

**From Integration to “Intra-National Commonwealth”:  
New Conceptual Thinking Towards Peaceful  
Resolution of Problems  
Facing Divided States\***

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# **From Integration to “Intra-National Commonwealth”: Towards Peaceful Resolution of Problems Facing Divided States**

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## **Abstract:**

Both "linkage communities" and "intra-national commonwealth" are concepts coined by this author to provide new conceptual schemes to analyze the processes of integration between different parts of divided nations. It is argued that conventional concepts and frameworks such as “confederation,” “federation,” and “commonwealth” are often rejected by different sides of a divided nation because they either imply the co-existence of two sovereign states or the absorption of one political system by another. Deriving from the practical experience of the various dynasties of China's past, I propose to use a new term, “intra-national commonwealth,” to accommodate the situation wherein a political union is formed among autonomous political systems within a nation yet it is neither a creation of new single sovereign state, nor a linkage of two sovereign states, but the formation of two political systems into a loose union just like those which existed in ancient China. Concrete suggestions are made to regulate the interactions between different units in an intra-national commonwealth as well as in their relations with other countries.

**Keywords:** Political Integration; Multi-system nations; Linkage Community; intra-national commonwealth

# **From Integration to “Intra-National Commonwealth”: Towards Peaceful Resolution of Problems Facing Divided States<sup>\*</sup>**

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The unification of divided states has been a focus of analysis among social scientists in general and political scientists in particular. Issues surrounding the so-called “divided nations” or “divided states” pose special problems to scholars in terms of precision of definition, the methods of analyzing of the process of transition and transformation, and the possible formulas of integration and unification.

Generally speaking, the problems in studying the so-called “divided nations” can be found in three areas: (1) the lack of precise and accurate concepts which can be operationalized for the purpose of empirical research; (2) the absence of effective legal norms to deal with the question of the international status of the different part of a “divided nations”; and (3) the need for institutional framework which can be used for the facilitation of interaction as well as the promotion of integration between different parts of a divided state.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the problem of the divided nations by providing a more precise operational concept for the analysis of this type of nations; to review the issues surrounding the legal status of the divided state under international law; and finally, to put forth new paradigms for the promotion of peaceful interaction and integration of the different parts of the divided nations. In the course of analysis, the concept of “multi-system nations,” the issues pertaining to the legal of the divided states, the idea of the “linkage communities,” and the conceptual as well as policy paradigm of “intra-national commonwealth” will be presented and examined one after another.

## **I. The problem of the “Divided Nations” and the new concept of “Multi-System Nations”**

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The division of China, Korea, Vietnam and Germany into communist and non-communist political systems has been a major development since the end of the Second World War. The emergence of divided nations is not only a most unfortunate experience for the peoples of these nations but also one of the primary destabilizing factors in international politics. The Berlin Crisis, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the cross-Taiwan-Strait crises all involved the divided nations and the major powers of the world. What are the prospects for reunification of divided nations? How can governments and peoples of the divided nations work toward the goal of national unification? What kind of concepts, legal norms, and institutional paradigms can we use to best analyze and to deal with the problems relating to divided nations? These are but a few of the questions which frequently have been raised by political leaders and scholars of the divided states.

Yet, comparative study of the divided nations has been a late development in political science. A survey of literature on divided nations reveals two basic problems. First, there is the lack of a commonly accepted term or concept that is neutral and precise enough to serve as an effective operational concept for empirical research on "divided nations." Second, there is a failure in differentiating two separate types of division and unification processes, i.e., those involving communist political systems and those which do not involve the confrontation between communist and non-communist systems.

As for basic concepts, a host of terms including "the partitioned nations," "the divided states," "the divided nations," and "two China's (Korea's, Germany's)" has been used. All of these terms designate certain features of the "divided nations," yet none is accurate and broad enough to reflect and include all the cases. For example, the term "partitioned nations" can not be used to refer to countries which were divided, not through international intervention or by international agreements, but through internal war, such as the case of China. The concept of "divided states" is broader than "partitioned nation," yet many of the leaders and scholars of the so-called "divided states" are very reluctant to accept the word "state" in the concept because it implies a

more permanent separation of a nation into two or more legal entities under international law. Similarly, most of the “divided states” resent terms such as “two China’s,” “two Korea’s,” and “two Germany’s.” As for “divided nations” it is a term used most often by scholars; however, it also has the misleading connotation that there are two or more nations in a “divided” state – an idea that is detested by most leaders and scholars of divided systems.

In order to avoid the shortcomings of the above-mentioned concepts, I propose that we substitute “multi-system nations” for “divided states” and “divided nation.” There are several advantages in using this new term. First, it clarifies the fact that the reality in a so-called “divided nation” is *not* the separation of one nation into two or more nations, but the emergence of more than one political system within *one* nation, either as a result of international arrangement or as the product of internal wars. More significantly, the term “multi-system nation” reflects faithfully the true nature and cause of division, i.e., the confrontation and competition between noncommunist systems and communist systems in various countries.

The development of the concept of “multi-system nations” can be traced back to the formation of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Studies Section within the International Studies Association (ISA) in 1969. As one of the co-founders of this research section within ISA, I was particularly interested in the complex problems of political partitioning which leads to a host of problems including refugees, migration, minorities, and non-state-nations.<sup>1</sup>

Through comparative study of the nature of the so-called “divided states”, I soon discovered that it is incorrect to call most of the partitioned nations “divided states.” For in most of these nations the different parts share a common culture and ethnic origin. It is therefore not the division of a political system into two or more different parts along

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<sup>1</sup> The formation of a “Divided Nations Internet” in the Comparative and interdisciplinary Studies Section of the International Studies Association in 1969 was a pioneering effort toward empirical study of divided systems and peoples. For some examples of the results of this intellectual endeavor, see Yung Wei (ed.), “Political Partitioning, Migration, Minorities, and Non-State Nations: Models, Propositions, and Intellectual Exchanges,” (CISS working paper no. 49, University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1975) and Ray E. Johnston (ed.), *The Politics of Division, Partition, and Unification* (New York. Praeger, 1976).

cultural or ethnic lines but the co-existence of two or more political systems within one nation. For this reason, I decided to coin a new term, “multi-system nations,” to define more accurately the situation.

