-North Korea dialogue seems to have reflected most of the desires of North Korea, and it seems that after *Yushin*, South Korea took a more defensive posture rather than the other way around. This, I would say, was attributable to the very fact that the South Korean government was trying to bring about *Yushin*. So, my first question is whether it is true that South Korea became more defensive as a result of what had occurred. My second question refers to the conversations Kim Il Sung had with [Nicolae] Ceaucescu, president of Romania, during 1972. A presidential election had taken place in South Korea during April of 1971, and in reference to the election, North Korea expressed their view that everything they had wanted to say in regard to peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula had been very well said by candidate Kim Dae-jung. So the document expresses [North Korea's] full support for Kim Dae-jung, and expresses North Korea's wish to ensure that there would be continued isolation of President Park. Part of that attempt had been to bring about eight items as a precondition for unification on the Korean Peninsula.

From the documents, I was able to see that North Korea had made up their strategy and that the strategy was to continue pursuing inter-Korean dialogue and peaceful unification [in order to] be able to find ways to isolate the dictator, President Park, from the international community as well as from the South Korean people. The documents further go on to state that by isolating the dictator from his people as well as from the international community, that although the presidential election in 1971 ended in failure for the opposition party, the next presidential election would be successful for the opposition party and that the person that they wanted [Kim Dae-jung] would be in power. After that, there was the Joint Communiqué of July 4, 1972. After the Joint Communiqué was announced, the opposition party came out and said, we do not fear aggression from the North, so we no longer need to have the National Security Law or the presence of American troops on the Korean Peninsula. So when you see the flow of events that occurred, the North Korean strategies actually seem to have been fairly effective during this time.

Also, in December 1971, President Park announced a state of emergency and the reason was because there was an increasing threat from North Korea. That's what the president had stated and his government had stated. In response, the opposition party came out and said the president and the ruling party was using the nation's security as a hostage and that they were actually abusing the security of the peninsula for their own interests. That's what the opposition party was claiming. However, when you look back, in light of all these documents that we have been able to refer to, and in light of what I have stated thus far, it seems that President Park was well aware of the background and the objectives that North Korea had, and the infiltration by North Korea into South Korea had been quite well known. President Park was actually quite knowledgeable. Having said this, I would like to know if it was truly as I have described. Are the documents correct the way I have read them?

**PERSON:** I have some questions about the North Korean constitution. In 1972, North Korea enacted the so-called Socialist Constitution which named Kim Il Sung president. This constitution was seen by many to institutionalize the *Suryeong* system, or the chieftain system, although its origins can be traced to 1967 when the monolithic system was first introduced. I would like to know how much South Korea knew about this constitution in advance. We know from the Bulgarian document mentioned by Professor Shin that South Korea informed North Korea of its plans to declare martial law ahead of the *Yushin* Constitution. Were the North Koreans as forthcoming with information about domestic changes? Was there much discussion about the plan to enact this new constitution? Were there channels of communication to discuss domestic politics? This could be directed to both Dr. Lee and Mr. Kim. We can start with that and then I'll follow up with additional questions.

**LEE:** I think the subjects that are being discussed now take us to a very sensitive area and I think there is need for me and some of the others to be somewhat careful so we do not depart from the facts. So let me address these issues with as much prudence as possible. Let me address the simpler question first asked by Mr. Person. Regarding the constitutional amendment which North Korea undertook



XIA YAFENG

in late 1972, we did not know of this in advance because in North Korea, the constitution was very confidential information. They treated it very confidentially, so much so that it was difficult for us to obtain the contents of the constitution. So much so that when this constitutional amendment took place in North Korea, it took us quite a long time before we were able to obtain the content of those amendments. And as it relates to that constitutional amendment of 1972, I think the question is about the possibility that because of the existence of the North-South dialogue along the political track within the context of the North-South Coordinating Committee, I think Mr. Person is finding it suspicious that there had been some kind of a prior consultation between the two Koreas regarding this constitution's amendments and what they were supposed to be about. That did not take place at that time. There was no prior consultation between the two sides. We came to know of the constitutional amendments posthumously, so I don't think there is any further need to discuss it in the context that the constitutional amendments having taken place in North Korea late 1972 and the *Yushin* constitutional amendment in South Korea were some products of inter-Korean exchanges. That was not the case, so let's settle that there.

Now, regarding the first item of Dr. Shin's questions. Yes, the record is accurate that one day prior to the announcement made by the government about the dissolution of the National Assembly and the government's move to amend the constitution, which took place on October 16, North Korea was notified, as pointed out there [in the document]. Actually Jeong Hongjin, with whom I was working, met Kim Deokhyeon, his counterpart, in Panmunjeom and conveyed a sort of message explaining exactly what the record mentions; that South Korea was now dissolving the National Assembly and taking the process toward a constitutional amendment, which is not intended to antagonize North Korea, but a means to create conditions more favorable for the inter-Korean dialogue. But that message did not contain the contents of the constitutional amendment. Explanations about the constitutional amendment were not relayed to North Korea until several days thereafter.

Having said that, we must understand, as we discussed yesterday morning, that the initiatives of the two Koreas taken in 1971 and 1972 that brought about the initiation of the inter-Korean dialogue came from both sides. I said that North Korea did that proactively and South Korea did that reactively in response to

changes in the international situation, which is correct. At that time, South Korea was feeling very anxious, suspicious about the intentions of Washington, so much so that South Korea felt the need to somehow come up with some ways to be prepared, or if not, to counter, whereas North Korea was more upbeat. North Korea was finding the overall international situation more favorable to them in its pursuit of unification. So as the records coming from the communist countries point out, Kim Il Sung and North Korean leaders were rather aggressive in coming forward for the dialogue. Clearly, with that optimism North Korea could take advantage of the dialogue as a means to penetrate into South Korea and work toward certain conditions and patterns by which North Korea could see reductions in the negative or antagonistic sentiment in South Korea toward North Korea. That's the reason why they came up with those preconditions like some changes of the law and dissolution and abolition of different institutions and agencies, things like that, as preconditions.

