

## A Critical Analysis on Vladimir Surin's "Korean Manifesto"

Moo-jin Jeong, In-Seok Seo, Min-soo Kang, Cheol-won Shin, Jong-ok Seok, Yong-bok Chung,  
Jun-ki Chung\*

Jun-ki Chung, Email: Junkichung@gmail.com  
36, Yangsantaekjiso-ro, Buk-gu, Gwangju City, South Korea, 61027

### Abstract

In this paper we explore the theory of Russian scholar Vladimir Surin, who proposed a Korean-Russian symbiosis in his 2005 essay "Korean Manifesto". Given the problem of population decline in Russia, an enormous land mass with rich natural resources, and the problem of overpopulation in (North and South) Korea, a small land mass with minimal natural resources, Surin argues that Russia and Korea should cooperate to establish a 'symbiotic state', allowing both to maximize their respective potential. The following study examines Surin's arguments in detail. Although Surin's thesis was proposed nearly twenty years ago, it is as relevant now as ever. Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine highlights the urgency of facilitating cooperative international partnerships, driven not by nationalistic ambitions but by a sense of mutuality, possibility, and cooperation.

Key words: Korean Manifesto, Russia, Surin, symbiotic state

### Introduction

In the early hours of Thursday, 22 February, 2022, as 150,000 Russian troops surrounded the sovereign nation of Ukraine and threatened to carry out the largest land attack on European soil since World War II, Vladimir Putin addressed the people of his nation. He claimed that Ukraine was entirely created by communist Russia and an integral part of Russia's own history, culture, and spiritual space. Putin's ostensible objective was to justify his military activity. It is no surprise that the world was not fooled. When Putin's army invaded Ukraine hours after his speech, there was immediate and universal condemnation from the international community (Moon, 2022).

Is Russia's future beset with military conflict? Must the international ambitions of Russian people be defined by the myopia of a dictatorial despot? Is it possible for neighboring countries to protect their own interests without angering an unpredictable leader who has access to nuclear weapons? How might Eurasian economic partnerships be advanced without enabling the nationalistic tendencies of global

powerhouses like Russia and China?

In the following, we will explore these questions by providing a detailed look at the theory of Vladimir Surin (ВладимирСурин). We will look at positive and negative aspects of his theory, concluding with a cautious optimism that Surin's notion of a Korean-Russian symbiosis has potential to advance respective national interests in a safe and potentially replicable manner. We will do so in three steps: (1) summarizing Surin's notion of the Symbiotic State in his 2005 essay 'Korean Manifesto', (2) highlighting a handful of constructive aspects of his thesis, and (3) highlighting points of disagreement and suggestions for supplementary theories.

Vladimir Surin obtained a doctorate in pedagogy from Moscow's College of Education and is serving as Director of the Russian Institute of Social Affairs, conducting research on various social issues that Russia is currently facing (Cho, 2022). His publication "Korean Manifesto" in the renowned Russian monthly review journal *Politicesky Class* (ПолитическийКласс) in November 2005,

has been influential in Korean and Russian politics and academia (Kim, 2008). Surin begins his "Korean Manifesto" with a sense of crisis for the Siberian and Far Eastern Federal Districts of Russia. Both are vast territories, rich in natural resources. But both are collapsing due to a steady decline in population. China stands to gain the most from this crisis since it shares a border with Russia and will eventually encroach on Russia's territory through a slow migration of Chinese people into Russian territory. Surin argues that Korea and Russia will only be able to manage the growth of China through a joint effort, relocating Koreans *en masse* to the northern and far eastern portions of Russia. Russia will, in turn, provide abundant resources, while Korea will supply technology and capital. A symbiotic partnership between Russia and Korea would allow Russia to preserve its territory while handling economic and social problems without over military action. In this study, we will go over the key contents of Surin's "Korea Manifesto", and then examine the positive and negative socio-political implications of his arguments.

