

An Analysis of the State of North Korea's Human Security and the Possibility of Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the elements of the crises and challenges of South-North Korean cooperation after the sixth nuclear test in North Korea in 2017 and to consider the possibility of South-North Korean cooperation concerning human security and the actual state of human security in North Korea in the sectors of welfare and food. Most importantly, the welfare and food sectors have become the most important issue of human security in North Korea due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These are directly connected to its survival accompanied by urgency and sensitivity. Welfare and food support are considered a matter in the field that can achieve cooperation without any strong objection from North Korea in addition to international cooperation for humanitarian purposes. If these forms of South-North Korean cooperation become possible, they could become the trigger that opens the gate of communication in the South-North Korean relationship that is fixed with chronic welfare and food problems in North Korea and the relief of the economic sanctions in North Korea as prescribed by the UN and the US. The possibility of South-North Korean exchange through enhanced human security may be expanded to the relief of North Korean sanctions for the assurance of humanitarian activity, international cooperation, and governance construction. At the same time, if South-North Korean cooperation is approached from a human security point of view, it may create momentum that results in the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula by acting as a catalyst that could relieve the problem of welfare and food faced by North Korea and transform the hardened South-North Korean relationship into a more conversational paradigm.

Keywords: *Human Security, South-North Korean Cooperation, Economic Sanctions on North Korea, Humanitarian Support, Governance*

I. Introduction

With the recent virus outbreak and spread throughout the world, it is made apparent that the world is a globalized single entity and a community of life. The common recognition that protecting precious lives is one of the most important tasks of the state, society, and individuals has expanded the concept of security and drawn more attention to the importance of community. In the same vein, the issues associated with the stagnant inter-Korean exchange and cooperation due to COVID-19 need to be discussed in the post-COVID-19 era. Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation is a controversial topic to discuss as it is affected by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs; some argue that although they recognize the importance of improving inter-Korean relations, it is yet too premature to discuss inter-Korean exchange and cooperation without a tangible solution to the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that inter-Korean exchange and cooperation is one of the core tasks that the Korean community - both North and South - must solve.

Neither the will of the conservative nor progressive governments of South Korea alone cannot solve the issue of Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. Moreover, North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles have a profound impact on inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. The Park Geun-hye administration has provided 39.1 billion won to UN agencies in North Korea during its 4 years in office, while the Moon Jae-in administration has no record of support. The Moon Jae-in government held an Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Promotion Council on September 21, 2017, to review the requests for the support it received from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). The requests asked for US \$3.5 million to UNICEF for vaccines, essential medicines, and nutritional aids for North Korean children and pregnant women and US\$4.5 million to WFP for malnourished children and pregnant women. However, the Moon government postponed the support plan to 2018 in comprehensive consideration of North Korea's nuclear tests and launch of the ballistic missile, Hwasong, in 2017. The plan has not yet been implanted until now. Because North Korea violated the 'moratorium of nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests' imposed in 2018 and continued missile tests as late as early 2022, some argue that although they recognize the importance of improving inter-Korean relations, it is yet too premature to discuss inter-Korean exchange and cooperation without a tangible solution to the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that inter-Korean exchange and cooperation is one of the core tasks that the Korean community - both North and South - must solve. This study examines inter-Korean exchange and cooperation from the perspective of human security, which lies at the heart of non-traditional security, and suggests possibilities.

Though there are not many studies conducted on supports provided to North Korea through inter-Korean exchange and cooperation for human security-related matters, such as food, health, and disaster, most of these studies were carried out in three directions. Firstly, previous studies conducted by Kim, Daein (2020),¹⁾ Han, Kiho (2020),²⁾ and Kim, Taewon (2021)³⁾ investigated supports for North Korean and inter-Korean exchange for each area of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. They demonstrated the necessity of humanitarian aid, review and support of related laws, and vitalization of the support for exchange and cooperation, suggesting that inter-Korean exchange and cooperation should be reflected in related policies. Secondly, Park Youngmin (2021), Lee Shinwha (2009),⁴⁾ and Kim Youngjin (2021)⁵⁾ analyzed the state of North Korea's human security, such as food security, health security, environment security, and human rights, highlighting the need for providing assistance to North Korea and engaging in inter-Korean exchange and cooperation from the perspective of human security. They examined the necessity of securing human security in North Korea by analyzing how poor the human security was in North Korea with the sanctions the US and international community imposed on the country against its nuclear weapons and missile programs amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirdly, the studies of Park, Sungyul (2021),⁶⁾ Kang, Dongwan, and Jeong, Eunmee (2010)⁷⁾ investigated measures to promote international and inter-Korean cooperation, establish cooperative partnerships, and provide humanitarian aid by analyzing changes and influence factors of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. They expected that North Korea's 4th (2016) and 5th (2016) nuclear tests and missile launches (2016) would have an impact on inter-Korean exchange and cooperation as the UN Security Council's sanctions were intensified and the US sanctions against North Korea were tightened to another level, proposing active utilization of the exemption clauses of the UN sanctions and a