And the [North Korean] constitutional amendment of 1972 was characterized by such changes as observed, elevating the status of Kim Il Sung from that of premier to president. And you know it may sound ironic, but as the two Koreas began engaging in dialogue, the calling of the two leaders, President Park as against Premier Kim Il Sung, was found very unfavorable to the North Koreans. You know they began talking about a confederation scheme. Kim Il Sung spoke about that in his meeting with Lee Hurak in November of 1972, that maybe the two Koreas initially agree to a unified confederation formula. Kim Il Sung said things like, "Well, I may not seek the office of prime minister." But the North Korean people were very sensitive about the fact that whereas Park was referred to as President Park, Kim Il Sung was referred to as Premier Kim. So that was one of the driving causes of the [North Korean] constitutional amendment in 1972.

Now let me come back to another dimension. As was pointed out, South Korea did convey to the North Koreans its intention to revise the constitution. Why South Korea did that, in order for us to understand that, I need to give you a general observation of the political circumstances in South Korea then. The North-South dialogue of the early 1970s was largely pushed by Lee Hurak rather than President Park Chung Hee. At that time, Lee Hurak was in his third term and there were some measure of political uncertainties as to what would happen

## **“But the North Korean people**

were very sensitive about the fact that whereas Park was referred to as President Park, Kim Il Sung was referred to as Premier Kim. So that was one of the driving causes of the [North Korean] constitutional amendment in 1972.”

thereafter. And I do not know if President Park himself had an intention to move toward extending his stay in power by that timeframe, but it was Mr. Lee Hurak who began nurturing the idea of looking for an opportunity to create an environment for President Park to continue to remain in his office.

So it was sometime around the early part of 1972 when Mr. Lee Hurak tasked some people to go abroad to countries like Argentina, Taiwan, and Spain to conduct studies and research on how the power systems in those countries where lifetime presidents or lifetime heads of state had been constitutionally institutionalized. So it was, I think it began in 1971, and when Lee Hurak began launching his efforts to open up a dialogue with North Korea, Lee Hurak, being a very clever person, I have a strong impression that he struck up the idea that there might be the possibility of this inter-Korean dialogue and quickly hooked up to his desire that there be in due course a constitutional amendment allowing the president to continue to be elected as the president of the country, republic.

So as he was looking forward to taking steps for the *Yushin* Constitution and he felt it possible that this inter-Korean dialogue could be taken advantage of to rationalize or justify this political restructuring, so much so that you know in 1972 after the exchange of secret visits by Lee Hurak and Pak Seongcheol, the two sides began moving toward a joint statement which culminated with the July 4 Joint Communiqué. At this time, when our side tossed out the idea of reaching an agreement in the form of a joint statement, the North Koreans immediately came back with the suggestion that the statement be built around the three basic principles for unification, which the North Koreans had been talking about for a long time – independent unification, peaceful unification, and national unity. I was among many working-level people who were opposed to allowing these principles inserted into that statement at that stage because I and others felt that if those principles were allowed to be admitted, then it would almost without fail open up a way for differences in interpretation which would make it difficult for the dialogue to move forward. But Lee Hurak insisted that those be accepted, so the process did not take long and toward the latter part of June the statement was almost about ready. So on July 4, the two sides announced that they had agreed to this Joint Communiqué.

Actually at first the North Koreans wanted Lee Hurak to come to Pyongyang and use Pyongyang as the venue for the announcement of the Joint Communiqué, but some different opinions were raised in South Korea. And Lee Hurak too was rather reluctant to go to Pyongyang and make the announcement in Pyongyang for many reasons. You know that it might have been propagandistically taken as an advantage by North Korea, things like that. So after the announcement of the Joint Communiqué, Lee Hurak immediately began taking steps for the *Yushin* Constitutional Amendment. So much so that by the time that the government was to announce the dissolution of the National Assembly on the 16th of October, one of the things which that very much captured the attention of Mr. Lee Hurak and others in South Korea was the fear that North Korea might react to the constitutional amendment negatively. Then the constitutional amendment movement might run into political storms. So the delivery of that message on October 15 followed by the explanation about the contempt of the constitutional amendment that took place thereafter were a reflection of the desire on the part of the South Korean people to prevent North Korea from reacting negatively to this political process in South Korea. And mysteriously, North Koreans did not react negatively because of two reasons. First, North Koreans were very optimistic that this constitutional amendment was yet another piece of South Korea's activity reflecting the fact that South Korea was in a very defensive position. And there was still hope that as the dialogue continued, dialogue could pose as a bridge for North Korea's move to instigate revolution in South Korea—that the revolution would be carried across the DMZ into South Korea, and they were still hopeful that the dialogue could be utilized as the bridge. And secondly, North Korea was taking this as an opportunity to come up with their own version of constitutional amendment in which Kim Il Sung was being promoted, elevated, to the status of president. So this, among other reasons, set the stage for those two political events to take place, the constitutional amendment in South Korea and another constitutional amendment in North Korea toward the end of 1972. Let me stop there.

**KIM:** During the inter-Korea dialogue, I had worked mostly with the Red Cross and Mr. Lee on the other hand had worked on the Coordination Committee, so as far as political motives or political operations are concerned, I would say that Mr.

**“After the announcement of the Joint Communiqué, Lee Hurak immediately began taking steps for the *Yushin* Constitutional Amendment.”**

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**“I was actually shocked to see**

how bad the railroads and road conditions were [in North Korea], and I was even more shocked to see that many of these railroads were in disrepair and that they had been neglected for so long.

Another example would be the forestry of North Korea, they did not have trees and it was a shock to me that the mountains would not have trees.”

