

Vietnam-North Korea Relations: Some Remarks over the Last 65 Years and Prospects*

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Abstract

Over the last 65 years, the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea has undergone 3 main periods. The first period was from the establishment of the diplomatic relation between the two countries to the end of the Vietnam War. The second period was from the end of the Vietnam War to 1995. And the third period was from 1996 to the present. This paper looks at overall characteristics of the relations between Vietnam and North Korea in the last 65 years on political-diplomatic, economic-commercial, and cultural-educational fields; simultaneously, analyzes and assess the positive factors affecting on prospects of bilateral relations between these two countries in the future. It shows that in the first period, the two countries had a very warm relation of the countries being members of the socialist system. In the second period the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea underwent a very difficult period due to the impact of internal and external factors. However, in the third period the Vietnam - North Korea relation was restored and showed good signs of a new period of development. The future prospect of the relation between the two countries is bright as both sides

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realize the fact that having good relation with each other will make good contribution to the development of both sides in the new context.

Keywords: Vietnam, North Korea, foreign relations, cooperation, development

I . Introduction

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea) is one of the first three countries in the world recognizing and establishing diplomatic relations with Democratic Republic of Vietnam after the former Soviet Union and China. The diplomatic relationship between Vietnam and North Korea was set up in 31 January 1950. In the past of 65 years, the relationship between the two countries has experienced periods of difficulties, associated with events in each country as well as political, economic situations in the region and the world. The relationship between the two countries over the past 65 years can be divided into three main periods as follows: (i) the first period: from the establishment of the diplomatic relation to the end of the Vietnam War (1950-1975) marking the warming period in the relationship between the two countries; (ii) the second period: from the end of the Vietnam War to 1995 being a difficult period in the relation between the two countries due to impacts from internal and external factors; (iii) the third period: from 1996 to the present

being the period of restoring and rebuilding the new foundation for the Vietnam – North Korea relationship.

This paper will review the events and features of the relations between the two countries, Vietnam and North Korea, through 3 periods mentioned above in the political-diplomatic, economic, and cultural-social fields and assess the prospects of the relationship between the two countries in the future.

II . The 1950-1975 period

In the time from the establishment of formal diplomatic relation between the two countries (1950) until the end of the Vietnam War (1975), Vietnam's relations with North Korea were the ties of the brothers in the socialist system, built by the top leaders of the two countries as President Ho Chi Minh and President Kim Il Sung.

The relations between the two countries during this period was very warm; It was marked by mutual visits of the highest-level leadership of the two countries, the same ideology of Marxism-Leninism and mutual supports impartially of the brothers in the same faction of the socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union.

In the political and diplomatic fields, after establishing the formal diplomatic relation, political-diplomatic relations between the two countries were marked by mutual visits of the highest-level state leaders of the two countries. From 8 to 12 July 1957, President Ho Chi Minh paid an official friendship visit to North

Korea. President Ho Chi Minh and the Delegation of Communist Party and Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam arrived at Pyongyang, opening visit to North Korea. After the official welcoming ceremony, President Ho Chi Minh and the accompanying people attended a rally of more than 10 thousands people in the Pyongyang capital to welcome the guests of Vietnam, held at the Kim Il Sung Square. Speaking at the rally, President Ho Chi Minh sent a greeting to the leaders of the North Korea's Labor Party and State as well as people in the capital Pyongyang and the North Korean people. After praising the heroic spirit of the Korean people in the struggle for national liberation and defense, he said, "The victory of North Korean people were cheering so much the Vietnamese people in the struggle against the imperialism; The Vietnamese people and the North Korean people would win the long and arduous struggle to reunify our nation." On the same day, President Ho Chi Minh and the accompanying people laid crown on the liberation tower in the Moranbong and laid crown to commemorate Red Army revolutionary martyrs who laid down their lives for the cause of the liberation of the North Korean people from Japanese fascist domination; and visited President Kim Il Sung and the leaders of the North Korea's Party and Government.¹⁾

In the following year, from 27 November to 3 December 1958, President Kim Il Sung officially visited Vietnam. Mr. Kim Il Sung