### **The Main Contents of Surin's "Korean Manifesto"**

#### **Russia's two essential problems: depopulation and Chinese infiltration**

According to Surin, the current physical disaster in Russia is a consequence of population issues. This is a problem not only in Russia, but also in Europe. The white upper classes of the Western world are silently passing on their economic advantages to the Third World. Ironically, the population continues to grow only in the developing world, where poverty, starvation, and disease lead to high mortality rates. By contrast, the population of the West and Russia is declining. To solve this problem, it is important to first identify the current situation and then find a way to manage the territory by taking advantage of new opportunities:

Physical resurrection from death is possible for us if we use physically preserved space (territory)

and, in principle, new geopolitics as means... The population problem is...a problem only for people who do not wish to have children despite the optimal conditions for childbirth. The important thing is that these problems cannot be solved by political and economic methods. Fortunately, only Russia can solve this problem (low fertility) through geopolitical methods (Surin, 2005).

According to Surin, a state's most important function is to ensure the physical survival of its people. The Russian Far East and Siberia, which belong to the Asian continent, cannot survive if they are lost to colonial powers such as China.

#### **Physical symbiosis between Russia and Korea**

Surin claims that it is not necessary for Russia to have many immigrants from developing countries. A nation like Russia has a better chance of defending itself if it consists of a strong ethnic group like Koreans and has a unified workforce. ('Korea', for Surin, includes both North and South Korea.) To prevent other immigrants from entering, only Koreans and Russians wishing to return to Russia from abroad should be accepted. To enable Koreans and Russians to coexist physically, it is necessary to create a special Korea-Russia symbiotic State. Another reason for excluding immigrants from other countries is that "highly productive workers who flock to Asia in a disorderly fashion cannot be expected to achieve high economic performance" (Surin, 2005).

#### **Why does Russia need only Korea?**

In response to this question, Surin offers several arguments. Unlike other economies, South Korea is dependent on exports and has no natural resources. In addition to being a highly efficient and technologically advanced nation, South Korea's economy is practical. South Korea is the twelfth largest

economy in the world, despite a chronic shortage of resources. It is also “geographically adjacent to Russia. Of the 72 million citizens, 67 million live on the Korean Peninsula, while 200,000 already reside in Russia” (Surin, 2005), thus already displaying a kind of symbiotic state between the two nations. Other factors also support this hypothesis. For example, unlike China, Korea does not provide a military threat of invasion. The Far East, Primorsky Krai, and Siberia are wealthy lands. It is not difficult to imagine a migration of between 25 and 30 million Koreans to the area. Furthermore, “South Korea is maintaining a balance at the crossroads of survival due to its proximity to Japan, North Korea, and China, all of which are hostile states” (Surin, 2005). The Korean people are law-abiding, kind, and well-educated. Koreans respect other religious beliefs and are excellent workers. Accordingly, Korea is an appropriate ally for natural cooperation with Russia. What remains is how quickly Russia can make the Korean people part of its political and strategic ally network.

### **Globalization as Pax Chinese**

According to Surin, we are seeing an end to the history of conquest by white Anglo-Saxons. The natural phenomenon of the end of this white domination is the destruction of ‘Pax Americana’. Likewise, a significant deterioration in the global status and influence of the United States can be interpreted in the same way. As the United States declined, a new era of ‘Pax Chinese’ arose, while Islamic nations and India also rose in power. Metaphorically speaking, China, which was once Russia's younger brother, has become Russia's older brother and is spreading its power threateningly. Russia will also face an unfortunate era of forcible linguistic indoctrination if China's expansion is not stopped. With the current crisis situation, Russia has no choice but to repopulate the Far East and Siberian regions. Because “Russian women have a low fertility rate, rapid population growth is not possible, so voluntary immigration of Koreans is the only solution” (Surin, 2005).

### **The politics of North-South unification and the way of life**

To survive in the Pax Chinese era, Surin argues, Koreans must develop a long-term, prosperous approach. By uniting Koreans residing abroad and Koreans from South and North Korea, Korea could aim to develop economic and political skills. As a ‘ghost’, the United States can no longer be considered a credible source for unifying the Korean people. The only hope is a symbiotic relationship between Korea and Russia, in the form of a large-scale migration of Korean people to the eastern Urals of Russia:

The vast expanse of sparsely populated and resource-rich eastern Urals will easily accommodate millions of Koreans. In this region, the contradictions and various problems accumulated between the Korean people . . . will be resolved through ideological tension relief and political reconciliation... Only in the eastern Urals can two different types of economies be combined--intensive and extensive. This is a truly beneficial combination (Surin, 2005).

