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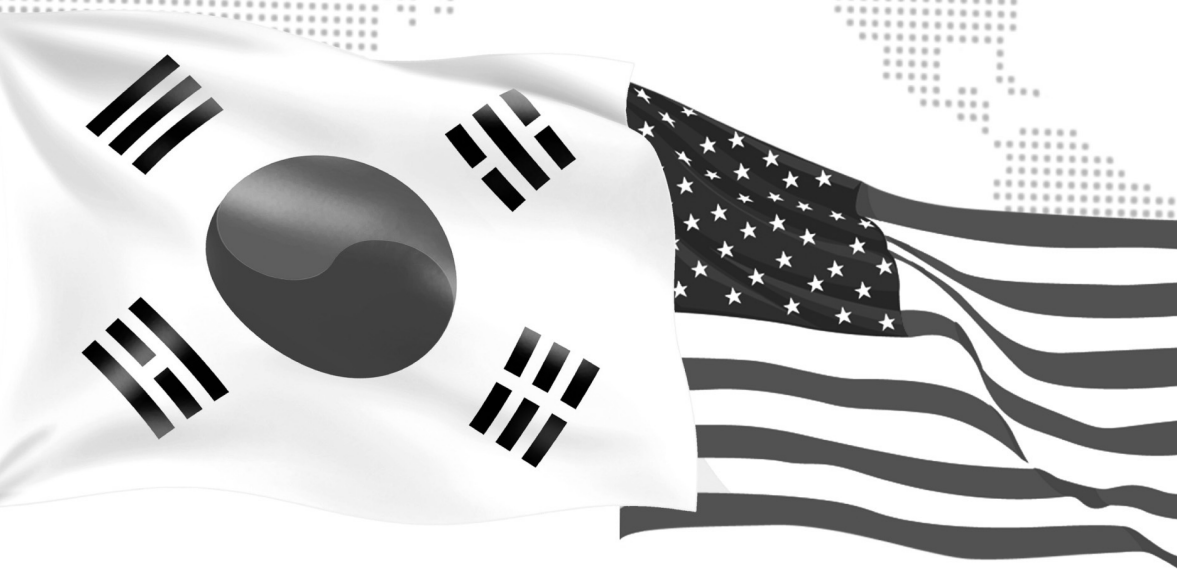


# *The U.S.-ROK Alliance in the 21st Century*

edited by **Jung-Ho Bae** and **Abraham Denmark**



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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
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# *Preface*

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Northeast Asia is a region where the interests of several great powers are in constant flux between competition and cooperation. Such a peculiar strategic environment is reflected in the dynamics of the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, efforts to manage affairs related to the security and future of the Korean Peninsula, especially in regards to the North Korean nuclear issue, requires cooperation among a wide cast of regional and strategic players including the United States, Japan, China and Russia.

Of particular importance in this equation is the United States. Since its beginning, the Myung-Bak Lee administration has worked diligently to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance. On June 16, 2009, the presidents of both countries adopted a common vision to broaden the scope of U.S.-ROK cooperation beyond the area of security to include politics, economics, society and culture. This redefinition of a 21st century U.S.-ROK alliance will help both countries be better prepared to address strategic issues regarding the Korean peninsula.

This study aims to strengthen U.S.-ROK policy coordination and cooperation in order to resolve salient issues regarding North Korea. It is intended to provide evidence and support for bolstering the U.S.-ROK strategic alliance and developing a joint U.S.-ROK North Korea strategy.

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This study is supported by the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) and is based on their understandings of the Obama administrations' Northeast Asia and North Korea policies and the Myung-Bak Lee administration's North Korea policy.

This study is deeply indebted to several individuals for their tremendous efforts in assembling this volume: Dr. Tae-Woo Kim at KIDA; Nira Patel at CNAS; Dr. Choon-Kun Lee, visiting fellow at KINU; Eun-Jung Lee, research associate at KINU; and Sang-Yeon Lee, research associate at KINU. A special thanks to Dr. Lee who devoted several hours to translating the English manuscripts into Korean. As the editor of this volume, it is my hope that this research helps experts, policymakers, students and other audiences in the United States and South Korea to better understand the importance of U.S.-ROK cooperation as well as pending issues regarding the denuclearization of North Korea.

Jung-Ho Bae  
(Director of the Center for International Relations Studies at KINU)

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# JOINT VISION FOR THE ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Washington D.C. June 16, 2009



The United States of America and the Republic of Korea are building an Alliance to ensure a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Korean Peninsula, the Asia-Pacific region, and the world.

Our open societies, our commitment to free democracy and a market economy, and our sustained partnership provide a foundation for the enduring friendship, shared values, and mutual respect that tightly bind the American and Korean peoples.

The bonds that underpin our Alliance and our partnership are strengthened and enriched by the close relationships among our citizens. We pledge to continue programs and efforts to build even closer ties between our societies, including cooperation among business, civic, cultural, academic, and other institutions.

The United States-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty remains the cornerstone of the U.S.-ROK security relationship, which has guaranteed peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia for over fifty years. Over that time, our security Alliance has strengthened and our partnership has widened to encompass political, economic, social and cultural cooperation. Together, on this solid foundation, we will build a comprehensive strategic alliance of

bilateral, regional and global scope, based on common values and mutual trust. Together, we will work shoulder-to-shoulder to tackle challenges facing both our nations on behalf of the next generation.

The Alliance is adapting to changes in the 21st Century security environment. We will maintain a robust defense posture, backed by allied capabilities which support both nations' security interests. The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance. In advancing the bilateral plan for restructuring the Alliance, the Republic of Korea will take the lead role in the combined defense of Korea, supported by an enduring and capable U.S. military force presence on the Korean Peninsula, in the region, and beyond.

We will continue to deepen our strong bilateral economic, trade and investment relations. We recognize that the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement could further strengthen these ties and we are committed to working together to chart a way forward. We aim to make low-carbon green growth into a new engine for sustainable economic prosperity and will closely cooperate in this regard. We will strengthen civil space cooperation, and work closely together on clean energy research and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Through our Alliance we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy. We will work together to achieve the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as ballistic missile programs, and to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.

In the Asia-Pacific region we will work jointly with regional institutions and partners to foster prosperity, keep the peace, and improve the daily lives of the people of the region. We believe that open societies and open economies create prosperity and support human dignity, and

our nations and civic organizations will promote human rights, democracy, free markets, and trade and investment liberalization in the region. To enhance security in the Asia-Pacific, our governments will advocate for, and take part in, effective cooperative regional efforts to promote mutual understanding, confidence and transparency regarding security issues among the nations of the region.

Our governments and our citizens will work closely to address the global challenges of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, organized crime and narcotics, climate change, poverty, infringement on human rights, energy security, and epidemic disease. The Alliance will enhance coordination on peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization and development assistance, as is being undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan. We will also strengthen coordination in multilateral mechanisms aimed at global economic recovery such as the G20.

The United States of America and the Republic of Korea will work to achieve our common Alliance goals through strategic cooperation at every level. Proven bilateral mechanisms such as the Security Consultative Meeting and the Strategic Consultations for Allied Partnership will remain central to realizing this shared vision for the Alliance.

U.S. President Barac Obama and South Korea President Myung-Bak Lee



# *The Strategy of the Obama Administration toward Northeast Asia*

*Abraham Denmark*

\* This chapter is adapted from previous works by the Center for a New American Security: Abraham Denmark, Lindsey Ford, Zachary Hosford, Nirav Patel, and Michael Zubrow, “No Illusions: Regaining the Strategic Advantage with North Korea,” Center for a New American Security, June 2009 ; Abraham Denmark, Zachary Hosford, and Michael Zubrow, “Lessons Learned: Navigating Negotiations with the DPRK,” Center for a New American Security, November, 2009; Kurt M. Campbell, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, and Vikram J. Singh, “Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance,” Center for a New American Security, February 2009; Kurt M. Campbell, Nirav Patel, Vikram Singh, “The Power of Balance: America in iAsia,” Center for a New American Security, June 2008; and Ralph A. Cossa, Brad Glosserman, Michael A. McDevitt, Nirav Patel, James Przystup, Brad Roberts, “The United States and the Asia-Pacific Region: Security Strategy for the Obama Administration,” Center for a New American Security, February 2009; Abraham Denmark and Nirav Patel (eds.), “China’s Arrival: A Strategic Framework for a Global Relationship,” Center for a New American Security, September 2009.

# 1

As the United States and the Republic of Korea look forward to the 21st century, the international system is growing increasingly complex and interdependent as American unipolarity gradually gives way to an emerging multipolarity. Regionally, rapid economic growth in most of Northeast Asia (combined with perceptions of American distraction in the greater Middle East) has driven pundits and analysts to declare the 21st century the Age of Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Under President Clinton, the U.S. regularly published an authoritative “Asia-Pacific Strategy Report,” which described in broad terms U.S. priorities, objectives, and strategies toward the Asia-Pacific region. The State Department has not published an updated version of this report in over ten years, despite profound changes to the region. Four key developments are driving these changes. The first is the staying power of the United States – despite popular predictions about an impending power transfer to China, the United States remains by far the dominant economic, political, and military power in the region. The second is China’s rise, a trajectory that has introduced an actor that is prosperous, aggressive, and influential while at the same time is profoundly risk-adverse and uncomfortable with playing the role of a regional or global leader. The third trend is an increasing complexity in America’s regional alliances and friendships, driven by domestic political dynamics and a decade of economic stagnation. The fourth and final trend is the ongoing problem of North Korea, whose nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs have intensified and threatened regional stability.

For these reasons, the Obama administration has decided to update the Asia-Pacific Strategy Report with a new report in 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, Northeast Asia is defined as China, the DPRK, Japan, the Republic of Korea(ROK), Russia and Taiwan.



Yet America's allies, partners, and friends cannot wait on the State Department to produce this report, and must recognize that it will be as much a public relations effort as it is a serious discussion of U.S. strategy in the region. In order to fully understand the United States' approach to Northeast Asia, actions and budgets will go further than rhetoric. This chapter will attempt to foreshadow the Obama administration's strategy towards Northeast Asia, examine what actions the United States has taken since January 2009, and reflect on how these objectives and priorities laid out in a strategy will be balanced against the reality of governing with limited time and resources.

## **U.S. INTERESTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA**

America's ability to maintain stability and project power in the Asia Pacific has long depended on its hub-and-spoke system of bilateral alliances. South Korea has been a valuable component of this system, serving as a regional hub of U.S. power, and projecting "spokes" of U.S. influence across the region. It has become increasingly obvious, however, that the sum of South Korea's influence and interests can no longer be viewed merely in a regional context. The Republic of Korea (ROK) is actively establishing new economic and diplomatic relationships with countries across the globe. Similarly, the South Korean military is already engaging in complex out-of-area operations in the Gulf of Aden.

In order to address global challenges, the United States must look to its friends and allies to shoulder some responsibility for maintaining the international system upon which we all rely. Beyond helping to defray costs and support regional stability,

alliances can help America deal with the multifaceted threat profiles of the 21st century and add greater legitimacy to shared international enterprises.

Symbolically, the Obama Administration has returned the Asia-Pacific region as a top foreign policy priority for the United States. Hillary Clinton's first international trip as Secretary of State was to East Asia, and her attendance at the June 2009 meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, were a major signal that the Obama administration would be a more active high-level participant in regional fora and that the region would receive more high-level attention. These signals were reinforced by the decision to host Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso as President Obama's first head-of-government visitor, a successful summit with ROK President Lee, and the inauguration of the U.S.-PRC Strategic and Economic Dialogue.

As discussed above, the United States has yet to officially detail its interests in Northeast Asia. Yet, Obama administration officials have indicated a continuation of long-standing American interests in the region:

- Defense of the U.S. homeland, territories, citizens, allies, and interests
- Regional stability and the absence of any dominant power or group of powers that would threaten or impede U.S. access or interests
- Regional prosperity and the promotion of free trade and market access
- A stable, secure, and proliferation-free global nuclear order
- Promotion of global norms and values, such as good governance, democracy, and individual human rights and religious freedom
- Ensuring freedom of navigation, which is an essential prerequisite for regional stability and the protection of American interests

## ***Regional Trends***

Today, Asia stands as the most important region for the future of American security and prosperity. Asia now accounts for over 40 percent of global consumption of steel, and China is consuming almost half of the world's available concrete.<sup>2</sup> Asia's rise has been sustained by a remarkable period of regional peace, international stability, the spread of democracy throughout the region, and the expansion of regional economic integration through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and a general liberalization of trade laws.

As described by Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke, Asia's rise has had a profound impact on the global economy. "Since 2000, Asia has accounted for more than one-third of the world's economic growth, raising its share of global gross domestic product (GDP) from 28 percent to 32 percent."<sup>3</sup> In 2007, Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye wrote, "With half the world's population, one-third of the global economy, and growing economic, financial, technological, and political weight in the international system, Asia is key to a stable, prosperous world order that best advances American interests."<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon has driven several academics and strategists, including noted retired Singaporean diplomat and scholar Kishore Mahbubani, to proclaim "the end of Western domination and the arrival of the Asian century."<sup>5</sup>

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2- John Fernandez, "Resource Consumption of New Urban Construction in China," *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2007), pp. 103-105.

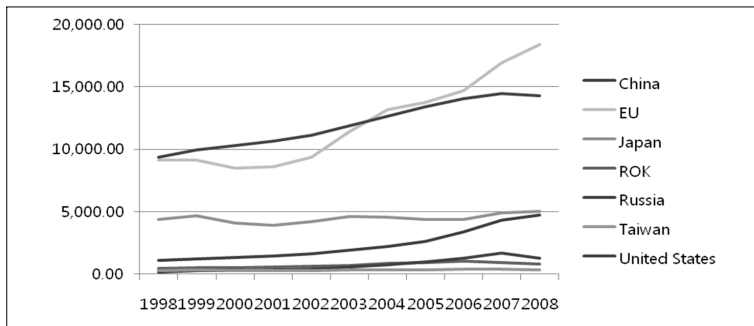
3- Ben S. Bernanke, "Asia and the Global Financial Crisis," Speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Conference on Asia and the Global Financial Crisis, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (October 19, 2009).

4- Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, *Getting Asia Right through 2020* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2007), p. 1.

5- Kishore Mahbubani, "Ring in the Asian Century," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 2008.

While the rise of Asia is an undeniable fact, rhetoric about a major power shift toward the East and the end of American “domination” is overstated. While Asia’s economic rise is nothing short of remarkable, it’s economic size still pales in comparison to that of the United States or the EU (Figure 1.1). This is in part a function of scale – China’s GDP has more than quadrupled since 1998, yet the U.S. economy grew by \$5.6 trillion during the same period, an amount larger than any economy in Northeast Asia.<sup>6</sup> A lack of uniformity in Northeast Asia’s economic growth also undermines a discussion of the region as a cohesive whole. China’s rapid economic growth (an average rate of 9.5% annual growth from 1998-2008) eclipsed the relatively slow growth rates in South Korea and Taiwan (4.2% and 3.9% respectively). Moreover, Japan’s anemic annual rate of growth during this time period (0.989%) has permitted China’s near-emergence as Northeast Asia’s largest economy.<sup>7</sup>

⟨Figure 1.1⟩ Gross Domestic Product, Current Prices in Billions \$US, 1998–2008.<sup>8</sup>



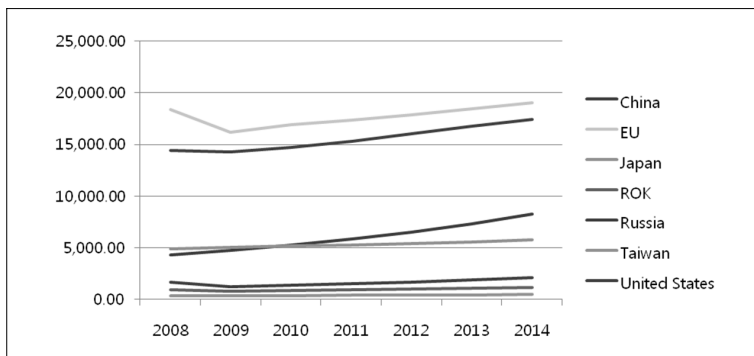
6- International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2009, Analysis by the Author.

7- North Korea does not publish economic data, and thus is not included for analytic comparison. The CIA World Factbook estimates the DPRK’s 2008 GDP to be an anemic \$26.2 billion, or 2.7% of South Korea’s economy that year.

8- International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2009, Analysis by the Author.

These trends are likely to become more pronounced in the coming years. According to IMF projections, China's GDP in 2014 will remain less than half that of the U.S. while the economies of Japan, South Korea, Russia, and Taiwan will continue to fall behind (Figure 1.2).<sup>9</sup> Thus, while the United States and the EU will remain economically dominant for the foreseeable future, China's economy will soon overtake Japan's and quickly become the strongest in Northeast Asia. The state of affairs is made starker, of course, when one compares *per capita* income in the countries under question.

〈Figure 1.2〉 Projected Gross Domestic Product, Current Prices in Billions \$US, 2008–2014.



These dramatic economic developments have significant implications for future regional political and military dynamics and the future of America's approach to Northeast Asia, as a country's political and military power is directly tied to its economic performance. Since World War II, the United States has maintained a system of bilateral alliances and partnerships with Japan, the

<sup>9</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2009, Analysis by the Author.

ROK, and Taiwan. While this system was originally intended to act as a bulwark against communist expansion, these alliances have evolved into important global relationships in their own right and part of America's "engage and hedge" strategy toward a rising China. Unfortunately for the United States, the states that it has built close and deep relationships with since the 1940s are the same states that are starting to fall behind China in economic, political, and eventually military terms. As the United States develops a renewed strategy toward Northeast Asia, it must address and account for these shifting realities.

### ***The Influence of Politics in Washington***

In Washington D.C., no foreign policy exists in a vacuum. Since Congress controls decisions about funding and allocation, the White House must work with Congress if it wants its foreign policy initiatives to be implemented. This means working with key members of Congress to build consensus on foreign policy decisions, priorities, and initiatives. More importantly, it means building support for an initiative with the American people. The president's ability to convince Congress to support administration policies is directly tied to their popularity with the American people, and any president (or potential candidate) who willfully ignores public opinion cannot expect to hold the White House for long.

President Obama has signaled a remarkably ambitious agenda, both in the domestic and foreign policy spheres. From tackling the global economic crisis, to domestic healthcare reform, to climate change, to Iraq and Afghanistan, the President's cup runneth over. Not only does this limit the amount of time and energy that he and his senior staff can devote to Asia, it also directly impacts Asia policy.

For example, the United States will need substantial cooperation from the China in order to address the global economic crisis and climate change. This drives the United States to de-emphasize and delay policies that may antagonize the PRC (such as arms sales to Taiwan) in order to gain its cooperation on other issues the White House deems of greater priority. While this in no way implies that China can expect a free pass because of economic and climate issues, these countervailing priorities have an undeniable effect on foreign policy toward China, and Asia writ-large.

Northeast Asian states have a major interest in making their case directly to Congress and the American people as well. In recent years, anecdotal evidence suggests that the PRC has vastly improved its understanding of, and interaction with, the American political process in Washington. Chinese diplomats, once awkward and ineffective, now come to Washington with exceptional English language skills and a finely-honed cultural understanding. This expansion on Chinese influence and engagement on Capitol Hill stands in sharp contrast to Taiwan's outreach in Washington, which has atrophied despite a consistently talented and professional diplomatic corps. To be sure, China's expanding influence in Washington, and Taiwan's relative decline, can directly be attributed to China's burgeoning economic and political power. But just as importantly, China has become increasingly adept at utilizing its power and promise to gain more influence in Capitol Hill.

## **GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES**

The Obama administration's strategy toward Northeast Asia encompasses several global issues that have specific application

within the region. As discussed above, the relative priority some of these concerns hold in Washington directly informs the Obama administration's approach to Northeast Asia. This section describes the Obama administration's broad approach to these issues, and how this approach has to date effected U.S. policy toward Northeast Asia.

### ***The Global Economic Crisis***

Some leading economists have referred to the ongoing economic crisis that began in 2007 as the worst downturn since the Great Depression of 1929.<sup>10</sup> While experts continue to disagree about the root causes of the crisis, the Brookings Institution summarized a consensus view that “the US economy ha[d] been spending too much and borrowing too much for years and the rest of the world depended on the U.S. consumer as a source of global demand.”<sup>11</sup> The tightening of U.S. consumer demand quickly hurt economies in Northeast Asia. While the U.S. GDP contracted by 6% in the fourth quarter of 2008, Asia's economies were more significantly affected – Taiwan declined by 20%, South Korea declined by more than 15%, and Japan shrank by 12% during the same period.<sup>12</sup> Only China continued to see a continued economic

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<sup>10</sup>– “Three Top Economists Agree 2009 Worst Financial Crisis Since Great Depression; Risks Increase if Right Steps are Not Taken,” *Reuters* (February 27, 2009), available at <<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS193520+27-Feb-2009+BW20090227>>.

<sup>11</sup>– Martin Neil Baily and Douglas J. Ellion, “The U.S. Financial and Economic Crisis: Where Does It Stand and Where Do We Go From Here?” *The Brookings Institution* (June 15, 2009), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup>– Ben S. Bernanke, “Asia and the Global Financial Crisis,” Speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Conference on Asia and the Global Financial Crisis, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (October 19, 2009); and Kyoji Fukao and Tangjun Yuan, “Why is Japan so heavily affected by the global economic crisis? An analysis based on the Asian international input-output tables,” *Vox* (June 8, 2009), available at <<http://www.voxeu.org/>



expansion, though its 6% positive growth rates fell well short of the double-digit growth rates it had enjoyed for decades.

Although Northeast Asia was more dramatically hit by the economic crisis than the United States, it is also recovering more quickly. Due to sound macroeconomic fundamentals, prudent monetary and fiscal policies, and a growth in domestic demand, Northeast Asian economies generally believe they are on the road to recovery.<sup>13</sup> In conversations with the author, policymakers across the region have predicted that 2009 would see double-digit growth rates and a “V-shaped recovery.” This has been in part facilitated by a remarkable level of economic integration—China is now the leading trading partner with South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. Many credit China’s robust domestic stimulus package as the primary source of domestic demand that has helped the regional economies “de-link” themselves from the United States.

While the long-standing effects of the global economic crisis remain unclear, China’s regional power and influence has undeniably been enhanced by the PRC’s apparent economic resilience. This has been evident in China’s notably aggressive behavior in economic fora since the crisis began, with Chinese officials regularly calling for the U.S. dollar to be replaced as the standard global reserve currency and Chinese President Hu Jintao boldly calling for “reform of the international financial system and . . . resolving global imbalanced development” during the September 2009 meeting of the G-20 in Pittsburgh.<sup>14</sup>

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[index.php?q=node/3637>](#).

<sup>13</sup> Ben S. Bernanke, “Speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s Conference on Asia and the Global Financial Crisis.”

<sup>14</sup> “Full text’ of Chinese president’s speech at G20 summit in Pittsburgh,” *Xinhua*, September 25, 2009.

China's active behavior in international trade fora and its aggressive pursuit of regional trade agreements stands in sharp contrast with Washington's relatively cautious and quiet approach to global trade. While this can in part be traced to domestic political concerns about U.S. products (namely beef) throughout Asia, the Obama administration has also been notably quiet on trade agreements with its allies and friends in the region. The Korea Free Trade Agreement (KFTA) continues to languish, and trade with Taiwan remains stifled by the lack of progress on the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The Obama administration must build a coherent and active trade policy and recognize trade as an essential element of national power, or else it risks allowing China to gain critical influence in the region at American expense.

### *Climate Change*

Like the global economic crisis, climate change is an international issue that has significant implications for U.S. policy toward Northeast Asia. Moreover, as with the economic crisis, the central role of China in resolving this global problem will necessarily enhance China's status and restrict Washington's ability to confront Beijing on other issues of (relatively) reduced importance to U.S. interests.

Again, other countries in Northeast Asia have largely been left out of the equation. While their relatively small pollution profile, compared to China and the U.S., has understandably kept them out of the spotlight in the opening rounds of a global discussion on combating climate change — Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and other American friends in the region (especially Singapore), have the resources and technologies to help China and other developing countries address

their emissions levels while preserving economic development.

The Obama administration must re-calibrate existing laws that limit the export of technologies that can help countries reduce their emissions while maintaining current economic development levels. China is currently the world's largest exporter of solar panels, and is about to overtake the U.S. in wind turbine exports. If this trend does not change, America will be excluding itself from a tremendous opportunity for global development, green technology distribution, and soft power expansion.

### ***The Contested Commons***

Free and fair access to, and stability within, the global commons now rest at the foundation of the contemporary international system. This is not a new development — since antiquity, the global commons have served as a conduit for international commerce and communications. First the high seas, then air, space, and now cyberspace have emerged as the key media for increasingly rapid economic, political, cultural, and military contacts between widely disparate nations. The publication in 1890 of Alfred Thayer Mahan was perhaps the first strategist to coin the term, describing the world's oceans as “a great highway ... a wide common” in his 1890 classic *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1789*.

As the primary medium through which commerce, military systems, people, and ideas travel, the global commons are what Under Secretary of State Michelle Flournoy has referred to as “the connective tissue of the international system and of our global society.”<sup>15</sup> While no state owns these environments, they rely on

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<sup>15</sup> Michele Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, “The Contested Commons,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July 2009).

access to the commons for access to resources and foreign markets. Ninety percent of global commerce travels by sea (worth roughly 55 trillion US\$), and millions, if not billions, of people rely, in some form, on a global communications system based on internet servers and orbiting satellites.<sup>16</sup>

Since World War II, the United States essentially has been the guarantor of the global commons, ensuring freedom of the seas and the ability of individuals and states to traverse much of the world. The presence, or threat of presence, of the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard has to date dissuaded naval aggression and fought piracy around the world. In space, the United States drove an international consensus on the openness of space, ensuring all countries access to orbit, provided they have the means. Lastly, the open and decentralized nature of the internet and its governing structures is directly attributable to the United States, the internet's birthplace. The United States has traditionally enjoyed an unchallenged military advantage within these commons, allowing the international economic system to develop on the back of U.S. military dominance.

This unchallenged U.S. military dominance within the commons also allowed American strategists to take access to the commons for granted, allowing the military to utilize these commons as force enablers and multipliers. Access to the commons is also taken for granted by the rest of the international community, which has used regular and predictable access to the commons to build prosperity and domestic stability. Yet, the proliferation of advanced military technologies such as high-performing "triple-digit" surface-to-air

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<sup>16</sup> International Maritime Organization, "International Shipping: Carrier of World Trade" (September 29, 2005). See also, *The World Bank*, "GDP 2008" (July 2009), at <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20399244~menuPK:1504474~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html>>.

missiles and advanced anti-ship cruise missiles, and the promulgation of strategies and doctrine to potentially hostile states and non-state actors, are threatening American military dominance within, and common access to, these vital commons. The use of anti-access technologies and capabilities such as advanced anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-satellite weapons, and cyberwarfare threaten the global commons and the tremendous amount of prosperity and stability they provide. The risk-adverse nature of maritime shipping corporations, the system-wide threat of orbital space debris, and the vulnerable nature of the modern internet make the commons especially vulnerable to disruption, and a relatively small or localized denial of access to the commons may quickly expand and escalate to deny the commons to all states.

These challenges are emerging at a time of profound change in the international political and economic system. A globalized international economy has allowed both for development of major centers of economic power around the world. Fareed Zakaria eloquently described the “rise of the rest” as a broad trend of economic growth:

In 2006 and 2007, 124 countries grew their economies at over 4 percent a year. That includes more than 30 countries in Africa. Over the last two decades, lands outside the industrialized West have been growing at rates that were once unthinkable. While there have been booms and busts, the overall trend has been unambiguously upward. Antoine van Agtmael, the fund manager who coined the term “emerging markets,” has identified the 25 companies most likely to be the world’s next great multinationals. His list includes four companies each from Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan; three from India, two from China, and one each from Argentina, Chile, Malaysia, and South Africa. This is something much broader than the much-ballyhooed rise of China or even Asia. It is the rise of the rest – the rest of the world.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>- Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of the Rest,” *Newsweek*, May 12, 2008.

The emerging multilateralism and the “rise of the rest” directly applies to America’s approach to the global commons. The realities of the contemporary security environment demand that the United States adapt, and accept that effective global leadership is not always centered on Washington. At times, U.S. interests are best served when others lead with us, or even take our place at the helm. The key for Washington will be in developing and cultivating responsible stewards of the global commons who will be able to contribute to the health and success of the international system without challenging U.S. interests or free access to the global commons.

As Washington works with its allies in Tokyo and Seoul to develop shared visions for the future of the respective alliances, sharing responsibility for protecting access to the global commons will be essential. Both Japan and Korea are dependent on the international economic system for resource imports and export to foreign markets, and for the fast data exchanges enabled by cyberspace and satellite-based communications. Keeping access to these channels open will involve direct security operations, such as the counter- piracy operations both countries have contributed to off the coast of Somalia. It will also involve support and peace-keeping operations, similar to Japan’s support to U.S. operations in Afghanistan where it refuels U.S. ships in the Indian Ocean. Additionally, it will involve working with the United States to promote the openness of the global commons in the international fora and coordinating with allies to counter state-borne anti-access threats.

The United States should also engage China directly on preserving access to, and stability within, the global commons. As a major power with an economy that is inextricably interwoven with the global economic system and a military that is demonstrating

increasing interest in blue-water navy and space capabilities, Beijing has a significant interest in maintaining international access to the global commons. Moreover, China's robust and long-standing military modernization program has produced capabilities that potentially threaten free and open access to the commons, though an ongoing lack of military transparency renders China's military intentions and desired end-states opaque. U.S. concerns are exasperated by China's past behavior towards U.S. naval assets operating in international waters in the South China Sea. These concerns and mutual interests should be addressed directly, frankly, and constructively on a bilateral and, eventually, a multilateral basis.

### ***Nuclear Nonproliferation***

Combating and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technologies is perhaps the most obvious traditional security issue where major powers would most likely have shared interests. Yet, specific international collaboration and cooperation is still lacking. Iran continues to thumb its nose at the international community, yet it has avoided stringent international sanctions, due largely to the protection of Moscow and Beijing. This stands in sharp contrast with the international community's response to North Korea's nuclear provocations, which have been more robust, if imperfect.

Direct discussions on Iran can be handled through official channels, and are not appropriate for a Track 2 dialogue. Yet significant room exists to discuss the parameters of Beijing's willingness to counter nuclear proliferation. Soon after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1874, the PRC reportedly intervened with the Burmese government to ensure the North Korean ship *Kang Nam 1* would be inspected if it entered port, on suspicion of illegal

proliferation activities. Yet it is unclear if this was a decision specific to this instance, or part of a greater pattern that will become standard practice. What principles will China use in decisions to inspect or board ships suspected of proliferation? How will China inform the international community if it suspects other countries of proliferation activities? These questions remain to be answered.

