

CHAPTER IV

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

Based on the description about the role of sports diplomacy in politics and international relations phenomena in the previous chapter, it shows that sports today are no longer seen as mere games or entertainment for sports fans around the world. However, today, sport has an essential role as a diplomacy tool in the realization of peace and conflict resolution in various countries. The primary objective of this chapter is to prove that sports diplomacy has positive and effective impacts on the relations between South Korea and North Korea. This chapter will also analyze the prospects for reunification on the Korean Peninsula after several sport diplomacy exchanges in both countries.

A. Sports Diplomacy Efforts and Its Impact on South Korea and North Korea Relations

April 27th, 2018 is a historic day and welcomed by North Korea, South Korea, and the international community. It is because on that day an unexpectedly high-level meeting happened. The meeting located in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and was warmly welcomed by the President of South Korea, Moon Jae-in. (Sanger & Hun, 2018) Then, Kim Jong Un as the President of North Korea offered President Moon to cross the military line that divided the two countries and returned to shake hands in the North Korea territory to show the world that peaceful efforts on the Korean Peninsula are being carried out. (Berlinger, Thompson, & McKirdy, 2018)

This meeting is one of the most awaited moments by the international community and is also a matter of world discussion. It happens because Kim Jong Un became the first North Korea leader to visit the South Korean region by crossing the Demilitarized Zone since the Korean War ended in 1953. In fact, the (*BBC*, 2015) reported that the two countries were still technically in a state of war because the peace agreement was never signed at the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War. The President of the United States, Donald Trump, along with the United Nations (UN) also welcomed a historic inter-Korean meeting. In addition, they also urged North Korea to carry out the denuclearization.

At the High-Level Conference between Korea, Kim Jong Un and Moon Jae-in pledged to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. Both sides said they would cooperate with the United States and China to declare the official end of the 1950-1953 Korean War and seek an agreement to build a permanent and solid peace at the site of the ceasefire. The results of the historic meeting stated that North Korea and South Korea officially declared the end of the Korean War, which made the two countries hostile for the past 65 years. As quoted from the official website of (Ministry of Foreign Affairs ROK, 2018), the declaration was officially called "the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity, and Unification on the Korean Peninsula."

The declaration from the inter-Korean summit also contained statements from the two leaders who sincerely started a new era of peace and declared that there will be no more war on the Korean Peninsula. The Panmunjom Declaration is named after the location of the two countries' high-level meeting, Panmunjom. The (*Straits Times*, 2018) stated that Panmunjom is a small village located around 55 km in the North of Seoul and included in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (Korean DMZ). In this village, the Korean Armistice agreement was signed in 1953. At the House of Peace, Panmunjom, Kim Jong-un addressed the international media in addition to Moon after the high-level meeting of the

two countries. House of Peace itself is a place that was set for North Korea and South Korea for peace talks. (Hu, 2018)

Kim Jong Un said the two Korea countries were the same nation, which must work together towards reunification. Kim Jong Un has a desire that North and South Korea should not clash as the nations in the Korean Peninsula and should live in unity. In his speech, Kim did not mention the denuclearization issue at all, although Moon Jae In said that the two sides agreed to do the full nuclear disarmament on the Korean Peninsula. (Sofwan, 2018) Both of South Korea and North Korea viewed the step initiated by North Korea as a sagacious and essential step for the denuclearization and agreed to implement their respective roles and responsibilities. The two countries to move forward to realize the peaceful Korean Peninsula for the sake of South Korea and North Korea citizens in the future. (Steger, 2018) After this inter-Korean meeting, South Korea and North Korea agreed to continue in making peaceful efforts and began to aggressively exchange diplomacy through sports actively.

As a matter of fact, in 1991, a team under the name of Republic of Korea (KOR) competed in the 1991 Table Tennis World Championship and the FIFA Youth World Championship with joint athletes from North Korea and South Korea. In 1991, the team used the Unification Flag and sang "Arirang" the national anthem. (Ministry of Unification, n.d.) This was reoccurred in 2018 with the existence of an international winter multi-sport event as known as the 2018 Winter Olympics. The (*BBC News*, 2018) reported that the 2018 Winter Olympics was held in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Starting with the 2018 Winter Olympics, the exchange of sports diplomacy between South Korea and North Korea continues and keep attempting by both of Korea countries.

1. Winter Olympic 2018 in Pyeongchang

On January 9th, the South Korean Authority stated that North Korea would delegate a delegation to the 2018 Winter Olympics that was held in February. Minister Unification of

Korea, Chun Hae Sung stated that the promise to send the delegation was made during the negotiations that took place at the Korean border on December 2015. The (*Fox News, 2018*) reported that the North Korean delegation at the 2018 Winter Olympics involves officials, athletes, cheerleaders, and journalists. The meeting between the two Korean officials was compiled and organized after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un did an unexpected push in order to improve better relations with his neighbors after years of tension over North Korea's nuclear weapons testing.

The 2018 Winter Olympics which become the first opportunity for two Korea countries was held on February 9th until February 25th, 2018 in Pyeongchang, Gangwon Province, South Korea. At the opening ceremony, the two Korea countries united and marched together at the State Parade under the Unification Flag. (Shin & Kim, 2018) According to the official website of (International Olympic Committee, 2018), a team united to compete in the female ice hockey tournament as Korea under the country code IOC COR at the Olympics,¹ using the Unification Flag and sang the national anthem "Arirang". For other sports disciplines, the two Koreas maintain separate national teams. Sports diplomacy through the 2018 Winter Olympics has succeeded in creating a diplomatic momentum towards resolving nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula. The (VOA Indonesia, 2018) reported that at the ceremony closing of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in South Korea, Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), praised North Korea and South Korea for using the Olympics to advance reconciliation efforts. North Korea's participation in the Olympics has stopped long-standing provocations on the Korean Peninsula.