The core of the new concept of “multi-system nations” rests on the emphasis that relations of different parts of a divided nation are not between different states, rather they are between different political systems of a *single* nation. These competing systems try to deny international status of the other side despite the fact that both sides meet almost all the criteria of an independent state. By advancing the new concept of “multi-system nations,” I proposed that we preserve the idea of “one nation” but face the reality of the co-existence of two or more mutually separated political systems within that nation.<sup>2</sup> The logical derivations from this concept include: “one nation, two systems;” “one sovereignty, two jurisdictions;” “one country, two international personalities.”

## **II. Legal Status of the Multi-System Nations: Calling for Realistic Regulatory Norms**

Other than the lack of precision in definition, another problem facing the divided nations has been the legal status of the various parts within these nations. To the various governments and states which have to deal with the divided nations, the recognition of the different parts of a “divided nations” with overlapping claims over sovereignty and jurisdiction has always been a thorny problem.

From the very beginning, the emergence of the “divided nations” or

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<sup>2</sup> For further discussions by this author on the inception, development and policy impact of the concept of multi-system nations, see Wei Yung, “The Unification and Division of Multi-System Nations: A Comparative Analysis of Basic Concepts, Issues, and Approaches,” (Paper delivered at symposium on Functional Integration of Divided Nations, Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 6-7, 1980); later published in *Multi-System Nations and International Law: The International Status of Germany, Korea, and China*, edited by Hungdah Chiu and Robert Downon (Baltimore: School of Law, University of Maryland, 1981). Also see the author’s following papers: “Multi-System Nations Revisited: Interaction Between Theories and Realities” (Paper delivered at the International Conference on Unification of Multi-System Nations, Taipei, September 27-29, 1991). “Unification or Separation: Assessment of Relations between the Two Chinese Political Systems through the Concept of Multi-System Nations” (Paper delivered at the Conference on China’s Constitutional Systems: Convergence or Divergence, Columbia University, New York, 29 April 1994); and “Conceptual Schemes for Multi-System Nations and Inter-System Developments” (Paper delivered at Panel on System Integration of Divided Nations, XVI World Congress, International Political Science Association (IPSA), Berlin, 21-25 August 1994).

“multi-system nations” has created unique problems for the international law. According to conventional international law, there are three types of international personalities: states, belligerents and insurgents. Judging by the criteria specified in international law, political systems in the divided nations fall between a “state” and a “belligerent”. In terms of the qualifications of a state – such as a government, a territory under effective control by that government, and the ability of that government to carry out international obligations – almost all the systems within the divided nations qualify for the status of that of a state. Yet confrontations between various parts of divided nations in political, economic and sometimes military arenas, have prevented a full recognition of all parts of a divided nation by other states.<sup>3</sup>

Other than mutual hostility and cold war situation, another element which has prevented multiple recognition and multiple representation of the divided nations, or multi-state nations, has been the problem of overlapping claims over sovereignty and territorial control. By “overlapping claims”, it is meant that various systems of a divided nation make claims that they represent not only the people and the territories which are under their effective control, but also the part of a divided state which they do not control. Consequently, diplomatic recognition and representation for the divided nation have become a “zero-sum game” in which other states are compelled to choose one of the political systems of a divided nation as the *only* legitimate government of *all* the territory of that nation despite the fact that it controls only a part of it.

Before unification, the two Germanys situation approximated to the creation of two governments within one nation. The Korean situation seems to be moving toward the German model. Before PRC’s entrance into the United Nations in 1971, the majority of states recognized only the government in Taipei. Since 1971, however, Beijing has fully utilized conventional international law to gain diplomatic recognition at the expense of Taipei.

In this regard, the new concept of “multi-system nations” has

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<sup>3</sup> For problems regarding the legal status of the divided nations, see Yung Wei, “Legal Status of the ‘Divided Nations’,” paper presented to the Session on State Succession, International Law Association 68<sup>th</sup> Conference, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China, May 24-30, 1998.

important implications to the legal states of the divided nations in the sense that it emphasizes that relations of different parts of a divided nation are not those between different states but between different political systems of a single nation. However, despite their common origin as a nation and people, these competing systems try to deny international status of the other side despite the fact that both sides meet almost all the criteria of an independent state. Thus, the new concept of “multi-system nations” stresses the idea of “one nation” but faces the reality of the co-existence of two or more mutually separated political systems within that nation. The logical derivations from this concept include: “one nation, two systems;” “one sovereignty, two jurisdictions;” “one country, two international personalities.”

Having coined the term “multi-system nations,” I further proposed that in order to resolve the problems of this type of nations, the international community should separate the issue of unification and recognition. It is suggested that other states should recognize all political systems within a multi-system nation without recognizing or denying their claims beyond the territories under their effective control. It is further recommended that under the notion of “one nation,” all parts of a multi-system nation should be allowed to join international organizations as *bona fide* members on equal footing. In short, the concept of multi-system nations argues that the problem of national unification should be left to the people of the multi-system nations to decide among themselves, whereas the issue of recognition should be handled with the principle of political realism by relevant countries and governments.