1) Kim, Daein, "Revitalization of Rule of Law Assistance Projects in North Korea through International Institutions: Focusing on UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)," *Journal of Law of Northeast Asia Law*, Vol. 14, 2020.

2) Han, Kiho, "Institutional Research for Sustainable North Korean Development Cooperation," *Journal of Legislation Research*, Vol. 58, 2020.

3) Kim, Taewon, "Legal review of Inter-Korean Health Cooperation: Focus on Infectious Disease," *Sungkyunkwan Law Review*, 2021.

4) Korea University, "Non-traditional Security and Inter-Korean Cooperation Measures," *Ministry of Unification's Final Report on Policy Service Project*, 2009.

5) Kim, Youngjin, "Human Rights Issues in North Korea from a Human Security Perspective," *Border Area Unification*, Vol. 3, 2019.

6) Park, Sungyul, "Trend and Influence Factors of Inter Korean Exchange and Cooperation: Focusing on Sanctions Against North Korea and COVID-19," *National Strategy*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2021.

7) Kang, Dongwan & Jeong, Eunmee, "The Structure and Dynamics of Inter-Korean Exchanges and Cooperation Governance: Focusing on Evaluation of Network Transformation in the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun Administration," *Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2010.

consensus view on humanitarian aid to North Korea.

As such, previous studies, in general, emphasized the importance of human security in North Korea coincided with increased non-traditional security threats and studied human security by grafting humanitarian aid to North Korea and inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. However, it fell short of suggesting practical alternatives that could be politically instituted. In this regard, this study examines human security in North Korea, which suffers from the triple hits of COVID-19, the United Nations and bilateral sanctions, and economic hardship, and seeks a breakthrough for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation for health and food.

Due to its nature, this study was conducted by surveying relevant literature and reviewing the Internet data centered on official documents of the Ministry of National Defense and other government agencies, academic papers, and dissertations. In this paper, Chapter II shows the state of human security in North Korea, Chapter III examines the progress of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation and impediments thereof, and Chapter IV suggests the possibilities of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation in terms of human security. This study suggests the possibilities of human security in terms of health and food for vitalizing stagnated inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, which is difficult to address with the traditional concept of security.

II. The State of Human Security in North Korea

As the times change, the concept of “security” also changes. During the Cold War, the concept of security centered on national defense and diplomacy in contrast to the era of globalization in which the concept has been expanded and diversified to include not only military security but also environment, economy, disease, and human rights. With the changes in the concept of security, the concept of “human security” has become more important in security cooperation. In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocated human security in the Human Development Report, pivoting around its two main axes of “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want.” Of the seven areas of human security, the areas of health security and food security, as the key elements of the freedom from want, are directly related to human rights and life.⁸⁾

Human security, from the standpoint of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, can help North Korea alleviate its problems related to health care and food by putting an end to the triple hardship and achieving economic development through financial

8) For further discussion, see Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991; United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: UNDP, 1994), pp. 22~23.

support from the international community and South Korea. Health care and food are recognized as the most existential threats among the seven categories of human security and are recognized and supported not only by the United Nations, such as FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization) as serious threats but also by global governance. Non-traditional security issues, such as infectious diseases, hunger, climate change, disasters, and terrorism, require more cooperation and joint response, rather than conflict and hostility, compared to traditional security issues. Cooperation can play a catalytic role in solving non-traditional security issues which cannot be easily resolved through a traditional security approach. In this respect, the urgent and sensitive issues of North Korea's health and food, as part of human security, can facilitate the resumption of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. Accordingly, this study limits its scope to the health care and food sectors.