### **Positive Aspects of Surin's “Korean Manifesto”**

The hope for a North-South Korea unification in Surin's “Korean Manifesto” is nothing less than a comprehensive survival strategy for Russia. International politics and diplomacy can change depending on circumstances. Countries that once were friends can quickly become enemies. Rather than being guided by a kind of metaphysical philosophy or transcendent faith, a situational ethic is often used to determine international policy. There were no problems between Russia and China when Russia acted as a powerful older brother. This was because all the issues could be resolved if the older brother Russia gave orders to his younger brother

China. For Surin, however, China is no longer Russia's younger brother but a potential threat disguised as a country seeking peace. Indeed, Russia's economy is not comparable to that of China. Russians living in the Far East are increasingly dependent on China, which sources the majority of their consumer goods. In addition, the Russian Far East region "occupies 36% (6.15 million km<sup>2</sup>) of Russia's total territory (17.08 million km<sup>2</sup>), but the population within that region is 4.6% (6.46 million people) of the total population (142 million people)" (Park, 2010). It is likely that the Chinese presence in the Russian Far East will continue to grow in the future, which in turn will increase China's economic and political power.

When it comes to dealing with US expansionism and NATO forces in Europe, it is exigent for China and Russia to function as allies. Nonetheless, Surin considers China a potential enemy in the Far East, due to economic and border issues between the two countries, while Koreans have no particular reason to oppose his theory. Koreans can assist North Korea if they enter Russia, acquire dual citizenship, and develop the Far East Primorsky Krai and Siberia. Combining South Korea's advanced technology and capital, North Korea's labor force, and the human resources of the Korean community in the rich Russian territory will develop a remarkable economic and socio-political power and exert both direct and indirect influence on those around it, especially China.

Indeed, there is a great opportunity for peaceful reunification of the North and the South, which can fundamentally solve the overpopulation problem and the lack of resources in South Korea. In support of economic symbiosis with Russia, the Moon Jae-in government of South Korea has also adopted the '9-bridge concept'. President Moon attended the Eastern Economic Conference presided over by Vladimir Putin in Vladivostok on 6-7 September, 2017. During this meeting, he advised Korea and Russia to find ways to expand their economic ties through the use of nine practical bridges, such as energy, the

shipping industry, and the Arctic Sea Route (Pardo, 2018). Moon's proposal does not seek to establish a Korea-Russia symbiotic country, but instead tries to expand Korea's economic exchanges with Russia.

### **A good understanding of current Chinese political world**

Surin concludes that almost all policies pursued by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are based on aggressive expansionism, and there is no mutual trust. Although their mutual concern with the United States and Europe has created opportunities for collaboration between Russia and China, the Russian elite, including Surin, see the CCP as a threat. What is the reason behind Surin's conclusion? We can look to China's own history of international policy for several clues, beginning with a Chinese classic entitled *Thirty-Six Strategems*. Until now, no author of this book has been identified, but it has been regarded as an important source for dealing with socio-political issues. In a complex political society, this book teaches various methods for subduing others and securing one's own interests through deception. For example, the first stratagem of the book reads, "Fool the sky to cross the sea" (CM, 2022). In this proverbial maxim, we see the underhanded strategy of providing false information to create a sense of security. That security is then leveraged in quick attacks that lead to victory. The twenty-third stratagem of the book reads, "Befriend a distant state while attacking a neighbor" (CM, 2022). To dominate immediate neighbors, a nation must form alliances with those far away. In addition to a victory strategy, this lesson provides a way to recognize enemies. Continuing the slight-of-hand theme, the thirty-first stratagem reads, "Use a woman to ensnare a man" (CM, 2022), while the last chapter of the book, stratagem number thirty-six, is a lesson in 'running away' – giving up face and honor if a nation thinks they cannot win over an opponent. In summary, the core idea of the *Thirty-Six Strategems* is to use deception, false security, temptation, ensnaring, and pretending to live as a victor in life.