¹ The International Olympic Committee using abbreviations or three-letter country codes. Eventually, North Korea uses PRK (People's Republic of Korea) and South Korea came to use KOR (Republic of Korea). When it comes for unity, two Korea countries use COR as Unified Korean Team.

2. World Table Tennis Championship 2018 in Sweden

Another sports event that becomes a diplomacy tool between the two Koreas took place in May 2018. In the world table tennis championship, for the first time since 1991, North and South Korea formed a joint team. The efforts of North Korea and South Korea towards peace continue to be carried out. It happened in the quarterfinals of the ITTF (International Table Tennis Federation) Table Tennis Championship held in Halmstad, Sweden. According to the report by (*CNN Indonesia*, 2018), the two countries decided to unite the women's team to face the semifinals. North Korea and South Korea said they did not want to compete when the championship brought them together in a quarter-final match. Instead, the two teams requested the formation of a joint Korean team to compete together in the semifinals, which will be held on May, 4th at 11.00 against Japan or Ukraine.

In point of fact, South Korea and North Korea should face each other as rival, however, these two countries actually agreed to unite to form the Unified Korea team in this event and have the right to advance to the semifinals. (Vyas & O'Connor, 2018) The committee applauded when each team expressed their intention to the referee, in the spirit of reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. The (*BBC Sport*, 2018) reported that this decision also received a very lively applause by delegates and viewers even the President of ITTF, Thomas Weikert said that *"When I told the board of directors about this decision, they actually received a standing ovation from the delegates and this showed their support for this step. This is not about sports. It's about peace. It's not about South Korea. It's not about North Korea. It's just Korea."* (Dwyer, 2018)

In the beginning, South Korea and North Korea started this tournament in a different group. According to the official website of (International Table Tennis Federation, 2018), South Korea won the Group D so South Korea immediately

advanced to the quarterfinals, while North Korea must be satisfied in the runner-up position in Group C so they must fight in the initial round before finally qualifying for the quarterfinals by beating Russia with a final score of 3-0. A historic moment occurred where the two Korea countries met each other in the quarterfinals before finally deciding to unite in the semifinals. On the other hand, the IOC President, Thomas Bach supports this peace move and he also hopes that sports can be a facility that bridges the world peace. According to (International Table Tennis Federation, 2018), Thomas Bach ever stated that: *"We hope that this momentum will continue and the two governments can reach an agreement that will mean the creation of peace on the Korean Peninsula and also peace for the world."*

In 1991, North Korea and South Korea also formed a table tennis joint team in the world championship in Chiba, Japan. At that time, the women's teams of the two countries emerged and in the end successful to become the champions. But in this match in May 2018, the Unified Korean team lost to Japan. Although the Unified Korea team lost to Japan and did not make it to the final, the lesson that can be taken from this event is the spirit of reconciliation between the two countries. The two Koreas also initially agreed to form a Unified Korean team at the 2018 East Asian Judo Championship in Mongolia. (Young, 2018) However, as stated in (*Kyodo News, 2018*), the plan to compete under the united flag was finally canceled in the end due to a dispute over the flag.

3. Basketball Friendly Match 2018 in Pyongyang

The sports diplomacy between South Korea and North Korea happened again on July 4th, 2018. On July, South Korea and North Korea held a basketball friendly match which located in Pyongyang, North Korea. The (*Xinhua, 2018*) reported this friendly basketball match is a form of sport diplomacy efforts from the two countries on the Korean Peninsula and has been approved in the High-Level

Conference in April 2018. This match was a witness of reconciliation efforts because friendly basketball match between South Korea and North Korea was last held in 2003.

At the beginning of the match, there had been an inconsistency between players, but the players immediately set their approaches and strategies together in order to show a slick game. For two days of this friendly match, the people of North Korea packed the gymnasium and gave a warm welcome with positive salutation. Basketball was chosen as the first sports arena for inter-Korean exchanges, after the April 27th, 2018 inter-Korea summit between South Korea and North Korea. This is based on consideration and advice from the Leader of North Korea Kim Jong-un who likes basketball.

On Wednesday, July 4th, 2018, two men's and women's basketball team matches were held where each team consisted of athletes from North Korea and South Korea. The players join and are divided into two teams without questioning about their origin country. The match took place at 3.30 pm local time and was held at the Ryogyong Chung Ju Yung Gymnasium which had a capacity up to 12,000 spectators. According to (*VOA Indonesia*, 2018), the two joint teams consist of one team wearing a white uniform which inscribed "Peace" and the other team wears a green uniform that says "Prosperity". These two combined teams compete in front of 12,000 basketball supporters. The Prosperity team won the match by beating the Peace team with a score of 103 to 102 while the men's team match ended with a tie score of 102-102. (Merlus, 2018)

According to the (*KBS World Radio*, 2018), the two parties from two Korea countries chose the July 4th as the match day to commemorate the July 4th Joint Statement which identified as an agreement of sovereignty, independence, peace, and unification of the nation between the two Korean States. However, even though Kim Jong Un as a basketball fan and the one who gave advice was not present at the friendly match between North Korea and South Korea. During this friendly basketball match, Kim Jong Un was on an inspection tour in the local province. Kim Jong Un was represented by

his main assistant named Kim Yong Chol who was also deputy chairman of the Korean Labor Party and was one of the key figures in negotiations and discussions with South Korea and the United States. (Lee, 2018)