Lee has the better information among the two of us. So what I will say in regards to the political nature of the dialogue would be really a supplement to what Mr. Lee has said. However, I will take several different perspectives, so there might be a slight variation in our explanations. I spoke about this yesterday. There was the Joint Communiqué of South and North Korea on July 4, 1972, and after the Communiqué was announced there were rotational visits to Seoul and Pyongyang and these rotational visits were very, very important. After the announcement of the Communiqué, from the fall of 1972 and leading up to the stoppage of the talks in 1973, we had a one year window where we held many discussions. And as far as the Red Cross was concerned, we had about seven meetings altogether, rotating between Seoul and Pyongyang. And as far as the Coordination Committee was concerned, we had about five meetings altogether.

Now when you look at the make-up of the people who were involved in these discussions, you would see that these people were very high-ranking officials from both the South and North Korean regimes. This was many years after the Korean War had broken out and, after a few decades, when both sides had a chance to look at one another, they were actually in shock on both sides. The first shock that happened was between the U.S. and China, and then the second shock would come from these [inter-Korean] meetings. And I would say the magnitude of the shock that was felt on both sides of the DMZ was about the same as the magnitude that was felt during that time of the two bigger countries.

For example, I was actually shocked to see how bad the railroads and road conditions were [in North Korea], and I was even more shocked to see that many of these railroads were in disrepair and that they had been neglected for so long. Another example would be the forestry of North Korea, they did not have trees and it was a shock to me that the mountains would not have trees. And also for the chemicals that were used, in South Korea most of the chemicals were petrol-based, so we would produce vinyl from petrol-based chemicals. However, North Korea was producing vinyl from coal-based chemicals which were quite outdated. So I can only imagine that the North Koreans had an equal magnitude of shock when they visited South Korea.

What I think they may have seen was the highways that we had in South Korea and the industries that we had, and I am pretty sure that they saw with their

own eyes how fast we were moving economically and also how efficient we were. Prior to their visit to South Korea, I'm pretty sure that they felt that the South Korean government was merely a puppet government of America and that once the Americans pulled out from the Peninsula, that this would actually mean a death sentence for the government of South Korea. But what they actually came and saw were all these highways that were running through South Korea and also there were anti-tank defense devices and other infrastructures such as the airbases which would stay even after the withdrawal of the Americans.

Also if you recall during the Korean War it only took a few days for the North Koreans to push South Koreans all the way down to Daegu and Busan, and this was mainly due to the Soviet tank and because the South Korean Army did not have any anti-tank devices or measures. So what we did in South Korea was, when the North Korean representatives visited South Korea, we would ensure and intentionally have these items exposed to their eyes so that the defense mechanisms and defense infrastructure would be seen by their own eyes. So through these exchanges between South and North Koreans we were able to actually change our perspectives and we came to break out of our preconceptions that we had.

Following these talks, there was *Yushin* in South Korea and then there was a chieftain system, or *Yuil* system [in North Korea]. As far as South Korea was concerned, the priority was security. National security was the number one priority. Now this was necessary because from our visit to North Korea, we came to realize that all the infrastructure of North Korea was outdated and due to their socialist system, we came to realize that military was the foremost important thing and the whole society had been militarized in North Korea and as such we felt it necessary to prepare for them. So a good comparison would be that towards the end of the Second World War there were the kamikazes of Japanese and the Japanese had these people who would be piloting their planes into U.S. ships, and we felt that the North Koreans had the same attitude towards the war that would be carried out on the peninsula if there were to be one.

And adding further to the concerns was the fact that the demands that were made by North Korea during the Red Cross and also in the Coordination Committee meetings were akin to having South Korea disarm itself. So when you think of all these things that were happening, *Yushin* became necessary and

that's why the *Yushin* came about in South Korea. In South Korea, we had *Yushin* and in North Korea we had a new system which would be a monolithic system known as *Yuil*, and in that monolithic system, they had a new constitution which was discussed briefly here. The important parts about this constitution in North Korea is that, first, Kim Il Sung became the Chieftan, or *Suryeong*, of North Korea and secondly and perhaps quite important as well is that the capital of Korea had changed from Seoul to Pyongyang, so prior to the new constitution, in the North Korean Constitution, Seoul had been the capital of the Peninsula.

And as far as North Korea is concerned, as indicated to you earlier yesterday, they were following the three revolutionary paths. If the three paths were completed, then it would lead to the unification of the Korean Peninsula under communist party rule and that Kim Il Sung would eventually become the head of the communist party and the Peninsula and that Kim Il Sung would rule in Seoul. Through the exchanges that we have had thus far, I believe this indicates that there was a change in the attitude that Kim Il Sung was taking towards the revolutionary path to be taken.

So what was happening in North Korea? We have China and the Soviets who had been the backers of North Korea, but now North Koreans saw that China was in the midst of rapprochement with the U.S. And South Korea apparently was a lot stronger and better prepared than North Koreans had initially thought, so North Korea came to realize that unification by might would not work anymore and so they abandoned the idea that unification would come through might, and Pyongyang, by establishing a monolithic system, would pursue a dynasty of their own. Apparently that's what the thinking of North Korea and, in particular, Kim Il Sung had been. And the very proof that this dynastic succession was in the mind of Kim Il Sung through this new constitution is as follows. I believe it was in March of 1973 when Kim Jong Il's post had been changed. Before he was in the Propaganda Section and then he was moved to the Party's Guidance Section, so the Party's Guidance Section basically meant that this man was beginning to get groomed to become the successor of Kim Il Sung.

