

LESSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE POLITICAL TRANSITIONS FOR REUNIFICATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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ABSTRACT

The political circumstances of Korean reunification will significantly determine the political environment for future public administration. This paper argues this context will create parameters for governments to implement the exercise of sovereignty over the united Korean peninsula. Pan-Korean nationalism will be exploited as a political mobilization resource for creating the foundations for reintegrating a pan-Korean state and society. A reunited national community will be upon shared historical commonalities. They will serve to mobilize political cooperation after nearly 70 years of separate development under radically opposed political and economic regimes. The North's vestiges will likely remain in the form of organized crime networks in a post-reunification state. Peace strategists should prepare to respond to the political tendency to manipulate and exploit anti-Japanese symbolic appeals by Korean political entrepreneurs. The latter will do so to mobilize prospective supporters both in North and South Korea. Some relevant comparisons with East European cases of transition from Communism provide insights into what to expect.

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KEYWORDS: Bulgaria, Communism, Crime, Germany, Imperialism, Japan, Korea, Nationalism, Reunification, Stereotype

INTRODUCTION

A strong political attitudinal legacy from the historical experience of Communism will remain in northern Korea in a post-reunification context. North Korea's regime is closer in terms of its general domestic public support to Communist-era Bulgaria than to East Germany. The economic and political disparities between North and South will result in the latter being the nucleus for a pan-Korean nation state. North Korean security services will likely be the nuclei of influential organized crime/illicit economic networks. The processes by which reunification will occur will affect how North-based organized crime structures will evolve including their relationship to political elite factional and party configurations. The level of efficacy that the authorities in a reunited Korea will demonstrate in suppressing corruption will not be as great as it has been in the reunited German nation state.

This analysis first presents a typological outline for comprehending the polarizing intra-community legacy of external imperial intervention applicable to Eastern European polities as well as to Korea. It then presents a political psychology-based theoretical framework for relating nationalism to collective patterns of political perception and consequent behavior. This approach to nationalism is used to infer the prevailing trends in Korean political perceptions and behavioral attitudes towards internal and external actors and constituencies that have dominated the Korean nation. The following section briefly compares these prevailing trends in Korean political perceptions and behavioral attitudes with selected national cases in Eastern Europe. It highlights the differential consequences of diverse historical development paths within the shared international context of deep Soviet, Chinese or US postwar internal political intervention. The likelihood of the transformation of North Korean police and security organizations into persistent organized crime formations in a future, reunified Korea is highlighted. The final section infers

from the preceding analyses to underscore the likelihood of Japanese scapegoating to be an intensifying feature of Korean intra-peninsular political interaction.

