

## CONSIDERATIONS OF SOLVING THE KOREAN PROBLEM AT THE PRESENT STAGE (2018-2019)

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**Abstract:** *The relevance of the study lies in the issue of divided Korea still being one of the most complex and relevant problems of the global political and legal system. With that, one of the main obstacles to solving the Korean problem is the nuclear missile threat of North Korea. The purpose of the article is to identify or disclose the features of solving the Korean problem in the current political situation, when each party wants to have it their way. The method facilitating the study of this issue is the comparative analysis that provides for a comprehensive consideration of the key factors impeding the negotiation process between the United States and North Korea. A modelling and forecasting methods are also used, which allows one to consider this issue from different perspectives and analyse various solutions. The article discusses the features of the negotiation process at each of the US-DPRK summits. The reasons for the inhibition of the negotiation process between the United States and the DPRK are analysed. It substantiates the importance of strengthening the role of the Republic of Korea, which, first and foremost, is the active promotion and support of the negotiation process and continuous offer of creative ideas that would satisfy both parties. The materials of the paper are of practical value for researchers, experts, politicians, as it considers recommendations for enhancing the negotiation process by inviting all interested parties (USA, DPRK, Kazakhstan, China, Russia, and Japan) to develop new approaches to solving this problem, which include: reconsideration of the position and the search for compromise solutions that would satisfy both parties. The importance of creating an international body to supervise the implementation of decisions and provide guarantees to North Korea is emphasized. The Republic of Korea is also encouraged to take more decisive steps to implement the decision of the two summits, because otherwise it would lose North Korea's trust completely. The importance of forming a real plan for the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula and guarantees to the North Korean regime with the participation of all interested parties is highlighted. Thus, this article provides information and analytical studies of the political events of 2018-19 and possible options for the development of the further political situation on the Korean Peninsula.*

**Keywords:** Korean issue, denuclearization, topdown, US-DPRK negotiation process, sanctions.

The Korean Peninsula occupies an extremely important geopolitical position in the Northeast Asia (NEA) region. The region has economically strong countries – Japan, South Korea and China. In addition, the region also has strong militarily and politically strong countries – the United States and Russia. There are also underdeveloped regions and countries – the north-eastern part of China, the Primorsky Territory of Russia, Siberia, Mongolia, and North Korea. Many researchers believe that these underdeveloped regions can become powerful catalysts for the economic development of NEA. Since the Korean Peninsula is located in the very center of this extraordinary region, it can play a very important part.

Lately, the Republic of Korea has successfully used its favorable geopolitical location to expand its sales market, distribute the latest technology, and invest capital. It is possible to profitably invest the capital, technology, and latest developments in the underdeveloped areas of NEA, but there is one problem – the division of Korea, which does not the use of the successful geopolitical location of the Korean Peninsula to the fullest. Quite the contrary, the peninsula has become a center of conflict and contention, which clearly hinders the peaceful development of the NEA.

Such situation does not allow to be actively involved in the economic transformation of the region. The 70-year history of the split of the Korean Peninsula eloquently confirms this. From this we can conclude that the unification of Korea is extremely necessary not only for the Koreans, but also for the peaceful prosperity of the NEA and the entire Pacific region. First of all, North Korea's closed, isolation policy impedes the process of Korea's unification and peaceful prosperity in the NEA. Although, since Kim Jong-un came to power, both politics and economy have witnessed shifts towards openness and steps towards a market economy<sup>1</sup>.

It would seem that after the end of the Cold War period, Korea had to unite faster than other countries, but the opposite happened – the confrontation and tense situation on the Korean Peninsula became an obstacle to the peaceful prosperity of not just Korea, but the entire NEA region. Naturally, the confrontation of the four great states – China, Russia, the USA, Japan, also played a big part. The USA and Japan consider China their potential adversary, and China is of a similar position, considering them to be its opponents. One cannot ignore Russia, too, because if the international situation and the economic situation stabilize, the Russian Federation will be in a confrontation with the United States,

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<sup>1</sup> Y.K. Yun, *North Korea today*, Neulpum Plus, Seoul, 2014.

China and Japan. Choi Kang, a South Korean security scientist, emphasized that NEA has developed good conditions for multilateral security cooperation, and therefore, the issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should be continued<sup>2</sup>.

According to the opinion of the Russian scientist A. Bogaturov, one of the main obstacles to solving the main Korean problem of reunification is the nuclear threat of North Korea<sup>3</sup>. North Korea's nuclear issue has a rather long history since 1989, when photographs of North Korean Yonbene nuclear facilities taken by the French satellite SPO-2 were declassified. Since then, the North Korean nuclear issue has acquired a global reach. The main subjects of the confrontation were the United States and North Korea.

