

CHAPTER II

CONFLICT HISTORY AND EFFORTS TOWARD CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In the Korean imperial eras, the Korean Empire was first initiated by the Goryeo Empire (918-1392). Then continued by the Great Joseon Empire (1392-1897) and the last was The Great Korean Empire (1897-1910). These empires covered the Korean Peninsula and were closely linked to the Chinese Empire. In 1905, Japan began to enter the Korean Peninsula, until finally in 1910, the entire Korean Peninsula was dominated by Japan and the Korean Empire ended. On August 15th, 1945, Japan officially surrendered to the allies. The Korean Peninsula is divided into two with 38th latitude (38th parallel) as the boundary. The South was administered by the United States while The North was administered by Russia (the Soviet Union). After Korea split into two states, the United States and Russia competed as superpowers states to instill their influence on the Korean mainland. With the intensification of the World War between the United States and Russia, the dividing line amongst North Korea and South Korea became a barrier that separated the Korean citizens from each other. The main aim of this chapter is to explain the history of conflict between South Korea and North Korea. The author also describes the efforts of conflict resolution ever taken by South Korea and North Korea to achieve reunification or at least reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

A. The History of Conflict between North Korea and South Korea

The Second World War left "deep scratches" toward various countries in the world. One of them is the Korean Peninsula which was "scratched" and split into two parts. Both parties which had intervened directly in the split of the Korean

Peninsula at that time were Russia and the United States. The United States and Russia made the policy of divided Korea within two parts in order to simplify the contested territories. Conflict and tension between the two countries then continued several years later when the Korean Open War took place in June 1950. According to *The Korea Society* in (History of Korea Part 1, 2008), The Korean Open War began with a violation of an agreement by North Korea where the North Korea soldiers crossed through territorial boundaries and invaded South Korea for three years.

The main actors of this open war are North Korea and South Korea. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada became the main allies for South Korea. The People's Republic of China as the main ally for North Korea accommodated military power, whereas Russia also help by accommodated war advisors and aircraft pilots. In addition, China also provided ammunition for North Korea and China forces. The war between the two Korean countries began on June 25th, 1950 and ended on July 27th, 1953. On July 27th, 1953, North Korea, the United States, and China signed a ceasefire agreement. The current South Korean president at that time, Seungman Rhee, refused to sign it but promised to respect the ceasefire agreement.

The conflict between the two Korea countries gave impacts on all sectors, especially the economy. The consequences of the war between the two countries resulted in the destruction of the country's infrastructure and economy. In 1970, the economy of both parties was balanced, but the economic orientation of North Korea prioritized military interests compared to the needs of its own people. North Korea often suffers from food shortages and causes a high mortality rate due to starvation. Therefore, North Korea often requests assistance from abroad, including from South Korea.

B. Efforts toward Conflict Resolution

Some diplomatic processes in resolving the Korean Peninsula conflict began in 1972, where both parties agreed

that reunification would create peace without outside intervention. The models of conflict resolution that have been carried out by South Korea and North Korea to achieve peace are as follows:

1. Conflict Resolution through High-Level Talk

The first model of conflict resolution was marked by a high-level talk which was attended by the Prime Ministers of the two countries from September 1990 to December 1992. The meeting took place four times in Pyongyang and Seoul. In the high-level talk, it resulted in an agreement on reconciliation, nonaggression, exchange, and cooperation between North Korea and South Korea which was marked on December 13th, 1991. (Pang, 2009)

2. Conflict Resolution through High-Level Conference (Inter-Korean Summit)

- Inter-Korean Summit in 2000 (Kim Dae Jung Era)

The cooperation continued to the first high-level conference in the history of relations between the two countries. It was called as Inter-Korean Summit which took place in 2000 as the result of the Sunshine Policy adopted by the South Korea president, Kim Dae Jung. Through the Sunshine Policy, the government of South Korea has a goal to achieve a peaceful Korean Peninsula reunification process through dialogue and economic assistance. The process of Germany reunification in 1990 had inspired President Kim Dae Jung to work for reunification on the Korean Peninsula. Kim Dae Jung seeks to reunite the two Korea countries in various international forums, such as when appeared in the APEC Forum on Shared Prosperity and Harmony in Seoul. During his visit to Germany in March 2000, Kim Dae Jung called on Pyongyang to begin to redevelop direct dialogue with Seoul through the Berlin Declaration. Berlin was the right

place to reveal the Berlin Declaration because the City of Berlin had been divided due to differences in ideology but eventually could reunite. (Frank, 2017)