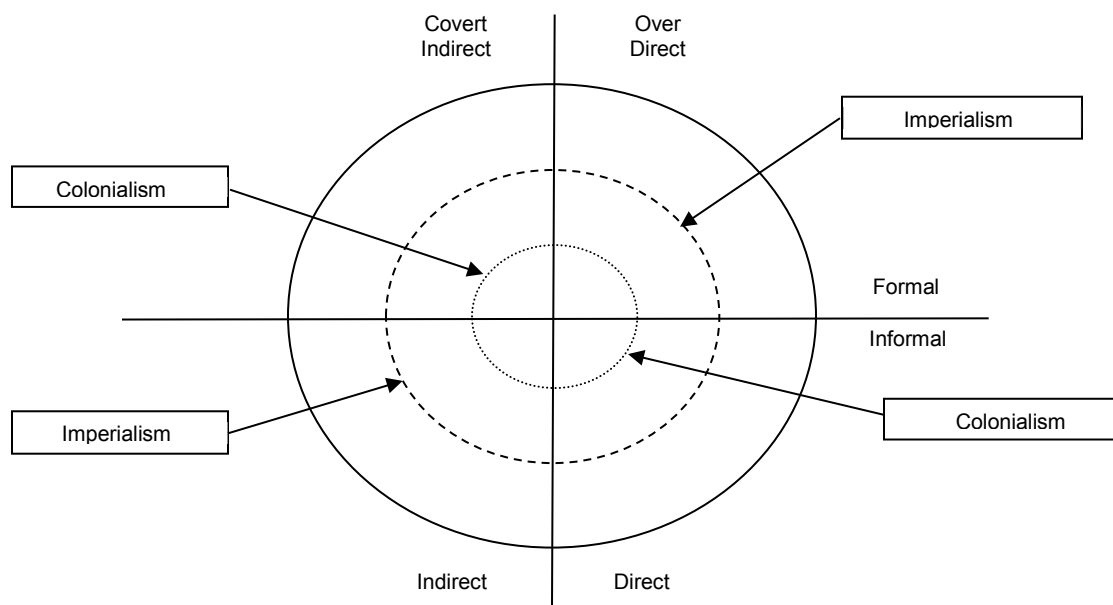
Imperialism and State Evolution

The Bulgarian state, partly as a consequence of centuries of colonialism and dependent development, is a comparatively weak administrative state today as evidenced by its relatively high levels of corruption (Miller, 2008). In the 1989 Eastern European “demonstration effect” environment, mass protests also occurred in Bulgaria to bring down the Communist regime on 10 November 1989 (Linden, 2009). Yet, as in North Korea Communist Bulgaria never earlier manifested an elite dissident movement, not to mention one with active support among the mass public base (US Government). Explaining the relative absence of organized public dissent in the Bulgarian or North Korean case as due to exceptional levels of coercion is necessary, but not sufficient. Neo-Stalinist post-1968 Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic developed significant dissident social movements (Stokes, ed. 1970; Pfaff, 2001). An explanation should include the paradoxes and dilemmas in Bulgarian “national” identity that significantly stem from its largely dependent, colonial Balkan historical political evolution. Beginning in pre-modern, feudal conditions, generations of Bulgarians and Koreans underwent lifetime socialization during periods of imperial intervention. The Orthodox Christian Bulgarian lands were under Ottoman Turkish Muslim control for centuries, before a relatively brief period of sovereignty saw it pass under Russian Soviet domination. Korea was a friendly Confucian tributary state of imperial China for centuries before falling under Japanese domination, followed by Cold War partition and occupation (D. Kang, 2010). They passed on these behavioral attitudes to their succeeding generations. Policy-relevant understandings of Bulgarian and Korean political attitudes towards their own respective states and communities can benefit from a theory-informed consideration of the impact of imperialism. Their respective national political self-determination drives reflect this legacy. Nationalism is this drive for national self-determination through acquisition of the perceived situational political prerequisites for national sovereignty.

The approach by which the external imperial power attempts to control another, pre-modern community will affect significantly the latter’s subsequent political development. The history of imperialism can be examined in terms of the temperament and the forms of control as categorized in Figure 1.

The impact of these imperial experiences shapes the subsequent socio-political mobilizational processes of national identity value formation and behavioral political attitude expression. They include the ethnic, sectarian, racial or territorial identity community foci for nationalism as well as the prevailing ideological self-expression that associates with a particular national case (Rock, 2008). In direct, formal colonial rule, the imperial power imposes its ultimate control through placement of a supreme political ruler publicly representing the sovereign authority of the imperial state. This type of colonial experience has a greater potential to unify the native pro-reform elite of different constituencies in the community in the development of resistance to this form of imperial control. It is probably the least detrimental in terms of its community polarization legacy for state-society relations; the local population at least can more clearly ‘see’ who the enemy is. Japanese imperialism in Korea and Ottoman control of Bulgaria may be categorized as such. In contrast, indirect-formal rule is in place when local, traditional elites rule in the community with the ‘advice’ of the imperial power in the form of advisors, security arrangements, etc. Today, it may also be attempted through formal legitimation of an external intervention by international organizational mandates granted, for example, by NATO, the EU, ECOWAS or the UN Security Council.

Figure 1: “Variance in Perceptions of Foreign Policy” from *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and a Case Study*, by Richard W. Cottam, © 1977. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.



Indirect-informational imperial control is maintained without the overt presence of imperial personnel. Local nationalist actors perceive the imperial power exercising ultimate control over the policies of the local ruling elite. During the postwar period, Moscow exercised control through its client elite in local Communist parties and the respective security apparatus in each Warsaw Pact country. If these control mechanisms collapsed, the USSR would intervene militarily, as in East Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. In 1989, the USSR had no military bases in Bulgaria and Romania, unlike in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. A current topic of media speculation is whether the People's Republic of China would militarily intervene to prevent the collapse of the DPRK regime so as to prevent reunification with the US-allied South (Lim, 2012). In this case, the nature of the North Korean regime would change with the overt presence of Chinese soldiers supporting the DPRK authorities. Such a scenario would constitute another test of the strength of pan-Korean nationalism today in the DPRK. Finally, in informal, direct imperial control, the imperial power invades and becomes the ruling class (e.g. Arabs into Egypt, Normans into England). In the contemporary era, one case that may plausibly be moving in this direction is the Israeli colonization of Palestine.