More broadly, significant misunderstandings between the U.S. and PRC on nuclear issues persist, and dialogue remains a vital means to improve mutual understanding. The inclusion of Major General Yin Fanglong (Director of the Political Department of the Second Artillery Corps) in General Xu Caihou's recent visit to the United States, which included a stop at USSTRATCOM in Nebraska, demonstrates that official conversations on nuclear issues (to some degree) are ongoing. However, the inclusion of high-ranking officials in conversations can at times act as an inhibitor to frank and insightful discussions, and the need for a Track 2 dialogue on nuclear issues remains.

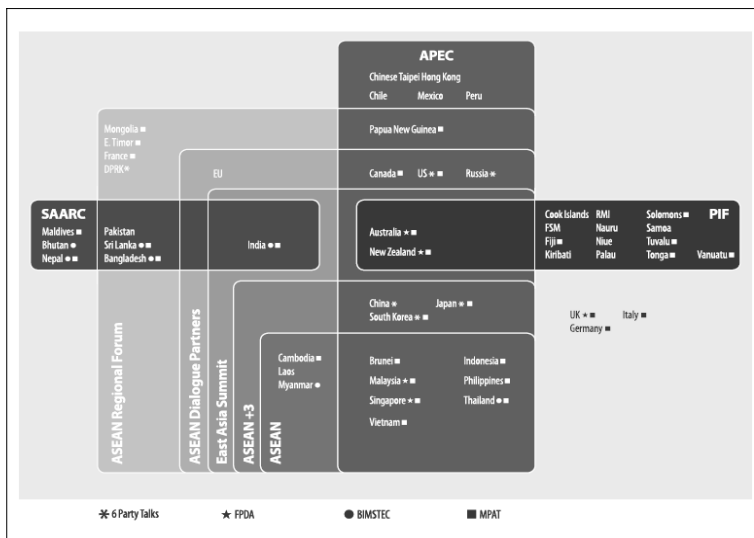
This need is enhanced by upcoming changes to official U.S. thinking on nuclear issues, which will be embodied in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. Supported by a bold show of support from Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, William Perry, and Sam Nunn, the Obama administration has announced the contours of an ambitious agenda toward eventual worldwide nuclear disarmament. Though the tricky details on how to "get to zero" remain conspicuously undefined, the president's embrace of this objective has profound implications for worldwide nuclear non-proliferation efforts. China and the United States need to engage in close conversations about the impact of a commitment to nuclear disarmament on deterrence and mutual security interests.



## Prospects for a Regional Security Architecture

Asia has a lot of three things: people, money, and multilateral organizations. A remarkable plethora of regional fora, each with a unique grouping of members and *raison-d'être*, run rampant throughout Asia. The wide differences in political systems, national interests, levels of economic development, national culture and history, and threat perceptions remove any realistic way to talk of Northeast Asia as a block. Yet, the interconnected nature of the region's economies and a significant number of shared threats call for an effective and relevant mechanism for regional cooperation among the major powers of Northeast Asia.

(Figure 1.3) AISA-PACIFIC MULTILATERALISM



However, the last thing Asia needs is another regional multilateral organization. Yet, demand for a regional security organization composed of the region's major powers remains unfulfilled. The

Six-Party Talks (minus North Korea) is such a forum, but it is solely focused on dealing with North Korea's nuclear program. Washington should work with its Six-Party partners to cultivate and an official dialogue on security issues among the five major parties (China, Japan, the ROK, Russia, and the United States). While all sides should ensure that this development does not undercut momentum for resolving the North Korea nuclear issue, solidifying this body will be essential to coordinate efforts towards mutual interests or issues of mutual concern.

### ***Normative Values and Human Rights***

The pursuit of democratic values and open economic systems has long been, and should continue to be, a traditional aspect of American foreign policy. Several leading American strategists, including John McCain during his 2008 presidential campaign, have called for various forms of a multilateral grouping based on common values and commitment to democracy. Others have warned that such a grouping could unnecessarily alienate important non-democratic states (namely, China and Russia) at a time when the west should be focused on *integrating* these powers into the international political order.

Beyond disagreements over values-based groupings, however, there is a generally accepted agreement within the United States that Washington should encourage the emergence of democracy and frankly address human rights abuses. Secretary Hillary Clinton made a rare mistake when she claimed that she would not let concerns over China's human rights record "get in the way." America's concerns are legitimate, and it is the responsibility of the U.S. government to make those concerns clear and to back them up, when

appropriate, with policies and sanctions. For instance, North Korea's abominable human rights record can also become a unifying factor in a regional approach to the DPRK.

America's democratic allies and partners deserve credit. President Bush rightly referred to Taiwan as a "beacon of democracy" that stands as an example to mainland China that democracy is compatible with Chinese culture. Similarly, many American strategists have identified Indonesia, a Muslim, democratic, maritime power, as a country that will play a pivotal role in the 21st century. However, Indonesia's human rights record is far from perfect, and a foreign policy approach that emphasizes democratic values and individual human rights can support a more positive direction for Indonesia's development.

## **BILATERAL RELATIONS**

### *Japan*

The U.S.-Japan alliance will remain the foundation for American engagement in the Asia-Pacific. The United States signaled its continued commitment to Japan with regular visits by high-level officials and the decision to host Prime Minister Taro Aso as President Obama's first head of government visitor.

Moreover, the U.S. and Japan enjoy a robust economic, political, and military relationship. Trade is brisk, despite Japan's stagnant economy, and Japanese society is technologically advanced and integrated into the international community. The United States has a robust military presence in Japan — approximately 50,000 military personnel, 44,000 dependents, and 5,400 American Depart-

ment of Defense civilian employees live in Japan.<sup>18</sup> The United States has dozens of bases and facilities around Japan, the major installations are in Yokosuka (home of the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet), Okinawa (home of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force), and Misawa and Kadena Air Bases (home of U.S. Air Force fighters).

Yet despite these strong ties, significant challenges in the alliance persist. While the Japanese people recognize the vital role America plays in maintaining Japan's national security, significant portions of the Japanese population seek a reduced U.S. military presence. This has resulted in an effort to realign U.S. forces away from population centers (especially in Okinawa) to Guam and other facilities in Japan.

These challenges have been exacerbated by the election of a new government in Tokyo, run by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Though they ran primarily on a platform of domestic reform, the DPJ's approach to the alliance remains unclear. A former Bush administration official reportedly referred to the foreign policy positions expressed in the DPJ's manifesto as being "all mood music."<sup>19</sup> Statements made by DPJ leaders about the alliance prior to getting elected offer few clues, primarily due to the politically diverse nature of its coalition. To date, the new government in Japan has repeatedly referred to the U.S. alliance as the cornerstone of Japan's security while signaling a willingness to delay, and consider reneging on, past agreements on realignment.<sup>20</sup> This approach,

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<sup>18</sup>- "Headquarters, U.S. Forces Japan," *U.S. Forces Japan Official Website*, as of October 22, 2009, available at <<http://www.usfj.mil/>>.

<sup>19</sup>- Yoichi Funabashi, "Tokyo's Trials," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2009), p. 113.

<sup>20</sup>- John Pomfret and Blaine Harden, "Japan: No base decision soon," *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2009.

along with a willingness to publicly say “no” to the U.S. with newfound candor, has temporarily brought relations to a new degree of animosity and uncertainty to the relationship. Yet, the centrality of the alliance to Japan’s security and its enduring support by the Japanese people makes it unlikely this level of animosity will be long-lived. In all probability, the U.S. and Japan will take some time to adjust to new political realities and eventually establish a common vision for the future of the alliance and a way to work with one another.

Washington should do its part to solidify this important relationship by reaffirming its role as a security guarantor. Determining the fate of a new generation of fighter jet sales to Japan is significant, as will cooperation on ballistic missile defense and progress on force realignment. However, U.S. actions not specific to the United States, especially language in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), will be read closely by U.S. allies in Tokyo and around the world for indications of U.S. perspectives on overseas force posture and nuclear deterrence.

Many of the challenges that have confronted the alliance over the past decade have arisen because of a lack of clarity from Tokyo and Washington on alliance-based cooperation and commitment. Establishing a strategic dialogue and perhaps a new joint security declaration to celebrate the alliance’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010 will help manage expectations and help set the alliance in a positive and constructive direction.

Further, the U.S.-Japan alliance must deepen beyond military guarantees. Tokyo and Washington should consider a new joint security statement that moves further than the 1996 accord toward a more forward-looking horizon for security cooperation. Even as

security- based cooperation will prove more important in the coming years, both sides must recognize the utility of the alliance for dealing with other non-traditional issues such as climate change and energy security, and should enhance this type of cooperation. Japan is already a global player, and has significant influence in shaping international policy in these areas.

### **China**

While China's arrival as a major power on the world stage has been a historic emergence, the U.S. strategy toward the PRC has been remarkably consistent. Since President Nixon's visit to Beijing, the United States has encouraged China's emergence as a stable, peaceful, and prosperous member of the international community. This policy has been based on the determination that a stable and prosperous China whose interests are directly linked with the status quo and the preservation of the international system would be in the long-term interests of the United States. With China's arrival as a major economic and political power, this determination is about to be tested for the first time.

Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, in a speech to the Center for a New American Security on the Obama administration's vision of the U.S.-China relationship, called for "strategic reassurance" in which the U.S. and its allies make clear its comfort with China's "arrival" as a "prosperous and successful power while China must reassure the rest of the world that its development and growing global role will not come at the expense of security and well-being of others."<sup>21</sup> He went on to call for increased cooperation between

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<sup>21</sup>- James B. Steinberg, "Administration's Vision of the U.S.-China Relationship," *Keynote Address at the Center for a New American Security* (September 24, 2009).

the U.S. and China on a wide range of global and regional issues, and urged China to improve its military transparency and discussed the risks of mistrust and misunderstanding.

Current U.S.-China relations define the word *complex*. In some areas, such as counterterrorism and counter-piracy, both sides agree on both the seriousness of the issue and (largely) share a commitment to combat these threats. Yet Washington and Beijing have differing policies or priorities on a much wider variety of issues at the global, regional, and bilateral levels. This is driven in part by uncertainty over China's intentions and desired end-states, but it is also the result of a basic disagreement in interests and preferences. Looking forward, it is likely that China will be a partner, a competitor, and at times a rival of the United States, depending on the issue.

The Obama administration's strategy toward China has, in part, been linked with a broader White House focus on global issues, such as the global economic crisis and climate change. During a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton shed light on this linkage by identifying two inescapable facts: "First, no nation can meet the world's challenges alone," and "Second, most nations worry about the same global threats."<sup>22</sup>

The United States has embraced the goal of increasing its savings rate while China has agreed to increase domestic consumption and reduce savings, in order to "resolve global imbalanced development" and avoid the disparities that contributed to the economic crisis. Going forward, China's ability to maintain domestic consumer demand while keeping a lid on inflation and domestic instability will be critical to the global economic recovery. Both as a

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<sup>22</sup>- Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Foreign Policy Address at the Council on Foreign Relations" (July 15, 2009).

source of manufactured goods and increasingly as a consumer nation, China's economic future is linked with that of the United States and Northeast Asia.

During his speech at the September 2009 United Nations summit on climate change, President Obama called for the international community to work together to address climate change by invoking John F. Kennedy's observation that "our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man."<sup>23</sup> After discussing his objectives for U.S. action, he called on developed nations to take the lead by promoting greater efficiency and slashing their own emissions. But he also called on the developing world to "do their part as well" by curtailing their emissions. Though not by name, President Obama was clearly referring to China when he declared, "We cannot meet this challenge unless all the largest emitters of greenhouse gas pollution act together. There is no other way."<sup>24</sup> Chinese President Hu Jintao took a decidedly different approach in his speech at the same summit. While he committed China to an ambitious program to restrain domestic emissions, he cast climate change as primarily a "development issue" and called on the developed world to provide the developing world (including China) with resources and technologies.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the U.S. better not hold its breath when waiting for China to lead on climate change.

The Obama administration's approach to China is also driven in part by regional considerations, especially regarding North Korea

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<sup>23</sup>- "Remarks by the President to the United Nations General Assembly," *The White House* (September 23, 2009), Available at <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-United-Nations-General-Assembly/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-United-Nations-General-Assembly/)>.

<sup>24</sup>- *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>- "Hu Jintao's Speech on Climate Change," *The New York Times*, September 22, 2009, available at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/23/world/asia/23hu.text.html>>.



and Pakistan. China's historically "special relationship" with North Korea, and their continuing close political and economic ties, make China central to any resolution of North Korea's nuclear issue. Similarly, China's 50-year "all weather" relationship with Pakistan, especially their military relationship, gives China access and influence to levers of power that are currently inaccessible to the United States.

### ***Taiwan***

America's approach to Taiwan will be in many ways defined by its approach to mainland China. Under President Ma Ying-jeou, Taiwan has pursued a pragmatic strategy focused on maintaining the status quo and the autonomy of Taiwan's democratic system via the responsible stewardship of the cross-Strait relationship. The United States should support Taiwan as a small, but important, economic power with good relations among the three major regional powers of China, Japan, and the United States. Undergirding this approach is an acceptance that Taiwan will be unable to compete with the mainland in terms of sheer economic size, military power, international political influence, or global soft power.

The Obama administration will be tempted to allow the importance of Taiwan to American interests to fade as U.S.-China relations continue to deepen and China becomes an increasingly important player in the international system. This would be a mistake — not only does Taiwan's democratic system deserve support and defense from attack or coercion from the mainland, but America's ability and will to stand up to mainland aggression will be closely watched by America's regional allies and partners. If the United States demonstrates itself as malleable to pressure from the

PRC when the cross-Strait status quo is on the line, the credibility of America's security commitments to its allies will be put in serious doubt.

The United States should pursue a policy rooted in America's traditional approach as defined by the Taiwan Relations Act and the three Joint Communiqués. Opposing any change to the status quo that is not peaceful and acceptable to the people of both sides has been an effective tool for continued stability, yet repeating this "cross-Strait catechism" is not enough. The Obama administration should develop a strategy that rewards Taipei for its responsible behavior and demonstrates a continued commitment to Taiwan's autonomy. This can be accomplished by encouraging increased levels of trade and cultural exchanges with Taiwan, regularizing arms sales and establishing a coherent asymmetric defensive strategy, and encouraging further entrenchment of a multi-party democratic system and an effective civil service. Additionally, the United States should abandon its decision to ban visits to Taiwan by high-level American officials.

Central to the success of this strategy will be a degree of acceptance, if not comfort, in Beijing. The PRC also has a significant interest in supporting Taipei's responsible management of the cross-Strait relationship. While the United States should not allow the mainland to write its policy toward Taiwan, Washington cannot ignore Beijing either, due to China's economic and political importance. Not only would this signify a more responsible posture in Beijing—it would also demonstrate a greater degree of trust between the U.S. and the PRC.

## **Russia**

After years of democratic growing pains, it seems more and more likely that Moscow will settle as an “autocratic democracy.” While Russians have fared well economically under Putin, it remains dependent on natural gas and oil exports, having failed to diversify its economy. While this worked well when oil prices were high, a fall in prices has severely hurt Russia’s economic performance. Russia’s economic problems are exasperated by poor demographics – its population is in rapid decline, and is expected to fall from 148 million today to 100 million by mid-century.<sup>26</sup>

From missile defense against Iran to energy supplies to Western Europe, the U.S. continues to view Russia primarily through a European lens. This view is somewhat misplaced. Even though Russia’s military power in East Asia is a shadow of its former self, it has been slowly positioning itself as an Asian power through arms sales, participation in regional venues, and energy exports. According to the Congressional Research Service, between 1998 and 2005 Russia inked over \$29 billion (US) in arms sales to Asian countries, with major sales to India, Indonesia, and China.<sup>27</sup> These arms sales accomplish more than raising capital; they are aimed at specific strategic ends. “The Russian’s are not indiscriminately selling arms ... Russia has pursued a policy driven by its strategic design .. [that] creates a strong client base that can later be transformed into a larger relationship.”<sup>28</sup> Most analysis today focuses on the rise of China and

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<sup>26</sup>- “Russia’s Dangerous Decline,” *The Boston Globe*, May 5, 2008.

<sup>27</sup>- Richard Grimmett, “Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 1998- 2005,” *Congressional Research Service* (October 23, 2006); Donald Greenlees, “Russia arms old and new friends in Asia,” *International Herald Tribune*, September 5, 2007.

<sup>28</sup>- Donald Greenlees, “Russia arms old and new friends in Asia.”

India and the almost inevitable reconfiguration of the Asia-Pacific security architecture, while neglecting Russia's role. According to Graeme Gill, professor of politics and economics at the University of Sydney, "Russia seeks to strengthen its presence and raise its profile in the Far East as a counter to the U.S., who remains embedded in the region in Korea and Japan, and whose links with China are expanding."<sup>29</sup>

Russia's future course is unclear. As indicated by its arms sales to China, India, and Indonesia, its less-than proactive approach to the Six-Party Talks, and its use of natural gas as a strategic weapon, Russia may be gearing itself up to become at least a credible regional power. Yet, as Russia specialist Dmitri Trenin has argued, Uzbekistan's apparent warming to the presence of the U.S. military and Russia's failure to convince any other country in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following its armed conflict with Georgia indicate that "Russia's plans for a regional political system centered on Moscow are not shaping up."<sup>30</sup>

Russia's future position in the world will necessarily inform Washington's approach to Moscow. The U.S. will in all likelihood continue to view Russia primarily through a European lens, except when Russia's involvement in Asia forces Washington to see it as an Asian power as well. For example, Russia's ongoing participation in negotiations regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons program is an ongoing source of hope and (to date) disappointment for the West. Moreover, the occasional decision by Moscow to send

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<sup>29</sup>– Graeme Gill, "Red Star in the Pacific?" *Australia Strategic Policy Institute Strategic Policy Forum Series* (August 28, 2007).

<sup>30</sup>– Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Reborn," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2009), p. 66.

strategic air forces to the skies over the Pacific Ocean and Baltic Sea are constant irritants. If Russia is ever able to do more than militarily posture over the Pacific Ocean, this behavior could become a real problem. Yet, until Russia's behavior changes, it will remain an afterthought in the Obama administration's approach to Northeast Asia.

### ***North Korea***

North Korea is the second longest-standing potential source of conflict and instability in Northeast Asia, after Taiwan. For more than thirty years after the signing of the armistice that halted armed conflict on the Korean peninsula, the United States pursued a policy of isolation toward North Korea. Fears of a growing nuclear threat from North Korea emerged in the 1980s. Yet, despite the evident crumbling of the Soviet Union, most analysts continued to view the North's illicit weapons program through a Cold War lens.<sup>31</sup> In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but Pyongyang has continued to pursue nuclear weapons. In the late 1980s, Washington concluded that its policy of isolating the North was failing to thwart Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons. The United States began to question whether negotiations might be a more effective way to denuclearize the DPRK. Since then, the U.S. has pursued a variety of negotiating tactics in order to denuclearize the DPRK. While some have achieved moderate successes in slowing North Korea's nuclear program, ultimate success remains distant.

Continuing a policy articulated by the George W. Bush administration, the Obama administration has insisted, repeatedly

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<sup>31</sup>- See John Deutch, "The New Nuclear Threat," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1992), p. 120, 131.

and unequivocally, that America's core interest is the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.<sup>32</sup> While denuclearization is one of Washington's primary objectives in North Korea, American security interests go far beyond nuclear issues. North Korea's ballistic missile development program, its possession of chemical and, potentially, biological weapons, and their conventional force capabilities are also of great concern to American policymakers as they pose a threat to the U.S. and its allies.

North Korea's consistent inclination to proliferate weapons technology endangers American interests and those of the international community. While the DPRK's missile technology is not yet advanced enough to target the continental United States, the more immediate and practical risk, especially given North Korea's past record, is that Pyongyang will transfer nuclear weapons technology to state or non-state actors.

History indicates that North Korea's agreement to the principle of denuclearization means little without a detailed plan for how to get there. Limited agreements have exacted a commitment to denuclearization in principle and a few initial movements in that direction, but they left the harder negotiations and more difficult steps for later. This approach entails too much uncertainty about the parameters of a final settlement and whether it will come to fruition at all. Without fundamental changes to this approach or the U.S.-DPRK relationship, it is unlikely Pyongyang will eliminate its entire nuclear program.

Past agreements with North Korea, including the Agreed Framework and the Six-Party Agreement of September 2005, have

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<sup>32</sup>- Hillary Clinton, Press Conference at ASEAN Summit (July 22, 2009), <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/126320.htm>>.

been limited in nature. Both agreements laid out the principles and the general path toward denuclearization in their respective texts, but lacked sufficiently specific descriptions of practicable processes for denuclearization. The Clinton administration paid a large political price for the long timeline of the Agreed Framework, which made implementation itself more difficult.<sup>33</sup> In each case the desire to come to an agreement superseded concerns that the road to denuclearization had only been tentatively outlined.

An agreement that is divided into smaller steps is a structure preferred by the DPRK. History shows that North Korea tries to divide and separate issues in a method that has become known as “salami tactics.” These tactics involve partitioning a large package into small pieces. This approach allows North Korea to extract a higher total price by demanding per-unit costs instead of allowing the United States to achieve its goals at a single negotiated price. Once a limited deal of this nature is made, the cost of offering additional concessions to continue securing modest steps seems lower.<sup>34</sup>

Limited agreements are costly and risky. By drawing out the timeline of a deal, the North can continue to advance its nuclear weapons program. For example, Pyongyang may try to delay denuclearization by distinguishing its plutonium reprocessing program from its uranium enrichment program. This tactic would perpetuate the cycle since the bigger and more complex its program becomes, the more the North can charge the United States for disablement.

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<sup>33</sup> Joel Wit, Daniel Poneman and Robert Gallucci, *Going Critical* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 360.

<sup>34</sup> Victor Cha refers to a similar concept as “relative reasonableness,” which involved accepting North Korean cheating for the sake of implementation momentum. See Victor Cha, “What do they Really Want?: Obama’s North Korea Conundrum,” *The Washington Quarterly* (October 2009), pp. 119-138.

There are other risks associated with splitting an agreement into smaller steps. Doing so reduces the likelihood that all of the requisite steps will be adequately addressed. The more drawn out the process becomes, the more likely there will be a setback that could derail the process. Moreover, the things that North Korea wants from the United States are not well suited to being divided into smaller parts. America's biggest potential inducement is its willingness to fundamentally alter the U.S.-DPRK relationship. While this could be implemented in steps, the potential turning point for denuclearization efforts is the political decision to "embrace" North Korea.

Despite the risks of interim agreements, interviews with former negotiators show that there is continued support for this approach. Some negotiators argue that limited agreements are effective in generating quick actions that reduce the threat from the DPRK.<sup>35</sup> Yet, both the 1994 Agreed Framework and the 2007 Six-Party Agreement demonstrate the clear problems associated with a limited agreement: neither pact fundamentally altered Pyongyang's strategic calculations and both lacked the specificity required to keep progress toward denuclearization on track.

Although the specifics of the administration's approach remain unclear, several key policymakers have indicated that the U.S. is no longer interested in a limited agreement. The United States has already made concessions for such limited agreements, agreeing to limited deals that shut down North Korea's plutonium reactor at Yongbyon. However, these concessions have not ended North Korea's putative nuclear weapons program or any highly enriched uranium program. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates clearly states

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<sup>35</sup> See Joel S. Wit, "U.S. Strategy Towards North Korea: Rebuilding Dialogue and Engagement," *U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS* (October 2009).



Washington's impatience with this approach, "I am tired of buying the same horse twice."<sup>36</sup> A senior ROK official confirmed that this sentiment is shared in Seoul, where a piecemeal deal is considered "inconceivable." Past experiences with limited agreements makes such a deal unacceptable to the U.S. Congress as well. Another freeze would hardly demonstrate progress, especially if it took additional concessions to achieve.

Given North Korea's past behavior and statements, the U.S. must develop a strategy to overcome the fundamental obstacle to successful denuclearization: Pyongyang's current calculation that retaining nuclear weapons is in its best interest. Crafting a comprehensive agreement — one that offers North Korea clear incentives to denuclearize, powerful disincentives for continued belligerence, and a path to final status — is the best way the United States can alter North Korea's calculations and test its commitment to denuclearization. As several American negotiators emphasized to the authors, the United States will not be able to trick North Korea out of their nuclear weapons. Pyongyang will only willing denuclearize if its cost-benefit and risk-reward calculations change.

### ***South Korea***

The U.S.-ROK alliance has been a key component of America's bilateral alliance system in Asia for almost 60 years. Korea has been a close friend and valued partner during difficult circumstances, even when personal relations between U.S. and ROK leaders were at a low point. Moreover, the alliance has always exceeded expectations

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Gates, "America's Security Role in the Asia Pacific," *Shangri-La Dialogue*, (May 30, 2009), <<http://www.iiss.org/conferences/the-shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2009/plenary-session-speeches-2009/first-plenary-session/qa/>>.

and provided invaluable help to the United States — even when it was politically challenging. Yet, despite this evidence and a general consensus about the alliance’s utility versus a nuclear-armed North Korea, an unhealthy feeling of strategic drift has increasingly beleaguered the alliance. For the past two decades, questions about the continued relevance of the alliance and America’s commitment to South Korea have colored perceptions about the alliance’s staying power in Washington and Seoul. To a large extent, this sense of strategic drift can be attributed to the failure of policymakers in both countries to define a strategic rationale for alliance-based cooperation outside of the Korean peninsula.

Absent a broad strategic reassessment, the United States will face tremendous challenges in maintaining support for this vital alliance. It was with this difficulty in mind that President George W. Bush and President Lee Myung-bak declared their support for a more global role for the alliance. The Bush administration’s decision to elevate the U.S.- ROK alliance to the level of a global strategic partnership provides a constructive inheritance for the new U.S. administration, and Presidents Lee and Obama reiterated this commitment with their Joint Vision statement in June 2009.

Yet, re-casting the alliance as a global relationship goes beyond vision statements — policymakers and military leaders on both sides are beginning to quietly discuss aspects of the necessary structures and roles to implement a global alliance. Though discussions related to the transition of wartime Operational Control (OPCON) from the U.S. to the ROK in April, 2012 is solely focused on peninsular contingencies, decisions about “enduring U.S. capabilities” and the “division of labor” will necessarily inform a more global posture.

The primary hurdle to South Korea’s ability to outline a strategic vision is that it continues to define its identity in terms of

what the country is not – the ROK is not North Korea, not another Japan, and not its former dictatorial and dependent self – rather than articulating what the country will be. As Victor D. Cha, former NSC director for South Korea and a Georgetown University professor, notes, “During the past administrations, however loudly Korea talked about its global role, South Korea’s parochial colors always showed through the minute the discussion move[d] to North Korea.”<sup>37</sup>

From President Roh Moo-hyun’s decision to send more than 3,000 Korean troops into Iraq to extending logistical support for military operations in Afghanistan, and from cutting interest rates in order to ease the global illiquidity crisis to countering Somali sea piracy, South Korea is slowly developing capabilities that will enhance its own force projection and complement American strategic objectives around the world. The ROK’s “spokes” are increasingly traversing outside of Asia proper, creating new mini-hubs around the world. Yet, most of these steps have occurred outside of, and independent from, the U.S.-ROK alliance. The goal for alliance managers in South Korea and the United States will be to conjoin American and South Korean interests in order to transform these tactical steps into a strategic vision. Although they often talk about shared values and a shared strategic vision, both South Korean and U.S. officials have been reluctant to take the requisite concrete steps to transform the alliance into a true global partnership.

Professional alliance management and attention will be critical for advancing the transformation of the U.S.-Korean military alliance into a more meaningful strategic partnership. Getting the key principles on the peninsula right will allow the United States

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<sup>37</sup>- Victor Cha, “Korea’s New Global Role,” *Korea Herald*, March 10, 2008.

and South Korea to coordinate and integrate their power to support mutual interests, from humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations to maritime security and counter-proliferation. Understanding the background is key to shaping this possible future. To paraphrase Kierkegaard, alliances can only be understood backward and inward, but they must be directed forward and outward. We expect this volume to go some distance in helping leaders in Washington and Seoul understand and effectively direct the partnership toward regional and global priorities.

Victor Cha, a former Senior Director at the National Security Council, has elucidated three principles for the future of U.S.-ROK relations. First, the alliance must be seen as standing for common values, rather than just standing against North Korea. Second, as the alliance expands in scope, its crafters must strive to make the alliance an institution of intrinsic rather than just strategic value. The third principle is for both sides of the alliance to constantly push themselves to forge areas of common cooperation that increasingly define the alliance outside of a peninsular context.

Washington should look to Seoul for cooperation on a wide variety of issues ranging from counterproliferation to development assistance to climate change. This will not be an easy sell as Seoul struggles with its own internal challenges. Nonetheless, it will be critical for Washington to take a proactive role in helping Seoul make this important transition from a regional to a global player.

Eventually, Seoul must choose what role it wants Korea to play in the region and the world, and what kind of military it will need to support that role. While the United States, as Korea's enduring ally and friend, will have a significant role to play with a global Korea, the ultimate decision is up to Seoul.

One area in which the ROK has already demonstrated the

alliance's extra-peninsular context has been in the global war on terror. South Korea played a significant role in Iraq, providing the third-largest ground contingent, and in Afghanistan, where it provided logistics and medical support. Yet, there are many other areas of potential growth; Korea's proven record of peacekeeping operations in places such as East Timor and Lebanon show that Seoul can play an increasingly prominent leadership role in other areas of domestic instability including Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific island nations. The ROK Navy can perform important regional tasks to maintain freedom of navigation in Asian waters. Korea's emphasis on nuclear power makes it a major player in efforts to move countries such as China away from carbon-based strategies to cleaner and more carbon-neutral energy development. Additionally, Korea's record as a responsible Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) member could become even stronger in the future through the potential leadership role that Seoul could play in dismantling a nuclear program inherited from a collapsed Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Seoul is also seeking to enhance its global profile as a provider of development assistance, in particular by helping countries make the transition into modernity through assistance in information technology.

Clearly, there is a lot of room for the U.S.-ROK alliance to grow. Key to a successful evolution will be careful and prudent management by the Obama administration in the lead-up to OPCON transfer in 2012. Properly handling this issue could put both powers in a positive direction to confront the threat from North Korea and position South Korea to play an active and substantial role to the health and success of the international system, while also building public support for the alliance within the American and Korean polities. A global alliance that is able to protect democracy in the

Korean peninsula, maintain regional stability, and contribute to international security operations is in the long-term interests of both sides, and it will be up to leaders in Seoul and Washington to seize this historic opportunity.

## **CONCLUSION**

As described by the American military analyst Tom Ricks, Barack Obama entered the White House with the most challenging international environment that any President has faced, at least since Harry Truman, and foreign affairs was understandably not his top priority. From health care and a global economic crisis to ground wars in the greater Middle East, the Obama administration has several challenges it must confront. While Northeast Asia is not on the administration's top list of immediate priorities, Washington recognizes that America's long-term interests and challenges lie in Northeast Asia.

