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**The Development of the Democratic People's  
Republic of Korea's Reunification Policy**

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**Summary:**

The report offers a summary and an evaluation of North Korea's reunification plans from 1945 through 1962.

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## The Development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Reunification Policy

### I.

On 15 August 1945 Korea was liberated by the Soviet Union from the Japanese colonial yoke. On 8 September 1945 U.S. forces landed in Korea's South. Two zones of occupation were created: The territory north of the 38th parallel was occupied by Soviet forces, and the one in the South by American troops.

At the Foreign Minister Conference in Moscow in December 1945 Soviet and American policy for Korea's future was agreed upon: establishment of a provisional democratic government, and turning the country into a democratic and independent state. A Soviet-American commission was established to monitor this process. While the Soviet Union strictly adhered to the Moscow agreements, the United States sabotaged them from the beginning. Only in the north of Korea it was possible to implement democratic measures like land reform and the establishment of democratic people's committees. The U.S. imperialists strived toward getting all of Korea under their rule.

In order to achieve this goal, U.S. machinations wanted to hold all-Korean elections under supervision of the United Nations. Therefore on U.S. initiative a Korea Commission of the United Nations was established in 1947. The commission was supposed to monitor elections to form a national government in Korea. The Soviet Union condemned this interference into the internal affairs of the Korean people. Soviet authorities denied members of the U.N. commission access into North Korea. They demanded to solve the Korean question based on the Soviet-American agreements [of 1945].

However, the U.S. imperialists were unwilling to adhere to these agreements. They openly moved towards a policy of division. While maintaining the U.S. occupation, separate elections were held in South Korea on 10 May 1948 controlled by the U.N. commission. On 15 August 1948 the Republic of Korea was proclaimed and Syngman Rhee became its first president. In response to these machinations by U.S. imperialism and South Korea's reactionary forces, the progressive forces all over Korea prepared all-Korean elections without foreign interference. Free all-Korean elections were held on 25 August 1948. Based on a turnout of 99.97 percent, in North Korea 98.45 percent of voters opted for the candidates of the Democratic Front. In South Korea elections were held illegally. In spite of terror, 77.5 percent of eligible voters turned out. 360 deputies from South Korea and 212 from North Korea were elected.

The 1st Session of the Supreme People's Assembly ratified on 8 September 1948 the constitution of the DPRK and proclaimed the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It was comprised of the entire Korean territory with Seoul as its capital. On 9 September 1948 an all-Korean government was formed.

### II.

Concerning their policy on South Korea and reunification, the Korean comrades argue the DPRK comprises of all of Korea, and the DPRK government represents the entire Korean people. They base this argument on the all-Korean elections of August 1948. They resulted in an all-Korean Supreme People's Assembly, which adopted the DPRK constitution and formed an all-Korean government. In contrast, elections in South Korea and the foundation of the Republic of Korea were illegal and did not conform to the will of the Korean people.

The DPRK constitution rests on the position that there exists only one state in Korea, namely the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A part of it is temporarily and illegally occupied by the United States and ruled by a reactionary regime. Since the constitution does not have a preamble, this position is reflected in some concrete provisions. Article 103 says: "The capital of the DPRK is Seoul." Article 7 states: "In places in Korea's interior, where land reform is not yet implemented, the latter will be conducted at a time to be determined by the Supreme People's Assembly." Though after 1945 two Korean states were de facto established, the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, the Korean comrades insist on the thesis of an existence of one Korean state only.

In international diplomacy, however, one could note that the DPRK does not follow through consistently on this one-state-theory. While it generally talked about South Korean administrations, in some documents addressed to the U.N. it referred to the "government of the Republic of Korea". In the context of South Korea's request for admission into the United Nations in 1957, for instance, at the meeting of socialist states in preparation for the VIII UN Session the DPRK representative stated (Prague, 25 and 26 June 1957): "The unilateral admission of Syngman Rhee, and the refusal to let a representative of our republic participate, stands in contrast to the basic principles of the United Nations. Such is ignoring the de facto existence of two sovereign states in North and South Korea. It is also an attempt to undermine a just resolution of the Korean question."

In accordance with this declaration, the Soviet delegate proposed on 13 November 1957 in the Political Committee of the United Nations to accept both parts of Korea into the United Nations, since "peaceful reunification can only occur through acceptance of the fact that two states with different social systems exist in this country."