According to the report by (Ryall, 2018) through *The Telegraph*, North Korea's media government announced basketball as the national sports and part of the country's ideology. The announcement also calls on workers and soldiers to take part in advancing basketball in North Korea and make North Korea possible to have power in the global arena through basketball. North Korea's national sport is *ssireum*, traditional Korean wrestling, while South Korea and North Korea both consider Taekwondo as their martial art. The media is firmly specializing in sports that the nation likes to become one now, dedicating the pages of Tuesday's edition in the official North Korean newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper, which calls on North Koreans to surprise the basketball world. In the late November editorial, *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper quoted Kim speech who stated that "*our party's important policy*" was to encourage community members to take a role in sports to ensure that the entire country had high enthusiasm and was impassioned towards sports." (Myong-song, 2018)

4. Korean Open Table Tennis 2018 in Daejeon

Furthermore, North Korea sent a team of ping pong or table tennis to the Korean Open table tennis championship which was held in southern Seoul on July 17th-22nd, 2018. (Kompas, 2018) South Korea and North Korea sent the joint teams of table tennis consisting of one North Korean athlete and one South Korean athlete as the representative of the Unified Korean team in the Korea Open Table Tennis. The Korea Open Championship (table tennis) is a table tennis tournament event that is usually held in Seoul, South Korea. Korea Open was organized by the Korea Table Tennis Association and placed under the International Table Tennis

Federation (ITTF) authorities. In a few years until now, the Korea Open (table tennis) is one of the top six Platinum events on the ITTF World Tour.

The mixed doubles table tennis pair from North Korea and South Korea became a strong team and it's proven when they beating the Chinese pair in the Korea Open. The Korea Open, which was held in Daejeon City on July 21st, witnessed the history of the first Unified Korea team victory after almost 30 years. Korean pairs Cha Hyo Sim (North Korea) and Jang Woojin (South Korea) succeeded in defeating Chinese. (International Table Tennis Federation, 2018) The Unified Korea team presented miraculous success to the Korean Peninsula which brought the Mixed Doubles titles at the Seamaster 2018 ITTF Platinum World Tour Shinhan Korea Open. Their victory was recorded as history, given the last time the Unified Korea sports team won the title occurred in 1991, which was a victory that also happened in the table tennis sport. (Channel NewsAsia, 2018)

Throughout the tournament at the 2018 Korea Open, the supporters of mixed doubles team shouted "we are one" and the shout echoed around the Daejeon Hanbat Stadium. In two Korean countries, Cha Hyo Sim and Jang Woojin are the "*As One*" models. "*As One*" is a sports drama movie which was based on real events. The setting of this movie was when the Unified Korean team won the 1991 World Table Tennis Championship in Chiba, Japan. This is the third time that Mixed Doubles has ever been experienced on the ITTF World Tour. The most prominent result since the first 1996 tournament happened in England. (Prasetyo, 2018)

5. Asian Games 2018 in Indonesia

Moreover, the two Korea countries performed together at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta-Palembang, Indonesia. South Korea and North Korea are back to carrying out peace efforts through the unification of the two Korea countries in the grand event of the 2018 Asian Games which was held in Jakarta and Palembang, Indonesia. Good intentions to make

peace from the two neighboring countries were also evident from the march together at the opening ceremony on August 18th and the closing ceremony, September, 2nd at the Bung Karno Main Stadium, Jakarta. Although South Korea and North Korea are united under the Unification of Korea flag at the opening of the 2018 Asian Games, this united Korea does not participate in all sports and only participates in three sports and six numbers. South Korea and North Korea formed a joint contingent which consists of 58 joint athletes and participated in women's basketball, canoeing and rowing. (Aditya, 2018)

The opening of the 2018 Asian Games at the Gelora Bung Karno became a historic moment for the Korean Peninsula because the South Korea and North Korea contingents paraded in one group while carrying a United Korea flag. The whole Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium suddenly full of applause when the Korean contingent entered the stadium. (Baynes, 2018) The (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2018) reported that the Prime Minister of South Korea, Lee Nak-Yon and Deputy of North Korea Prime Minister Ri Ryong Nam joined in and waved their hands. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah as President of the Asian Olympic Council and the Asian Handball Federation also stated that the 18th Asian Games in Indonesia has made history because it has witnessed efforts to reconcile and peace between the two countries on the Korean Peninsula. (Saputra, 2018)

The athletes from Unified Korean Team competed against other countries in fighting for medals from women's basketball (5x5), male and female dragon boats, LM4-male rowing, male LM8 +, and daughter LW2X. This union is a commitment of North Korea and South Korea in cooperation in the field of sports. They continued the moment after appeared under one flag during the 2018 Winter Olympics in February. At that time, the two Koreas only participated in one sport which is the women's number ice hockey. Husain Al Musallam as the Director General of OCA also expressed his pride in the unification of the two Koreas at the 2018 Asian Games event: *"We are very pleased and proud that the Asian Games can contribute to the peace process on the Korean*

Peninsula. The Korean team reunited incised history by competing together for the first time at the 2018 Asian Games. We look forward to seeing other teams in action in the upcoming days." (Daily Times, 2018)

The matches at the 2018 Asian Games event have proven the power of sports to unite people from both countries on the Korean Peninsula. In this case, not only players or athletes from North Korea and South Korea could unite, but also officials and supporters of athletes. To see the President of the National Olympic Committee from both countries sitting side by side in the VIP area is a very precious moment. North Korean and South Korean athletes have been training together since the beginning of August 2018. They are supported by a group of fans from their respective countries wearing white shirts and waving flags on Unification papers which showed the slogan "*Asian Games Jakarta-Palembang 2018 - One Dream, One Korea.*" (Prashant, 2018)