The international community, together with the USA and the Republic of Korea, made a lot of efforts to solve this problem, including negotiations and conclusion of a treaty between the DPRK and the IAEA on the application of full guarantees (December 1989 – July 1990). President Bush's Declaration on the Withdrawal of Tactical Nuclear Weapons from South Korea (September 27, 1991), President Roh Tae-woo's Statement on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (November 8, 1991), Declaration of a Nuclear-Free Zone (December 18, 1991), Termination of US-South Korean Joint Team Spirit exercises in 1992. Then, during 1993, a series of bilateral negotiations were held between the United States and the DPRK. North Korea continuously objected against the special inspection of IAEA and demanded that the United States meet 6 conditions:

1. documentary guarantee of non-use of nuclear weapons against the DPRK;
2. nuclear non-proliferation declaration on the Korean peninsula;
3. suspension of Team Spirit large-scale military exercises;
4. replacement of the ceasefire agreement with a peace agreement;
5. abolition of the status of a state supporting terrorism assigned to North Korea;
6. support of federalization of Korea.

The negotiations were difficult and lasted until 1994, until they reached the Geneva and New York Accords. However, the DPRK, in accordance with its stop-and-go tactics, put forward new requirements

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<sup>2</sup> K. Choi, *Geopolitical transformations in Eurasia: views from Kyiv and Seoul*, “Demid” publishing house, Kyiv, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> A.D. Bogaturov, “Eurasian foundation of world stability”, in *International Life*, 1993, no. 2, p. 38-45.

and continued performing its nuclear program. On May 4, 1994, the DPRK began an unloading of a worn-out fuel rod from a 5 MW reactor<sup>4</sup>. On May 30, 1994, the UN Security Council started discussing sanctions against the DPRK, and the DPRK immediately decided to withdraw from the IAEA, which led to an escalation of the crisis.

In January 2002, President George W. Bush called Iran, Iraq, and the DPRK the "axis of evil," which further escalated the situation. On January 10, 2003, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT, which caused the second nuclear crisis. Subsequently, six-party negotiations had recurrently took place to resolve the nuclear issue for several years until 2008, which also failed. On June 4, 2006, tests of seven ballistic missiles were carried out, and on October 9, 2006, North Korea tested a nuclear bomb.

This was the third attempt, and it is not yet known whether it is also the last one. It should be noted that in addition to the United States and the Republic of Korea, the UN Security Council, starting from 2006, repeatedly imposed sanctions on North Korea under No. 1695, 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094. Still, the sanctions were unsuccessful, and North Korea continued developing its nuclear missile potential and by 2018, it achieved notable successes: it tested the hydrogen bomb, successfully completed testing of the Inha-3 intercontinental missiles, which can reach the continental territory of the United States<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, according to Kim G.N., North Korea has become a threat not only to South Korea, Japan and the United States, but also a destabilizing factor in the NEA region and the whole world<sup>6</sup>. In recent years, the United States has stepped up its efforts to tackle the nuclear issue of North Korea. In June 2018, the Singapore Summit was held, where certain accords were reached on this matter. But after the failure of the Hanoi summit (February 28, 2019), the entire world politics is awaiting the actions of the parties to the negotiation process on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Researchers, politicians are worried whether the US-DPRK negotiations will continue, will Kim Jong-un cancel the decision to end the moratorium on the development and testing of nuclear missiles? Will the US, at least partially, ease the sanctions against North Korea? What steps is the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as RoK) taking and what is its role? Thus, according to the results of 2018-2019, we can conclude that the future of the Korean

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<sup>4</sup> H. Soe, *Army Priority – North Korea's Foreign Policy*, Meoungin munhwasa, Seoul, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> K.R. Lee, *North Korea – country with nuclear weapons*, Politicus, Seoul, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> G.N. Kim, *Unification of Korea is inevitable*, UKGO, Seoul, 2014.

Peninsula is once again in a state of uncertainty. The aim of the article is to study the features of solving the Korean problem at the present stage.

### **Materials and methods**

In the process of study, the following methods were used: theoretical (analysis; synthesis; comparison, concretization; generalization; analogy method); empirical (studying the materials of the negotiations of the Singapore, Hanoi summits, international legislative and regulatory documentation on the settlement of international and regional conflicts, content analysis of the texts of the Singapore and Hanoi summits). Thus, an analysis of the current situation on the Korean Peninsula was carried out, with evaluation of the impact of both internal and external international factors on the situation. The positions of the key global players – the USA, China, Russia, Japan – in relation to this problem are compared.