UN agencies and various NGOs in Korea and abroad aim to improve food security by assisting technology development for vegetable cultivation and agricultural production, provide infant nutrition and welfare for the elderly, and support essential health care services such as vaccinations. According to the "Korea NGO Council for Cooperation with North Korea" (KNCCNK), which represents about 60 organizations providing humanitarian aid to North Korea, 33 organizations, in 2004 alone, provided 111.7 billion won in aid to North Korea. After the May 24 measures, the number of support groups gradually varied from 42 in 2010 to 35 in 2011, 16 in 2012, 15 in 2013, 17 in 2014, and 21 in 2015, showing a gradual decrease without a sharp drop. This is because South Korea applied humanitarian cooperation as an exception to the May 24 measures and provided various assistance to the North with international organizations to circumvent the measures. However, the cessation of the Kaesong Industrial Complex in 2016 and the tightening of the UN-US sanctions against North Korea had a significant impact on the private organizations' support for North Korea. The number of North Korea supporting organizations plummeted from 21 in 2015 to 2 in 2016 and 1 in 2017, while the amount of support also decreased from 11 billion won in 2015 to 2.8 billion won in 2016 and 1.1 billion won in 2017. After the inauguration of the Moon Jae-in government in 2018, inter-Korean relations seemed to improve, showing an increase in the number of the organizations and the amount of support (13 organizations, 6.5 billion won in 2018) and (15 organizations, 17 billion won in 2019). However, the number went down back to 5 organizations and 1.1 billion won in 2020. Sanctions against North Korea, quarantine and self-lockdown in North Korea to prevent the inflow of COVID-19, and North Korea's refusal to accept external support after the Hanoi summit are presumed to have an impact on the decrease in inter-Korean humanitarian exchange and cooperation in 2020.⁹⁾

9) Park, Sungyul (2021), p. 78.

Therefore, securing stable inter-Korean humanitarian exchange and cooperation has been difficult due to inter-Korean tensions, domestic political environment, and security and foreign policies of the US and others. The food and health sectors have been identified as the greatest weakness of the North Korean system and the most urgent and sensitive areas of human security. Although South Korea, international organizations, and private organizations have promoted various programs, cooperation and institutionalization have not yet reached a mature, stable stage.¹⁰⁾

A. The State of Health Security in North Korea

Infectious diseases and medicine shortages in North Korea do not only affect the survival of North Koreans, but they can also affect the health of South Koreans with infectious diseases spreading through the border areas, even placing the sense of community of the Korean people at risk of collapse.¹¹⁾ Advocating a socialist healthcare system, North Korea's healthcare system is said to consist of a free treatment system, a preventive medicine system, and a regional doctor system; however, the economic crisis in the 1990s left the system in name only, placing many residents in the blind spot of the system.¹²⁾

The basis of socialist medicine is preventive medicine. In North Korea, prevention of diseases and protection and promotion of people's health and life by prioritizing prevention over treatment are set to be its basic missions. Nevertheless, since most of the assets of North Korea's unified healthcare system are financed by the national budget, the healthcare system as a whole will inevitably suffer if the national budget is not secured.¹³⁾ In the 2019 Global Health Estimates, WHO identified stroke, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive disease, tuberculosis, lung cancer, lower respiratory tract infection, traffic accident, hypertensive heart disease, liver cancer, and liver cirrhosis as the top 10 causes of death among North Koreans. In North Korea, tuberculosis, a traditional infectious disease, is reported to be a serious issue. According to the statistical data of the WHO, the number of new or recurrent cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 people in a year has remained almost the same since 2000. 1 in 200 people in North Korea has tuberculosis. In contrast, only 59 per 100,000 people in South Korea had tuberculosis in 2019, and the number is on the decline.¹⁴⁾ < Global Tuberculosis Report 2020 > ranked North Korea as the 6th county with the highest mortality rate of tuberculosis.¹⁵⁾ These numbers clearly

10) Park, Youngmin, "A Study on the Possibility of Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation from the Perspective of Human Security Theory," *Global Studies Education*, Vol. 13 (2021), p.45.