Informal imperial rule typically means that the imperial power does not acknowledge that it has ultimate authority within the country; the embassy of the imperial power works through the local bureaucracy (Chandler, 2010). Chandler (2010) focuses on Africa. David Chandler (2006), focusing on Eastern Europe, argues that imperial powers today do not admit that they are hegemonic because it is no longer acceptable to global public opinion. Chandler highlights the greater divide between the state authorities and their European and American international patrons, on the one hand, and the mass public in post-colonial states, on the other hand. The inference is that indirect control aims to reduce the costs of imperial control by lessening resistance to it through attempting to obscure it. This obfuscation can be promoted through a dependent, compliant local elite that has formal sovereignty. Whether or not the political influence of an external imperial power is intolerably high is a subjective judgment by different interest groups and evolving constituencies within the target community. One unfortunate legacy particularly of informal imperial intervention is a stronger propensity for the emergence and crystallization of local community identity cleavages. Consequent, polarizing stereotypes and intense

suspicions are more likely to emerge within the previously subjected community regarding who ‘collaborated’ with the imperial powers in the past. In political competition, they are more likely to be portrayed as prone conspiratorially to ‘collaborate again’ in the perceived contemporary machinations of the imperial powers in the area. During intense conflicts, these tendencies may contribute to acts of genocidal violence against suspected ‘traitors.’

Political Psychology and Korean Nationalism

Cottam and Cottam’s theory of nationalism identifies patterns in image perception towards perceived sources of challenge to the national “in-group.” These systematic stereotype simplifications in perception shape policy decision-making. Imperial-colonial relationships leave their legacy in these tendencies towards political stereotyping prevailing in the post-colonial polity (please see Table 1).

Table 1: Image Attributes of a Perceived Source of Comparative Challenge (i.e. threat or opportunity) to Perceived Status of the Nation (in this case, Korea) (adapted from Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

Image/Stereotype	Capability (as perceived)	Culture (as perceived; today, tends to be equated with perceived technological proficiency)	Intentions (as perceived)	Decision Makers (as perceived)	Threat/ Opportunity (as perceived)
“Enemy”	Equal	Equal	Harmful	Small elite	Threat
“Barbarian”	Superior	Inferior	Harmful	Small elite	Threat
“Imperial” (stereotype of imperial power by the colonial/client)	Superior	Superior	Harmful	A few groups	Threat
“Colonial/Client” (stereotype of targeted colonial subject by the imperial power)	Inferior	Inferior	Benign	Small elite	Opportunity
“Degenerate”	Superior or equal	Weak-willed	Harmful	Confused, differentiated	Opportunity
“Rogue”	Inferior	Inferior	Harmful	Small elite	Threat
“Ally” (the individual social relationship analogue is “friend.”)	Equal	Equal	Good	Many groups	Threat (jointly shared towards a third actor by two “allies”; i.e. the enemy of my enemy is my “friend”)

The national legacy of imperialism includes a predisposition by the subject of control to stereotype historic, imperial external actors in accordance with the “imperial” image. The controlling power, in turn, is prone to stereotypically view the controlled community in accordance with the “colonial/client” image. After generations of domination by the Ottomans followed by Russia, the post Cold War democratic regime in Bulgaria has recently become a Western ally in the US-dominated North Atlantic Community. After 35 years of occupation by Japan, postwar South Korea is historically a client and today an ally of the US against North Korea, the USSR and/or main land China.

These perceptual stereotypes associate with psychological behavioral pattern predispositions that, in turn, become the basis for derivate group behavior orientations by the perceiver as outlined below in Table 2.

