

Ilmin International Relations Institute

Working Paper Series

Sponsored by
MacArthur Foundation's Asia Security Initiative

No. 02

Social Consequences of North Korean Contingency

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June 2010

I. Foreword

This paper seeks to analyze how a contingency in North Korea, hypothesizing that one does occur, would affect the Korean peninsula, East Asia, and the international community as a whole, with a focus specifically on the social sector.

The future of North Korea is contingent upon countless factors; likewise, its prospects remain opaque.

First of all, the impact of a North Korean contingency on the Korean peninsula and the international community will be determined by the "type" of crisis that unfolds in the country. The scope and degree of impact will vary, depending on what the contingency means. The nomenclature "North Korea" is widely used, often confusedly, to refer to one or more of the three "levels" that represent the country—the Kim Jong-il regime, a Stalinist dictatorship, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Hence, a North Korean contingency implies deep trouble for one or two or all of these three fronts. When and under what circumstances a contingency might break out in North Korea is beyond the scope of this paper's interest. For clarity, however, the author would like to point out this paper hypothesizes a contingency on the first and second levels and assumes that the possibility of a third-level crisis is quite low. In short, the objective of this paper is to gauge the possible impact a sudden change on the first and second levels might have on the Korean peninsula, East Asia, and the international community.

Second, even if a contingency were to take place in North Korea, we can regulate and control its impact on us depending on where we see the contingency in terms of phase and process of inter-Korean unification. For example, a strategy of taking advantage of the contingency to accelerate unification, and a policy of recognizing the developments in North Korea as an opportunity for regime change in the true sense of the word, supporting the new regime in a friendly manner, and building a friendly relationship with an eye toward unification can have very different consequences.

Our ability to manage the impact of the North Korean situation hinges on which strategy we choose to take.

What is important is that, if Seoul were to view a North Korean contingency as an opportunity for unification and attempt to expedite unification, the burden and confusion that our society will face will indeed be serious. A peaceful East and West German unification was possible because East Germany went through a peaceful revolution. A new regime desiring unification with West Germany came to power, and the new East German regime carried out unification negotiations with West Germany and agreed on unification. In short, unification was a fruit of East Germany's peaceful revolution and the ensuing liberalization.

Had West Germany attempted unification through absorption before the new regime came to power in East Germany, the two sides would have been hard-pressed to avoid a physical clash in the course of unification. One must recall that in the German case, it was East Germany's de Maizière regime that ordered all armed organs, including the military, to respond to integration with West Germany peacefully and reined them in.

Germany was able to conduct a peaceful revolution following a chain of events: East Germany's Honecker stepped down, democratic general elections were held under the Egon Krenz regime, giving birth to a democratic regime which came to power in East Germany, and East Germany's democratic regime and West Germany engaged in unification negotiations. East Germany's first

and last general elections translated into electing a regime that could carry out unification negotiations, because the people of East Germany demanded unification with West Germany. It was because Germany attained unification through the consensus of both sides that it has been able to manage the process while minimizing chaos. If West Germany had intervened and attempted to achieve unification when East Germany had not even undergone a process of a peaceful revolution, West Germany's action could have escalated into a civil war.¹

Supposing that a contingency occurs in North Korea, South Korea, taking the German precedent as an example, must chart a course of action only after it accurately assesses in which phase of inter-Korean unification the contingency falls.

For the two Koreas attain German-style unification, North Korea must first carry out a 1+1 revolution. The Kim Jong-il regime must be replaced by a third regime; then, a grassroots revolution must take place in North Korea, followed by the establishment of a democratic regime. Only then will it be possible for Seoul and Pyongyang to effect unification based on a consensus.

In other words, to achieve unification through a consensus, Seoul needs a strategy of waiting for a bottom-up revolution to occur within North Korea. It needs to regard North Korea's fourth-generation regime as a pro-masses, pro-national, and pro-unification regime and interpret and respond to the North Korean situation with a strategy of raising North Korea's fourth-generation leadership into a unification-friendly group of leaders. Even if a popular uprising were to topple the North Korean regime, it remains unknown whether the masses would call for unification with South Korea. Hence, it is premature for one regime change in North Korea to result in unification with South Korea. It would be difficult to expect a top-bottom regime change to result in unification with South Korea, because the preservation of vested interests

¹ Jens Huettmann, Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur [Federal Foundation for the Reconciliation of the SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands; Socialist Unity Party of Germany] Dictatorship], workshop presentation (May 3, 2010).

would be a foremost priority for the privileged class. The North Korean regime must undergo a revolutionary bottom-up change in order for North and South Korea to agree to unification.