The rise of China, the future of bilateral alliances, and the challenges posed by global challenges such as climate change and nonproliferation are likely to occupy the attention of America's future leaders to a much greater degree than arguments over troop deployments in Afghanistan or the nature of the Iraqi insurgency. Prudent leadership and management from Washington today will prevent a lot of heartburn tomorrow. Central to America's future position as the dominant power in the region will be its ability to manage alliances and confront challenges posed by a truculent North Korea and an ambiguous China. These challenges are linked, and will come to the fore as America considers management of its relationship with South Korea in the 21st Century. The forthcoming

chapters in this book by American experts will more fully explore the contours and challenges our leaders in Washington and Seoul face, and offer recommendations on facing them together, as allies.

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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
in the 21st Century*





*Myung-Bak Lee Administration's  
North Korea Policy  
and the Inter-Korean Relations*

*Jung-Ho Bae*

2

## **THE LAUNCH OF LEE MYUNG-BAK ADMINISTRATION AND ITS NORTH KOREA POLICY OF 'MUTUAL BENEFITS AND COMMON PROSPERITY'**

The last two administration' North Korean policy has made substantial progress in inter-Korean economic, social, and cultural interaction.

However, their North Korean policy was so optimistic with regard to a change in North Korean attitude that they did not seriously consider the meaning of North Korea's nuclear-armament strategy for its regime survival, its South Korea policy, and its inter-Korean cooperation strategy. As a result, without improving inter-Korean relations based on trust and ushering in a new era of the Korean Peninsula, the government policy was bent on showing immediate outcomes and remained only 'exchange for exchange' in 'insecure peace.' As seen on <Table 2.1>, despite the provision of large amounts of money and goods by South Korea, the former North Korea policy failed to bring forth genuine exchange and cooperation to establish trust-building relationship in political-military aspects.

Therefore, inter-Korean relations were often strained with North Korea launched missiles and conducted nuclear tests. In other words, inter-Korean relations stand on an uncertain and insecure trust that could easily become strained, cooled, and worsened at any time.

Furthermore, because the previous governments provided monetary aids as a part of their North Korea policies, while turning deaf ears to voiced opposition from the majority of its people, the policy resulted in cleavages and conflicts within the South Korean society – the so called 'South-South conflict.'

Debates and evaluations about the previous government's North Korea policy has been deeply politicized due to factors brought on by the 'South-South conflict' in the aspects of generation, region, gender, ideology and has contributed to disrupting the public consensus and cohesion. The backdoor illegal remittances to Pyongyang and the North Korea's nuclear development issue have aggravated the public's distrust in the government's North Korea policy. The deterioration of the public's attitude towards North Korea has deepened the ideological conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Such negative legacy of the previous North Korea policy led the public to deepen their distrust of North Korea and criticize the government's North Korea policy.

Consequently, it is the Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy that has been adjusted to overcome the after effects of and public criticism toward the past North Korea policy. 'Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity' is the core concept of the new government's policy toward North Korea, which is manifested in 'Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness.'<sup>2</sup>

The North Korea policy of 'Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity' was first released in a Unification Ministry report in 2008. On July 11 of that year, in his National Assembly opening ceremony speech, President Lee Myung-bak officially declared it as the basis of his North Korea policy.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jung-ho Bae, "The Structure and Management of NSC," *National Defense Study*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2004).

2. Jung-ho Bae, "Lee Myung-bak Government's North Korea Policy and Korea-Japan Strategic Cooperation," KINU International Forum: 2<sup>nd</sup> Korea-Japan Policy Forum, Tokyo (April 1, 2009).

3. On July 11, 2008, in his National Assembly opening ceremony speech, President Lee Myung-bak stressed that "Our North Korea policy puts top priority on the denuclearization of North Korea, while paving the way of inter-Koreans relations for 'Mutual benefit and Co-prosperity.'"

<Table 2.1> Aid to North Korea for the Past Decade from South Korea  
(Unit, US\$)

Kim, Dae-Jung Administration	Payment Tender Type	Roh, Moo-Hyun Administration
Trade \$456,000,000	in cash	Trade \$1,383,000,000
Tourism(Mt. Geumgang) \$413,610,000		Tourism(Mt. Geumgang, Kaesong) \$125,290,000
Social and cultural exchange \$11,440,000		Kaesong industrial zone (land use tax) \$44,290,000
Rewards for summit talk \$450 million		Social and cultural exchange \$18,590,000
\$1,331,050,000	subtotal	\$1,571,170,000
Free aid (including fertilizer) \$462,810,000	in-kind	Free aid (including fertilizer) \$1,271,170,000
Food aid \$256,700,000		Food and raw materials aid \$735,400,000
Investment (including Mt. Geumgang) \$303,260,000		Investment (Mt. Geumgang and Kaesong industrial zone) \$917,700,000
Social and cultural exchange \$55,190,000		Social and cultural exchange \$25,910,000
Pyongyang Gym construction \$50 million		
\$1,157,300,000	subtotal	\$2,899,980,000
\$2,488,350,000	total	\$4,471,150,000
Grand total \$6,959,500,000 (\$2,902,220,000 in cash + \$4,057,280,000 in-kind)		

Source: *Chosun Ilbo and Kukmin Ilbo*, July 8, 2009.

## **‘MUTUAL BENEFITS AND COMMON PROSPERITY’ BASIS AND MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF THE NORTH KOREA POLICY**

### *Basis of the North Korea Policy*

The Lee Myung-bak administration’s policy towards North Korea aims at building a substantial foundation for a peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. To this end, it pursues to create a community for peace, economic prosperity, and happiness based on the advancement of inter-Korean relations for mutual benefits and common prosperity. (See <Table 2.2>).

In this regard, the basis of the government’s North Korea policy is ‘Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity,’ which results in a win-win strategy to the South and the North. There are two meanings contained within the ‘Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity.’<sup>4</sup>

First, in the context of co-existence and co-prosperity, South Korea will provide aid to Pyongyang to overcome its national insecurity and economic difficulties by supporting the normalization of North Korea’s diplomatic relations with the United States in the process of denuclearization negotiations.

Second, by facilitating the economic development of North Korea, South Korea will secure an opportunity to advance its own economic development.

As seen, the ‘Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity,’ which puts special emphasis on the denuclearization of North Korea, pursues to facilitate ‘North Korea’s openness and change’ through the

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<sup>4</sup>- Jae-jean Suh, *The Lee Myung-bak Government’s North Korea Policy* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), p. 9.

establishment of peace on the Korean Peninsula and the increase of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation.

Therefore, the Lee administration is carrying forward the “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness” as a policy means and goal for advancement of mutual benefits and prosperous inter-Korean relations.

The “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness” is strategically a win-win plan to pursue the denuclearization and openness of North Korea, and increase inter-Korean economic cooperation, to advance the economy of the Korean Peninsula and pursue reciprocal humanitarian cooperation between the South and the North.<sup>5</sup>

The denuclearization in the “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness” implies neither conditions nor the need for denuclearization first. In other words, the “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness” is a policy to build a substantial foundation for peaceful reunification by furthering Pyongyang’s denuclearization and its economic development through promoting inter-Korean economic cooperation in accordance with progress in the North Korean nuclear issue.

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<sup>5</sup> Jae-jean Suh, *The Lee Myung-bak Government’s North Korea Policy* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), p. 10.



<Table 2.2> Structure of “Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity” North Korea Policy

<p>Vision</p>	<p>In order to build a substantial foundation for a peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula: to create a community for peace, economic prosperity, and happiness through the advancement of inter-Korean relations for mutual benefits and common prosperity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community for peace: denuclearize the Korean Peninsula; build military trust; reduce military tensions between the two Koreas.</li> <li>• Community for economic prosperity: to support North Korea’s economic development and its participation in the international society; promote mutually beneficial inter-Korean economic cooperation.</li> <li>• Community for happiness: to solve pending issues, including prisoners of war, abductees, and separated families; to improve the quality of life for the South and North Koreans.</li> </ul>	
<p>Driving Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pragmatic and result-oriented attitude</li> <li>• Firm principles, flexible approaches</li> <li>• National consensus</li> <li>• Balance between inter-Korean cooperation and international cooperation</li> </ul>	

Source: Ministry of Unification, *Efforts for advancement of inter-Korean relations for Mutual Benefit and Co-prosperity* (February, 2009), p. 1.

Therefore, the Lee Myung-bak administration holds high respect for the “South-North Basic Agreement” and wants to prepare for feasible implementation plans by delivering on the contents of the June 15<sup>th</sup> Joint Declaration and October 4<sup>th</sup> Summit Declaration agreement.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Unification, *Efforts to Develop Mutual Benefits and Co-prosperity Inter-Korea Relations* (February 2009), p. 6.

## Major Principles

### 1. Pragmatic and Result-oriented Attitude

Both the ‘Sunshine Policy’ of the Kim Dae-jung administration and the ‘Peace and Prosperity Policy’ of the Roh Moo-hyun administration aimed to achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula by improving the inter-Korean relations. However, the policies toward the North of the previous governments were set forth based upon an ideological inclination and executed regardless of North Korea’s shift in policy or change of its attitude.

In other words, they were South Korea’s unilateral approaches in which Seoul optimistically anticipated Pyongyang’s change in attitude.

The Lee Myung-bak administration declared that the South Korea’s North Korea policy would no longer be exhaustive like that of the past, but instead it will make efforts to carry out a productive policy that can achieve progress the South Korean people expected.

Thus, the Lee administration argues that the inter-Korean relations that work towards the peaceful reunification should be a ‘product of pragmatism,’ rather than a ‘product of ideology.’

The Lee administration’s standards of pragmatism and productivity are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

1. Mobilize the support from the people;
2. Provide aid that will actually improve the living standards of the North Koreans;
3. Deliver outcomes that corresponds the cost;

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<sup>7</sup> The Korea Institute for National Unification, *Lee Myung-bak Government’s North Korea Policy* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), p. 16.

4. Promote North Korea's development; and,
5. Contribute to a peaceful reunification.

## **2. Firm Principles and Flexible Approaches**

Balancing principles and flexibility are the key factors in successfully carrying out policy goals. Overly emphasizing principles results in a loss of flexibility and it bars advancement. In other words, principles can tie the goal down.

On the other hand, when principles are damaged by flexibility, the objective can become tainted. Furthermore, damaged principles result in the loss of political legitimacy and cause a decrease in public support. Therefore, to achieve the objective while retaining its political legitimacy and maintaining public support, the government must stick to its principles, while also applying strategic thinking that allows the government to deal with changes in reality with flexibility.

In sum, the Lee Myung-bak administration's policies on reunification and North Korea will thoroughly abide by the principles of North Korean nuclear abandonment and push for genuine and substantial dialogue, while also adapting its approach to the reality of the situation.<sup>8</sup>

## **3. National Consensus**

The Kim Dae-jung administration's Sunshine Policy was spearheaded by a small group of people rather than being executed in the context of a policy system. Criticism mounted as people voiced 'Support the Principle, Criticize the Details,' exposing the

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<sup>8</sup>- The Korea Institute for National Unification, *Lee Myung-bak Government's North Korea Policy* (Seoul: KINU, 2009), p. 16.

policy's inability to gain public support.<sup>9</sup>

The Roh Moo-hyun administration's Peace and Prosperity Policy overlooked North Korea's nuclear ambitions, blinded by the need to deliver immediate results, thus paying no attention to gain a national consensus.

Furthermore, the last two governments failed to provide the public with sufficient information concerning the actual circumstances of North Korea.

As a result, the backdoor illicit remittances to Pyongyang and the North Korea's nuclear development issue have brought the public distrust towards the administration's North Korea policy and towards the government. As the public's attitude towards North Korea deteriorated, it also resulted in ideological conflicts within the South. For these reasons, North Korea policy has not been discussed as a policy but a political issue, thus making it hard to obtain the national consensus.

The opening of the Korea Peninsula era and a peaceful reunification are national projects that require public support and consensus. Therefore, the Lee Myung-bak administration highly values driving policy based on the national consensus. The first criterion for pragmatism and productivity is "securing national consensus." This is why the Lee administration puts a particular emphasis on the transparency when implementing its North Korea policy.

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<sup>9</sup>- Jung-ho Bae, "The Structure and Management of NSC," *National Defense Study*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2004).

#### 4. Balance of Inter-Korean Cooperation and International Cooperation

The Korean Peninsula issues do not rest at inter-Korean issues, but also at international issues. Therefore, the U.S., Japanese, Chinese and Russian interests can have significant influences on the South Korean government's North Korea policy.

On the road to reunification, the U.S, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian interests will have a major impact on resolving the key issues: denuclearization of North Korea; creation of a new peaceful environment; North Korea's integration into the international society; and, North Korea's regime transformation. That is, there exists clear limitation of development of North Korean policy only managed by the South and the North.

This is from a point of view that emphasizes the strategic importance of international cooperation, strengthening and enhancing Korea-U.S. relations based on the accurate analysis and common understandings of North Korea's nuclear missile strategic intentions and establishing South Korea's centripetal power against the centrifugal forces surrounding the Korean Peninsula are urgent policy tasks.<sup>10</sup>

The Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy emphasizes international cooperation based on the South Korea-U.S.-Japan collaboration system, and it is currently working towards that goal.

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<sup>10</sup>- Jung-ho Bae, "Lee Myung-bak Government's North Korea Policy, the Importance of International Collaboration, and Policy Task," *Overcoming Division and the Opening of the Age of Unification* (The Institute for National Unification 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Conference, April 8, 2009), pp. 32-37.

## NORTH KOREA'S REACTION TO THE LEE ADMINISTRATION'S NORTH KOREA POLICY AND INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS

### *Pyongyang's hard-line measures and deteriorating inter-Korean relations*

Pyongyang criticized the policy of the “Mutual Benefits and Common Prosperity” and the “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness” for being a hard-line policy of a conservative administration, and it showed their disapproval by abruptly discontinuing talks with the South.

North Korea voiced its disapproval during the early stages of both the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Mu-hyun's administrations. However, the criticism and disapproval of the Lee Myung-bak administration is more than a test of resolution.

As seen in <Table 2.3> on March 29, 2008, soon after Lee Myung-bak took office, North Korea one-sidedly discontinued inter-Korean dialogues by declaring that it would break off all talks and contacts between authorities. On April 1 of that year, the North Korean government began to directly mention President Lee Myung-bak's name when criticizing his policy.

Pyongyang has ratcheted up its pressure on Seoul to nullify the “Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness plan,” unconditionally carry out the June 15<sup>th</sup> Joint Declaration and October 4<sup>th</sup> Summit Declaration, and restrain NGOs from sending leaflets airborne over into the North Korean territory.

In short, North Korea began to mount more pressure on South Korea when the new government adhered to its basic principles such as the creation of peaceful environment through the denu-

clearization of North Korea, and the promotion of inter-Korean economic cooperation and exchange based on mutual trust. In particular, North Korea is carrying out hard-line military measures, such as its long- range missile launch on April 5, 2009 and its second nuclear test. (See <Table 2.4>).

There are several intentions behind the North Korea's hard-line measures.<sup>11</sup>

First, North Korea is attempting to incur 'South-South conflict' again. By intensifying tensions on the Korean Peninsula under the current uneasy inter-Korean relations, North Korea wishes to create ideological conflicts over the North Korea policy within the South, to foster a public split and finally force the Lee Myung-bak administration to change to adopt an appeasement policy toward North Korea.

Second, they are attempting to attract attention from the Obama administration and urge for the U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks. Both North Korea's long-range missile launch and its nuclear tests are plain proofs of Pyongyang's intentions. Meanwhile, Washington is concentrating on its economic difficulties in the wake of the financial crisis and the war in Afghanistan. Also, the U.S. press has not been covering North Korea in-depth. These reasons pushed Pyongyang to conduct its long- range missile launch and nuclear tests in an extreme attempt to draw Washington's interest in hopes to hold U.S.-North Korea bilateral negotiations to resolve its issues.

Third, North Korea is attempting to solidify internal unity and set the preparatory stage for a power succession. For the sake of its

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<sup>11</sup>- Jung-ho Bae, "Lee Myung-bak Government's North Korea Policy, the Importance of International Collaboration, and Policy Task," *Overcoming Division and the Opening of the Age of Unification* (The Institute for National Unification 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Conference, April 8, 2009), pp. 30-31.

internal unity and ideological control, North Korea used its deteriorating relations with South Korea for propaganda and demagoguery purposes. The long-range missile launch and nuclear tests were part of this strategy to solidify its regime and pave the road for a power succession.

<Table 2.3> North Korea's Hard-line Measures after Lee Myung-bak Government's Instatement(March 2008-March 2009)

2008

- 3,27 Withdrawal of South Korean authorities of South-North Economic Cooperation Conference Office
- 3,29 Suspension of all talks between the two Korean authorities and rejection of contacts
- 7,11 A South Korean tourist shot dead in the Mt. Geumgang tourist area
- 11,12 Severance of the Panmunjom hot line between the two Koreas and notification of "limitation and cutoff the land passage through the military demarcation line as a primary measure since the first of December"
- 12,1 Δ the railway service between the South's Munsan and the North's Bongdong suspended, Δ South-North Economic Cooperation Conference Office closed, Δ Kaesong tour suspended, Δ limit the period of stay in Kaesong industrial complex and Mt. Geumgang tourist area and the number of visitors allowed into North Korea.

2009

- 1,17 Through the statement of Chief of the General Staff of North Korean Army Spokesman: Δ strengthen military readiness for a full-fledged war, Δ ready for powerful military response, Δ adhere to West Sea Military Demarcation Line drawn by the North, ignore NLL
- 1,30 Through the statement of North Korea Council on National Peaceful Unification: Δ nullification of agreement on defusing political and military confrontation between the two Koreas, Δ abrogation of provisions for West Sea Military Demarcation Line in the South-North Basic Agreement and the side agreements
- 3,9 North Korea announced the cutoff of the inter-Korean military communication and the land passage during the joint military defense exercise between South Korea and the U.S., or Key Resolve.
- 3,21 Normalization
- 3,30 The North detained Korean workers from Kaesong industrial complex
- 3,30 The North announced in a statement of North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland: "If South Korea participates in PSI, we will consider it as a declaration of war and immediately carry out countermeasures."



〈Table 2.4〉 North Korea's Hard-line Measures after Its Long-Range Missile Launch

<p>2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.5 North Korea launched long-range missiles from Musudanri in Northeastern region.</li> <li>• 4.14 Statement of North Korea Foreign Ministry: declaration of strengthening its nuclear deterrence for self-defense             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ▲Refuse to participate in Six-Party Talks and implement agreements, ▲Strengthen its nuclear deterrence, restore and get the reactor up, ▲Reprocess spent plutonium fuel rods</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* According to North Korea's demand for investigators of Yongbyun nuclear facility to withdraw (4/14/09), IAEA monitors (4/16/09) and the U.S. government officials left North Korea (4/17-4/19/09).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.18 Press conference by spokesman of the Chief of North Korea General Staff of the People's Army: Stressed that "any pressure of South Korea by joining PSI is a declaration of war against the North"</li> <li>• 4.25 A North Korea Foreign Ministry spokesman reported the start of processing spent plutonium fuel rods</li> <li>• 4.29 A North Korea Foreign Ministry spokesman suggested the implementation of additional measures             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ▲Second nuclear test, ▲ICBM launch test, ▲Attain fuel for light water reactor plants for itself (enrichment of uranium)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5.15 North Korea's one-sided nullification of basic rules and contracts             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Nullification of rules and contracts related to land rental costs, land usage fees, wages, all varieties of taxes, etc.</li> <li>– If there is no intent to carry out these changes, South Korea is free to leave the Kaesong industrial complex.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5.25 The North conducted the second nuclear test</li> </ul> <p>* The South Meteorological Agency announced that it recorded a 4.4-magnitude artificial quake near Punggye-ri, Gilju gun, Hamkyounbuk-do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.26 North Korea fired short-range missiles near Hamheung City in North Korea.</li> <li>• 5.27 North Korean Panmunjom delegation announced the statement on South Korea's participation in PSI             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ▲Regards the participation in PSI as a declaration of war against the North, ▲Breaks armistice agreement, ▲No guarantee of protecting the legal status of five islands in West Sea (Baekryeoung-do, Yeonpyoeng-do, Daechoung-do, Socheoung-do, Woo-do) and near waters.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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***North Korean appeasement approach towards South Korea and attempt to improve inter-Korean relations***

North Korea's criticism of President Lee Myung-bak has begun to decrease since July 2009 and its appeasement approach towards South Korea began to emerge in the beginning of August.

For instance, in July 2009, the frequency of President Lee's name being mentioned fell by 30% compared to that of May and June of that year, then on. On August 23, the condolence delegation for the former President Kim Dae-jung's funeral paid a courtesy call on President Lee Myung-bak. Soon after, open criticism from North Korea steeply decreased.

Recent North Korean appeasement approaches can be seen in <Table 2.5>. Pyongyang's appeasement approaches, include repatriation of a detained Kaesong industrial complex worker, withdrawal of land passage and visit restrictions, a courtesy call to the President by the condolence delegation, reopening of the South-North Red Cross meetings, and the return of the detained Yeon-An Ho fishing boat crew. There are claims that talks of an inter-Korean summit meeting were brought up during the condolence delegation's visit to Cheongwadae.

<Table 2.5> North Korea's Appeasement Approach before and after the Condolence Delegation Courtesy Call (2009)

- 8,13: Returned detained workers in Keasong industrial complex
- 8,10-17: Invited Hyun Jeong-Eun, Hyundai Group Chairwoman/made joint press release of Hyundai Asan- Asia and Pacific Peace Committee
- 8,21: Lifted the December 1, 2008 sanction on visitation and land passage to the North imposed on
- 8,21-23: Condolence delegation from the North visits to Cheongwadae
- 8,25: Re-opened the Panmunjom Red Cross South Korea-North Korea Office which had been closed since November 12, 2008
- 8,26-28: Opened Red Cross talks/reached an agreement on reunion of separated families (South-North 100 persons each)
- 8,29: Repatriated Yeon-An Ho crew (including 4 crew)
- 9,16: Agreed to maintain previous wage increase of 5% for Kaesong industrial complex workers

With North Korea's appeasement approaches toward the South, both sides are now engaged in contact to improve inter-Korean relations.

However, as seen in <Table 2.5>, it would be difficult to look at these actions as a sign that Pyongyang genuinely wishes to improve inter-Korean relations and plans to fundamentally change its attitude. These measures have not been adopted to improve inter-Korea relations, but rather, it is simply that the North Korean government has removed restrictions on measures that had formerly been in effect. Until North Korea takes serious measures to dismantle its nuclear program, South Korea should not consider the North's actions as a genuine attempt to fundamentally change its attitude and improve the inter-Korean relations.

Therefore, I would like to point out how North Korea is attempting at strategic changes in inter-Korean relations.

First, by manufacturing an external crisis, North Korea has

used it to strengthen regime unity and sought to manage the external situation.<sup>12</sup> North Korea's criticism of South Korea and its missile and nuclear test have aimed at creating tension or crisis between the South and the North and with other countries. North Korea intended to use this tension to lay down the basis for Kim Jong-il to hand over the reins of power to his successor, Kim Jong Un, by amending the DPRK Constitution, and reshuffling the National Defense Council and other military core positions. Now, in order to stabilize the succession process, Pyongyang is devising a frame to manage the external environment.

Second, North Korea is in the midst of a serious economic difficulty ever since the UN Security Council Resolution 1874's sanctions against North Korea went into effect and the failure of the 150-day battle. It is in urgent need of foreign aid. As of October 2009, North Korea needs 1.8 million tons of food provisions. On October 15, 2009, North Korea formally requested economic support during working level talks for the reunion of the separated families at the South Korea-North Korea Red Cross Organization.<sup>13</sup> This was the first official humanitarian aid request from North Korea since the Lee administration took office. North Korea needed South Korean aid to overcome their serious economic crisis.

Third, North Korea plans to create an atmosphere of improved inter-Korean relations prior to the U.S.-North Korea talks in order to use it as leverage. By the means of creating an atmosphere of improved inter-Korean relations, developing talks with the U.S., returning to multilateral talks, North Korea will attempt to have the international community remove the UNSC 1874 sanctions against them.

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<sup>12</sup>- Duk-min Yoon, "Kim Jung Il's Intents for Proposing Multilateral Dialogue," *JoongAng Daily*, September 21, 2009.

<sup>13</sup>- North Korea did not disclose the type and amount of aid in its request.

Therefore, the Lee administration should flexibly react to changing situations while maintaining a cool head and promote a consistent North Korea policy. South Korea must not forget its strategic objectives: the complete denuclearization of North Korea; reform, openness, and regime transformation of it; and, the establishment of the basis for the reunification.

## LEE MYUNG-BAK ADMINISTRATION'S SOLUTION TO THE NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE AND THE GRAND BARGAIN

### *Key points and features of the Grand Bargain*

President Lee Myung-bak announced the “New Peace Initiative for the Korean Peninsula”<sup>14</sup> in his celebration speech for National Independence on August 15, 2009. President Lee explained that “only when North Korea abandons its nuclear ambitions, will there be follow-through on the international cooperation that can provide breakthrough improvement to the North Korean economy.”

On September 21, 2009, in New York, President Lee officially proposed the Grand Bargain to fundamentally solve the North Korean nuclear issue as an extension of the New Peace Initiative, stressing that “North Korea’s surrendering of its nuclear program is

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<sup>14</sup> The main points of the Peace Initiative are North Korea’s abandonment of nuclear weapon, initiating international cooperation program for North Korean economic development, establishment of high-level inter-Korea talks to realize economic community, promotion of 5 main North Korea projects (economy, education, finance, infrastructure, living standard), reduction of conventional weapon of the two-Koreas.

the only path to develop itself.”<sup>15</sup>

According to the existing principle of “denuclearization first, support second,” President Lee proposed the new approach promising that if North Korea dismantled “its core nuclear program,” then South Korea would guarantee North Korea’s security and provide international support as a package settlement, namely, the ‘Grand Bargain.’

The aforementioned ‘dismantlement of the core nuclear program’ includes the suspension of the outflow of unused fuel rods, disposal of extracted plutonium, dismantlement of nuclear weapons, and shutting down Yongbyun 5Mw reactor’s key components.

Therefore, the Grand Bargain differs from the former phased approaches to North Korean nuclear program. It is a proposal for a ‘comprehensive package settlement’ and approaches the ‘North Korean nuclear issue’ through the larger framework of the ‘North Korean problem.’ Thus, the Grand Bargain does not put an emphasis on the ‘suspension of North Korean nuclear development;’ rather, it fundamentally tackles the issue of the ‘denuclearization of North Korea’ to realize an ultimate negotiating goal, the ‘irreversible denuclearization’ of North Korea.

### ***Strategic significance of the Grand Bargain***

#### **1. Preventing North Korea from attaining nuclear power status through the U.S.-North Korea talks**

President Lee Myung-bak has emphasized the denuclearization of North Korea since his presidential campaign. The Lee Myung-bak

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<sup>15</sup>- President Lee Myung-bak officially proposed a ‘Grand bargain’ as a solution to the North Korean nuclear issues during CFR, Korea Society, and Asia Society co-hosted meeting at CFR headquarters in New York (September 21, 2009).

administration considers the denuclearization of North Korea as a precondition for developing inter-Korean relations and thus 'denuclearization first, support second' is being pursued as its strategic basis.

However, North Korea considers its nuclear issue to be a Washington-Pyongyang bilateral matter and is attempting to exclude South Korea from discussing the issue. Furthermore, North Korea seeks to obtain nuclear power status through bilateral talks with the U.S.

President Lee Myung-bak will not tolerate these sorts of strategic intentions on the part of North Korea. It is the President's firm position that the North Korean nuclear issue no longer be considered a matter only between the United States and North Korea. The South Korean government will discuss the North Korean nuclear issue during high ranking minister level talks and actively engage in and play its own role in resolving the problem.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the conservative political parties that support the incumbent government suggest South Korea use its own 'nuclear development card' to achieve 'the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula' and 'the elimination of the North Korean nuclear program.'<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, President Lee's Grand Bargain proposal has a strategic significance in that it shows South Korea's firm determination and its active efforts to 'prevent North Korea from becoming a nuclear power,' and to solve the North Korean nuclear issue.

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<sup>16</sup>- *JoongAng Daily*, October 16, 2009.

<sup>17</sup>- Jung-soo Park, "South Korea Must Use Nuclear Development Card to Denuclearize North Korea," *Mirae Korea*, Issue 353 (September/October 2009), pp. 28-29.

## 2. Overcoming the limitations of salami tactic and the pursuit of a fundamental solution

The salami tactics<sup>18</sup> refers to separating of issues for negotiations and obtaining benefits piece by piece. In other words, North Korea receives compensation at each step of the bargaining.

Salami tactics has only enjoyed partial success in solving the North Korean nuclear issue and is not a fundamental solution to the North Korean nuclear issue as North Korean repeatedly uses its trademark brinkmanship tactic of ‘crisis-negotiation-agreement-breach.’ North Korea has continued to receive heavy oil aid and has been removed from the U.S. terrorism support list while postponing the denuclearization and carrying out two rounds of nuclear tests. In the meanwhile South Korea, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia ended up wasting both time and money.

However, when North Korea gestured to return to bilateral and multilateral talks to discuss nuclear issues, the Lee government had no choice but to respond with a new strategic approach to fundamentally solve the problem.

This is why President Lee Myung-bak proposed a fundamental measure to solve the North Korean nuclear program, or the ‘Grand Bargain,’ which aims to achieve irreversible denuclearization by directly tackling the issue of North Korean denuclearization. This way the ‘Grand Bargain’ takes on strategically meaningful responsibility in that it is a fundamental strategic framework that aims at to overcome the limits of the salami tactics.

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<sup>18</sup>- Salami is a thin slice of Italian sausage.



### **3. North Korea's appeasement approach towards the outside world and external responses to its return to the bilateral and multilateral talks**

Pyongyang is attempting an appeasement approach not only towards the United States, but also towards South Korea, Japan, and China. The North is approaching the United States by choosing bilateral talks to acquire nuclear power status via the normalization of diplomatic relations with Washington, as India and Pakistan did in the past. As for South Korea, during the condolence delegation visit to Cheongwadae, North Korea hinted at the possibility of holding an inter-Korean summit meeting. In dealing with Japan after the instatement of the Hatoyama government, North Korea has been practicing an appeasement approach in relation to the Japanese abductees' issue. And as for China, after conducting its second nuclear test, Pyongyang approached China with the possibility of its participation in multilateral talks.

As North Korea's appeasement foreign policy was underway, the Chinese delegation of high-profile officials visited Pyongyang and met with North Korean Leader Kim Jong-il, and North Korea expressed its willingness to return to bilateral and multilateral talks.