In short, a new chapter should be added to the text of international law, i.e., the recognition and representation of “divided nations,” or “Multi-System Nations.” The overall underlying principles in dealing with this subject matter should be the respect of human rights and the effective handling of political realities. To sum up, the added new chapter to international law should include:

1. International law should be a stabilizing, not a destabilizing, factor in international relations.
2. International law should not be used as an instrument to achieve purposes that cannot be achieved short of the use of force.



3. Recognition and representation of the various part of a “Multi-System Nations,” or the “divided nations” should not be a zero-sum game, i.e., other states should not be forced to recognize only one of the systems in a divided nation and accept its claim over all the territories of a nation, including those which it does not control.

4. The third state should recognize *all* systems in a divided nation without recognizing their claims beyond the territories under effective control yet without denying those claims either.

5. All third states should not take a position on the question of unification of the divided nations, neither forcing nor preventing the unification of the different parts of a divided nation into one single state.

6. The principle of multiple recognitions of the divided states should also extend to multiple representations of the divided states in the United Nations and in all international organizations.

One may challenge the above-mentioned proposals by arguing that they are impractical because it does not correspond with the *realpolitik* of international relations. The fact is that even for highly mutually hostile systems, accommodations have been made to ensure certain extent of representation of the divided states that are not formally recognized by a third state. Consequently, what we have today in regard to the recognition of the divided states is a series of creative accommodations to political reality, yet without legal meaning, therefore, unstable and conflict-prone.

### **III. Nation, State, Sovereignty, Unification, and Recognition: Issues relating to the Peaceful Resolution of the Problems Facing the Multi-System Nations**

Having examined the problems facing the divided nations or multi-system nations in the areas of definition as well as in the legal status of divided nations under international law, we may then move onto a more systematic examination of the various problems confronting the multi-system nations. A careful survey of the problems facing the divided nations led us to the discovery of a host of issues haunting the different parts of a divided nation or state. As pointed out previously in this paper, each part of a divided nation is fully qualified as a state or at

east a government under ordinary situation. Judging by the usual criteria of a state, including a territory, a group of people living within that territory, and a government which is in effective control of that territory and people and is able and willing to fulfill international obligation, then all parts of the divided nations are qualified to be full fledged states.

Yet because of the overlapping claims of the political systems within a divided nation, various parts of different divided states often try to win recognition, from other governments and states, of them only not as the government of the territories they actually controls but also as the government of the territories which they do not control. As a result, international recognition of the different parts of a divided nation often evolves into a "zero-sum" game wherein other states and governments often become the victims of having to make difficult choices among various parts of a divided nations.

Issues confronting the multi-system nations can be found in a host of contradictions regarding the preferred ideal state of affairs and the actual situation in the reality. Thus one finds that while more often than not the leaders of the divided nations prefer to believe that there is "one nation," "one state," "one sovereignty," and "one people" there are actually two political systems co-existing in one nation, two "governments" within one state, two jurisdictions within one sovereignty, and consequently the emergence of the need to have dual representation of the unfortunate people who happen to live on two sides of an original nation or state. (See Table 1)

A deeper understanding of the problems facing the multi-system nations in the area of unification and recognition can be obtained by looking at situation illustrated by Table 2. Juxtaposing the issue of "unification" on the one side and "recognition" on the other, we have obtained a four-fold table. By asking "yes" or "no" on the issues of unification and recognition, one obtains four different outcomes, i.e.: (1) single recognition of a unified nation, state, or government; (2) dual recognition of a divided nation (multi-system nation); (3) non-recognition of a pariah state or government; and (4) non-recognition of one or both political systems within a divided nation. Other than the

rare case of non-recognized single unified state, the real issue rests with the serious failure or inability for certain members of the multi-system nations to obtain any significant international recognition. (See Table 2)

Corollary to the issue of recognition or non-recognition of multi-system nations are the methods of unification or division which in turn have an effect on the relations between different parts of a divided nation as well as on the attitude of international community toward different parts of such a nation. By relating types of change in the relations between two parts of a divided nation and the methods of change, one can obtain four types of outcomes, i.e., (1) amalgamation (forced occupation); (2) civil war between different parts of a divided nation or violent secession; (3) negotiated merge or gradual integration; and (4) consensual separation and partition of a multi-system Nation. How can we promote peaceful change in regard to the problems of the divided nations thus have become paramount concern not only to the multi-system nations themselves but also to international community as a whole. (See Table 3)

The real critical issue facing the divided nation, other than the possibility of warfare, has been the failure of certain political systems within multi-system nations in gaining diplomatic recognition and in obtaining participation in the international organization. Herein one sees the real inadequacy of conventional international law. The current principles of granting diplomatic recognition were developed from the experience of western European states before the 20th Century. At that time, transition of a nation from unification to division, or from division to unification, usually were rather rapid. The pioneers of today's international law simply failed to foresee the persistent existence of parallel political systems within an original nation or state for an extended period of time as what have happened in China, Germany, and Korea.

In the minds of the founding fathers of international law, other than the *state*, which naturally was assumed to exist for quite some time, other two types of international personalities under conventional international law, the "*belligerents*" and "*insurgents*," actually were not anticipated to last for any length of time. Thus recognizing these two categories of

“international personalities” was meant purely for the matter of convenience, not for any enduring long-term purposes. Consequently, international law, as it exists today, is grossly inadequate in dealing with the situation of the multi-system nations, particularly in the Chinese case. (See Table 4)

Arguments have made to make the non-recognized part of a divided nation an “entity *sui generis*.”<sup>4</sup> Other than the archaic nature of its nomenclature, “entity *sui generis*” really carries a rather blurred and uncertain connotation so far as the legal status of unrecognized political system of a multi-system nation is concerned. It should be recognized that although the political systems within a divided nation may be somewhat less than a full-fledged state or government, but they are definitely of a higher legal status than those of belligerents and insurgents, the other two recognized international personalities under conventional international law. My suggestion, therefore, is for the international jurists to coin a new term other than “entity *sui generis*” to refer to the less recognized part of a divided nation. If “political system” is too abstract or non-legal looking, then either “political entity” or “political authority of self-governing territories” may be two other better and easily understandable choices.

