

THE KOREAN CONFLICT: SEARCH FOR UNIFICATION (1982).

By M.P. Srivastava. Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., M-97, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110 001. Pp. v + 120. Price Rs 25.50.

IN SIX short chapters the author has attempted to present the involvement of super powers in the Korean conflict since its beginning. The first three chapters give the background of the conflict and its brief historical perspectives. He has attempted to impress that the main reason for the conflict is the conflict of ideologies between the two super powers.

Although no convincing reason has been given for unification of the two halves of the country as a solution, according to the author, it is the main problem confronting the two Koreas at present. Attempts made in the past for unification, such as convening of the Geneva Conference in 1954, and North Korean 'Federation' proposal, have been dealt along with the many other proposals made by the leaders of North Korea and South Korea from time to time for peaceful co-existence. The author has rightly stated that all these attempts have failed to bring about a conceivable and mutually agreed formula due to the overriding political, ideological, strategic fundamental interest of the super powers.

In view of the political and strategic situation, the author has suggested that "the only option for resolving the Korean conflict seems to be through "bilateralism". In the endless search for peaceful unification of the two Koreas, he has suggested the conclusion of a mutual non-aggression treaty and bilateral negotiation in order to overcome mistrust and suspicion from the minds of the Koreans. According to him, bilateral efforts are to be considered more positive and pragmatic than international efforts as the latter directly implicate some pulls and pressures on account of rival interests.

Bilateral negotiations are, of course, the simplest forms of settling any dispute. They help the disputant parties to bring about the needed change by mutual consent. However, the success of such negotiations depends largely upon the degree of acceptability of claims of one party by the other, and the restraints, tact and spirit of accommodation with which the negotiations are conducted. Whether negotiations would help solve the Korean conflict wherein super powers are so much involved is a difficult question to answer. Chances of arriving at a peaceful unification is not possible unless and until super powers decide to remain aloof from the Korean affairs, which appears to be a very remote possibility. It, however, depends upon the strong determination of the Korean leaders and the people. As and when Korea comes out from their clutches, one can think of bilateral negotiations leading to unification of the two Koreas.

Although at times one gets the feeling that references to some develop-

ments within and outside the United Nation are somewhat abrupt, the author has managed to compress the maximum information in minimum of space. It is, therefore, a welcome contribution to the discussion on the question of Korean conflict.

It is suggested that bibliography and index be included at the end of the book in its next edition.

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