

SPORTS DIPLOMACY AS THE ALTERNATIVE OF RECONCILIATION FOR SOUTH KOREA-NORTH KOREA AND THE PROSPECT OF REUNIFICATION

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the effort of Sports Diplomacy by South Korea and North Korea in order to promote peace. In this study, the researcher conducted research from various legitimate sources to support this research. The researcher methods are by did library studies and website searching. Using the theory of soft power by Joseph Samuel Nye, this research findings proof that sports diplomacy has become a soft diplomacy tool that accepted by South Korea and North Korea to ease tension, promote stability, tolerance, and reconciliation between the two countries. Therefore, the two Korea continuously did sports exchanges to improve the sports diplomacy effort on the Korean Peninsula.

Keywords: North Korea, South Korea, Sports, Soft Diplomacy

Background

Since separation from post-World War II, tensions have always surrounded South Korea and North Korea's relations. At that time, South Korea was under the influence of the U.S. (United States) influence, while North Korea was under Russian control and China's influence. The war ended on July 27th, 1953 through a ceasefire and the establishment of a demilitarized zone on the border of the two countries. However, technically the two countries have never reconciled and claimed to be the rulers of the Korean Peninsula.

Under Kim Jong-il's regime, North Korea began to soften. This was seen on the high-level meeting between North Korea and South Korea in June 2000. At that time, the President of South Korea Kim Dae Jung visited North Korea. However, North Korea and South Korea relations have worsened after Kim Jong-un took over the "throne" following Kim the death of Kim Jong Il in December 2011. North Korea accelerated the nuclear program and repeatedly tested nuclear weapons. At the same time, South Korea responded by tightening the border guarding and arming on the DMZ (demilitarization zone). The second meeting was held in the President Roh Moo Hyun era in 2007 who agreed to encourage economic development of the two Korea countries. However, the agreement also did not continue and give North Korea more room to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Another attempt of conflict resolution is through mediation or negotiation with third parties namely Six-Party Talks. These negotiations were attended by six countries as follows: South Korea, North Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia (the Soviet Union). This negotiation aims to discuss and find common ground in the nuclear programs issue in North Korea. These six-party talks lasted from 2003 to 2007 and went through six rounds. Unfortunately, the conflict resolution through mediation also did not give significant results to

the peace of the Korean Peninsula. The peaceful efforts on the Korean Peninsula seemed to find a bright spot on the 2018 Winter Olympic. The Winter Olympics that was held in Pyeongchang, South Korea on February 9th and 25th, 2018 brought enlightenment in the diplomatic relations between North Korea and South Korea.

In order to analyze the process of conflict resolution between North Korea and South Korea, theories and concepts are required. The basic framework used by the author uses concepts or theories that are closely related to the title chosen by the author. Theory and concept in which these study stands are Soft Power Theory by Joseph Samuel Nye and the Concept of Conflict Resolution by John Wear Burton.

1. Soft Power

The use of hard power, especially military strength, is becoming unpopular because it contradicts the spirit of upholding human rights. Hard power displaced by the use of soft power as an instrument of foreign policy. In *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (Joseph Samuel Nye, 2009) defines *soft power* as the ability to get what is desired through attraction rather than through coercion or financial strength. Soft power is a way to make other countries have a desire in accordance with the wishes of the country through their culture and ideology. The goal of soft power is to promote a positive image and the formation of public opinion. Soft power proved easier, cheaper, and effective in achieving its national interests.

	Hard Power	Soft Power
Behavior type coordinates	Command	Setting the Agenda
	Stress	Attract
	Induced Force	Absorb Political Values
Most likely to use of resources	Transaction	Institutional System
	Sanction	Cultures
	Bribery	Foreign Policies

Table 1 *Types of action and resource utilization of hard power and soft power*

Soft power strategy does not give rewards or punishments but through the agenda setting. When the other countries are impressed or interested in the ideas or behavior of a particular country, then it can affect other countries in formulating goals that will ultimately affect their actions. If a country is able to demonstrate the legitimacy of its power in the global arena and other countries eyes, then it can avoid resistance from the other countries. If the culture and ideology adopted by certain country are interesting, then other parties will follow them. If a country is able to promote consistent international norms, then it does not need to change. (Nye, 1990) In fact, other countries will support and follow these norms. Thus, the country does not need to spend a lot of money as hard power to make other parties or countries to follow it. Sports diplomacy in the sub-category of public diplomacy is also part of an irreplaceable soft power

tool for foreign policy. Sports events such as the Olympics have been used repeatedly as a means to convey political messages in the hope of suppressing other actors in the international order.

