

Revisit Decolonized State-building & Post-Korean War Peacebuilding and Its Implication to R.O.K.'s Implementation of SDG 16 in Fragile States

Executive Summary

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The Korean Peninsula had undergone a turbulent transition from the sudden independence from the Japanese imperialism and the debatable division of the two Koreas since the end of the World War II. Whereas the North Korea accepted communism, South Korea adopted liberal democracy as its governing ideology. In the South Korea, the United States established its military government as a transitional authority in the process of decolonization. During the struggle and ideological conflict of state-building efforts between South and North Korea, the United Nations launched ambitious relief and reconstruction mission in partnership with the United States to provide nascent political and economic support.

The U.S. military government didn't recognized Korea as a self-governing country, nor had it expertise of political economic and socio-cultural contexts of the liberated country, that is to say lack of preparations for effective military rule. Therefore, instead of embracing the moderate and center-left groups, which was popularly supported, the U.S. military government had been lukewarm to reflect the Korean national self-reliant sentimentalism, which failed to establish the government participated by the left and right wing. Rather, it intended to reemploy the pro-Japanese intellectuals and authorities for the purpose of early and smooth stabilization. This ignorance of the socio-political contexts resulted in prolonged conflicts of power struggle between the right and the left, violent repression and human rights abuse to frame and marginalize moderate and innocent people who longed for freedom and equality. Physical and structural violence, derived from state violence, ultimately procrastinated democracy and governance, human rights based justice and rule of law, people-centered security and public order.

To make it worse, the Korean War put the peninsula into irrevocable turmoil. The War was called on robust and coercive action of the U.N. member states, the first case to apply a large-scale international security and peace enforcement mechanism, centered on the United States and other 15 allies, and endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution No. 83 (1950.6.27). It labelled South Korea as the main consumer of international security apparatus.

Consumed in millions of casualties and completely destroyed for three years (1950-53), South Korea had received emergency humanitarian aids through various channels such as bilateral and multilateral organizations, international NGOs (INGO) and religious organizations.

Firstly, UN Civil Affairs Command Korea (UNCACK) was mandated to prevent disease, starvation and civilian disturbance, but focused on the public health sector. Secondly, civilian humanitarian agencies (CHA) involved in fund raising and direct relief activities in Korea based on Busan. From July 1950 to November 1952, Individuals and private voluntary organizations donated \$ 10.9 million through the United Nations.

In parallel, the U.S. launched a strong initiative of economic revitalization so that the South Korea might become a model of liberal democratic country, rising from the war-torn country as well as playing a role in defense line to prevent the spread of communism in the Northeast Asia.

With regard to main actors of economic revitalization, the Economic Cooperation Administration Mission in Korea (ECAMIK), established as a follow-up to the South Korea-U.S. concluded in December 1948 was primarily intended to support basic national defense capabilities and economic stabilization. Further, UN Korea Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) exercised overall authority to plan and manage the relief and reconstruction of Korea, mainly responsible for socio-economic reconstruction of the private sector and its full-scale activities began after the ceasefire in 1953, contributing USD 127 million dollars to 260 projects in the mid- to long-term development of postwar Korea. FAO, WHO, and UNESCO had also established five-year plans for agriculture, health and education in their fields.

With a cordial supports from public and private donors, the South Korea has solved the basic human needs through emergency humanitarian assistance. By building the foundation of economic revitalization based on bilateral and multilateral aid for recovery and reconstruction after the Korean War, relief to development approach had been moderately applied. In particular,

under the Cold War system, the strategic goal of prevention of communist power in the Northeast Asia was consistent with the development needs of the South Korean people, and the donor's will and the aid volume remained constant. The South Korea also maintained its ownership and strong commitment to self-reliance as a partner country.

Of course, in spite of successful economic development, physical and structural violence, derived from ideological conflicts had been submerged in institution for a considerable period of time. Mature civil societies and people's movement finally erupted in the 1980s, which led to the democratization, protection of human rights and political freedom.

Learned from the lessons of the South Korean case in peacebuilding perspective, it is necessary to take a transformational approach that leads to more fundamental change of causes of conflict, derived from structural and cultural violence rather than stabilization approach to return to pre-conflict status quo. Secondly, economic reconstruction and revitalization are important, but peacebuilding requires a broader, cross-sectoral perspective. In particular, various sectors should be considered, such as democratization and good governance, human rights based justice and rule of law, people-centered safety, security and public order, and stable provision of essential social services. Thirdly, the in-depth analysis and understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural context of the field in peacebuilding should be stressed. A frequent mistake is to transplant a certain system from the outsider's perspective without understanding the long and customized conflict resolution and social interaction methods in the field, which can lead to another conflict. Therefore, it is important to define any sectors to improve or develop through respect and understanding of various local contexts. Finally, it is important to cultivate experts with peace competence, so to speak civilian peacebuilders corps and establish an institutional base for their field activities. Peacebuilding experts should be trained to have a multi-layered understanding of the concept of peace and to analyze the dynamic conflicts in the field and to transform them peacefully. And noted is that safety, physical and mental well-being, and appropriate financial and infringe benefits should be ensured, so that they can perform well the tasks assigned in the stressful and sometimes dangerous field environment.