

[Dialogue with Johan Galtung]

Northeast Asia in Tension, Seeking for Peace

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■ Causes of Conflict

It is absolutely natural for human beings to feel incompatible with others. Thus, conflict will remain part of our life as long as the human species survives.

■ Democratic Peace

While Immanuel Kant developed the idea that democracies do not fight against one another, what really matters is who they are and what their beliefs are. Statistical data show that the top four countries who have been engaged in conflicts in modern history are the U.S., Israel, the U.K. and Turkey. It is notable that they share Abrahamic religions whether it is Christianity or Islam. Surprisingly, Japan and Germany are very low on the list of the most belligerent nations in the modern history. The U.S., in particular, has regarded itself as the country chosen by God ever since the Puritans landed on American soil, and this kind of belief is the key determinant of belligerency.

■ The Korean Peninsula

In contrast to the commonly held view, North Korea is a Confucian country, not a communist one. In fact, South Korea and North Korea have many things in common including strong influence of Confucianism, filial piety, and diligent work spirit among others. If South Korea and North Korea can start cooperating on non-military issues where they can agree, it would be possible to overcome the current obsession with the North's nuclear weapons program.

We should not demonize the North Koreans and their leaders. If a person travels to the North and really see how people live there, they will find the North Korean people surprisingly normal.

■ North Korean Nuclear Weapons

There could be various motivations behind North Korean nuclear weapons program such as regime security, bargaining chip and pride. But the most important point to remember is that there is no way to peace without having serious dialogue with North Korea. Peace must be sought in peaceful ways and should be built on equal terms. Those who want to talk to North Korea to address the



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nuclear issue should first recognize North Korea as an equal partner.

■ Sanctions on North Korea

Economic sanctions against the North Korean nuclear weapons program are unfair given that many other countries did not face such sanctions when they were developing nuclear weapons against the international norm.

The U.S. has been orchestrating sanctions against North Korea in the hope that it will collapse if it is pressured hard enough. But there will be no collapse of North Korea as there was no demise of South Korea in the 1970s when it was faced with multiple challenges and many predicted its collapse. The collapse of "collapsism" is the best we can hope for.

■ The Fall of the U.S. Empire

The prediction that the U.S. empire will not last longer than 2020 has been largely fulfilled at the moment.

The U.S. is increasingly losing its grips on its key allies as European countries refused to fight with it in Ukraine and it is also being isolated in the Western hemisphere. President Obama's capitulation to Cuba is just one sign of that. Thus, the U.S. has started to do the killing by itself because others have refused to participate in dirty wars. In the past, the allies of the U.S. have done the most of the killing for the U.S. empire.