Proposals by the DPRK from 1960 and 1962 to establish a Korean confederation invite the conclusion that the DPRK recognizes the actual existence of two Korean states - without saying so explicitly. In Kim Il Sung's government declaration from 23 October 1962 as well there are references to the "government of the DPRK and the government of the Korean Republic" without talking about two states.

III.

First proposals for a peaceful reunification of Korea were presented by Comrade Nam Il at the Geneva Conference in 1954:

□ Holding all-Korean election for a National Assembly, which will form a government for all of Korea;

. Formation of an all-Korean commission of North and South Korean representatives to prepare and hold free all-Korean elections, and implement urgent measures in order to achieve economic and cultural rapprochement between North and South Korea;

. Withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea within six months;

. States, which are interested the most in preserving peace in the Far East, guarantee a peaceful process in Korea in order to create favorable conditions for the peaceful unification of Korea to an united, independent, and democratic state.

□□

Nam Il's proposals were supported by the delegations from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. The Western powers (i.e. the states participating in the Korean War) rejected both the DPRK proposals and the additional compromises and motions submitted by the Soviet Union and the PR China.

Additional proposals were made by the DPRK at the 8th Session of the Supreme People's Assembly on 30 October 1954. An appeal to all fellow Koreans stipulated the following:

- Holding a conference about peaceful reunification in 1955 with the parties and organizations from North and South Korea, or having a joint session of both parliaments about the same subject
  - . Holding a pre-conference meeting to discuss mutual economic and cultural relations, as well as the exchange of mail and goods
  - . Establishing mutual contact through visits by political officials to the other part; respective administrations will have to guarantee their free movement
- 

The III KWP Party Congress in April 1956 also addressed the issue of Korea's reunification. DPRK positions were outlined in a document called "For the Peaceful Unification of Our Country":

- Holding general elections in all of Korea without foreign interference; include representatives of the workers and peasants in a joint coalition government to be formed;
  - . Turning the armistice into a permanent peace; reducing armed forces in both parts of the country; mutual commitment to refrain from using military force; withdrawal of all foreign troops; none of Korea's two parts is allowed to be member of a military alliance;
  - . Creating democratic liberties and improve the living conditions of Korean workers; remove South Korea's economic dependency on the United States; implement democratic reforms in South Korea;
  - . Facilitating traffic between both parts of the country;
  - . Establishing a Joint Committee of representatives from parliaments and governments, or from party and societal organizations, to address in particular the issue of reunification;
  - . Building a united front to fight against American imperialism;
  - . Ratifying an international agreement to preserve peace in Korea, and for the peaceful resolution of the Korean question.
- 

IV.

In the following years as well, the DPRK made concrete proposals for Korea's peaceful reunification and for the establishment of certain relations between DPRK and South Korea. All those proposals testify to the eagerness of the DPRK to solve the Korean question and achieve a peaceful reunification of the country.

However, the Syngman Rhee clique rejected those DPRK proposals. On the other hand, there was no force in South Korea strong enough to exert the necessary pressure on ruling circles to pursue a national policy in the interest of the Korean people. As a result of the Syngman Rhee clique's reactionary rule, all progressive forces in South Korea were brutally persecuted and forced to operate in deep illegality. Since 1950 there exists no Communist Party in South Korea. Therefore progressive forces lacked an instrument to lead them in the national and social struggle. The democratic movement in South Korea primarily opposed Syngman Rhee's dictatorship. Struggle for Korea's reunification just played a subordinate role.

Also, it was difficult to widely circulate DPRK proposals in South Korea. There are no links whatsoever between the north and south of Korea. Effects of DPRK broadcasts on the South Korean population must be considered minimal. It is also worth mentioning that the DPRK did not propagate its proposals with the insistence required, and it did not conduct a consequent struggle for the realization of its proposals. The DPRK first had to work out a clear concept for Korea's reunification. Core elements of all DPRK proposals were holding all-Korean free elections and the demand for a withdrawal of U.S. occupation forces from South Korea. These DPRK proposals have to be seen in the context of U.S. attempts to hold elections through the United Nations and the U.N. Commission in Korea under American control. This would have meant an interference into the internal affairs of the Korean people. Thus the DPRK proposal to hold all-Korean free elections has to be considered as correct during that period. An actual reunification of Korea is only achievable through the struggle of the entire Korean people.