11) Seo, Bohyuk, *Human Security and Inter-Korean Cooperation*, Seoul: Acanet, 2013, p. 96.

12) Choi, Eunjoo, "North Korea's Health Care System and Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation," *Sejong Policy Brief*, 2020-07 (2020), p. 1.

13) Choi, Eunjoo (2020), pp. 4~7.

14) Lee, Hyewon, et al., "Status and Trends of Tuberculosis Deaths in Korea, 2001-2020," *Weekly Health and Disease*, Vol. 14, No. 48 (2021), p. 2.

represent the state of human security in North Korea where poor health and medical welfare directly affect the survival of the people.

B. The State of Food Security in North Korea

In the meantime, North Korea has kept secret the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 but officially recognized it for the first time on May 13, 2022. The number of COVID-19 cases has reached 400,000. Although the number of patients is gradually decreasing, international organizations such as the WHO question the reliability of the COVID 19 information provided by North Korea and point out that it is difficult to trust.¹⁶⁾ From the perspective of a community of life, supplying food to North Korea as a humanitarian aid can be considered an inter-Korean cooperation project. The chronic shortage of food North Korea has suffered from is well-documented, and it is not expected to improve in a short time.

On March 23, 2021, North Korea reported to The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) that it produced 5,523,119 tons of food in 2020. The number is similar to 5,542,000 tons, the average annual production of food between 2012 and 2018, although it was 17% less than the record high production of 6.654,000 tons in 2019.¹⁷⁾ According to the UNFAO, the food shortage in North Korea had gradually decreased for the first three years since Kim Jong-un's succession to power in 2012, increased after 2015, and reached a peak in 2018. It is expected to escalate into a crisis for 10.1 million North Korean, about 40% of the North Korean Population in 2020, due to COVID-19 and other reasons.

Graphs showing fortified foods delivered to children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers are often found among the data on the monthly food (nutritional) aid provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) to North Korea. It is worth noting that aid has significantly decreased since the collapse of the 2019 US-North Korea summit in Hanoi. North Korea's trade with China, which slowed down after its peak in 2013 and plummeted in late 2017 due to sanctions against North Korea, is on a rapid decrease, both for import and export, due to COVID-19. Agricultural, forestry, and livestock products accounted for 0% of exports and 35.8% of imports; 71.9% of imports are farm products that are directly related to livelihoods. Thus, food aid to North Korea takes priority in terms of human security as it is directly related to the survival of North Koreans. North Korea's food aid is directly related to the survival of the North Korean people, and it can be said that it takes priority over anything else. Through food, humanitarian measures in connection with international governance can become a point of contact for inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation.

15) Park, Youngmin (2021), p. 52.

16) <https://www.edaily.co.kr/news/read?newsId=01105366632363360&mediaCodeNo=257&OutLnkChk=Y> (Search date: 2022.6.19).

17) Kim, Younghoon, "KREI Agricultural Trends in North Korea," Vol. 23, No. 1 (2021), p. 11.

III. Progress of Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation and Impediments

Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation have been continued within the framework of inter-Korean relations which officially began in 1948 with the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea on the north and south sides of the Korean Peninsula, respectively. Inter-Korean relations have been fluctuating between conflict and cooperation for the past 73 years, showing contradicting complexions of war and precarious peace. In short, inter-Korean relations have been built between conflict and peace. Exchanges and cooperation are necessary to improve inter-Korean relations; improvement in inter-Korean relations is often led by exchange and cooperation. In fact, inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are a channel that serves as a network to secure mutual homogeneity between the two parts of Korea while connecting North Korea with South Korea and other parts of the world. This is the biggest reason why we should cherish and manage inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. However, inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation, which were expanded and further developed with the Mt. Geumgang tour (1998), Kaesong Industrial Complex (2003), and two inter-Korean summits (2000, 2007), have withered due to the May 24 measures taken by the South Korean government in response to North Korea's provocations, such as the Cheonan sinking (2010), suspension of the Kaesong Industrial Complex (2016), and tightened international sanctions against North Korea. Moreover, North Korea virtually cut off inter-Korean exchange and cooperation by locking itself down due to COVID-19 and successively refusing to have inter-Korean exchange and cooperation.¹⁸⁾