Kim Dae Jung who ruled South Korea from 1998 to 2003 always tried to prioritize the restoration of bilateral relations between South Korea and North Korea. Kim Dae Jung also has a clear commitment toward unification even when the issue of unification was a very sensitive issue in South Korea. The other supporting factors for reunification are also associated with economic interests and political interests. South Korea businesspeople see many opportunities that can be explored in North Korea, such as the East Coast as a center for heavy and chemical industries, Wansu as shipbuilding, Geomdeok area has a variety of metals. The other areas such as Najin and Seonbong areas are economic zones that deserve to be developed as a center for transportation and tourist destinations. Along the West Coast, in the Haeju area, there are cement and steel, while the Kaesong area contains food and weaving materials. If transportation facilities in the Kaesong area are repaired, food and weaving products can be marketed in Seoul. In addition, there are still many areas in North Korea that have potential as industrial areas.

Kim Dae Jung has helped North Korea to be more open and join the international community by means of Sunshine Policy. Kim Dae Jung took the lead of reconciliation efforts between North Korea and South Korea which remained hostile after the 1950-1953 Korean War by visiting Pyongyang. The Inter-Korean Summit between Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung in 2000 in Pyongyang was important for the efforts of Korean reunification. Through the summit, the two Korea countries chose the method of unification by living together peacefully. Based on the meaning of the summit, the two Korea countries need an attitude toward the post-Cold War period and eliminated the conflict relations in the Cold War period. Kim Dae Jung's visit to North Korea and the successful summit in Pyongyang in June 2000 were the results of Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy. Because of his success,

Kim Dae Jung won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000. (Yoon & Mas'ood, 2004)

The impacts of the Sunshine Policy are the existence of a project to bring the separate families together, cooperation in the field of economics, defense and socio-culture. The project of bringing separate families together between North Korea and South Korea is included in the five articles agreed upon by Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung. Separate family meetings took place in Seoul and Pyongyang on August 15, 2000. Families separated on the Korean Peninsula were generally caused by the 1950-1953 Korean War. The project of bringing together separate families is the most important thing and must be prioritized by the two governments on the Korean Peninsula. (Jung, 2017)

The most tangible result at the 2000 inter-Korean summit was the meeting between Ministers of Defense from both North Korea and South Korea. The second meeting between the Minister of Defense in the direction of normalization of relations between North Korea and South Korea was progress that was expected by all Koreans and the international community. Before the inter-Korean summit was held, there was an intense sea battle in 1998-1999 between North Korea and South Korea navies.

The summit also aims to improve the economic cooperation between the two countries by developing the Kaesong industry. Kaesong Industrial Area which is a part of the Kaesong Directly Governed City located in North Korea. This industry had impacts on increasing trade flows and facilitates the distribution of humanitarian assistance. North Korea promised to stop its propaganda against South Korea and allow hundreds of residents to meet their families in South Korea. This region for North Korea provides considerable foreign exchange because at least in April 2013, 123 South Korean companies employed around 53,000 DPRK workers and 800 ROK staff. (McCurry, 2013) But in April 2013, North Korea began to reject all access toward South Korean employees to the Kaesong region as a result of Korean Peninsula relations that became worsened. (Williamson, 2013)

- Inter-Korean Summit in 2007 (Roh Moo Hyun Era)

The second Inter-Korean Summit continued in 2007 which discussed nuclear issues and the project of economic cooperation relations in Pyongyang, North Korea. North Korea is indeed the global's attention over its nuclear experiment, which was first launched in 2006. The Inter-Korean Summit in 2007 took place under the government of Roh Moo Hyun. In the Roh Moo Hyun era, the Policy of Peace and Prosperity was created which had content that was almost the same as the Sunshine Policy by President Kim Dae Jung but had a wider scope. (Kim, 2006). In the Policy of Peace and Prosperity, there are four basic principles following: 1) use dialogue as a means to solve all problems, 2) build mutual trust and maintain upholding reciprocity, 3) promoting international cooperation on the principles of direct participation and reciprocity, and 4) increase transparency, expand citizen participation, and secure bipartisan support. (In-Duk, 2003)