**STUECK:** I may have missed something, but I didn't follow the logic of Mr. Kim's presentation in one sense, that is, you talked about how your contact and that of



AMBASSADOR SUN JOUNYUNG

your colleagues with the North shocked you in terms of northern backwardness, and the North Koreans of course had contact with the South and saw the South was surging ahead. That would explain to some extent the constitutional reform in North Korea, but it wouldn't logically, to me, explain *Yushin*. You suggested at one point that *Yushin* can be explained by the contacts with the North. If the South was more confident of its advancement over North Korea internally as a result of the contact with North Korea, why would that lead to *Yushin*?

**KIM:** The question seems to be whether *Yushin* was intended to extend the regime of Park Chung Hee, or was it a reaction towards North Korea so that the security of South Korea would be guaranteed. My perspective would be that as far as what President Park may have intended in terms of his own regime, I do not know what his intentions were. And so although I don't know the precise intentions of President Park, what I can say is as follows: we looked at North Korea and we realized that the North Korean economy was nowhere near where we had thought it might be. However, it is also true that North Korean society had become much more militarized, so the military became the foremost concern for North Korean society as a whole.

At the time you have to remember that there was the Vietnam War and South Vietnam was falling, so with the demise of South Vietnam, it was felt that there was some sort of a crisis in South Korea. And when this crisis was looming with the militarization of the North Korean society, it became very necessary for the South Korean government to prioritize itself and make sure that security became the foremost concern and topic and objective of the regime.

And also, at the time we had the Nixon Doctrine, which seemed to indicate that there was a distinct possibility that the U.S. would continue to withdraw its

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of the *Yushin* revitalization reform, it was very much the initiative of Director Lee Hurak rather than President Park. President Park, as I understood, knowingly remained silent, so to speak, leaving Director Lee Hurak to take whatever initiative he was taking.”

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troops from the Korean Peninsula, and it then became necessary therefore that the South Korean government find its own ways to protect itself.

**SCHAEFER:** I want to thank Dr. Lee for this wonderful statement you gave which I think confirms many things which you can find in the records, particularly with the North Korean interpretation of this entire thing.

I have two follow-up questions for you. About this meeting between Kim Il Sung, Lee Hurak and the delegations between both Koreas on November 3, 1972, this was of course a couple of weeks after the constitutional amendment and Kim Il Sung apparently regarded this as his really last chance to achieve a sort of change in the entire situation. By then, North Korea had already realized that the constitutional amendment and the emergency rule in the South was working very much against North Korea. They were very angry about it, but they didn't say it publicly at the time because they said we don't want to shut the door which is still open just a little bit and we don't want to be the ones to close it but the last chance of this meeting. Since you were at this meeting, how did you recall the atmosphere, and particularly the attitude of Kim Il Sung? Because afterwards, when Kim Il Sung talked to the Soviet ambassador, he was still optimistic in a way, saying “I made so many proposals, and once these proposals become known in South Korea, people will immediately rise up and overthrow Park Chung Hee because I came up with a wide array of very good proposals.”

And the second question, you portray Lee Hurak basically as the guy who put all the strengths behind the dictatorial system and the presidency for life. Of course you didn't want to say that, but it almost comes across as if Park Chung Hee was merely a puppet of Lee Hurak. So what was Park Chung Hee's own contribution towards becoming president for life? Did he fully agree with Lee Hurak? Did he commission Lee Hurak to find a way how to install the presidency or was he rather indeed passive and Lee Hurak being the active proponent of the system?

**STUECK:** I have a follow-up to Mr. Kim. You mentioned in your response to my question that you were more aware of the militarization of North Korean society as a result of your visits to North Korea. I wonder if you would be more specific on that.

**LEE:** Let me respond to some of the points this way. In understanding the background in those days behind some of these developments, I think we have the need to make a distinction between the humanitarian dialogue in the context of Red Cross talks and the political dialogue in the context of North-South Korean Committee. I think I may say it this way, the Red Cross talks were more in response to the changes in the international situations highlighted by things like the Guam Doctrine and things like that. Whereas the political dialogue in the context of the North-South Korean Committee was more motivated by political needs felt by some people in President Park's government, then which was headed by Mr. Lee Hurak.

And at the time I think I had many conversations with Director Lee Hurak, and I'm speaking on the basis of the memory of the conversations that had transpired between me and Lee Hurak in those days. Obviously, Director Lee Hurak had in mind the need to respond to the changes in context of the international situation, but at the same time, he was obviously trying to take advantage of this opening in inter-Korean relations in the context of the political dialogue as a means to justify a certain political process that he had in mind. When it came to the issue of the *Yushin* revitalization reform, it was very much the initiative of Director Lee Hurak rather than President Park. President Park, as I understood, knowingly remained silent, so to speak, leaving Director Lee Hurak to take whatever initiative he was taking. So much so that President Park knew that Director Lee Hurak was pushing very hard for the July 4 Joint Communiqué.

That is my understanding which I can relate to you. And regarding the first part of the question that Mr. Schaefer put forth, as I said repeatedly earlier, Kim Il Sung was very proactive and Kim Il Sung was very optimistic that this dialogue was going to bring North Korea advanced opportunities in pursuing the kind of unification that they were pursuing, that is, creating conditions in South Korea more favorable for the kind of revolutionary takeover of South Korea.

That said, around the turn of the year from 1972 to 1973, I think, there was a major reconsideration, a major reassessment of the overall situation in Pyongyang and when the year 1973 dawned, North Korea began harboring an increasing number of questions and suspicions as to whether this dialogue was necessarily



KIM IL SUNG AND LEE HURAK

giving North Korea any such advantages. They were realizing that South Korea was not the South Korea that they had assumed it to be, both in terms of economic development and also in terms of whether South Korean society was that unstable to the extent that North Korea's pursuit of revolutionary takeover might carry over. And North Korea began realizing that that was not the case and North Korea began waking up to the reality that North and South Korea were already showing a reversal in economic development. South Korea was way ahead.