With structural factors such as international sanctions against the 11 missile tests and North Korea's harsh remarks toward South Korea during the first three months of 2022, North Korea's refusal to exchange or cooperate makes it even more difficult to achieve a breakthrough in inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. The factors hindering inter-Korean exchange and cooperation can be understood from three different aspects: the international community's sanctions against North Korea, North Korea's national interest and policy, and South Korea's policy and institutionalization concerning North Korea. UN Security Council can impose sanctions to maintain and restore international peace and security in accordance with Chapter 7 and Article 41 of the UN Charter that may comprehensively limit the target country in terms of economy and trade with measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans, and financial or commodity restrictions and without involving the use of armed force. The UN Security Council has imposed collective sanctions on North Korea in response to the country's violation of the non-proliferation treaty in order to maintain international peace and security by blocking the transfer of financial

18) Park, Sungyul (2021), p. 70.

resources necessary for the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) such as nuclear weapons. Similarly, the United States has been playing a vital role in leading the UN sanctions on North Korea and urging each country to implement sanctions resolutions on North Korea. It also prepared and implemented the framework of strict sanctions against North Korea through legislation and executive orders in the US. In the end, the sanctions on North Korea imposed by UN Security Council and the US are interconnected in terms of securing normative power and enhancing executive power driven by the North Korea-US relations and the position of the US.¹⁹⁾

North Korea's national interests, including political independence and territorial preservation, seek to establish ideology and system identity, reinforce military security, and promote strategies concerning South Korea in connection with which North Korea is highly likely to strategically respond or give up. The national policies that North Korea has implemented since Kim Jong-un's acceded to power, from the stance of nuclear and missile development in relation to national interests, include the Economy-Nuclear Parallel Policy (2013); Completion of Nuclear Force (2016-2017); Improvement of Relations with South Korea and Nuclear Negotiations with the US (2018); Deadlocks in Nuclear Negotiations and Severance of Relations with South Korea (2019); and Self-Reliance and Head-On Breakthrough (2020). When its nuclear development was not concerned, North Korea showed a cooperative attitude toward inter-Korean exchange and cooperation; on the matters related to its nuclear development or the dignity of its supreme leader, North Korea went as far as suspending inter-Korean exchange and cooperation.

Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation have been influenced by the South Korean government's ideological tendencies and the basis of North Korean policy. The progressive government has prioritized dialogue, exchange, and cooperation with North Korea, while the conservative government has focused on a give-and-take type of exchange and cooperation under the principle of reciprocity. The May 24 measures (2010) taken by the Lee Myungbak government in response to the sinking of the Cheonan and the closure of the Kaesong Industrial Complex by the Park Geunhye administration in consideration of North Korea's development of nuclear weapons are good examples of inter-Korean exchange blocked by the conservative government. On the contrary, the Moon Jaein government presented a vision of peaceful coexistence and shared prosperity and suggested developing inter-Korean relations based on the principle of mutual respect. This vision resulted in a temporary resumption of the inter-Korean summit and exchange in various fields in 2018 despite the international sanctions imposed on North Korea.

It is essential to explore the possibility of inter-Korean continental cooperation as a humanitarian measure such as human peace, human life, and fundamental rights. In

19) Park, Sungyul (2021), p. 83.

particular, health care and food are two of the key areas among the seven categories of human security. There are very few problems that the two Koreas can solve for the issues mentioned in Chapter III. It must be supported by the international community from a humanitarian perspective in terms of institutionalization of inter-Korean continental cooperation and human security.

IV. Possibilities of Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation in Terms of Human Security

A. Institutionalization of inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation and Strategic Targeting of Escape Clauses in Related Policies.

The possibilities of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation can be found in the support of the people who share a community of life on the Korean Peninsula, mutual national interests of North and South Korea, and policy diversification. Institutionalization can be regarded as the process by which all organizations and procedures related to inter-Korean exchange acquire value and stability. National interests and policies initially have contradictory ideologies. While national interests cannot be constricted, national policy toward unification has a lot of room for change.