On September 18, 2009, at the meeting with Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo (Special Envoy for the Chinese President Hu Jintao), Kim Jong-il expressed willingness to attend bilateral and multilateral talks to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Besides, during the October 4-6 meetings, the Chinese Premier Wen Jia-bao and Kim Jong-il, Kim further clarified his position that Pyongyang will participate in bilateral and multilateral talks.

Therefore, prior to North Korea's return to a negotiation table, it is necessary for Lee Myung-bak's administration to adopt strategic

measures that clearly emphasize the North Korean denuclearization to both North Korea and the international community.

In this strategic context, President Lee's Grand Bargain can be said that it has been proposed at an appropriate time.

## **CONCLUSION**

The vision and basis of the Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy is to pursue 'mutual benefits and common prosperity' of the two Koreas through trustworthy and sincere exchange and cooperation, then to grow the foundation for the peaceful reunification.

To meet this end, the Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy is making an effort to become a productive policy that is based on national consensus by pursuing: (1) 'pragmatism' rather than ideology; (2) 'balance of inter-Korean relations and international collaboration'; (3) 'complete denuclearization of North Korea'; and, (4) settlement of long-pending inter-Korean issues through 'genuine inter-Korean dialogue.'

Compared to the past administrations, the Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy stands out due to its emphasis on the 'denuclearization of North Korea.'

Though the Lee administration had received criticism for being hard-line, after North Korea's second nuclear test, the public support and understanding of his policy within South Korea has risen.

But it is important to keep in mind that North Korea has at times shown fierce criticism and rejection, while at other times it has taken an appeasement approach towards the Lee administration's

policy according to its strategic needs.

Concerning the Lee administration's North Korea policy and Pyongyang's strategic reactions, the following matters should be considered:

First, North Korea is a potential threat and at the same time a reconciliatory partner to South Korea. Still, for North Korea, the significance of political security comes before that of an economic development through an inter-Korean exchange.

Second, economic difficulties, Kim Jong-il's health problems, a weakening regime, and the growing number of defectors in the North have aggravated internal conditions. Furthermore, the succession process is being hurriedly executed due to Kim Jong-il's ailing health. North Korea is in a state of great anxiety. Based on the evaluation of the situation, the anxiety has been projected as either a hard-line or an appeasement approach to its Southern counterpart.

Third, North Korea is pursuing a nuclear development strategy to maintain its regime and secure the government authority. Unlike the previous governments' policies, North Korea has strongly rejected the Lee Myung-bak administration's policy, which emphasizes the denuclearization of North Korea.

Since North Korea's hard-line and appeasement approaches can both cause South-South conflicts, regardless of which approach they choose, North Korea has a strategic intention to induce a change in the Lee administration's policy.

Hereupon, I propose the following policy tasks for South Korea to take towards its North Korea Policy:

The first task is establishing and developing an implementation program for the 'Grand Bargain' to denuclearize North Korea. In other words, denuclearization, rather than nonproliferation should be discussed in the U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks and

multilateral talks in order to thoroughly block North Korea's path to becoming a nuclear power state. Also a strategic execution program that can realize North Korean denuclearization must be established and put into practice.

The second task is to initiate the era of the Korean Peninsula along with North Korea's regime transformation. In so far as the Grand Bargain deals with the North Korean nuclear issue within the context of general North Korean issues, a strategic approach to regime transformation, including its reform and openness and a plan to prepare for the beginning of a new era on the Korean Peninsula will need to be devised.

The third task is to create a "Grand Strategic Initiative of the Korean Peninsula" in which inter-Korean relations and international collaboration are properly coordinated. The "Grand Strategic Initiative of the Korean Peninsula" set forth for the Korean people in the 21st century must be established in a way to persuade the North Korean governing elites to accept it and contribute to obtaining support from the international community during this transition period.

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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
in the 21st Century*





*A Regional Approach  
to the North Korea Conundrum*

*- Early Indications of an Obama Administration Policy*

*L. Gordon Flake*

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Less than ten months into the Obama administration it is still too early to define the administration's North Korea policy with confidence. In part this is due to the overwhelming scope of the administration's other domestic and international policy challenges, which have made the formulation of a dramatic new approach to a largely intransigent North Korea an unwise investment of political capital at this early stage. More importantly, however, the series of decisions and provocations by North Korea in the months leading up to and following the inauguration of President Obama have meant the United States has inevitably and appropriately been in a reactive mode. As such, there have been few actual negotiations or initiatives upon which to base an assessment of a distinct North Korea policy. Even with the apparent easing of the pace of crisis escalation by North Korea in the past few months, Pyongyang has give few indications of a willingness to seriously negotiate in a context acceptable to the international community on the issues of greatest concern to Washington, namely its nuclear weapons and missile development programs.

This is not to say, however, that this issue has not been a priority for the administration. While not as sexy as bilateral talks with North Korea, the Obama administration has already invested considerable time and effort into first and foremost crafting a joint approach with U.S. allies in Seoul and Tokyo and with other partners in the region such as China and Russia. It has appointed Ambassador Stephen Bosworth as U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy and Ambassador Philip Goldberg to coordinate the implementation of U.S. sanctions on North Korea. More recently President Obama has nominated Robert King to serve as special envoy on North Korean human rights issues. Still, in the absence of negotiations, much of the initial action has been in the



United Nations and in coordinating the implementation of the UN Security Council Sanctions that have been passed in reaction to North Korea's actions.

Despite having been tested early on, the Obama administration has been successful in preventing North Korea's escalatory tactics from developing into a full blown crisis. It has been able to forge an unprecedented degree of regional and international consensus in responding to North Korea's actions. And thus far in the process of dealing with North Korea it has avoided compromising its key principles of belief in diplomacy, the prioritization of coordination with allies, and an insistence on denuclearization. Still, it is difficult to point to any meaningful progress in resolving the central challenge posed by North Korea's nuclear program and there is reason to believe that many severe challenges remain.

Rather than attempt a definitive description of or predictions for the Obama administration's policy towards North Korea, this assessment instead examines in some depth the factors that are likely to influence any approach to North Korea, describes some early indications of the format and strategy behind that approach, and finally looks forward to some likely future challenges.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO NORTH KOREA**

### ***North Korea's Actions***

A glib answer to the question of which individual has been most influential in developing the Obama administration's North

Korea policy would be “Kim Jong Il.” In large degree, the Obama administration’s approach to North Korea has indeed been more influenced by decisions, statements, and actions in Pyongyang than in Washington. This is not so much a criticism as it is recognition that the rhetoric and series of escalatory steps taken by Pyongyang have been of sufficient severity to limit any real debate as to the type and scope of response merited. At a minimum, North Korea’s actions effectively eliminated the option of early engagement. When North Korean actions are in explicit violation of existing UN Security Council resolutions, there is little question that the matter needs to be addressed by the UN Security Council. While individual sanctions resolutions in the UN may lack sufficient power to change North Korean behavior, viewed collectively they form a growing body of international law and precedent upon which any future response to North Korean provocation must be built.

During the presidential campaign of 2008 the question of North Korea policy was not a major area of partisan dispute. While interpretations of past policy and questions of who was to blame for the current crisis were clearly delineated, there was general recognition of the failures of the first term of the Bush administration and support for the more proactive diplomacy of the final years as led by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill. The Obama campaign in particular was clear in its harsh criticism of the perceived failures and excesses of the first term of the Bush administration. At the same time, the Obama campaign voiced cautious support for the multilateral approach embodied in the Six-Party Talks and the process of negotiating the implementation of the various agreements of the Six-Party Talks such as the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement or the February 13, 2007 agreement on “Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement.” In fact it was widely

assumed that in contrast to the highly politicized and ultimately disastrous transition of North Korea policy between the Clinton and Bush administrations in early 2001, the transition between the Bush and Obama administrations would be relatively smooth. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

In the waning days of the Bush administration, the focus of then Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill was on securing an agreement on a verification regime that would confirm the declaration of North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea had belatedly provided this declaration to China as Chair of the Six-Party Talks on June 26, 2008. Despite the U.S. gamble to remove North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism to keep this process going — a move that caused considerable anxiety in Tokyo — and a reported watering down of the requirements for a verification protocol, ultimately these negotiations failed. While it is difficult to guess the North Korean calculus at the time — perhaps something to do with uncertainty surrounding Kim Jong Il in the months after his reported stroke — one effect of this failure was to deprive the incoming Obama administration of any momentum or obvious next steps in implementing the agreements of the Six-Party Talks. At any rate, the tortured process of negotiating implementing steps of the February 13, 2007 action plan was soon rendered irrelevant by North Korea's decision to test a long-range missile just ten weeks after President Obama was inaugurated.

Despite international pressure not to do so, on April 5, 2009, North Korea proceeded with what it termed a “satellite launch,” but what the international community considered a test of a Taepodong-2 ICBM. While the launch was a failure, President Barack Obama (who was that day giving what is already viewed as a pivotal speech on nuclear weapons in Prague) responded vigorously:

“Just this morning, we were reminded again of why we need a new and more rigorous approach to address this threat. North Korea broke the rules once again by testing a rocket that could be used for long range missiles. This provocation underscores the need for action - not just this afternoon at the U.N. Security Council, but in our determination to prevent the spread of these weapons.

Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something. The world must stand together to prevent the spread of these weapons. Now is the time for a strong international response, now is the time for a strong international response, and North Korea must know that the path to security and respect will never come through threats and illegal weapons. All nations must come together to build a stronger, global regime. And that's why we must stand shoulder to shoulder to pressure the North Koreans to change course.”<sup>1</sup>

While not the sanctions resolution that some had hoped for, after considerable debate on April 13, 2009, the United Nations Security Council agreed unanimously to a Presidential Statement that condemned North Korea for the launch and stated the Council's intention to expand sanctions on North Korea. Notably, the Presidential Statement did not distinguish between a missile and a satellite but broadly condemned the launch and determined it to be “in contravention of Security Council Resolution 1718”<sup>2</sup>

North Korea, responding angrily and immediately to the UN Security Council's resolution, said that “There is no need for the six-party talks anymore,” and that it would “never again take part in such [six party] talks and will not be bound by any agreement reached at the talks.”<sup>3</sup> Pyongyang then proceeded to once again expel nuclear inspectors from the country and informed the

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1- <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/)>.

2- <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/301/03/PDF/N0930103.pdf?OpenElement>>.

3- <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/15/world/asia/15korea.html?ref=global-home>>.

International Atomic Energy Agency that they would resume their nuclear weapons program. This was far from an idle threat, as on May 25, 2009 North Korea once again detonated a nuclear device underground. Again, after considerable debate, the UN Security Council condemned the nuclear test as being in “violation and flagrant disregard” of previous Council resolutions 1695 and 1718 and unanimously adopted a new Security Council Resolution numbered 1874<sup>4</sup> that imposed further economic and commercial sanctions on North Korea and encouraged UN member states to search North Korean cargo.

As might be expected, North Korea responded with another round of bombast and vitriol. On Monday June 8, 2009, the official Korean Central News Agency carried a commentary from the state-run *Minju Joson* newspaper stating that “Our nuclear deterrent will be a strong defensive means ... as well as a merciless offensive means to deal a just retaliatory strike to those who touch the country’s dignity and sovereignty even a bit”<sup>5</sup> This first-time threat of the offensive use of nuclear weapons was seen as a notable escalation of rhetoric. Later that week, a statement released by the DPRK Foreign Ministry warned that “all plutonium to be extracted will be weaponised. One third of used fuel rods have so far been reprocessed” and that “Secondly, we will start uranium enrichment.”<sup>6</sup> Again, this statement crossed an important escalatory line with an open recognition of North Korea’s long denied uranium enrichment program. In keeping with its apparent strategy of timing its provocations with U.S. holidays and disrupting American barbecues, North Korea launched seven short-range missiles on July 4, 2009.

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4- <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9679.doc.htm>>.

5- <[http://www.chinadaily.net/world/2009-06-10/content\\_8268882.htm](http://www.chinadaily.net/world/2009-06-10/content_8268882.htm)>.

6- <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8098484.stm>>.

While the North launched five more short-range missiles on October 12, 2009, and while these tests too are in clear contravention of UN Security Council resolutions, since July North Korea apparently has decided to ratchet down at least the rate of its crisis escalation. Despite the successful pursuit over the summer by the USS *John S. McCain* of the North Korean cargo ship *Kang Nam 1* (in enforcement of the USSC Resolution 1874, which resulted in the *Kang Nam 1* returning to North Korea without delivering its cargo to Burma), there has been a noticeable decline in North Korean rhetoric and provocations. Some have termed this a charm offensive by Pyongyang, including the decisions to: release two journalists into the custody of former President Bill Clinton; reengage in select North-South Dialogue; welcome a series of senior Chinese officials to Pyongyang, including Premier Wen Jiabao; and even send positive signals to the new government in Japan.

While North Korean motives are notoriously hard to ascertain, there does seem to be some evidence that by July of 2009 the DPRK realized that it had gone too far in that China and Russia not only signed on to far more rigorous action in the United Nations than expected, but also began to take initial steps toward implementing sanctions. Another possible explanation focuses more on the logistics surrounding North Korea's missile and nuclear programs and the time needed between tests to analyze the data before proceeding with subsequent tests. Such logistics-driven pauses in the process of crisis escalation also provide Pyongyang with an opportunity to seek to exploit differences in the positions of the other parties in the region and at the same time attempt to secure as many benefits and resources as possible through separate bilateral negotiations. Yet another factor to consider could be Kim Jong Il's return to some measure of health and his ability, unique in the DPRK

system, to make such decisions with confidence.

Whatever the definitive cause of this apparent shift, and it is still the subject of much debate, it is notable that it has occurred without a significant shift in U.S. policy and with the effort to enforce UN Sanctions still very much ongoing. Even if North Korea is now prepared to return to negotiation in earnest, and as discussed below there is scant evidence for that conclusion, one thing that is certain is that through its escalatory actions in the first six months of the Obama administration, North Korea has greatly influenced the context and environment in which the administration's policy has been established as well as likely parameters and direction of any future policy.

### *Core Principles*

While not always explicitly listed as such, the Obama administration has continued to emphasize several core principles in relation to its approach to North Korea: a belief in diplomacy; the necessity of close coordination with allies; and a firm insistence on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Like all policy approaches, this too is built upon and in some respects reactive to the policies of preceding administrations. For example, the notion that diplomacy, or the willingness to talk to parties with which the United States does not agree, wouldn't have seemed like such a revolutionary idea had we not experienced the highly divisive first term of the Bush administration, where former Vice President Cheney's dictum "We don't negotiate with evil, we defeat it"<sup>7</sup> seemed to hold sway. Indeed, while during the campaign

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<sup>7</sup>- A widely reported statement made by Vice President Cheney in regards to North Korea in the course of a December 2003 White House meeting, <<http://www>.

then candidate Obama was attacked for a supposed willingness to sit down to tea with dictators, in its first ten months the Obama administration has indeed returned to the traditional notion of diplomacy as a tool to engage with, and hopefully alter the behavior of, our adversaries. While still controversial in some quarters in the U.S., the administration's recent overtures to Burma, Iran, and Cuba are further evidence of this change in approach. One possible benefit of this broader policy shift on the use of diplomacy is evidenced in the Obama administrations enhanced capacity to counter some of North Korea's most provocative behavior by challenging its international customers. This may have been the case in Burma's decision to turn away the *Kangsan 1* and has potential application to other sensitive cases like Syria or Iran.

In another respect, the administration's emphasis on close prior consultation and coordination with its allies and other partners in the region and its relative resistance to less transparent bilateral meetings with North Korea can in part be interpreted as a reaction to the excesses of the final years of the Bush administration and the dynamic but controversial approach of then lead North Korea negotiator and Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill.

*A Belief in Diplomacy:* Even during the spring and early summer of 2009 when North Korea was in a sharply escalatory mode, testing a long-range missile, detonating another nuclear device and declaring the demise of Six-Party Talks, the Obama administration continued to call for North Korea to return to talks and continued to express its support of the diplomatic process.

The ongoing challenge of adhering to this principle has been

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[washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/24/AR2008042401459.html](http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/24/AR2008042401459.html).



calibrating an approach that makes it clear that the United States is not the obstacle and remains committed to diplomacy, yet at the same time does not serve to reward North Korean intransigence, undermine prior agreements or the Six-Party Talks, or worse still, *de facto* recognize North Korea's claim to status as a nuclear power — hence the careful distinction between “talks” and “negotiations.” For example, shortly before Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Pyongyang in early October 2009, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg stated in an interview with the *Asahi Shimbun* that “The purpose of bilateral contacts is for the North Koreans to hear directly from us our perspective on these things, not for the purpose of having a bilateral negotiation.”<sup>8</sup>

While this may seem like mere semantics, there is an important distinction related to the Six-Party Talks. So long as North Korea insists that they will never return to the Six-Party Talks, for the United States to initiate an alternate set of bilateral “negotiations” is tantamount to accepting the North Korea position and serves to undermine the Six-Party Talks. This drama has continued to play out in late October with the visit to San Diego and New York by Ambassador Li Gun and the administration's decision to have Ambassador Sung Kim meet with him on the sidelines of other meetings.

*The Necessity of Close Coordination with Allies:* One of the most underreported foreign policy successes of the Obama administration to date has been the progress it has made in forging perhaps the closest-ever coordinated approach on North Korea with its allies in Tokyo and Seoul. This is all the more notable

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<sup>8</sup>- <<http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200910030113.html>>.

when one recalls the genuine anxiety that greeted President Obama's election in Tokyo and even in Seoul. However unrealistic, as recently as January of 2009, just prior to the inauguration, the prevailing narrative in Tokyo was that the incoming Obama administration was likely to pursue a highly bilateral approach to North Korea and even an early summit in Pyongyang. This narrative stemmed from then candidate Obama's willingness, as stated during the primary campaign, to meet with leaders such as Kim Jong Il.<sup>9</sup> It led to concern in Tokyo in particular that this would be manifest in an early summit that would give short shrift to Japanese interests related to North Korea. Such a scenario was never likely; it is almost impossible to even imagine an argument for the early prioritization of a summit level effort to engage Pyongyang. Moreover, the string of North Korean provocations very early in the Obama administration greatly constricted its policy options. However, the Obama Administration should be given full credit for prioritizing the process of alliance consultation and coordination from the very start. Secretary Clinton's historic first trip to Asia with visits to Tokyo and Seoul set the tone. Nearly every subsequent visit to the region by senior officials from the Obama administration has involved close and careful policy coordination with our allies Japan and Korea first and foremost, and then with our other

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<sup>9</sup> During a CNN/YouTube debate, on July 24th, 2007 candidate Obama was asked, "Would you be willing to meet separately, without precondition, during the first year of your administration, in Washington or anywhere else, with the leaders of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba and North Korea, in order to bridge the gap that divides our countries?" He responded, "I would. And the reason is this, that the notion that somehow not talking to countries is punishment to them – which has been the guiding diplomatic principle of this administration is ridiculous." <<http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/07/23/debate.transcript/>>.

partners in the region. One important manifestation of this approach has been the lack of complaints coming out of Tokyo or Seoul about the coordinating process, something that is a marked change from the final years of the Bush administration.

While arguably more perception than reality, during the Christopher Hill era there was considerable criticism from Tokyo, Seoul and even Beijing about the process of the United States' bilateral negotiations with North Korea. Many of the meetings between Ambassador Hill and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gyegwan involved private discussion with no written record or joint statement, after which the U.S. would brief China, and finally inform its allies in Tokyo and Seoul — a problematic prioritization at best. To date the Obama administration seems to be making a clear effort to first and foremost forge a consensus with its allies in South Korea and Japan, and based on the strength of that consensus secure the support of China and Russia before dealing at last with North Korea.

*Firm insistence on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula:* While suspicions regarding North Korea's nuclear program go back decades, and while there has always been a healthy skepticism of the possibility that North Korea will ever fully abandon its nuclear ambitions, in the past there has always been a sufficient fig leaf of commitment to permit active diplomacy with North Korea without appearing to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power or to legitimize its strategy to date. The 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework was built upon official North Korean denials about its nuclear ambitions. Likewise, even after the somewhat ambiguous North Korean nuclear test in October 2006, North Korea's return to the

Six-Party Talks and its willingness to sign on to the February 13, 2007 agreement on “Initial Actions for the Implementation of the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement” provided a plausible enough North Korean commitment to abandon its nuclear ambitions and return to its prior agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This commitment permitted active negotiations with North Korea without appearing to legitimize their nuclear program.

North Korea’s unambiguous rejection of the Six-Party Talks, as well as the agreements it made in the Six-Party Talks, coupled with its assertion that it must now be recognized as a nuclear power, have greatly complicated the context of bilateral negotiations with North Korea. In his statement before the United Nations General Assembly on September 29, 2009, DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Pak Kil Yon tied Kim Il Sung’s vision of denuclearization to a “nuclear-free world” and declared that “so long as U.S. does not change its nuclear policy as at present time, we have no other option but to rely on our dependable nuclear possession to ensure nuclear balance of the region.”<sup>10</sup> Even during the final years of the Bush administration, there was growing discomfort among our allies and other countries in the region that the U.S. had somehow abandoned its effort to get North Korea to fully denuclearize and would instead be satisfied with just blocking the proliferation of North Korean nuclear weapons, materials or technology.

As such, an important priority for the Obama administration has been to reassure the region of the United States’ commitment to denuclearizing North Korea and to convince its allies and other partners in the region that the need to prioritize counter prolifer-

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<sup>10</sup>- <[http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/KP\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/KP_en.pdf)>.

eration activities in the short term does not imply an abandonment of the objective of full denuclearization. This mandate has been manifested in numerous official statements from administration officials. For example, while speaking to U.S. and South Korean troops at the U.S. military headquarters in central Seoul on October 21, 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates could not have been more unequivocal, “There should be no mistaking that we do not today – nor will we ever – accept a North Korea with nuclear weapons.”<sup>11</sup> In a speech in Washington D.C. on the same day, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reinforced this message saying that the leaders of North Korea “... should be under no illusion that the United States will ever have normal, sanctions-free relations with a nuclear-armed North Korea”<sup>12</sup>

Although this will be discussed in greater detail below, the need for clarity about the U.S. refusal to accept North Korea as a nuclear power is central to the U.S. insistence that North Korea return to the Six-Party Talks and implies that the objective of denuclearization cannot be deferred indefinitely. It also is central to U.S. resistance to bilateral negotiations that might undermine those talks and thus be seen as releasing North Korea from its prior commitments to unilaterally abandon its nuclear weapons.

### ***Regional Factors***

*South Korea:* Perhaps the least appreciated influence on the Obama administration’s policy toward North Korea and more specifically its capacity to forge a meaningful regional consensus

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<sup>11</sup>- <<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1931338,00.html>>.

<sup>12</sup>- <<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE59K3ZP20091021>>.

on North Korea has been the change of government in South Korea. After ten years of progressive government in Seoul, the four difficult years during which the Roh MuHyun administration overlapped with the Bush administration was a true case of oil and water. The December 2007 election of relatively conservative President Lee Myung-Bak facilitated a dramatic improvement in the trilateral coordination of policy between the United States and its allies in Tokyo and Seoul.

One of the apparent presumptions of the late years of the Bush administration was that China held the key to North Korea and that if Beijing could somehow just get North Korea in the room with the U.S., the brilliance and persuasive capabilities of U.S. diplomats could forge agreements which we would then convey to our allies in South Korea and Japan. The folly in this, and in the notion a G2 approach to a broader range of issues, is that our ability to influence Chinese policy is in large part dependent on our success in forging a common position with our allies. Nowhere is this more true than in North Korea policy, where for years we were often working at cross purposes, particularly with Seoul.

For example, following the failed North Korean long-range missile test in July of 2006, the Roh administration was decidedly less enthusiastic than the United States about implementing sanctions against North Korea. This discrepancy made it very easy for the Chinese to say in essence, “How can you expect us to exert pressure on North Korea, when your own ally South Korea is asking us not to? Far be it from us, China, to interfere in the domestic affairs of another country.” The first North Korean nuclear test in October of 2006 pushed Seoul to its closest level of cooperation with the U.S. under the Roh Government and led to

a relatively unified position among the U.S., South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia, something that was essential in pressuring North Korea to return to the table for the December 2006 round of the Six Party Talks. Unfortunately, this close coordination did not last long as one of the unintended effects of the highly bilateral manner in which the U.S. approached the Banco Delta Asia issue in the spring of 2007 was to give South Korea a green light to re-engage the North culminating in the October 2007 Summit between Roh Muhyun and Kim Jong Il at which there appeared to be little link between to promises made to Pyongyang and their performance in the Six Part Talks.

One need only contrast the response to North Korea's provocation in 2009 to gain a full understanding of the importance of a unified U.S.-ROK-Japan approach. Both following the missile test in April and the nuclear test in late May, China and Russia moved dramatically away from their starting positions in the UN Security Council of supporting not only a remarkably strong Presidential Statement, but also the most far reaching sanctions resolution to date. While not the only factor, and while by no means a final solution to the North Korean challenge, it is difficult to imagine such a response from China absent a common position among the U.S. and its allies.

*Japan:* Given the extreme domestic political sensitivity of the abduction issue in Japan, as long as the broader regional approach to North Korea emphasizes pressure, Japan is able to take a leading role in passing and implementing sanctions on North Korea. Such was the case in 2006 and again in early 2009. When, however, the U.S. attempts to pursue a more progressive engagement-oriented approach toward North, as was the case during

the Christopher Hill era, Japan's ability to play a more proactive role is proscribed by its domestic politics and the challenge of coordinating U.S. and Japanese approaches is considerably more difficult. Given the primacy of the U.S.-Japan alliance, this also becomes a consideration for U.S. policy toward North Korea since the possibility of progress in negotiations, will need to be evaluated in the context of the action's impact on the U.S.-Japan alliance. From the perspective of Tokyo, the North Korea issue has become a litmus test for the U.S. commitment to Japan. This was the case when the Bush administration decided to remove North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in August of 2008. In the long run, the election of the Democratic Party of Japan may influence this dynamic, but at least until the upper House elections in July of 2010 the DPJ appears unlikely to take on such a sensitive issue as the abductees and the still politically powerful organizations of the abductees families.

*China:* There is no question that China plays a key role not only in influencing North Korea but also in influencing U.S. policy toward North Korea. If politics is the "art of the possible," then forging a regional approach toward North Korea certainly involves the politics of China. Not only is North Korea China's erstwhile ally, but with the potential to destabilize the region and to unleash millions of refugees into China's already economic underdeveloped northeast, North Korea is a conundrum for China as well. Ultimately, it is impossible to imagine a policy that might effectively put either sufficient pressure on or inducements before North Korea to convince it to abandon its nuclear



ambitions without the active cooperation of China. As such, the necessity to coordinate with China becomes a key determinant of what is possible in terms of a North Korea policy. This was particularly evident during the early October 2009 visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jia Bao to Pyongyang to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PRC-DPRK relations.

### ***Domestic Factors***

When considering the influence that domestic factors might have on U.S. policy toward North Korea, the single largest factor is resource constraints. Even with tentative control of both houses of Congress, President Obama faces serious limitations on his political capital and a recession, health care, energy security, climate change and a host of other issues to deal with. Internationally, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Middle East peace talks is clamor for attention, time and resources. Naturally, in the days immediately prior to and following North Korea's most provocative acts, the U.S. public pays considerable attention to North Korea. However, in contrast to the situation in South Korea or Japan, it is almost immediately replaced in the headlines with another crisis in another corner of the world.

There is remarkably little domestic pressure on the Obama administration to pursue North Korea. This is one effect of Pyongyang's over-the-top vitriol and seemingly unprovoked crisis escalation at the outset of a new administration that was presumed to take a softer tack on North Korea. On May 25, the day after North Korea announced its most recent nuclear test, a *Washington Post* editorial entitled "No Crisis for North Korea" called on the Obama admin-

istration not to “lavish attention on North Korea and offer it economic and political favors,”<sup>13</sup> and the same argument was made in the same day’s newspaper in an Op-Ed from conservative scholars Dan Blumenthal and Robert Kagan.<sup>14</sup> In this respect, the domestic and diplomatic climate following North Korea’s nuclear test in 2009 could not have been more different than the climate in 2006. Then, the Bush administration was widely viewed as a significant part of the problem for refusing to have engaged North Korea and for allowing the collapse of the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework, which had frozen the North Korean nuclear program. If anything, domestic factors in the U.S. are likely to urge greater pressure on North Korea rather than call for compromise.

On June 15, 2009, a Fox News Poll reported that 69% of respondents felt that President Obama “has not been tough enough” on North Korea.<sup>15</sup> While there may be a tendency to dismiss this based on the source of the poll, it is notable that among those polled who voted for President Obama in 2008, 59% felt that the President had not been tough enough. This sentiment may have eased in the months since North Korea’s nuclear test. Yet rather than castigate President Obama for a failure to engage North Korea diplomatically, an October 27 editorial by the *Washington Post* entitled “Mr. Kim’s Scam” instead asked, “Will the Obama administration pay to resume disarmament talks with North Korea?”<sup>16</sup>

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13\_ <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/25/AR20090525\\_01391.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/25/AR20090525_01391.html)>.

14\_ <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/25/AR20090525\\_01391.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/25/AR20090525_01391.html)>.

15\_ <<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,526480,00.html>>.

16\_ <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/26/AR20091026\\_02712.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/26/AR20091026_02712.html)>.

## *Organizational Approach*

One of the most common questions regarding the Obama administration's North Korea policy is "Who is in charge?" Given the priority placed on North Korea, Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates and even President Obama have all spoken with some frequency on North Korea-related issues. Day-to-day issues continue to be ably managed by Kurt Tong, Director of the Office of Korean Affairs, and Ambassador Sung Kim, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks. Yet given the high profile role played by then Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in the last few years of the Bush administration, there is an understandable question as to who is taking the lead in the inter-agency coordination and in crafting and shepherding any policy.

At the State Department, Deputy Secretary James Steinberg, Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell, and Special Envoy for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth are all renowned Korea specialists with long experience and deep knowledge. Given the regional approach the administration has taken to the problem, there is also tremendous regional expertise in both the National Security Council and in the Pentagon. Given the financial aspects of implementing UN Security Council sanctions, the Treasury Department is also playing a clear role. Yet, at least publicly, the administration has yet to clearly define a hierarchy or division of labor.

In contrast to the early period of the Bush administration, during which there were significant and well documented intra-administration battles on North Korea policy, thus far it is difficult to identify anything resembling factions or organizationally or personality driven policy disputes regarding North Korea. This is again in part due to the clarity granted by the egregious nature of North

Korean provocations. As with the process of regional coordination, it is far easier to maintain unity in response to an obvious threat. Presumably, however, if there does emerge an opportunity to re-engage North Korea diplomatically, the process of policy coordination and questions of roles and responsibilities will assume a greater urgency.