If, on the other hand, we were to view a North Korean contingency as an early stage of unification and push for positive intervention, we ourselves will be deeply embroiled in North Korea's contingency. As a result, South Korean society might wind up in uncontrollable confusion.

If a popular uprising were to occur, South Korea would be able to minimize both conflict and cost only by endorsing the establishment of a new regime by the masses and conducting a North Korea policy that enables the new North Korean regime to work toward unification with its Southern counterpart.

Third, our ability to manage and control the impact of a North Korean contingency on our society will be contingent upon how we map out a course of unification.

If Seoul begins with the assumption that a North Korean contingency will generate a regime change and that South Korea will make concerted efforts with the new North Korean regime to gradually work toward consensus-based unification, its view of a North Korean contingency might change. What is more, doing so would minimize the impact of a North Korean crisis on us.

If South Korea chooses the China-Hong Kong model, under which it would achieve complete integration over the medium to long term after going through a stage of partial integration of one state and two systems, rather than pushing for German-style unification, where two sides aim for complete, one-time integration, it can minimize the ramifications of a North Korean contingency on us.²

In short, Seoul should approach a North Korean contingency with two principles: that it will manage the North Korean region separately, and that

² Goohoon Kwon, "A United Korea? Reassessing North Korean Risks," *Global Economic Paper*, No. 188 (Goldman Sachs: September 21, 2009).

North and South Korea, unlike East and West Germany, will not push for complete integration at once. If we choose to follow the China-Hong Kong model in a transitional period, we can reduce the impact of a North Korean contingency on South Korean society.

It is this strategic line of action that South Korea should follow as it tries to gauge North Korean developments and prepare against their possible consequences for South Korea. *Sans* a strategic calculation such as this, we may misunderstand North Korea's situation and make the mistake of responding to it inappropriately. South Korea must not further aggravate its ties with North Korea by forming a new hostile relationship with a fledgling North Korean regime.

II. Short-term Social Impact

A. North Korea

Public Security

Public security no doubt will be the most critical upshot of a North Korean contingency. Contingency means a malfunctioning of governmental authority. Holes in public security will highly likely trigger political terrorism, including property crime.

North Korean society is plagued by severe conflict between cadres and ordinary people. In that vein, public disorder, for example crimes like plundering and arson, will emerge as the biggest downside of incapacitated governmental powers in North Korea.

When the Saddam Hussein regime collapsed in 2003, the Iraqi people reportedly plundered everything that came in sight. North Korea witnessed similar cases in the past. There were numerous extortions of state property

during the “arduous march.” Examples of property crime include plundering of public and private assets. In particular, markets, a major means of living for North Korean commoners, remain the most vulnerable to looting. Looting may well lead to physical collision between those who are struggling to defend the markets and those who are trying to plunder them, which in turn will probably spark more crime, such as murder and robbery.

Property crime may even include the plundering of invaluable cultural assets. The smuggling of precious cultural assets out to China and Japan, for example, would be an egregious loss for the nation and state.

On the other hand, should a popular uprising-style contingency break out and public order breaks down in North Korea, the masses may carry out terrorism against cadres. Conflict between the North Korean cohort of cadres and the working class is highly volatile. Hence, many North Koreans harbor a grudge against their leaders. It is highly likely that a weakened grip of the old ruling class will give rise to the subjugated class’s resistance to and terrorism against the old ruling class.

A shaky public order may give rise to frequent acts of terrorism triggered by personal emotions. The leadership, in the meantime, may conduct counterterrorism offensives against the ordinary people. That could be a very dangerous clash between the left and the right—a so-called “North-North conflict.” Even Kim Il-sung’s closest confidants may decide to take the matter into their own hands and rise up in an act of counterterrorism.

Collective Dissident Actions

A contingency under a third-generation regime in North Korea is highly likely to unleash dissident social conflict. In North Korea today, sociopolitical conflict remains concealed, forcibly suppressed.

If a contingency occurs, true tales about the Kim family and words of condemnation will travel through North Korean territory, and the people will

probably give vent to their pent-up wrath.

With Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il gone, North Koreans will no longer fear being branded political criminals. Hence, they could freely voice political demands. It is highly possible that the masses will carry out a resistance movement to prevent the remnants of the old ruling cohort from regaining control of the reins of power. Younger generations will form a critical political force, which will highly likely wage a civic movement calling for a new government. An underground group of intellectuals with antiestablishment tendencies has long been known to exist. Even now, a group of young people are coming together in North Korea to chart an alternative to the incumbent regime. This paper shall skip details for the sake of their safety.

The North Korean intelligentsia may engage in discussions criticizing the old North Korean regime and brainstorming policies concerning alternative systems and exit plans. North Korean intellectuals have not been able to pick up their pens though they had them; they have not been able to speak though they had mouths. They may launch free heart-to-heart discussions where “a hundred schools of thought contend.” Such discussions may even develop into collective action.

Information about the outside world and North Korean regime problems are widely known even among ordinary North Koreans, thanks to years of commercial activities in markets. The collapse of the Eastern bloc in the late 1980s and the demise of the Soviet Union began with grassroots resistance and popular uprisings. In short, the subjugated class either overthrew or expelled the ruling class in both instances.

If a contingency occurs in North Korea, it may take place in the form of a revolution. Should the North Korean regime collapse and state functions are paralyzed as a consequence of a popular uprising, the ordinary people’s resistance to and discord with the ruling elite will form the main front of conflict.

It is uncertain whether the North Korean army will succeed in a military crackdown and a new military-centered regime will take power, or whether the North Koreans will uphold a new civilian leader and launch a democratic regime.

Lack of Food and Daily Necessities

Defunct state activities result in abnormal market functions. Hence, it is highly likely that market functions will be paralyzed and the national economy as a whole will not operate normally. The scarcity of goods will cause prices to soar; a lack of consumer goods may drive the people to anxiety and fear.

Yet, it is none other than cadres, who have relied on rations, that will suffer the most in a contingency. Ordinary North Koreans have managed to make a living on their own, in markets. Thus they have the ability to survive in crisis situations. On the contrary, cadres do not. In fact, they can degenerate into the most vulnerable class following a contingency. This is why a contingency could very quickly destroy state functions in North Korea.

North Korean Escapees

An unstable domestic situation in North Korea will highly likely generate escapees. The number, however, will probably not be large. A contingency will not lead to a mass exodus, barring internal bloodshed so violent that it breaks down the cease-fire line.

The Korean nation is not disposed to leave home and family and move to another place. In that sense, we may be different from Germans. What is more, mass exodus is physically difficult, given the circumstances surrounding the Korean peninsula. It is very likely that the Chinese government will bolster border defense and altogether block North Korean escapees' crossings into China in case a contingency erupts in North Korea. Beijing is deeply troubled

by the possibility of North Koreans swarming into the three provinces of Northeast China and cause public disorder or joining the ethnic Korean community.

Traveling to South Korea would not be easy, either. The overland route is blocked by the cease-fire line; the sea would be a more viable option, but the small number of vessels will limit the number of escapees.

The collapse of the North Korean regime alone would not necessarily spawn escapees—it is only when political, economic, or military circumstances force people out that they become escapees.

Civil war is the only exception which may generate a mass exodus. A religious conflict, an ethnic strife, or a war between the cadres, or the ruling class, and the subjugated people in North Korea may result in a large number of refugees.

The only instance of mass migration to the South by those residing in North Korea was when the North, in the course of a land reform, deliberately expelled land confiscators to the South in the immediate wake of national liberation until national division.

North Korean escapees can be divided into two broad categories—ordinary people and the power elite. In general, ordinary people flee out of fear for life or uncertainty about their ability to earn a living; the majority of the power elite who escape do so owing to threats of terrorism from the people.

Ordinary North Koreans will attempt to escape to South Korea; the power elite will highly likely choose China over South Korea. Ordinary North Koreans will likely opt to come to South Korea because they yearn to experience the advancements Seoul has made, rather than China, where they are certain to face language barriers. The power elite will likely prefer China for fear that they may receive political punishment for their track records should they defect to South Korea.

B. South Korean Society

This article is premised on the assumption that the armistice line will not be torn down and consequently there will be no mass influx of North Koreans heading down South. Since a North Korean contingency probably will not entail a disintegration of the border and therefore its impact on South Korean society will be limited to some issues concerning North Korean escapees, the crux of the problem for South Korea would be how to understand and respond to the very fact that a contingency occurred in North Korea.