Through the Asian Games, for the first time in history, the female dragon boat² of Unified Korean Team which consists of South Korean and North Korean athletes won a gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. On August 25th, the Unified Korean female team also won a bronze medal for the 200-meter number in the same sport. In the 500 meter number, the Unified Korean dragon boat team consisted of 16 athletes won a gold medal with a time of two minutes 24,788 seconds, defeating the toughest competitor, China on August 26th. In the 2018 Asian Games, a combination of South Korean and North Korean athletes also performed in rowing and basketball. The Unified Korean team had previously won gold medals for table tennis championships in 1991 and 2018. But the gold medal won by the Unified Korean female dragon boat

² Dragon boat is a form of traditional boat that is believed to have originated from 2,000 years ago in China. The canoeist races with a beat rhythm by one of the athletes who sits in front of the boat.

team on August 27th was the first in mixed sports championship on a large scale.

6. Asian Para Games 2018 in Indonesia

South Korea and North Korea prepared a further maneuver to strengthen relations between the two countries. On September 23rd, 2018, the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) announced that North Korea and South Korea would unite and parade in tandem at the 2018 Asian Para Games. After successfully unified and stealing attention at the 2018 Asian Games, these two countries on the Korean Peninsula reunited at the 2018 Asian Para Games. The 2018 Asian Para Games take place on 6th until 13th October 2018 in Jakarta and are participated by disability athletes from 42 countries in Asia. The (*Yonhap News*, 2018) reported that South Korea sent a delegation of 307 people consisting of 202 athletes, coaches, and officials. On the other side, North Korea represented by seven athletes in swimming, table tennis and para-athletics in the Asian Para Games. According to the official website of (Paralympic Games, 2018), 100 South Korean athletes and 23 North Korean athletes paraded alongside the Korean Unification flag under the Korea name (COR) and sang the national anthem "Arirang" at the 2018 Asian Para Games opening ceremony to show the spirit of unity.

The APC (Asian Paralympic Committee) President also expressed his gratitude to the International Paralympic Committee, international sports federations, and INAPGOC (Indonesia Asian Para Games Organizing Committee) for supporting this initiative. It is because the Asian Para Games have become a forum for the spreading of humanitarian and peace messages throughout the world. The President of IPC Andrew Parsons stated that he's happy with the union of South Korea and North Korea. He stated that sports can unite the nation and bring a message of peace to the world. The gestures of the two Koreas show the capability of the sport in uniting the nation and bringing a message of peace to the world. (Umam, 2018)

Previously, at the 2018 Asian Games, the Unified Korea team participated in three sports: women's basketball, canoe or kayak race, and rowing. The Unified Korea women's team won the Asian Games gold medal for the traditional 500-meter traditional boat racing. The (Korea Times, 2018) reported that at the Asian Para Games event, the two Koreas sent three joint teams to compete in two sport sections: one team on the Swimming Men's 4 x 100m freestyle relay (34p) and the other two teams on the Table Tennis Men's TT6-7 Team and Men's TT8 Team. For the men's table tennis team there is one athlete from South Korea and two athletes from North Korea. This men's table tennis team is trained by a North Korean instructor, Ri Chol-ung. Then for the swimming freestyle relay, there are three South Korean athletes along with one North Korean athlete. For mixed styles, there are five South Korean athletes working with two North Korean athletes. The swimming team is trained by South Korean instructor Sun Chang-yong. In addition to the sport, North Korea and South Korea will compete separately.

The Aquatic Center Gelora Bung Karno was one of the most popular places during the 2018 Asian Para Games. This place was always crowded with supporters or fans at the event venue and on social media. On the last two days of swimming competition, the Asian Para Games organizers opened access to all visitors to the west and east tribes, which previously only provided access to athletes and officials. (Jati, 2018) The supporters came with emotional feelings because they were inspired by the tight competition between athletes.

The result of the Unified Korea team was a victory for the first time on October 8th at a Paralympic event where athletes from both countries stood together to receive bronze medals on the podium and under the same flag. (Hernandez, 2018) This team became the champion of bronze medal in the men's 4 x 100-meter swimming freestyle relay after scoring 4 minutes and 24.95 seconds. (Diamond, 2018) The athletes pointed their index fingers to the sky while shouting "One Korea" with a satisfied smile on their faces. (Cahya, 2018) As stated in the official website of (Asian Para Games 2018,

2018), the athletes from the Unified Korea team which participated in the Para Table Tennis are Kim Yong-rok and Park Hong-kyu. This team also won the silver medal in the wheelchair table tennis match on October 13. The (*Jakarta Post*, 2018) reported that Majid Rashed as the President of Asian Paralympic Committee and Raja Sapta Oktohari as the Chairman of the Indonesian Asian Para Games Organizing Committee stated that they were grateful to be the witness of such a historic moment. *"This is one of the most historic and crucial moments for all of us where we can witness that sport unites the two Koreas at Para Games. Sports is earth where tolerance and reconciliation are stands on."* This historic momentum can also inspire all athletes and countries participating in the Para Games.

7. Ari Sports Cup 2018 in Pyongyang and Chuncheon

Although in 2016 South Korea and North Korea have officially decided to cut off all forms of communication, there is optimism and hope for improving relations between the two countries through their participation at the Ari Sports Cup. In consonance with the (Yonhap, 2018), Ari Sports Cup is an eight-team U-15 soccer tournament that was held in December 2017 and located in Kunming, China. The incumbent Governor of Gangwon Do Province Choi Moon-soon has high hopes through this soccer match. Gangwon Province hosted the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics where Choi as the Governor of Gangwon Province also took the opportunity to encourage sports diplomacy between the two countries. In Kunming, China, Governor Choi also held a closed meeting with Mun Ung who was a deputy minister level official and Head of the Athletics Committee April 25th North Korea.

