



Chinese Perspectives on North Korea and Korean Unification

By Sunny Lee

China's political attitudes toward the Korean peninsula and its role in managing North Korea have been a constant source of intrigue for many Asia watchers in the U.S. Trying to understand Chinese elite sentiments about the Six Party Talks, the security situation on the peninsula and reunification have only increased with Kim Jong-un's uncertain succession and China's own leadership transition in 2012. The goal of this paper is to understand the Chinese elite sentiment on the key issues that shape China's attitude toward North Korea by surveying Chinese scholars on Korean affairs. It is important for us to pay attention to Chinese scholars' opinion on North Korea because China will play a bigger role in North Korea's future now with Kim Jong-il's death.

Chinese scholars are good subjects for this study because they are accessible by foreign researchers and they reflect the often murky, internal sentiment of the Chinese government, so much so that Chinese scholars are often criticized by their Western colleagues for lacking "independent" views.

Some of the results defy commonly-held assumptions about China's attitude toward the peninsula, and may serve as an opportunity for policy communities, especially in Washington and Seoul, to examine pre-existing ways of thinking and explore alternatives to better cooperate with China. This is paramount because without China, the world nowadays is increasingly finding it difficult to construct a balanced narrative on matters surrounding North Korea.

Introduction

With Kim Jong-il's death, it is important for us to pay attention to Chinese scholars and Chinese domestic opinion on North Korea because China will play a bigger role in

the future of North Korea. Different estimates have pointed out that North Korea depends on China for up to 90% of its energy supply, 80% of its consumer products and 40-45% of its food supply. Simply put, North Korea is a country whose survival depends on China.

North Korea's dependence on China stands to deepen under the helm of the young new leader Kim Jong-un, whose lack of experience and charisma only increases uncertainty surrounding the regime's future, and China is de facto the only "ally" Pyongyang can turn to for both political and economic support. In fact, a number of security experts have highlighted this point, often with a tint of dramatization. They range from China possibly absorbing North Korea as the "fourth province"¹ in its northeastern region ("*dongbei*" in Chinese) to North Korea becoming China's "economic tributary."² Ryu Kil-jae at Kyungnam University in Seoul summed it up like this: "North Korea's dependence on China is the key"³ in gauging the prospect of North Korea under Kim Jong-un.

No doubt, popular commentary on Sino-North Korean relations suggests that China wields decisive influence over North Korea. China chairs the Six Party Talks, an aid-for-nuclear disarmament negotiation since 2003. China's role has been highlighted as much as North Korea's provocations in international headlines. In fact, a longtime mantra of the U.S. State Department holds that "China is the key to North Korean belligerence."⁴ Against the backdrop of the information blackout surrounding Kim Jong-il's death, some analysts went so far as to argue that "China is the only country that has eyes inside North Korea."⁵

It is then important to understand China's political attitude toward North Korea. This paper examines some of the widely held assumptions and key questions surrounding the Chinese perspective on the Korean Peninsula and Korean reunification. Doing so will have implications on the prospect of the Six Party

Sunny Lee is Chief China Correspondent for The Korea Times and columnist for Asia Times. Mr. Lee's paper is the forty-ninth in KEI's Academic Paper Series. As part of this program, KEI commissions and distributes 10 papers per year on original subjects of current interest to over 3,000 Korea watchers, government officials, think tank experts, and scholars around the United States and the world. A public discussion at KEI with the author generally follows in conjunction with distribution. At the end of the year these papers are compiled and published in an On Korea volume.

Talks, whether China will cooperate with Washington and Seoul in case there is an invocation of a contingency plan in North Korea, how much China is willing to pressure North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, whether China will support Korean reunification, as well as how Beijing sees Washington's strategy toward Pyongyang.

Just like policy makers in Washington and Seoul, China's policy makers are part of a robust and often very competitive entity. North Korea is the most divisive of foreign policy issues among the senior leadership in China. There are a multitude of actors in China that shape and influence its policy toward North Korea. In fact, this multiplicity of actors is becoming an increasing feature of Chinese foreign policy toward North Korea.⁶ While externally China's North Korean policy remains unchanged, in private Chinese experts share that North Korea is a case of how it's getting harder to achieve consensus⁷. There is more pluralism of views on North Korea than there used to be. What's behind this are the array of actors in China's policy-making toward North Korea, each with their own, and sometimes conflicting motivations, interests, and influence.