And as Mr. Kim observed, one of the surprising views that we had on the political track was that the members of the delegation participating in the North-South Korean Committee were hauled from Gaesong to Pyongyang by helicopter, which gave us an expanded scope of visitors. And as we saw from the helicopter down, we were literally surprised by the barrenness of the landscape. It looked very much like some parts of the Middle East, you know, no trees at all. And then we were surprised to find not only the barrenness, but economic backwardness, you know. We were taken to shopping stores and the general products which were displayed there looked like those products of ours during the 1940s, and quantity-wise, there was such a scarcity. No North Koreans came to wake up to the reality that even in terms of well, you know, some of the records here show Kim Il Sung telling Eastern European comrades about North Korea having made such an economic advancement and Kim Il Sung is sounding so upbeat and saying that if the South Korean people wake up to the reality then the South Korean people will find more drawn to the cause of the revolution, things like that. But that goes through changes around the turn of the year from 1972 and 1973. I think that much I can say.

**KIM:** I believe your [Bill Stueck's] question was asking for specifics as to the militarization of North Korean society. The first thing we need to keep in mind is that just because North Korea was poverty-stricken it does not mean that they would not terrorize or become aggressive through military might. The very reason why North Korean society had become militarized can be traced to the four big principals for militarization. The four principles for militarization, although I'm not going to go into details, started in 1962 and lasted until 1972 in North Korea.

And as a result of the four principles, North Korean society had gone through fundamental changes. All industries and all private lives became changed.

A four-point military doctrine was the doctrine that was pursued. All jobs in North Korea and even in the civilian sector would be given military names and so there would be platoons as well as battalions and smaller companies, et cetera. And the targets that were given to civilians would be in terms of military terminologies, such as, “we will take a certain hill.” Also, beginning in 1970, North Korea launched a six-year plan, so each six-year plan would be followed with certain targets, and the six-year plan became much more militarized and military-oriented when Kim Jong Il started taking a more active role in the party. So all economic and industrial activities in North Korean society were really a military exercise. So it’s literally impossible for us in a free society to even imagine what it means to have a society that is so militarized.

**STUECK:** So I sense from your answer that you’re not saying that your trips through North Korea created this perception of militarization, but it was a result of your awareness of a North Korean program or programs since 1962. I just want to make sure we understand that.

**KIM:** Well, documentation, although important, they do require imagination and they do not measure up to what you see with your own eyes. I’ll give you an anecdote. While I was in Pyongyang I was invited to a dinner at which wine was served. I was invited by a very high-ranking official of the Korean Workers’ Party and he gave me a ride in his car and the car was speeding away so fast I actually wondered in amazement how this car could be driving so fast. Do they not even have traffic laws? And also when our group was visiting Pyongyang, during the mornings we would take rides out to the meeting sometimes and we would occasionally see certain students, usually elementary students perhaps, heading towards their school and we noticed that these students were marching with one another. Such anecdotes abound.

**LEE:** There was actually a book authored by the last East German ambassador to North Korea which has plenty of descriptions of North Korea as being a highly militarized society.

**OSTERMANN:** I just wanted to underline the importance of Bill Stueck's question and differentiation between the general understanding of developments in Korea and specific impressions you gained from specific trips and meetings. Historically that's for later historians to use, but I think that it is important to be as specific as possible. In that same vein, I would in fact like to follow-up and push a little further along the lines of Bernd Schaefer's questions again about the atmosphere of the November meetings with the North Koreans, because that is the kind of information that is not captured in the documents. To the extent that you can help us contextualize the documents with your impressions of the encounters with the North Koreans and whatever insight that may shed on the North Korean attitude would be very helpful and significant.

**MOON:** My question is a follow-up also to Mr. Lee. I would just like some clarification. When you refer to North Korea's intentions in participating in the talks or inter-Korean dialogue, one of the things you mentioned was that the North felt it had an advantage over the South given the various geopolitical conditions. I'm trying to figure out here the different reasons or the end outcomes that North Koreans might have wanted out of this. On the one hand, things you said seem like they might have looked at the talks as a way to do fact-finding about South Korea. "What kind of a state is South Korea in, in order for the North to push its revolution along?" I don't recall whether it was you or Mr. Kim who kept emphasizing this desire to push the revolution further into South Korea. So was this partly to do fact-finding about, "is South Korea ready?" Was it partly to show off North Korea's "superiority," and yet that backfired? And when you referred to having the South Korean people realize that the revolution would make sense, are you referring to participating in inter-Korean dialogues as a propaganda method toward the South Korean public? I can't believe that the leaders would have bought that kind of an assumption, so all of these things were mentioned and I want to

get an idea of what kinds of timelines and priorities, and each factor might have played or might not have played.

**HONG:** My question is from a different angle. Regarding the succession of Kim Jong Il in North Korea and the designation of such, is there any relationship with the South-North Korean dialogue? Was this succession plan somehow a result or somehow designed because of the dialogue? It is true that during the early 1970s, when the dialogue was taking place that Kim Jong Il was on the rise to become successor, but just because two things had happened around the same time does not mean that there was a causal relationship. However, I do think there is a causal relationship which is definitely a possibility given the following, for example, on October 17 we had *Yushin* proclaimed in the South and on October 23 we had the Fifth Plenum of the Fifth Congress of the Korean Workers' Party. And during the Party's Plenum the socialist constitution was amended and also the Party members' certificates were exchanged. When you say that the certificate of Party members were being exchanged, this basically required a review of each Party member to recognize their tendencies and also to make personnel changes if necessary.

Also, according to the biography of Kim Jong Il, which was recently published, it indicates that on October 23, 1972, Kim Jong Il was promoted. So by tying together the two different events, and to be clearer, Kim Jong Il became a member of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party on this date, this goes hand-in-hand with the inter-Korean dialogue that was occurring around the time. So I must say that there must have been some sort of relationship between the dialogue and the succession plan that was being carried out. This question is really posed to everyone.