The 4th Ari Sports Cup was held on August 13th -18th, 2018 in Pyongyang, North Korea. In this fourth Ari Sports Cup tournament, South Korea sent more than 150 athletes, South Korean officials, and journalists to go to Pyongyang in an effort of sports diplomacy between two countries on the Korean Peninsula. Choi Moon-soon as governor of Gangwon

Province stated through the (*Yonhap*, 2018) that this soccer tournament is a real development where North Koreans and South Koreans could cross the border by land without passing through a third country. The (*Agence France Presse*, 2018) reported that the coach from South Korea said that the soccer tournament and the opportunity to play football in the North Korean capital city were very rare opportunities and it would be an extraordinary experience for the players regardless of the score and the final result.

According to the (*KBS World Radio*, 2018), the Ari Sports Cup was held again for the fifth time in Chuncheon and Inje, two cities located in Gangwon Province. The 5th Ari Sports Cup was held from October 29th to November 3rd, 2018. Eight teams from six countries including China, Vietnam, Iran, and Uzbekistan joined the tournament while the North Korean team under the age of 15 also included a team of South Korean players from Gangwon province as reported by (*ECNS*, 2018). In the final, the North Korean Team won the match with a score of 3-1. The atmosphere in the soccer competition after that victory was very warm and vibrant. The players from both teams made an exciting lap on the field together in front of the supporters. Choi Moon-soon and Mun Ung who sat next to each other in the stadium stands are also happy to hear cheers and the sounds of K-pop music played loudly in the stadium. It was heartwarming for them to see the event that successfully touched the hearts of these supporters. Governor Choi also named the Ari Sports Cup event as "football diplomacy" and he hoped that sport could play a greater role in the development and progress of inter-Korean relations. (Bicker, 2018)

In December 2018, the players and coaches in this tournament stated that they see the Ari Sports Cup not only as an ordinary match or game. For players, this match is not a fierce competition between the two countries but rather how players from two Korean countries meet and have fun together. Li Il Song, a North Korean player, stated that he felt close to players from South Korea. "*I hope North Korean*

players can go back and forth also participate in more tournaments and have friendly relations with each other."

On the other hand, Kim Ga-un, a player on the South Korean team, said that he hoped South Korea and North Korea would soon unite. (Maresca, 2018) The players from the North Korean team are elite young athletes in North Korea and they have been training all year long to join the 5th Ari Sports Cup event. (Shim, 2018) Kim Kyung-sung as the organizer of the Ari Sports Cup and Head of the North Korea and South Sports Exchange Association said that such a warm atmosphere had become hopeful so far where sports exchanges were a powerful step to dilute tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The Ari Sports Cup can also be an essential element to keep communication exchanges between Korean countries open because there is no political burden on young players. On the other hand, Choi Moon-soon also said that in the end, the issue of the State on the Korean Peninsula needs to be solved internationally, therefore, Choi plans to invite the United States to the Ari Sports Cup in May 2019, because he has the thought that basically, the issue on the Korean Peninsula comes from the fact that there must be better relations between the United States and North Korea.

On September 18th, 2018, (*Yonhap*, 2018) reported that Kim Kyung-sung stated that his organization was trying to link the North Korean soccer league and the South Korean league. This was expected to help economic development and inter-Korean sports exchanges through sports. Kim stated that the next stage after the youth soccer tournament is to guide exchanges between the South Korean league which as known as the K League and the North Korean football league as reported by (Maresca, What may be easing long-standing tensions between North and South Korea? A passion for soccer, 2018) Kim also stated that the next Ari Sports Cup will be held in Wonsan, a coastal city in Kangwon Province, North Korea. (Dormels, 2015)

President Moon Jae-in was welcomed with a hug by Kim Jong Un when his entourage arrived in Pyongyang on September 18th, 2018. Kim Jong Un announced that he plans

to unite the South Korean and North Korean Football leagues. (Reuters, 2018). North Korea is in the process to build a football stadium with 20.000 seat capacity which is expected to be completed in March 2019. In this stadium, South Korea and North Korea have agreed to hold the Ari Sports Cup youth soccer tournament from May 20th to 29th, 2019. If it is by the stadium development schedule in the future, there is a probability that the 2019 Sports Cup will be transferred to Pyongyang. However, if development is realized on schedule, this will be the first sports exchange event in Wonsan for South Korea.

To improve the sports diplomacy effort among Korean countries, South Korea and North Korea have agreed to jointly submit themselves to be the host of the upcoming 2032 Olympics. The agreement was reached at an Intra-Korean meeting between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang on September 19th, 2018. In a statement along with the two Korean leaders, two Korean countries also agreed to participate in various international sports competitions including the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. The idea to be the host together at the 2032 Olympics was put forward by South Korean Minister of Sports Do Jong-hwan. According to Sports Minister Do, the intention to be the host of the 2032 Olympics is based on the success of the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, where North Korea's participation at that time helped to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. This good intention is one example of an effort to promote a sense of solidarity and unity between the people of South Korea and North Korea. Through the statement at the Intra-Korean meeting, Moon Jae In and Kim Jong Un stated that they wished to continue to increase joint participation and cooperation in subsequent international sporting events. (Wicaksana, 2018)

In the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics, it was reportedly 10 out of 11 countries have agreed that South Korea and North Korea should reunite. Because of that, the Korea Sports & Olympic Committee (KSOC) have to plan which

sports branches will be together under one flag as soon as possible. It was reported that there were already 6 to 7 sports branches that would join. However, the South Korean sports federation has not yet decided on the national team, coaches, and officials they will send for the Two Koreas in Tokyo 2020. (Hidayati, 2018) The KSOC also states that the KSOC will continue to carry out inspections where they will do screening on the athletes who appropriate with the Olympics qualification and can't be harmed by the formation of the unification team. The KSOC also decided the intention to minimize assistance from IOC nor International Olympic Federations.