Long-held outside perception characterized Sino-North Korean relations as sterile "blood ties," knotted out of the Cold War confrontation with the United States. That view needs correction. Unfortunately, Chinese experts themselves partly shaped such outside generalization as they often followed the official Communist Party lines in their remarks on North Korea. Sometimes they didn't divert a single word from their prepared written speeches before the international community, prompting some participants from other countries to discount them as not having independent scholarly views.

Chinese experts faithfully representing the official views of the government, ironically, help outside researchers to understand the official attitude of the country. In fact, this is a much under-appreciated item. An American scholar visiting Seoul, for example, who wanted to have an idea about whether Kim Jong-un's North Korea will 'softland' or not, will have difficulty in finding this information because South Korean policy communities are so polarized.

The real problem does not lie in Chinese scholars' representing the official views of the government, but in their not sharing more, not talking more, not elaborating more. The author's personal experience points out "trust" as the most important factor, while the socio-political environment of China has a share.

Another popular outside perception states that Chinese academic communities are "irrelevant" in terms of policy considerations as they themselves are not part of the decision-making process. This is a downright oversimplification of reality. In China, there is a lack of a "revolving door" system, as seen in many other countries, in which

an academic member of a university enters public service and returns to academia upon the completion of his public service. The argument goes that Chinese scholars don't have "ears" inside the decision-making process, or the Chinese division of bureaucrats and academics don't allow the latter access to policy preparation processes.

This view reflects a lack of understanding of Chinese society. The division of public servants and academics, and their lack of cross-breeding is a matter of convenience to keep the order of its pay and promotion system, rather than to serve as an information "barrier" to keep secrecy. For example, a Chinese government employee has a fairly good expectation of when he can be promoted and what kind of pay level he can expect based on the number of years he worked in the government. This is also the case for an academic working at a university. However, when a professor becomes a government official, an issue naturally arises as to how to determine his seniority and his appropriate pay level. China attaches great importance to keeping social stability and "harmony," and is normally unenthused to introduce a new system, unless absolutely necessary, departing from decades of socialist tradition. The picture is compounded by the tendency to preserve one's turf and protect one's self-interests.

This doesn't in any manner indicate that Chinese scholars are "outside" or "irrelevant" to policy considerations. Chinese scholars are active participants in policy suggestions and formulations that ultimately shape China's foreign policy. As a graduate student in China, the author observed on numerous occasions how the government "outsourced" various projects to universities that had foreign policy implications. In internal deliberations, often both government officials and scholars participate together. Some Chinese scholars are well-sourced in knowing the internal sentiment of the government. Government officials are often the former students or classmates of Chinese scholars, and they tend to maintain an extensive human network. It shouldn't be forgotten that China is a society of "guanxi" (networking).

The view that Chinese scholars are "irrelevant" in foreign policy considerations on North Korea is one of the most popular and unwarranted assumptions held by outsiders who lack understanding in Chinese society and grossly simplify the picture. Whether to be included in policy suggestions and the deliberation process is more a function of the guanxi network than a government versus academic division by default.

How the Survey Was Done

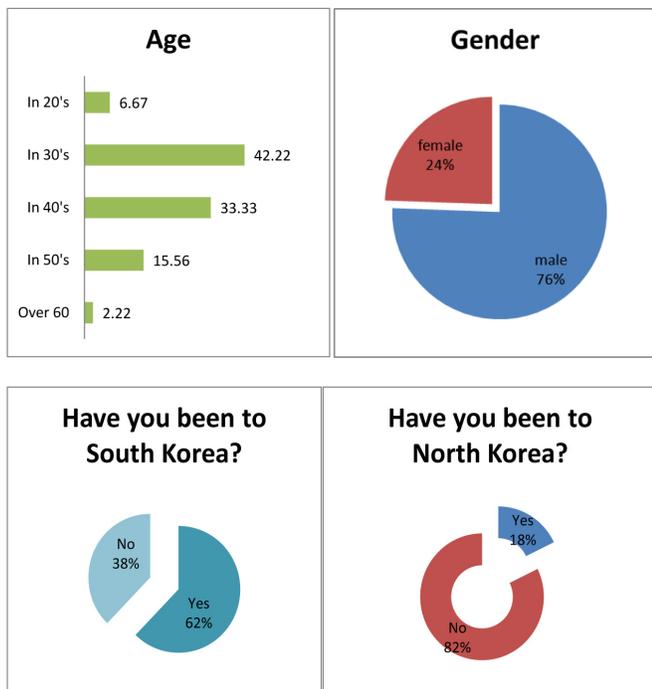
A total of 46 Chinese experts on Korea affairs were surveyed during November and December of 2011.⁸⁹ The term "Chinese experts" in this paper indicate scholars and researchers who are affiliated with universities and think tanks within the government. There was no participant who was a private consultant. There was no participant from a private security consultant firm. Many of them are public figures this author interviewed over the years for reporting on North Korea and the Korean

peninsula issues. They are the ones who participated in international forums on Korean affairs and penned articles and academic papers on the topic. In the United States, some of them are also known as “Chinese experts on America,” reflecting the multilateral aspect of the Korean affairs in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