#### **IV. Development in the Divided Nations After the Introduction of the Concept of “Multi-System Nations”**

Developments in various so-called “divided states” following the coinage of the concept of multi-system nations more or less have corresponded to the analysis and predictions of the theory of “multi-system nations.”<sup>5</sup> The “common roof (Dachtheorie) theory” developed in Germany largely echoes the idea of multi-system nations. By asserting the notion of one German nation, East Germany and West

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<sup>4</sup> See Louis Henkin, Richard Crawford Pugh, Oscar Schachter and Hans Smit, *International Law, Cases and Materials*, 2nd ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1987); also see Philip Yang, “Taiwan’s Legal Status: Going Beyond the Unification-Division Dichotomy.” (paper delivered at the CSIS Seminar on Cross-Strait Relations at the Turn of the Century, September 21-23, 1999)

<sup>5</sup> For American international jurists’ taking note of the “multi-system nations” theory, see “suggested readings” for recognition of the divided states in Gerhard von Glahn, *Law Among Nations, An Introduction to Public International Law* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996), p. 64.

Germany managed to separate the issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction. Sovereignty belongs to the abstract German nation while jurisdictions were clearly delineated between the Federal Republic of Germany and Democratic Republic of Germany. Consequently, both West and East Germany were able to be simultaneously recognized by other states as well as to join the international organizations including the United Nations without violating the “one German Nation” principle.<sup>6</sup>

In the case of the two Koreas, the application of “multi-system nations” theory has been more direct and encompassing.<sup>7</sup> Some officials and scholars, such as Prof. Hakjoon Kim, former special assistant to the President, openly described Korea as a “multi-system nation.”<sup>8</sup> The December 1991 Communiqué between the representatives of North and South Korea clearly defined the situation in the Korean peninsula as two political systems co-existing in one Korean Nation. As a result, relations between the two Korean political systems are not international relations, but special relations to be regulated by special agreements between the North and South. Today both North and South Korea are members of the United Nations and enjoy dual recognitions in many capitals around the world.<sup>9</sup>

As for the Chinese situation, leaders of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) put forth the notion of “one country, two systems” some time around 1983, shortly after the concept of “multi-system nations” gained international recognition and caused debates in Taiwan. Despite repeated denials by the Beijing authorities, many scholars are of the opinion that before 1983, PRC leaders already have been aware of the concept and its implication to the cross-Strait relation and to the

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<sup>6</sup> See Joyce Marie Mushaben, “A Search for Identity: The German Question in Atlantic Alliance Relations,” *World Politics*, 40 (April 1988), pp. 395-417; and Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, “The Unification of Germany’s Multi-System Nations: the Evolution of West Germany’s Strategies,” (paper delivered at International Conference on the Unification of Multi-System Nations co-sponsored by Vanguard Foundation and American Enterprise Institution, Taipei, Republic of China, September 27-29, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> See John H. Herz, “Korea and Germany as Divided Nations: The Systemic Impact,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1975), pp. 957-970.

<sup>8</sup> See Hakjoon Kim, “Korean Reunification: A Seoul Perspective on the Korean National Community Unification Formula as Seen Through the Various Concepts on the Unification on Multi-System Nations,” (Paper presented at International Conference on the Unification on Multi-System Nations, Taipei, September 27-29, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> See Hong Nack Kim, “The ‘Two Koreas’ Enter into the United Nations and the Implications for Inter-Korean Relations,” *Korea and World Affairs* (Fall, 1991), pp. 397-413.

diplomatic efforts of the ROC. Hence they have borrowed the idea but have skillfully adjusted the content of “multi-system nations” to suit their own political framework and purposes, i.e., the two *systems* in the “One Country Two System” scheme were only socio-economic institutions without international personalities. Unquestionably, Beijing had both Hong Kong and Taiwan in mind when it put forth the “one-country-two-system” scheme.

In regard to the Republic of China, the inner circle of the ROC government basically concurred the concept of “multi-system nations” and actually called high-level meetings to discuss the implications as well as possible positive usage of the concept. Enthusiastic and generally positive responses also came from the academic community in Taiwan. Only a few senior members of the Legislative Yuan (Parliament) voiced different opinions. Whatever the initial responses, the fact has been that since 1981, the official policy of the ROC government towards the cross-Taiwan-strait relations as well as toward international participation have steadily have moved closer to the idea of “multi-system nations.” The Guideline for National Unification, for instance, advocates the concept of “one China” but allows the co-existence of two “political entities” within one China. The White Paper on Cross-Strait Relations released by the Mainland Affairs Council went further to formally declare that “one China” is a “historical, geographic, and cultural Chinese nation.”<sup>10</sup> Within this nation, the two Chinese political entities are not foreign countries to each other; relations between the two are to be regulated by agreements signed by both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Yet their relations with other countries, both the ROC and the PRC are fully-fledged international personalities. Hence, the idea “one China, two entities” embedded in the Guideline for National Unification corresponds completely to the ideas of “multi-system nations” as defined by official ROC government policy. Responding to interpellation from members of the Legislative Yuan, Dr, Huang Kuen-hui, Chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council of the Executive Yuan (Cabinet), openly acknowledged that the content of the Guideline for National Unification indeed had borrowed the idea of “Multi-System Nations.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Policy Paper on Cross-Taiwan-Strait Relations* (Taipei: Mainland Affairs Council, 1994), p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> For an official view of the ROC position on the issue of national reunification, see Lien Chan, “A

It must be pointed out, however, that the release by former President Lee Teng-hui of the thesis of “Special state-to-state relations” to refer to cross-Taiwan-Strait situation was a blunt rejection of the “One China” concept and the Guideline of National Unification and was serious setback in cross-Strait relations. Fortunately, after Chen Sui-bian assumed the office of the Presidency of the ROC, more moderate and restrained position have been taken by the ROC Government. Nevertheless, the reluctance of the new ROC government to openly acknowledge “One China” policy and the lack of desire of the PRC to give ROC more international space have led to the current deadlock in cross-Strait relations.