In substance, the real action for the two countries in the initial step of implementing reconciliation is the removal of speakers at the demilitarized zone by South Korea on May 1st, 2018. The speakers are usually used to voice anti-North Korean propaganda and broadcast news, Korean pop songs and criticism toward the North Korean regime. (Roh, 2018) Following the actions by South Korea, North Korea also carried out the same activities at several points along the border as reported by (Ingber, 2018). This direct action is the easiest first step to build military trust.

In addition, North Korea also shows a good manner in inter-Korean relations by changing the Korean time zone to suit South Korea. North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un has promised to change North Korea's time zone, which was made in 2015 to mark the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese rule after World War II. According to the (BBC News, 2018), North Korea changed its time zone to match South Korea after the inaugural meeting of the two leaders on April 27th, 2018 at the Peace House. Previously, North Korea held Pyongyang's time, half an hour behind South Korea and Japan. The 30-minutes addition was introduced as a sign of "fight against Japanese imperialism" in 2015. South Korea also moved from Japan time zone in the 1950s but returned again in 1960s. Starting from May 5th, 2018 until now, the time zone in both Korean countries shows the same time alongside in the Demilitarized Zone, Panmunjeom.

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. Additionally, President Moon was also very eager to restart Inter-Korean economic cooperation.

On December 26th, 2018 the two Koreas showed significant progress in improving their relations during 2018. Moon Jae In and Kim Jong Un agreed to link the railway system to the Demilitarized Zone and repair damaged railways in North Korea. (Reints, 2018) One point that is expected from this agreement is the easier traveling and trading between the two countries. South Korea's Minister of Transportation Kim Hyun-mee stated that companies can develop skills to compete with each other in the international market through the railway line according to the (Tong-Hyung, 2018) When North and South Korean leaders meet in a historic moment in April 2018, Kim Jong-un called on South Korea to help in restore North Korea's railway line which already in the "embarrassing" conditions. The South Korean officials said that the opening of the train line would enhance the peace and prosperity of the two countries. Some of the infrastructures originated from the beginning of the 20th century so if it will be connected to the South Korean railway line later, a total renovation is needed.

On December 30th, 2018, South Korean technicians boarded a train from Dorasan which located on the north side of Seoul for a short trip to the Demilitarized Zone. (McCurry, 2018)

The (*BBC News*, 2018) reported through the BBC News that new technicians could only see what the train line is like and can't do anything. They also have to get a one-way permit specifically issued by the United Nations to avoid sanctions related to the prohibition of carrying fuel and equipment into the North Korean region. Cho Myoung-hyon, the Head of Unification Ministry stated that the project was intended to overcome divisions and open a new page on the Korean Peninsula as reported in the (*Korea Times*, 2018). Through the connected railway line, South and North Korea will be prosperous and peace on the Korean Peninsula can be created.

B. The Prospect of Reunification in the Korean Peninsula

Reunification is the merger of two or more countries that share the same ethnic national identity and believe that their country was once united as a single political entity. In other terms, reunification is the integration of government institutions, functions and authorities from two governments into one. Peaceful reunification requires cooperation from the two countries involved. Integration negotiations where the two countries adjust different interests and demands, maintain and coordinate their behavior, and each make accommodations to form a joint government of the two countries. Unification can be likened with the union of puzzle pieces. If what is collected is only pieces that have not been completed, then the whole picture cannot be seen. In addition, unification is not the same as buying a puzzle that has been strung together and perfect. In the way to completing the puzzle to become a complete picture, there is what is called the process. The picture of unification can only be completed when "puzzle pieces" are united by the government and people of South Korea, North Korea, and countries around the peninsula. (Juhwa, 2018)

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 is 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 SNU 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 percent of respondents believe the unification of the two Koreas can occur within ten 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."

In this part about the prospect of reunification between the Korean countries in the Korean Peninsula, the author would like to share the South Korean and North Korean perspective regarding the reunification issue in the Korean Peninsula. To make this part accurate and trustworthy, the sources in this part is summarized from the Asian Boss channel on the YouTube platform. In the statement about their channel, Asian Boss which was established on October 29th, 2013 stated that their channel has the ability bring the viewers the most authentic voices and perspectives on the latest news and cultural trends from Asia. Through their original and in-depth interviews of real people, Asian Boss will challenge the viewers as the global youth to think critically and challenge various social and cultural issues.

1. South Korean Thoughts and Point of View on Reunification Issue

The (Asian Boss, 2018) channel published some sort of interview toward South Koreans in the streets of Seoul in March 2018 to ask South Koreans feeling about reunification. When Steve Age, the reporter asked the South Korean public opinion regarding the reunification, most of them told the truth

that the younger generation does not really feel this issue. The result from the streets interview is divided into the pros and cons of should reunification truly happen in the Korean Peninsula. From the South Koreans standpoint, the pros side of reunification must have come from the older generation. Because the older generations are the people who have experienced the pain and hurtful feeling of being separated from their family, so it is probably the number one reason for the older generation in South Korea to push the Koreans to reunify. In addition, if South Korea and North Korea reunify in the futures, the benefits for South Korea is the opportunity to access the North Korea's resources such as human capital, roads, and natural resources. In a long term, it will increase the South Korea population and resources. One more benefit for South Korea if reunification truly happens is South Korea might reduce the cost on their military spending and instead deliver it to other areas.