Yet DPRK proposals remained unsuccessful. U.S. imperialism, which had made South Korea strongly dependent, and the Syngman Rhee clique were not interested in reunification on a democratic basis. They wanted to incorporate the DPRK into South Korea.

So, due to the actual situation in Korea it was impossible to unite both Korean parts from one day to the next. DPRK efforts to achieve reunification through free elections in all of Korea failed due to the ruling South Korean circles' reactionary policy. This required the DPRK to come up with new proposals taking into account the actual situation in Korea, namely the existence of two Korean states. It had to emphasize the need for a transitional period of peaceful coexistence between both Korean states until Korean reunification. This requirement was met by the proposal of 15 August 1960 to build a Korean confederation.

In the spring of 1960 a broad popular movement overthrew South Korean dictator Syngman Rhee. Based on this new situation, [in August 1960] the DPRK government again made proposals for Korea's peaceful reunification. As before, it referred to the holding of free elections as the most effective and realistic path. However, for the first time the DPRK went beyond that. The DPRK government declared to undertake, in case of South Korea's rejection of free elections, at least transitional measures, which cannot be delayed in the national interests of the Korean people:

□□ Building a confederation, while maintaining the current political systems in South and North Korea and the autonomous operation of governments in the DPRK and the Republic of Korea;

. Establishing a Supreme National Committee of representatives from both governments in order to jointly coordinate economic and cultural processes in South and North Korea;

. Holding subsequently all-Korean elections leading to full implementation of Korea's peaceful reunification;

. Reducing armed forces mutually to 100,000 or less;

. Meeting of representatives from South and North Korea in Panmunjom, Pyongyang, or Seoul in order to discuss all these issues;

. In case those proposals will be rejected as well, the DPRK suggested to form an economic committee with business representatives from both Korean parts to guarantee the exchange of goods as well as cooperation and support for economic reconstruction.

□□

These proposals have to be considered as more realistic and constructive, even when they still defined the holding of free elections as the best method. They take into account objective conditions, without saying so explicitly, that after 1945 two states have emerged in Korea. Those proposals are showing the only possible path towards a peaceful resolution of the Korean question. Proposing to build a confederation is

based on the realization that Korea's reunification is unachievable from one day to the next. It is necessary to arrive at rapprochement between DPRK and ROK based on peaceful coexistence and to create realistic conditions for peaceful reunification. Even if the [North] Korean side does not say so, this step signifies in fact a move away from the one-state-theory.

Those DPRK proposals received a broad echo all over the world. Also, among South Korea's population it was received much better than previous DPRK proposals. However, the South Korean people were not in a position to force American imperialism and South Korea's ruling class -which continued the old reactionary policy- to implement those DPRK proposals. So this move as well remained without a result.

V.

After the overthrow of the Syngman Rhee rule the government of Chang Myon was formed. Though in more moderate ways, it continued anti-democratic and anti-communist policies and embarked on a course of South Korea's economic consolidation. Due to more opportunities for the democratic forces, a democratic movement geared towards reunification came to the fore. It threatened to become a danger for the ruling circles. Thus the Chang Myon government was overthrown and a military junta led by General Park Chung Hee came to power.

The DPRK government initially misjudged the actual character of this coup and welcomed Chang Myon's fall. Only a week later it arrived at a clear-eyed assessment of the events of 16 May 1961 as a fascist military coup. With the fascist coup also came a liquidation of democratic organizations and the end of semi-legal opportunities for progressive activities. Still, due to the incorrect initial assessment opinion [in the DPRK] was widespread that Korea will be united soon.

At its IV Congress in September 1961 the KWP declared South Korea's occupation by the United States as the main obstacle for Korea's peaceful reunification. The only possible way out for the South Korean people from their actual situation would be the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, the overthrow of the fascist military dictatorship, and the peaceful reunification of the country. The KWP outlined its positions as follows:

- Peaceful Unification of Korea on a democratic basis by the Koreans themselves without foreign interference;
- . Establishing a united government through all-Korean free elections on a democratic basis without foreign interference;
- . Guarantee of free political activities in all of Korea for all political parties, societal organizations, and individuals;
- . Precondition for free elections is the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea and the removal of any interference by foreign forces;
- . Uniting all forces of the people to an anti-American united front, and its mobilization for struggle against the U.S. occupation and for peaceful reunification.