In addition to the author’s personal acquaintances, invitations to participate in the survey were sent to scholars in international relations at universities and think tanks whose website profiles indicate that the person previously published papers on Korean affairs. These institutions are located in Beijing, Shanghai, and China’s northeastern region near the North Korean border where research on North Korea and Korean affairs is the most robust.

North Korea remains a sensitive topic in China. Topics related to North Korea’s leadership and succession are often censored. Indeed, a few Chinese scholars cited “sensitivity” in their response to the author’s request to participate in the survey. In fact, “sensitivity” to the survey and its relevance to policy implications on North Korea was a concern by participants who preferred a minimum disclosure of their personal information. That concern was honored, but resulted in limitations in forming a detailed demographic profile of the Chinese participants.

Survey participants (Unit: %)



The same sensitivity was a concern for this researcher as well. The author made it clear at the outset of the survey that the survey was intended to fulfill the academic requirement of a graduate program degree, and that the results would be made public. The author’s information, including academic affiliation and mobile phone number, in case there were questions, was offered as well.

In this survey, demographic questions included gender, age, and travel experience to both Koreas. While this author knows their institutional affiliations, the paper doesn’t cite them.

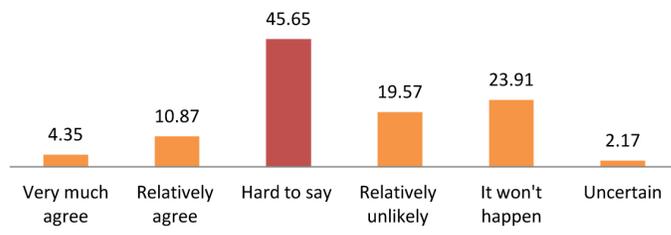
On average, it took participants 21 minutes to complete the survey. It was a relatively long time commitment. (In trial runs, it took six to seven minutes and was introduced as such). No honorarium or gift was given to participants. No complaint was made for the survey taking longer than was represented. But most Chinese participants expressed that they wanted to be informed of the results.

As seen above, the typical profile of a Chinese scholar surveyed is a male, in his 30’s and 40’s. Over a half of them visited South Korea and “only” 20% of them visited North Korea. (Relatively speaking, the “20%” figure cannot be underestimated as it tended to be higher than that in other countries. Remember, a former South Korean unification minister has never been to North Korea, even though he was in charge of inter-Korean relations. Another difference might be that Chinese scholars, given the country’s special ties with North Korea, tend to visit North Korea regularly. For example, a scholar this author knows visits North Korea about three times a year.)

Results

Pic1

In recent period, there has been media reports, predicting the collapse of North Korea. Do you agree?

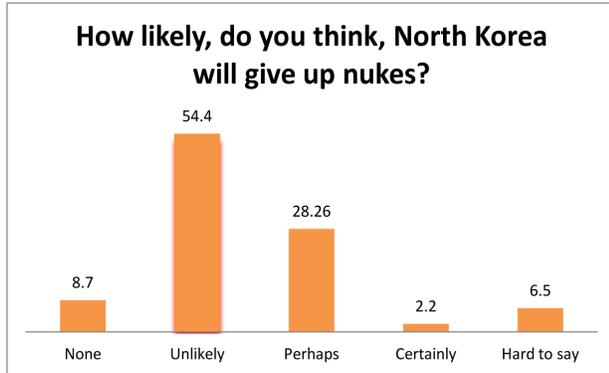


Chinese scholars are skeptical about media reports of the “imminent collapse” of North Korea.

This question is particularly relevant in the aftermath of Kim Jong-il’s sudden death and increased uncertainty over North Korea. Since 2008, Washington and Seoul have prepared contingences to prepare for North Korean uncertainties, including the possibility of implosion or a power struggle or a military coup.

If the Chinese think the possibility for the collapse of North Korea is low, then it can be also inferred that they are unlikely to cooperate with Washington and Seoul to coordinate contingency plans. China is believed to have its own contingency plans. But if the Chinese don't communicate with Washington and Seoul, it will increase room for miscalculation.