**LEE:** Let me respond to the question that Professor Hong raised with regard to Kim Jong Il's rise to power. You know the whole process of grooming Kim Jong Il as the hereditary successor began way before that timeframe. Kim Jong Il graduated from Kim Il Sung University in 1964 and upon graduation he instantly joined the Korean Workers' Party and became an instructor in the Cultural Department where after several years he established himself as an expert, specialist in propaganda and agitation, which is a very important part of controlling the population. Then in 1972, there was the Central Committee meeting where Kim Jong Il was

## “It was the view of the Central Intelligence

Committee that Kim Yeongju was still the number two man in the North Korean political structure, and he was regarded potentially as a possible heir to Kim Il Sung.”

**“Kim Jong Il should have had quite a lot to do with the inter-Korean dialogue and Kim Jong Il, beginning from the timeframe of early 1970s, was literally performing as crown prince regent. He was being touted as a partisan center in the fashion Stalin had been during the late years of Lenin [ ... ]”**

elevated to the status of Deputy Director. Then there was another secret Central Committee meeting in the fall of 1973 when he was promoted to the status of one of the secretaries.

Now, the North-South dialogue began in that timeframe, 1971-1972-1973, and around the turn of the year from 1971 to 1972, there was a movement under the table between the two Koreas to have Mr. Jang Giyeong, who used to be the deputy prime minister and economic planning minister of South Korea and formerly the publisher and president of Hankook Ilbo, sent to Pyongyang at the invitation of Kim Il Sung. But in January of 1972, Mr. Lee Hurak changed his mind and instructed Jeong Hongjin to suggest to Pyongyang that he, as director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, go to Pyongyang instead of Jang Giyeong on the condition that his counterpart be Kim Yeongju. And this proposal was made because at that time it was the view of the Central Intelligence Committee that Kim Yeongju was still the number two man in the North Korean political structure, and he was regarded potentially as a possible heir to Kim Il Sung. Surprisingly, North Korea said “yes.” So Lee Hurak’s visit to Pyongyang became consummated where Kim Yeongju showed up to have a couple of meetings prior to Lee Hurak’s meeting with Kim Il Sung, but that was the last time we saw Kim Yeongju.

During the meetings between Lee Hurak and Kim Il Sung, Lee Hurak asked Kim Il Sung to send Kim Yeongju down to Seoul for a return visit. Kim Il Sung said, “No, he cannot do that and I am going to send another trusted comrade of mine on behalf of Kim Yeongju.” And when Lee Hurak inquired who that was, Kim replied that he was going to send Pak Seongcheol down there as a proxy of Kim Yeongju. Lee Hurak said, “No, no, no, we do not agree to that. We want to have Kim Yeongju in Seoul,” still believing that Kim Yeongju was the number two man. And Kim Il Sung replied, “We cannot do that because Kim Yeongju is an ailing person and Kim Yeongju met you in spite of his bad health, but you should receive Pak Seongcheol instead of him.” We later found out that there was very delicate timing with Kim Jong Il, who won in a race for power against his uncle. The two had been involved in a very heated rivalry for several years and around that time Kim Yeongju turned out to be the loser and he had to go to the countryside and that was the last time that he publicly showed up.

So that said, you know Kim Jong Il should have had quite a lot to do with the inter-Korean dialogue and Kim Jong Il, beginning from the timeframe of the early 1970s, was literally performing as crown prince regent. He was being touted as a partisan center in the fashion Stalin had been during the late years of Lenin and then Kim Jong Il was leading the *Samdae Hyongmyong Undong*, the Three Revolutions Movement. This was small groups dispatched all across the country to supervise things directly to report to Kim Jong Il. So we cannot simply rule out the possibility that Kim Jong Il was discreetly involved in the early phase of the inter-Korean dialogue in the 1970s and to back that up we experienced very interesting things in those days. Whenever North Koreans came to Seoul, this guy Kim Deokhyeon was busy collecting movies, videos, and tapes of music, you know—South Korean songs. And when we asked him why you are so interested in collecting these things he said it is for the beloved instructor, and he talked about Kim Jong Il’s film and music library. Kim Jong Il was very much involved in that phase of dialogue. I think I can testify to that much.

**RYOO:** Did Mr. Kim Deokhyeon say “Beloved Leader?”

**LEE:** Beloved Instructor, *Chinaehaneun Jidoja*, which is Kim Jong Il, not Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung is *Widaehan Suryeong* (Great Leader), and Kim Jong Il is *Chinaehaneun Jidoja*.

**RYOO:** Did you feel anything strange when he said that?

**LEE:** No, no, and my counterpart in the political dialogue was Jang Geumcheol in his capacity as northern spokesperson, and he was known to report directly to Kim Jong Il at that time. So Kim Jong Il was very much in the loop.

**PERSON:** But didn’t you still believe that Kim Yeongju was successor?

**LEE:** Kim Yeongju was gone by—after the secret visit to Pyongyang by Lee Hurak, Kim Yeongju was nowhere to be seen.



JAMES PERSON

**PERSON:** Did you know that your interlocutors were referring to Kim Jong Il when they used the term “Beloved Instructor?”

**LEE:** Sure.

**PERSON:** Did they actually say “Kim Il Sung’s son?”

**LEE:** Yes. “Beloved Instructor” is a reference exclusively to Kim Jong Il.

**PERSON:** And you knew this at that time?

**LEE:** Sure, sure.

**PERSON:** Did they actually say Kim Jong Il?

**LEE:** No, no – Beloved Instructor.

**PERSON:** But was it clear who that was in reference to at the time?

**LEE:** Sure.

To answer Dr. Moon’s question, Kim Il Sung’s objectives were very clearly elaborated in his conversations with the leaders of East European leaders in that era, which are compiled here, which says that Kim Il Sung was, well, he was saying that he was not considering the invasion of South Korea, but he was looking forward to seeing a revolutionary situation to unfold in South Korea and he was very optimistic because of the unfolding of the international situations, which is very clearly elaborated in his remarks to those leaders.