The leading methods of the study of this problem are the comprehensive comparative analysis and generalization, which allow a systematic and comprehensive consideration of the key factors that impede the negotiation process between the USA and the DPRK aimed at solving the Korean problem, namely the tough offensive policy of the USA, isolationism of the DPRK, expectant, soft policy of the Republic of Korea.

We also used the modelling and forecasting method, which allows us to consider this issue from different perspectives and analyse its various solutions. The settlement model is based on the creation of a comprehensive, detailed plan, which should include a phased, stepwise, partial easing of sanctions against North Korea, phased guarantees of the preservation of the regime, as well as phased nuclear disarmament of North Korea and other activities for the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the method allowed us to conclude that sanctions alone cannot be a means of achieving complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Nevertheless, sanctions are still valid and this is a favourable factor to offer North Korea a constructive solution it could not refuse.

Among the prominent researchers of the Korean problematics the following deserve to be mentioned – L. Areshidze, A. Torkunov, V. Denisov, V. Lee, Yu. Mazur, I. Tolstokulakov, M. Trigubenko, T. Nelova, G. Levchenko, V. Tkachenko and others. In their works, issues of political, cultural, economic development of South and North Korea were

considered, the prerequisites for their unification were analysed. The international conflict over the DPRK nuclear program and security issues on the Korean Peninsula were the subject of dissertation of the researcher Joung Jae Ho<sup>7</sup>. In the book *Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War*, ed. by A. Arbatov and V. Dvorkin, on the basis of an in-depth analysis of the containment and non-proliferation policy of the Nuclear club member states, regional proliferation problems, the pros and cons of the existing nuclear non-proliferation regimes, a set of recommendations based on political, economic, military and technical justification is proposed, with aim to increase the efficiency or change the policies of states and international organizations so as to prevent further nuclear proliferation<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, the works of L. Areshidze consider the features of the formation of international relations in East Asia<sup>9</sup>. A. Torkunov, V. Denisov, V. Lee covered the history of the development of the Korean Peninsula<sup>10</sup>. Ukrainian researcher Yu. Mazur analysed the ethno-civilizational factors in the formation of political institutions in the countries of East Asia. The political scientist noted that the geographical factor is inextricably linked with the factor of external influences and challenges and intercultural interaction<sup>11</sup>. Significant contribution to the development of South Korean subject matter was made by historian I. Tolstokulakov, who analysed the development of the democratic process in South Korea during the 6th Republic. In his work, on the example of Korea, the scientist attempts to identify the specifics of understanding democracy in the Confucian cultural environment<sup>12</sup>. In the works of M. Trigubenko, T. Nelova, G. Levchenko, V. Tkachenko, the features of interaction between Russia and the countries of the Korean Peninsula were considered<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> J.H. Joung, *International dispute over North Korea's nuclear program and the security issues on the Korean Peninsula*, ST Print, Moscow, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> A. Arbatova, V. Dvorkin, *Nuclear weapons after the Cold War*, Russian Political Encyclopedia, Moscow, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> K. Choi, *Geopolitical transformations in Eurasia: views from Kyiv and Seoul*, "Demid" publishing house, Kyiv, 2008, 356 p.

<sup>10</sup> L.G. Areshidze, *International relations in East Asia. Threats and hopes*, International relationships, Moscow, 2007.; A.V. Torkunov, V.I. Denisov, V.F. Lee, *Korean peninsula: metamorphoses of post-war history*, OLMA Media Group, Moscow, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Y.V. Mazur, *Ethno-civilizational factors of political institutions formation in the countries of East Asia*, Shamray, Mykolaiv, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> I.A. Tolstokulakov, *The development of the democratic process in South Korea during the VI<sup>th</sup> Republic period*, Publishing House of the Far Eastern University, Vladivostok, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> M.E. Trigubenko, T.A. Neelova, G.Ya. Levchenko, *Problems of the Korean Peninsula. Russian diplomacy in Korea in 1998-1999*, AOZT "Zpikon", Moscow, 2000.

The works of Lee V.F.<sup>14</sup>, A. Lankova<sup>15</sup>, Tihomirov V.<sup>16</sup>, Beon John Heon<sup>17</sup>, Young Nam Keung<sup>18</sup>, Kim Hak Joon<sup>19</sup>, Min Kyeong Tae<sup>20</sup>, Lee Kang Rae<sup>21</sup> cover the Korean problem and international factors, the prospects for economic, political and cultural development of South and North Korea.

An analysis of the literature on this subject matter suggests that a comprehensive analysis of the prospects for resolving the Korean problem in the context of recent meetings of leaders of the US and the DPRK was not performed.