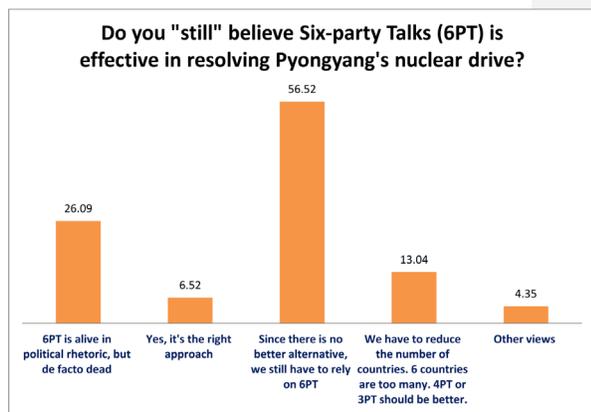
Pic 2



《》 Over half of the Chinese scholars (63%) polled believe North Korea is unlikely to give up its nuclear weapons. Among them, 8.7% said the chance is “none.”

This question touches upon the “core” of the controversy surrounding North Korea’s nuclear drive: that is, whether Pyongyang sees its nukes as “tradable” in exchange for economic aid and diplomatic recognition, or it sees its nukes as something non-negotiable. Even the Chinese, arguably the country that “reads” North Korea best, doubt North Korea will ever renounce its nuclear weapons.

Pic3

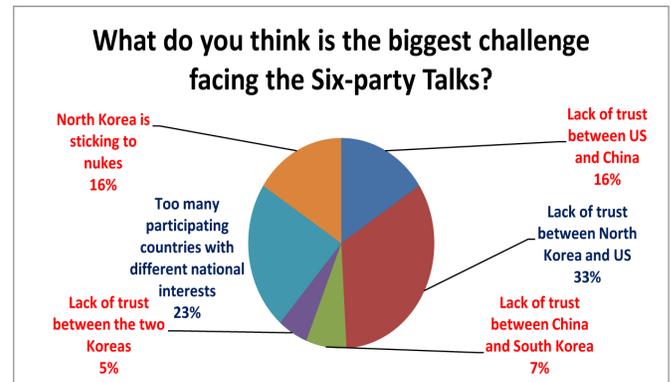


As chair to the Six Party Talks, this may be seen as a “self-defeating” confession because the very purpose of the Six Party Talks is designed to persuade North Korea to give up its nukes. Then, an obvious question will ensue challenging the “usefulness” of the multilateral negotiation regime.

《》 One out of four Chinese scholars believe that the Six Party Talks are de facto dead, while the majority (57%) said that as long as there is no other alternative, we have to rely on the Six Party Talks.

The utility of the six-party talks has been a long debated item. And this author also posed the same question to the late South Korean President Kim Dae-jung during an interview. Kim strongly advocated for the Six Party Talks. However, it is also true that the Six Party Talks, since its inception in 2003, has been largely ineffective in achieving its stated goal of the denuclearization of North Korea.

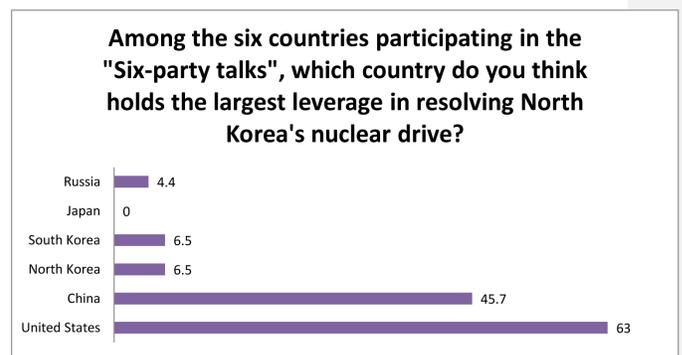
Pic4



《》 Chinese scholars believe that a lack of trust between North Korea and the U.S. is the biggest challenge facing the Six Party Talks (33%), followed by the lack of trust between the U.S. and China (16%) and a lack of trust between the two Koreas (16%). One out of five Chinese scholars also pointed out that the number of participating countries in the Six Party Talks is too many, with all their different national interests (23%).

The next question reflects the Chinese perspective of “what is wrong” with the Six Party Talks.