1) <http://www.baotanghochiminh.vn/TabId/495/ArticleId/4432/PreTabId/503/Default.aspx> (Accessed on 30 August 2015)

and the North Korea delegation visited Hanoi capital, Nam Dinh city and some enterprises, cooperatives, and cultural centers. Particularly, in this visit, Mr. Kim Il Sung, on behalf of the North Korean Government and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, on behalf of the Vietnamese Government signed a “General statement” showing the spirit of mutual agreement and close cooperation between the two countries in many fields as well as appraising the achievements of the countries in the socialist bloc. The two countries also signed the “Agreement of commodity exchanges and payments” in order to strengthen economic cooperation and support each other.²⁾

These were the very important mutual visits, laying the foundation for the close fraternal relations between the two countries during the Vietnam War. During this time, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong paid a visit to North Korea in June 1961. During the Vietnam’s anti-American resistance war, North Korean government and people provided highly valuable spirit, material and human supports to Vietnam. In early 1967, North Korea sent a fighter squadron to the North of Vietnam to prepare for air regiment 921 and 923 to protect Hanoi. About 200 pilots combated in Vietnam in this period. Moreover, at least two anti-aircraft artillery regiments of North Korea had also been sent to the North of Vietnam (Pribbenow 2003). In the period from 1965-1972, North

2) The Government of the DPRK and the Government of DRV, “General statement of the People Democratic Republic of Korea’s representative group and Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam’s representative group, International Treaty,” December 01, 1958.

Korea gave RUB40.7 million grant-in-aid to Vietnam,³⁾ making partial contribution to the success of the anti-American resistance and unification of Vietnam.

As regards to cooperation in various fields the two countries had signed many important agreements such as Cultural Cooperation Agreement (Nov. 1957), Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement (Oct. 1958), Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the DPRK (1961), Trade and Shipping Agreement (Dec. 1962), Mutual Aid Agreement on Health Care (Dec. 1966), Visa Exemption Agreement for Diplomatic and Official Passports (Sep. 1969). However, because the war against the U.S. to save the nation in Vietnam came so fierce, the signed agreements between the two sides almost had little chance of being fully implemented.

In social-cultural fields, in the 1960s, North Korea received hundreds of Vietnamese pupils and students to study there (Le Quang Thiem 2015). Many people had been accepted to study at Kim Il Sung University - one of the famous universities in North Korea. In addition, traditional cultural and artistic of the two countries also often performed in public. It was one of the examples of mutual exchange. Every year the Ministry of Culture of Vietnam sent an artist delegation to North Korea to take part in the Spring Arts Festival in April, held in Pyongyang.⁴⁾

3) Vietnam National Archive III, Governmental Office Fond, Document No.9235, Index No.3.

4) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, "The basic information of the relations between Viet Nam - North Korea," http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/cn_vakv/ca_tbd/nr040819

The relationship between Vietnam and North Korea in the period 1950-1975 underlied the socialist system led by the Soviet Union and China. The wars against the French and the U.S. of Vietnam and the Korean War (1950-1953) were not only the fighting of Vietnam and North Korea themselves but also the fighting of the whole socialist bloc. North Korea and Vietnam considered the Vietnam War having a close connection with the revolution in Korea with two main goals being to against the imperialism and liberalizing the nation, unifying the country. In addition, the participation of South Korea's troop in South Vietnam was also a factor stimulating North Korea more actively in strengthening relations with Vietnam so as to effectively support Vietnam in the Vietnam War. Beside, the friendly relationship between the top leaders of the two countries, President Ho Chi Minh and President Kim Il Sung, also became a symbol for the good relationship between the two countries.

III. The 1975-1995 period

This was a period of many changes taking place across the globe. It had a significant impact on the relations between Vietnam and North Korea, which was not as warm as the previous period. After the unification of Vietnam, the two countries signed

the Civil Air Transport Agreement (Jan. 1977). But the effectiveness of this document was not high due to the downward situation in the relationship between the two countries. More than 10 years later, there was just a visit to North Korea by the Vietnam Chairman of the State Council, Vo Chi Cong, attending North Korea's Independence Day Ceremony and awarded the Gold Star Medal to President Kim Il Sung in September 1988.⁵⁾ Just until 1989, the two countries established the Inter-government Committee on Economic, Scientific and Technology Cooperation. However, this Committee had meetings in just the first three years and then were not continued after.

