

equitably participate in the goods of the creation. . . .

Life, from its conception in the maternal womb until its natural end, must be defended, decisively and bravely. It is necessary, then, to create in the Americas a culture of life that counteracts the anti-culture of death, which—through abortion, euthanasia, war, guerrillas, kidnaping, terrorism, and other forms of violence and exploitation—intends to prevail in some nations. In this spectrum of threats against life, drug trafficking occupies a place in the first ranks, which the appropriate authorities should counter with all the licit available means at their disposal.

On liberation theology:

. . . We cannot forget that recent history has shown that when, under cover of certain ideologies, the truth regarding God and the truth regarding man are denied, it is impossible to construct a society with a human face. With the collapse of the regimes of so-called “real socialism” in eastern Europe, it is to be expected that also in this continent the appropriate conclusions are reached regarding the ephemeral values of such ideologies. The crisis of Marxist collectivism is not one rooted solely in economics, as I have highlighted in *Centesimus Annus*, because the truth concerning man is intimately and necessarily linked to the truth concerning God. . . .

There exists no authentic human advancement, no true liberation, nor preferential option for the poor, if one does not start from the very foundation of the dignity of the person and the environment in which he must develop, according to the project of the Creator.

On the proliferation of sects:

Following the example of the Good Shepherd, you must graze the flock entrusted to you and defend it from the rapacious wolves. A cause of division and discord in your ecclesiastical communities—as you well know—are the sects and the “pseudo-spiritual” movements referred to by the Puebla document, whose expansion and aggressivity it is urgent to confront.

As many of you have pointed out, the advances of the sects underscores a pastoral vacuum that frequently has as its cause the lack of formation, which undermines the Christian identity, and which leaves a great mass of Catholics without the proper religious attention—in many cases, due to a lack of priests—at the mercy of serious and very active proselytizing campaigns. But, it can also happen that the faithful cannot find in their pastors the strong sense of God that they should communicate in their lives. . . .

On the other hand, one cannot underestimate a certain strategy with the aim of undermining the links that bind the countries of Latin America, and thus undermine the strength that comes from unity. Toward that objective, significant economic resources are allotted to underwrite proselytizing campaigns that attempt to break this Catholic unity.

Seoul-Beijing ties portend instability

by Lydia Cherry

South Korea opened official diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) on Aug. 24, an action which will redraw the political configuration of Asia. This was followed by a high-profile trip to Beijing by South Korean President Noh Tae Woo over Sept. 27-30. During the trip, cooperation was begun or intensified in numerous economic fields. The two countries concluded a trade agreement, and agreements to guarantee investment, on science and technology, and on establishing a joint committee on economy, trade, and technology. A banking link was also finalized, following earlier talks in Washington, D.C. between the chairmen of the South Korean and Chinese central banks. The delegation from the South Korean side to Beijing was large, including officials of several dozen multi-national Korean businesses.

Equally important, China, conducting an undisputed military buildup and flexing its military muscle to assert its territorial claims, reportedly held discussions with South Korea on military cooperation. The South Korean daily *Hanguk Ilbo* reported on Sept. 29 that discussions in such areas as exchanges between field grade officers were held.

China, the last gateway

South Korean polls reported wide-ranging support for the visit, which was viewed as President Noh putting into place the final plank of his “Northern policy” for the eventual reunification of Korea, prior to his retirement. Noh's plan, including the China leg, was first spelled out in a speech at the United Nations in 1988. Noh reiterated on Sept. 30 upon returning to Seoul: “To open the door widely on the road toward Pyongyang, I opened the door, first of all, leading to the former Soviet Union, many East European nations, and the United Nations. I have now opened the door to Beijing, the last gateway.”

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, China is being placed in the role to broker Korean reunification. In marked contrast to the earlier North Korean reaction to South Korea establishing close links with the Soviet Union in the Gorbachov era, North Korea has been totally silent about Noh's trip to Beijing.

China offers South Korea new markets and natural re-

sources, and there is strong support in Seoul for greater economic links. "China is the sixth largest oil producer in the world and is rich in coal, antimony, tungsten, and vanadium," noted South Korea's Energy and Resources Ministry on Aug. 29. "As it wants technology and capital, bilateral cooperation would prove lucrative for both countries." The first concrete commercial benefit for South Korea appears to be in steel, and it is expected to be at the expense of Japan. Pohang Iron & Steel Co., South Korea's largest steelmaker and the third largest in the world, has signed a \$100 million joint venture to produce tin-plate in Shanghai.