Moreover, from their perspective, North Korea give a strange feeling and it somehow does not click with South Korea. Even if South Korea citizens are taught with the "one people, one country" slogan, it feels like North Korea is not a place to reunify with but instead compete with. They also have a doubt that this is just a strategy made by Kim Jong Un since North Korea not doing well now because of outside pressure on North Korea export regulations are stricter. South Korea always show the goodwill in helping North Korea with financial aid, then North Korea take advantage of this situation.

Furthermore, what makes it hard for Peninsula reunification is North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea getting help from nuclear weapons because through the nuclear program, North Korea feels empowered to speak up and be heard. The other negative point of reunification possibility is South Korea would have to spend more money on taxes and other issues arise to support the North Korea which means it will give the burden on South Koreans financial life and their quality life. Therefore, according to them, to keep the nuclear weapons as self-preservation is made

sense for an isolated country like North Korea, but if North Korea really wish for the reunification seriously then the North have to give up their nuclear weapons. Moreover, for the cost of reunification that might be pay by South Koreans, there should be the return on investment. North Korea should educate the public, run a campaign, or at least create a movie on the topic to make a better impression on North Korea.

2. North Korean Thoughts and Point of View on Reunification Issue

On April 2nd, 2018 the interview toward North Korean defectors (Yujin, Eun-jung, & Toyang, 2018) and Steve Age took place through the Asian Boss channel on YouTube platform. The author wants to share the North Koreans point of view and their thoughts on the reunification issue. For the interview session, the host Steve Age from Asian Boss channel invited three North Koreans who successfully escaped from North Korea and stayed in South Korea now. The first interviewee is Choi Yujin who escaped from North Korea to China in 2011. She was in China for about two years and moved to South Korea in 2013. The second interviewee is Oh Eun Jung, 27, she came to South Korea in 2009. The same thing goes to the third interviewee, Toyang, who escaped from North Korea too in 2009.

According to the interviewees, North Korea government and media brainwashed the citizens to think that North Korea really wanted reunification but in the way to accomplish the reunification, there is the United States makes that makes it hard to achieve it. The citizens also got a sight that South Korea was extremely poor but somehow because of the influence of media, perception toward South Korea changes completely. In North Korea textbooks, the South Korean children are portrayed as ragged and starving but the citizens found out that it's wrong through the k-pop and k-drama tapes that smuggled into North Korea. From the interviewees' point of view, the percentage of North Koreans desire toward reunification is 60% until 90% since North

Korean have nothing going for them. It's better than risking their lives so the wish to reunify is way safer. On the other hand, the people in their 20-30s in North Korea also don't have a future. They can only dream it, they don't know the way to pursue it even if they want to do a lot of things. But actually since a lot of the younger generation has natural curiosity in North Korea update on Chinese and North Korea media and got info from smuggling, they can't be brainwash by the government. From this, they have the desire and try to be brave to escape from the North and live to pursue a better life In the South. For every defector, freedom is not something that was just given to them but it was something that they risked for.

From North Korea defectors standpoint about the reasons why South Korean seems disinterested with the reunification issue because South Korean citizen have a negative impression about North Korea because all they see on media and television is the nuclear threats by North Korea. North Korea defectors in South Korea are hesitant to reveal their background so there's no one to remind South Korean that reunification is important and there's no opportunity to bridge these cultural gaps. In addition, according to the interviewees, the longer South Korea and North Korea separated, the more the percentage will fall. The percentage is already so low and it will be lower in the next generation until the point that no one will be interested to reunify. Regarding the nuclear threats, it's unfortunate that South Korea citizens blaming all North Koreans because it's not North Korean citizens who made the threats, average of people know nothing about this action, those kinds of decisions and actions are set up by those at the top. From their perspective, the negative or downside repercussions of reunification is the South Korea economy will definitely suffer. The job market in South Korea is hard and pretty stagnant, South Korea would not interested in this idea if South Korea might have to pay more taxes to cover the reunification in the end.

On the other side, the positive or upside repercussions of reunification is that South Korea economy being at the peak

and it grew so fast now. It has no more room for growth and there aren't domestic opportunities left, South Korea has no choice but to expand their market overseas, so why South Korea does not expand it to North Korea since it will create a lot of job opportunities that will alleviate the pressure in finding work. Moreover, in 2017, North Korea is apparently sitting on 6 trillion dollars' worth of natural resources as reported by (Killalea, 2017) through the *New York Post*. For North Korean, the mining technology would have to be pretty sophisticated so it's easier for them to develop their natural resources. North Korea does not have such technology since they spent all money on developing nuclear weapons, thus they sold their natural resources at a ridiculously low price. If the Koreas reunify, there are a lot more resources to be discovered with the right technology.

In their opinion, Kim Jong Un will never give up his nuclear program, he would give it up only if there is a condition that he gets to maintain his power. The moment he gives up on his nuclear weapon, his regime will fall and crumble upon him. For North Korea, nuclear weapons are like a bullet-proof vest that they can't give it up. But if North Korea is given some sort of assurance and guarantees that they can keep their government, then North Korea may give up their nuclear weapons. Regarding the possibility of reunification in the near future, they stated that if the two governments suddenly combined, there would be a lot of problems, so they should both regime first. Then, both sides should take small steps that will minimalize the problem which is by showing the effort to become one again.

