

Kims. In the long term it will render the Kims irrelevant, demonstrating the absurdity of juche and setting in train forces that will destroy North Korean socialism. Furthermore, economic development in the North is an essential prelude to reunification. For years Seoul and Pyongyang have propagandized about reunification while pursuing policies hostile to that end.⁵⁰ As the gulf widened relentlessly between the northern and southern economies, even the pretext of reunification tended to be abandoned. Indeed, it became in the South's best interest to try to prop up the North in order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of the Pyongyang regime and the fate that befell West Germany. It is widely recognized that the South is far less capable of absorbing the North than West Germany was of absorbing the East. Thus, closing the economic gap is critical to the future stability of the peninsula.⁵¹ Inter-Korean trade has, of course, been growing dramatically (albeit from a very small base) and it strikes this writer that every means should be employed to develop the Northern economy; setting aside -- for all intents and purposes -- the nuclear issue which is a war that is already lost.

CONCLUSION

The broad outlines of the post-Cold War order in the Asia-Pacific have begun to emerge. For the most part the regional outlook is benign even if the global outlook is much less so. Economic interdependence is the order of the day as socialist states abandon their bankrupt ideologies and embrace free market economies. American power in the region remains sufficient for the moment. The Russians have plunged from view. The Chinese, in the ascendant, seem firmly committed to fostering stability as a necessary precondition to their continued economic