There are, however, two specific organizational changes that can be linked to lessons learned from the Bush administration approach: the decision to delegate the role of chief negotiator with North Korea to someone other than the Assistant Secretary of State; and the decision to bifurcate the role of negotiator and coordinator of sanctions. During the Bush administration, then Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill was known to call himself Assistant Secretary of State for North Korea. Indeed, the process of dealing with North Korea was so all-consuming that as time progressed it became increasingly clear that it would be difficult to give full attention to the broader region and North Korea at the same time. That was a trade-off that arguably had much to do with the particular negotiating strategy of the Bush administration. Yet should they resume, negotiations are not likely to be easy. Furthermore, by appointing Ambassador Sung Kim to be lead envoy to the Six-Party Talks and reserving for Ambassador Stephen Bosworth the broader responsibility of Special Representative for North Korea Policy, there was likely some intent to upgrade the level at which Ambassador Bosworth is able to engage with the DPRK. During the Bush administration, there was repeated frustration for Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill in his interaction with North Korea at the level of Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan. An early test of this approach will be seen in the level of meetings Ambassador Bosworth is able to secure should he decide to visit Pyongyang.

Another innovation of the Obama administration was to more clearly bifurcate the role of negotiator and sanctions enforcer. As was evident during the long negotiations surrounding the Banco Delta Asia (BDA) case and the ultimate decision to return North Korea's illicit twenty-five million dollars (which had been frozen by the Macao Monetary Authority following the decision of the U.S. Treasury Department to designate BDA a primary money laundering concern), there is a high potential for a conflict of interest between the two roles. By appointing Ambassador Phillip Goldberg to coordinate the implementation of UN Security Council Sanctions Resolution 1874, the Obama administration has freed Ambassador Bosworth from the responsibility of sanctions implementation and at the same time made it clear that the current sanctions were tied to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and not to its willingness to negotiate alone. Secretary Clinton emphasized this point on October 20, 2009 when she declared that "Current sanctions will not be relaxed until Pyongyang takes verifiable, irreversible steps toward complete denuclearization... North Korea's return to the negotiating table is not enough."<sup>17</sup>

## QUESTIONS OF FORMAT AND STRATEGY

### *Bilateral vs. Six-Party Talks*

The initial formulation of the Six-Party Talks was based upon a recognition that the United States alone could not muster sufficient inducement or sufficient pressure to convince North Korea to

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<sup>17</sup>- <<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE59K3ZP20091021>>.

abandon its nuclear ambitions. Under the Bush administration it was primarily seen as a mechanism for coordinating pressure on North Korea. The Bush administration's refusal to meet bilaterally with the DPRK led to numerous debates about format and the efficacy of negotiating with thirty-some odd representatives around a large round table. The debate over format was famously highlighted, if not elucidated, during the debates between President Bush and Senator Kerry in the 2004 campaign.

Five years after those debates once again the Obama administration is resisting bilateral negotiations with North Korea and insisting on North Korea's return to the Six-Party Talks. Yet there is a fundamental difference between 2004 and 2009. In 2004, the Six-Party Talks represented little more than a format. However, given the importance of the commitments North Korea made to the other five parties in the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the talks to abandon "all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs"<sup>18</sup> and the subsequent agreements related to implementation, in 2009 the "context" of the Six-Party Talks has more to do with substance than format. So when Secretary Clinton declares that, "Within the framework of the six-party talks, we are prepared to meet bilaterally with North Korea"<sup>19</sup> the appropriate question is what is meant by the "framework" or "context" of the Six-Party Talks. Following North Korea's categorical rejection of the Six-Party Talks and its declaration of its nuclear status, it is the "content" of that Six-Party Talks that now holds the most meaning. With Pyongyang stating that it would "never again take part in such [six party] talks and will not be bound by any agreement reached at the talks,"<sup>20</sup> for the

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18- <<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>>.

19- <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/10/130806.htm>>.

20- <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/15/world/asia/15korea.html?ref=global-home>>

United States to accept the North Korea position would be tantamount to accepting North Korea as a nuclear power. This is the primary reason why the U.S., Japan, South Korea, China and Russia have all been so consistently adamant in their insistence that North Korea return to the Six-Party Talks even in the face of North Korea's repeated and sometimes categorical denunciations of the format.

The meaning of the term "denuclearization" is also key. The U.S. and the North Korean definitions of the term differ widely. North Korea's current position is that it is a demonstrated nuclear state and that any future negotiations with the United States should be conducted on the basis of equality as dual nuclear powers. As such, any discussion of "denuclearization" implies mutual disarmament, removal of the U.S. nuclear umbrella from the Korean peninsula, and more recently broader global disarmament.<sup>21</sup> This of course differs greatly from the U.S. position, and that of the other four parties in the Six-Party Talks, which emphasizes the commitment North Korea made in the September 19, 2005 Joint statement to unilaterally return to its NPT and IAEA commitments.

This is the context in which the willingness Kim Jong Il reportedly expressed during his early October 2009 meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao for the DPRK "to attend multilateral talks, including the six-party talks, depending on the progress in its talks with the United States"<sup>22</sup> should be evaluated. Absent any reference to the DPRK's willingness to denuclearize, or more

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21- As stated in the October 12, 2009 KCNA report, "Disarmament should never be unilateral. It should be done on the basis of mutual respect and trust among countries. It is urgent to convene an international meeting to seek ways of removing nuclear danger and take an effective action for universal disarmament including nuclear disarmament," <<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2002/200210/news10/12.htm>>.

22- <<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/10/06/world/AP-AS-Koreas-Nuclear.htm>>.

specifically to return to compliance with its previous agreement, the reaction in Washington to this statement and its inherent pre-conditions has been understandably cool.

### ***Northeast Asia Policy***

Given the emphasis to date on close and careful regional coordination, it is clear that the Obama administration has more of a “Northeast Asia policy” than a “North Korea policy.” In other words, the focus of the policy is not North Korea itself, but rather on ensuring that the United States’ real strategic interests – the peace, stability and prosperity of Northeast Asia – are not threatened. The United States’ primary interests have long been centered on containing the risks inherent in North Korean proliferation and in ensuring that regardless of which direction North Korea takes – be it collapse, conflict, or unexpected compromise – that what happens in North Korea does not jeopardize U.S. alliance relationships in the region and that North Korea does not become a source of conflict between the U.S. and its other partners in the region – China and Russia. In the past, North Korea has been somewhat of a black hole sucking up all the diplomatic matter in its vicinity and becoming an end in and of itself. While tedious, and certainly less sexy for the individual diplomats involved, the process of regional consultation and coordination is far more directly connected to the United States’ fundamental interests in the region. As such, at least for the time being, the process is the policy.



## FUTURE CHALLENGES

The description of the Obama administration approach described above is a policy that is pragmatic, that emphasizes multilateral diplomacy, and that takes in to full account broader U.S. strategic interests in the region. Yet unfortunately it is also a policy that holds little promise of leading to the “resolution” of the North Korean conundrum, at least in the short run. Perhaps that is too much to ask. Perhaps given the other domestic and foreign policy priorities facing the Obama Administration ... many of which are arguably far more important and imminent than a somewhat contained crisis in North Korea ... the best that can be hoped for in the current context is to contain the North Korean crisis and avoid any spillover into the region or further damage to the international non-proliferation regime.

There are however, several potential threats to this relative equilibrium, two of which are worth of particular note.

*Start of Talks:* At present there is still uncertainty over whether Ambassador Bosworth will visit Pyongyang, and there is even less likelihood that Pyongyang will agree to return to the Six-Party Talks, at least in a context recognizing its prior agreements in those talks. However, should North Korea do the unexpected and yield, the resumption of talks itself would pose a real challenge in alliance coordination. The ebb and flow of negotiations over the past few decades have repeatedly demonstrated the relative ease of maintaining a coordinated approach based on inaction as opposed to action, particularly as involves Japan.

*Successful Tests:* To date, the North Korean long range missile tests and nuclear tests have all been relatively unsuccessful. However,

presuming that North Korea is indeed focused upon its stated goal of achieving “Great Nation” status (*KangSongDaeGook*) by the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kim Il Sung’s birth in the year 2012, then North Korea can be expected to continue its testing on its own internal schedule. There appears little opportunity for Pyongyang to claim great nation status economically, diplomatically, or even with its deteriorating conventional military. In its own domestic propaganda, the DPRK has emphasized its missile (satellite) and nuclear programs as an integral part of its claim to legitimacy. One possible explanation for North Korea’s recent “charm offensive” is that after its long range missile and nuclear tests early this year it merely needs more time to analyze the result of its previous tests. If so, then the timing of the next North Korean tests is more likely to be driven by internal dynamics in North Korea than by the U.S. holiday schedule.

The challenge for the U.S. will be if and when North Korea is able to conduct unambiguously successful tests of long range missiles and nuclear weapons. In such an event the threat felt by, and the response in, both Tokyo and Seoul will likely escalate in turn. Likewise, successful tests have the potential to alter the domestic political calculus in the United States.

During his June 16, 2009 news conference with President Lee Myung Bak, President Obama noted that “there has been a pattern in the past where North Korea behaves in a belligerent fashion and, if it waits long enough, it is rewarded. I think that is the pattern they have come to expect. The message we are sending them is that we are going to break that pattern.”<sup>23</sup> Thus far, the

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<sup>23</sup> - <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-President-Lee-of-the-Republic-of-Korea-in-Joint-Press-Availability](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-President-Lee-of-the-Republic-of-Korea-in-Joint-Press-Availability)>.

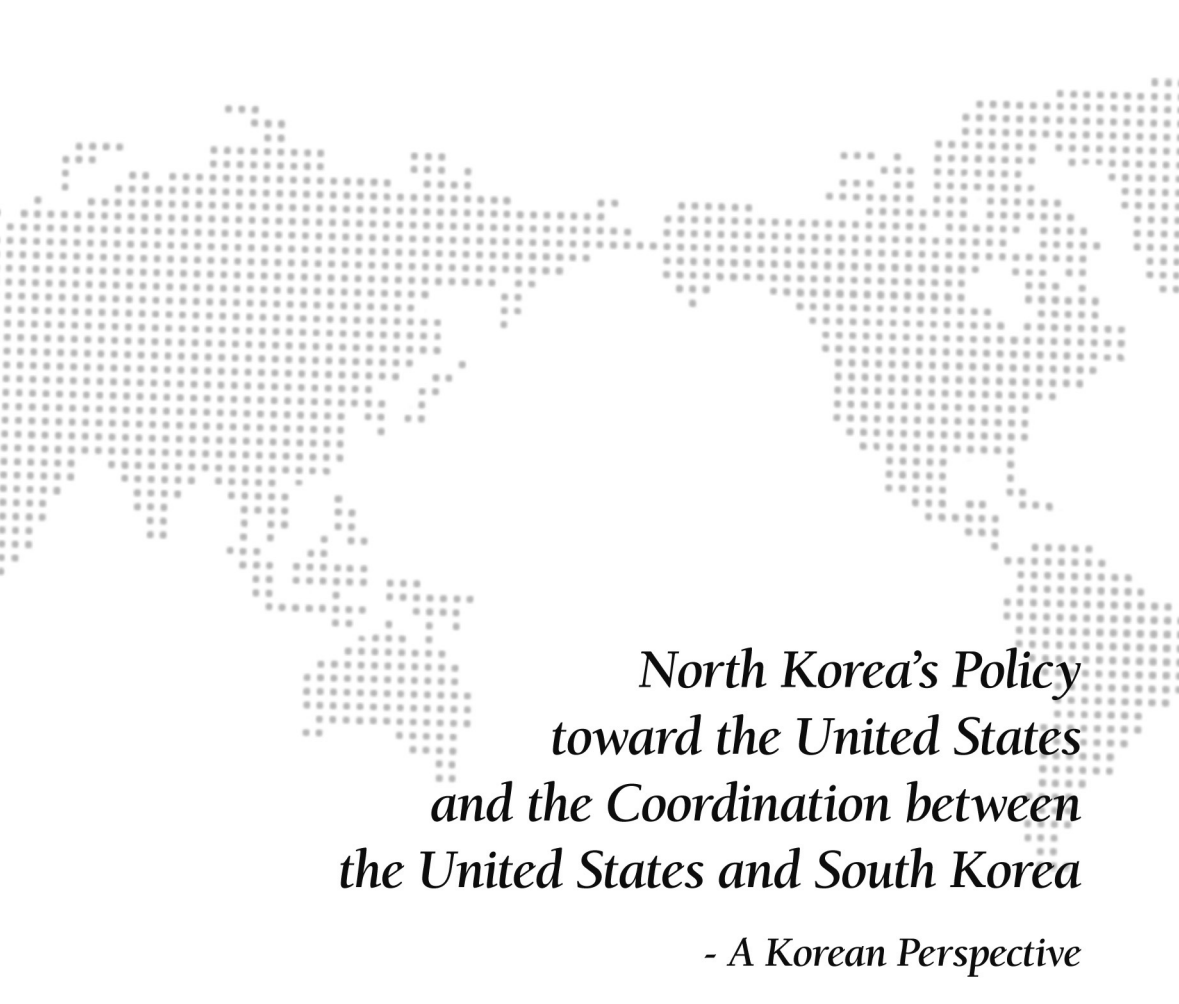
Obama administration's approach to North Korea does indeed seem consistent with a break from the patterns of the past. What remains to be seen is whether North Korea will go along.



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*North Korea's Policy  
toward the United States  
and the Coordination between  
the United States and South Korea  
- A Korean Perspective*

*Choon-Kun Lee*

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As of September 9, 2009, it has been discovered that the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) had maintained a severe and hostile relationship with the United States. At least in terms of North Korea's rhetoric, the United States had been an arch enemy of North Korea that cannot coexist together on earth. In fact, there was a severe war between North Korea and the United States which lasted three years and cost the lives of more than several hundred thousands for both countries: the Korean War (1950-1953). While North Korea had a stronger aversion towards the United States during the Cold War years, entering into the Post-Cold War years, and especially after September 11, 2001, the United States has become more averse towards North Korea.

The United States, having to face completely new types of threats began to regard North Korea as one of the state sponsor of terrorism that can willingly deliver weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear bombs, to terrorists. In his first address to the U.S. Congress after the 9.11, President George W. Bush pointed out North Korea as one of the three 'Axis-of-Evil' states that can wage terrorist attacks against the United States directly or indirectly.<sup>1</sup> Harvard University Professor Graham T. Allison also regarded North Korea as one of the most dangerous countries that supports nuclear terrorism against the United States.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>- In his address to the U.S. Congress on January 29, 2002, President Bush pointed out North Korea as one of the *Axis of Evil* state together with Iraq and Iran. All these three countries had clandestine plan to make nuclear weapons and these countries are perceived by the United States as the supporters of international terrorist movement against the United States.

<sup>2</sup>- Graham T. Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 2004), p. 68. Together with North Korea's nuclear bomb, Professor Allison regard the following two as the plausible nuclear bombs that can be detonated in the American soil by the terrorists: a nuclear bomb that was lost from the arsenal of the Soviet Union while it was collapsing and the bomb made in Pakistan and were given to terrorists in the past.

Currently, no diplomatic institutions of any type exist between the United States and North Korea. However, North Korea regards the United States as one of the most important object in its foreign policy.

Now, in the Post-Cold War years, North Korea regards its former allies-Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China-as well as the hostile neighbors like Japan, South Korea and the United States as its crucial objects in its foreign policies. However, since the 9.11, the United States has become the most crucial country for North Korea's foreign relations. The reasons why North Korea regards the United States as the most important partner in its foreign policy come from two paradoxical aspects.

First, the United States is the remains as the biggest threat to the very survival of the North Korean state with its enormous military and economic capability in the post communist world. However, at the same time, North Korea has begun to realize the reality of the United States: as the country that can realistically guarantee the survival of North Korea. North Korea is not a country that can compete with the United States. North Korea thinks that the United States has the keys to both survival and the death of North Korea. This is the starting point of North Korea's foreign policy towards the United States. The United States and South Korea should keep this fact in mind when they deal with North Korea. The necessity for cooperation between the United States and South Korea comes from the fact that the grand strategy of North Korea should be directly related with the national security affairs of South Korea because the goals North Korea adamantly seeks that the United States is not just for its own security, but also to achieve and control the whole Korean Peninsula.

In the second chapter of this paper, I will discuss the national

goals and purposes of North Korea. Only after we have discussed the goals of North Korea, can we analyze what the North Koreans want from the United States through its foreign policies toward the United States. Like all other nations on earth, national security or survival is the foremost goal of North Korea, and to achieve this goal, North Korea has been striving to improve its vulnerable international environment. At the same time North Korea tries very hard to increase its own capability, such as the development of nuclear weapons, to deal with the harsh international environment. In this chapter, I will analyze North Korea's perception of its own security and policies towards the United States in order to benefit.

In chapter three, I will briefly deal with the history of foreign relations between the United States and North Korea to describe the goals and methods of North Korea's foreign policy towards the United States with an emphasis on the North Korean nuclear problems. If North Korea feels that the United States has provided more than enough security guarantees for North Korea, then North will give up its nuclear weapons and programs. However, we should carefully deal with such kind of situation because the full security of North Korea may mean insecurity for South Korea because the two Koreas are the rivals in a hostile competition.

In the fourth chapter, I will deal with the desirable future of Korea and how the United States and South Korea can work together to achieve this by controlling and leading North Korea. Peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas in the Korean Peninsula is not a zero sum situation. However, if we regard the facts that both South and North Korea want national unification on its own terms, the political game in the Korean Peninsula cannot always be a non-zero sum. It is not possible for us to find any case of unification that was achieved through impartial negotiation between the two sovereign states. The



unification of Korea will also be the case where one will initiate the unification process, as in the cases of West Germany and North Vietnam, while the other party just helplessly followed the process like East Germany or South Vietnam.

## NATIONAL GOALS OF NORTH KOREA

### *General Theories and Methods of Achieving National Goals*

Every nation in the world shares a common goal of achieving self-preservation. Survival or self-preservation is the highest and ubiquitous goal of every state in the world. Only after its survival is guaranteed, nations can pursue other national goals such as prosperity and prestige. Statesmen and people may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, and/or power.<sup>3</sup>

Like all other countries around the world, North Korea also has pursued such values as survival, prosperity, prestige and national power since its foundation in 1948. For weak countries like North Korea, securing of survival is especially important. To secure its national interest, North Korea takes similar actions as many other countries. Theoretically speaking, all countries have the same way of dealing with security questions they face. One is to make its security environment better and the other is to enhance its national capability to deal with security matters. International politics is the area of anarchy; therefore one's effort towards enhancing its own security may mean endangering another country's security. Therefore, the

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<sup>3</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2006), p. 29. Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton.

security dilemma situation is widespread in the arena of international politics.<sup>4</sup>

In this regard, every nation in the world firstly seeks the method to decrease the threat and vulnerability that come from their international environment.<sup>5</sup> Threat means direct or indirect dangers emanating from potential enemies. Nations usually feel threatened from countries with different ideologies or when they are political/ economic rivals even if they share a common ideology.

For example, the United Kingdom and Germany shared mutual threat immediately before both World War I and II. When countries are in such a situation, they usually try to negotiate to solve the problem peacefully. The appeasement policy of Mr. Neville Chamberlain was to decrease the threat from Adolf Hitler's Germany to the United Kingdom. However, peaceful methods do not always succeed. Chamberlain's effort is one of the most famous cases of failed diplomacy.

Sometimes, the threats from outside were geopolitical in nature and thus very difficult to be amended. Countries like Poland, which is located in the geographical center among the rival great powers like France, Germany and Russia, always feels vulnerable and this vulnerability is almost impossible to be amended through diplomatic efforts.

In this regard, states try to increase their own capabilities to deal with the threats from the outside. The most common way for the states to increase their capabilities is to arm themselves with

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4- The concept of Security dilemma was initially used by John H. Herz in his book *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (1951). This is regarded as a core concept among realist scholars in international politics. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 35-36.

5- Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), Chapter 3.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) including nuclear weapons which we have witnessed in the international politics since the 1970s. Aside from its own effort to increase their own capabilities, states also try to forge an alliance with other countries that share a common enemy. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japan had allied with the United Kingdom and thus significantly increased its power. Korea, who successfully formed an alliance with the United States in 1953 effectively maintained its national security during the entire Cold War period against the threat from North Korea as well as those from the international communist movements.

### ***Special Characteristics of North Korea's National Goals***

Like other countries around the World, North Korea has the same national goal of achieving survival, prosperity, prestige and other general national interests.<sup>6</sup> National security is the immediate concern for any state which is a political organism that has both life and death.<sup>7</sup> North Korea's foreign policy is one of the most important means to achieve its goal of national security and other various national interests.

The foremost national goal of North Korea is to save and keep the country which is called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In fact, North Korea had been in a crisis mode for the past two decades, beginning in the 1990s with the threat of its very survival.

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<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that every nation in the world regards national security as its foremost goal. See Charles O. Lerche, Jr, Abdul A. Said, *Concept of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 28. Analytically, self preservation must be considered a ubiquitous objective of state action. Next important objective is the objective of security.

<sup>7</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, p. 1.

However, North Korean leaders had never even thought of changing its national ideology of *Juche* philosophy or introducing bold economic reform to save its dysfunctional economic system of socialism. Unlike most other former socialist states, North Korea does not want to open its society and declare that it will keep its socialist economic system until the end.

In its recent constitution that was reformed in April 2009, North Korea again declares that it will stick to socialism and its political system until it completes the building of a socialist political and economic system in North Korea.<sup>8</sup>

However, North Korea's national goals are in some sense, different from other states' national goals, because North Korea had defined its national goals in an extended, broader and more aggressive fashion. While it is commonly found among the communist states of the past,<sup>9</sup> the national goals that North Korea expressed are too big to be regarded as just megalomaniac.

The preamble of the North Korean Labor Party platform, which is regarded to have a higher authority than the Constitution of North Korea, it clearly mentions that the natural purpose of North

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<sup>8</sup> North Korea has reformed some parts of its Constitution in first time in 11 years in April 2009. According to this new constitution, North Korea formally discards the concept of communism, while maintaining that the socialism is the goal to be achieved by the sincere efforts of the North Korean leaders and its people. The new Constitution raises the position and authority of a chairman of the military commission. The chairmanship of the military commission is currently assumed by Kim Jong Il and his status goes higher than the North Korean government. North Korea's new Constitution emphasizes *Juche* ideology together with the 'military first' Policy.

<sup>9</sup> James L. Payne, *Why Nations Arm* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 105. According to the author, communist countries usually have a clear concept of an "enemy" and a national goal of achieving revolution and therefore have a tendency of having a broader and aggressive national goal than other countries. The author found that the communist states have the tendency to spend more on their national defense and have more militaristic foreign policies than other countries.

Korea's Labor Party is to achieve complete socialist victory in North Korea and then to spread it to the entire Korean Peninsula to complete the national liberation as it completes its revolutionary goals. The final goal of North Korea's Labor Party is to make the whole society live under the *Juche* and Communist ideology.<sup>10</sup> North Korea officially makes it very clear that its national goal is to keep North Korea a base for socialism and spread it to South Korea, and then to the whole world.

As we all know, North Korea is not a democratic state and it is rather a Stalinist state where the interest of its sole supreme leader has all the power and authority over its people. In North Korea, there is an elaborate ideology consisting of an official body of doctrine covering all vital aspects of man's existence to which everyone living in that society is supposed to adhere.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in North Korea, national security equates to the regime security of its supreme dictator, Kim Jong Il. While it is true that more than several million people have died by hunger in the past two decades in North Korea—a problem that can be solved by adopting a reformed economic policies—Kim Jong-Il has never in the slightest thoughts of opening its society or adopting a minor economic reform.

The reason why the North Korean leaders do not allow economic reform and opening of the society is the fact that they know that the economic reform and opening of North Korea will mean the end of their political regime even though it is a good way

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<sup>10</sup>- 'Platforms of the North Korea's Labor Party,' Revised at the 6th national convention on 13th October, 1980.

<sup>11</sup>- Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brezezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 15-27. The typical totalitarian political model provided by these two scholars clearly fits into the current political system of North Korea.

to save North Korea's ailing economy.

In this regard, the North Korean leaders believe that the regime's survival, rather than the survival of the North Korean state, is most crucial. Instead of an economic reform and opening itself to the outside world, North Korea follows the isolationist policies only to secure the survival of the regime. North Korea opens itself in strictly restricted cases when the North Korean leaders want foreign cash. The sole purpose of the political catch phrases, "Military First," and "Great Nation with strong Military Power" is for the survival of Kim Jong Il's government which brings the conclusion of them not wanting to change North Korea's economic and political systems at all.

With this domestic policy, North Korea has waged confrontational foreign policies with the outside world. North Korea test fires missiles frequently without any specific patterns and through this brinkmanship diplomacy, North Korea seeks attention from the international community. North Korea wants attention from the United States. They are seeking security guarantee from the United States.

While the current situation is not the best for North Korea, it has yet to give up its hope of becoming the master in unifying the Korea Peninsula. North Korea still maintains the forward deployed offensive military posture against South Korea. During the last few years, it has substantially increased the number of special forces for terrorist and guerrilla types of warfare against South Korea.<sup>12</sup> North

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<sup>12</sup>- According to the U.S. forces in Korea, North Korea had forward deployed 40 % of its 720,000 strong military forces in 1981. In 1988, the number of North Korean Military had increased to 1.1 million and 65 % of them were forward deployed within 100 km from the DMZ. In 2005 North Korea had 1.2 million soldiers and 70% of them were forward deployed. Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense, Defense White Paper, 2008.

Korea had never made any official declarations discarding the military option as a means for achieving national unification.

The relationship between North and South Korea is different from other normal bilateral relations because both South and North Korea think that it is imperative for them to unify their fatherland in their own terms. This is especially true for North Korea, and therefore, unification is another important goal of North Korea in addition to its regime survival. To North Korea's political leaders, full security for North Korea is achieved only when they achieve national unification. In this way, North Korea's security may mean severe insecurity for South Korea.

So, in the Korean Peninsula, the security dilemma is more real than any other place in the world. The security guarantee for one party in the Korean peninsula may mean insecurity for the other party.

## **NORTH KOREA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES: SEARCH FOR SURVIVAL**

### ***Origin and History of North Korea's Foreign Relations with the U.S.***

North Korea was founded by the Soviet Union as a communist satellite state and so in its earlier stages, North Korea's foreign policy was heavily dependent upon the Soviet Union. The communist bloc was the guarantor of North Korea's security. North Korea just followed the guidance of the Soviet Union. However, just after the Korean War, North Korea began a more or less independent foreign policy. Especially after the mid 1950s when the Sino-Soviet

rifts began, North Korea emphasized the independent and impartial foreign policy in the middle of China and the Soviet Union. When China began its reform under Deng Xiao Ping in 1978, North Korea was leaned towards the Soviet Union, and in 1985 when the Soviet Union began *perestroika*, North Korea once again maintained independent in its foreign relations.

When international communism collapsed in the late 1980s and when the Soviet Union declared the end of the Cold War with the United States, followed by the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1990, North Korea had to pursue a totally new way of survival. Since the 1990s, North Korea began its foreign relations with the West, including the United States in full scale.

The United States became a sole superpower after it won the Cold War over the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the fate of North Korea as a beleaguered socialist state was in great danger. The international system of the early 1990s itself was a real danger for North Korea's survival.

However, President Bill Clinton had adopted a policy of engagement and enlargement, rather than adopting the policy of eliminating the remnants of socialism and a few surviving socialist states. Clinton wanted to invite those socialist states as members of the international community and North Korea grabbed the chance to make better relations with the United States. Of course, North Korea also devised its own means for the national security insurance: the development of its nuclear weapons capability.

Clinton was shocked when he found out that North Korea developed its nuclear weapons. In June 1994, the United States almost waged a surgical air strike against North Korea's nuclear weapons facilities. That crisis merely ended with the visit of former President Carter to Pyongyang. The United States and North Korea



made an interim deal of freezing the North Korean nuclear activities on October 21, 1994 in Geneva.<sup>13</sup>

The Clinton administration was able to make a deal with North Korea at that time in good faith towards North Korea. In the early 1990s, the United States was at its peak of its international status and North Korea could not be a real strategic threat to the United States. In making a deal with North Korea, officials in the Clinton government had optimistic outlook that North Korea will break down by itself soon.<sup>14</sup>

During that same time, the Republicans in the United States believed that North Korea had not kept its promise with the United States of halting its nuclear activities. Thus, the Republicans raised great doubt about the effects of Clinton's deal with North Korea. When the Republicans regained power in 2001, the detente mood<sup>15</sup> between the United States and North Korea that were formed during the latter years of the Clinton administration returned to its original point.

President George W. Bush stopped all contacts with North Korea, which had been opened during the Clinton years until the new administration was assured that the North Koreans were following the promises made with the United States. The U.S.-North Korea relations started badly after Bush became president. The

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13- William G. Hyland, *Clinton's World: Remaking American Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1999), pp. 132-133.

14- Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. xvii.

15- On October 10, 2000, North Korea's highest ranking general Cho Myong Rok visited the White House and two weeks later, Madame Secretary Madeleine Albright visited Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang. These were unprecedented-events of the 50 years of hostile relations between the United States and North Korea. However, North Korea's clandestine nuclear activity that was exposed on October 2002 was the main reason for the end of such detent during the later years of the Clinton administration.

Republicans discovered that the North Koreans were violating the promises when the special envoy of President Bush, Mr. James Kerry, visited Pyongyang on October 3, 2002.<sup>16</sup>

### ***American Perception of North Korea after 9.11 and the U.S. policy to North Korea***

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 abruptly change the international system of the Post-Cold War years. Since 9.11, the American perception towards North Korea significantly changed as well. Before 9.11, North Korea was regarded as a failed country, regarded as a strategic threat to the United States. The United States was able to check North Korea's small nuclear arsenal by freezing its nuclear activities as promised on October 21, 2004 in Geneva. Before 9.11, a small number of North Korea's nuclear bombs might have been okay, if they were not proliferated to Muslim states.

But, the 9.11 terrorist attacks completely changed America's perception of its security, and North Korea's small nuclear arsenal has now begun to be seen from the context of nuclear terrorism. Suddenly, freezing North Korea's nuclear activities is not enough for the United States and therefore the Bush administration set a new standard for solving North Korea's nuclear question. After 9.11, the United States requested that North Korea should completely, verifiably, irreversibly dismantle (CVID) its nuclear programs and weapons.<sup>17</sup> Since 9.11, North Korea's nuclear weapons were seen,

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<sup>16</sup>- North Korea began a new way of making nuclear weapons after the Geneva agreement with the United States on October 21, 1994. The new method was to make nuclear bomb through the uranium enrichment instead of using plutonium.

<sup>17</sup>- David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, *Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program A Practicable, Verifiable Plan of Action*, Peace work No. 54 (Washington D.C.: The United States Institute of Peace, January 2006), p. 8.

not as a problem of proliferation to other nations states, but as a problem of nuclear terrorism. The Bush administration assumed North Korea as a country willing to deliver WMDs, including nuclear bombs to the terrorists' hands.