2. The Concept of Conflict Resolution

In international relations or global arena, an interaction will always happen within states, the example of interaction between states is cooperation. But the result of the interaction in international relations is not always positive. There is a possibility it is going in a negative direction and becoming a conflict. Conflict can occur because of differences in interests. In his book entitled *International Politics*, K.J. Holsti argued that conflict occurs against a combination of specific parties who opposing views on an issue, hostility, and certain types of diplomatic and military systems. (Holsti, 1988) The source of the conflict lies in the relationship between the systems of national countries based on the concept of "egocentrism", namely the aspiration to maintain and enhance the strength and position of the state in relation to other countries.

In order to overcome or facing the conflict, it requires a way to end or find common ground in the problem so that it can build a new relationship that can last a long time between rival parties. Conflict resolution is an analysis and problem-solving process that considers the needs of individuals and groups. In conflict resolution, conflict cannot be resolved by armed forces and by negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Conflict resolution does not end in negotiation but it is a process to create a new structure that is conducive to meet the basic human needs. (Burton, 1996) The main objective of conflict resolution is how to change the conflict dynamics from the competitive to the more cooperative. (Sukanta, 2007) From the concept of conflict resolution, it can be applied to analyze conflicts North Korea and South Korea and what kinds of conflict resolutions made by the two countries to achieve peace.

Method of Research

In this thesis, the research method that the writer uses is qualitative research. The qualitative research is used to explain the problem and to verify the hypothesis based on empirical reality. The sources of information and references are collected in the form of books. In addition, various data from the internet that related to the topic will also be used such as journals, e-news, articles, e-book, and other literary sources. Therefore, the research is not implemented in the field but the research is based on the data that has been available in library research and media. The level of analysis in this research is states (South Korea and North Korea).

Result and Discussion

1) The Impacts of Sports Diplomacy Toward North Korea and South Korea Relations

South Korea and North Korea are fearless to show good intentions towards another party and the world. Two Korea countries also leave weapons and hard power behind and prefer sports as a means of diplomacy. The two Korea countries had successfully done the sports exchanges such as the Winter Olympics, World Table Tennis Championship, Basketball Friendly Match, Korean Open Table Tennis, Asian Games, Asian Para Games, and Ari Sports Cup. They make the Olympics and various matches a catalyst for dialogue between countries. Sports diplomacy has also become a tool for conflict resolution for the two countries, where a ceasefire between

two Korean countries since 1953 finally ended with North Korea's desire to join the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Therefore, this research has shown that the biggest impact of sports diplomacy between the two Korean countries is real efforts in cooperation to realize and promote peace.

The impact of sports diplomacy and the various actions of reconciliation between the two Koreas also gave impacts in several fields. For example, in the military field, the creation of profits in the military field where North Korea and South Korea agreed to gradually close 11 guard posts in the border area. (Wooyoung, 2018) This action is one of the ways to ease military tensions between North Korea, South Korea, and other countries. While the impact on the economy is actually more felt by North Korea. Since North Korea's nuclear threat has caused a global shock, the United States has given an ultimatum and sanctions to the countries that cooperate with North Korea. If President Kim does not carry out denuclearization, these countries must break economic cooperation. The impact of sanctions is felt by North Korea, especially in the domestic economic sector. Therefore, the actions to improve the diplomatic relations of these two countries can be a bright opportunity for North Korea to improve its economic sector.

2) The Prospect of Reunification on the Korean Peninsula in the Near Future

On April 27th, 2018, a historic meeting between North and South Korea was held in the border village of Panmunjeom. The leaders of the two countries also have agreed on several things including a joint effort to end the Korean War and create an everlasting peace. Many people hope that this meeting can lead to peace and there's a possibility to realize the

reunification of the two Koreas. In one survey in 2017 by the Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies showed that more than 95 percent of North Korean defectors who responded said unification was needed to occur. (Smith, 2018) North Korea has pushed the concept of "one country, two systems" for decades in which the country will maintain a different system of government in the North and South, at least until both can be reconciled peacefully.