Mr. Kim was very elaborate about explaining about that, but North Korea in those days was very much obsessed with what they called the South Korean revolution. The initial part of the ultimate takeover of the entire Peninsula undertaken on North Korean terms is a communist takeover, and this South Korean revolution requires the consolidation of three revolutionary forces, which means developing North Korea as the base of the revolution and strengthening the revo-

lutionary force in South Korea and securing improved ties with the international revolutionary forces. These are the three revolutionary forces. And in doing that in the early 1970s, Kim Il Sung was very optimistic that South Korea was ripe for this kind of development. But as the dialogue went on, they began to realize that that was not exactly the way things stood at the time, so North Korea began feeling frustrated and then North Korea began backtracking from early 1973.

**OSTERMANN:** I wanted to bring our American colleagues into the conversation here and I think we've had some very exciting accounts from the South Korean side this morning. I wonder if Ambassador O'Donohue or Mr. Thompson or Mr. Picard would care to comment on their knowledge and awareness at the time of these developments that were discussed. To what extent was there consultation between the ROK and the Americans in Seoul or in Washington on these matters? Or anything else you care to comment on in terms of the subject in the discussion this morning.

**RYOO:** And also I would like to ask Ambassador Mitov, who was there at the time in North Korea, to comment on North Korean domestic politics, especially with regard to Kim Yeongju and Kim Il Sung, and even Kim Jong Il.

**PERSON:** I have two specific questions. Christian asked our American colleagues to discuss the amount of information being shared, and I have two specific questions about information-sharing. One, were you extended the same courtesy of the North Koreans who were notified in advanced about *Yushin*? How much time did you have to prepare for this? When were you informed about *Yushin*? Two, were you aware of the "Beloved Instructor's" succession at this early stage or was it much later? I don't remember seeing that in the INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] reports. It seems South Korean intelligence was already aware of the succession. Did they share this information with you?

**O'DONOHUE:** I'll focus on *Yushin*. In terms of North Korea at that time, all of our information, particularly on the negotiations, was derived from the South side. With regard to *Yushin*, very obviously, one of the basic objectives was to neu-

tralize us. We were not told in any fashion earlier; it was a day before that we were informed and in a manner which was designed to allow us not to respond; or, to put it differently, not to be able to mount any opposition. I assume that the Korean side came from the view that we were not going to like it. So we did take a negative stand, but I don't think we were surprised, and as the public aspects of it unfolded, our opposition or our stated opposition had no real impact.

In terms of our own assessment at the time, I very much appreciate Mr. Lee's comments because I think this is a fuller picture on the South Korean side than we had [at the time]. First of all, our view was that President Park wanted to in effect perpetuate himself in power. He did not want to go through what he had gone through in the election in 1971 again. Our view was that certainly, the North-South, but maybe even more the regional situation did figure in it [the *Yushin* Constitution], but we saw it and as it later unfolded, as really being directed to control a domestic scene. It neutralized political opposition and, as I said, perpetuated the president's power. We did not have the picture that Mr. Lee has given so well of Lee Hurak. By the way, I don't dispute that at all. As I said, we had more a sense of the President driving it, but that was not based on anything other than our assessments. Our view was that it [*Yushin*] was a mistake because the President of South Korea was already running an authoritarian government. The President already had sufficient powers to control the situation and in reaching beyond that, he was sowing the seeds for future difficulty. But we had essentially a fairly passive view from then on, and the South Korean authorities had calculated that this would be the case. They had to live with us being opposed, but on the other hand, in the short-term tactical sense, it didn't have much impact. As the events unfolded, as I said, we always had the sense that it did relate to a degree to the regional situation in the North-South talks.

But as it unfolded over the succeeding months, and then obviously dramatized by the kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung, we did see it as far more directed to getting control of the domestic situation and establishing a regime in which a very strong authoritarian cast would be given to what had already been an authoritarian government but one that had some breathing space. We didn't have any great problem with the government before then, meaning it was authoritarian, but we thought there was a little room for the press, there was a little room for the opposition,



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and that it worked. The kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung was an immense mistake. It dramatized how the domestic preoccupation was such a part of it, and Mr. Lee's explanation, in terms of Lee Hurak, was very, very interesting and compelling, and then again, with the kidnapping he overreached. That would be my comments on that.

**BRAZINSKY:** I want to follow-up. I'm just curious, ten years earlier when Park Chung Hee first seized power through a military coup, the Kennedy administration had really pressured him to hold free elections. With the *Yushin* system, basically free elections were abrogated and the Nixon Administration basically seemed to sit back. I'm wondering if you see the difference in policies at these two times as a reflection of differences between the Kennedy administration and the Nixon administration, or is it an acknowledgement that the United States was just less influential in South Korea at the time and couldn't do as much?

**O'DONOHUE:** It was different. I happened to be there in the 1960-1964 period. Essentially, at the time of the coup we opposed it. Very quickly for a variety of reasons, our policy changed to be one of endorsing and supporting President Park. One aspect in terms of the quickness of it was the fact that the Kennedy administration had just had a fiasco in the Bay of Pigs. Our chargé was left hanging. He didn't know what our policy was, but he could read in the newspapers the constant criticism of him, so our policy became one of support for Park. Now we always have this built-in question of democratic institutions, but what really drove us in 1963 was a preoccupation about internal stability. At that time you had factionalism within the military which was being reflected in the government and there was an immensely unsettled period in which our thrust was to have

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elections and in effect get the military out of politics. But this had nothing to do with President Park and the fact that military men were going to take off their uniforms. It was really to get the military out so that every political crisis didn't get reflected domestically, so that drove it very strongly. We were always in favor of moving to a civilian government and as I said, the civilian government they moved to, i.e., President Park, continuing those in the military who were going to be, wanted to be, politicians, government officials, that wasn't our problem.