#### **V. “Linkage Communities” in the Chinese and Korean Cases: Further Analysis and Projections**

From the study of the Chinese, Korean, and German cases, it has become clear that formal-structural arrangements are not as effective as informal and inter-personal contracts and interactions. Yet regrettably more often than not, one finds that analyses on the issues of the divided states are often too obviously state-oriented, elite-oriented, law oriented, and structure oriented, thus losing sight of the impact of interaction between the people, culture, and communities of different parts of a multi-system nation.

With a view to further identifying and highlighting his process of informal but functional interactions between the people of different political systems within a multi-system nation, I propose a new term, “linkage communities”, to illustrate the actual process of functional integration within either side of a divided state. What I mean by “linkage communities” is the existence of a group of people who have had such extensive social, cultural, commercial, or other types of contacts with the people and society of the opposite system that they have developed an understanding, sensitivity, and empathy with the people and society across system boundaries. People who belong to this type of

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Pragmatic Strategy for China’s Peaceful Reunification,” *American Asian Review*, 14, No. 1 (Spring 1996), pp. 97-107.

“linkage community” not only have higher contacts with individuals and groups across boundary lines, they also keep close contact with people of similar orientation and experience within their own political system.<sup>12</sup>

By all accounts, cross-Taiwan-Straits relations have already entered into an era of linkage-community formation and functional integration. According to data released by the Custom Office and Bureau on Tourism, the percentage of export to the United States in the total export of the ROC has declined from 44.15% in 1987 to that of 23.65% in 1995. During the same period, the percentage of export to Japan decreased from 13% to 11.79%, yet export to Hong Kong increased from 7.68% to 23.39%, mainly to Mainland China. As for tourism, the percentage of Taiwanese tourists going to Japan decreases from 27.87% to 9.8%; those to U.S.A., from 15.52% to 10.16%; yet the percentage of people of Taiwan traveling to Hong Kong increases from 18.4% in 1987 to 36.57% in 1995, again mainly to Mainland China.<sup>13</sup> From these data, one can easily assess the actual size of “linkage communities” both in Taiwan and on Mainland China. A leading American specialist on Taiwan commented that “the process of building linkage communities and lessening mistrust between the two sides of the strait will take time...eventually, it should be possible to agree on a special form of association, probably one that will not fit into traditional political science or international relations categories.”<sup>14</sup>

That is exactly what this author has been proposing for a number of years. One thing is crystal clear; that is, unless both sides of the Taiwan Straits are unified by force, “multi-system nations” and “linkage communities” are probably the only workable concepts which still preserve the notion of “one Chinese nation” on the one hand, yet allow

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<sup>12</sup> See Yung Wei, “Let the Concept of ‘Linkage Communities’ to Serve as a Vehicle to Breakthrough the Current Impasse in Cross-Taiwan-Strait Relations,” *United Daily News* (June 19, 1996), p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> For further discussion on the increasing interactions between the Chinese political systems, see Yung Wei, “Toward a New Framework of External Relations for the ROC in the 21st Century: Between Oceanic and Continental Strategies,” in Yung Wei, *Tu-Po (Breakthrough, Creating a Future of Broad Perspective)* (Taipei: Commercial Weekly Publishers, 1995), pp. 319-323; for a broader discussion on the interplay of internal and external factors in cross-Taiwan-Strait relations, see Yung Wei, “Democratization, Unification, and Elite Conflict,” in *The Chinese and Their Future: Beijing, Taipei and Hong Kong*, edited by Zhi-ling Lin and Thomas W. Robinson (Washington, DC: The American Enterprise Institute Press, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> See Ralph N. Clough, *Cooperation or Conflict in the Taiwan Strait* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 1999), p.108.



both sides of the Taiwan Strait to gain international recognition without violating the principle and goal of eventual national reunification on the other. By most estimates, the current division between the two Chinese political systems probably will last well into the 21st century.<sup>15</sup> Under this situation, the concept of “multi-system nations” and “linkage communities” may serve not only as theoretical constructs to help explain the existing reality but also as an intellectual tool projecting and prescribing possible policy options.

In addition to cross-Taiwan-Strait relations, a discussion of the “linkage communities” in the Chinese setting cannot leave Hong Kong out of the picture. As a special zone enjoying unique status within the PRC, Hong Kong may serve as a natural linkage community to both Mainland China and Taiwan. In fact, the Legislative Yuan of the ROC has passed a special law to deal with Taiwan’s relations with Hong Kong and Macau, separate from that with Mainland China. How the new Hong Kong authority handle its relation with both Beijing and Taipei so as to make good use of this “linkage” role will definitely have an impact on future relations between the two polities across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>16</sup>

Having fully discussed the case of China vis-a-vis the concepts of “multi-system Nation” and “linkage communities,” we may move on to the situation in the Korean Peninsula. In contrast to Chinese case, relations between the two Korean political systems entered into contractual arrangements as early as 1972 and gradually evolved into full mutual understanding of the co-existence of two Koreas in December 1991. Also in 1991, the two Korean political systems became members of the United Nations. Both Koreas are now recognized by major countries of the world and maintain embassies simultaneously in many capitals. Thus the Korean situation is a typical example of a full-blown “multi-system nations.”