Regarding the issue of unification, South Koreans might not even want reunification and being pessimist about reunification according to the results from the same survey held by the Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies. Basically, this survey is an annual national survey and contains unification awareness. The survey is conducted once a year and the first survey began in July 2007. The purpose of this survey is to identify and analyze public opinion and awareness of South Korean society about unification, North Korean policy, North Korean defectors, North Korea as a whole, social awareness and international environmental which surrounds the Korean Peninsula. The results from the (Institution of Peace and Unification Studies SNU, 2018) showed that 24.7 percent of South Koreans think unification is impossible. Only 2.3 percent of citizens believe that unification can occur within five years. While as many as 13.6 percents of respondents believe the unification of the two Koreas can occur within 10 years.

On the other hand, in the same survey, 53.8 percent of South Koreans held the opinion that reunification was very important to pursue. Unfortunately, so far there has been no meeting point regarding what form the reunified Korean state in the future. Nearly half of South Koreans want the political system of democracy that they have been up to now. While 37.7 percent supported a compromise to combine the South and North Korean political systems. In addition, 13.5 percent of respondents answered they chose to continue the two political systems in one

country. The statement about South Koreans who did not really consider the reunification important was supported by another survey by the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). In a survey conducted in December 2017. The survey by (KINU, 2017) found out that only 138 out of 1,000 respondents felt that unification was "very necessary". From the 1,000 respondents interviewed by KINU, 440 said unification was "rather necessary" and 365 thought it was "not really necessary." The most frequent reason encountered by South Korean respondents (41.5%) for Korean unification interests is "to prevent inter-Korean warfare."

Basically, South Korea and North Korea have differed tremendously as a country. South Korea is much wealthier, powerful than North Korea. According to Julian Ku, Professor of Law from Hofstra University on the (*Business Insider*, 2018) channel, the Korean societies nowadays have developed far apart that South Korean might view North Korea as a misfortune and burden. South Korea have to embed and invest a huge amount of money to rebuild North Korea, reeducate North Korean citizens, and compromise with the costs of unification. In addition, North Korea is the most isolated totalitarian societies in the world while South Korea on the reverse side is one of the most open and experienced in technologically wise.

In consequence, it is almost impossible to merge both countries especially for the younger generations who do not have any sort of link memory toward each side. In South Korea, there's just a little amount of support toward unification, because they might think the countries differ greatly and unification costs are not cheap. Besides these reasons, the main obstacle for the realization of reunification is North Korea's hard relations with other countries such as China and the United States (Denmark, 2018) The United States and North Korea never truly formally solve and settle all the issues amongst them, that's why the United States troops are still in South Korea.

Conclusion

Sports diplomacy has also become a soft diplomacy instrument and conflict resolution tool for the two countries, where a ceasefire between two Korean countries since 1953 finally ended with North Korea's desire to join the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Therefore, this research has shown that the biggest impact of sports diplomacy between the two Korean countries is real efforts in cooperation to realize and promote peace. Moreover, regarding the issue of reunification, the situation on the Korean Peninsula is not only influenced by the dynamics of inter-Korean relations. In fact, Korea is seen from the perspective of historical, theoretical and other positions of large countries such as the United States and China that are able to influence the Korean Peninsula. Then the formulation of reunification policies and scenarios or strategies for resolving the Korean conflict must not only be acceptable to the two Koreas but also other major countries that have interests on the Korean Peninsula to avoid negative implications for the East Asian region and globally.

Although sports diplomacy gave valuable impacts on the progress of inter-Korean relations, there are possible limits to sports diplomacy to bring relations between Koreans to the reunification stage. The North has shown some good will but the fundamental issues are still unresolved and most importantly the underlying geopolitical situation has not changed. Korea remains divided and there is no agreement over the future asset of the Peninsula. The differences in political aspects that exist in each country also have spread to economic aspects which eventually led to gaps related to economic growth in both countries. Apart from the geopolitics and economic aspects, the reunification would imply a very high cost to develop the North and it seems no one really wants to sustain these expenses. Furthermore, at this moment, Korean

reunification is harder because there are two other powerful states involved. The United States and China have an obligation duty to with North Korea and South Korea to form a clear strategy toward the denuclearization of the Korea Peninsula. But the progress will continue to go on since South and North Korea have been continuously doing some good efforts and cooperation throughout 2018 after the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. The improvement will be made that the nuclear issue will be solved that the countries in the Korean Peninsula will eventually reunite. Therefore, in short term or in the near future, no breakthrough is likely to happen in the Korean Peninsula.

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