Objective and subjective factors having arisen in this period became obstacles hindering the development of the relationship between the two countries. The contradiction between the USSR and China, China and Vietnam, and also the choosing of different development ways between North Korea and Vietnam since the end of the 1970s highly impacted on the relationship between the two countries.

The contradiction between the USSR and China became clear when the USSR claimed China to follow the “fatalism” and China claimed the USSR to follow the “revisionism”. With the advantage on the close geographical and supporting the anti-American to unify the country of Vietnam and North Korea, China succeeded in getting close with Vietnam and North Korea and vice versa the USSR. But in the 1970s, the trend of harmonization between

5) See note 2.

China and the USA became strong while Vietnam signed a 25-year cooperating treaty with the USSR. It made China angry. In 1979, the border war between China and Vietnam took place. Therefore, Vietnam and North Korea met big challenges in receiving the support from socialist countries. Nevertheless, when Vietnam consistently used armed forces to liberalize South Vietnam and obtained the final victory in her anti-American aggression and unified the country, North Korea was not pleased. North Korea chose the way of negotiating with the Park Chung Hee administration and stood on China's side. Therefore, although the North Korean Government sent congratulating remarks to Vietnam for victory, North Korea did not announce the unification of Vietnam to North Korean people (Do T. Mien 2014, 102). Since the unification of Vietnam, and when the Vietnam – China border war was occurred, cooperation and exchanges between Vietnam and North Korea was reduced sharply compared to the previous period.

After the Cold War was ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and East European socialist system, both Vietnam and North Korea faced with serious challenges when the aids from the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries were no longer existed. Each country had to overcome difficulties on its own. Vietnam has implemented innovation policies, developing a socialist-orientated market economy, expanding relations with all countries in the world. This policy, which was initiated by the Sixth Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party in 1986, had

helped Vietnam's economy to gradually stabilize and overcome the crisis and Vietnam's international relations. Vietnam had established formal diplomatic relations with some countries around the world, including South Korea. Meanwhile, North Korea firmly remained the political lines "military first" with military priorities and nuclear weapons development. The economy of North Korea, which faced many difficulties after no aids remained from the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries and was added more difficulties by the sanctions of the United Nations mobilized by the U.S., had fallen into a serious crisis, particularly in the shortages of energies and foods

The relations between Vietnam and North Korea had been no longer warm as in the previous period, especially after Vietnam's establishment of the formal diplomatic relation with South Korea (Dec. 1992). If Vietnam was not pleased with North Korea carried out negotiation with South Korea, this time North Korea was distressing a situation, which Vietnam established diplomatic relationship with South Korea. The Inter-government Committee on Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the two countries was formed in 1989. The committee members met just three times and then stopped the meetings for 10 years. It can be said that this was a very difficult period of the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea. The relation between the two countries in this period also became very sensitive with external impacts, particularly from the countries in the socialist bloc like China and Russia. Changes in internal factors of each country also took much

time and forces, the condition for developing the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea became limited. Nevertheless, both countries attempted to overcome impacts from outside. The two countries maintained annual meetings of the Inter-government Committee on Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was a big effort representing the spirit of friendship, cooperation, and close connection of the two countries even in the most difficult point-times.

IV. The period of 1996-up to now

This is the stage of restoring and promising a new development in the relations between Vietnam and North Korea. The first remark and also the basic condition to restore and develop the relationship between the two countries in this period were the revision of agreements signed previously so as to continue to carry out or to resign them. The thaw started from April 1996 when Mr. Lee Tae Sung, Minister and Chairman of Foreign Economic Relations Committee of North Korea, visited Vietnam; and a year later, in May 1997 Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, visited North Korea. The result of these two visits was that the two countries resigned the agreement of cooperation between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Since then, the two sides had together revised 150 items and agreements had been signed in all fields, continued to carry out 17 items which

was still in effect and negotiated on resigning the agreements which concerned both sides.⁶⁾ Every year the two countries have mutual visits of the heads of state, or ministerial level.⁷⁾

This period was marked by a very significant visit of the General Secretary of Vietnam Communist Party, Nong Duc Manh, to North Korea on 16-18 October 2007. This visit took place in the context of the peace process in the Korean Peninsula has achieved important progress through positive result in the sixth six-party negotiation round table⁸⁾ and the second inter-Korean high-level

6) Vietnam Government Office, 2011, *Cong bao* [Official Gazette], so. 87-88, February 07.