## Results and discussion

As is known, despite the multitude of sanctions, North Korea has successfully completed a phase of politics called "a powerful army – the DPRK's foreign policy course"<sup>22</sup>. Having significantly strengthened its defence and virtually becoming the ninth nuclear power in the world, North Korea gained a new status<sup>23</sup>. But due to experiencing critical deficiencies of internal financial resources and innovative technology, tough economic sanctions and isolation from the international community, it began altering its foreign policy<sup>24</sup>. Thus, in 2018, Kim Jong-un announced that the country has set a course for economic reforms and normalcy with the outside world, primarily with Kazakhstan. The events of 2018-2019 demonstrated that Kim Jong-un started implementing the new political course. In 2018-2019, two summits were held with South Korea: in Panmunjom (April 2018) and in Pyongyang (September 2018), and two summits with the USA: in Singapore (June 2018) and Hanoi

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<sup>14</sup> V.F. Lee, *Russia and Korea in the geopolitics of the Eurasian east (XX century)*, Naychnaya kniga, Moscow, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> A. Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> V.D. Tihomirov, *The Korean problem and international factors in 1945 – the early 80<sup>th</sup>*, East Literature, Moscow, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> J.H. Beon, *Relations with North Korea and Unification of Korean Peninsula*, Inkan sarang, Seoul, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> H.K. Young, *The Superpower politics and Peninsula*, Oreum, Seoul, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> H.J. Kim, *The unification policy of South and North Korea*, Seoul National University Press, Seoul, 1977.

<sup>20</sup> K.T. Min, *Seoul – Pyongyang Megacity*, Mireae chang, Seoul, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> K.R. Lee, *North Korea – country with nuclear weapons*, Politicus, Seoul, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> H.K. Kim, H.U. Song, *Whither of Kim Jong Un's North Korea*, Kiparang, Seoul, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> J.S. Kim, *Why America cannot overcome the North Korea?*, Neireul yoneun cheg, Seoul, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> S.H. Ju, *Where is Kim Jong Un's North Korea going?*, Neulpum Plus, Seoul, 2012.

(February 2019). If the Singapore Summit can be called more or less successful, then Hanoi resulted in complete failure.

It should be stated that the failure of the Hanoi summit left North Korea in a state of shock, as the issues of the summit were preliminarily discussed by the executors Kim Hyok Chol – Biegun. Surely North Korea has a backup plan and will now revise the plan for the negotiation process with the United States. Furthermore, calls are increasingly being made in North Korea for a review of relations and more decisive measures against the United States, for an end to concessions and a revision of the strategy<sup>25</sup>.

Naturally, the United States blames the failure of the Hanoi summit on North Korea and, according to a statement by John Bolton, US National Security Advisor, the United States continues to demand immediate, irrevocable, complete denuclearization without easing sanctions on North Korea. Also, the actions of the United States speak not of a suddenly changing tactics, but rather of a long-term, previously adopted strategy. Analysis of the performance of both parties demonstrates their unwavering position. Of course, such a situation when the negotiation process is in a “coma” state is unacceptable for North Korea, as according to the plan of economic reform, the DPRK should have already begun constructive changes in the economy. Currently, time is running out for North and South Korea, because if North Korea will hereinafter be forced to make increased efforts for opening to China, then the interest in negotiations with the United States, which fail at yielding results, would naturally cool down. Hence the probability of a complete failure of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will significantly increase. In the near future we should expect a reciprocal move from the DPRK.

After some silence caused by the shock after the Hanoi summit, North Korea, through a press conference by the Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister of the DPRK Ri Yong-ho and Choe Son-hui, declared that all the fault of the Hanoi summit failure lies with the United States. Deputy Minister Choi Son-hui stated that the fact that the United States had not accepted their proposal was the same as missing out on a unique chance and emphasized that North Korea does not quite understand the principles of American telling<sup>26</sup>. Thus, the North Korean party made it

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<sup>25</sup> T.S. Chwe, I.S. Jang, *Discrepancy between a market economy and the political structure of North Korea*, Seonin, Seoul, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Y.Ch. Jeong, “The Korean Peninsula is on a crossroads of peace, negotiations must continue”, in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 150, no. 4, p. 20-27.



clear that it disagrees with the US proposals and is not going to concede. The United States also expressed its position: at a press conference, Donald Trump stated that North Korea only settled for partial destruction of the Yongbyon landfill, but did not consent to complete destruction.