The life of Mao Zedong (1893-1976) is likewise an example of manipulation, deceit, and violence. The Chinese Cultural Revolution, which he carried out to maintain his absolute power, was a frenzy that almost wiped out the beautiful history and tradition of China for about ten years after 1966 (Wemheuer, 2019). Mao deceived the Chinese and destroyed their physical and mental lives, all in the name of the people. His successor, Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), led a more moderate life, but his political philosophy was also riddled with hypocrisy. His notion of 'silent aggression' is exemplary: "China could occupy Russia without firing a single shot. It will sort itself out if millions of Chinese soldiers would surrender to Russia over the border. Russia could be difficult to control and even hard to feed them. Then Russia will draw back" (Park, 2009). And what may we conclude from the current Xi Jinping government? Xi Jinping's current strategy is the completion of the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. Xi has had an ambitious dream of linking all roads in the world, whether on land or by sea, with China, a kind of modern version of cultural imperialism, which seeks to make China the center of world culture. He has encouraged Chinese companies to enter overseas markets through the 'One Belt, One Road' policy. While ostensibly calling for a 'community of common interest' between countries, the majority of materials, equipment, technology, and labor in any partnership come from China. Not only that, but when a country fails to repay its loan on time, China will either seize the country's natural resources or colonize the country by procuring its leading seaports (Ark and Chugoku, 2022; Venkateswaran, 2020; Yoon, 2019).

We may also look to a handful of American scholars. In *How China's Communist Party made the World Sick* (2020), William Gertz traces a number of manipulative economic and political practices. In the first chapter, entitled "Fool the Sky to Cross the Sea" (2020), Gertz exposes the lies and deceptions of the CCP using the classic Chinese *Thirty-Six Stratagems*. The U.S. had long assisted

China in preventing the Soviet Union from expanding its power, importing cheap goods from China as a way of maintaining economic stability. After analyzing the U.S.-China relationship for nearly half a century, Zachary Karabell argues in *Super Fusion* that the U.S. essentially has no choice but to maintain its economic partnership with China (2009). In the same vein, Edward Steinfeld displayed a kind of international political optimism by saying in *Playing Our Game* that China cannot endanger the West (2010). These scholars did not comprehend China's duality, which has both an 'outside' and an 'inside'. When the Soviet Union was officially dissolved in 1991, China's true nature began to emerge. Since China had been building up its power quietly for some time, it no longer felt the need to hide. As a result, Surin concludes that China is now Russia's older brother rather than the younger brother. Besides enjoying tremendous economic growth and wealth, China has served as a manufacturing hub for advanced countries such as the United States and has developed a formidable military force. Furthermore, China has stolen advanced knowledge and technology from various countries, which it has used to its advantage.

China's tricks and deceptive strategies must no longer be dealt with by the world. Before becoming president of the United States, Donald Trump stated, "China is our enemy" in *Time to Get Tough* (2011). Mike Pompeo, who served as secretary of state during Trump's presidency, also pointed out that the CCP-dominated China is the central enemy of our time (Kelly, 2020). In their view, it is the responsibility of the international community to free the Chinese oppressed by the CCP (Lee, 2022). Indeed, Surin concludes that China's increasing international influence should be prevented not only by Russia but by the whole world. Otherwise, China's power will be used destructively against the global community. South Korea is no exception to this phenomenon:

From our [South Korea] point of view, the situation in which China dominates the Far East Siberia region

due to Russia's weak power in Northeast Asia will not only increase pressure on us from China, but also impose humiliation on us. This is not only undesirable, but should be prevented. In addition to the strong South Korea-US alliance, Russia is useful as it can offset pressure from China. The advancement of our people to the Far East Siberia is a matter to be actively considered in terms of peaceful expansion of our living and economic territories (Park, 2010).

### Wisdom to select Koreans

Surin argues that Korean people are uniquely situated to help advance the interests of the Russian far east. South Korea's advanced technology and capital, combined with North Korean labor provide critical resources without harming the economy and society of Russia. Surin is aware of the ethical awareness and hard work of Koreans.

Historically, Korea has been a respecter of peace. They are a people with deep religious convictions but are respectful of other faiths. The Korean culture is naturally accommodating, despite the fact that they have periodically been forced to fight. When the Chinese Sui emperor invaded Goguryeo in the 7th century, Koreans risked their lives. The Koreans fought again when the Sui dynasty ended and Tang China invaded Goguryeo by force, driving out large numbers of Chinese soldiers. When Japan invaded Korea in the 16th century, Korean Buddhist monks, Confucian philosophers, merchants, peasants, and slaves united with the Korean army to fend off the Japanese invasion. As Korea was annexed by Japan in the early 20th century, Korean Protestant Christians and people of other faiths formed a peaceful protest for national independence (Jeong et al., 2021; Seo et al., 2021; Park & Chung, 2022). The Republic of Korea (ROK) was born as a result of this

movement. Although Korea has not invaded other countries, Korean people have always fought to protect themselves from outside invasions.