Needless to say, it would be a crucial situation requiring the South Korean government to closely monitor developments in North Korea and chart strategic responses. Seoul needs to come up with a strategy of steering the situation in a direction it wants by conducting psychological warfare vis-à-vis and providing food aid to North Korea. The impact of a North Korean contingency on South Korea would not be unilateral—it may increase or be thwarted, depending on how it interacts with South Korean society. The North Korean situation may be affected by how we understand and respond to it.

A North Korean contingency, first and foremost, would provoke a tremendous amount of interest from South Koreans, for they would be not only curious about the new developments but also uncertain and insecure about the actual situation in the North.

A contingency in the North Korean regime would have a broad, multi-layered, and explosive effect on South Korean society.

First, it is possible that South Koreans will start asking a barrage of questions about what the contingency means, the prospects of the North Korean regime, and how the North Korean emergency would affect South Korean society. In addition, South Korean society would be flooded by news and information about the developments in North Korea. Conflicting

assessments and interpretations will be offered, driving the people to confusion.

Tensions and anxiety may engulf South Korea as a whole. All the goings-on in North Korea would be broadcast in real time via cellular phones, and all of South Korea would closely watch the situation there with utmost interest. South Koreans may be shrouded by concerns about the prospect of the armistice line's collapse in the aftermath of the contingency. Wild rumors about how the North Korean state collapse might lead to inter-Korean unification and how the North Korean army might forge ahead with Southward aggression may even run rampant.

Government's Explanation of the Situation

How the South Korean government explains the changed circumstances to its people will emerge as a major national task. The greatest challenge could be taking a two-track approach of offering a public explanation and responding to the situation strategically, behind the scenes.

South Koreans tend to call on the government to make everything public, in a transparent manner. As such, the government will first need to draw up a manual that stipulates a course of action in case of a North Korean contingency, and then seek public support for it.

A public announcement of the government's analysis of the situation may end up leaking Seoul's planned strategy to the incumbent North Korean leadership and providing it with enough information to devise its own countermeasures.

Some analysts argue that one of the reasons German unification was possible was there was absolutely no prediction of East Germany's collapse at the time. Numerous pundits claim that, had the West projected approximately when and how East Germany might collapse, the East German leadership, in turn, would have made military and political preparations. Thus East Germany

would not have broken down and Germany would not have been unified to this day, according to these pundits. (Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur)

Against this backdrop, the most important task for the government will be to establish a governance system for explaining developments in North Korea. It is the government that should take the lead in providing information. If rumors on the Internet take control of the situation, it may generate too much confusion for the government to handle, as was witnessed by how groundless rumors on the Internet affected the aftermath of the sinking of the South Korean naval vessel Cheonan.

The South Korean government's foremost priority should be to respond to the North Korean contingency with a clear-cut program stipulating to what level it will make public and account for, to the people, what exactly is happening in North Korea, how it might impact South Korean society, how it might be connected to unification, and how the government is managing the situation.

In the early stages of a North Korean contingency, the government should concentrate on crisis management rather than unification. The reason is, a contingency in North Korea is unlikely to lead to unification immediately. The two Koreas need to undergo a process of consensus-based unification. First, there must be a demand in North Korea for unification with South Korea, as was the case with East Germany. Government-level negotiations should ensue, followed by unification.

South Korea may inevitably have to shoulder the burden of taking over the North Korean regime, but that may give rise to various difficulties.

What is crucial for the government, however, is how it explains the situation to the people. It should first study what the West German government's position was when the crisis was unraveling in East Germany. Seoul must take the lead in analyzing the North Korean situation and

proposing a line of attack, relieving the people's anxiety and confusion in the process.

Seoul needs to assess the situation clearly so as to determine whether it will push for unification and quickly map out a set of measures accordingly. The government needs to clarify that the North Korean contingency will not immediately lead to unification.

Seoul should take advantage of North Korea's changed circumstances as an opportunity for regime change—a first in the true sense of the word. It should examine ways to build a friendly relationship with the new North Korean regime by lending friendly support to it, with an eye toward negotiating unification with it.

Seoul should define the new North Korean regime as a people-friendly, pro-national, and pro-unification regime and interpret and respond to the North Korean situation with a strategy of raising it into a regime that has a desire for unification.

If Seoul decides to transform the contingency into unification, it should present a blueprint for how, in what form, and in what phases the two Koreas would be unified.

Another very sensitive issue is how the South Korean government explains, and how South Korean civilians perceive the North Korean situation, and how North Korean cadres and people understand and are affected by it.