The first principle of the Peace and Prosperity policy, which is solving problems through dialogue, exists because of the possibility of armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula due to the instability of the military regime in North Korea as well as a ceasefire that is still not over between the two Koreas. Therefore, a peaceful solution is needed through dialogue. The second principle is to build respect and mutual trust amongst the two Koreas. It is done in order to improve relations and encourage healthy mutual cooperation with North Korea and the surrounding countries. The third principle is to implement the “parties directly concerned” principle in order to strengthen international cooperation. On this basis, North Korea will naturally cooperate with the international community and commit to peace and prosperity in the East Asia region. The final principle is the expansion of community participation also the guarantee of external transparency in the policy-making process. (Jae-Nam, 2004)

In applying the policy, the government of Roh Moo-hyun has three stages of development: 1) South Korea try to facilitate peace on the Korean peninsula 2) South Korea seeks to further develop inter-Korean cooperation as the basis of the peace regime, and 3) launching a regime peace in Korea. In the short term, these three stages principles were used as guidelines in cooperating with neighboring countries to bring a resolution of peace to North Korea's nuclear problems. On that basis, the medium-term goal is to increase substantive cooperation, realize military trust between the two Koreas and establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula by supporting the normalization of relations between North Korea with the United States and Japan. This became the beginning of a long-term goal which is to establish common prosperity, build a foundation for reunification and build the Korean peninsula as the center of the East Asian economy.

Furthermore, it can be concluded too that the primary target of the Policy of Peace and Prosperity is to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula. It means it has a goal to peacefully resolving and suppressing the North Korean nuclear issue. The second goal is to shape shared or common prosperity. If the economic integration of South Korea and North Korea is realized then the economy in the Korean Peninsula will be able to unite. Roh Moo-hyun's government policy was a vision to lay the foundation for peaceful unification, as well as the basis for developing the economic center of East Asia by bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula and trying to achieve prosperity within the two Korea countries.

3. Conflict Resolution through Mediation (Six-Party Talks)

China finally called for the start of Six-Party Talks. Six-Party Talks attended by North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China Russia, and Japan. The efforts of the Six-Party Talks were to prevent South Korea and North Korea from being triggered again to hold a civil war as what

happened in 1950 until 1953 also to reduce tension between the two countries. The chronology of the Six-Party Talks efforts following:

Table 2. 1 The Six-Party Talks Chronology

| Round | Date of Event | Events |
|-------|---|--|
| 1. | August 27 th – 29 th 2003 | North Korea agreed to attend Six-Party Talks in Beijing, China |
| 2. | February 25 th - 28 th 2004 | North Korea offered to destroy nuclear program, but would not stop peaceful nuclear activities |
| 3. | June 23 rd – 26 th , 2004 | The submitting agenda of United States proposal regarding the suspending or closing of nuclear reactors |
| 4. | July 25 th – August 7 th and September 13 th – 19 th , 2005 | The meeting issued a joint statement regarding the steps to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula |
| 5. | November 9 th – 11 th , 2005 December 18 th – 22 nd , 2006 February 3 rd – 13 th , 2007 | The agreement contained a request that North Korea could stop and close its nuclear facilities |
| 6. | March, 19 th – 22 nd , 2007 September 27 th – 30 th , 2007 | North Korea gave details of its nuclear program and promised to close its nuclear program by the end of 2007 |

***Modified by the author from many sources**

In August of 2003, North Korea agreed to attend Six-Party Talks in Beijing, China. In the first meeting on August 27th, 2003, deputy foreign minister Wang Yi concluded the result of the meeting as a commitment to address the nuclear

issue through peaceful dialogue, realizing a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, and avoiding actions that could worsen the situation. In this case, China acts as a facilitator and mediator in the first Six-Party Talks while the United States acts as a negotiator. The meeting also discussed the big agenda of normalizing relations and agreement on non-aggression pacts offered by North Korea, but the United States rejected this idea. (Bajoria & Xu, 2013)

