



Breaking the Stalemate: Re-engaging North Korea

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Abstract: *The situation in the Korean Peninsula continues to remain tense and uncertain despite hectic diplomacy and peace overtures demonstrated by former President Donald Trump of the USA, President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, and the members of the six-party talks platform due to lack of coherent policy on how to engage North Korea. While the international community has displayed cautious optimism on the US-North Korea Summits, however, the change in US administration and overextended policy review by the new administration has created anxiety and stalemate. Chairman Kim Jong-un has once again resorted to brinkmanship and test-fired several missiles to draw the attention of President Joe Biden, who, after hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, is still in the process of consolidation of his position and doesn't appear to be in a hurry on North Korea. This article recapitulates the peace developments of the last three years, investigates the causes of its failure, and suggests a course of action to break the prevailing stalemate by engaging North Korea and advancing the peace process for enduring stability of the entire peninsula.*

Key Words: North Korea, US, Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Moon Jae-in, South Korea,

Theoretical Construct

For critical investigation of the evolving trends in the Korean Peninsula and building incisive analyses, the theory of reciprocity (Falk & Fischbacher, 2001, p. 1) has been applied to examine the behaviour of three main actors USA, North Korea, and South Korea, and members of six-party talks. However, it is pertinent to synthesize the genesis of the conflict, which rationally builds the application of theory in the latter part of the article. Despite the end of the Korean war in 1953 through an armistice and peace arrangements along the 38th parallel in the demilitarized zone (DMZ), three main actors, the USA, North Korea, and South Korea are virtually in the state of war due to aggressive pretension against each other. North Korea considers US alliance obligations in the Asia-Pacific region as a serious national security concern. The United States' coercive diplomacy and active military drills with South Korea and Japan have been

considered as serious threats to regime security in North Korea. Continued U.S. sanctions against North Korea and fear of invasion incentivized the North Korean regime for pursuing the nuclear path as the only means for regime security. During the period of intensified pressure after fire and fury remarks by President Trump, the international community was contemplating another nuclear holocaust after the second world war. The members of six-party talks remained engaged in consistent diplomatic negotiations to defuse the growing tension and brinkmanship on both sides, i.e., the USA and North Korea. The denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula is the desired End State for enduring peace and stability; however, each interest group demonstrates differing approaches, which is quite a challenge to implement. The extraordinary peace overtures, de-escalation, and conduct of three summits during 2018 and 2019 between

President Trump and Chairman Kim are highly appreciated as these have the potentials for lasting stability. The theory of reciprocity explains the intended obligations on the recipients when they receive rewards and incentives ([Falk & Fischbacher, 2001, p. 2](#)). In the case of North Korea, denuclearization and changing behavior of leadership always dominated the past summits but failed to achieve any breakthrough. By way of tangible incentives and regime security, North Korea may be willing to accommodate US and western concerns on nuclear and missile issues. Therefore, the research article has examined the current stalemate and prospects of initiation of peace process through the lens of theory reciprocity and regime survival through the lens of realism.

Methodology

The article has been developed by applying the qualitative research method ([Bhandari, 2020](#)). Primary and secondary data has been used from official transcripts, speeches, and press statements using library resources, archives, and internet sources. Historical case study design has been applied to validate the arguments and arrive at incisive analyses and coherent findings.

Literature Review

The Korean Peninsula has been the international hotspot since the Korean War in the 1950s and active hostility between the USA and North Korea since then, despite armistice and establishment of DMZ in 1953. The US presence in the region is taken as a provocation and direct threat to national security by the North Korean regime, while overt nuclearization and brinkmanship are perceived as a threat to international peace and stability by the US and its allies. The last five years have witnessed tit-for-tat rhetoric, reconciliation, and peace summits between the USA and North Korea; however, any tangible peace deal is still far from reality. The ongoing stalemate is attributed to distracted US policy from North Korea due to hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan and ensuing security vacuum. However, such a delay is causing frustration to all the stakeholders ([Vu, 2021, p.](#)

[1](#)). The restoration of communication lines between two Koreas and operationalization of Panmunjom peace office in July 2021 have been positive developments, however, they remained overshadowed by North Korean missile tests ([Harris et al., 2021, p. 2](#)). In the evolving situation, the UN is expected to take the initiative and break the prevailing stalemate. While no immediate breakthrough is expected, yet UN can provide extraordinary forum and good offices for engagement with North Korea ([S.Im, 2021](#)). The Biden Administration is moving slowly with a "calibrated and practical approach" while North Korea is also following the policy of "benign neglect" ([Davies, 2021, p. 1](#)); however, it exhibited the intent to re-initiate stalled peace process with South Korea despite US reluctance ([Davenport, 2021](#)). There is another school of thought in the US, who profess the preference of public diplomacy to energize North Korean population for eventual pressure on Chairman Kim to transform its policy on the nuclear issue and comprehensive engagement with the USA and South Korea ([Baek, 2021](#)).