Pic5

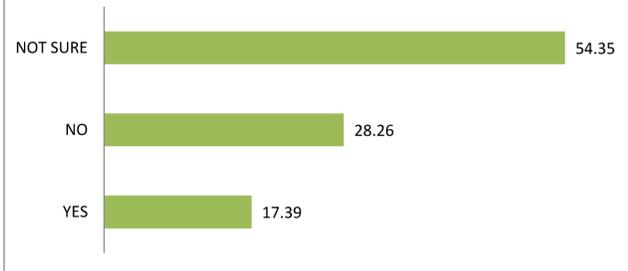


《》 While the international community believes that China has the most influence over North Korea, Chinese experts indicated it is actually the U.S. that wields the most influence over North Korea, while China is the second.

This is a counter-intuitive result, challenging the commonly held assumption. But then, for this author, the view isn't strange, but has been consistent over the years. This is one good example that illustrates the difference between how international media “frames” the narrative and how the Chinese themselves see it.

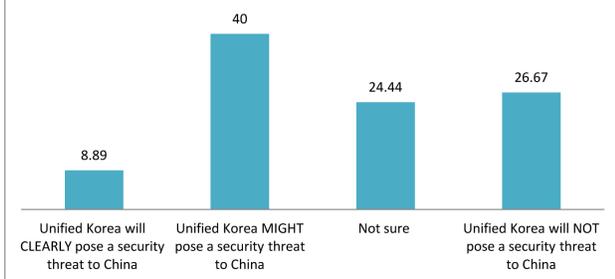
Over 80% of Chinese oppose the Korean reunification or are ambivalent about it.

(As of 2011), do you support the unification of the two Koreas?



China is a key stakeholder of the Korean peninsula and it is imperative for South Korea to gain support from its giant neighbor to achieve reunification. South Koreans may look at the results with disbelief, but Seoul often misreads China. For example, in the wake of the Cheonan incident, Seoul believed China would side with Seoul and condemn North Korea.

If the Korean Peninsula is unified under South Korea's initiative, what do you think is the likely relationship between unified Korea and China?



《》 About 50% of Chinese scholars believe a unified Korea is likely to pose a threat to China.

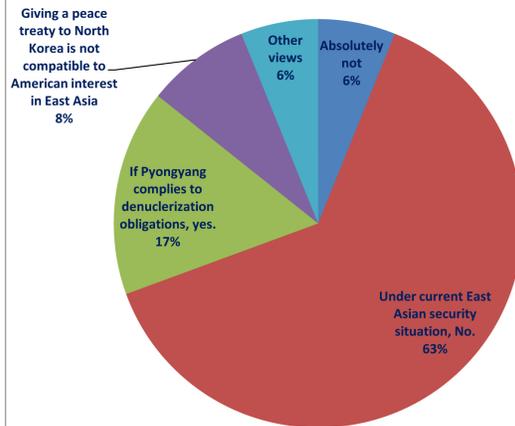
This result explains partly “why” China is concerned about Korean reunification, which would likely be done under the South Korean initiative. As will be elaborated on later, China fears that a reunified Korea would be stronger and likely to turn nationalistic and pose a threat to China, including igniting territorial claims.

《》 The presence of American troops in the unified Korea is a concern for China (35%). Most Chinese (43%) prefer a unified Korea which is neutral between America and China. Interestingly, the Chinese don’t necessarily require a unified Korea to be pro-China to still support Korean reunification.

《》 Over half of the respondents (63%) believe that the U.S. is not likely to sign a peace treaty with North Korea to resolve North Korea's nuke issue permanently under

the current security environment in Asia where the interests of China and America collide.

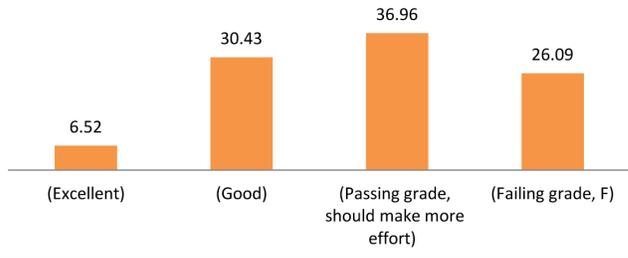
Do you think the American government is willing to sign a peace treaty with North Korea to resolve Pyongyang's nuke issue permanently?



This question has multiple ramifications. Signing a peace treaty and normalizing its relationship with the United States is North Korea’s primary wish, as stated by Kim Jong-il’s first son, Kim Jong-nam (as shown in his email correspondence to a Japanese journalist). Signing a peace treaty will also officially end the Korean War, which has been in a state of truce since 1953. But many Chinese experts doubt the U.S. will be willing to sign the treaty because, they think the U.S. is status-quo oriented and the tension generated by North Korea serves the U.S.’s justification for having troops in East Asia, while it importantly helps in containing China as well.