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<sup>15</sup> For a projection of Taiwan’s future onto the 21st century, see Yung Wei, “The Interplay between Taiwan’s Internal and External Environments to 2020: A Contingency Analysis,” in *Development in Taiwan to 2020: Implications for Cross-Strait Relations and U.S. Policy*, edited by Karen M. Sutter, with Paul H. B. Godwin and Alfred D. Wilhelm, Jr. as co-rapporteurs (Washington D.C.: The Atlantic Council of the United States, 1996), pp. 3-22.

<sup>16</sup> See Yung Wei, “The Parameters and Variables on ROC-USA Relations,” *United Daily News* (October 27, 1996), p.11; also see Frank Ching *et al.* *Hong Kong’s Transition, Context and Implications from Both Sides of the Pacific* (New York: The Asia Society, April, 1997); Frank Ching, “Misreading Hong Kong,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (May/June, 1997), pp. 53-66.

Yet despite the success of the two Koreas in resolving their problems on UN memberships and international recognition without violating the one Korean nation concept, actual trade and other types of interactions between North and South have been almost at negligible level. For instance, the meeting of South and North Korean from 1989 through 1994 totaled only 1,111 cases involving only 3,958 persons.<sup>17</sup> South Korea's export to North Korea has achieved some growth in recent years, yet still amounted only US\$ 64,44 million in 1995, which represented only a tiny fraction of South Korea's total export.<sup>18</sup> (See Table 5)

With the meeting of the leaders of South and North Korea in Pyongyang in June this year, a new stage is set for reconciliation between the two Koreas. With North Korea directly needing economic aid from the South and with South Korea searching for more independent foreign policy, there is indeed more room for cautioned optimism toward more peaceful development in the Korea peninsula. As of this writing, the reunion of separated families between South and North Korea has already begun. On August 16, 2000, one hundred families had their separated members reunited in Seoul. More reunions are in the process of being planned.<sup>19</sup>

Hence it may be concluded that while the Koreas have more or less resolved their issue of recognition and representation and have become "multi-system nations," they are far from being "linkage communities" to each other. The two Chinese political systems on the other hand, are increasingly becoming "linkage communities" but are still far from becoming "multi-system nations."

## **VI: "Intra-National Commonwealth": A Flexible Concept worthy for Further Exploration**

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<sup>17</sup> See Werner Pfennig, "Steps towards Normalization: A comparative look at Divided Nations." in Myoung-Kyu Kang and He Mut Wagner (eds.) *Germany and Korea Cessions in Unification* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1995), pp. 39-71.

<sup>18</sup> For a most interesting and comprehensive analysis of the North-South economic interaction, see Murooka Tetsus, "Economic Exchanges between South and North Korea Since the South Korean Activation Measure," *New Asia*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer, 1997), pp. 22-46.

<sup>19</sup> "After 50 Years, Reunions Bring Joy to Koreans," *New York Times* (Aug. 16, 2000), p. 1.

If the experience of Germany reunification is any guide, then Chinese and Koreans have concrete lessons to learn. Both nations must understand that gradual socio-economic integration is an indispensable pre-condition for eventual political unification. While the Republic of Chinese on Taiwan must find ways in resolving their political and legal entanglements with the People's Republic of China on the mainland, the two Koreas must enhance their trade, cultural, and people-to-people interchange so that gradual concrete, and mutually beneficial socio-economic integration may be achieved before political unification.

Furthermore, the Germany experience of reunification also has taught us a lesson that even the absorption of a less free socialist society and economy into a democratic system with free enterprise can still be rather difficult and sometimes even painful for people in both systems. Hence it may serve the interest of both competing Chinese as well as Korean systems to focus first on the building of an "intra-national commonwealth" before moving onto complete political unification.

The idea of "intra-national commonwealth" derives its notion from the British Commonwealth, which is a union of loosely linked sovereign states which were former colonies within the British Empire. The adjective "intra-national" was added to highlight the nature of the relationship between different parts of a divided state as differentiated from that among members of the British Commonwealth.

The reason I put forth the idea of "intra-national commonwealth" instead of federation or confederation is because the later two concepts have too concrete legal and institutional prerequisites to be realized under the political realities of the existing multi-system nations. The concept of "federation" require formal merge of the different parts of a multi-system nation into a single unitary state. The idea of "confederation," on the other hand, rests on the formal and mutual acceptance of separate sovereignties between different parts of a divided state. Both are not possible either in Chinese or Korean case. Hence a loose union between the two parts of a divided states which does not touch upon the issue of separated sovereignties and preserves the notion of "one nation" probably is the only feasible instrument for gradual linkage which may move toward functional integration. (For an illustration of the process of development from the multi-system nations

to “intro-national commonwealth” in the Chinese case, see Figure 1)

By preserving separate autonomous economic-political systems within a loose framework of commonwealth of same cultural and ethnic roots, Chinese and Koreans may avoid the agonizing process of socio-economic-political adjustments that are still confronting the German people ten years after reunification on the one hand, yet are able to enhance practical interaction between the two sides on the other.<sup>17</sup>

Other than avoiding the thorny issue of sovereignty, another reason that I employ the concept of intra-national commonwealth is owing to the historical precedents in both Chinese and Korean history. During the long history of both China and Korea, the two countries have gone through many different stages of unification and division. Yet despite the co-existence of more than one political system within one China and one Korea, there never had been serious attempts to permanently divide the nation. Furthermore, rather detailed rules of conduct on the relationship among different political systems during the period of division.