The South Korean government enacted the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act and the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund Act in August 1990 to institutionalize exchange and cooperation with North Korea. Since then, the Development of Inter-Korean Relations Act (2005), Act on Inter-Korean Confirmation of the Life or Death of Separated Families and Promotion Of Exchange (2009), and Kaesong Industrial District Support Act (2015) were also enacted. The enactment of the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Act and the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund Act has facilitated exchange and cooperation activities by various entities, including private organizations, and laid a legal and institutional basis for securing necessary finances.²⁰⁾ The legal system should be reorganized to avoid conflicts, and inter-Korean exchange and cooperation for unification should be expanded by acknowledging each other in mutual respect.

The poor healthcare system and food shortage, which are directly related to the survival of the people, can threaten human security from a humanitarian point of view. Although assisting North Korea through tourism or economic aid is difficult as it is restricted by the sanctions imposed by the UN and the US on North Korea, the escape clauses in related policies should be revisited for the humanitarian aid for health care and food that can directly benefit North Koreans.²¹⁾ It is time to develop

20) Park, Sungyul (2021), p. 90.

systems and policies that can be supported by various governing entities and individuals. As a policy for humanitarian measures for human security that breaks away from the framework of ideological or military confrontation, it requires mutual sympathy and effort throughout the Korean peninsula.

B. Establishment and Utilization of Inter-Korean Governance

In terms of governance, inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are a multi-layered system that involves various entities, including not only the domestic central government, local governments, private organizations, and corporations but also overseas international organizations, associations, and North Korean authorities-organizations.²²⁾ The international governance system that supports North Korea's exchange with others has been operated in association with UN organizations, European countries, and international NGOs. First, WHO, WFP, UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, and UNFPA have sought to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea in cooperation with major countries such as South Korea, Switzerland, Russia, Sweden, Canada, Norway, and Germany. In 2020, the UN announced the need for humanitarian aid to North Korea in the amount of \$107 million for "the Necessities and Priorities of North Korea" and \$39.7 million for "North Korea's response to COVID-19." Simultaneously, European humanitarian NGOs have continued promoting food security improvement projects for the vulnerable in North Korea. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) announced that, in 2020, the French and British governments respectively provided \$220,000 and \$100,000 through international NGOs to improve nutrition for the vulnerable in North Korea. The governance for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, which is composed of several entities with different goals from South and North Korea and the international community, plays an important role in securing democracy during the course of implementation and efficiently achieving goals. Governance in the private sector embraces flexibility, autonomy, and pluralism.²³⁾ Government-controlled inter-Korean exchange and cooperation governance that can exert an integrated synergy effect based on the governance in the private sector should be made available.²⁴⁾

C. Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Through Relieving Sanctions Against North Korea

The possibility of exchange and cooperation with North Korea can be found in

21) Park, Youngmin(2021), pp. 49~54.

22) Bae, Ilsoo, "A Study on the Importance of Human Security and the Effect of National Security in COVID-19 Pandemic," Sangmyung University Ph.D. thesis, (2022), pp. 156~157.

23) Kang, Dongwan & Jeong, Eunmee (2010), p. 31.

24) Park, Sungyul (2021), p. 96.

the exemption clauses of sanctions imposed by the UN and the US. First, after the 6th North Korean nuclear test, UN Security Council Resolution 2397 (December 2017) Paragraph 25 states that “the Committee may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt any activity from the measures imposed by these resolutions if the committee determines that such an exemption is necessary to facilitate the work of international and non-governmental organizations for any other purpose consistent with the objectives of these resolutions.”²⁵⁾ Accordingly, the Committee may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt activities with humanitarian purposes, as long as the activities do not interfere with the achievement of the objectives of the resolutions and obtain prior approval. However, even if the South Korean government promotes humanitarian aid to North Korea through international organizations and NGOs, companies and financial institutions conscious of the US secondary boycott are cautious, and, thus, it is difficult to find transportation to North Korea. As such, support for exchanges and cooperation with North Korea seems to be extremely limited under the current sanctions imposed on North Korea.