□□

So the IV KWP Party Congress no longer talked about a confederation. In conversations [with DPRK officials] this move was justified by stating one cannot negotiate and cooperate with a fascist regime. Yet free elections in all of Korea the DPRK apparently deemed possible despite these conditions. Also the presumption, according to which South Korean rulers would collapse after the withdrawal of U.S. troops and thus pave the way for a democratization of South Korea, does not quite square with the facts.

This temporary deviation from a policy of confederation between DPRK and South Korea demonstrates how the DPRK did not follow a consistent line in its reunification policy. It became especially apparent in the period between January and May 1962 when the Korean people were called up to expel U.S. imperialism from South Korea and to violently overthrow the Park Chung Hee clique. This movement bordering on adventurism reached its peak when on 15 February 1962 a statement by the United Patriotic Front of Korea was made public. It contained slogans about the forceful liberation of South Korea from U.S. imperialism and coincided with military demonstrations in the DPRK. Especially the month of April saw large manifestations under the slogan of expelling U.S. troops from South Korea by "liberating the South Korean brothers and sisters".

Although the DPRK continued with its official claim to advocate peaceful reunification, those orientations [mentioned above] must be seen as a tendency towards non-peaceful reunification. This tendency is in sync with Chinese tactical considerations and the PRC military build-up in Eastern China directed against Taiwan during this period (spring 1962).

Origins of this policy must be seen in DPRK positions on basic questions of Marxism-Leninism: war and peace, peaceful coexistence, and the national question. This DPRK policy caused grave concerns among the socialist countries and was not supported by them. Other countries, especially young national states, began to lose faith into the peaceful intentions of the DPRK. Imperialist states and South Korea's ruling circles exploited this policy to accuse the DPRK of aggressive intentions and to justify South Korea's ongoing occupation by the United States. Consequently, the DPRK again oriented increasingly towards a peaceful resolution and accordingly submitted new proposals.

VI.

These proposals for reunification were part of Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon]'s [?] speech at the 11th Session of the Supreme People's Assembly in June 1962, the "Letter of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK to the Supreme Council for National Transformation of the Republic of Korea, the representatives of societal organizations, the politicians, and the entire people of South Korea", and part of the "Letter of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK to the Parliaments of all the States in the World". They have the following contents:

- Joint struggle of all classes of the North and South Korean population for the withdrawal of U.S. troops;
- . If the South Korean rulers are currently not willing to negotiate about reunification, then this can occur in the course of a process of rapprochement between both parts of Korea;
- . Signing of a non-aggression treaty between North and South Korea and reduction of armed forces to 100,000 men each after the withdrawal of U.S. forces;
- . Negotiations between South and North Korea on issues of economic and cultural relations, as well as about travel.

□□

Objectives of these proposals were to increase the international reputation of the DPRK, to demonstrate before the eyes of the world peaceful intentions of the DPRK in solving the Korean question, to counter anti-communist propaganda about alleged aggressive intentions of the DPRK, to activate people's struggle in South Korea for the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and to achieve the support of all people for its struggle.

VII.

In his government declaration of 23 October 1962 before the Supreme People's

Assembly of the DPRK Comrade Kim Il Sung again outlined proposals for Korea's reunification:

□□ would be necessary to eliminate the tension between the South and the North created by the United States. An agreement on non-aggression between South and North Korea has to be signed. Armed forces of both parts of Korea ought to be reduced to 100,000 each or less.

. After the ending of the state of tensions, the next step could be exchange and cooperation in the economic and cultural field. For this purpose an economic committee ought to be formed, consisting of representatives from both parts of Korea.

. After the implementation of this step, it will be appropriate to build a confederation. Current social systems and autonomous operations of the DPRK and ROK governments are supposed to be maintained. A Supreme National Committee comprised of representatives from both governments could solve joint issues of all-national interest. According to their political convictions, both the South Korean and DPRK government will become free to operate without mutual interference. They will jointly solve only those questions on which they agree upon in the confederative organ and which concern general national interests.

. Through such intermediary stages the full reunification of Korea can, and must, be achieved. At the end of this process an united central government is to be established. It has to represent all parts of the population and will come about through all-Korean free elections on a democratic basis.