In responding to a negative social comparison by a strong in-group towards an out-group, the members of the in-group may tend to respond psychologically in different ways. Between actors mutually perceived as threatening, relative power equals, social “competition” refers to direct competition between these groups for status and influence. A ‘zero-sum’ perception of interaction is a tendency in these intense conflicts. One side’s perceived systematic gain in influence and status in the domestic or in the global political system, as in full-scale war (hot or cold) situations, is perceived as the other side’s loss (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). The Cold War Korean conflict can be understood in these terms. A leitmotif of this analysis is tendencies in prevailing Korean constituencies’ post Cold War images of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in relation to North or South Korea, Japan, the USSR/Russia, the US or China. Social “creativity” strategies aim to preserve a positive in-group self-image through creating a collective perceptual reality in which different, equally valid ‘yardsticks’ for evaluation apply to different groups. Groups are thereby ‘different

but equal.’ One may argue, for example, that the North Korean renewed emphasis on the *juche* (“self-reliance”) ideology and strategy may be understood partly as a new regime post-Cold War self-justification. As with all stereotypes, it is self-justifying, emerging with the collapse of its USSR patron and the ending of its subsidies following the end of the Cold War. In this regard, B. R. Myers notes North Korea’s self-referent, derogatory references to South Korea as a “yankee colony” (2011b). Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind note the poverty-stricken North’s reference to the prosperous South as “the foul whore of America” (2010).

Table 2: Political Images and Social-Identity Strategies Towards the Challenger (Cottam and Cottam, 2001)

Group Image/Stereotype of perceived challenger	Social-Identity Orientation Behavioral Patterns towards the perceived challenger
“Enemy”	out-group; creativity, competition when possible
“Barbarian”	out-group; creativity, indirect competition
“Imperial”	out-group; mobility, creativity, competition when relationship is unstable
“Colonial/Client”	out-group; maintain status quo
“Degenerate”	out-group; competition
“Rogue”	out-group; competition, destroy
“Ally”	in-group; mobility, creativity

Stereotypes develop out of extended, conflictive political relationships directly or indirectly on the basis of perceived critical group cultural and capability differences. They produce patterns of social perception and behavior towards the perceived source of political challenge. The social psychological perception of a national in-group towards a perceived source of challenge in turn produces systematic behavioral attitudinal predisposition patterns in interaction. These patterns are in terms of social “mobility,” “competition,” and “creativity” by the perceiver on the basis of these stereotypes.

Social “mobility” strategies seek to join and assimilate into the perceived, ‘superior’ out-group, with a postwar South Korean focus on an Americanized-globalized international business community. The pervasive influence of American political, economic and cultural models within South Korea is arguably more acceptable due to the provision of social mobility opportunities. South Korea’s Cold War client status relationship with the US provided enormous social mobility options both for individuals and the southern two-thirds of the Korean nation. This development occurred while confronting the Communist control of the northern third of the population and its territory, with American tutelage helping to provide this social mobility (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). It provides a strong incentive to the ROK to continue to acquiesce to American hegemony while national reunification, as a prerequisite for national self-determination, has not been achieved (Greenberg, 2004). South Korea serves to validate the development model that the US promoted during the global Cold War conflict. American authorities advocated this model in the midst of its perceived Cold War global social competition with the USSR. Both sought allegiances among the newly independent countries emerging or re-emerging from the postwar wreckage of empires (Linantud, 2008). The neighboring propinquity of North Korea magnifies this South Korean appeal: the failed, “alternative” Korea lies across the 38th parallel conveniently available for immediate comparison. The division of the Korean nation apparently created a de facto laboratory for comparing the two systems to determine their value. The perceived triumph of the US-led alliance over the USSR poses critical dilemmas for the DRPK regime authorities that now rely on PRC economic subsidies (ICG, 2012).

The application of this nationalism-focused theory of image formation provides insights into the competitive and cooperative challenges confronting pan-Korean nation state building. National communities having a collective recent memory of Great Power imperial domination may manifest this legacy in identifiable, lingering patterns of policy behavioral predisposition. This political interaction predisposition derives from a consequent, predominant national image of ‘self’ versus the external and internal ‘other’ and the affective orientations that associate with it. It is evident in the imperial-colonial/client image relationship that can emerge under extended periods of domination (Cottam and Cottam, 2001) (Please see Table 3).