Pic 10

With regard to China's effort to goad Pyongyang to denuclearization, which grade would you assign?



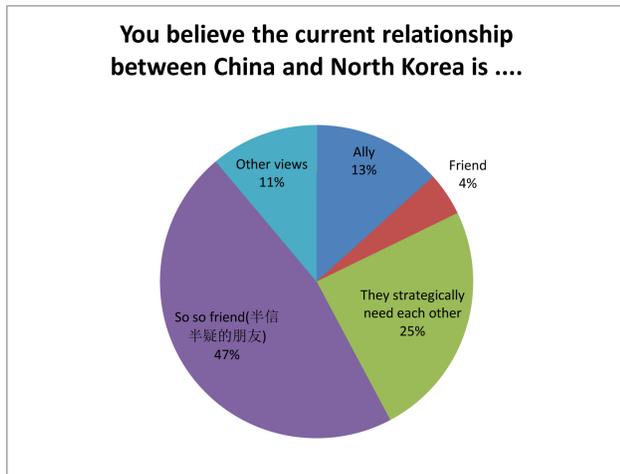
《》 One out of four Chinese scholars said China's effort to contain North Korea's nuclear drive is a failure.

The self-admission of failure is unlikely to appear in any official Chinese document, especially as the chair for the Six Party Talks. However, they are willing to admit it in private.

For some years, the strategy by Washington and Seoul has been to influence North Korea through China. And the result shows the Chinese “self-assessment” of their country’s per-

formance. The fact that a quarter of the respondents said China failed in persuading Pyongyang to choose the path for denuclearization is the reflection of the current state. But it poses an important question of what may motivate China to exercise its much touted influence on North Korea to goad it to denuclearization.

Pic 11



《》 Half of the Chinese scholars believe the current relationship between China and North Korea is "so-so friends," while 25% said the two countries need each other for strategic purposes. Only 4% said the two are friends. 13% said they are allies.

This is a wakeup call for the news outlets which tend to portray the duo as having "blood ties" since the Cold War period. This also reflects the feedback the author has been getting from Chinese scholars over the years. In fact, the Chinese expression "半信半疑" was the direct quote by a Chinese professor in his lecture to Chinese university students, who giggled upon hearing it (a sign that they also agreed on the characterization of the bilateral relationship). It is also worth noting that a quarter of the respondents said that Beijing and Pyongyang formed a relationship out of their mutual strategic needs.

In fact, unlike popular commentaries on the staunch ideological affinity of the two, their relationship has also been shaped by mutual tension and mistrust. For example, the 1992 diplomatic establishment between Beijing and Seoul deeply hurt Pyongyang. Therefore, the correct question to ask is what prevents the couple from breaking away from each other? And what "missteps" have Seoul and Washington made in their failing to work together with China?

Death of Kim Jong-il and Looking Ahead

The abrupt death of Kim Jong-il on December 17, 2011 sparked a palpable information thirst to know what was going on inside the reclusive country, as uncertainty surrounding the untested leader Jong-un became a subject for intense speculation. China's status as the only country

that maintains regular high-level contacts with Pyongyang, as well as its much touted clout over the North, was once again turned into a coveted diplomatic currency.

As each country was scrambling to craft its own appropriate diplomatic response, fears of possible miscalculations among different stakeholders were also brooding. This again made the status of China as the "gateway to North Korea" all the more prominent.

Kim's sudden death also exposed – surprisingly – how little Seoul and Washington know about what's happening within the North's leadership. In the past, they had normally been the ones that first detected signs of unusualness or cried foul over the North's stealthy nuclear and other illicit activities. Apparently, Seoul and Washington were caught off guard when North Korea's state media announced Kim Jong-il's death. By then, more than two days had passed since the leader's death.¹⁰ No doubt, it was a serious intelligence flop. And this additional feature deprived Seoul and Washington of viable up-and-coming strategies, while Beijing was taking the driver's seat in shaping the development of the situation in its best interest.

China was the first country to express condolences after the death of Kim Jong-il. China was the first country to endorse the untested young successor, Jong-un, calling him the "great leader." It was again China that, within hours after North Korea's announcement of Kim's death, took the initiative for diplomatic coordination by rounding up ambassadors from the U.S., South Korea, Japan and Russia, and counseling them not to "provoke" North Korea during this highly volatile time. The next day, President Hu Jintao personally visited the North Korean Embassy in Beijing, flanked by other top Politburo members, and paid condolences to the late Kim, a further signal to the world of the importance Beijing attaches to Pyongyang.