Hence, the South Korean government must construe developments in North Korea strategically and explain them to the people accordingly. Should the South Korean government report and explain the North Korean situation to its people *sans* any strategic considerations, it will only bring about the unwanted consequences of antagonizing the new North Korean regime and further aggravating inter-Korean relations.

Sensationalist Media Reporting

Media reports on the North Korean crisis may form a critical “social phenomenon.” A North Korean contingency may spur North Korea experts on to write up unification scenarios that offer projections about the next one to 10 years. Radio and television networks may then access and report on these speculations. As a result, the South Korean people may perceive the North Korean reality quite differently from what it is and become agitated; the international community, most of all North Korea and China, may overreact. The South Korean government must be mindful of this possibility.

South Korean media’s treatment of a North Korean contingency will have a crucial impact on the North Korean domestic situation, for it will affect North Korean leaders’ and ordinary people’s actions.

Consensus-building among South Korean people is important, but even more important is South Korea’s strategic measures for ensuring that the North Korean situation develops in a way that is advantageous to South Korea. This boils down to whether the government allows free reporting by individual media outlets, or lays down a national strategic policy of restricting media reporting.

Managing Influx of North Korean Escapees

One of the most tangible issues for South Korean society as a crisis unfolds in North Korea will be North Korean escapees. While boat people who enter South Korea via the sea, in boats, will be subjects of tremendous interest, they will nonetheless surface as a major problem.

The government needs to make public a manual which lays out a process by which it plans to accommodate and educate a large influx of North Korean escapees and help them create a community. It should then garner the people’s support for it. The government should clarify how it plans to manage

North Korean escapees. Furthermore, it needs to announce a plan to recruit volunteers to make up for the shortage of manpower in managing the escapees.

The government also needs to take control of and stabilize the situation by making public a supplementary manual it will follow as the number of escapees increases.

South Korean Society's Reaction to Neighboring States' Moves

The South Korean people's interest will not be limited to North Korea in case of a North Korean contingency—they will also take an intense interest in neighboring countries' reactions.

There will be animated discussions and debates about whether the United States and China would intervene and, if they do, how we should respond. Speculative reports far from the truth may be prevalent. Speculative reports that fail to understand or analyze China's position accurately may evoke highly unnecessary emotions from Beijing.

While China has high stakes in the Korean peninsula, it is not easy for the country to intervene in North Korea's internal affairs. South Korea must refrain from discussions that may unnecessarily provoke China. Instead, it should discuss with China ways to share information on and address the North Korean contingency.

C. East Asia

The collapse of the North Korean regime will be a subject of significant interest not only for South Korean media, experts, and government but also for those of China, Japan, and the United States. They will all closely monitor and take an immense interest in how the North Korean contingency might affect them. Such international attention will impact South Korean society, which, in

turn, will have ripple effects on how the North Korean domestic situation unfolds.

The contents and directions of Japanese, Chinese, and US media reports will have just as critical an impact on South Korea as will the North Korean situation itself.

China will be interested in the stabilization of the North Korean situation. As such, it is highly likely to interpret the crisis with the expectation that the new North Korean regime will be able to stabilize the post-contingency situation rapidly and propagate its position as such.

China will be concerned that the North Korean emergency might mass-produce escapees. Hence, how to deal with those North Koreans who escape to or through China will emerge as a major issue.

China will highlight North Korean escapees and refugees in the three northeastern provinces, including Yanbian, as a key problem and will react sensitively to interactions between ethnic Koreans in China and North Korean escapees.

One may also anticipate conflict between Beijing and Washington over the former's handling of North Korean escapes. The reason is, China's approach to escapees may spur on or frustrate the developments in North Korea.

North Korea experts in China, Japan, Russia, and the United States will rush to offer a barrage of contending analyses and strategies. It is highly possible that international media reports will amplify interest in and concerns about North Korea at the same time. Hence, in order to avoid being swayed by international media, South Korea will need to chart a strategy of taking the lead in the situation.

D. International Community

The collapse of the North Korean regime will surface as a matter of profound interest for international media. What they report and how they report it will have a significant impact on South Korean society, as will the North Korean contingency itself.

Major international media outlets, such as CNN and BBC, will report on North Korean developments day after day. As a result, North Korea will once again surface as the most controversial topic of interest around the world.

The international community will closely watch the South Korean government's actions. As such, the South Korean government must take the initiative.