Table 3: Images and Policy Predispositions (Cottam and Cottam, 2001)

Image/Stereotype of perceived challenger	General Policy Predispositions towards perceived challenger	Policy Predispositions towards perceived challenger in intense conflicts
“Enemy”	Wary suspicion, containment	Hostility, defense
“Barbarian”	Fear, form alliances	Preemptive strikes, precipitate alliance intervention (potential for genocide)
“Imperial” (stereotype of imperial power by the colonial/client)	When domination is stable: fear, avoid conflict, submit	When conflict is unstable: anger, shame, struggle for liberation
“Colonial/Client” (stereotype of targeted colonial subject by the imperial power)	Paternalistic policy guidance and direction	Most commonly nonviolent repression
“Degenerate”	Contempt, mobilize for competition	Disgust, offensive aggression
“Rogue”	Derogate, isolate	Hostility, violent repression (potential for genocide)

Perceptual and behavioral attitudinal patterns generate policy behavioral predispositions by a national in-group towards the perceived source of political challenge. In the imperial-colonial image dependent relationship, policy behavioral predispositions may change as the political relationship becomes unstable, weakening assumptions regarding relative capability and cultural superiority and inferiority. Perceived opportunities and threats to the relationship may thereby intensify, producing more intense political conflicts. They may reinforce stereotypes and the emotional affect that accompanies them, creating significant potentials for violence.

A future, unified Korean polity will include various constituencies that have their respective, collective historical memories of external and internal domination and their corresponding attitudes. In states with a recent memory of extended imperial control by external actors, the state is more likely to be seen in popular attitudes as a distant, threatening, powerful entity serving its own interests. However, South Korea has had a liberal democratic political regime for a generation since 1987. The contemporary North Korea state had much of its foundation established under Japanese imperialism followed by the “Sultanism” of the continuing, decades-long dictatorship of the Kim dynasty (Hymans, 2008; Myers, 2011a). Sharp portrays this view as a monolithic or “self-sufficient” image of the state and its power capabilities (Sharp, 1973). It stands in contrast to a popular consent-based image of the state and its power (Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994). Both Koreas, however, share a memory of direct Japanese imperial domination until 1945 under which Korean mass political mobilization accelerated out of its preceding feudal, agrarian societal setting.

Comparative Communist and Post-Communist National Development

Upon the arrival of Communism with the Soviet Red Army, Germany was already an industrialized and politically mobilized society. The section of the German public that lived in what became the German Democratic Republic had previously undergone mass political mobilization processes into a common German nation state identity. German mass public state identity for the nation, in other words, had by this time been established. As a consequence, the forcibly imported and coercively maintained, East German “national” state identity never gained sufficient intensity to supersede pan-German national identity. This failure resulted despite strong efforts by the Communist regime to inculcate one (Federal, “East Germany”). Partly for this reason, the collapse of the East German regime was not only peaceful, but the GDR legacy left comparatively little impact on prevailing political attitudes in the former East Germany. The post-Communist “Party of Democratic Socialism” had some electoral support. Yet, eastern German politics is dominated by the same major parties that have dominated western German democratic politics since the formation of the German Federal Republic in the 1950s.

During the postwar period, both Bulgaria and North Korea underwent a period of rapid, forced economic, social and political change under a Communist totalitarian regime. During this same period, the People’s Republic of Bulgaria acquired a reputation as the closest ally of the USSR in the Warsaw Pact (Dyer, “Bulgaria won’t be celebrating 1989”). North Korea’s political development under Communism was rather more similar to the experience of the east European nation states, particularly in regard to the Balkan states. In these states, Communism largely brought “modernity” to these societies that, with few regional exceptions (e.g. the Czech lands) had been overwhelmingly agrarian. Consequently, the

respective former national Communist parties, after reforming themselves, have become one of the pre-eminent political parties in all of these states. A positive correlation appears between the level of economic development at the time of the imposition of Communism and the level of popular political support for post-Communist/socialist parties (Toole, 2007). Toole concludes that the pre-Communist historical legacy of Eastern Europe affected significantly the respective post-Communist political party structure that emerged in east central Europe. Toole views this structure as in accordance with the Lipset-Rokkan model's focus on the historical legacy in political cleavage formation in contemporary west Europe. In countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, these parties have successfully transformed themselves into successful electoral parties since 1989. They have won, lost, and then regained control of the government through winning national elections and leading parliamentary coalitions. They represent an organizational model for an enduring, successful East European political party (Klesner, 2007).

In the Communist Romanian case, the correspondence with North Korea is not only empirical, but also intentional. According to one report, Nicolae Ceausescu actually sought to emulate the political model he personally witnessed in North Korea while visiting there in 1971 (Tolnay). In the case of Bulgaria, a strong parallel exists with North Korea insofar as the agrarian Bulgarian political economy industrialized, like North Korea, under Communism. They both did so through close modeling of their own development strategy after one or both of the Communist Great Powers. Bulgarian politics today, a generation since the 1989 revolution, continues to include charges of national treason against the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The latter (i.e. previously the Communist Party) is still domestically attacked for its refusal to repudiate its leaders in the 1970s that voted to apply to join the USSR as the USSR's 16th republic ("Bulgaria," 2012).