The second meeting took place on February 25th, 2004. It was led by the Foreign Minister of China and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia as the chairman of the meeting, reporting that North Korea offered to destroy its nuclear program, but would not stop peaceful nuclear activities. While Russia and China agreed to this plan, the United States, Japan, and South Korea refused and stressed that North Korea must destroy all of its nuclear programs and facilities on the consideration that the cost of nuclear development should be used for other activities. The results of this meeting did not mention significant steps but reaffirmed the commitment regarding the realization of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

On June 23rd, 2004, the third meeting was held with the agenda of submitting a United States proposal regarding the steps to close or temporarily suspend several nuclear reactors within three months. Then, on November 2004, President Bush was re-elected and won the second round of the US Presidential Election, but a sudden decision was taken by North Korea stated that North Korea refused to negotiate at the Fourth Round meeting in Beijing. But North Korea finally resumed negotiations when the Bush Administration explicitly crossed out North Korea from the "axis of evil" list and recognized the sovereignty of North Korea as a sovereign state entity. (Chamberlin, 2007)

The fourth six Party Talks meeting was held on July 25th, 2005 and lasted 13 for days. For the first time, the meeting reached a significant agreement which by issuing a joint statement regarding the steps to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. North Korea is willing to leave and stop its nuclear

program, rejoin the nuclear non-proliferation agreement, accept the arrival of IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) representatives to carry out inspections, in return for assistance and security guarantees for North Korea and normalize relations between all stakeholders in the East Asia region and uphold peace on the Korean Peninsula. (Snyder, 2014) The United States and South Korea insist that they will not use nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and stated along with Russia, Japan, and China, that they will provide energy assistance. The United States and Japan also expressed their commitment to normalize their relations with North Korea.

The fifth meeting was marked by North Korea's condemnation over United States sanctions against a number of United States accusations regarding North Korean money laundry at Banco Delta Asia in Macau. Banco Delta Asia is a bank based in Macau, China. This bank is the center of North Korea's financial activities where all North Korean financial resources are processed at the bank. North Korea is also one of the bank's biggest shareholders. However, after the economic embargo carried out by the United States toward North Korea, the United States decided to confiscate the bank for indications of money laundering and freeze the asset and close accounts belonging to North Korea. (Rennack, 2006)

As a result of this action, North Korea back to boycotted negotiations and provoked actions by launching several missiles and nuclear launch tests on July and October 2006. This triggered the response of the United Nations Security Council which then issued a resolution of 1718 which asked North Korea to refrain from conducting nuclear testing, halting the program mass destruction weapons and missile programs, and rejoin the six-party talks. The agreement continued on February 2007, where initial steps were taken to implement the 2005 joint statement. The agreement contained a request that North Korea could stop and close its nuclear facilities and discuss nuclear-related activities with other countries within 60 days. The US and Japan are committed to normalized relations with North Korea, and other members

provide 50,000 tons of oil for North Korea within 60 days. The United States also agreed to remove Korea from a list of "the countries that sponsor terrorism".

On October 11th, 2008, the sixth meeting was held. The IAEA issued a report ensuring that North Korea's nuclear facilities had been stopped and as a consequence of normalizing the diplomatic relations. The five other countries are willing to increase the amount of fuel assistance to North Korea. North Korea then gave details of its nuclear program and promised to close and stop its nuclear program by the end of 2007.

The mistrust and non-transparent relations between the United States and North Korea have been very influential in the progress of peace on the Korean Peninsula. This is because the United States has made unilateral demands and continues to accuse North Korea for their nuclear program. On the other hand, North Korea seems to have no intention to abandon its nuclear weapons program. (Lee & Back, 2011) After all the Six-Party Talks meeting rounds ended, there was no significant progress encountered. The participating countries have not been able to make a joint statement that contains guidelines for denuclearization or North Korea's nuclear program termination. Thus, North Korea insists that they will not stop its nuclear weapons program unless the United States is willing to let go of hostility towards Pyongyang and North Korea as a whole.