Rather than being swayed by international media, Seoul should conduct a strategy whereby it is the one setting the tone for international media. Economic assistance to the people in North Korea will emerge as a talking point for the world. The international community will also pay attention to the human rights of North Korean escapees. The aid issue will also surface.

III. Mid- to Long-term Social Impact

A. North Korean Situation

The shock of a North Korean contingency will not be a mere short-term event. Even after a year, North Korea will be in commotion due to unstable governmental authority, conflict and confusion surrounding policies, perennial economic difficulties, and the people's growing discontent.

The sanctuary built by Kim Jong-il will have crumbled. Starting from a clean slate, the new force that has risen to power will make every effort to win the people's hearts, but their resistance and backlash will only spread.

Should a new post-Kim Jong-il political force emerge from the bottom thanks to the North Korean people's defiance, and North Korea enters a new revolutionary phase where a regime change is imminent, voices calling for unification with South Korea may start to be heard from within North Korea.

In short, North Korea may witness a situation that is similar to East Germany's peaceful revolution following the Honecker regime's resignation. A fourth regime may be launched in North Korea.

It will be five to 10 years or even more, however, for North Korea to undergo an event comparable to the East German experience. There are two prerequisites for a peaceful revolution to take place in North Korea: the awakening of the people's consciousness and a lack of alternatives owing to the depletion of the power elite's resources for preserving the regime.

It is possible that social turmoil will escalate—new social groups may be formed, new demands unleashed. The North Korean people will build new forces that each voices its own demands for a complete overhaul of policies; different cohorts will clash sporadically. Hence, North Koreans will begin to experience a complete renewal of consciousness.

The new regime may be unable to translate the people's demands into action; the people, in turn, may continue to make additional demands.

B. Impact on South Korean Society

The South Korean people's interest in developments in North Korea remains great, and social conflict may persist over the details of North-South integration and the procurement of funds for unification. Some people may return to their everyday life, noting that the North Korean contingency will not immediately lead to unification.

Different quarters of society may come into conflict with each other over the progress of unification negotiations and the methodology of the unification process. The current South-South conflict may even intensify.

Tasks and topics of discussion surrounding unification, such as North-South societal integration and integration of history, may flood society and hence become socially destabilizing factors.

Disparate understandings of history and different positions on the origin of the Korean War, Kim Il-sung's past, and the *juche* idea could also surface as elements of conflict between North and South Korea.

At the government level, South Korea should proactively move closer to and promote exchange and cooperation with North Korea's fourth-generation regime with an eye toward launching unification negotiations. At the civilian level, it needs to foster relations with the North Korean people and cadres in a way that wins their hearts.

Now is a time for South Korea to take a more proactive approach to the management of North Koreans who have escaped to the South and build an atmosphere for unification. Unification will become a feasible option only when a 1+1 regime change takes place in North Korea, followed by a peaceful revolution. To that end, Seoul will need to develop a strategy for civil society-building in North Korea.

IV. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to estimate what kind of impact a North Korean contingency, if one should ever occur, would have on the Korean peninsula and the international community. This article is, for the most part, premised on hypotheses.

The greatest challenge of writing this paper was to make projections about the ripple effects of a North Korean contingency, for the range of its independent variables is too great.

The repercussions will vary according to the type and degree of the contingency. In addition, we can choose or control its impact on our society,

depending on what meaning we attach to the North Korean contingency. In other words, depending on whether we regard the contingency as an opportunity for unification or simply a change taking place inside North Korea, we can determine the level of our intervention, which translates into choosing the ripple effects of the contingency on us. Furthermore, South Korea can choose how it responds to the North Korean contingency depending on what form of unification it opts to promote.

One point to keep in mind is that it would be extremely difficult for a North Korean contingency to lead to unification. A North Korean contingency would be quite unpredictable and uncontrollable—hence, it will highly likely require management rather than intervention. If a contingency should occur at all in North Korea, it would be not so much an opportunity for unification but a burden of crisis management for South Korea.

We also need to note that the conditions for unification are not ripe in North Korea, mainly due to the North Korean masses' understanding of their own system and their perception of South Korea. If South Korea wants unification, the most desirable way forward would be to achieve unification in a controllable and negotiable way by drawing out gradual changes in North Korea.

Inter-Korean unification should be a result of negotiations. Unification through absorption or other forms of forcible unification will produce numerous side effects. The two Koreas should aim for phased integration rather than the German-style complete, one-time integration.