With this new perception towards North Korea, the Bush administration began a new approach towards North Korea. The Bush administration sought a diplomatic as well as confrontational means in dealing with North Korea. Regime change to Kim Jong Il was one of the options for the United States during the Bush years. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pointed out North Korea as one of the several outposts of tyranny<sup>18</sup> and President Bush also hinted that dictators like Kim may be eliminated by the advanced military technologies of the United States armed forces.<sup>19</sup>

However, in his second term, Bush changed his policy towards North Korea to emphasize more on negotiation and in his later years in White House, he even removed North Korea from the list of the State Sponsors of Terrorism.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>— On January 18, 2005, then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice testified at the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee that North Korea is one of the “outposts of tyranny.” This term was widely used by others in the U.S. government to describe the governments of certain countries as being governed by totalitarian regimes and dictatorships. In addition to specifically identifying Belarus, Burma (Myanmar), Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Zimbabwe as examples of outpost of tyranny, Rice characterized the broader Middle East as a region of tyranny, despair, and anger. The characterizations drew strong reactions.

<sup>19</sup>— Remarks as Delivered by Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England, Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland (May 27, 2005). In his address, President Bush said that technology changes the balance of war in another important way, “We can now strike our enemies with greater effectiveness, at greater range, with few civilian casualties. In this new era of warfare, we can target a regime, not a nation, and that means terrorists and tyrants can no longer feel safe hiding behind innocent life. In the 21st century, we can target the guilty and protect the innocent, and that makes it easier to keep the peace.”

<sup>20</sup>— It was October 21, 2008 when North Korea was removed from the list of the State Sponsors of Terrorism after 20 years when it was initially listed due to its

Since the inauguration of President Obama, unlike the expectation of average citizens in both the United States and South Korea, the relation between the United States and North Korea is worsening. The main reason for the worsening of the relations between the United States and North Korea lies in the behavior of North Korea. While Obama promised to have talks even with the enemies, North Korea showed violent and confrontational behavior both against the United States and South Korea. Since January 2009, North Korea had tested its nuclear weapons and test fired ten of its missiles, including the long range missiles. North Korea did this to pressure and test Obama on his policy towards North Korea.

In response to North Korea's confrontational acts, the Obama government has maintained a firm and cool policy stance thus far. Obama clearly stated that there will be no reward to a bad behavior and he does not want to reiterate the failed policies of the preceding presidents. In this regard, neither bilateral talks nor the Six Party Talks has taken place since Obama has become president, despite his stance on being a man of negotiation rather than a man of confrontation with the 'trouble makers' of the world. Of course the major responsibilities for this sour relation lie at the North Korean side who adopted violent and confrontational policies at the early part of this year.<sup>21</sup>

The Obama administration knowing well that the Bush

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bombing of the Korean Air in the fall of 1988 to hedge the Seoul Olympic Games.

<sup>21</sup> Since the inauguration of President Barak Obama, North Korea took the following confrontational measures: on April 5, it fired a long range ballistic missile by saying it was a satellite; on May 25, North Korea waged its second nuclear tests; from May 25 to 28, North Korea fired six missiles; on July 2 and 4, while the U.S. was celebrating its Independence Day, North Korea fired 4 and 7 missiles respectively; and, most recently on October 12, North Korea fired 5 mobile missiles.

administration failed in solving the North Korean problem, declared that the United States will not have any illusions about North Korea and will maintain initiative event when the United States talks with North Korea.<sup>22</sup> The Obama government has successfully issued a far stronger UN Security Council Resolution 1874 after North Korea tested its nuclear weapons for the second time. Following this resolution, the United States blocked a voyage of North Korea's suspected ship that was sailing for Myanmar with weapons on board. While the two countries are now trying to open negotiations, the U.S. maintains a firm position that North Korea should show sincerity if she wants to have any meaningful negotiation with the United States.

### ***North Korea's Foreign Policy toward the United States in the Age of Anti-Terror Warfare: Goals and Strategies***

After the United States had assumed North Korea as one of the *Axis of Evil* states in the aftermath of 9.11 terrorist attacks, North Korea also started to regard the United States as an arch enemy and waged a confrontationist policy against the United States. North Korea violated the 1994 Agreement with the United States and accelerated its nuclear weapons program.

However on June 25, 2002, when the United States offered bilateral talks between the two countries, North Korea rejected this offer by attacking South Korea's naval patrolling the Northern Line of Limitation at the western part of the Korean peninsula on June 29, 2002. The North Korean navy had attacked and killed six of the

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<sup>22</sup>- Abraham M. Denmark, Nirav Patel, Lindsey Ford, Michael Zubrow, Zachary M. Hosford, *No Illusion: Regaining the Strategic Initiative with North Korea* (Washington D.C.: CNAS Working Paper, June 11, 2009).

South Korean sailors near the Yon Pyong Island in the Yellow sea. If North Korea had accepted this offer, the United States would have dispatched its Special Envoy, Mr. James Kerry, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at that time, to Pyongyang on July 10, 2002. This was all happening during the time of the 2002 World Cup, which was held in Korea and Japan. After this military incident, the United States withdrew this offer as invalid.<sup>23</sup>

Later, North Korea apologized to South Korea on this military incident and wanted to accept America's offer for bilateral talks. At the first meeting during the U.S. delegation's October 3, 2002 visit to Pyongyang, Kelly strongly protested against the North Korean on their violation of the nuclear agreement. Kelly provided compelling evidences of the North Koreans were making nuclear weapons through the uranium enrichment methods. At first, North Koreans defied Kelly's protest with indignation. However, the North Koreans had to admit after they saw the evidences provided by Kelly. The next day, North Korea confessed that it had developed high enriched uranium nuclear facilities. The United State and South Korean governments announced this fact at the same time in Seoul and in Washington, D.C on the morning of October 17 (evening of October 16, 2002, EST), that North Korea had violated the 1994 Nuclear Agreement and is now developing nuclear weapons with the HEU program. From that day on, the so called Second Nuclear Crisis of the Korean peninsula has pursued.

During this crisis of more than six years, North Korea showed a typical pattern of brinkmanship diplomacy towards the United States. North Korea first wages military provocation, then accepts

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<sup>23</sup> Shimada Yoich, *History of American-North Korean Confrontation* (Tokyo: Bun-KyoShunchuSha, 2003), pp. 195-196.

the negotiation offer from the United States and South Korea. The United States and South Korea who have tendencies to avoid direct confrontations with North Korea, usually offer talks and negotiations after a few statements blaming North Korea. In the negotiation process, North Korea made a few concessions in exchange with material rewards from the United States and South Korea. After a while, North Korea wages another, more severe military confrontation and the same pattern continues again and again.

First and foremost, North Korea's top leadership enjoys the fact that they are now vying with the world's strongest power on an equal footing. They boastfully advertise this fact to the North Korean people and use this as the source of legitimacy for dictatorship rule of Kim Jong Il over its people.<sup>24</sup>

What North Korea ultimately wants from the United States is a "security guarantee for the current North Korean political regime." However, we should note that the process and methods of how the North Koreans are aiming to reach this final goal from the United States. It wants to directly hear from the United States and South Korea's officials and experts on North Korean affairs that they can guarantee the security of North Korea if North decides to give up its nuclear weapons program.

This idea is irrational as long as the North Koreans believe that nuclear weapons are the ONLY thing that protects their regime from collapsing. Furthermore, security is a phenomenon that should be judged in a very subjective way. That is, North Korea's security is judged only by the North Koreans. No such thing that can be

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<sup>24</sup> *The New Year Message of North Korean Presses 2006*. In this message, North Korea's state run media boasted that they had fought and won the war against the United States a sole superpower and this is due to the 'Military First' policy of Kim Jong Il.

guaranteed by the foreign powers, especially by hostile powers.

Then, what constitutes the security of North Korea? And what is the minimal requirement for North Koreans to ask the United States to give in return for the its decision to abandon the nuclear weapons and programs?

I believe that the minimal condition for security guarantee that North Korea wants to achieve from the United States before it decides to abandon its nuclear weapons and programs is the “termination of U.S.-South Korea Defense Alliance” and the “complete withdrawal of American troops from South Korea.” Since the end of the Korean War to today, North Korea has never given up asking the United States to end an alliance with South Korea and withdraw all American troops from South Korea.

North Korea usually expresses that it wants to “denuclearize the entire Korean peninsula.” By this, they mean the withdrawal of American troops from South Korean soil. North Koreans believe, regardless of the reality of their beliefs, that it can have the *upper hand* in Korean peninsula affairs upon the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from South Korea. North Koreans firmly believe that they will be the leaders in unifying the whole Korean peninsula with *Juche* (independence) ideology if the Americans leave South Korea.

*Tong Mi Bong Nam* is a concept which means that the North Koreans will try to contain South Korea through the United States of America. *Tong Mi Bong Nam* is a basic strategy of North Korea whenever they deal with the United States.

This argument is not strange because we hear and read this kind of argument from open sources. Recently, Chinese experts on Korea began to argue that North Korea can achieve security guarantee from the United States by becoming a strategic friend of the United States. For example, Professor Chao Wei Zi of Beijing University,



North Korean economy expert, criticized China about China allowing North Korea to have nuclear weapons that “It is a grave mistake for China to allow nuclear armed North Korea to have a chance to get closer to the United States.” He further criticized the Chinese government that “by allowing North Korea to become closer to the United States, the Chinese government makes the three hundred million Chinese people in the three provinces of the Northeast, Lianing, Jirin and HeiLongJiang, live under the threat of North Korea’s nuclear weapons.”<sup>25</sup> Professor Chao worries about the day when North Korea becomes a strategic friend of the United States.

We also hear the Chinese saying that “the United States will contain China by allying with North Korea,” “North Korea will finally normalize relations with the United States and increase power to prevent China,” or “it is inevitable for China to fight a war with North Korea and thus, China should prepare for war with North Korea.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus far, North Korea has not made this kind of argument in public, but it is certain that North Korea tries to use the United States for achieving its foremost national goals. Just a few weeks ago, a very influential editorial writer of the *Chosun Ilbo*, a newspaper with the largest circulation in South Korea, wrote that South Korea should prepare for a situation when the United States considers the exchange of North Korea’s nuclear weapons with the American troops in South Korea.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>- *The Chosun Ilbo*, July 20, 2007.

<sup>26</sup>- Tomisaka Satoshi, *Secret Files of China toward North Korea* (Tokyo: BunGyo-ShunChu, 2007). This book was originally written by a Chinese author named Ou Yang Sun, a Chinese official on intelligence affairs, but published in Japan and translated in Korean.

<sup>27</sup>- Yang Sang Hoon Column, “If North Korea abandons nuclear weapons only if the American troops withdrew from South Korea,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, October 20, 2009.

## COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH KOREA FOR SOLVING NORTH KOREAN PROBLEMS

### *Imperatives for U.S.-South Korea Cooperation*

While it is also true that the neighbors like China, Japan and Russia have deep concerns about North Korea; it is certain that South Korea and the United States are the most concerned countries in dealing with the problems of North Korea. The United States, the sole super power, that is leading the world in the 21st century has to deal with such daunting questions as anti terror warfare, nuclear proliferation and the challenges from China, etc. These big questions are all deeply related with the problem of North Korea. In this regard, the United States is the major actor on the issue of North Korea together with South Korea.

Of course, the most interested party on the North Korean problem must be South Korea because South Korea is the country that will be most influenced by the outcome of the political game North Korea is playing against the world. North Korea's nuclear weapons are an indirect threat to the United States, but it is a fatal threat to South Korea's security. South Korea is in a hostile and competitive relationship with the North. Especially in political security matters, North Korea's every strategic act will have direct impact on the security of Korea. Because both South and North Korea want to achieve national unification on their own terms, many of their relations have zero sum characteristics.

South Korea and the United States, as an ally, share the common vision of solving North Korean problems and the two countries should be close partner to solve North Korean problems in

an effective and positive way.

However, as we have argued in the preceding section of this paper, the United State and South Korea differed in several respects in their goals and methods about the solution of the North Korean problems. For example, in June 1994 the United States tried to conduct surgical air strikes against the Yongbyun nuclear facilities in North Korea as a last resort to solve the problem, but the South Korean president at that time, Kim Young Sam had opposed to this idea of bombing North Korea. During the Bush presidency, Korea had been under the left wing government and at that time, the goals and methods of solving North Korean problems of the United States and South Korea were basically different. Even the perspectives of viewing North Korea were different between the United States and South Korea.

Former South Korea presidents, Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun did not view North Korea's nuclear weapons as a grave threat to South Korea. They simply see the nuclear weapons problem of North Korea as a struggle between the United States and North Korea. Kim and Roh insisted a consistent appeasement policy towards North Korea, while Bush wanted to teach the North a lesson with a coercive means to North Korea. Roh even mentioned that North Korea has its own reason to have nuclear weapons. And to this end, the United States and South Korea did not cooperate for about twenty years, and now North Korea is on the verge of becoming a full scale nuclear power.

It is true that the United States and South Korea were the only countries which did not cooperate to solve the North Korea nuclear problems. Japan, Russia and especially, China were also not too eager to support solving the North Korean nuclear problems. If the five member countries of the Six Party Talks had really cooperated

in solving the North Korea questions, the problems could have been solved by now. It is not possible to imagine that the world's four great powers, of all also happens to be members of the Six Party Talks, could not prevent North Korea from becoming a nuclear weapons state if there had been some kind of sincere cooperation among them.

On August 27, 2003, when the first round of Six Party Talks began in Beijing, North Korea was not regarded as a nuclear weapons state yet. However, after the six years of Six Party Talks, it is almost certain that North Korea has nuclear weapons and it may soon have intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach targets in the United States. During the past six years while the Six Party Talks went on intermittently, North Korea waged two nuclear tests and fired tens of missiles as a means to develop longer range missiles. The nuclear situation of North Korea today is the proof that the concerned states could and did not cooperate sincerely to solve the problem.

Now, all five member states in the Six Party Talks again expect to open the Talks. However, if a sincere cooperation continues to be missing between and among the five member states, the Six Party Talks cannot and will not solve the problems caused by North Korea.

***South Korea and the United States should Cooperated to take initiatives in dealing with North Korea***

It is natural that North Korea is in a favorable position at the Six Party Talks and other multilateral talks. North Korea has one clear goal and a consistent strategy for achieving it while the United States and South Korea has its own goals, instead of one collective

goal, which leads to concluding that each of the five member states in the Six Party Talks have at least five different goals all together. Although nations cooperate, their differences in the goals to be achieved and methods for achieving those goals cannot be perfectly identical. Therefore, North Korea can adopt a strategy of ‘*divide and rule*’ very easily in any kinds of multilateral negotiations. North Korea used these tactics very shrewdly for a long time and achieved what it wanted to have. Through negotiations which were held after their violent behaviors, North Korea received financial as well as material aids from its potential enemies, and succeeded in maintaining their defunct political and economic regime for the past 20 years. Through the help of others, especially from South Korea, North Korea could muster enough money for maintaining their 1.2 million strong military power and a massive nuclear development program.

North Korea will soon complete the development of ICBMs, which will arrive at the targets on the American mainland. If North Korea has the capability to hit the targets in the mainland U.S., then it is very difficult for the United States to keep security commitment with South Korea, such as the nuclear umbrella for the defense and deterrence of South Korea. If the North has the capability to hit the American mainland, America’s commitment towards South Korea will be under the real threat of being hit by North Korea’s nuclear missile attacks.

This is the reason why North Korea has tried so hard to possess longer range rockets with range capabilities to reach the American mainland. Of course, North Korea will never hit any parts of the United States even with the possession such a capability, because that would be committing suicide for North Korea. North Korea just wants to deter the U.S. from helping South Korea in case of a war break out again on the Korean Peninsula.

It is certain that North Korea wants the military ties between South Korea and the United States be severed as long as possible and in this regard, South Korea and the United States must cooperate and build on their alliance stronger than ever.

If North Korea's purposes in having talks with the United States are allowed or fulfilled, then such a situation will be a grave danger for the national security and survival of South Korea. Therefore, if the United States and South Korea has the intention to denuclearize North Korea, than the U.S and South Korea should take the initiatives out from North Korea. For this purpose, South Korea and the United States have to consider every option, including military, in dealing with North Korea. We don't need to say that the Six Party Talks is the only and the best option for solving North Korea's nuclear problems. We have to make North Korea sincerely believe that the United States and South Korea may resort to force as a final method for the solution of North Korea's nuclear problems. We should not remove the coercive measures from the list of options in dealing with North Korea. For this purpose, South Korea and the United States should make clear what they really mean when they say solution of North Korean problems.

### ***Contents for U.S-South Korea Cooperation to Solve North Korean Problems***

For the effective cooperation between South Korea and the United States in solving North Korean problems, the two countries must make it clear as to what the North Korean problems really mean. They also must make clear what kinds of methods need to be used in solving the North Korean problems. They should agree with the goals and methods in their efforts for the solution of the North

Korean problems. This is because it is certain that both the United States and South Korea have different purposes and methods in mind.

In fact, we are not sure whether the United States and South Korea had agreed upon the meaning of the 'solution' of North Korea's nuclear weapons problems. Although it is not possible for the two countries to have identical ideas about North Korea, the differences should be narrowed down to the possible minimum.

Let's think about the meaning of the solution for the North Korea's nuclear weapons problem. During the Clinton presidency, the United States did not think that this to be a grave security problem for the United States. Thus, it was enough for the United States in 1994 for North Korea to promise to stop its nuclear weapons activities at that point. Freezing its nuclear activities was satisfactory for the United States when it made the agreement with North Korea on October 21, 1994 in Geneva. Even though North Korea might have had a few nuclear bombs, it was fine for the United States as long as there were to be no more nuclear activities going forth in North Korea. At that time, some Americans thought that many South Koreans preferred to see North Korea have nuclear weapons because the South Koreans were thinking that the North Korean nuclear weapons would eventually be South Korea's upon unification.<sup>28</sup>

It is true that some Koreans, mostly the left wing government folks in South Korea, did in fact think this way.<sup>29</sup> As shown above, the United States and South Korea did not share the same idea, even

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<sup>28</sup>- David E. Sanger, *The Inheritance: The World Obama Confronts and the Challenges to American Power* (New York: Harmony Books, 2009), p. 289.

<sup>29</sup>- I personally believe this as a very dangerous idea because it will be North Korea, and not South Korea, which will finally achieve national unification on its own terms, if it is allowed to have nuclear weapons.

about the nuclear weapons of North Korea. We no longer have time to disagree about North Korea's nuclear weapons, because North Korea is on the verge of being a full scale nuclear power with fine delivery systems.

Now, the Obama administration, like the preceding Bush administration, regards the "elimination" of all North Korea's nuclear weapons and weapons development programs as a final goal for solving North Korea's nuclear weapons problem. Both South Korea and the United States should stick to this goal. Freezing cannot be an option for North Korea, which already has about 10 nuclear bombs.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond North Korea's nuclear problems, both South Korea and the United States should share in the future of the Korean peninsula vision. There are many possible scenarios for the Korean Peninsula in the future: (1) Continuation of current tension with Kim Jong-Il regime in North Korea; (2) Breakdown of current regime in North Korea, and a pro-Chinese North Korean Government; (3) Breakdown of the current regime in North Korea, occupation of North Korea by the allied forces of the United States and South Korea, unification under a liberal democratic government; (4) An outbreak of war by the current North Korean regime, etc.

Most South Koreans want sincerely to achieve national unification under liberal and democratic government. It is natural that the South Korean people want to assume a leading role in the unification process. Peaceful process is also desired. It is the South Koreans' hope that the United States also shares in this vision about the future of the Korean Peninsula. The Korean people believe that the United States is the most generous and powerful country which

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<sup>30</sup> David Sanger estimated that North Korea had at least 8 nuclear bombs at the end of Bush presidency. Sanger, *Op. Cit.*, p. 269.



can finally support in the unification of the Korean Peninsula.<sup>31</sup> Sharing in the common vision of the future of the Korean Peninsula is the precondition for cooperation between the United States and South Korea in dealing with the daunting problems of North Korea and achieving a unified democratic and liberal country on the Korean Peninsula.

Since the inauguration of Lee Myung-bak government, the U.S.- South Korea alliance relations have substantially improved. There are little differences on the idea of North Korea between the United States and South Korea. However, we should develop U.S.- South Korea alliance further to deal more effectively with the problems not only in the Korean Peninsula, but also in the other parts of the globe. It is imperative that South Korea, as a strategic ally of the United States, support the United States who is now fighting a difficult war against terrorists.

We also want the United States to give more consideration to specific problems of the Korean Peninsula, such as the OPCON transfer question that were signed during the Roh government against the will of the majority of the Korean people. We sincerely hope that the United States will reconsider and postpone the transfer of OPCON to South Korea a few more years until the nuclear question of North Korea is over.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>- Most of the neighboring states surrounding Korean peninsula said they want status quo and stability over the Korean peninsula. We, Koreans fully understand what they really mean. However, division of the nation is hard and difficult for all people in both South and North Korea and therefore, we want a peaceful unification. The neighbors of Korea all say they want peaceful unification, but each has their own calculation about the impact of the unification of Korea to their national interests. The division of Korea does not hurt them, but at the same time, they would rather not face potential danger in the process of unification of the Korean peninsula.

<sup>32</sup>- Almost all South Korean experts on security affairs believe that the OPCON transfer scheduled for April 17, 2012 to occur on time will be dangerous for

## CONCLUSION

The United States and North Korea had been arch enemies for more than 60 years since North Korea was founded in 1948. Now the confrontation between the two has reached its last stage.

However, North Korea is trying to survive through achieving a security guarantee from the United States and wants to unify the whole Korean Peninsula on its terms. As the last communist country in the world, North Korea has a megalomaniac goal of being the leader in the unification process, and they believe that it is possible in the realist world of power politics.

Through the brinkmanship diplomacy with nuclear weapons and long range missiles, North Korea seems to believe that they can survive and even be the unifier of the Korean Peninsula. I have mentioned that the United States and South Korea would and should not allow North Korea to think and act that way. The goals of the United States and South Korea is to denuclearize North Korea and to help them to change their defunct regimes and build a unified Korea which will be ruled by the liberal and democratic government on the Korean Peninsula.

To achieve this noble goal, the United States and South Korea must cooperate. With cooperation, the United States and South Korea can achieve their national goal more easily and effectively. To cooperate, South Korea and the United States should share ideas about North Korea. The two countries should have the common views and answers to the following questions: what is the problem

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the stability of the Korean peninsula. Some American scholars also share the worries of the Korean people. e.g. Bruce Bechtol, Jr., "The U.S. and South Korea: Prospects for CFC, OPCON, and Contingency Plans: Problems and Remedies," Paper presented at the 2009 Joint International Security Conference (Seoul: Capital Hotel, October 29-30, 2009).

of North Korea?; what does it mean to solve the North Korea's nuclear problem?; and, what should be the future of Korea?

The preconditions for cooperation between the United States and South Korea in solving the North Korean problems are sharing the common answers to the above questions.

North Korea is a failed state ruled by a rogue leader who cannot even provide food and shelter to his own people, while endangering the international community with nuclear weapons and long range missiles. Therefore, it is imperative for the peace loving people of the world to remove nuclear weapons from the hands of the North Korean dictator. For permanent peace in Northeast Asia, we should have a vision to build a unified country with liberal and democratic government on the Korean peninsula. We believe that the United States and South Korea under the Obama and Lee presidencies share the common visions and will succeed in solving the problems raised by North Korea with full cooperation.

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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
in the 21st Century*





# *Coordinating North Korea Policy*

*- An American View*

*Richard Fontaine & Micah Springut*

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As the Cold War retreats in history and memory, the American approach to managing relations in northeast Asia continues to evolve. For decades, U.S. policymakers have instinctively looked to their South Korean and Japanese allies as the primary channels through which to engage the region and manage challenges. Today, however, foreign policy in Asia increasingly involves other actors. The U.S. approach to North Korea has typified this trend: whereas Washington once relied primarily on its allies in Seoul and Tokyo for engagement with the North, in recent years it has sought to expand the format for dealing with Pyongyang — culminating in the Six Party Talks that include China and Russia.

Yet America's alliances in the region remain not only the pillars of American engagement in East Asia, but also Washington's most reliable mechanism for dealing with the array of threats posed by the regime in Pyongyang. The Republic of Korea (ROK) is both uniquely positioned to conduct diplomacy with the DPRK and the state most affected by events on the peninsula. If and when an unexpected event occurs in North Korea, it will fall to the ROK and the United States to respond and play the leading role in the peninsula's future. Given this fact, coordination between Washington and Seoul on North Korea policy is of singular importance.

This chapter examines three essential elements of coordination between the U.S. and ROK in managing the North Korean issue: diplomacy towards North Korea, management of the military component of the alliance, and the "whole of government" and "whole of alliance" approaches necessary to meet the challenge of a potential North Korean collapse. Getting all three elements right is critical to the effective management of North Korea policy, and to the continuing vitality of the alliance. While aligning approaches to



North Korea in the region and with other parties is key to any possible success, this effort begins with coordination between Washington and Seoul.

## WHY COORDINATE?

As the hundreds of American and South Korean officials involved in North Korea policy over the years will attest, theirs is a difficult endeavor. Pyongyang's actions and intentions are notoriously inscrutable, and the North's alternating pattern of threats, bluster, and occasional concessions are as treacherous a path to navigate as exists in international relations. The threat posed by Pyongyang's nuclear program, combined with its proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies, naturally represents a major challenge to the current American and South Korean administrations, while the story of the North's on-again, off-again engagement with multilateral nuclear talks consistently fills the headlines.

In the longstanding diplomatic effort to arrest or reverse Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons, failing to coordinate policies threatens to undermine the effectiveness of any approach to an already arduous task. During the Clinton administration, for example, Seoul's fears that Washington was making excessive concessions to the North nearly prevented the realization of the Agreed Framework.<sup>1</sup> By the early years of the George W. Bush administration, the positions were reversed, and the U.S. tried to isolate Pyongyang at the same time that South Korea was making

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<sup>1</sup> Lindsey Ford, Zachary Hosford, and Michael Zubrow, "U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Negotiations: A Survey of the Policy Literature," *Center for a New American Security* (April 2009), p. 21.

efforts to engage the DPRK. Should such gaps reemerge in future diplomatic approaches to Pyongyang, the North will undoubtedly seek to split the parties to its advantage. By achieving a unified approach, Washington and Seoul can ensure greater leverage over Pyongyang and facilitate the difficult task of bringing into alignment the other interested parties, including Tokyo, Beijing, and Moscow. Indeed, the mechanism for conducting nuclear negotiations—the Six Party Talks—was conceived during the Bush administration and retained by the Obama team in part as a way to improve coordination among the five non-North participants. The value of this format—a unified front attempting to push North Korea toward denuclearization—is obviously at maximum impact when those parties are fully aligned in their positions. This exercise has little chance of success, however, if it does not begin with full diplomatic coordination between Washington and Seoul.

Diplomatic coordination would also be of prime importance following any agreement with the North. Whether a pact with Pyongyang reaches the allies' stated goal—full denuclearization—or some other, more modest objective (such as threat reduction), any agreement will require maximum binding power. Because Pyongyang has shown a repeated penchant for abrogating its international commitments, it is necessary to begin with a clearly articulated view of how the parties interpret any commitments reached. Coordination along this dimension begins with the U.S. and the ROK reaching a shared vision of Pyongyang's requirements and then agreement on the terms of implementation. As the troubles that surrounded the implementation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in the 1990s suggest, even a broad agreement reached by several parties can easily founder in the implementation phase.

Apart from diplomatic harmonization, coordinating plans and policies for contingencies north of the demilitarized zone represents a core activity of the U.S.-ROK alliance. While diplomats seek to steer the peninsula towards greater stability, both nations actively prepare — often beyond the headlines — for the possibility of upheaval. Since the Korean War, ROK Armed Forces and U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) have worked to deter and contain North Korean aggression. Both nations are also well aware of the potentially devastating impact of a DPRK collapse, a contingency that could destabilize the peninsula and the region if not properly managed. Short of regime collapse, other events — including renewed famine and nuclear disaster — would demand a coordinated response.

The decades-long experience of extended cooperation between the two militaries provides a durable foundation upon which to manage such challenges. Planned changes in the operational structure of U.S.-ROK military integration, however, threaten to undermine this effort at a time when coordination should be expanded. In addition, the manifold challenges that instability north of the DMZ pose to the United States and South Korea demand that the two allies employ a whole-of-government and a whole of alliance approach that synchronizes civilian and military efforts. Thus far, this issue has not received the degree of attention in Seoul and Washington that it requires.

Properly coordinating North Korea policy offers benefits that go beyond the specifics of diplomacy with the North or planning for the “day after.” The U.S.-ROK alliance has demonstrated its resilience over decades and represents an important pillar of stability in northeast Asia. Uncoordinated North Korea policies promote bilateral distrust and misunderstanding, risking strains in the alliance that can spill over into the larger U.S.-ROK agenda.

Given all that each side has put into this unique relationship—the time and energy, troops and treasure, hopes and expectations—neither Washington nor Seoul can afford to risk such an outcome. In coordinating its North Korea policies, Seoul and Washington have the opportunity to strengthen their alliance and demonstrate its vitality, rather than to uncover cracks that invite doubts about its future.

### ***Coordination on the Diplomatic Front***

Active diplomatic efforts to achieve full denuclearization of the Korean peninsula have taken place for nearly two decades. Throughout these years, seemingly every possible format and configuration has been tried in an attempt to persuade Pyongyang to reverse its pursuit of nuclear weapons. At various moments, the U.S. has supported negotiations between North and South Korea, talks between the DPRK and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks, Four-Party Talks, Six-Party Talks, multilateral talks with the opportunity for bilateral engagement, and multilateral talks precluding bilateral engagement. In each of these efforts, the nature of coordination between Washington and Seoul has been a key variable, and attempts to achieve a common position have consumed great amounts of time and effort on both sides.

Common positions have at times been elusive. This is partly explained by the sheer number of issues on the diplomatic agenda, which includes not only denuclearization, but also missile production, proliferation, the North's conventional force posture, Japanese abductees, internal stability, and human rights. As both sides have pursued a mix of carrots (such as economic assistance, high level visits, and the provision of heavy fuel oil) and sticks

(including sanctions, aid cut-offs, military exercises and threats directed at the North, and the interdiction of illicit materials), each has held its own view of the means necessary to prompt changes in Pyongyang's behavior. Beyond the means, however, both sides have frequently disagreed about the desired end state itself. South Korea, for example, given its proximity to the North and the serious implications of an unstable state north of the DMZ, has tended to place a greater priority on regime stability than the United States. Washington, on the other hand, has generally emphasized proliferation and human rights to a greater degree than has Seoul. Domestic policy differences are also important. Liberal South Korean politicians have stressed the need for reconciliation between North and South more than their conservative counterparts, who have emphasized to a greater extent the threat posed by Pyongyang and the ROK's defensive needs. These different approaches to means and ends have presented natural challenges of coordination.