Evolving Trends in the Korean Peninsula

Since the departure of President Donald Trump, there has been a consistent stalemate, and uneasy calm prevails in the Korean Peninsula amid heightened tension over North Korean missile tests, which are going on unabated ([Vu, 2021, p. 4](#)). President Joe Biden's decision to complete a review of President Trump's policies before engaging North Korean leadership has also added to prevailing haze and uncertainty ([Snyder, 2021](#)). There is no denying the fact that both the USA and North Korea are still in a state of war despite peace overtures and hectic diplomacy witnessed in last three years. The personal peace efforts of President Moon Jae-in and reciprocal response from Chairman Kim are highly appreciated, which have helped in managing the tension and avoiding conflict. The atmosphere of goodwill and optimism, which was generated by two summits at Singapore and Hanoi and a later one-on-one meeting between Chairman Kim and President Trump at DMZ in July 2019, are extremely significant, which need to be capitalized

by the Biden Administration. It is also worth remembering that unnecessary provocative language against Chairman Kim has not given any dividends; instead, it has hardened his stance on acquiring nuclear and missile technology for state survival and regime security. The recent escalation by North Korea by missiles testing is a wake-up call for the United States to re-engage North Korea ([Lee, 2021, p. 3](#)). Neither side can accurately predict the true motivation and intentions of each other, therefore, increasing the chances of inadvertent miscalculation, which could be fatal for the entire region and a serious threat to international security.

Examining the Peace Efforts during Years 2018 to 2021 and Future Prospects

Chairman Kim's New Year Speech on December 31, 2017, and Olympics Diplomacy

Chairman Kim's offer to join PyeongChang winter Olympics gave a delightful revelation for the wider international community ([Sang-Hun, 2018a](#)). After months of rhetoric, incitements, and antagonism, the atmosphere of hope, peace, and stability was provided by pragmatic diplomacy. The South Korea immediately welcomed the offer and directed to facilitate the timely completion of travel formalities to enable North Korean teams to participate in PyeongChang winter Olympics ([Green, 2018](#)). The unstinted support by the international community and diplomatic engagement by China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan enabled the leaders of the USA and North Korea for unprecedented face-to-face summits between President Trump and Chairman Kim at Singapore and Hanoi. The rationale analysisists concluded no immediate breakthrough, especially on the denuclearization of North Korea; however, the inadvertent fog of war and tense military standoffs were avoided, and de-escalation was witnessed in the Korean Peninsula as all parties to the conflict demonstrated a rational approach towards confidence-building and easing the tension. Such overtures created new opportunities for inter-Korean dialogue and improving bilateral relations between North and

South Korea. The Pyeongchang Winter Olympics 2018 was a unique opportunity in furthering inter-Korean diplomatic relations demonstrating the leadership of North Korea, South Korea, the USA, and the international community for their sincere efforts for the advancing the cause of peace ([Ishaque et al., 2020, p. 184](#)).

North and South Korean Leaders Summit at Panmunjom on April 26, 2018

The historic summit between Chairman Kim and President Moon Jae-In at Panmunjom peace office at demilitarized zone (DMZ) on April 26, 2018, left many imprints for times to come. Both leaders reiterated their firm pledged to work jointly towards enduring peace in the Korean peninsula. The positive signals are apparent from the joint statement reassuring the international community that "there will be no more war contemplated in future on the Korean peninsula "and that "the current rapprochement for establishing a firm peace regime is a historic task, which should not be delayed under any circumstances" ([Han, 2002, p. 39](#)).