Among the rules of the multi-systems within China and Korea in historical past include:

1. Common acceptance, by all the political systems within one nation, that despite the then existing division of the country, there still is one nation, one culture, and one people.
2. Although the different political systems within divided China and Korea call themselves “states,” but they were not states in the sense of international law in the Western world. Instead, these were merely separate political entities pending eventual reunification of the nation into one.
3. The paramount principle over the conducting of inter-system relations is to perpetuate the common cultural heritage of the nation as well as to prevent intrusion of foreign power into the territories of the common motherland.
4. With the anticipation that the nation will be reunified at some future date, no effort should be made to change the basic cultural values and

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<sup>17</sup> For a forward-looking yet down-to-earth analysis of, as well as suggestions to, the idea of linking Mainland China and Taiwan into a loose confederation with shared sovereignty, see Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, *The Divided China Problems, Conflict Avoidance and Resolution*, Essay in Public Policy. No. 101 (Stanford, Cal.: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, 2000), pp. 48-52.

political beliefs shared by the people living in different political systems.

All the above principles shared by the political systems in historical China and Korea can shed much light on the development of inter-system framework as well as conduct of inter-system interaction in the Chinese and Korean situations. Since the two Koreas have more or less acquiesced to a confederation model, it is up to Chinese on two sides of the Taiwan Strait to develop something close the “intra-national commonwealth” to handle future relations between the two political systems. A “Chinese Intra-national commonwealth” may be what is needed here.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, a discussion of the unification of the divided states or “multi-system nations” will not be complete without analyzing the US factor in the Chinese and Korean cases. US position on cross-Taiwan-Strait relations is based on the “one China principle,” The Taiwan Relation Act, and the three communiqués between the USA and the PRC. Recent visit by Jiang Zemin to the United States has enhanced PRC-USA relations and “elevate” it to the level of “constructive strategic partnership.”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, American attitude toward the issue of unification rests on the principle that it must be achieved by peaceful means. The sending of two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait demonstrated US determination in enforcing this principle. Yet there are increasing signs that a growing number of US government officials, Congressmen, and policy analysts are weary about the overtly “aggressive” policy moves of Taipei such as efforts towards UN membership and the occasional “provocative” policy statements of Taipei such as the “special state to state relations” statement made by the former President of the ROC, Lee Teng-hui.<sup>19</sup> It would be prudent, therefore, for the ROC government to adopt a long-term perspective both in cross-Taiwan-Strait relations and in its relations with the United States in the 21st Century. (For an illustration on the relations between big power competition and its impacts on the divided states, see Figure 2)

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<sup>18</sup> For example, see Yung Wei,

<sup>18</sup> See Yung Wei, *U.S. China Policy and Cross-Taiwan-Strait Relations: Analysis and Projection for the Policy Planning and Responses of the Second-term Clinton Administration* (Taipei: Vanguard Institute of Policy Studies, July, 1997); “Joint U.S.-China Statement, October 29, 1997,” and Yung Wei, “Coping with the Meeting between Clinton and Jiang Zemin: We Must have an Overall Review of Our External Policy in the 21st Century,” *United Daily News* (Taipei: October 28, 1997), p.11.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, see “The Taiwan Factor,” editorial, *The New York Times* (April 14, 1997).

As for the Korea peninsula, the paramount concerns have been focused on the prevention of the development of nuclear weapon by North Korea and the sudden outbreak of accidental military incident between North and South along the DMZ. It is safe to assume that with the continuing stationing of than 39,000 US troops in the South Korea, the status quo will be able to maintain. Yet with the rapprochement between the two Koreas set to higher gear and with increasing demand of the withdrawal of US troop from college students and young workers in South Korea, things may start to change. In the final analysis, however, promoting socio-economic exchanges between North and South seems to be the most logical and workable path toward functional integration of the two Korean societies.

The Koreans have apparent advantages over the Chinese on two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the area of an agreed upon formula of North-South interaction. In addition, they also have long resolved their confrontation over diplomatic recognition and international representation. Thus the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait have to think hard and take concrete step toward reaching acceptable or at least tolerable formula to guide their future interaction. Otherwise, the positive effect of laboriously accumulated goodwill through cross-Strait trade and tourism may eventually be eroded both by the reluctance of the current leaders on both sides to take the first step and by the gradually acculturation and alienation between two Chinese communities.

-END-

**Table 1**

**Nation, State, Sovereignty, and International Representation :  
Ideals and Realities in regard to multi- system Nations**

	Nation	State	Sovereignty	International Representation
Ideals	One Nation	One State	One Sovereignty	One People
Realities	Two political systems (two separately governed region)	Two governments	Two jurisdiction	Two Representations (dual recognition and membership in International Organizations)

**Table 2****Relation between Unification and Recognition**

Recognized by other states	Unified Nation (State)?	
	Yes	No
Yes	Recognized single nation, state, or government	Dual Recognition of Multi-System Nations
No	Pariah state (South Africa before 1980s)	Non-recognized Multi-System Nations



**Table 3**

**Unification and Division:  
Relations between Types of Change  
and Methods of Change**

<b>Methods of Change</b>	<b>Types of Change</b>	
	<b>Unification</b>	<b>Division</b>
Violent (military)	Amalgamation (forced occupation)	Civil war; violent secession
Peaceful (non-military)	Negotiated merge or integration	Consensual separation and division

**Table 4**

**Relation between the Situation in a  
Nation (State) and the Issue of Recognition**

International Recognition	Situation in a nation (state)		
	Unified nation (state) with a single government	Almost equally competing political systems	One legitimate government challenged by an insurgent group
Yes	Single recognition of a unified nation (state)	One legitimate recognized government with a recognized belligerent	One legitimate recognized government with a recognized insurgent group
No	Pariah state (South Africa before 1980s)	Non-recognized Multi-System Nations	A recognized government with an non recognized insurgent group (PLO before 1970s, Muslim rebels in the Philippines)

