

The Importance of the Reunification of Korean Peninsula: Strong Support from Indonesia¹

Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia²

The importance of a Free and Unified Korea

Indonesia fully supports a Free and Unified Korea as a Catalyst for Regional and Global Peace and Development. Indonesia as a neutral and peace-loving country absolutely continue supporting the inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification to foster peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and, more broadly, in north-east Asia and the world.

Indonesian government also supports the efforts of The National Unification Advisory Council, since its establishment in 1980 has continued to receive support from many countries, including Indonesia. In fact, the idea of reunification South Korea-North Korea was also supported by all Indonesian Presidents, from our first President, Sukarno to President Joko Widodo.

I believe that all Indonesian people will always strive for world peace based on respect for humanity, independence, and social justice according to the values of *Pancasila*. Our ideology *Pancasila* consists of five principles, the principle of spirituality, the principle of humanity, the principle of the unity of Indonesia, the principle of democracy, and the principle of social justice. These five principles are very compatible with the universal values of human rights and also the concept of peacebuilding.

Pancasila is very conducive for establishing democracy and building peace within the community. And what is more important, *Pancasila* reflects the idea of *bhinneka tunggal ika* means unity in diversity. This concept serves as the core foundation of peace and the unifying glue of the highly diverse Indonesian nation, either in terms of race, color, language, religion, and faith.

The importance of peace efforts

I personally really appreciate the efforts of the government and people of the Republic of Korea to build lasting peace. Starting with the decision to join the United Nations in 1991. Then, expanding its active participation in multilateral diplomatic relations coincided with its growing global position economically. The world also really appreciates the important role of Ban Ki-moon who was previously the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of South Korea to become Secretary General of the United Nations.

We all know that during nearly two decades at the United Nations, the Republic of Korea has actively participated in many peace efforts and the resolution of international problems handled by the UN, such as conflict prevention and peacekeeping missions, development projects and protection of human rights and so on and so for. I do believe that these efforts to uphold peace must continue to be improved and strengthened, so that they become the foundation for a free and unified Korea.

¹ The paper is submitted on International Forum on One Korea 2022, arranged by Global Peace Foundation in collaboration with One Korea Foundation, held in Seoul on 11-15 Agustus 2022.

² Chairperson of Global Peace Foundation Indonesia Trustee Board

In my opinion, even if the implementation of the Korean Peninsula reunification policy has not been carried out properly, it is not a failure, in fact it is a natural thing. Why? Because, South Korea and North Korea have some quite contrasting differences, especially in terms of social life, economic, political, and security. This is certainly a challenge for both parties to unite. In addition, both South Korea and North Korea each have conditions that are difficult for the other to meet. South Korea asks North Korea to denuclearize, must also be willing to report all its nuclear weapons. This is very unlikely to be realized, considering that North Korea is still a closed country. **In my experience**, reunification can take place if mutual trust continues to increase. Both countries must be open and tolerant of each other.

The complicated relationship between North and South Korea requires a concrete solution that is more humane and free from the interests of a big country like the United States. I think there are at least two alternative efforts that can be taken. First, allowing the two countries to independently resolve many disputes in a bilateral scheme. Second, placing countries free of political interests in the Korean Peninsula region, such as Indonesia, to become “honest brokers”, namely negotiators who are impartial or impartial with certain interests. Considering that the Indonesian state is actively promoting free-active politics, Indonesia is very appropriate to play a role as a peacemaker between the two countries.

The importance of dialogue and cultural efforts

I have always believed that the Korean people, both North Korea and South Korea, have the same identity and cultural character because both are rooted in the same family. In my opinion, this will be the spirit and at the same time the key to peace for the reunification of Korea. The Korean nation has a very strong cultural identity. And this will be an important capital in encouraging dialogue efforts towards peace on the Korean Peninsula.

I'm thinking about other possibilities of reunification of Korean Peninsula. If the step of reunification is too difficult to achieve, it is better to start first with efforts to build peace on the Korean Peninsula. I think this might be more acceptable to everyone. So it's kind of a gradual effort, not all at once. The best option now is to stop the threat of war, and start partnerships in many fields, such as economics and culture to bring about peace between South and North Korea.

Peace efforts of this kind have actually started in Indonesia. For example, in 2018 Asian Games Event which was held in Indonesia made quite a touching history since the Korean conflict which has lasted for more than 70 years. The contingents of South and North Korea united to carry the huge name of Korea by using the unification flag.

Peace is a condition for the survival and prosperity of all nations. Peace always brings goodness, serenity and happiness to human beings. That is the way of peace that is dreamed of by all nations, even by all human beings. Efforts to unify the Korean nation cannot be done with hatred and anger. The solution is not with weapons, not with violence in any form, let alone with war. The only solution is peace through reunification. That is the way of peace that is dreamed of by all nations, even by all human beings.

The importance of Women's Participation

The Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, an important resolution on Women, Peace, and Security. It is a policy framework that aims to promote gender equality and improve women's rights, participation and protection in conflict situations. This global policy encourages a gender-based approach to recognize the role of women in all areas of life, including in peace efforts related to reunification of Korean Peninsula. This resolution it further emphasizes the important role of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, peace building in post-conflict reconstruction. This resolution also demands equal participation in promoting and maintaining peace and security.

Therefore, cultural dialogue should be carried out more and more, and also involve all elements of society, including women. Women with their maternal instincts find it easier to embrace and unite those torn apart by war and conflict. Women must be involved in all stages and processes of peace reconciliation towards the reunification of Korea.

I have witnessed the extraordinary work of women's groups in many areas of conflict and war. They usually work from a sincere heart and without any political interests, the only goal is to see their nation united in peace and work together towards the realization of a more advanced civilization. I believe that is also the desire of the entire Korean nation; the real Korean people are one family, one nation, one soul and one character in culture.

The importance of respect the principle of sovereignty

In addition to the cultural element, another thing that is no less important is the principle of sovereignty in the political field. In dialogue, it is important to respect the sovereignty of all parties. The principle of sovereignty in politics is very important for peace. The description of sovereignty in the political field means that eternal peace can only be carried out by the Korean nation itself, without any intervention from other countries. Because both are one family and one cultural identity.

The realization of peace and the unification of Korea is very important for all nations, including the Indonesian people. Because, with peace and unity, many forms of cooperation that benefit the international community can be carried out. But the most important thing is that peace is an absolute condition for the survival, security and prosperity of all nations in the world.

We know that peace cannot be built in a short period of time, more so through half-hearted efforts. Building peace must be through hard efforts that are organized, systemic and involves all elements of society. And most importantly, it comes from a strong commitment from within ourselves, from within the family, and, further on, from a larger community. It is definitely not easy, but we must work hard if we want to have peace.