Thus, the United States, which is firmly convinced that only sanctions will force North Korea to negotiate, insist on lifting the sanctions only after full denuclearization. North Korea, however, insists on easing sanctions on issues related to the situation of the North Korean people. With regard to denuclearization, the understanding of the parties is significantly different. In addition, it is necessary to factor in the continuation of the trade war between China and the United States, which means that China will certainly capitalise on the current situation.

And yet, what are the reasons for the failure of the Hanoi summit? Before the start of the summit through the Kim Hyok Chol – Biegun channel, the phased and synchronized action plan proposed by the North Korean party was repeatedly discussed. This was stated by Special Representative Biegun in January 2019 at a lecture at Stanford University. Moreover, at the Singapore Summit (June 2018), an agreement was reached on irrevocable, phased and synchronous denuclearization. However, at the Hanoi summit, everything changed dramatically. To analyse and identify the reasons for the failure of the summit, in our opinion, we should analyse all the events of 2018-2019.

2018 can be described as a year of positive change in relations between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK. Throughout the entire history of the Korean peninsula, there were several attempts to normalize relations between the South and the North, but all of them failed. Historical experience shows that no matter how good declarations are, if they are not implemented, they only cause a negative mood. Therefore, the task of the South and the North is to implement the Panmunjom (April 2018) and Pyongyang (September 2018) Declarations adopted in 2018. The adoption of these declarations marked the start of the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula. Perhaps the three most important events can be highlighted here:

1. Transformation of the demilitarized zone into a peaceful one.
2. The beginning of stabilization and strive for normalcy in inter-Korean relations, relations between the USA and the DPRK. The foundation was laid for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the development of guarantees for the preservation of the North Korean regime.

3. The establishment of the general office of the Republic of Korea and the DPRK on resolving issues.

Since 2019, joint consultations and inspections will be held, a gradual movement to the next stages of the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula lies ahead, including the denuclearization process. With that, the important thing is not the speed of implementation of the decisions made, but the process itself and, naturally, the accumulation of trust in each other.

In 2019, the continuation of the denuclearization process was expected, along with the establishment of lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the development of cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK in the economic, political, cultural and humanitarian fields. However, it seems that all expectations will remain just that, therefore, proceeding from the failure of the second US – DPRK summit, the leaders of the Republic of Korea are faced with intermediary tasks of enhancing the US-DPRK relations in terms of creating irrevocable situations on the Korean Peninsula.

It must be emphasized that in the context of sanctions against North Korea, it is difficult to intensify the economic cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, but active preparatory work has to be initiated today, otherwise China may outrun the Republic of Korea, which may entail a loss of the sales market and significantly complicate the ways of rapprochement. It is high time to think about creating a joint security committee. In any case, to start developing a plan to create a security agency at the very least, both on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. Due to the fact that the world community still does not quite believe in the process of full and irrevocable denuclearization, in our opinion, the time has come when South Korea needs to intensify relations with North Korea and strengthen the role of mediator in the US–DPRK negotiations. Furthermore, one should bear in mind that in South Korea there are a lot of opponents of the rapprochement of the Republic of Korea with the DPRK. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the propaganda within South Korea as well.

Despite the fact that after the first US–DPRK summit (June 12, 2018), North Korea destroyed the nuclear weapons test site, demined the demilitarized zone, eliminated the rocket engine testing complex, etc., so far the US–DPRK relationship are stagnating. It should be emphasized that contacts between the United States and the DPRK continue, but there is no progress. Thus, after the first summit, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Pyongyang four times, Kim Jong-un's special envoy

visited Washington. But, as is known, the Hanoi summit in 2019 completely failed and gave rise to many questions. What happened? Why are US-DPRK relations still stagnant? How will the failure of the Hanoi summit affect relations between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK? What actions should the Republic of Korea take to intensify the US-DPRK relations? And finally, what are the causes of stagnation? Naturally, there are many reasons for this, but the most important one, according to many researchers, is the distrust amongst each other, generated by the long confrontation. Thus, the United States, even after the summit on 12.06.2018, continues strengthening sanctions against the DPRK, despite the fact that the DPRK has stopped nuclear missile tests. The second important factor is the increasing influence of China.

In 2018, it finally became clear that a confrontation unfolded between China and the United States and the US–China trade war began. As for the Korean peninsula, this is the beginning of denuclearization and the establishment of a peaceful state. In 2019, after the end of the 90-day moratorium in the trade war between the United States and China, it became clear that the confrontation would worsen even more, consequentially affecting the process of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Many researchers wonder whether the third summit will take place, how long the stagnation in the negotiation processes will last, and whether the negotiations will break new grounds or remain at the same level.