Both countries also have to give concern about economic integration to open up more roads and to expand the joint factories, then the reunification can happen under the current South Korea administration. North Korean citizens also deserve freedom, so reunification should happen at all cost. For them, the scenario of two Korean countries separated forever is unimaginable, the North Korean defectors would be stuck between South and North Korea and continue to call their families in North Korea secretly. At the end of the

interview, they give the last words telling that they did not choose to be born in North Korea. North Korean citizens have a freedom right, in order to achieve that freedom, therefore, reunification must happen at all costs.

C. The Prospect of Reunification in the Near Future

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 Korea might view North Korea as a misfortune and burden. South Korea has 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 society 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.

This also happened with German reunification as the West's much stronger economy had to deal with the East's stagnant economy. The reunification of Germany also was not exactly the two sides forming into one larger country as it was just the West moving the capital back to Germany and the DDR surrounding its authority to the West. But it's not that

simple for Korean Peninsula and things might be even harder because, for Germany's case, Germany's been relishing in one country. On the other hand, Korea has still remained divided where the societies are growing far apart and the language has even started to be different and diverse. (KhAnubis, 2018) The Koreans are so massively divergent, that integration would be extremely hard and long. Another biggest difference between the reunification effort of South Korea-North Korea and West Germany-East Germany is by cause of China which still has a strong concern and interest in preserve a separate country in North Korea. On the other side, the Soviet Union no longer put interest and care when East Germany decided to become a part of the West. (Business Insider, 2018)

Moreover, the unification of the two Koreas could be hindered due to the lack of knowledge of South Koreans regarding North Korea. In interviews with 17 high school students, it was revealed that they had never heard about North Korea's joint development policy in the last decade as stated in the report by (Lee & Kim, 2018) through the Reuters. Most of them did not know about the growth of the private sector which now supports North Korea's economy. The opposite situation happened in North Korea wherein North Korean students discuss more about South Korea at school. Besides being an issue of propaganda, North Korean defectors say they were taught about South Korea in as much detail as possible. They were taught and learned about South Korean geography, various kinds of mining and fields, also what kind of production produced by each region and the historical chronology in the South Korea region.

The head of the South Korean Institute for Unification Education, Baek Jun-kee, said the South Korean school teaching system had failed to make South Korean students understand the importance of having knowledge about North Korean leaders Kim Jong Un, North Korean people, and North Korea as a whole. South Korea should handle this issue in a way that makes sense or shows its impact on the lives of students in middle or high school. (Gill, 2000) Therefore, the South Korean government is now actively trying to change the

condition by intensifying lessons about North Korea and unification.

Nevertheless, the two Koreas can't lose hope because the relations between South Korea and North Korea have brought changes to a better direction during 2018. North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un said he was committed to denuclearization, but warned that he would "change his attitude" if the United States continued to give sanction toward DPRK as stated in (VOA News, 2018). North Korea has been subjected to a series of sanctions by the United Nations Security Council related to prohibit nuclear and ballistic weapons programs. In the report by (Howell, 2019) on South China Morning Post, Kim Jong Un hinted at a possible agreement to limit the country's nuclear weapons production and promised not to use it first in conflict or transfer it to others in exchange for assistance from international sanctions, but nothing could happen when the United States continued to pressure the country. Kim Jong-un made the statement during the 2019 New Year's speech broadcast on state television.

In a speech broadcast on state television on Tuesday, January 1st, 2019 morning local time, Kim Jong-un stated: *"If the US does not keep its promise ahead of the whole world and continues to apply sanctions and pressure to North Korea. Then there is the possibility that North Korea has no choice in addition to thinking and reviewing new ways in order to protect the sovereignty and interests of the North."* (BBC News, 2019) The several lines from Kim Jong-un's speech could mean that North Korea is waiting for the United States to act and treat North Korea better in 2019 because if it does not happen then the suspension of nuclear weapons testing could end and North Korea will continue to develop nuclear weapons. After his meeting with the United States President Donald Trump last year, Kim Jong-un said that North Korea has agreed not to make, use or spread nuclear weapons and has taken concrete steps to implement this. (Hotham, 2019), a North Korean analyst gave his point of view regarding the speech through the *NK News*. He commented: *"Overall, the speech increased Kim Jong-un's position in front of the*

domestic people on issues while sending a message of peace but firmly to the United States while on the other hand still keep on trying to persuade South Korea with the new cooperation prospect."

The routine speech that Kim Jong Un made every year was considered crucial, with several international observers analyzing each line of speech to get clues about Pyongyang's international agenda, even though the speech seemed aimed specifically at a domestic audience and mostly focused on the economy. (Denyer, 2019) This is evidenced by Kim Jong Un's speech at the beginning of the new year 2018, Kim announced a vision where North Korea wants to be open to the path of international diplomacy. This then led to an unprecedented summit of North Korea with South Korea and the United States. In a new year's speech, Kim also announced that North Korea would take part in the Winter Olympics organized by South Korea, which ultimately led to the relief of tension and the improvement of good relations between the two countries.

Moreover, negotiations between North Korea and the United States have stopped since June 2018 summit in Singapore. In the New Year's speech, Kim also said that he was willing to hold another summit with President Donald Trump, but North Korea demanded sanctions to loosen. But on February 6th, Trump announced that the second summit between the United States and North Korea which will take place on February 28th, 2019 in Vietnam. The second negotiation was held again in order to encourage peace on the Korean peninsula. This meeting will increase the possibility of a policy change by the United States towards North Korea and will influence the denuclearization issue. (Haberman & Baker, 2019)