Consistent Peace Efforts by the Members of Six-Party Talks

It is also important to acknowledge that the member countries of the six-party talks platform played a pivotal role in facilitating the rapprochement between the United States, North Korea, and South Korea, along with Singapore and Vietnam, who eagerly hosted the unprecedented summits. The perspectives and efforts of China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan are elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

China

China is a very active member of six-party talks and has enormous stakes in the stability of the Korean peninsula. China considers it as near abroad, therefore, it appreciates that stability shall have positive consequences for China and the entire region. China has always advocated patience and restraint by all sides for the negotiated settlement of issues, therefore, it professes placating the crises, whenever they

emerge. China has maintained a policy of non-intervention during the period leading up to 2002 and “watching from the sidelines”([Canrong et al., n.d.](#)). However, from 2002 to 2009, China adopted a policy of “active involvement due to North Korean withdrawal from Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)”([Canrong et al., n.d.](#)), which could seriously jeopardize the prevailing regional order. The North Korean nuclear tests of 2009 resulted in yet another transformation in Chinese policy, which entailed denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula as the End State for maintaining regional peace and stability. President Xi Jinping during his address on July 4 2014 at Seoul National University highlighted four cardinal aspects of Chinese policy which are; “economic integration and development; long-term political interests; peaceful unification between South and North Korea; and public diplomacy” ([China, 2014](#)). The Korean Peninsula is very important; therefore, China actively engages with concerned parties for negotiated settlement of the issue.

Russia

Due to the vulnerability of Russia's eastern region, the peace and stability in Korean Peninsula is of utmost significance. Russia actively participates in six-party talks platform aimed at defusing the tension and facilitating rapprochement between US, North Korea, and South Korea. During President Putin and Chairman Kim's face to face summit on April 25, 2019 at Vladivostok, President Putin emphasized the significance of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but also supported North Korea's suggestion of incremental process and reciprocal response from the United States” ([Snyder, 2019](#)). Russia is maintaining a constructive engagement with all parties, especially the during the past US-North Korea summits, and eagerly contributing for negotiated settlement and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea (Republic of Korea -ROK)

South Korea is a very active member of six-party talks as a multilateral forum for incessant

engagement with North Korea aimed at ensuring peace and harmony in the entire Korean peninsula. President Moon Jae In has demonstrated marked statesmanship in easing the tension and facilitating US-North Korea rapprochement, for which his personal efforts are commendable. President Moon was quick to welcome and reciprocate Chairman Kim's new year speech, warmly welcomed the North Korean Olympic team, and facilitated the conduct of Panmunjom summit in April 2018 with the North Korean leader. President Moon promotes “Sunshine Policy”([Canrong et al., n.d.](#)) for bilateral relations with North Korea, and both leaders reaffirmed the goal of denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, and economic incentives for North Korea.”([Sang-Hun, 2018b](#)). President Moon has made North Korea as a foreign policy preference and is working to facilitate President Biden's summit with Chairman Kim in 2022.

Japan

The enduring peace and stability in Northeast Asia independent on the constructive engagement between the United States, North Korea, and South Korea, and positive support from the members of six-party talks, therefore, Japan has huge stakes in the stability of the Korean Peninsula. Japan considers that any military standoff between the USA and North Korea would result in a first response attack from North Korea on US bases in Japan”([Suzuki, 2018](#)). Another concern is that most North Korean provocative missile tests fly over Japan, therefore, “any failure or miscalculation can create mayhem in Japan”([Suzuki, 2018](#)). In order to avoid such catastrophic scenarios, Japan emphasizes restraint, and patience, avoiding provocations and promoting negotiated settlement of Korean issues, especially the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

President Trump from Fire and Fury to a Peace Maker

The United States President Donald Trump, after taking over the office, initiated a series of

provocative statements to demonize the North Korean leadership on the plea that coercion might pay dividends over the hot war to change the behaviour of Chairman Kim Jong-Un ([Ullah et al., 2017, p. 86](#)). President Trump's address at the United Nations in September 2017, where he boasted the infamous phrases of "fire and fury", a rocket man and destruction of North Korea if it does not change its course, indeed created doomsday situation as it gave flip to already extreme degree of tension and polarization in the Korean Peninsula. Such unpredictable harsh utterances at a highest level of the diplomatic forum were unprecedented in the history of the UN. Therefore, the world got worried that any miscalculation by either side could prove fatal for hard-earned regional stability and spiral a series of unending human sufferings due to inadvertent use of nuclear weapons. The frenzied conversation between President Trump and later from Chairman Kim were extraordinary and unwanted. The war of words attracted a lot of media and world attention, especially North Korea, South Korea, China, and Russia, with anxiety. The regional stability in Korean Peninsula appeared to be a difficult proposition as the clouds of war became a reality due to hostile posturing by the US and joint military drills with South Korea. The active involvement by China and Russia in reducing the tension played a significant role in changing the ground conditions and convincing the concerned parties for rapprochement for enduring stability. The marked statesmanship demonstrated by Chairman Kim in seizing the initiative by a surprise new year speech on December 31, 2017, where he sent conciliatory new year messages to President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. By this sudden move, the fog of war started to disappear as peace and rapprochement became the international buzzwords. Chairman Kim's peace overtures were reciprocated immediately by President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae in. The sports diplomacy later took the central stage in resetting the triangular relations between US, North, and South Korea. Chairman Kim's another intelligent step of participating in