As is known, in 2017, the United States announced in a report on national security that China is a strategic competitor and in 2018 resumed fundamental development of the latest nuclear weapons designs, withdrew from the non-proliferation treaty of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) and established the space force, that is, has taken a number of measures to strengthen military power, and in July of the same year sharply increased duties on Chinese goods, thereby starting a trade war with China. In October 2018, US Secretary of State, US Vice President Pence announced that the era of a new cold war with China had begun<sup>27</sup>. In contrast to these events, Japanese Prime Minister Abe secretly met with the DPRK leadership to stabilize the DPRK-Japan relationship, and then visited China with 500 entrepreneurs, where he officially met and expressed readiness to enter into bilateral economic cooperation with China. And then they made every effort to revitalize the Comprehensive and Progressive Treaty on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – the

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<sup>27</sup> T.S. Chwe, I.S. Jang, *Discrepancy between a market economy and the political structure of North Korea*, Seonin, Seoul, 2016.

Trans-Pacific Partnership, which nearly collapsed after the US announced its withdrawal from this organization<sup>28</sup>.

In addition, the second US–DPRK summit, which was to be held on November 8, 2018, was held only on February 27-28, 2019, after numerous meetings and discussions in the city of Hanoi, but, as is known, it failed miserably and there was a threat of disruption of the denuclearization process. Kim Jong-un in his New Year's address to the people said that he was always ready to sit down at the negotiating table with President Trump again should the appropriate platform for the meeting be prepared, and also emphasized that he would make every effort to achieve success, which would be welcomed by the entire world community, but if the US does not adhere to the agreement and strengthens the sanctions against the DPRK, then there would be nothing else to do but to choose a new strategy<sup>29</sup>. To confirm this, North Korea launched a short-range missile in May 2019, and in October launched a ballistic missile<sup>30</sup>.

Why did the second US-DPRK summit fail? The goal of achieving final denuclearization is identical for both the United States and the DPRK, but the meaning and methods of achievement are different, and the approaches to execution are completely different. The time of the complete denuclearization process, according to the DPRK, can be adjusted by agreement, but the US position is different. If at the start of the negotiations the United States announced that they should achieve results within the Trump's first term, now they declare that they do not set any time limits. Very big disagreements exist regarding the content of denuclearization, both in nuclear weapons and in transport devices for the delivery of nuclear weapons. Will they be limited only to transcontinental missiles or is this also true for medium and short-range missiles? A report from the US Department of State's Assistance Office for Asia-Pacific indicated that the United States adheres to a long-term program providing for final and complete denuclearization and a short-term program for suspending a nuclear program, nuclear missile tests, and termination of nuclear fuel production.

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<sup>28</sup> S.R. Joe, "Change of the Chinese position and the obstacles to the North Korea – American Summit", in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 148, no. 2, p. 14-17.

<sup>29</sup> Y.Ch. Jeong, "The Korean Peninsula is on a crossroads of peace, negotiations must continue", in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 150, no. 4, p. 20-27.

<sup>30</sup> "New-type SLBM test fire proves successful". Available at: <https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1570082431-462150636/new-type-slbm-test-fire-provessuccessful/>.

Kim Jong-un clearly announced that he would no longer produce, test, use and distribute nuclear weapons. He had already taken some steps in this direction and demonstrated four principles: no development; no testing; no using; no proliferation. This means a complete freeze on the nuclear program. But US Secretary of State Pompeo set new additional requirements to prevent US threats – to suspend the ICBK intercontinental missile program<sup>31</sup>. Disagreement of similar magnitude between the United States and the DPRK is over the demands of the Korean party to conclude a peace treaty and the request for easing sanctions. The USA did not satisfy the demands of the DPRK, citing the refusal of the DPRK to completely denuclearize.

Thus, if the DPRK agrees to the US conditions regarding the suspension of the nuclear missile weapons development, termination of production and testing of nuclear missiles, then the United States will cease large-scale joint military exercises (USA-RoK), provide humanitarian assistance to the DPRK, arrange the US – DPRK office, provide 2 million barrels of light fuel oil and 500 thousand tons of refined oil. However, North Korea did not accept the terms of the United States and thus the second meeting of D. Trump and Kim Jong-un failed. Experts believe that one of the reasons for the disruption of the second US – DPRK summit is a change in China's policy. As is known, Kim Jong-un never visited China after coming to power for 6 years, but in 2018 paid a visit to the Celestial Empire four times. On June 30, for the first time in many years, President Xi Jinping paid an official visit to North Korea.

All these factors indicate that China is very carefully preparing for intervention in solving the Korean problem. The negative influence of China on the US-DPRK negotiation process is loud and clear, since prior to the second summit there were several instances of cancellation of meetings by the United States, referring to a distinct influence of China. DPRK's position is clear – it wants to include China in the process of a peace treaty conclusion.