Paragraph 15 of the Security Council Resolution 1718 affirms that it shall keep DPRK’s actions under continuous review and that it shall be prepared to review the appropriateness of the strengthening, modification, suspension, or lifting of the measures, as may be needed at that time in light of the DPRK’s compliance with the provisions of the resolution. It can be interpreted that a new Security Council Resolution is needed to ease or lift sanctions on North Korea. However, most support organizations for North Korea had to strain lots of time and manpower through trial and error to accumulate enough precedents for exemptions and to share among the organizations due to difficult exemption procedures and complicated conditions.²⁶⁾

As mentioned earlier, since the US is at the core of sanctions against North Korea, a solution for easing sanctions against North Korea should be looked for through the ROK-US alliance. A day after the virtual summit between the US-China on November 16, 2021, at the Brookings Institute, the National Security Adviser Sullivan proposed four conditions for maintaining a free, open, and fair international system. The first of the four conditions is to promote cooperation for global agendas such as climate change and health security. As health and food are matters of cooperation between the United States and China, the two top leaders of the world, as well as threats to North Korea’s human security, inter-Korean exchange and cooperation in the field of health and food have a possibility in connection with the ROK-US alliance. To do so, a working group with the US can be formed to ease sanctions against North Korea, expand permitted items, and simplify procedures. In other words, South Korea must seek ways for inter-Korean exchange and

25) Kim, Nokyoung, “A Review on the Compatibility between the UN Sanctions against North Korea and the Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation,” *Unification and Law* (2021), pp. 93~94.

26) Ji, Hyeron, “Economic Sanctions on North Korea and Its Effects of the Human Rights Activities,” *Culture and Politics*, Vol.8, No. 1 (2021), p. 81.

cooperation in the fields of health care and food with or without the governance of the international community from a humanitarian and human security point of view. For South Korea, conducting an objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the UN and US sanctions against North Korea in advance while participating in the sanctions imposed on North Korea in response its nuclear and missile threats from the standpoint of ROK-US alliance and continuing dialogue and consultation with North Korea to provide support for the health care and food supply, which are directly related to the survival of North Koreans, from the perspective human security is of great importance.²⁷⁾

V. Conclusion

The number of COVID-19 infection cases hardly decreases with the continuous emergence of mutated variants and incomplete quarantine measures. Similarly, inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are still under suspension due to the issues associated with North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles and the COVID-19 pandemic. The best measures to bring solutions to COVID-19 issues in North Korea and inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are humanitarian aid such as the provision of food and medicine from the standpoint of human security. North Korea's problems with health care and food, though they are directly related to the survival of its people, cannot be resolved without the support of the international community and South Korea.

It has not been long since individual health issues have been discussed in terms of security, and the state has a responsibility to protect health security. In particular, the emergence of unexpected infectious diseases such as SARS, swine influenza, MERS, and COVID-19 terrorized the international community and made the necessity of health security more apparent. Cooperation between countries is an essential condition for realizing health security. Infectious disease control is a common concern between North and South Korea, and inter-Korean exchange and cooperation for this purpose can play a catalytic role in improving inter-Korean exchange and cooperation.

Despite the need to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea in consideration of its poor health care system and food shortage, doing so has been difficult due to North Korea's nuclear test and missile launches. Rather than addressing it with the traditional approach using diplomacy and security between states and governments, it should be addressed from the perspective of human security along with various governance. This study examined several possibilities of promoting inter-Korean

27) Kim, Joosam, "Efficacy of UN's Sanctions on North Korea's Nuclear and North Korea's Regime Survival Strategy," *Korea and Global Affairs*, Vol.2, No. 1 (2018), p. 89.

exchange and cooperation in terms of human security while enhancing human security in North Korea and contributing to the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Firstly, the South Korean government must institutionalize inter-Korean exchange and cooperation and strategically target escape clauses in related policies. Secondly, a governance control tower should be built for inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, and governance should achieve convergence and synergy through solidarity and cooperation. Thirdly, North Korea's sanctions should be lifted to facilitate inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. The ROK-US alliance, which has been expanded into a comprehensive alliance, should help provide aid to North Korea by lifting sanctions on the health care and food sectors from the standpoint of human security.

Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation in the domain of human security can become a blue ocean for world peace and prosperity beyond peace on the Korean Peninsula. Human security will secure not only national support but also the justification of global support for the identity of the Korean Peninsula community and life community while contributing to the establishment of peace and unification of the Korean Peninsula.

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