Some coordination problems have sprung less from differing strategic calculations and more from the delicate and sometimes emotional nature that North-South relations plays in South Korean politics. Even if South Korean leaders view the U.S. as indispensable in diplomacy with North Korea, a strong current of opinion in South Korea remains uncomfortable being perceived as a "junior partner" on the country's most important foreign policy issue, and one so central to its national identity. South Korean policymakers have sometimes encouraged their American counterparts to make concessions to North Korea as talks sputter, only to attempt to rein in U.S. progress later. Such contradictory behavior is partly driven by distress at being sidelined on such a critical issue, but also by a feeling by many in the South feel that only they, as Koreans, truly understand how to manage their northern

counterparts.<sup>2</sup> Finally, like leaders in any democracy, South Korean policymakers also feel pressure to respond to shifts in public opinion and criticism from the media, which can trend alternately toward an accommodationist or hard-line stance.

*The First Bush Administration:* Taking office near the end of the Cold War, the George H.W. Bush administration was the first to attempt to seriously engage North Korea on its nuclear program. Although the administration was internally divided over whether to emphasize pressure against Pyongyang or to seek an accommodation, the President supported a strategy of “comprehensive engagement.” The U.S. decision to withdraw nuclear warheads from South Korea and cancel Team Spirit military exercises appeared to prompt Pyongyang to slow its weapons production.<sup>3</sup>

While the Bush administration faced internal division about whether to proceed with direct nuclear negotiations with the North, it also met resistance from Seoul. South Korean officials expressed concern that such talks would be unproductive, and complained about a lack of consultation with Washington.<sup>4</sup> In the face of these objections, the administration offered inducements to the North and encouraged talks between North and South and between Pyongyang and the IAEA. The approach produced a safeguards agreement with the IAEA, but progress quickly stalled in 1992 as the IAEA and South Korea employed tougher tactics.

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2- Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 19, pp. 33-35.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 25; Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (Washington D.C.: USIP Press, 2002), p. 108.

4- Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea*, pp. 19-33.

*The Clinton Administration:* Denuclearization efforts gathered steam and prominence during the Clinton administration, particularly after 1993 when the DPRK announced its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The provocation came as a shock to the new South Korean administration of Kim Young-sam, which had hoped that a diplomatic solution to the nuclear issue would accompany his policy of reconciliation. Following close consultations among the U.S., the ROK, and Japan, America's allies lined up behind a strategy of "gradual escalation," which called for both diplomacy and preparations for sanctions in the event that talks failed. In a nod to the ROK, the U.S. insisted that North-South dialogue play a role in the diplomatic process, though some participants concluded that it actually hindered progress in the talks between the U.S. and Pyongyang.

The process of direct American bilateral talks with Pyongyang — culminating in the 1994 Agreed Framework — revealed the challenges of coordination with Seoul. The Clinton team briefed South Korean diplomats at the end of each negotiating day, a move that kept the ROK side informed about the conduct of the talks and allowed it to offer input for the next day of negotiations.<sup>5</sup> However, South Korean delegates essentially waited in the hallway while the U.S. negotiated with the North, producing suspicions among ROK officials that the U.S. was proceeding in a fashion that did not fully protect Seoul's interests.<sup>6</sup> Because of this distrust, one Korea expert has written, "no

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<sup>5</sup> During early negotiations, daily meetings were held between lead negotiator Robert Gallucci and Seoul's UN ambassador, Chong-ha Yu, and close contacts were maintained between the State Department and its Washington embassy. This information was passed along to the Blue House, and advice from Seoul was passed back to the Americans through these channels. See Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> Even had the United States wished to fully align with South Korea behind unified goals, the speed with which negotiations took place would have made doing so exceedingly difficult. U.S. negotiators later reflected on the great difficulty required

concession or compromise in U.S.-DPRK negotiations proved too small to shock the South Korean public, to reinvigorate paranoid debate in some quarters about the possibility of a U.S. betrayal....”<sup>7</sup>

South Korean officials were, for example, infuriated by U.S.-DPRK joint statements in the spring of 1993 regarding inspections and American intentions not to use force against the North. These officials expressed less outrage about the actual content of the statements than with the way in which they were issued: Seoul first learned about them from North Korean officials.<sup>8</sup> One American official compared the reaction of South Koreans (among both officials and the general public) to that of a spouse who discovers his partner committing adultery. In the first of many such instances during the course of the negotiations, pressure from domestic opponents and the media drove the Kim administration to take a harder line and to come out publicly against the direction of talks.<sup>9</sup>

Another rift emerged between Washington and Seoul in late 1993, this time over a media leak that alleged the U.S. was pursuing a “comprehensive package” deal with North Korea. The allegation opened President Kim to further charges among South Korean hardliners that his government was a mere bystander in talks with the North. Following this episode, American officials concluded that their close contact with South Korean embassy staff and envoys did not do enough to ensure policy coordination with Seoul, and

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simply to agree upon talking points within the U.S. interagency process, let alone with other countries. Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, pp. 64-65; Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Gallucci, *et. al.*, *Going Critical*, pp. 66-67, pp. 82-88; Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, pp. 71-72.



began to establish closer contacts with the Foreign Ministry, Blue House and the President himself. Repeated summits and conversations between Presidents Clinton and Kim enabled the two sides to overcome prior suspicions and to align policies in an unprecedented fashion.<sup>10</sup> In one telling anecdote, President Kim reportedly told President Clinton that he would stand up to media attacks on a particular negotiating issue, since Clinton had taken the time to call.<sup>11</sup> Such high-level communications were particularly important when former President Jimmy Carter's personal diplomacy with Pyongyang interrupted ongoing preparations by the U.S., South Korea and Japan to impose sanctions and sent the U.S. back to negotiations.<sup>12</sup>

U.S. coordination with Seoul and Tokyo was also essential during the Geneva talks that culminated in the Agreed Statement and the establishment of KEDO. The pact required Pyongyang's acceptance of South Korean involvement in building light-water nuclear reactors in the North, and of Seoul's willingness to provide financing for the project. Despite close coordination, President Kim nearly upended the agreement when, fearful of domestic political pressures, he publically denounced the U.S. negotiating strategy and criticized the Clinton administration's ignorance and over-eagerness to make concessions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>- High level visitors tended to be exchanged every six to eight weeks. Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*, p. 113; Robert L. Gallucci, et. al., *Going Critical*, pp. 108-111.

<sup>11</sup>- *Ibid*, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup>- After months of rising tension in the spring of 1994, Carter travelled to North Korea with President Clinton's permission and unexpectedly secured a promise from Pyongyang to freeze its nuclear weapons programs and enter into high level talks with the U.S.: Ford, Hosford and Zubrow, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>- James Sterngold, "South Korea President Lashes Out at U.S.," *The New York Times*, October 8, 1994. The sequencing of the deal would have allowed all the benefits to Kim's predecessor, and put all the sacrifices on the current

Coordination issues went beyond the difficulties inherent in aligning the American and South Korean negotiating teams behind a common position. Following the Agreed Framework, for example, Japan resisted funding initiatives stemming from the deal – a deal it had not directly negotiated.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the U.S. had its own coordination problems at home. The new Republican majority in the Congress, brought to power in the 1994 elections, drew strong objection to the bargain with Pyongyang and took particular exception to the provision of a light water reactor to the North.<sup>15</sup> The administration's subsequent struggle to secure funding for KEDO delayed its promised shipments of heavy fuel and made it impossible to provide the reactor on deadline.<sup>16</sup> In the face of continued DPRK intransigence, the U.S., Japan and two Koreas entered into Four-Party Talks in 1997, a mechanism designed to blunt the DPRK's brinkmanship tactics, expand intra-peninsula diplomacy, and sustain the Agreed Framework and KEDO.<sup>17</sup>

While South Korea had previously criticized the American approach to the North as insufficiently firm, the election of Kim Dae-jung in 1998 and the establishment of his "Sunshine Policy" of engagement and concessions turned the situation on its head. Washington grew exasperated with North Korea's non-compliance with the Agreed Framework and leaned towards expanding sanctions against the North, while at the same time Seoul sought a

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administration. Robert L. Gallucci, *et. al.*, *Going Critical*, pp. 313-314.

<sup>14</sup>– Lindsey Ford, "U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Negotiations: A Survey of the Policy Literature," p. 20.

<sup>15</sup>– Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>16</sup>– Mike Chinoy, *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), p. 8.

<sup>17</sup>– Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*, pp. 134-135; Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), p. 283.

path of greater accommodation with North Korea. After a policy review conducted by former Secretary of Defense William Perry called for further engagement of North Korea, U.S. and ROK policies became further aligned and the U.S. established the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) as a forum for consultation among the U.S., ROK and Japan. The TCOG, which was to endure until 2003, constituted a formalization of previous trilateral talks.<sup>18</sup>

*The George W. Bush Administration:* With respect to North Korea policy, the change from Clinton to Bush was, according to one official who served both presidents, “about as dramatic as any change I have seen in foreign policy.”<sup>19</sup> Relations between Washington and Seoul became strained over differences in philosophical approach to North Korea, particularly after President Bush’s famous 2002 speech in which he labeled North Korea a member of the “axis of evil,” and the administration’s adoption of a tougher stance toward Pyongyang than that of its predecessors. A first summit between Bush and Kim Dae-jung went poorly, and South Koreans routinely disparaged what they perceived as unduly hawkish rhetoric emanating from Washington. Bilateral U.S.-DPRK talks early in the Bush administration made little progress, and they broke down completely following American accusations of a secret North Korean highly enriched uranium program.

Yet rising from the embers of bilateral diplomacy came a new, multilateral strategy for engaging North Korea: the Six Party

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<sup>18</sup> Lindsey Ford. *et. al.*, “U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Negotiations: A Survey of the Policy Literature,” pp. 20-21.

<sup>19</sup> Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard, interview with authors, Washington D.C., October 20, 2009.

Talks, in which the U.S., South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia were drawn into the negotiation process. The forum began after China invited the U.S. and DPRK into trilateral talks, which the U.S. then succeeded in expanding to include its allies.<sup>20</sup> A six party framework allowed the U.S. to consolidate its cooperation with the allies, leverage the persuasive tools of its partners, and help immunize them from the possibility of DPRK-created divisions.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the failures of the Six Party Talks, they did serve – at least in their earlier incarnation – as an effective tool for closing gaps with the allies. In the first few rounds of negotiations, the U.S., South Korea and Japan met under formal conditions to exchange positions, discuss the upcoming agenda and decide who should take the lead on issues (usually with bilateral U.S.-Japan discussions taking place first) – before engaging China in an attempt to win its support for the allied position. Strategy disagreements between the White House and Blue House naturally arose, with Seoul arguing for more carrots and fewer sticks, an interim freeze of nuclear programs rather than immediate dismantlement, and more vigorous efforts by the U.S. in bilateral talks. U.S. negotiators often ignored their suggestions, but not before lengthy discussions and the establishment of solid agreement on basic principles.<sup>22</sup>

No diplomatic format could, however, serve as a panacea in the face of the DPRK's intransigence and challenges in the broader U.S.-ROK relationship. Presidents Bush and Roh Moo-hyun approached the North from different philosophical and personal

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<sup>20</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 262-281.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>22</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, "The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis," p. 343, pp. 361-363.

backgrounds, and Seoul-Washington ties were strained by a series of developments, including anti-American demonstrations in 2002, Roh's comments about being a "balancer" between the United States and China and suspicions of Roh, deriving from a number of anti-U.S. and anti-alliance statements he made before becoming President.<sup>23</sup> Despite these challenges, the two sides were able to make progress in several significant areas, including defense realignment, free trade, and alignment of overall goals in nuclear negotiations—a testament to the strength of official relationships below the very top levels.<sup>24</sup>

By 2005 and the fourth round of Six Party Talks, however, the process of consultations with the allies began to fray badly. Discord between South Korea and Japan broke out over an unrelated territorial dispute, leading the ROK to reject almost all contact with the Japanese. Several individuals involved on the American side have also attributed this shift at least in part to a reluctance on the part of lead negotiator Christopher Hill to embrace allied agendas—Japan's focus on the abductees issue in particular.<sup>25</sup> The Japanese and Americans, for their part, began to see the South Koreans as unwilling to take any steps that would provoke the North. These developments made the State Department's interest in enhanced consultation with China even more attractive.<sup>26</sup>

The U.S. administration's attempts to coordinate approaches

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23- Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance," *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance*, Center for a New American Security (January 2009), pp. 15-16; Yoichi Funabashi, "The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis," p. 219.

24- Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance," pp. 13-15 and Thomas C. Hubbard interview.

25- Interviews with knowledgeable former officials, October, 2009.

26- Yoichi Funabashi, "The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis," pp. 425-431.

with the South were also seriously compromised by a near inability to achieve consensus at home. As Ambassador Hill (supported by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice) stepped up engagement with the DPRK in an attempt to win a lasting agreement, broad interagency discord emerged without resolution. Because of the great difficulty—and perhaps impossibility—of winning formal interagency acceptance of policy positions, the U.S. negotiating team took to fleshing out negotiating positions and strategy in the field, rather than in Washington. This turn of events was compounded by a lack of congressional buy-in to the administration's overall approach to North Korea. Together, the internal lack of coordination on the U.S. side rendered the task of coordinating policy with Seoul increasingly difficult.

A different, but similarly complicating, dynamic played out among South Korean government agencies. The Roh administration's Unification Ministry received a Blue House mandate to fund North Korea-related programs without coordinating its efforts with either the United States or with its own Foreign Ministry. Its unconditional engagement with North Korea made Seoul's overall efforts to align with the other members of the Six Party Talks more difficult.<sup>27</sup> This experience, like the Bush administration's internal conflicts, strongly points toward the importance of both Washington and Seoul ordering their own houses before attempting to win the support of foreign allies.

*The Obama Administration:* Given its short residence in office, it is possible to draw only tentative conclusions about the way in which the Obama administration intends to coordinate diplomatic

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<sup>27</sup>- Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance," p. 24.

positions with respect to North Korea. Obama and Korean President Lee Myung-bak are more aligned in outlook than the previous occupants of their offices. After the nuclear test by North Korea in the spring of 2009, both administrations came out in favor of a six party process, but the five parties have yet to agree on a comprehensive package to offer the North Koreans. Coordination problems, however, remain. In the latest incident, the White House brushed aside Seoul's proposal for a "grand bargain" with North Korea, apparently after Seoul failed to effectively communicate the proposal to Washington.<sup>28</sup> In the meantime, the administration has expressed openness to bilateral talks with Pyongyang led by the Special Representative on North Korea.<sup>29</sup> Such discussions, administration officials have been careful to note, do not represent the meat of negotiations over the North's nuclear program or other core aspects of the Six Party agenda, but rather constitute a forum through which the U.S. hopes to persuade Pyongyang to return to the Six Party Talks so that the formal negotiations can resume.<sup>30</sup>

It is as yet unclear what challenges of coordination such an approach will entail. It does, however, seem reasonable to conclude that, absent a highly disciplined bilateral negotiating posture, issues that had formally been under the purview of the six parties may "bleed" into the bilateral forum, irrespective of Washington's intention to use them for a more limited objective. This, then, would present the same sorts of coordination challenges that have characterized previous bilateral efforts — namely, the requirement to

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<sup>28</sup>— "Playing Out of Tune," *JoongAng Daily*, October 23, 2009.

<sup>29</sup>— Ji-hyun, Kim, "U.S., N. Korea May Hold Talks in Beijing" *Korea Herald*, October 19, 2009.

<sup>30</sup>— "Any North Korea meeting must lead to six way talk: U.S.," *Reuters*, October 19, 2009.

brief allies on a daily basis and solicit input for future talks; the difficulty or impossibility of fully coordinating negotiating positions in the midst of a live set of bilateral negotiations; and the difficulty of bringing China on board in an attempt to maximize leverage.

### ***Diplomatic Coordination: Recommendations and Lessons Learned***

A review of the diplomatic experience that has marked the past several American and South Korean administrations—and numerous rounds of diplomacy with Pyongyang—suggests several lessons and recommendations to guide future negotiations.

*Maintain discipline at home.* The Clinton administration was notoriously unable to get Congressional buy-in to its North Korea approach, particularly after the Agreed Framework and the emergence of a Republican majority on Capitol Hill in 1994. The Bush administration faced objections not only from Congress but from its own agencies, prompting grave problems of internal coordination. South Korea has endured similar challenges. Such experiences put a primacy on each side putting its own house in order to the maximum degree possible. This entails strong presidential leadership on each side to make clear to all elements of government that any given approach has support at the highest level, and requires the appointment of a senior negotiator that has the full imprimatur of the president. On the U.S. side, there is a need for greater executive-legislative coordination, which should begin with regular consultations between administration officials (including negotiators) and congressional leaders.



*Coordinate all aspects of North Korea policy.* Given the disparate perceptions of threat and opportunity inherent in how Washington and Seoul view the North, and the different emphases they place on each aspect of North Korean misbehavior, it is inevitable that each side will weigh issues differently. Nevertheless, the U.S. and the ROK should make a more concerted effort to move beyond coordination on the nuclear agenda to other issues, including proliferation and human rights. A start in this direction would include, as Victor Cha has suggested, the appointment in Seoul of a special envoy for North Korean human rights.<sup>31</sup>

*Conduct pre and after-action exercises.* Before any round of negotiations – and particularly surrounding any bilateral U.S.-DPRK talks – the United States should solicit input from the allies and brief them on the agenda. After any negotiations, American diplomats should share with Seoul and Tokyo their views of how the talks proceeded and solicit corresponding views from their counterparts. This is important even at negotiations in which Seoul and Tokyo participate, as discussions about the content and character of North Korean talking points can prevent misunderstandings of North Korea's views.

*Ensure communication between officials.* Media leaks, personal frictions between top officials, and domestic pressures all pose various perils to policy coordination. One method for mitigating the negative effects of these incidents can be summed up with the mantra of one former U.S. official: “consult, consult, consult.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>– Victor D. Cha, “Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance,” p. 25.

<sup>32</sup>– Evans Revere, telephone interview with authors, October 23, 2009.

High-level and routine NSC to NSC and State Department to Foreign Ministry communications can help overcome misunderstandings, offer course corrections, and put out fires before they engulf diplomatic action.

*Recognize the importance of Japan.* It is difficult, if not impossible, for the U.S. to productively coordinate North Korea policy with its allies when the two are not themselves interested in coordination with each other. When, during President Roh's administration, South Korea was reluctant to coordinate directly with Japan, the U.S. team was forced to consult with Tokyo, then brief Seoul, and vice versa. Trilateral coordination is more efficient and by far the more preferable course.<sup>33</sup>

*The bilateral question.* The United States should not shy away from bilateral discussions with Pyongyang within the context of the Six Party Talks. At the same time, however, ensuring coordination of positions in advance of bilateral talks is imperative. An extensive series of interviews conducted by researchers with Korean and Japanese officials revealed a remarkable degree of comfort with the prospect of bilateral Washington-Pyongyang talks – particularly at the outset of renewed diplomatic engagement with North Korea – so long as the United States coordinates positions with its allies.<sup>34</sup> Given that the same study found that bilateral talks have been the primary driver of progress in negotiations, and given the Obama administration's stated willingness to engage bilaterally in an

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33- Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis*, p. 427.

34- Michael Zubrow and Zachary Hosford, *Lessons Learned: A Guide to Negotiations with the DPRK*, *Center for a New American Security*, forthcoming.

attempt to move Pyongyang back to the six party framework, the U.S. and the ROK should consult closely on the way in which the United States will go about direct talks with Pyongyang.

### ***Military Coordination and Transfer of Operational Command***

Talks aimed at denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will continue to occupy global attention and the energy of leaders in Washington and Seoul. Yet as these talks proceed – and even when they do not – another bilateral process is taking place that has as its ambit the future direction of North Korea. Preparing for potential crises north of the DMZ remains a critical, but often overlooked, element of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Nearly thirty thousand American troops are stationed on the Korean peninsula, in place to dissuade and defeat North Korean military aggression, maintain regional stability, and respond to potential turmoil, including contingencies within North Korea. Through various integration mechanisms, the U.S. and South Korean armed forces jointly plan for contingencies and prepare to operate in unison if the need arises. Within the next several years, however, longstanding components of the bilateral military relationship will change in ways that place greater responsibility in the hands of the ROK Armed Forces. Some in Seoul have worried aloud that these changes may harm cooperation between the two militaries, weaken their fighting ability, and put the American commitment to South Korea in doubt. It is the task of officials in both Washington and Seoul to ensure that this is not the case.

The most important change in the military alliance in more than a decade is scheduled to take place on April 17, 2012. On that date, the U.S. intends to transfer wartime Operational Control

(OPCON) to the South Korean Armed Forces. Prior to the transfer, the United States will maintain unified command of all American and South Korean forces on the peninsula in the case of any conflict; after the transfer, Korean and American forces will operate under separate war-fighting commands—with the ROK taking the leading role during conflict. More precisely, ground and naval conflict would be spearheaded by the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), aided by U.S. ground, naval, and marine operations support, under the tentatively named KORCOM. Air missions, meanwhile, will remain something of a throwback, as an American commander will have direct control over nearly all U.S. and ROK air forces during conflict.<sup>35</sup>

President Roh Moo-hyun originally proposed OPCON transfer as a way by which South Korea could demonstrate its military self-sufficiency and create a more equal relationship with its American ally. At the time, the move was vigorously criticized by Roh's own generals and by South Korean conservatives concerned that it would degrade South Korean security. The decision was embraced, however, by the U.S. Department of Defense as helpful to its force posture modernization goals on the peninsula and reflective of South Korea's formidable ability to defend itself against threats from the North.<sup>36</sup> Still, several concerns with OPCON transfer remain and have yet to be sufficiently addressed.

The first is the psychological impact of the change, as the

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<sup>35</sup>— This will occur through an arrangement in which the American commander will report to KORCOM and the ROK JCS, but direct U.S. and ROK air assets in war through the Combined Air Component Command (CACC), under the ROK JCS. United States Department of Defense official (October 2009); knowledgeable Washington strategist with extensive connections in the ROK government, interview with author (October 2009); Taik-young Hamm, "The ROK Towards Defense Self-Reliance: The Self-Reliant National Defense of South Korea and the Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance," *Military Technology* (January 2007), p. 339.

<sup>36</sup>— Mike Chinoy, *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 262-263.

upcoming termination of U.S. command has intensified South Korean concerns about America's commitment to their defense. A loss of U.S. command, some worry, may make the U.S. less determined to assist the ROK during times of conflict. The timing of the change also remains an issue, as ROK officials often convey to Washington that they will not be prepared to take command by 2012.<sup>37</sup> U.S. officials insist in public that OPCON transfer will take place as scheduled, but off the record comments from some in the Obama administration suggest the United States may show flexibility down the road, if conditions demand it.<sup>38</sup>

The operational challenges involved in OPCON transfer are especially daunting. The U.S. and South Korea have spent the last sixty years devising military plans and a division of labor to suit their respective capabilities. The transfer of command will require that this division of labor be reworked and plans redrawn. Although the U.S. will provide certain "bridging" (short term) and "enduring" (long term) capabilities to the ROK, South Korean forces must procure new systems and train for a range of new missions they will be required to perform under the post-2012 arrangement, including in the areas of early warning, target acquisition, intelligence, operational planning, C4I (command, control, communications, computers and intelligence), and joint battlefield management.<sup>39</sup> Some analysts maintain that careful planning on both sides and lessons learned over time will allow for strong coordination between the two

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<sup>37</sup>- Sung-ki Jung, "Calls Grow to Reschedule Command Transfer," *Korea Times*, May 27, 2009.

<sup>38</sup>- "U.S. hints at possible delay in OPCON transfer: official," Asia Pulse Data Source via COMTEX (October 18, 2009), <[http://www.individual.com/story.php?story=1086\\_05934](http://www.individual.com/story.php?story=1086_05934)>.

<sup>39</sup>- Kate Ousely, "Wartime Operational Control," *SAIS U.S.-Korea Yearbook 2006*, <<http://uskoreainstitute.org/pdf/Yearbooks/2006/2006%20SAIS%20USKI%20YB%20Chapt3.pdf>>, pp. 33-38.

commands. Critics, on the other hand, charge that the new set-up will fail to match the efficiency of a unified command.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the most crucial of the changes, at least in the minds of many critics, is the planned dissolution of the Combined Forces Command (CFC). The CFC is an integrated organization of American and South Korean commanders that would lead a military response in wartime and reports to the national command authorities of both the United States and South Korea.<sup>41</sup> It is led by an American four- star general and supported by a four-star Korean deputy commander, an American three-star chief of staff, and subordinate command units with alternating American and Korean commanders and deputy commanders.<sup>42</sup> In addition to ensuring a joint response from the U.S. and ROK to a potential crisis, the CFC stands as the “keystone of an arch,” tied to a host of command mechanisms and contingency plans.<sup>43</sup>

Given the great importance of coordinating military responses to any potential crisis, the U.S. and South Korea have a strong interest in fashioning mechanisms capable of meeting their military objectives. Washington and Seoul have begun setting up an array of subsidiary coordination cells that will come online when the CFC dissolves: a Combined Operational Coordination Group (a liaison team in support of ROK JCS), a Joint Operational Coordination Group (to provide ROK operational support to KORCOM), a Combined Warning and Indications Operations Center (indications and

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40- Sung-ki Jung, “South Korea to Launch Theatre Command by '09,” *Defense News*, March 13, 2009.

41- Bruce E. Bechtol and Richard C. Bush III, “Change of U.S.-ROK Wartime Operational Command,” *The Brookings Institution* (September 14, 2006).

42- Bruce Klingner, “Its not right time to discuss OPCON transfer,” *The Heritage Foundation* (June 22, 2009).

43- Bruce E. Bechtol, “Change of U.S.-ROK Wartime Operational Command.”

warning), a Combined Logistics Coordination Center (supporting ROK JCS), the Alliance Korea Joint C-2 System (the alliance C4I system), and an Alliance Military Cooperation Center (to provide political-military guidance to ROK and U.S. commanders).<sup>44</sup> Yet these mechanisms will not constitute a one for one replacement of the CFC; instead, they will primarily aid the ROK JCS in informing KORCOM of its orders and directives, in receiving awareness and intelligence input from KORCOM, and in de-conflicting the two forces. This represents a major change in command relations, not a simple reshuffling.<sup>45</sup>

However significant the dissolution of the CFC – and for some the real issue is the political optics associated with the move – it is also clear that many of the concerns raised about OPCON transfer are, in fact, the sorts of normal concerns that accompany any evolving military relationship. Ten years ago, the CFC was, in reality, a U.S. command mechanism – according to a DOD official, South Koreans were “there in body, but not in spirit.”<sup>46</sup> The last decade has seen the ROK Armed Forces take a much more active role, and OPCON transfer will represent another, significant development in this respect.<sup>47</sup> Since 2007, the outlines of the transfer have taken shape in several documents, including the joint Strategic Transition Plan, in American command relations studies and, most recently, in the Korean joint staff’s OPCON Transition Action Plan.<sup>48</sup> Yet however detailed the plans, much

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<sup>44</sup>– Interview with Washington strategist and “Defense White Paper 2008,” *The Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea*, p. 94.

<sup>45</sup>– Interview with DOD official.

<sup>46</sup>– *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>– *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>– *Ibid.*

remains to be determined with respect to how each military will operate under these new conditions.

The two sides have already begun a series of joint military exercises leading up to 2012 to test the new structures and working out any kinks in advance.<sup>49</sup> In the recent *Ulchi Freedom Guardian* exercises, the allies discovered several integration challenges, including linking U.S. and South Korean communications systems (language barriers remain a complication—the exercises were carried out in English, but war will be waged in Korean).<sup>50</sup> Having clarified end states and alliance goals, and tested provisional plans in the field, the two militaries must now clarify and improve the necessary operational plans.<sup>51</sup>

Through the OPCON transfer process, the alliance must also consider the issue of South Korea's military modernization and defense transformation goals. According to South Korea's *Defense Reform 2020* document, the ROK intends to build leaner, more modern armed forces, with better capabilities in C4I, detection and precision.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, however, ROK joint planning and procurement is notoriously ad hoc, and has often been imitative of the American military. A distinct advantage of the CFC structure is that it has wrapped the South Korean military within the Pentagon's planning process.<sup>53</sup> After the CFC is dissolved, and as South Korea looks to modernize its military, it will face planning and pro-

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<sup>49</sup>—Sung-ki Jung, "South Korea to Launch Theatre Command by '09," *Defense News*, March 13, 2009.

<sup>50</sup>—Interview with DOD official. Still, the Pentagon felt the difficulties were manageable and certified that OPCON transfer is on track.

<sup>51</sup>—Interview with DOD official.

<sup>52</sup>—"South Korean Military Doctrine," GlobalSecurity.org, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/rok/doctrine.htm>>.

<sup>53</sup>—Interview with Ambassador Hubbard.



curement challenges as it seeks to acquire new capabilities.

Finally, OPCON transfer brings into sharper relief existing questions in Seoul and Beijing about the purpose of U.S. military forces on the peninsula. By handing to the ROK the near-exclusive responsibility for conducting ground operations in a peninsular war, OPCON transfer renders transparent the fact that conflict will not automatically trigger a massive influx of some 600,000 U.S. troops to the peninsula (as called for in earlier war plans).<sup>54</sup> Though this has been the reality of war planning for some time, as the modernization of the ROK armed forces has made such a massive response unnecessary, the transfer of command has raised these issues anew. In addition, by recognizing the capacity of South Korea to command forces in case of conflict, OPCON transfer has prodded observers in both Beijing and Seoul to wonder whether the U.S. presence on the peninsula is geared partially toward China. And the fact remains that both nations have different views about how to handle the PRC; indeed, South Korean officials have shied away from discussions with their American counterparts about China or with their Chinese counterparts about end states on the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, such issues will increasingly rise to the forefront of the strategic agenda in East Asia.

### ***OPCON Transfer: Recommendations***

Improving the OPCON transfer process will be important to securing the U.S.-ROK alliance's vital operational military relation-

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<sup>54</sup> Michael J. Finnegan, interview with author, Washington D.C., October 2009, and Taik-young Hamm, "The ROK Towards Defense Self-Reliance: The Self-Reliant National Defense of South Korea and the Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance," *Military Technology* (January 2007), p. 339.

ship. The following recommendations should guide this process:

*Ease fears and deter.* To allay fears of abandonment in Seoul and to deter Pyongyang, Washington should make clear that the United States maintains its obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty to defend the ROK. In addition, the U.S. must maintain a continued stated commitment to the provision of a nuclear umbrella.<sup>55</sup> As OPCON transfer potentially adds doubt about the American role on the peninsula and blurs previously clear responsibilities, Washington and Seoul should agree on defense guidelines (similar to those that exist between the U.S. and Japan), clarifying responsibilities and commitments to various missions — both on the peninsula and beyond, in light of South Korea’s increasingly regional and global military role.