Pyeongchang winter Olympics paved the way for the exchange of banalities between two Korea's helped in defusing the tension and de-escalation of the military situation. The damage control of fire and furry speech was audacious as it was dealt with cautious optimism. Former UK diplomat James Hoare, remarked: "North Korea is trying to break from isolation, where Pyeongchang winter Olympics present a pragmatic face to the international community" ([Haas, 2018](#)). South Korean President Moon Jae In remarked that "Games are a "precious opportunity" to seek peace on the Korean peninsula and Pyeongchang Winter Olympics will be remembered as "Peace Olympics" ([Sang-Hun & Rich, 2018](#)). This article critically analyses the peace efforts of the last three years, predicts the future course, followed by viable recommendations for lasting stability in the region. Such extraordinary developments incentivized President Trump to give peace a chance, therefore, decided for a summit in Singapore for one- on- one meeting with Chairman Kim. The momentum generated in Singapore was later followed by President Trump at Hanoi and DMZ to persuade Chairman Kim to give up the nuclear path without any substantial incentives. The investigative analysis of summits is presented in the ensuing paragraphs.

Momentous US-North Korea Summit at Singapore 2018

President Trump's pragmatic approach for engaging North Korea after heated fire and fury homilies generated positive momentum for commencing inter-Korean dialogue for eventual peace in the entire Korean Peninsula. The icebreaking movement was witnessed when chairman Kim offered a rapprochement and goodwill messages for President Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-In in his new year messages on December 31, 2017. This was warmly welcomed both by the United States and South Korea and paved the way for North Korean participation in Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018. The fogs of war over the Korean Peninsula gradually started to fade, and all members of the six-party talks platform also hailed and supported the move. The Olympics

diplomacy generated the momentum for inter-Korean dialogue and summits with the United States. President Moon Jae-in's personal efforts also deserve much appreciation. The prodigious efforts of Mr Lee Hsien Loong, the Prime Minister of Singapore, for hosting the summit also deserve commendation. The world enthusiastically and optimistically watched the unparalleled summit on June 11, 2018, at Capella Hotel Singapore between President Trump and Chairman Kim. While no immediate breakthrough was anticipated, yet substantive discussion took place, which helped both the leaders in understanding each other's position and compulsions in a comprehensive manner. The misgivings and apprehensions were deliberated at length, and accommodative views were expressed after the meeting. The main sticking point of denuclearization of North Korea without any substantive reciprocal consideration of North Korean national security compulsions and adequate confidence-building measures proved counterproductive, which derailed the process towards the end. The exchange of pleasantries produced an amicable environment for the summit, and both leaders exhibited significant statecraft in rationally concluding the summit. President Trump expressed his satisfaction by stating that "he has developed special bonds with Chairman Kim and was looking forward to inviting him to the White House" ([Panda, 2019](#)). He added that Chairman Kim "is an honourable partner", "vowed to improve relations, and stressed to suspend all military exercises around North Korea" ([Blackwill, 2019, p. 15](#)). Later, President Trump stated in a Twitter message that "despite the absence of denuclearization framework with North Korea, the prospects of inadvertent nuclear war have receded to a large extent" ([Blackwill, 2019, p. 53](#)). Singapore Summit also paved the way for the ending over six decades of hostilities between three main contenders, i.e., the USA, North Korea, and South Korea.