Koreans accepted Chinese Confucianism but practiced a rich ethical life. Professor Westad of Yale University used the term 'righteousness' to define Koreans in East Asia (2021). Here, 'righteousness' is the core idea of honesty, truth, and trust, as opposed to the ideas of self-interest, ensnaring, and pretending which characterize China's *Thirty-Six Stratagems*. In addition, most Koreans try to practice the '*Hongikingan* (弘益人間)' that has been passed down from the old Korean traditional philosophy (Choi, 2009). '*Hongikingan*' means living a life that benefits others. The rescue of Afghan refugees in 2021 is a good example of this practice. In the midst of military conflict, South Korea organized a rescue mission in Afghanistan, bringing into Korea 391 Afghans who had worked for the Korean embassy and other Korean institutions there (Oh, 2021). South Koreans call them 'special contributors' instead of refugees.

For a playful symbol of Korea's positivity, we can turn to the BTS, which has fascinated people all over the world with its music and dance moves. BTS is a 7-member Korean art team. When asked about their identity, they say, "We are like Korean bibimbap" (Kang et al., 2021). Koreans enjoy eating bibimbap, a popular and inexpensive dish. Bibimbap is a Korean food made with rice or barley, various vegetables, beef, pork, and fried eggs, mixed with sesame oil and red pepper paste. Before mixing, each food has its own identity, but after mixing, all the identities disappear and create a single meal, "bibimbap." Similarly, even though BTS members are individuals with distinct personalities, they give up their subjectivity when performing their music. The members dance and sing, but the content never turns into pure entertainment. Those who live in a difficult and sorrowful life can find comfort in the lyrics of their songs. People of the world find their pain, loneliness, and sadness healed, as they sing and dance along with BTS. Even in locations where

such celebration is discouraged, the whimsical art of a band like BTS can be effectual. In a moment of poetic irony, CCP's top leaders witnessed Chinese youth singing BTS songs out loud during the Beijing winter Olympics. In short, we can surmise that Surin is on to something when he encourages Korean immigration to the eastern territories of Russia. His viewpoints are not merely nationalistic or protective but based on the spirit of Korean people.

### **Negative Aspects of Surin's Thesis Reinforcement of the cosmic perspective is necessary**

Since Surin does not attend to any kind of divine sense of cosmic community, we must ultimately consider his analysis flat. Gone is any consideration of existential moments, such as the sense of awe one experiences when walking into clear night and seeing countless stars radiating a dazzling display of fire. Gone is any concern for harmonious living or our mutual obligation to care for the earth. Gone too is any consideration of population growth, food shortages, climate change, or the environmental crisis. And there is no sense in Surin of a general mutuality, no awareness of what Dr. Martin Luther King famously called the common fabric of our shared humanity. If Surin's Korean-Russian symbiosis is to be adopted, we must supplement his unidimensional analysis with a robust sense of subjectivity.

### **A certain positive view of Chinese political history is needed**

In the current political and economic climate, Surin's understanding of Chinese culture is persuasive, but it runs into problems when it is extended to the entire Chinese population. Let us briefly consider two of the world's best political thinkers – both from China – the Taoist philosopher Laotzu (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) and Mencius, who established the philosophy of national governance in the 3rd and 4th centuries BCE. In contrast to the philosophy portrayed in the *Thirty-Six Strategems*, these Chinese thinkers had a different philosophy of state governance. Laotzu argues for 'Non-action (wu-wei)' in