At an international conference in Shanghai on December 1, 2018, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Kung Shian Yu said that in connection with the changing situation in the DPRK, it was time to modify sanctions against North Korea, and also emphasized the need to resume the six-party talks<sup>32</sup>. In addition, at the beginning of 2019, Kim

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<sup>31</sup> S.R. Joe, “Change of the Chinese position and the obstacles to the North Korea – American Summit”, in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 148, no. 2, p. 14-17.

<sup>32</sup> S.R. Joe, “Change of the Chinese position and the obstacles to the North Korea – American Summit”, in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 148, no. 2, p. 14-17.

Jong-un made a lightning visit to Beijing, which no doubt played a role in the US–DPRK negotiation process. In light of the continuation of the denuclearization process and the establishment of a peace process on the Korean Peninsula and in relations between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, there must also be substantial progress. And first of all, it is necessary to start with close economic and cultural cooperation without solving political problems, otherwise China may take the place of the Republic of Korea<sup>33</sup>.

After the failure of the Hanoi summit in 2019, the negotiation process on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula completely stopped, and North Korea launched a short-range missile twice in 2019 and, in October, launched an intercontinental missile. But unexpectedly, on June 30, 2019, 66 years after the armistice in the Korean War, a meeting of the heads of three states took place: the United States, the Republic of Korea, and the DPRK in the demilitarized zone (Panmunjom).

However, the meeting was very short and lasted 53 minutes. It became known that at an informal meeting that unexpectedly took place, the issue of resuming the negotiation process on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was discussed. US President Donald Trump emphasized the importance of the relationship that has developed over recent years. Trump also said that a special group will be created in the near future, led by Mike Pompeo, to prepare and negotiate denuclearization. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) also announced that the DPRK will make every effort to conduct the negotiation process on denuclearization. President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in emphasized that the meeting of the three leaders is of great importance for the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula, and despite the spontaneity of the meeting, it demonstrated the readiness to continue the negotiation process on denuclearization. But this does not mean that an agreement will be reached swiftly and smoothly.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid the Hanoi failure, it is necessary to analyse the reasons. There are several of them, but many researchers believe that the main reason for the failure is the so-called “top-down” method, which involves assigning solutions of issues only to senior managers<sup>34</sup>. Naturally, this method has advantages, since the efforts of the two presidents will determine the main provisions of the negotiations, and then the performers on both sides start elaborating them. Of course, such

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<sup>33</sup> K.T. Min, *Seoul – Pyongyang Megacity*, Mireae chang, Seoul, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> H.U. Im, “Hanoi Summit Failed: Problems and Perspectives of Denuclearization”, in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 153, no. 7, p. 24-25.

method can significantly speed up the preparatory process. But it also has its drawbacks, since in the event of insufficient study by the performers it can lead to failure, which is what happened in Hanoi. The parties did not sign the declarations, as they were not fully canvassed and assigned some key points to the heads of states, and as a result, the North Korean party could not accept the US proposal for denuclearization. Thus, the United States blamed the the failure of the summit on North Korea and believes that it is necessary to discuss a promising (large-scale) and immediate plan, and to draft a detailed roadmap of its implementation. By "full denuclearization", the US means a ban on testing, manufacturing, storage and use of nuclear missile and other weapons of mass destruction. There was a need to discuss the concept of complete irrevocable denuclearization in order to determine what is the final stage and what types of weapons are on the list (what and how much needs to be destroyed). How will the process take place, and who should control the progress of the process? In addition, a comprehensive, detailed plan should include a phased, stepwise partial easing of sanctions against North Korea, phased guarantees to maintain the regime, and the implementation of measures for the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula.

In our opinion, it will take quite a lot of time to draft, discuss, and agree on a comprehensive plan for denuclearization. Currently, given the upcoming election campaign in the United States and the complexity of the situation, the emergence of such a plan in the nearest future is improbable. Understanding the situation, North Korea insists on a phased plan with a partial lifting of sanctions, before discussing a comprehensive plan. China, RoK also support a phased denuclearization plan with partial lifting of sanctions. The Republic of Korea cannot begin the economic cooperation with the DPRK, in particular, it cannot implement the points of the joint declaration of the two summits, namely, the resumption of the Keson industrial complex and tourism on Mount Kymgansan.