Table 5

**The Separation and the Projects of Unification of China and Korea:  
A Comparative Paradigm**

made by Yung Wei

Nov. 15, 1997

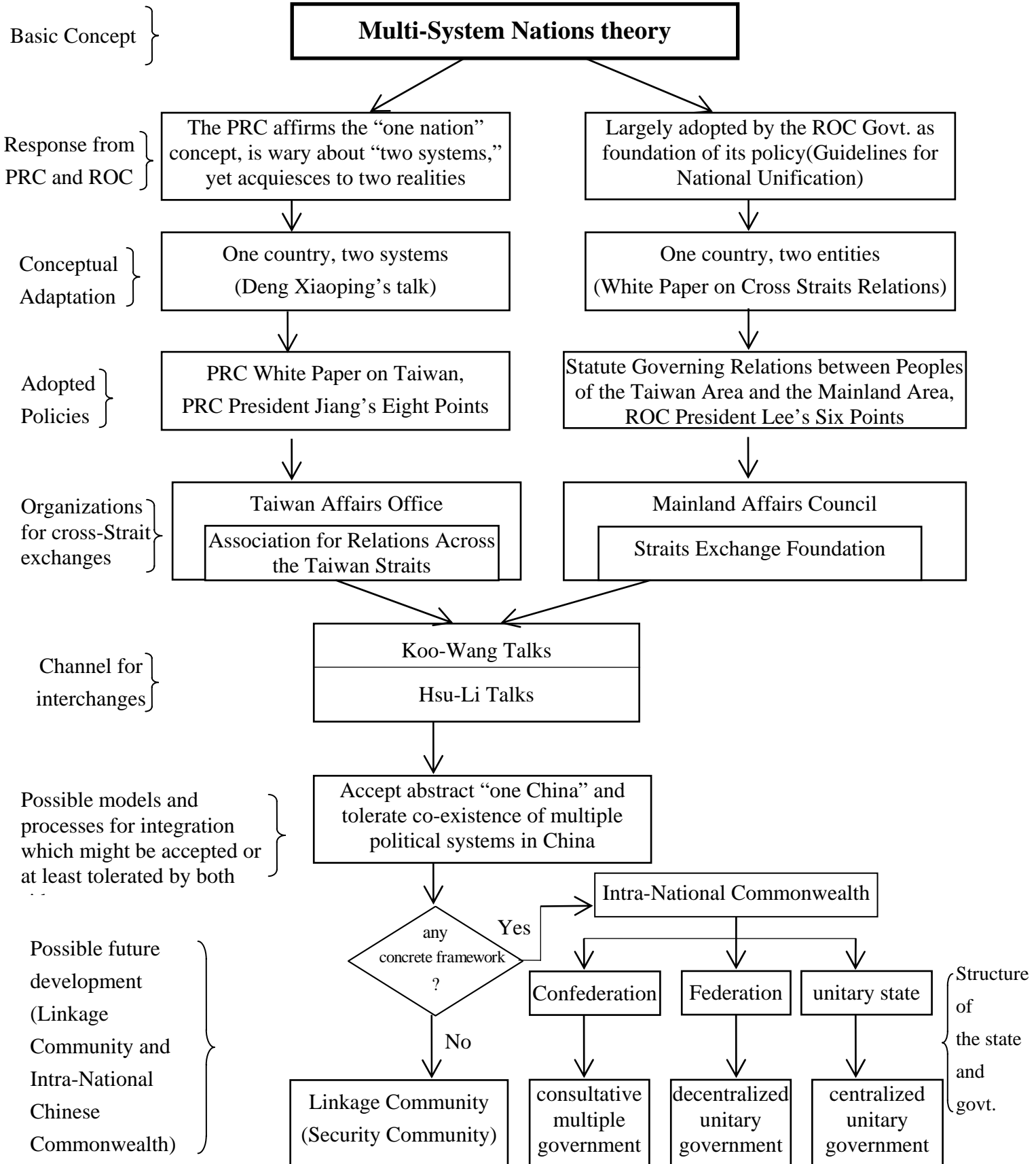
	<b>Chinese Case</b>	<b>Korean Case</b>
<b>Nature and Origin of Separation</b>	Prolonged internecine warfare	International and inter-system military conflicts and negotiation
<b>Original Position on National Reunification</b>	Before 1980s, complete rejection of the legitimacy of the opposing system; unification through replacement	Before 1973, complete rejection of the legitimacy of the opposing system; unification through replacement
<b>Revised position on National Reunification</b>	After 1980s, de facto acceptance of opposing regime, peaceful unification by stages for the ROC; use of force not ruled out by the PRC	After 1980s, gradual acceptance of each other's existence, leading to formal agreement on co-existence in Dec., 1991
<b>Position toward International Recognition</b>	The ROC side tolerates dual recognition since late 1980s; the PRC opposes all kinds of dual recognition	Dual and separate recognition, but still adhere to one-Korean-nation and community notion
<b>Attitude toward International Organizations</b>	The ROC side is for dual memberships in international organizations; the PRC is against it	Dual and separate memberships for all international organizations, including UN
<b>Actual Interaction through trade, cultural exchanges and tourism</b>	Extensive exchange of goods, people, and ideas occurred, with the ROC somewhat on the defensive side	Minimal trade and cross-boarder contacts until recently
<b>Prospect of Peaceful Transition and Unification</b>	Uncertain; acute crisis have subsided; but renew of para-military confrontation is possible if peaceful exchanges failed	Uncertain; large scale military confrontation still possible; ROK side seems to have the upper hand in long-term peaceful reunification

**Figure 1**

**Multi-System Nations, Linkage Communities, and Intra-National Commonwealth: A Paradigm and Flowchart on the Interaction between Conceptual Thinking and policies**

Conceived and drawn by  
Yung Wei

on November 15, 1997; revised and updated on July 28, 2000



**Figure 2**

**The process of the development and integration of Multi-System Nation : A Paradigm**