China's top leader's move was also a subtle, yet clear warning to other stakeholders in the region not to "misjudge" the situation as an opportunity to topple the North's regime. Since Kim Jong-il's stroke in 2008, South Korea and the U.S. have developed military contingency plans involving North Korean instability. China sees North Korea as its "backyard" and wants stability. It also regards North Korea as a strategic buffer against the presence of U.S. military in East Asia. China, therefore, hopes for a smooth power transition in the North and has rallied all-out support around the untested rookie, Kim Jong-un.

Looking back, China's rapid and decisive response in the aftermath of Kim's death set the tone for the rest of the world, which was still struggling for a diplomatic recipe on how to react to the event. It was largely successful. Even South Korea, which was attacked by North Korea twice in 2010, expressed condolences, despite hardliners' clamoring for taking advantage of the situation as an opportunity for "unification." China's Global Times, the international news arm of the official People's Daily, said China played the role of "stabilizer."

The series of rapid initiatives China displayed also fueled the

belief that Beijing had its own well-planned manual to prepare for North Korean contingencies. Previously, it had shied away from discussing such matters with Seoul and Washington, for fear of antagonizing Pyongyang.¹¹

All in all, Kim Jong-il's sudden death once again highlighted the prominence of China as a key, if not the most influential, stakeholder on the Korean Peninsula. But do Chinese scholars see China's measure of influence that way?

To such a claim, Chinese security experts usually resort to modesty. For example, while discussing post-Kim Jong-il North Korea, Wang Junsheng of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, penned: "Beijing's influence over Pyongyang is limited."¹²

What is, at least, certain is that China has the ability to influence the North Korean regime when it wants¹³ to, and it is a primary stakeholder in the international narrative on North Korea.

As China competes with the U.S. for leadership in Asia, it will utilize the "North Korean card" to counter the U.S.'s "return to Asia" strategy. China has been also increasingly seeing South Korea, a major American ally in Asia, as colluding with Washington to contain China, since the conservative South Korean president Lee Myung-bak was sworn in four years ago. For years, China has been wary of the Seoul-Washington military alliance too. That doesn't bode well for Seoul's national mandate to unify the Korean Peninsula. Power politics in the region dictates that without Beijing's endorsement, the Korean unification will remain an elusive goal to achieve, especially now as North Korea, under Kim Jong-un's helm, will be more dependent on China for economic aid.

Chinese strategists are also concerned about swelling nationalism in the unified Korea, and it fears possible territorial claims to Gan-do (today's Manchuria) by a unified Korea. Koreans have long regarded Gan-do as their "lost territory."

Against this backdrop, with regard to China's stance on North Korea, some analysts resort to a wholesale assumption that China will never give up North Korea, nor will China ever support Korean unification. In fact, that's a popular sentiment similar to the view that states North Korea will never give up nuclear weapons. Surprisingly, the Chinese scholars surveyed also largely share this sentiment. But then, it was also the Chinese scholars, including a former senior government official who was in charge of North Korean affairs, who privately shared with this author that North Korea's nuclear weapons is not a matter of whether North Korea will stick to nuclear weapons, but more is dependent upon the concerted ef-

fort by other countries to "make North Korea give up nuclear weapons."

This statement gives room for optimism, albeit pessimism prevails today surrounding North Korea's likelihood for giving up nukes. China worries about the nuclear "domino effect" of East Asian countries, including South Korea and Japan. However, the lack of strategic trust between China and the United States has been deterring China from being enthusiastic about pressuring North Korea.

Today, China and North Korea appear all the more close to each other in the aftermath of Kim Jong-il's death. But the survey results point out that China's sculpting of such an appearance is strategic rather than genuine. The results debunk the widespread belief that states "China will never give up North Korea," or "China and North Korea are Cold War allies." Only 13% of respondents view the bilateral relationship as an ally. Even a smaller percentage of respondents (4%) see their relationship as genuine "friends." Rather, almost half of them (47%) feel ambivalent about their relationship, as defined by the Chinese expression "半信半疑的朋友," which literally means "half-trusting, half-suspicious friend."

On the other hand, a quarter of the Chinese scholars said China and North Korea strategically need each other. The obvious implication is the Cold War rivalry structure has China in one camp and the U.S. (and South Korea and Japan) in the other. The Chinese response is that this Sino-North Korean "wedlock" is a necessary part of their common coping strategy against the U.S. camp, and it acknowledges that the two have their own trust issues. Outside strategists, therefore, need to explore creative ways to work with China in approaching the North Korean issue, instead of resorting to the misleading wholesale belief, resiliently propagated in the media, that the two are "blood allies" and they always stick together.