Communist Romania under the Ceausescu dictatorship adopted the posture of vigorous non-alignment vis-à-vis the Warsaw Treaty Organization until the late 1980s (Deletant, 2007). Yet, Romania remained in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and therefore it remained economically integrated in the Communist block. The DPRK did not have the public pretense of being ostentatiously politically independent from either the USSR or the PRC or both until the end of the Cold War. The latter resulted in far-reaching declines in economic subsidies heretofore provided to the DPRK. The DPRK political economy did not liberalize. Consequently, the loss of the Soviet economic subsidies in the early 1990s resulted in mass starvation and death for perhaps 5% of its population (O, 2011). At this time, the regime accentuated its *juche* (self-reliance) official ideological doctrine.

Prior to the end of the Cold War, North Korean development strategy appeared to be ideologically orthodox in terms of conformity with Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist principles. The DPRK represented the attempt by the North Korean leadership to prevail in the domestic and international competition for representational legitimacy for the entire Korean nation. At first, North Korea displayed development success in comparison with the American-dominated South until the 1970s, during which per capita income was similar to that in the ROK (Lankov, 2006).

The DPRK confronted Cold War adversaries in South Korea, the United States and Japan after the disastrous and catastrophically destructive Korean War. Accordingly, the DPRK regime had strong Cold War incentives to ally closely with the USSR and the PRC and adopt their general economic and political models. The legacy of this commitment remains an existential issue because unlike Bulgaria, the survival of the DPRK regime equates with the survival of the state. Post-1989 Bulgaria, a nation state, could adopt far reaching liberal political and economic reforms, albeit in comparative fits and starts. Due to the intensity of pan-Korean national identity throughout the peninsula, the DPRK regime does not have this option without abnegating itself like East Germany (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Yet, the DPRK identity profile among the DPRK public is notably stronger than was the GDR among its population (Myers, 2011b). The comparative political obeisance of the DPRK public to the DPRK authorities contrasts with the comparatively awkward identity allegiance of the South Korean public. Specifically, the latter's

relationship to the ROK state (as distinct from the pan-Korean nation) is disputed (Myers, 2011b). The DPRK security apparatus is not so readily going to dissolve as it did in the former GDR. Modernization within the DPRK framework has created stronger political identity allegiances. They will likely translate into elements of the coercive apparatus transferring their slowly decaying pro-DPRK identity profile into parochial organizational identities. Their relative cohesiveness and expertise, as well as their extensive social networks, will be conducive for transforming into illicit political economic syndicates in a reunified Korea. As in Bulgaria, they are more likely to evolve into organizations that will continue to specialize in organized illegal economic activity, such as illicit arms shipments (Hope and Troev, “Bulgaria struggles”).

The legacy of Japanese, Chinese, Soviet and American imperialism in Korea will likely generate a significant potential for state fragmentation in a post-unification political environment. Korean organized crime organizations emerging out of the security services will likely seek domestic political support partly by associating themselves with romantic nationalist stereotypes. The heroic mythologization of Kim Il-sung and his family as guerrilla unit fighters in the anti-Japanese struggle is noted, for example, in Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind (2010). It compares with the romantic “bandit” image in Balkan folk imagery of early resistance against the Ottoman Turks that supports extensive organized crime activity currently in the Balkans (Giatzidis, 2007). It implies that this theme would be readily available as a set of romantic national symbols to manipulate to appeal for public support by political entrepreneurs in a reunified Korea. The disputed legacy of the ROK state and its 1945-50 foundations with the rise of Syngman Rhee will become more prominent in the competitive political discourse of a reunited Korea (Greenberg, 2004). Greenberg recounts Syngman Rhee’s reliance on the Japanese-associated Korean National Police, with American backing to become the first president of the ROK in 1948. Rhee and his allies killed the most prominent political figure in the South, Yo Un-hyong, and thousands of his supporters to pave the way for the former’s own election. The disappearance of the lingering threat from the North will end incentives for some degree of collective regime-enforced or self-censorship. A fuller discussion by groups, parties and constituencies competing for political support in the democratic political system will ensue regarding the Japanese occupation and subsequent partition period (e.g. “Censorship”; “South Korean Journal Backs Down”).