Second US-North Korea Summit at Hanoi 27-28 February 2019

The world curiously watched the Singapore

summit in 2018 between President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim. A lot has been written about the summits; however, there's a silver lining which must be considered while analyzing the current situation in Korean Peninsula. The region was at the brink of war between the United States and North Korea, ever since President Trump's speech of fire and fury, and destroying North Korea, however, the Singapore summit was an icebreaking moment for the United States, North and South Korea, and the regional countries surrounding Korean peninsula. Therefore, as per my analysis, the Singapore summit provided a unique opportunity, ever since the end of the Korean War in 1953, that the leaders of the United States and North Korea had the opportunity of a face-to-face meeting in front of media fanfare. Intangible terms, the outcome of Singapore summit 2018 was inconclusive, but it created a better atmosphere for future dialogues. For Hanoi summit in 2019, comprehensive planning and deliberation were done by the USA and North Korea. Chairman Kim made diplomatic visits to Beijing and later to Hanoi and followed wide-ranging consultations. Similarly, the US side also made good preparations, to make the second summit a success. The Hanoi summit attracted a lot of international audiences, and the world was eagerly watching to see the tangible breakthrough as any failure could have serious consequences. The countries of six-party talks and the host of the second summit also consulted to keep the summit on the right track with positive outcome. However, against all the assumptions, the summit ended abruptly than expected. The sticking point remained denuclearization of North Korea, without any incentives or assurances of regime security from the USA. President Trump remained optimistic and called it as a good progress, while the North Korean demand of lifting all sanctions could not be fulfilled in the absence of any agreed framework on denuclearization. The North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho stated that "Pyongyang had only demanded partial sanctions relief in return for closing Yongbyon, which was declined by the

US, thus historical peace opportunity had been missed and may take a long time to give impetus to peace process” ([Julian & Simon, 2019](#)). From President Trump’s perspective, the Hanoi summit got affirmative response from North Korea for suspending future nuclear and missile tests, and as a gesture of reciprocity, the US suspended all military drills with South Korea for easing the tension. President Moon Jae In said that his government would pursue the path of peace and facilitate the US and North Korea to reach to a comprehensive peace settlement”([Borger, 2019](#)). President Trump praised Chairman Kim and lauded that “our relationship is strong”([Bremer, 2019](#)).

Third US-North Korea Summit at Panmunjom DMZ Office June 30, 2019

The hastily arranged summit at Panmunjom peace office at DMZ was at the great desire of President Trump, who, after attending the G-20 summit at Osaka, Japan, wanted to coordinate this summit on his return journey and wanted to capitalize on the momentum generated in last two summits. Despite less preparation time and in the absence of any groundwork for the summit, all sides welcomed the summit and did their best to make it a success. This was named as handshake summit and left irrefutable inscriptions for future analyses. President Trump became the first sitting US President since the end of the Korean war in 1953, who stepped into North Korea across DMZ. President Trump conveyed his emotions by saying that "we have developed a great relationship and it's just an honour to be with you and it was an honour that you asked me to step over that line and I was proud to step over the line." ([Ghani, 2019](#)). The misapprehensions and haze generated by the abrupt ending of Hanoi summit was cleared to a large extent. Both leaders got the opportunity once again to interact in amiable and relaxed environments to advance the cause of peace. In the overall assessment, Panmunjom summit paved the way for future summits and also reduced the US hostile posturing along DMZ” ([Panda, 2019](#)).

New US Administration under President Joe Biden; Stalemate in US-North Korea Relations

The atmosphere of goodwill and review of harsh positions both by the USA and North Korea are welcome gestures. President Trump and Chairman Kim demonstrated above board statesmanship and made significant progress towards confidence-building and easing tension at steady pace. While the journey towards envisaged peace is full of challenges and reversals, yet the path of negotiated settlement selected by all the stakeholders will yield positive results if all sides, with the help of the international community, remain firm in giving peace a chance to resolve the most complex issue of the century. Both President Trump and Chairman Kim had indicated for possibility of more summits during 2020, and South Korean President Moon Jae In has maintained consistent engagement and stepped up diplomatic efforts to re-energize the stalled process. South Korean Foreign Minister stated at Geneva Forum on February 24, 2020, that "a speedy resumption of the U.S.-DPRK negotiations is critical so that all stakeholders maintain and build upon the hard-won momentum for dialogue. “We stand ready to engage with the North Korea in a way that facilitates and accelerates the U.S.-North Korea dialogue” ([Staff, 2020](#)). Professor Cheehyung Harrison Kim at Hawaii University gave his analyses of the past two summits "I think in the past year, there has been a positive increase in the amount of meaningful public debate about North Korea. He added, "we are moving on from the simple, one-sided view of North Korea, and I think that's a very positive change.."([Kasulis, 2020](#)). Professor Charles K Armstrong from Columbia University states, "what lies ahead is likely neither an explosive conflict nor a breakthrough to peace, but a return to the status quo ante of Korea’s never-ending Cold War” ([Armstrong, C. K. 2020](#)). President Joe Biden, since assuming office in 2021, has been quite slow on North Korea as he initiated a comprehensive policy review. He appears to be not in a hurry for any breakthrough, till tangible policy options are