7) The visits of Vietnam's leaders to North Korea in August 2000: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Dy Nien visited North Korea. In May 2002: President Tran Duc Luong officially visited North Korea. In September 2003: Chairman of National Assembly's Ethnic Committee, Trang A Pao visited North Korea. In July 2006: Head of Party Central Committee's Foreign Affairs Department Nguyen Van Son visited North Korea. In April 2007: Member of the Party Central Committee and the General Editor of People's Newspaper visited North Korea, worked with the North Korea's Labor newspaper. In September 2007: Mr. Pham The Duyet, Chairman of Vietnamese Fatherland Front visited North Korea. From 16 to 18 October 2007: General Secretary Nong Duc Manh officially visited to North Korea. From 6 to 9 October 2008: Member of the Politburo and Minister of Public Security Le Hong Anh and high-level delegation of the Ministry of Public Security visited North Korea.

The visits of North Korean leaders to Vietnam in the 1990-2007 period:

In January 1992: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Yong Nam visited Vietnam. In April 1996: Chairman of the Committee of External Economy, Lee Song Te visited Vietnam. In April 1997: Deputy Prime Minister Gong Chin Tae visited Vietnam. In March 2000: Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Korea Paek Nam Sun visited Vietnam. In April 2001: Alternative Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Party Central Committee, Chairman of the Supreme People's Conference Choe Thae Bok took part in the 9th Congress of Vietnamese Communist Party. In July 2001: Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Conference Kim Yong Nam officially visited Vietnam.

8) Conference of Chief's six-party negotiation on nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, closing in Beijing on 20 July. The conference lodged the press release; the sides reached a framework agreement to promote the denuclearization process in the

meeting which had just occurred previously with positive results. The visit of the General Secretary, Nong Duc Manh to North Korea contributed to strengthen the traditional friendly relations between the two countries, including economic–commercial relations. The visit also contributed to enhance the role and status of Vietnam in the international arena, actively participate in solving international problems, stimulating the peace process in the Korean Peninsula. With the good traditional friendly cooperative relations between the two traditional countries, Vietnam wants to contribute positively to the improvement of relations between North Korea and South Korea and the peace process in this peninsula. According to the opinion of the two countries, the historic meeting of the Vietnam’s General Secretary, Nong Duc Manh and North Korea’s General Secretary Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in October 2007 was a big landmark event, raising the traditional friendship relations between the two countries to a new altitude.

The two sides affirmed the solid foundation of traditional friendship relations of Vietnam–North Korea, which President Ho Chi Minh and President Kim Il Sung made painstaking efforts to foster. Both parties are unanimous that it is necessary to consolidate and develop relations between the two parties, the two states, and the people of the two countries to the new heights; strengthen the high-level meetings, contact in various forms; expand exchanges, reciprocation of visits at all levels along the

Korean Peninsula. See VARANS 2007.

party, state and mass organizations in a practical way; promote mutual understanding and share experiences in areas of mutual interests; effort to expand cooperation in an effective and mutually beneficial on economic, cultural, scientific-technical, educational and training fields, on the base of proving the strengths and potentiality of each country.