It is evident that it is not easy to reduce disagreements between the parties, but both sides have displayed that they are ready to start searching for solutions. Thus, Stephen Biegun, the US Special Representative for North Korea stated that a soft approach to resolving the issue is required. There is talk that if North Korea goes for the complete freezing of the nuclear program and the destruction of the Yenben nuclear reactor, the United States will partially lift the ban on the export of North Korean coal and textiles <sup>35</sup>. The DPRK leader Kim Jong-un is also ready to resume

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<sup>35</sup> M.S. An, "Historical meeting at Panmunjom, North and South Korea need Bold relationship", in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 154, no. 8, p.7-12.

negotiations with the United States, but strongly disagrees with their position on lifting sanctions only after full denuclearization. At the seventh congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Jong-un announced the transition to the stage of economic reform, but denied pandering to the United States. Apparently, both parties are unlikely to make concessions and in this situation, the role of the Republic of Korea as an intermediary and a catalyst is growing more than ever.

The role of the Republic of Korea primarily consists in actively promoting and supporting the negotiation process. Secondly, it lies in the continuous proposal of creative ideas that would satisfy both parties, but the final decisions will be made by the USA and the DPRK. North Korea is not happy with the position of the Republic of Korea and calls for bolder steps: not to be a mediator, but to be a participant<sup>36</sup>. North Korea is not happy that the three economic projects that were approved at the two RK-DPRK summits have not yet been implemented due to disapproval from the United States.

According to many experts and researchers, the time has come when the Republic of Korea should commit a courageous act and, playing the role of mediator, go towards rapprochement with North Korea, and provide the United States with logical explanations. Indeed, at one time, a Nobel laureate, President Kim Dae-jung, contrary to the disapproval of the United States, went on to create, together with the DPRK, the Keson Industrial Complex and opened Mount Kymgansan for tourism. Most regrettably, the indecision of the Republic of Korea at present has led to the fact that Moon Jae-in is not perceived as a mediator or mediator of the settlement of US-North Korean relations neither by Washington nor by Pyongyang. Thus, Kwon Chon Gun, the head of the American department of the DPRK Foreign Ministry, emphasized the following: "...we do not need the South Korean authorities as an intermediary." But it should be emphasized that, according to many researchers, Moon Jae-in has become an integral part of the Pyongyang – Seoul – Washington axis.

Experts state that North Korea will not make unilateral concessions in any way, since it has learned a lesson from its past, and also because of the overthrow by the Americans of the regimes of Libya, Iraq, and events in Ukraine. Russian researcher Yevgeny Kim of the Centre for Korean

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<sup>36</sup> N.J. Lee, "Strengthening of the national consensus is the way of our initiative lifting", in *Unification Era*, 2019, vol. 153, no. 7, p. 12-17; Pyongyang announced the termination of negotiations with the United States on nuclear disarmament. Available at: <https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/north-korea-talks/5111742.html>.



Studies at the Institute of the Far East of the Russian Academy of Sciences believes that North Korea has already taken a number of serious unilateral steps. He believes that if the United States made advances, the DPRK would be ready to destroy the main nuclear complex in the presence of foreign observers. According to many researchers, the next US-DPRK summit will take place, but the question is when will this happen and whether Moon Jae-in, who made a certain contribution to the normalcy between the DPRK–USA and the DPRK–RK, can participate in it.

Events of 2018–2019 showed that despite the failure of the Hanoi summit, the parties are ready to continue the negotiation process on denuclearization. Given the firm position of the parties, it is necessary to develop a new approach to solving this problem, which includes: a review of the position and the search for compromise solutions that would satisfy both parties. China, Kazakhstan, the DPRK, Russia are prone to phased, synchronized action by both sides, therefore, to continue the dialogue in the political and diplomatic channel, the United States should reconsider its decision and apply a milder approach to resolving issues, otherwise there will be no shifts, since North Korea also will not make concessions without easing sanctions, guarantees of the regime and economic assistance. Naturally, the United States can formulate and include its wishes in this plan. This is the only way. The last meeting between the United States and the DPRK, which took place in Sweden (October 2019) and ended in nothing, confirms our conclusion.

The following measures are proposed to solve the Korean problem:

1. To formulate proposals of each of the parties, factoring in the current situation in the negotiation process.
2. Discussion of proposals and adoption of compromise decisions.
3. If it is impossible to compromise, it is necessary to create an international body, similar to the six-party talks, which should include all interested parties (at least the USA, DPRK, the Republic of Korea, China, and plus, as maximum, Russia and Japan).
4. The creation of an international body to monitor the implementation of decisions and provide guarantees to North Korea.
5. To formulate a real plan for the peaceful transformation of the Korean Peninsula and guarantees for the North Korean regime.
6. The Republic of Korea to take more decisive steps to implement the decisions of the two summits, contrary to the desire of the United States, because otherwise it would lose the full confidence of North Korea.