This belief only limits Washington's and Seoul's policy options. Resisting old habits and maintaining flexibility in judgment is especially due today as China and North Korea have been showing the outward appearance of deepening their ties after Kim Jong-il's death. The appearance may last for awhile, as Kim Jong-un stabilizes his power grip, but it should be noted that China's strategy toward North Korea is fluid too.

In the aftermath of North Korea's nuclear test in October 2006, China issued an unprecedentedly strong condemnation against North Korea, characterizing Pyongyang's move as a "flagrant" ("hanran" in Chinese) act. It was a time when China was nearly part of the U.S. camp in terms of cooperating together in pressuring North Korea. But two factors kept China from staying in league with Washington. Firstly, China didn't feel it was gaining any tangible reward by cooperating with Washington. Secondly, the more China was pressuring North Korea, the farther away North Korea was drifting away from China's sphere of influence. Chinese strategists then began to sound the alarm that China was not benefiting by helping Washington. In fact, they feared that Washington's strategy was to drive a wedge

between Pyongyang and Beijing.

In the summer of 2009, the Chinese leadership held a heated internal debate on its North Korean policy and decided not to abandon North Korea. In October of the same year, China dispatched Premier Wen Jiabao to Pyongyang to sign a series of agreements, including a firm pledge of commitment for bilateral ties. The North's official newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said the visit "clearly illustrates the Communist Party and the government of China attach great importance to the friendship between the two countries", adding that its significance was commensurate with marking "a new chapter" in Sino-North Korean history.

What we're seeing is the continuation of China's 2009 policy adjustment on North Korea. China's all-out friendly gesture toward North Korea in the aftermath of Kim Jong-il's death should be seen in the larger picture of the continuation of China's policy since 2009, not a sudden impromptu gesture.

However, China's foreign policy toward North Korea is not fixed, but instead remains fluid. And the biggest determining factor is China's national interests. Looking back at China's position in its recent history testifies to this point, as seen in 2006 and 2009. As China's perception of its own national interest changes, so does its relationship with North Korea. As China has its own leadership shuffle in 2012, the dynamics between China's new leader Xi Jinping and North Korea's Kim Jong-un will begin to unfold as well. The duo's relationship will also be naturally influenced by outside variables as well, such as Washington's relationship with Beijing and Seoul's position with China in the post-Lee Myung-bak administration. Here, the results of the current survey come in handy in appreciating the Chinese elite's sentiment on North Korea and the Korean peninsula.

Sunny Lee is Chief China Correspondent for The Korea Times and columnist for Asia Times. He has lived in China for 10 years. A graduate of Harvard University and Beijing Foreign Studies University, Lee is also completing his Ph.D. on North Korea at Tsinghua University. He can be reached at boston.sunny@yahoo.

Endnotes

- ¹ Kim Bo-geun, "Let us prevent Kim Jong-un's North Korea becoming China's fourth province in its northeastern region." '김정은 북한'의 동북 4 성화 막아라. Economy Insight magazine, published by the Hankyoreh Sinmun newspaper. 1 January 2012. <http://www.economyinsight.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=1066>
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- ⁵ Victor Cha, Kim's Death is Watershed Moment for North Korea, Financial Times, 21 December 2011.
- ⁶ Please see the author's pieces on this topic. "Who decides China's policy on North Korea?" The Korea Times. 27 September 2010. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/09/116_73597.html Also, "Who shapes China's NK policy?" The Korea Times. 19 May 2011 http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/05/120_87318.html
- ⁷ "Who shapes China's NK policy?" The Korea Times. 19 May 2011 http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/05/120_87318.html
- ⁸ Additionally, the author has compiled in-depth interviews with Chinese scholars over the last two years. Those will be later integrated to a larger paper.
- ⁹ Most of the interviews were completed before Kim Jong-il's death.
- ¹⁰ For 51 hours, to be more precise.
- ¹¹ A Chinese security expert privately told this author that another reason behind China's reluctance to discuss the sensitive matter with Seoul and Washington is because "they cannot keep their mouth shut. Whatever we say in confidence, we will see it printed later in media outlets in the U.S. and South Korea.
- ¹² China Daily, 5 January 2012.
- ¹³ Please see the author's previous discussion on the topic at Yale Global Online: China's North Korean Foreign Policy Decoded, 28 July 2011. <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/chinas-north-korean-foreign-policy-decoded>

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