The two sides also exchanged ideas and shared a close standpoint on international issues of mutual interest. Vietnam confirmed consistently to support the expectation of peace and reunification of the North Korean people; acclaim the efforts of gaining peace and unification of two sides in Korea, on the base of self-controlled independence, self-determined nationality in the spirit of inter-Korean high-level agreements in 2000 and 2007. Vietnam applauded the achieved progresses in the six-party negotiation, which was prepared for actively contributing to the promotion of peace, stability and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula and in the region; and supported the expansion of North Korea's cooperation with ASEAN and ASEAN's member countries.⁹⁾

The two sides also agreed that the solidarity of Vietnam-Korea, which built personally by President Ho Chi Minh and President Kim Il Sung, is the long-standing traditional relationship, deeply strike root in feelings of both nations; reaffirmed their

9) MOFA, "Discussion between General Secretary Nong Duc Manh and President Kim Jong Il," <http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns0710180928>

determination to constantly consolidate and develop the Vietnam–North Korea and cooperative dealings. By that spirit, the two sides agreed to promote the activities of the Vietnam–North Korea Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation to identify prioritized areas and key cooperation projects between the two countries to deploy in the following years.¹⁰⁾

Afterwards, on May 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the two countries agreed to establish a mechanism for annual political consultation at vice-ministerial level to discuss measures to promote multi-faceted cooperation relations. The vice-ministerial level annual meetings were held immediately in 2008 in Pyongyang, in 2009 in Hanoi and alternately in the two countries in the following years. During these meetings, Vietnam and North Korea had deployed many cooperation activities, especially in the field of standardization, metrology and quality control, signed by two sides on 20 Nov. 2003 between the Directorate for Standards and Quality (STAMEQ) of Vietnam and the General Directorate of the State Quality (AQQM) of North Korea. In the following years, the STAMEQ and AQQM signed four schedules to implement the cooperation program for exchange of legal documents and organize workshops to exchange experiences between the two sides.¹¹⁾

Next, in 2012, a high-level delegation of North Korea led by

10) MOFA, “Discussion between General Secretary Nong Duc Manh and President Kim Jong Il,” <http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns071018092849>

11) Lang Son Province Electronic Portal - Department of Science and Technology 2011.

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, Kim Yong Nam – the second most important leader of North Korea, visited Vietnam to exchange views and learn experiences in Vietnam's economic development. The highest-level leaders of the Party and Government of Vietnam such as General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, President Truong Tan Sang¹²⁾ and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung welcomed and held discussions with Mr. Kim Yong Nam.¹³⁾

During the discussions, the two sides confirmed the esteem and desire to constantly consolidate and develop the traditional relations between the two countries to meet the aspirations and interests of their people in accordance with the actual condition and ability of each country as well as the trend of the era, contribute to peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region. The two sides also were of the same mind in continuing the visits and contacts between leaders of the two countries, exchanging visits at all levels, branches and localities; strengthening economic cooperation with a more practically orientation, on the principle of mutual benefit, being in accordance with the actual situation and utilizing the strengths of each party. Initially, the Vietnam-North Korean intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation should focus on exchanging measures to remove barriers of mechanism, policies, increase the information exchange of economic cooperation.

12) *Nhan Dan Newspaper* (online). 2012.

13) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam. 2012.

The two sides agreed to reinforce cooperation in agriculture, culture, arts, sports, training and education and people exchanges. The top-ranking concern of North Korea in the visit was agriculture and a new rural model of Vietnam. North Korea appreciated the achievements that Vietnam has reached in the field of food production and agriculture, wanted Vietnam to share experiences in these fields. The two sides had discussions on agricultural management policies as well as manufacturing technical problems. The North Korean delegation also visited Thai Binh province to explore about the new rural program in this location as Thai Binh is considered to be the most successful province in applying the new rural program in Vietnam.

On this occasion, Vietnam donated 5,000 tons of rice to share the difficulties in food shortages of North Korea. Vietnam also declared to support North Korea to become a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and was prepared to share experiences with North Korea in economic development. After the visit to Vietnam, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea Kim Yong Nam, in the following years, many delegations from North Korea visited Vietnam to exchange experiences.

As regards economic cooperation, the Vietnam-North Korea Inter-governmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was reestablished in September 2000. This commission held the 4th meeting session (after the interruption of the first 3 sessions since 1992) in Pyongyang from

15 to 18 October 2001 and the 5th meeting session in Hanoi from 19 to 20 November 2003, the 6th meeting session in Pyongyang from August 27 to September 2 2006. The two countries signed a number of cooperation agreements such as Maritime Transport Agreement (3 May 2002); Trade Agreement (3 May 2002); Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance (3 May 2002); Agreement on Encouragement and Investment Protection (3 May 2002); Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (3 May 2002). The trade and investment relations between the two countries began to be implemented in this period, but at an exceedingly modest level.