□□

Model for these programmatic ideas is the proposal for establishing a confederation in Korea from 1960, but they are more concrete and comprehensive. They are based on the assumption that Korea's reunification is a complicated and lengthy process, which will succeed only gradually and with intermediate steps. In a talk with a GDR government delegation in September 1962, Kim Il Sung stated the majority of the South Korean population still thinks South Korea's viability depends on aid from the Americans and Japanese, as well from the West German monopolists. While all previous [DPRK reunification] proposals centered on holding free elections, the latter are now considered as the end of a process of rapprochement and cooperation between both parts of Korea. It is correctly stated that preconditions for such elections are the removal of any interference from outside and establishing an actual democratic situation in South Korea.

This objective, however, can only be achieved if one succeeds to create a united front for the struggle against American imperialism and the domestic reactionary forces in South Korea, and for Korea's peaceful reunification. The center of this movement would have to consist in a Marxist-Leninist party [in South Korea] capable to lead the working class and form an alliance with the peasantry.

Overall, this new program represents a more realistic base for uniting all forces in favor of peaceful reunification. It could lead to an upswing of the struggle towards Korea's peaceful reunification. In order to realize this grand reunification program, the DPRK is willing to cooperate with all forces in South Korea, notwithstanding their respective past.

VIII.

Recently, however, we see again tendencies contrasting this peaceful policy. From 10 to 14 December 1962 the KWP [Central Committee] held its 5th Plenum. It decided to arm the entire population, to feature the slogan "arms in one hand, hammer and sickle in the other", to strengthen DPRK defense capabilities, and to turn the entire country into a fortress. Although the DPRK government declaration of 23 October 1962 and various documents addressed to the United Nations strongly emphasized a peaceful resolution of the Korean question -and even though the plenum mentioned



above also referred to the peaceful path-, the measures decided [at the 5th Plenum] just point in the opposite direction.

Summary:

The foundation of the DPRK party and government's reunification policy is the existence of one Korean state. In documents and conversations the Korean comrades in general circumvent the question whether there exist one or two Korean states. In particular, proposals for building a confederation in Korea demonstrate that the DPRK de facto moved away from the one-state-theory.

□□

Korea's reunification can only be achieved on a peaceful path. Any other path would be adventurism. It would create immense damage to the Korean people and threaten the [global] peace. Peaceful coexistence and negotiations between DPRK and South Korea are the only realistic basis for solving the Korean question.

□□

It was always the DPRK that launched initiatives for Korea's reunification. However, DPRK policy was inconsistent and contradictory. Those oscillations had negative impacts on the credibility of DPRK proposals. Party and government issued wrong tactical slogans. They did not focus on workers and peasants in South Korea as the force representing the progressive parts of the population. Reasons for this are, among else, false assessments of the balance of forces and the political groupings in the South, also the insufficiently differentiated evaluation of South Korea's economic development.

□□

The DPRK did not consequently fight for realization of its proposals. In general, it just left it at proclaiming them.

DPRK proposals, which were always actively supported by the DPRK population, were met with insufficient resonance in South Korea. Although a broader movement for reunification was possible under Chang Myon, this democratic movement was liquidated by Park Chung Hee. The faint resonance [to this liquidation] is a result of facts like that there are no relations whatsoever between DPRK and South Korea, and that there are still just scant opportunities for the DPRK to influence South Korea's population. Also, DPRK party and government have undertaken insufficient efforts to gain international support in their struggle for Korea's peaceful reunification.

□□

Preconditions for Korea's peaceful reunification are the withdrawal of U.S. forces and South Korea's democratization. The South Korean population has to be mobilized for this struggle. Precondition for this mobilization is the formation of a Marxist-Leninist party capable to lead the masses in the struggle for the withdrawal of U.S. forces, for South Korea's democratization, and for Korea's peaceful reunification. However, such a party must not be viewed as an appendix of the KWP, as the Korean comrades are still doing it.

□□

Currently, they are still the intellectuals and students who represent the progressive forces [in South Korea]. Until now there are no indications for getting the workers and peasants organized. For this, as well as for the formation of a party, conditions in South Korea are extremely difficult since under Park Chung Hee all legal and semi-legal opportunities got eliminated. Successes are only possible through a consequent DPRK reunification policy. Decisions of the 5th KWP plenum are already turning out to inhibit the latter, as they distract from focusing all energies on strengthening the DPRK economically.

[signed]

Wegrich  
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CC:

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