During the Cold War, the US worked with local authorities that it saw as cooperating with the US containment strategy in Asia and elsewhere. Containment wars contributed to horrendous suffering, but this US policy strategy also contributed to South Korea’s economic “miracle” (Linantud, 2008). China’s intervention in the Korean War saved the Kim Il-sung regime. China’s perceptions of and policies toward a reunited Korea will largely depend upon the political circumstances and scenarios under which the reunification dynamics occur. China’s acquiescence to the disintegration of the DPRK regime will require that the Chinese authorities view the ROK as not being a threat to China’s security interests in East Asia. Success in persuading the Chinese authorities of the benign intentions of the ROK will depend upon various factors. Some of these factors are not directly under ROK control, i.e. the intensity of conflict in the US-PRC relationship. The ROK authorities may work to convince the PRC that a reunited Korea under the ROK regime will generate greater economic and security benefits for the PRC. The ROK authorities would feel strong pressure to accommodate to the economic investments that the PRC is evidently already undertaking in the DPRK in mining and other sectors (Choe, “North Korea”). The South Korean leadership has emphasized that the recently adopted ROK-US Free Trade Agreement will make the ROK a more attractive site for Chinese (and Japanese) investment. It will generate more opportunities for accessing the US market (“S.Korea,” 2012). China’s investments in the DPRK, therefore, may become even more valuable as part of an expanded ROK. It will serve as another incentive to Chinese constituencies to accommodate to the extension of sovereign ROK law, including public administration law, into the North.

Should US-PRC relations become more hostile, their relationship will display more intense competition. The ROK authorities will experience more domestic, nationalist public opinion pressure to distance the ROK from the US to achieve PRC acquiescence to reunification if the latter appears increasingly feasible. It will constitute another test of the strength of pan-Korean nationalism as the pace of change accelerates in North Korea; unlike the USSR in Eastern Europe in 1989, the PRC is a rising Great Power.

The Potential for Japanese Scapegoating in Korea

In the southern part of Korea as well, portrayals of the founding South Korean ROK authorities as ‘traitors’ to the nation may receive a surprisingly receptive audience (Myers, 2011b). This contextual factor implies that the prospect of violence in the reunification process may be significant. Demagogic references to a common, traditional Japanese ‘enemy’ will be politically useful for political coalition formation through intra-Korean evocation and manipulation of the ‘ally’ stereotype. This political competitive predisposition will be useful to overcome intra-Korean political cleavages and polarizations due to nearly 70 years of partitioned, separate development. Political entrepreneurs will seek to create political coalitions by mobilizing public opinion to the extent possible around claims to nationalist legitimacy (Lankov, 2006). In addition to the state of Japan, a focus on Japan’s “collaborators” internally against whom to ally will intensify. In various reunification political scenarios, the legacy of the conditions leading up to and during 1945-50 will in all likelihood re-emerge among competing elite factions and their constituencies. ROK President Lee Myung-bak’s provocative August 2012 visit to territorially disputed Dok (Korean)/Takeshima (Japanese) island evoked latent but strong anti-Japanese Korean public sentiments (e.g. “BBC,” 2012). Currently under ROK control, Lee’s first visit of an ROK President to the island arguably enhanced the December 2012 electoral prospects of his party’s nominated successor, Park Geun-hye. Lee’s actions occurred in the midst of low public opinion survey findings for his concluding administration. These low ratings reportedly resulted from public disappointment over low economic growth, growing income disparities, nepotistic corruption reports, and worsening relations with the North (“Lee Myung-bak,” 2012).

Lankov highlights the ongoing official public commitment to pan-Korean nationalism defining the formal ideology of the ROK (2006). This ideology contrasts with the differing policy reality of increasing ROK discouragement of economically burdensome DPRK refugee flows into the ROK as of the mid-2000s. South Korean political discourse today has legitimated renewed investigations regarding pre-1945 charges of collaboration with the Japanese. During the administration of Lee Myung-bak’s predecessor, Roh Moo-hyun, South Korea’s equivalent of a “truth commission” issued a report listing various foundational ROK figures as Japanese “collaborators” (“Colonial Collaborator List Released”). Roh had also continued his predecessor’s strategy loosening restrictions on economic investment and humanitarian aid in the North as part of the “Sunshine Policy,” which Lee subsequently abandoned. The list included Park Chung-hee, the military ruler during 1961-79 popularly credited with overseeing the formative period of South Korea’s economic “miracle” (Kang, 2009). Park Chung-hee’s daughter, Park Geun-hye, won the December 2012 ROK presidential election (McCurry, 2012). Park Geun-hye received primary credit for leading the ruling “New Frontier” (*Saenuri*) party to the surprise retention of its majority in parliamentary elections in April 2012. Her party colleague and rival, Lee Myung-bak of the *Saenuri* party, has been ROK president from 2008 until February 2013 and was constitutionally prohibited from seeking re-election.