In order to continue to implement the agreements on economic cooperation, in 2010, North Korea directed a cadre delegation, led by Mr. Ri Myong San, the Deputy Minister of Commerce, on a working visit in Vietnam with a desire to cooperate with Vietnam in the field of agriculture, aquaculture, genetic and stem cells research, tissue culture, energy, construction of hydro-electric power plants and electrical lines, electrical insulator manufacture, cement, mining, gold siftings, production technology of bimetallic wire, silk fiber, and 3D animation.¹⁴⁾

As for aid, in the situation of serious food shortages in North Korea in the early 21st century, Vietnam had repeatedly provided rice aid to North Korea. For example, Vietnam gave North Korea 1,000 tons of rice in 2000; 5,000 tons of rice in 2001; 5,000 tons of rice in 2002; 1,000 tons of rice and 5 tons of raw rubber in 2005; US\$ 50,000 (emergency aid) and 2,000 tons of rice in 2007.¹⁵⁾

14) See note above.

Therefore, we can say that the relation between Vietnam and North Korea in the 3rd period (from 1997 to the present), has attained encouraging achievements, which set the foundations for the further development of the bilateral relations between the two countries in the coming years. However, it can be said that in this period, relations between the two countries was just as the relationship of two typical partners in a fluctuant context of the region and the world.

In sum, over the last 65 years, the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea has undergone three periods of up and down due to the impact of internal and external factors. In the first period, the two countries had a very warm relation of the countries being members of the socialist system. In the second period, the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea underwent a very difficult period. However, in the third period, the Vietnam–North Korea relation was restored and showed good signs of a new period of development.

V. Prospects

As regards to the prospect of the relation between Vietnam and North Korea in the coming years, based on the current state of bilateral relations, the situation in each country and the current regional and international context, it may conclude an optimistic

15) See note above.

statement that the relationship between the two countries in the next time will grow faster and stronger. There are many positive factors contributing to promote the further development of the bilateral cooperation between Vietnam and North Korea in the years to come. Hereafter, it just mentions the factors in only two major fields: politics–security and the economy.

a. In the field of politics-security: The context of politics and security in the region is happening very complicatedly. Both countries, Vietnam and North Korea, have the very great demand and benefit in promoting cooperation further in the new context.

Throughout the history, in the geographical perspective, East Asia is an important strategic area. This area is the “corridor” and “bridge” as a strategic turning point, obstructing the access both at sea and on land between the East and the West and vice versa. From the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, East Asia was almost invaded, annexed objects of the colonial powers in Europe and North America. However, from the second half of the twentieth century, especially from the Cold War to the present, this area has been geo-politically important in the international arena, contributing greatly to the development of the world. The early twenty-first century, East Asia has increasingly merged as a region holding an important strategic position in the development strategies of most of the major nations, particularly US and China. The complicated context of the world situation from the beginning of the 21st century to the present has considerably affected the geo-political complexion

changes of East Asia, forcing countries in the region to change dramatically in their foreign policies and its international relations. The large countries have actions of a large country in the competition for dominance and influence, small countries also must have to take action in their own way. In this context, small countries like Vietnam and North Korea as well as other countries should intensify cooperation and solidarity to form a solid block in order to increase the strength to deal with the oppression, aggression of large countries. Vietnam and North Korea have interests in supporting each other in international issues of mutual interest. North Korea wants Vietnam support it in the peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula and play the role as a bridge between Korea and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); and help North Korea escape from isolation at present. More than ever Vietnam extremely needs the supporting voices of North Korea in international issues.¹⁶⁾

These are the factors promoting diplomatic-political relations between Vietnam and North Korea to develop further in the future.

b. In the field of economic cooperation: the economic cooperation

16) In terms of these issues, at the meeting with Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Dung, on an occasion of the visit and working in Vietnam in 2012, the Chairman of Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, Kim Yong Nam, confirmed that the stance of North Korea was in favor of resolving the dispute in the South China Sea by peaceful measures. Simultaneously, the two sides agreed to continue the visits and contacts between leaders at all levels to enhance exchanges and look for measures to effectively enhance bilateral cooperation on all fields between the two countries, and enhance coordination in the regional and international forums. <http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns120807063123>.

relations between Vietnam and North Korea, grounded by significant achievements in recent time, will certainly be boosted further under the impact of regional context and situation of each country in the next time.

