

DEBAT

Recteur de l'Institut d'Etat des relations internationales de Moscou (université MGIMO)

Philippe Chalmin, professeur à l'université Paris-Dauphine

Un petit peu comme dans le débat précédent, j'ai trouvé curieux que l'on ne parle pas de la Chine. Il me semble que si le Mur est tombé il y a 25 ans, c'est parce que l'URSS s'était effondrée. Or, le parrain de la Corée du Nord, il me semble que c'est toujours la Chine et que tant que la Chine conservera avec la Corée du Nord des relations quasi-filiales, il n'y aura pas de place pour une évolution du régime et donc pour une réunification. C'est une question, bien entendu.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thomas Bagger can respond to your question because he addressed the differences between Germany and Korea. He said that the difference between Germany and Korea is that for German reunification, the Soviet Union held the key. On the other hand, in the case of Korea, it is North Korea, rather than China, that holds the key. Would you like to react to his question?

Thomas Bagger, directeur de la planification politique à l'office fédéral allemand des Affaires étrangères

I would second that point. I think there is quite an interesting development in the Chinese appreciation or non-appreciation of what is going on in North Korea and therefore a dynamic also in the South Korean/Chinese relationship. However, I would also agree that, of course, there is a difference. China plays a hugely important role for what happens in North Korea and what happens on the peninsula, but it does not hold the key to the same degree as the Soviet Union did in 1989 to what happened in Germany and in Europe. Both of these things are important but I am not in a position to talk about the Korean/Chinese relationship. There are others here who should do that.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Excellent. Ambassador Ju?

Ju Chul-Ki, conseiller présidentiel aux Affaires étrangères et à la Sécurité, République de Corée

Thank you very much. The ties between North Korea and China remain very strong, and China hopes to see prolonged stability and security in the region. China does not want a recurrence of an armed conflict in the region or in the vicinity. On the other hand, South Korea deeply strengthened its ties with China and we have very strong economic patterns. An FTA between Korea and China was recently announced, as well as many other things. We have many summit level meetings and quite close contact and conversations.



What has changed in China is that China does not want North Korea to produce or develop nuclear weapons and China, as others, as a P5 member of the Security Council, cannot allow the state to develop nuclear weapons because one must uphold the principle of non-proliferation and an NPT regime. That makes the relationship between North Korea and China a little bit tricky at the moment, but I think solving this problem and resolving the conflict means we need to consult with each other. We are in close contact. As was already mentioned, my colleagues went to Russia and China and now our experts are in Japan so among the stakeholders there is constant contact. To find a permanent solution, which is unification, we need to rely on Chinese support, and I think China has no difficulty with that approach. Thank you.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you. We can have two more questions.

Tatsuo Masuda, professeur à la Nagoya University of Commerce and Business Graduate School, Japan

Thank you very much. I have a question for Ambassador Ju. There is a rumour everywhere that in today's world of uncertainty, the nuclear umbrella of the United States over some part of Asia may not last forever. Some Asian countries wish to have their own weaponry system based on nuclear. Some said South Korea may wish to have the North united without giving up nuclear capability because that could be a last resort for safety, even without the nuclear coverage of the United States. Is this just a rumour or do you have any feeling about this in South Korea? Thank you.

Ju Chul-Ki, conseiller présidentiel aux Affaires étrangères et à la Sécurité, République de Corée

I think it is a complete rumour, a groundless rumour. I do not know. It may be promoted by some but, frankly, while North Korea is developing nuclear weapons, we are developing our policy for non-proliferation. We are now negotiating with the United States about a new type of nuclear agreement and we want to be one of the model champions of non-proliferation. Even though in Korea we have a few people who may emphasise that we must have enrichment in terms of having a new nuclear agreement with the United States, that is not the general notion of the Korean public and the Korean government. We want to uphold the principle of non-proliferation and stick to the point and we want to be a model country in promoting a peaceful existence, respecting the rules of NPT and IAEA.

There is no doubt that we hope that unification will be done peacefully and if there is still something remaining in North Korea about nuclear devices, then it has to be carried away by responsible members of the Security Council. I do not think there is any doubt on that. We dearly hope we will not develop in that wrong direction. Let us unite our forces in preserving the current NPT system. Thank you.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you.

Serge Sur, professeur émérite de droit public à l'Université Panthéon-Assas



Je voudrais poser une question tout à fait naïve qui peut être adressée à l'ensemble des membres du panel. Qui souhaite la réunification de la Corée ?

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Ambassador Ju will respond to that question.

Ju Chul-Ki, conseiller présidentiel aux Affaires étrangères et à la Sécurité, République de Corée

I think in Korea, the larger public wants unification because we have been one country for the past 2,000 and something years. 70 years is very long and by emphasising the so-called unification bonanza or whatever – in Korea we call it the big bonanza - we may do that. Suddenly, public attention is drawn to the fact that unification is something that you should not be afraid of. It may create further dynamism for Korea's continued growth and enable the region to prosper together. I think a lot of the public in Korea supports that notion, but I do not know whether our friend here shares the same viewpoint. We are there in Korea. We have this new preparatory committee preparing and they are supported by the public.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you.