As the new broker for Korean reunification, China's already quite hefty role in the region will be enhanced. But the reason China had little hesitancy in moving toward Seoul is also connected to the country's internal problems. A British area specialist, who predicted the breakup of China in the longer term, told a reporter: "The central government in Beijing has been becoming increasingly weaker. The state budget has been shrinking in relative terms as the economy has been growing; people in the poorer provinces no longer look to Beijing to help them to catch up with Guangdong" and other provinces on the southeast coast of China, where there has been heavy investment from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Beijing's strategy over the last two years, according to this source—though he admits that "Beijing very definitely has mixed views" on the subject—has been to encourage the poorer regions to look outside China for additional sources of revenue, investment, and so on. "The northeastern provinces obviously look toward Korea," and relations between Seoul and Beijing will encourage South Korea to attempt to develop this destitute region, he said.

Might not this strategy also tend to bolster separatist tendencies in China? Might not this northeastern province area turn out to be an economic sinkhole for South Korea, in light of the financial resources that Seoul has sunk into the former Soviet Union over the last two years, and the need to bolster the North Korean economy that achieved a -5.2% growth rate last year? the source was asked. "Very possibly; it certainly could turn out that way," he responded.

Another benefit for China in the new arrangement involves edging out Japan. Although little has been said publicly, it is known that Japanese leaders responded to the warming of relations between South Korea and China with a sense of disquiet. Remarks from the Korean side fill out the picture. The South Korean daily *Choson Ilbo* on Aug. 28 interviewed No Chae-won, who handled much of the diplomatic work with the P.R.C. He was asked, "Because of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the R.O.K. [Republic of Korea] and China, are there now options that a structure will be formed to restrain Japan?" The Korean leader responded: "It is true that we are worried about Japan . . . [but] I do not think it is a situation yet in which it is necessary for the R.O.K. and China to unite to deal with this matter."

Balance of power games

Why is it that well-placed Korea experts in the West—many of whom were not that fond of President Noh's "Northern policy" earlier, nor that happy with a close South Korean alliance with the former Soviet Union—are quite pleased with this latest diplomatic hookup? Henry Kissinger touched on the subject in a Sept. 23 address on the Asia Pacific region to the Washington, D.C.-based Freedom Forum.

Concluding that Korea "will become much stronger" in the coming period, as will Russia, Kissinger insisted that the United States "must prevent hegemony in Asia" at all costs. Kissinger made clear that he was referring to Japan: "Japan has survived 2,000 years; it has a special culture," it cannot be "part of any global structure," it doesn't have the ability "to think in terms of a world community." Japan has a "heavy nationalist component . . . the necessity for consensus is a problem." The United States, he continued, must have a close relationship with Japan, but "we must also accept [that] it is a very different kind of society."

On China, Kissinger said, "Because of the weight China carries, our foreign policy would be difficult" were there a break in relations.

Don't encourage Japan

The British area specialist spoke in a like manner. He first noted that the view in Britain has been that Japan in general should be encouraged to play a more prominent role in world affairs. However, he qualified this: "This has always seemed to me a slightly short-sighted view. . . . This might lead Japan then to adopt positions which were different from those of Britain or the United States, or the West—for instance as they are over Russia." This same "difference," he continued, might occur with respect to Japan's policy toward China.

The analyst then embarked into a discussion of how British strategists were operating from a "more Machiavellian view." The view is that "if you encourage the Japanese to play a more prominent role of some kind in the region, they would then be forced to confront . . . some of the unfinished business of the Second World War," i.e., the hostility against Japan in the region. So, he continued, what the British were actually doing by encouraging Japan to play a larger role was to "force the Japanese to spend a lot more time in coming to terms with that. And if they were busy doing that, they might not have much time to deal with other parts of the world. If you cause trouble in somebody's backyard, they tend to concentrate on it first."

This analyst is convinced that the overall situation is "highly unstable," despite a Kissingerian balance-of-power policy. "The warming of relations between Korea and China may be directed partly against Japan, but in that kind of triangular relationship, I think there is a lot of basic instability. The players could move sides fairly quickly. . . . We are talking about temporary and shifting alliances."