President Park to everyone's surprise, including ours, had a very close run with Yun Boseon, the opposition candidate, but nonetheless the American side was very relaxed about him winning. We were very relaxed about how the situation evolved. We had a constant theme always in terms of easing up, being more democratic, but what really drove us and probably in terms of the elections where you could really see we put immense pressure on, was really the perception that they had to do it for stability.

**LEE:** Let me respond to your point very briefly. You know at the time of the military takeover in 1961, I don't think the United States condoned it at the outset. Well actually, if Prime Minister Jang Myeon was accessible to the commander of the U.S. forces, then I think there was enough room for the military coup to have been crushed because at that time, General McGruder was trying to use his forces to put it down. But Jang Myeon was in hiding, inaccessible, so after a few days the American side had to take it as fait accompli and then that was followed by two days of very hard negotiations between General McGruder and Kim Jong-pil, who was the force behind the coup. And one of the serious questions raised by General McGruder at the time was whether this coup leader was leftist leaning or rightist leaning and many people were suspicious that they were socialists, or left leaning, but Kim Jong-pil assured General McGruder that they were going to be committed to free democracy. So after two days of negotiations, General McGruder said that he would be reporting to Washington that there was no way of opposing to this.

Now, in 1972 when the *Yushin* Constitutional Amendment and the dissolution of the National Assembly occurred, you know, I don't think the United States was that opposed at the outset. The rift between Washington and Seoul, in a sense, began to take shape after March 1973 when priests and certain civic leaders staged

an assembly demonstration at Myeongdong Cathedral. And the government began cracking down, equipped with martial law and also emergency measures, and these were steps which really began pushing the two countries apart from each other.

And interestingly, North Korea too was not reacting negatively to this *Yushin* reform at the outset. It was the following year when they began asking questions. We had a meeting of the co-chair people of the North-South Coordinating Committee in late October, immediately in the wake of the *Yushin* Constitutional Amendment in Panmunjeom. Pak Seongcheol was there, I was there, Lee Hurak was there. Pak Seongcheol raised many questions to which Lee Hurak answered in such a way that he was doing all he could do to quiet down North Korean suspicions. Then sometime after the turn of the year in 1973, North Korea began raising voices against that and when we met at the second or third meeting in Pyongyang in March 1973, they were categorically castigating what was developing in South Korea. So, many players were literally caught by surprise and it took some time for the players to come up with positions of their own.

**O'DONOHUE:** I would say that our initial response was a very negative one, but it showed up in terms of disassociation. I think a point you were making was that actually the situation was very different, and in 1972 the United States was not going to play the role we played in 1963. After that initial statement, and as I said, disassociation, which when you looked at it, it didn't mean much more than what was happening, except with regard to the recommendation about moving ahead with troop withdrawal which was never acted on. But the United States by that time did not see itself playing the kind of role that we not desired but had to play from 1961 through 1963.

**PICARD:** Just a couple of observations on, basically, the degree to which the South Korean government kept the United States informed both on the developments, very interesting developments, that Dr. Lee has described in North Korea and also on their own political plans in 1972. I was in Washington on October 16 and because I was the junior officer in the Korean office, I came in early every day and

looked through the cables that had come in overnight to see if there was anything that the director needed to be informed of right away. And somewhere down in the pile of cables that had come in overnight was a cable from Ambassador Habib describing his interview with the Prime Minister. Obviously this was something that got everybody's attention, but certainly we had no warning of it and we were very active that day in Washington with Dr. Kissinger and others trying to decide what the right response would be. Ambassador Habib of course all along knew what the right response would be and told us in no uncertain terms what it should be and that was basically the response that was adopted which Ambassador O'Donohue described.

The second thing that I found very interesting, especially about the comments both from Mr. Kim and Dr. Lee about what was going on in North Korea, was that we were very much in the dark on any of the internal developments in North Korea. We were doing whatever we could to follow this, but whatever we could was not very much and we certainly weren't getting any great assistance, I can tell you, from the South Korean government, who was following it very closely.

**THOMPSON:** I have a question with regard to Kim Il Sung's reaction to the economic surprises that they observed in the South. Obviously this was not a surprise at some level because there was open intelligence. They could get the magazines and movies and so forth from other sources than South Korea about South Korea. And also the two block members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission could go to Seoul and observe the shops and so forth, and I'm sure Mr. Mitov can enlighten us as to whether this was shared with the group in Pyongyang and also with the North Koreans. My impression is that the elites which might have consisted only of Kim Il Sung found it useful to obscure this information in dealing publicly both with their domestic audience and with the world audience so that even when this information was obtained by the North delegation the leadership would continue to say that the people in the South are oppressed and poor and don't have anything. But obviously at least Kim Il Sung would have known the truth about the economy and so much of this was a charade in my opinion, and I would appreciate comments from the South Koreans about that.

**LEE:** I will be very brief. I think I can respond to your question by relating to you the kind of very interesting observation that we had been making of North Korea. South Korea is an open society that produces so much information, whereas North Korea is a closed society where there is such an absence of information. But it is surprising for us to find that North Koreans have such a distorted view of us and I have been wondering why, and I think I have at least part of the answer. You know, when North Koreans think about the outside world, it is not the kind of firsthand understanding, but their view of the outside world is formulated by the kind of process of evaluation which is undertaken by the party specialists based on the kind of form of evaluation unique to them. So the outcome of the evaluation is what led them in the direction of misconception about the outside world. I think that has been very conspicuous in most cases. So their views of the outside world are found very much out of the context of reality.

**RYOO:** Thank you for your brief response. We are now out of time for this session.



B. DONOVAN PICARD