In a process that accelerated beginning in the mid-2000s, the South Korean authorities expropriated property from the descendants of identified collaborators with the Japanese (Ryall, 2010). According to this report, the South Korean authorities had seized 11 million square meters of land evaluated at 112 million British pounds. In sum, South Korean political discourse has already contributed to the legitimation of this theme of collaboration. Integration of a post-Communist North into the ROK state will very likely witness an intensification of this subject in democratic politics to appeal to discontented

constituencies across the political spectrum. In the South will be located those constituencies paying the very large bill for integrating the economically decrepit North into South Korean market institutions. Similarly, in post-unification Korea, calls will likely intensify for indemnities and reparations from Japan for its actions during the 1910-45 colonial period (Hancocks, 2012). Japanese reparations to S. Korea were supposedly resolved under the “Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea” signed in 1965, under the Park Chung-hee military dictatorship. The post-1987 South Korean democratic system, together with subsequent publication in 2005 of the treaty preparation documents, has generated continual demands for revision of the terms of the treaty. These calls have a particular focus on the plight of South Korean women enslaved as sex workers for the Japanese imperial military during World War, the so-called “comfort women” (“Treaty”).

After reunification, public polarization will be great in response to the high profile political attitudinal differences between southern and northern residents as well as towards internal economic migrants. In the North will be based constituencies and groups experiencing invidious comparison and often perceived humiliating treatment by the South (O, 2011). The political context will be favorable for political entrepreneurs manipulating romantic Korean anti-Japanese nationalist symbols. It will be an effective means to mobilize political support that bridges the legacies of the North-South divide. Manipulating anti-Chinese or anti-US symbols and sentiment will be comparatively less pronounced partly because of the perceived much higher comparative economic and political costs of doing so. The economic, cultural and security investments of South Korea in its relationship with the US and China will likely be too great. China became the ROK’s largest trading partner in 2003, surpassing the US (Klinger, “China Shock for South Korea”). As long as trade-dependent Japan also remains dependent on the US for security, it will be the least dangerous scapegoat. US and PRC Cold War military intervention in 1950-53 contributed to horrendous Korean suffering (“South Korea shuts down Korean-war human rights probe”). Continuing alliance of a reunified Korea with the US or PRC may generate cognitive dissonance. It can be self-servingly resolved by viewing this historical suffering as ultimately the consequence of Japanese imperialism that led to Korea’s partition and subsequent tragedies.

CONCLUSION

The legacy of imperialism and partition in Korea will manifest itself in a reunified Korean peninsula in terms of challenges to public administration. The situational political dynamics on the Korean peninsula surrounding DPRK disintegration are likely to include appeals to pan-Koreanism utilizing anti-Japanese entreaties. DPRK military and police security structures are likely to enjoy strong albeit declining national popular authority in reunified Korea. The interrelated sources of this authority are likely to include nationalist pride, habitual obedience and utilitarian incentives through the economic resources that they will still control. This northern security elite will continue publicly to associate itself with popular anti-Japanese sentiment. These appeals are more likely to transcend the substantial perceptual, attitudinal and value differences between northern and southern populations that would characterize a reunified Korea. These security structures will likely continue to linger on as organized crime networks at least on a scale comparable to that witnessed in post-Communist states in Southeast Europe. Elements among them are likely to transition into becoming the nuclei for elite political factional and party formations not to mention legitimate, as well as black and grey, economic formations. Among their objectives, South Korean state and civil society actors should prepare today to counteract anti-Japanese nationalist demagoguery in Korean public opinion now and in a future, reunifying Korea. They should continue developing transparent, cooperative ties with Japanese governmental as well as non-governmental civil society representatives. Private sector actors should promote corporate philanthropy endorsing Korean-Japanese dialogue relying on their extensive Japanese corporate ties and partnerships.

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