worked out by relevant US departments. Such a situation has created stalemate and frustration in North Korean leadership. Chairman Kim, following his old policy of “escalate to de-escalate,” has test-fired missiles on several occasions to attract the US and international community's attention. The atmosphere of the Korean Peninsula is once again tense, and chances of miscalculation have increased. The evolving situation is also worrisome for members of six-party talks as US's peripheral attention is vindicating North Korean resolve, that the US is not serious about making peace. All the regional countries have demonstrated their concerns and reservations on North Korean brinkmanship as well as a lukewarm response from President Joe Biden. South Korea and Japan have displayed anxiety over unprovoked missile tests, likelihood of malfunctioning, and miscalculations, which may jeopardize the security of the entire Korean Peninsula with devastating consequences. The stalemate created after the exit of President Trump is adding to the haze and “strategic ambiguity”, therefore, concerted efforts on part of six-party talks for convincing Chairman Kim to give up the path of further escalation and also facilitating Biden – Kim summit in 2022 will be a great opportunity for lasting peace in the region.

Is Peace Deal between North Korea and USA Possible?

The Korean Peninsula is a flashpoint since the end of Korean war into armistice in 1953 along 38th parallel and establishment of demilitarized zone. Since then, the regime in Pyongyang has been striving for regime security and national survival against the looming threat of US sanctions and invasions. Survival and self-help convinced subsequent North Korean leaders to acquire nuclear weapons as the sole guarantor of national security. The sweeping changes across the Middle East and regime change, especially in Iraq and Libya, vindicated North Korean resolve not to give up nuclear capability at any cost. Therefore, the development of nuclear capabilities and delivery means have given added advantages to North Korea, who is not ready for any bullying, and demonstrated capability and

intention to disturb the existing security architecture of Asia-Pacific region, which is against the US interest. The prevailing stalemate is adding to frustration and concerns for all the stakeholders, as the atmosphere of goodwill generated in the last three summits between the US and North Korea with hectic international support is fading away. Another factor of instability is the divergent accounts of ‘denuclearization’ amongst the regional stakeholders. China and North Korea desire a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula along with the precondition that the US should withdraw its military presence from the region and end alliance obligations of nuclear umbrella to Japan and South Korea. From the US perspective, troops withdrawal is not an option at all and instead is insisting on a complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling of North Korea’s nuclear facilities, which is unacceptable to other stakeholders. The middle ground acceptable to the parties needs to be worked out to lower the temperatures and allow for confidence building. Some of the measures which can help in trust-building are; immediate announcement of policy priorities by new US administration for dealing with North Korea, preparing grounds for summits in 2022 by adopting a comprehensive approach of avoiding provocations and deliberate groundwork, re-energizing six-party talks platform facilitating rapprochement, a unilateral announcement by the US on end of Korean war and freeze of joint drills and other military activities with South Korea and Japan, which will create conducive environments for future talks and cooperation. Secondly, the US may assure North Korea for regime survival and alleviate sufferings by sanctions relief and other such incentives. The reunification of two Koreas as the ultimate end state should be facilitated as per the wishes of people from both sides and imposition of any outside solution can have a negative impact.

Conclusion

Asia-Pacific region is witnessing the defining moments of history, where peace and harmony are the new norms as the world is now tired of wars and conflicts. Current geo-strategic

architecture marks the era of complex interdependence and mutual benefits for all. Both US and North Korea are at the crossroads to take a pragmatic decision to make the Korean Peninsula a zone of peace, stability, prosperity, and economic development. The situation demands "outbox solutions" rising to the occasion

for the eventual benefit and development of mankind. The revival of North and South Korean summits along with US-North Korea summits during 2022 is the earnest need of the time. All stakeholders must join hands together to build on the progress of the last three summits and arrive at a comprehensive peace deal in years to come.

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