Chapter 2 of the *Tao Te Ching*: "The sage dwells in affairs of non-action, carries out a doctrine without words. He lets the myriad creatures rise up but does not instigate them; He acts but does not presume; He completes his work but does not dwell on it" (Shmoop, 2022). Laotzu's teaching is often misunderstood, interpreted to mean that when a person in power encounters difficulty, he or she should run away from it. In actuality, Laotzu is suggesting a way of living. Problems are not solved by indifference but by living in harmony with 'the way' of the world. One must give up the desire for artificial control or the temptation to manipulate a situation. Lest we be misunderstood, we must also observe that Laotzu permits war when the safety of one country is jeopardized by another. He writes in chapter 57 of *Tao Te Ching*: "Rule the state with uprightness. Deploy your troops with craft, gain all under heaven with non-interference" (Shmoop, 2022). In allowing war, he does not intend to take control of other territories. But when the people of a country are in danger, the ruler of that country has no choice but to go to war. In Chapter 78 of *Tao Te Ching*, Laotzu argues that the highest virtue of any nation is to be like water: "Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water. Yet, to attack the hard and strong, nothing surpasses it... The weak overcomes the strong. The soft overcomes the hard. Everybody in the world knows this, still nobody makes use of it" (Shmoop, 2022). Initiating a metaphor that runs like a thread through Chinese philosophy, Laotzu observes that the nature of water is to flow naturally downwards, not upwards. During midsummer, a shower of rain falls on a large mountain. Those showers water the trees, rocks, and grasses in the great mountain. Unless its path is artificially perturbed by humans, the water descends all the way to the valley, running through rivers and ultimately to the sea. Understood politically, rulers should have the virtue of humility that flows naturally and descends like water (Chung, 1997). One scholar interpreted this text as follows:

Often when we choose the path of confrontation, we

do so because of irrelevant factors, such as our pride and our impatience. Although we regard ourselves as the reasoning species, *Homo sapiens*, many of our actions are induced by our bad temper. . . . So, the sage begins by lowering himself and accepting the suffering that may be inevitable. He expects disgrace rather than praise . . . The sage is also willing to share the misfortunes of the country, instead of using his power to isolate himself from them. That makes him fit to rule the whole world. (Stenudd, 2022).

As an ancient philosopher, Mencius did not advocate the type of democracy we speak of today. Nevertheless, he deserves to be highly regarded for his insistence on the theory of state governance. In Book 6A, Mencius asserted that humans have universal goodness. In addition, he defined the ruler as a person who works devotedly to ensure the happiness of the people. In Book 7B, Mencius developed the 'revolutionary idea' that if a ruler works for his own power and honor, and not for the welfare of the people, the people can remove him from office:

The people are most important . . . the ruler is last of all. For this reason, any man who gains the support of the great mass of people reigns as the Son of Heaven. Those who gain the confidence of the Son of Heaven become the lords of states, and those who gain their confidence become grandees (Siris, 2022).

The Chinese have produced many great political thinkers, who are still admired and respected today. In the current Chinese political and social environment, we must not forget the seeds of harmony and

democracy that exist in the very DNA of Chinese philosophical thought.

### **Possible misunderstanding from Koreans**

Surin's notion of a Korea-Russia symbiotic state could be misinterpreted as an encouragement for Korea to annex Russian territory. After discussing Surin's idea, some of the most problematic pieces of information that can be seen in Korean society are: "Siberia becomes Korean territory . . . Korea, imminent acquisition of new territory" (Park, 2021). If this interpretation is merely a wish of Koreans regardless of the Russian or the Korean government, it may seem absurd from the point of view of Russian politics and academia. Both the Korean and Russian governments need time to thoroughly review Surin's proposal. Despite knowing about Surin's "Korean Manifesto," the Russian government has not given any official indication that it will take any action. We also must remember the words of Russia President Putin: "Unless we make a serious effort, the Russians in the border regions will have to speak Chinese, Japanese and Korean in a few decades" (Valvo, 2012). Although he is open to foreign investment in Russia, he is wary of foreign political influence.

### **Surin's imperfect view of the United States**

Perhaps Surin's most egregious misunderstanding is his interpretation of the United States as a 'ghost'. Usually, we understand 'ghost' as 'spirit' floating in the air without substance. It is natural for a ghost to be powerless due to its lack of substance. In Surin's "Korean Manifesto", the political message is to unite the two Koreas with the support of Russia, which has great power, rather than rely on a powerless United States. Should we indeed consider the United States a powerless ghost? Let us consider a handful of recent rankings. According to a recent survey on the world's top ten military powers, the U.S. ranks first, Russia second, China third, Japan fourth, India fifth, South Korea sixth, France seventh, Britain eighth, Italy ninth, and Turkey tenth (Racheal, 2022).