C. The Result of Conflict Resolution Efforts

After the six meetings of Six-Party Talks were held, it did not meet significant progress. On April 5th, 2009, North Korea tested the Taepodong-2 III missile. On April 14th, 2009 North Korea declared withdrawal from the Six-Party Talks and on May 25th, 2009, North Korea conducted a nuclear test that was greater than in 2006. (Liang, 2018) This is because mediators from China are not in a neutral position because China did "double play", which means that China expressed neutrality, but actually really supported North Korea. The

China diplomatic strategy was also openly apparent when the sinking of a South Korean navy ship (Cheonan) on the Yellow Sea border on March 26th, 2010, which killed 46 South Korea sailors. The United States, Japan, and other countries criticized North Korea's actions, while China as a key ally of North Korea, appeared reluctant to punish Pyongyang for a torpedo attack that split the ship and sank.

The (VOA, 2010) reported that criticism from the United States was in the form of a warning from Hillary Clinton as United States Secretary of State at that time. Clinton called the deadly attack on the Cheonan as a "provocation" that needed a "strong but calculated response." Clinton also stressed that the threat to North Korea must be stopped and the United States would tighten their sanctions against North Korea. After the Cheonan tragedy, Hillary Clinton as the United States representative visited East Asia actively to persuade Japan, China, and South Korea to support the imposition of sanctions against Pyongyang. South Korea also announced trade sanctions with North Korea and a ban on North Korean ships to enter South Korean waters. South Korea also complained about Pyongyang attack and behavior to the United Nations Security Council. The steps taken by South Korea may be the furthest response that Seoul could issue, rather than military action. (Sudworth, 2010) Furthermore, the United States was seen as judge toward North Korea for carrying out an economic embargo on North Korea, the United States is considered to continue to be tough on North Korea by giving sanctions that make North Korea feel unfairly treated.

Then, on November 24th, 2010, North Korea carried out an artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island which became South Korea's military headquarters, by released 200 artillery pieces. The fire then immediately burned 60 to 70 houses in Yeonpyeong. After the incident, the South Korean government immediately held a sudden meeting. They said they would take firm action if North Korea continued its provocation. But South Korean President Lee Myung-bak called for efforts to quell the shootout. The bombardment then stopped. The South

Korean military announced that one soldier was killed, 13 injured including three seriously injured.

After a few months, tensions reappeared between North Korea and South Korea military on the Yellow Sea, Wednesday, August 10th, 2011. The trigger is North Korean artillery bullets fell in waters near the borders of the two countries. There were no injuries due to the incident. The escalation of conflict between the two countries has increased again when the United States announced new sanctions against North Korea over this incident. In response to this, North Korea gave an offer to South Korea, including family reunification and receipt of assistance toward flood.

The borderline of the dispute between the two countries in the Yellow Sea has often been a trigger for tensions since 1999 which killed dozens of people. North Korea says the borderline should be more to the south. However, South Korea refused, saying that if they obeyed North Korea, the fisheries sector in five South Korean islands was threatened. In addition, if obeyed, access to Incheon port will be closed. Since the 1950-1953 war, North Korea and South Korea have never experienced open and total war, only a limited series of wars. Although both countries have the support of large countries such as the United States and the Soviet Union (Russia), there has never been a massive war.

North Korea before being led by Kim Jong Un until now has been seen as an isolated country, where North Korea does not have diplomatic channels to convey its national interests and guarantees national security. North Korea considers that the development of nuclear power and military confrontation is the only alternative to maintain national stability. Thus, it can be said that the threat of war from North Korea is an expression of fear and defense of the threat from other countries. (Pattiradjawane, 2013)

Furthermore, conflict resolution efforts to achieve peace between South Korea and North Korea as described above have not produced significant results because the tension of the conflict between the two countries had increased due to the lacks of mutual trust, the persistence of hostility,

weak cooperation, and ideological differences. The lacks of mutual trust, persistence hostility, and weak cooperation happened because North Korea has not been guaranteed the security and economic assistance needed from the United States and other countries. On the other hand, North Korea does not want to suspend neither stop the nuclear weapons program. The failure of conflict resolution efforts also occurred because of ideological differences that created a different perspective from both South Korea and North Korea in addressing each conflict resolution effort. North Korean under the communism uses its military power in trying to unite the Korean peninsula under while South Korea under the capitalist democracy tried to do negotiations to reach a reunification agreement.