With the specific characteristics of geography, scale and economic development speed, East Asia is still the region with the most dynamic vitality in the world at present. The forums of both bilaterally and multilaterally economic cooperations in this area are occurring vigorously than ever. Vietnam is a very active member of this forum. With its market-oriented economic renovation policies and positive integration into the economies, Vietnam has achieved great achievements in economic cooperation with the countries in the region. With the experiences obtained in the process of its international economic integration and on the base of achievements in economic relations with North Korea, Vietnam has advantages and opportunities to speed up the process of economic cooperation with North Korea in a number of aspects in the future. For example, increasing two ways trade; investing in North Korea by Vietnamese investors, especially in mineral exploitation and agriculture; exchanging of students and tourists between the two countries.

For North Korea, despite of being still isolated with the outside world concerning the nuclear issue of the country, North Korea has been conducting economic reforms for some years and there are major needs for boosting economic cooperation with other countries in the region. North Korea has established the free

economic zone (FEZ) and the resorts to promote the attraction of foreign investment and the development of tourism service sectors. The potentials of North Korea, which can promote economic cooperation with other countries, are still very abundant. In recent years, economic developments in North Korea have shown that the trend of promoting domestic economic reform, opening and integrating into the economy of the region and the world is an inevitable trend. We can say that what has been happening in North Korea to the present is somewhat the same as what occurred in Vietnam when Vietnam began to conduct economic reforms at the end of the 1980s. Vietnam's experiences will be certainly useful references for North Korea, and North Korea itself is also really looking forward to studying and consulting Vietnam's experiences. These obvious factors will contribute to impulse North Korea in strengthening economic cooperation with Vietnam in the future.

In short, the relationship between Vietnam and North Korea has experienced a number of difficult period, which are associated with the volatility of the situation in the region. The cooperation between the two countries has taken great pains with nurture and creation by President Ho Chi Minh and President Kim Il Sung and the other top level leaders of the two countries. During the movement against US involvement in Vietnam, North Korea wholeheartedly helped Vietnam. When North Korea faced with serious food shortage, Vietnam also supported timely and effectively. In East Asia, with complex circumstances today,

leaders of the two countries has agreed to promote the traditional relations between the two countries to develop more substantive, actively support in politics and security issues, promote cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, investment, enhance the forms of people exchange and mutual share of development experiences. It can say that the year 2015, the 65th anniversary of establishing the diplomatic relation between Vietnam and North Korea, is the year marking a new period of the relations between the two countries in very bright prospects.

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요약

베트남-북한 관계: 65년간 고찰과 전망

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지난 65년간 베트남과 북한 관계는 세 시기를 거쳐 왔다. 제1기는 양국의 외교관계 수립부터 베트남전쟁 종전까지이다. 제2기는 베트남전쟁 종전부터 1995년까지이다. 그리고 제3기는 1996년부터 현재까지이다. 이 논문은 지난 65년간 정치-외교적, 경제-상업적, 문화-교육적 부문에서 베트남-북한 관계의 전체적 특징을 살피고, 동시에 미래의 양자 관계의 전망에 영향을 주는 긍정적 요인들을 분석하고 평가한다. 제1기에 양국이 사회주의 체제의 일원으로서 매우 우호적 관계를 가졌다는 것을 보여준다. 제2기에 베트남-북한 관계는 국내외적 영향으로 인해 매우 어려운 시기에 처하였다. 그러나, 제3기에 베트남-북한 관계는 복구되었고 발전의 새로운 시기에 대한 좋은 징표를 보였다. 양측이 상호 우호 관계를 가지는 것이 새로운 구도 속에서 양측의 발전에 기여하리라는 것을 인식하기에, 양국 관계의 미래 전망은 밝다.

주제어: 베트남, 북한, 외교관계, 협력, 발전