According to the Research FDI report, “the world's top ten economic powers are ranked in the order of US (1), China (2), Japan (3), Germany (4), Britain (5), India (6), France (7), Italy (8), Canada (9), and South Korea (10)” (2022). Who are the 10 strongest countries in the world? According to World Population Review, the “most powerful countries 2022 are: No. 1 U.S., No. 2 China, No. 3 Russia, No. 4 Germany, No. 5 Britain, No. 6 Japan, No. 7 France, No. 8 South Korea, No. 9 Saudi Arabia, and No. 10 United Arab Emirates” (WPR, 2022). The evaluation of world universities serves as an indicator of talent that represents the intelligence of a country and will determine its future. The top ten universities in the world are: “Harvard University (1), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2), Stanford University (3), University of California (4), University of Oxford (5), Columbia University (6), University of Washington (7), and University of Cambridge (8); California Institute of Technology and Johns Hopkins University are tied for ninth” (Hess, 2022). Of these, eight are American universities and two are British universities.

Surin asserts that the influence of Anglo-Saxons is diminishing rapidly and that the United States is losing its ability to act. Given the essentially universal observation of the United States' prominence in world rankings, we must deem Surin's diagnosis inaccurate. In short, the United States is by no means a helpless ghost. Do many Koreans, and even people in other parts of the world, accept Surin's claim that reunification between the two Koreas can only be achieved with the help of Russia? It is clear that Surin's research seems to be influenced by Russia's political wishes.

### **Differences in legal and political interests between Korea and Russia**

There may be a big difference between the two countries regarding the acceptance attitude of Surin's “Korean Manifesto”. To have a system with international legal effects, different countries need to follow the same path. This is easy to say, but in reality it is a very complex and difficult

problem. The symbiotic state theory between Korea and Russia is likely to be accepted by South Korean intellectuals with an open mind, but its support will be limited by the strong national pride of the Russian elite. Furthermore, since the Korean War (1950-1953), South Korea has established itself as a political and military partner with the United States. A total of 54,260 US soldiers were killed in the Korean War (CBS, 2000). A stele at the Korean War Memorial in Washington, DC reads, “Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met.” Some South Koreans today do not appear to be overly impressed by the American soldiers who gave their lives in the Korean War, but it is important to keep in mind that the South Korea of today would not exist without their support. The alliance between the United States and South Korea is an unbreakable US-ROK alliance; thanks to this alliance, South Korea is enjoying the wonders of freedom and democracy. Since the U.S. and Russia have a tense relationship, Korea's cooperation with Russia has a limited radius. By putting into practice what both countries can do for one another, governments, academics, and businesses should find a way forward that is mutually beneficial. It seems necessary to broaden the horizon of this issue by first discussing the Korea-Russia joint state theory in academic groups from both countries. In the event such procedures are well implemented, it would be beneficial for the two Koreas and Russia to create a kind of pilot program of economic and political partnership in the industrial complex of the Russian Far East.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we must surmise that Vladimir Surin's theory of a Korean-Russian symbiotic state must be accepted with a cautious optimism. His creative theory makes sense in light of current international politics, population density, and geography. If this theory is realized, the problems of population decline in Russia and economic growth in the Far East will

be resolved, as will concern in Korea regarding overpopulation and a lack of natural resources. We must further be enthusiastic about the possibility of laying a foundation for the unification of Korea. However, in order to make this concept a reality, the Korean and Russian governments must be proactive. Both countries must at least consider the political moves of China and the United States. A reorganization of international and national laws would also be necessary to create a true symbiotic state, requiring significant time and energy. As a first step, both countries must build mutual trust by focusing on what the two countries can do independently. The interaction between Korean and Russian scholars should extend beyond Surin to include businessmen and local governments in carrying out tangible projects. Finally, we must make sure that the Korea-Russia symbiotic state theory is not bound by nationalism. As we stated at the outset of our study, the recent invasion of Ukraine, driven by the whimsical demands of a Russian dictator, demonstrate the importance of prioritizing mutuality, not nationalistic ambition. Supplementing Surin's utilitarian theory with a sense of subjectivity and optimism, symbolized in the sense of cosmic unification and the unifying flare of Korean pop music, will assist in fulfilling an international vision for happiness. Indeed, given these caveats, Surin's work could be construed as laying the foundation for multiplied symbiotic relationships across the globe.

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#### ORCID

Moo-jin Jeong <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3099-1488>

In-seok Seo <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7124-5468>

Min-soo Kang <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8406-6653>.

Jong-ok Seok <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0426-9472>

Jun-ki Chung <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2243-4849>.

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