Fen Hampson, directeur du programme de sécurité internationale et politique du CIGI ; co-directeur de la Commission mondiale sur la gouvernance d'internet ; professeur chancelier à l'université de Carleton, Ottawa, Canada

I wonder if the two Korean members of the panel could comment on the stability of public attitudes towards what have clearly been oscillations in policy, from the Sunshine Policy to cooling, now a policy based, as we heard, more on reciprocity. Is the public behind it and when there is disappointment, as there may well be, how do you manage that?

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

I think, again, Ambassador Ju is the obvious person to respond to that question. Before he does, would anybody from the panel like to address that issue? Marcus?

Marcus Noland, vice-président exécutif et directeur des études, Peterson Institute for International Economics

I would be happy to address two of the other questions that have been asked, but I am not an expert on South Korean public opinion.



Ju Chul-Ki, conseiller présidentiel aux Affaires étrangères et à la Sécurité, République de Corée

Very briefly, before we had the five-year progressive government, which supported the Sunshine Policy. Then we had another very conservative government. Now we have a second conservative government and we launched the so-called unification preparatory committee, the participants in which are largely from the conservative element, but there are several people representing other opinions. Astonishingly, we found a deluge of consensus emerging out of this preparatory committee and I am very hopeful that this committee may play a central role in collecting public opinion or national opinion so that we can have easier access to difficult issues, which is the unification issue and the strategic issue of talking with North Korea and partners.

Overall, I think we are more positive that we might consolidate public opinion in the right direction, which is working towards a peaceful, gradual unification and preparing the groundwork to support both government and parliamentary viewpoints on the unification policy.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you. Perhaps we can have one last question before we adjourn for lunch.

From the floor

Thank you, sir. Today, as we know, the economy dominates politics. Keeping this in mind, are we hearing from China or can we ignore China if we are thinking about the unification process? My feeling is that if we involve Japan, China, Russia, the US and if we initiate a unification process, is it possible? Please comment on that. Secondly, keeping the nuclear issue apart, keeping the other issues, whether the parliament issue or the economic element or other issues, is it possible that unification will go ahead in that way? Thank you very much.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you. Is there any reaction from the panellists? I would also like to hear from Ambassador Jianmin since he is from China.

Marcus Noland, vice-président exécutif et directeur des études, Peterson Institute for International Economics

The absence of a Chinese representative from the sample, with all due respect to our hosts, I think is really a lacunae. China has enormous influence on North Korea and Chinese attitudes and policies are absolutely critical. In my remarks, I referred to a survey by the Ilmin Institute of International Relations. What is very interesting about that survey is that the Chinese experts surveyed have very distinct views relative to the non-Chinese experts. The non-Chinese experts saw China as the key to resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. They saw Chinese pressure on North Korea as absolutely essential and with respect to the question of who wants unification, they saw China as being the single biggest beneficiary from Korean unification.

The Chinese experts in turn viewed China as having much less influence on North Korea than the non-Chinese do. They think bilateral engagement by the United States is the key to resolving the nuclear issue and what is really interesting is that there is complete uniformity among these 135 experts that North Korea will not surrender its nuclear programme for removal of sanctions or economic inducements. The old idea that somehow this was a bargaining chip, that North Korea was simply going to negotiate away for a package of goodies; at this point in time, there is no belief in that theory or hypothesis any more.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you, Marcus. The last intervention of this session is from Ambassador Wu.

Wu Jianmin, vice-président exécutif du China Institute for Innovation and Development Strategy

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. I think we should not exaggerate China's influence over North Korea. A good example is that we do not want North Korea to go nuclear, but they just ignore our advice. We asked them, 'What can assure your security?' It is not a nuclear arsenal, but development. When people are hungry with empty stomachs, you cannot have security. They just ignore our advice.

The other thing you see this year is that my President chose to come to Seoul first. Our North Korean friends are very angry. Not long ago, we hosted a Chun-sang forum in Beijing to talk about the Asian security issue. On that issue, I think Richard Haass is right. What is missing in the Asian region is security architecture. I think we are open-minded. We like to talk about it. We invited North Korea to participate in this forum. They declined the invitation. Many other countries joined this forum. I think this issue is quite complicated. We should not exaggerate the influence of China.

What can we do together? I think the international community, the US, Korea, China, Japan, Russia have to join hands to exert influence over North Korea to lead them to give up their nuclear arsenal. I do not see this prospect at this stage. Thank you.

Choi Young-Jin, professeur à l'université Yonsei, ancien ambassadeur aux Etats-Unis, ancien chef de la mission des Nations unies en Côte d'Ivoire

Thank you. I would like to thank the five panellists for their brief and succinct presentations and the audience for their attention. There will be a lunch debate with former Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo. Thank you.