*Bolster coordination mechanisms.* After dissolution of the CFC, the U.S. and ROK militaries will never be as “joint” as they once were. The allies must, however, continue to develop coordination mechanisms and test them in the field.

*Stress combined planning.* Combined planning not only assures tactical readiness for various contingencies — from full-scale war on the peninsula, to interdiction efforts, to surgical strikes inside North Korea — but also reassures both sides of their mutual commitments. A common understanding of missions and goals also provides the

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<sup>55</sup>— In June 2009, President Obama provided a written assurance to the ROK of the U.S.’s “continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella,” the first time such a commitment was made at such a level. See Sung-ki Jung, “U.S. Nuclear Umbrella: Double Edged Sword for S. Korea,” *The Korea Times*, June 24, 2009; Richard Halloran, “Nuclear Umbrella,” *Real Clear Politics*, June 21, 2009.

foundation for force planning and the division of roles essential to successfully carry out OPCON transfer. Quiet discussions of contingencies beyond the peninsula should be considered on a Track 1.5 and II level.

*Aid ROK defense transformation.* American advice and training in force planning and procurement processes can help the ROK identify needs and priorities. Consultation with the U.S. will also ensure that the ROK understands how the equipment it acquires interacts with that of American forces and can be employed to its fullest potential. Continued joint training missions will remain an important testing ground for new capabilities.

*Maintain guarded flexibility on OPCON transfer.* Flexibility in OPCON transfer can help ensure that the right mechanisms and capabilities are in place at the time of transfer and that the wrong message is not sent to Pyongyang at an inconvenient time. This does not mean that leaders in Seoul and Washington should seek to delay transfer for vague political reasons, but rather that they should consider the specific concerns of military commanders and the overall foreign policy environment in which transfer would take place. In the meantime, insistence on the current transfer date provides a catalyst for the ROK military to make necessary changes to assume wartime command.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Bruce Klingner, "Its not right time to discuss OPCON transfer," *The Heritage Foundation* (June 22, 2009).

## **PREPARING THE ALLIANCE FOR A COLLAPSE SCENARIO**

Heeding the above recommendations will be essential to ensuring a smooth transfer of operational command, complete with adequate coordination mechanisms, and to meeting a range of alliance military goals. On their own, however, they are not sufficient for achieving a core alliance mission: preparing for instability, including potential collapse, in the North. Given the complexities inherent in any required response and the significant consequences such a contingency would pose for the wider region, these issues deserve special attention. Yet diplomatic sensitivities and continuing inertia in the alliance have produced a yawning gap in coordination between the allies in this sphere. A collapse contingency would require a “whole of government” and “whole of alliance” approach that involves military, civilian, foreign, non-governmental, and private entities to meet the manifold challenge such a scenario would pose.

However remote a possibility it may seem at present, a wholesale collapse of the North Korean regime would pose extraordinary challenges for the U.S. and South Korea. At a minimum, a DPRK government collapse would require that the U.S. and ROK be able to: (1) immediately fill the power vacuum and stabilize North Korean territory; (2) rebuild the economy and government of a poor and traumatized nation; and (3) ensure that the reconfigured geopolitical arrangement of the peninsula is conducive to long-term stability in northeast Asia. This is to say that collapse and unification would likely require the full array of tasks associated with nation building, including peacekeeping, reconstruction, economic and political development, and regional diplomacy. It would involve significant

financial costs, and require strong diplomatic and military management to shape geopolitical outcomes.<sup>57</sup> The way in which any collapse occurs – involving economic decay, a coup, a revolt, civil war, or conflict with outside powers – would also introduce unpredictable variables to this challenge. In addition to considering the implications of such contingencies for alliance operations, there exists a range of scenarios short of total collapse that deserve attention, including famine, natural disaster, internal chaos, and refugee flows.

The South Korean government, along with China and several American administrations, has expressed a strong preference that any unification of North and South take place via gradual reform of North's economy, and not through sudden collapse.<sup>58</sup> But even a determination by outside powers to prevent a collapse of North Korea cannot ensure such an outcome. The DPRK remains the world's most autarkic economy and one of its preeminent human rights abusers.<sup>59</sup> Its totalitarian political system is highly dependent on the personal legitimacy of its dynastic leaders, and routine shortages of food, energy, and capital suggest that its ability to survive (and maintain an aura of dominance) is dependent in part on support from the international community.

Although few experts predict the collapse of the North Korean

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<sup>57</sup> Francis Fukuyama, 'Guidelines for Future Nation Builders,' *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, Francis Fukuyama ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 232-233.

<sup>58</sup> Soo-gil Young, Chang-jae Lee, and Hyoung-soo Zang, "Preparing for the Economic Integration of Two Koreas: Policy Changes in South Korea," Special Report 10: Economic Integration of the Korean Peninsula, Marcus Noland ed. *Institute for International Economics* (January 1998), pp. 251-252.

<sup>59</sup> Marcus Noland, "Economic Strategies for Reunification," *Korea's Future and the Great Powers*, Nicholas Eberstadt ed. (National Bureau of Asian Research, 2003), p. 213.

state in the short to medium term, the extreme opacity of the Kim Jong-il regime argues for erring on the side of caution by striving for robust contingency planning. Many analysts believe that Pyongyang's provocations in 2009, including repeated missile launches and a nuclear weapons test, were driven by a tenuous succession process that is poorly understood by those outside the country. A contested or failed succession following Kim's passage from the political scene could lead to a loss of regime control or internal power struggle that fosters domestic instability.<sup>60</sup> Even knowledgeable Chinese, who have traditionally been more optimistic than most American strategists about the inherent stability of the DPRK, worry that the death of Kim Jong-Il could trigger events that bring down the government.<sup>61</sup>

None of this is to say that such a scenario will unfold, or even that it is likely. It does mean, however, that given the far reaching consequences that would result should such a contingency occur, the United States and South Korea have a strong interest in preparing for this potentiality. Previous efforts to do so have fallen far short of what is necessary, however, and today neither Seoul nor Washington possesses a whole of government plan for the "day after" scenario. To the extent that such planning — or even analysis — occurs, it is largely under the auspices of intelligence agencies or the two militaries, though in the absence of bilateral interaction. Nor do shared operational plans for handling the effects of a collapse in the North exist between the U.S. and ROK militaries. The United States produced

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<sup>60</sup> Paul B. Stares and Joel S. Wit, "Preparing for Sudden Change in North Korea" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Special Report, No. 42 (January 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Bonnie Glaser, Scott Snyder, John S. Park, "Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor: Chinese views of Economic Reform and Stability in North Korea." *Center for Strategic and International Studies and U.S. Institute of Peace* (January 3, 2008).

“CONPLAN 5029” in 1999, a conceptual strategy for dealing with such a crisis or other unusual scenarios. Yet Seoul blocked production (on sovereignty grounds) of “OPLAN 5029,” a follow-on document aimed at providing for U.S. and ROK forces a concrete military strategy to deal with turmoil in North Korea.<sup>62</sup> Reports suggest that both sides, at the very least, have begun to review and update OPLAN 5029 after its long hiatus in development.<sup>63</sup> The plan requires the CFC for execution, however, and it will be necessary to develop a new conceptual and operational plan as part of the joint planning for OPCON transfer. Embarking on such a path will likely require a political commitment on the parts of Washington and Seoul to work together and share sensitive information on this controversial issue.

The political sensitivities that attend this issue have thus far precluded regular dialogue and planning between the two allies. The South Korean government has been aware that such planning could generate the misperception that it has adopted a policy of regime change in the North, and it remains committed to minimizing foreign intervention in its unification process.<sup>64</sup> Yet the United States also has interests at stake in the event of a North Korean collapse, and would desire to share some of the burden with the ROK in order to shape the outcome. Washington will wish to ensure the security of nuclear stockpiles, stop refugee flows from destabilizing the region, prevent Chinese or Russian intervention in

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<sup>62</sup>- Dae-woong Jin, “JCS nominee back contingency plan,” *The Korea Herald*, March 27, 2008.

<sup>63</sup>- Choon-kun Lee, “U.S. support needed to handle crisis in N.K.,” *The Korea Herald*, March 31, 2008 and Sung-ki Jung, “S. Korea, U.S. to Chart Contingency Plans on N. Korea,” *Korea Times*, September 11, 2008.

<sup>64</sup>- Moo-bong Ryoo, “The ROK Army’s Role When North Korea Collapse Without A War with the ROK,” United States Army Command and General Staff College (January 2001), <<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/ec/e-asia/read/roknorth.pdf>>.

Korea, and foster a stable and unified peninsula that can resist pressure from its northern neighbors. Given the interests of both sides in the outcome of this process, it is important that Seoul overcome its skepticism of a potential American role following a collapse in the North, and help establish a framework for cooperation that puts robust contingency planning into place.

A look at the likely challenges suggests why. In the initial stage following a collapse in the North, military forces must be prepared to provide security, carry out humanitarian relief operations, secure nuclear materials, and potentially disarm and demobilize the DPRK military.<sup>65</sup> They must also be prepared to safeguard important infrastructure and resources, incorporate logistical support from Japan, and gather contributions from international organizations and donors.<sup>66</sup> Carrying out these and other tasks requires combined military and civilian efforts, but this proved a weak spot in past exercises. In the *Ulchi Freedom Guardian* military exercises, for instance, American observers cited ROK civilian response as ineffective in deployment.<sup>67</sup> On the U.S. side, difficulties associated with the effort to build a robust stabilization and reconstruction capacity—particularly outside the Department of Defense—have been well documented.

Should the allies approach the rebuilding stage following a North Korean collapse, they would be confronted with a poor, isolated population with weak public institutions, an isolated economy, and a legacy of ideological indoctrination and brutal repression. The costs of rebuilding—not just securing North Korea,

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<sup>65</sup> “North Korea Contingency Planning and U.S.-ROK Cooperation,” *Center for U.S.-Korea Policy* (September 2009), p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> “North Korea Contingency Planning,” p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Washington-based Asia expert.



but actually turning it into a viable part of a unified Korean nation — would be staggering.<sup>68</sup> The wealth gap between North and South is considerably greater than it was between the two Germanies when they unified, and even that process cost more than \$700 billion and constrained West German economic growth for years. Also, unlike in Germany, financing would have to come to a larger degree from the international community, as the South Korean tax system and financial markets may not be able to handle the burden alone.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the North Korean population would likely chart a more difficult transition to a market economy than did East Germans, and may well reject the legitimacy of South Korean policies and governance.

To address such challenges, reconstruction efforts would require the ROK and international partners to address many difficult policy issues. Macroeconomic policies would need to be established, including on exchange rates, rules regarding trade and labor flows, property rights, the handling of investment, and reforms of state-owned enterprises. Political issues would need to be carefully managed, including the reassertion of authority, establishment of the rule of law, migration to the South, and efforts at national reconciliation.

Further complicating matters are the consequences that particular reconstruction and stabilization policies might have on the broader region. Drawing in resources and investment for reconstruction from others would be essential, but these resources can

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<sup>68</sup>— Estimates generally place the costs at hundreds of billions of dollars, with some even estimating the costs to be more than two trillion dollars. Soo-gil Young *et al.*, pp. 266-268.

<sup>69</sup>— Soo-gil Young *et al.*, pp. 266-268; Young-sun Lee, “The cost and financing of Korean unification,” *Perspectives on Korean unification and economic integration*, Y. Choi ed. (Cheltenham, UK: Elgar, 2001), pp. 133-134.

also be used as a proxy for influence and would have to be carefully managed. Some reconstruction requirements, such as the use of foreign militaries or resources, could give rise to fears that one outside power or the other seeks to alter the geopolitical balance in the region – and thereby provoke a response. A worst case scenario would involve China and Russia seeking to carve out zones of influence in North Korea, bringing their militaries and personnel in uncoordinated contact with those of South Korea or the United States.<sup>70</sup>

These reflections on the many difficulties attending a wholesale collapse of government in North Korea should suggest just how great is the need to begin thinking “the unthinkable” before it occurs. As a potential response to such a crisis should demonstrate, the U.S.-ROK alliance must be more than an alliance of militaries. Dealing with a major contingency north of the DMZ – whether it entails outright collapse of the DPRK government, a nuclear disaster, a major refugee outflow, or another such scenario – requires a whole of government, whole of alliance approach, and one that considers carefully the role of regional and global actors.

## **PREPARING FOR A COLLAPSE SCENARIO: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Planning for such an approach should begin in earnest and take into account the following recommendations:

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<sup>70</sup> For further reading, see Robert D. Kaplan, “When North Korea Falls,” *Atlantic Monthly* (October 2006).

*Institute political guidance:* It is clear that a political approach to dealing with a collapse contingency must guide the military approach, not the other way around. Only by aligning bilateral political support behind a series of shared goals can Seoul have faith that American military and civilian contributions can preserve its own interests. The political leadership in South Korea should drive the planning process by first sharing its objectives and desired end states with Washington. High-level policymakers in both capitals should then establish joint principles that would assign leadership for various post-collapse missions, followed by tasking respective agencies to work out the steps necessary to attain the desired end state. Given the controversial nature of this issue – and a desire in both capitals not to have contingency planning be misconstrued as an affirmative shift of emphasis toward a policy of regime change – such bilateral discussions are best initiated within quiet and already established consultation mechanisms between the U.S. and ROK.

*Coordinating Mechanisms:* Following the establishment of end goals and clear agency roles, there will be a compelling need to establish interagency coordination within and between the governments of the United States and South Korea. Planning for, and execution of, reconstruction efforts will incorporate South Korea's Armed Forces, National Intelligence Service, Unification Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Strategic Planning and Finance, Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Justice, among others. Given the difficulties inherent in this task, such an effort will have to be spearheaded by Blue House. On the U.S. side, clear NSC direction to the various agencies, including the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, and so on will be required.

It is unlikely, however, that such a complex, large-scale

bilateral planning effort will be successful absent specially-designed institutions that provide a framework for unified action. A convenient mechanism for planning immediate stabilization responses would be a dedicated, military-based bilateral coordination cell like those that are likely to arise after the CFC is dissolved. Such a body should plan operations, liaise with civilian agencies, and promote the equipping and training of ROK and U.S. military units for the needs of the mission. For longer term reconstruction tasks, Blue House should designate a civilian ministry or inter-agency body to lead planning efforts if it deems the Unification Ministry unsuited for managing the process.

*Engage Regional Players:* Washington and Seoul should seek to bring Japan into the planning fold while consulting with—and reassuring—China and Russia. With China in particular, the U.S. and the ROK should attempt to establish a basis of understanding regarding Beijing's likely responses to collapse or other disaster in North Korea. Because of political sensitivities, Chinese policy-makers have been highly reluctant to talk to others about a collapse contingency, so such consultations should commence first at the track 1.5 and II level.

*Coordinate multiple actors:* Dealing with a post-collapse scenario in the North will involve leveraging the skills and resources of non-alliance actors, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, foreign aid agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations agencies, NGOs, private banks and private firms.<sup>71</sup> Washington and Seoul should

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<sup>71</sup>- Special Report 10: Economic Integration of the Korean Peninsula, Marcus Noland ed. *Institute for International Economics* (January 1998), pp. 251-252.

encourage some of these organizations to conduct their own planning and begin a dialogue with them on “day after” scenarios.

## CONCLUSION

The recent history of U.S.-South Korea relations demonstrates just how complex ties between the two allies have become. Yet while complications will enter into the alliance as a matter of course, it remains a pillar of U.S. strategic engagement in northeast Asia. The task ahead for policymakers in both Washington and Seoul should be to make the alliance ever more resilient, increasingly moving it onto a foundation of mutual trust, open communication, and shared expectations.

Approaching the tasks set out here — coordinating the diplomatic approach to North Korea, ensuring a smooth transition following transfer of wartime operational control, and planning for a “day after” contingency — will help move the alliance in that direction. Yet each will require, above all, a concerted effort by leaders in both nations to forge a common vision of their shared future. Progress in each of the areas outlined above should be valued not simply on its own terms, but also by the mutually reinforcing effect it can have on other aspects of the relationship. Progress in coordinating diplomacy will make contingency planning more feasible; comfort with the state of military ties renders diplomacy a more collaborative effort. Confidence in the allies’ overall approach to North Korea makes easier the important task of growing and sustaining the alliance over the long term. Given the numerous challenges the United States, and its allies in South Korea and Japan, are likely to face in the coming years, it will be incumbent on each

of the three players — and with respect to North Korea, on Seoul and Washington in particular — to deal from a position of unified strength, rather than from uncoordinated weakness.

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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
in the 21st Century*





*ROK-U.S. Defense Cooperation  
against the North Korean Nuclear Threat  
- Strengthening Extended Deterrence*

*Tae-Woo Kim*

6

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Four successive events have elevated tensions in 2009: (1) North Korea's test-firing of its long-range rocket, Gwangmyongsong-2 on April 5; (2) the nuclear test on May 25; (3) the adoption of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1874 and the subsequent fortification of international sanctions placed on the North; and, (4) the North's declaration of its intent not to participate in the Six-Party Talks. Nevertheless since August, at the outset of North Korea's 'appeasement offensive,' a new chain of events have unraveled. On August 5, with the former U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to the North, Pyongyang has released the two female journalists who had been taken hostage. Shortly thereafter the release of Seongjin Yu, an employee of Hyundai Asan Corporation who had also been detained, followed in synchronous to the timing of the visit made by the Hyundai Group chairwoman Jung-eun Hyun. Moreover, Pyongyang freed the South Korean fishing vessel, '800 Yeonan,' and its crew members, which had also been seized. Subsequently, it has called for 'bilateral talks' with the U.S., as well as suggest the resumption of the South's Mount Geumgang tourism project and inter-Korea family reunions. For the first time, Pyongyang addressed Myungbak Lee as President, without attaching such epithets as a 'fascist clique' and/or an 'anti-reunification traitor.' Right after meeting the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao who visited Pyongyang in early September, Jong-il Kim, Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) elucidated its intent to return to the Six-Party Talks though he placed a prerequisite: "If the "U.S. resolves the antagonistic relations through bilateral talks."

### ***International Consensus on a Two-Track Approach***

Although one may view North Korea's recent stance of appeasement as a positive change, it can also be viewed as severely insufficient to cause any immediate reverberations on the international community or South Korea. This was due to the fact that there was already an established global consensus on a 'two-track approach' of welcoming talks, but maintaining sanctions against the North until tangible progress on the nuclear front was observed. In particular, despite the passivity, China's participation in the sanction was extremely worrisome to North Korea. Such international consensus and recognition acted as a variable in quelling the 'South-South (conservative-liberal)' controversies within South Korea. Even the critics who had presupposed that inter-Korea stalemate was attributable to 'the hard-line policy of the Lee administration and consequently demanded a shift in North Korea policy have decided to observe the developments rather than to hurl criticism at the government for its reticence in immediately accepting Pyongyang's proposals. As such, there have been several factors in how international consensus could be consolidated towards a two-track approach.

### ***Media Condemning DPRK's Aggressive Verbiage and Deeds***

Foremost, Pyongyang invited international reproach by extremely sharp verbiage and behavior by continually threatening the South for the first year and a half of President Lee's tenure in office by conducting numerous missile tests, including Gwangmyongsong-2, testing its nuclear device, and by declaring its confrontational stance towards the U.S. There have been several domestic reasons for

Pyongyang's behavior, including the need to flaunt Chairman Kim's health, to reinforce the survivability of the regime through internal unity, and to actively promote the succession structure with Jung-un Kim as the head. In the end, this enabled consensus from the international community, including China and Russia. At this time, both states that have been traditionally supporters of Pyongyang decided to participate in the adoption of UNSC 1874, and ultimately be on the same wavelength on the two-track approach towards Pyongyang. For Japan which has persistently sought the resolution of the abductees issue as a prerequisite to improvements in bilateral relations, the two-track approach is even more sensible. Japan had in fact opted out of providing the North with heavy oil while other Six-Party members began the oil supply pursuant to the February 13 and the October 4 agreements of 2007. Since the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), now in power, also focuses on the abductees issue, chances are that fractures will not arise in the consensus towards the two-track approach.

North Korea's aggressive tone and behavior had the effect of synchronizing the dissenting voices within the U.S. and South Korea as well as among the two countries. Within the U.S. and South Korea, with the increasing necessity for sanctions against Pyongyang, even the 'liberals' that had held strong to the idea of talks and diplomacy could not convey any justification to oppose the sanctions, and thus, ROK-U.S. consensus came about quite naturally. Against such a backdrop, Seoul did not face any particular hostility in dissent, thereby going ahead with joining the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and moving forward with the implementation of UNSC 1874.

## *Familiarity of Pyongyang's Strategic Calculus*

Second, since August, there has been wide international understanding regarding the circumstances that have led to the North's stance of appeasement. For Pyongyang, it was in its urgent interest to nullify the sanctions outlined in UNSC 1874, and in particular, to restore relations with China out of fear from China's relatively more active participation in levying of sanctions than in the past. Toward South Korea, the North must have liked to disturb President Lee's 'Denuclearization/Openness/3000' initiative by stressing a spirit of a 'return to the people of one nation,' thereby extracting a large-scale economic assistance. For Pyongyang that had used up much of its foreign currency through desperate nuclear development and missile tests, consolidating a source of hard currency, also an important mean to confirm military loyalty as well as to develop weapons of mass destruction, became a desideratum. The North certainly remembers that the UNSC 1718 adopted after the first nuclear testing in October 2006 became hazy when the North returned to the Six-Party Talks two months later. There was also the incident of the North sending its delegation of 200 cheerleaders to the Busan Asian Game immediately after the June 29, 2002 provocation on the West Sea, thereby alleviating any anti-North sentiments.

Of course, the nuclear facet is also a variable in the North's strategic calculus. For Pyongyang, nuclear development from its initial stages was not up for negotiation. North Korea is still hoping for a seat in the club for nuclear weapon states (NWS). In fact, the North has repeatedly called for the U.S. to recognize the North as a nuclear weapon state, as it did India, then to proceed to engage in disarmament talks as a NWS against another NWS. Repeated

provocations coupled with gestures of appeasement by the North in this light are simply a tactic to craft its possession of nuclear weapons as a fait accompli.<sup>1</sup>

The above analysis no longer represents a dilemma for the international society that has experienced 20 years of the North's nuclear game, or for the South Korean populace. When the nuclear issue first came to the fore in the early 1990s, select experts in the U.S. and Europe had pointed out that North Korea was negotiating for a return of benefits; and, once a threshold of sufficient economic provisions had been made, Pyongyang would abandon its nuclear program. This was based on Western-centric rationalism. However, those very critics admit now that such Western-based rationalism is inadequate in judging the North. Instead, they have fathomed that the North is practicing its own version of 'two-track' policy of accepting talks and negotiations when it feels that tensions must be alleviated, but then persistently moving ahead with becoming a nuclear weapons state.

In effect, there is a higher possibility that Pyongyang's appeasement offensive since August is more of a continuation of past tactical tools of regime survival in order to turn the tables around, as opposed to any reformation/liberalization or denuclearization in ways of strategic change. In fact, the international community is already aware of Pyongyang's calculus. For any ordinary citizenry residing in the nearby countries, the analysis that the North's appeasement offensive is clearly detached from any genuine motivations for denuclearization has become a common sense.

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<sup>1</sup> For details on the strategy and efforts made by North Korea in consolidating its position as a nuclear power, see: Tae-woo Kim, "North Korea's Dangerous Nuclear Calculus," *Monthly Chosun* (Korean), March, 2009.



## *Repugnance for Nonproductive Nuclear Talks*

Ever since North Korea expressed interest in a dialogue in 2009, both the North and the U.S. have been engaged in a tug-of-war involving nerves regarding the bilateral framework and the Six-Party Talks. The North had suggested bilateral talks in August, but then proposed a 'conditional acceptance of the Six-Party Talks' during the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit on October 4-6. The condition was that only if the U.S. manages to renounce hostile policy through bilateral talks, would it participate in the multilateral framework.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. on the other hand, had declared that it would only accept bilateral talks on the condition of resumption of the Six-Party Talks. Despite continuing flurry over the framework, there is a chance that sooner or later a compromise may be reached by variations in ways of either 'bilateral talks within the Six-Party framework' or a parallel of both Six-Party Talks and bilateral talks. However, the problem is that the international community has no reason yet to place great weight on the structure or hosting of such talks-theoretically not related to the North's will to abandon the nuclear weapons. Indeed, there are more than a few intellectuals in South Korea that share a view of great cynicism. For them, the mere structure or actual hosting of talks cannot become a weighty subject while the North is continually practicing its own version of a two-track approach and thereby separating the agenda of dialogue with the nuclear weapons development.

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2- Theoretically, the U.S. renunciation of hostile policy will be an outcome, rather than a prerequisite, of the dialogue. However, the North's request for it needs not be interpreted as its rejection of a dialogue. Rather, it can be construed as a preliminary strategic move to accumulate in advance legitimate reasons to delay participation in the Six-Party Talks.

If the international community proceeds to ease the sanctions in return for the North back at the negotiating table, this only signifies a return to the nonproductive nuclear game that has already been played out for the past 20 years. Until now, North Korea has continued down this vicious cycle of 'provoking tensions → cashing in via negotiations and agreements → violating the agreements and standing ground.' During this process, Pyongyang has regularly adopted techniques along the lines of 'adding on agendas,' 'agenda slicing,' and 'salami tactics.'<sup>3</sup> The international community holds only repugnance against such nonproductive negotiations. And there is a wide international consensus that a return to the aforementioned vicious cycle of the past cannot become a justification for an easing of sanctions.<sup>4</sup> This very thinking has fashioned the consensus surrounding the U.S.-led two-track approach, all the while serving as the background for the birth of President Lee's 'Grand Bargain' on September 21, 2009.<sup>5</sup>

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3- A successful example of 'adding on agendas' was in the early 1990s, when North Korea inserted new agenda of provision of light-water reactors during negotiations with the U.S. concerning its plutonium stockpile and cemented the deal through the *1994 Agreed Framework*. A successful instance of the 'salami tactic,' was after North Korea having agreed to 'full dismantlement of nuclear weapons and programs' as envisioned by the September 19, 2005 Joint Declaration, but then demurring on multiple items, thus letting the nuclear problem go around in the circle. Through the February 13 and October 4 agreements, nuclear settlement was divided into three stages of 'closure and sealing of nuclear facilities,' 'dismantlement,' and 'verification and nuclear dismantlement.' After dragging its feet in each of the steps and cashing in on the benefits of 750,000 tons of heavy oil and the delisting from the state sponsors of terrorism list, North Korea proceeded to strand the talks in the latter part of stage 2, thereby accomplishing 'agenda slicing.'

4- However, the potential for China's change in attitude post-2009 October 4-6 North Korea visit by Premier Wen Jiabao is attracting attention. There are concerns of the international community on the two-track approach falling apart if China were to reward the North with massive economic assistance for returning to the talks.

5- President Myungbak Lee during his visit to the U.S. for the G-20 Summit, in a statements made at the invitational roundtable on September 21, held by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Asia Society (AS), and the Korea

## *North Korea's Dilemma over its Regime*

The dilemma that the North faces in terms of its regime explains well as to how for North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons serves as the main objective behind its nuclear game. Those of the ruling strata in North Korea with vested interests have on the one hand had access to privileges during the 60 years of feudalistic dynastic dictatorship, but on the other hand, are the most knowing witnesses of the abuses of the system. They stood by the events of the 1990s with the tragic fall of the Eastern Europe socialism, and recognize that upon a regime collapse, there lies the potential for those that had been subject to oppression due to affiliations of politics or birth, to become a threatening force. The objective behind the North Korean leadership in elevating its military-first policy to a governing ideology in order to sustain military loyalty is also to safeguard the regime. The reason for shunning reform and openness, all the while knowing that these will lead to the most immediate betterment in the North Korean economy is the same. The same goes for sticking to the *Juche* agricultural method instead of market-economy based agriculture which would lead to swift improvements in the food situation, as well as refusing to increase transparency in distribution attached to foreign food aid. Disallowing the inter-Korea family reunions and the reciprocal contact between the ten million survivors of dispersed families, and remaining silent about the South Korean Prisoners of War (POW) or the South Korean abductees are also fundamentally about protecting the regime. North Korea knows well that the

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Society (KS), as well as at the UN General Assembly on September 23, suggested a method of offering a package settlement in regards to North Korea's complete nuclear dismantlement and an offer of a security guarantee along with international assistance.

immense economic assistance that could be reaped as quid pro quo for denuclearization can lead to fast recovery of the economy and radically elevate the standard of living for its citizenry. However, Pyongyang holds its nuclear arsenal as ultimately the last card in its bulwark against the regime. This is the very dilemma faced by Pyongyang.

In the end, the leadership in Pyongyang has only two choices: to give up its nuclear weapons and pursue reform and openness, or to retain its nuclear arsenal and insulate its regime. The first will essentially lead to the improvement of the living standards of the ordinary North Koreans, but the vested strata rejects such option based on views that this places North Korea closer to an immediate collapse of regime and thus, poses a threat to the very being they seek to protect. The second option is becoming the inevitable alternative since it prevents any imminent destruction of the regime, despite the destitution and isolation that will ensue for the citizens.

North Korea's regime-centered dilemma is also narrowing the window of opportunity in terms of reaching an agreement in nuclear negotiations. North Korea would surely want a guarantee for the security of the regime and those in power in return for denuclearizing, but this is not what the international community can provide. For the U.S. to guarantee the safety of a regime that would still remain a dictatorship and one of the worst offenders of human rights even after denuclearization would be contrary to the founding principles of the U.S., not to mention against public sentiments. Nevertheless, the North Korean leadership would not be satisfied with anything less, in ways of mere improvement in relations or economic assistance. For those experts recognizing the grand structural problems, the simple presence of talks or formality

regarding the framework cannot but represent trivialities. Unless Pyongyang decides on a 'third way' (for example, a decision to denuclearize based on gradual reform and openness along with regime improvements), North Korea's two-track approach of separating the issue of negotiations with nuclear developments is inevitable. Even if talks are to resume, chances are that they will repeatedly run the gamut of being extremely protracted and unproductive with North Korea persistently standing its ground.

Considering North's dilemma, South Korea must continue to deter the nuclear threat regardless of the Six-Party talks, until the nuclear threat no longer exists. Most South Koreans recollect that even during the Daejung Kim and Moohyun Roh administrations when massive assistance towards the North and active human exchange took place, the North constructed its underground nuclear testing facility in preparation for a nuclear test, and continued down the road towards missile development. For the South, it is no wonder then that the immutable objective is 'Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID).' Until the fulfillment of this objective, the priority for the South Korean government would be to protect its state and citizenry from the nuclear threat.

To this end, Seoul faces a situation of having to allot limited resources to both 'autonomous measures' and 'international measures.' The former signifies the deterrence of the nuclear threat by cultivating advanced conventional weaponry and deterrence capabilities, thereby autonomously thwarting the threat. The latter entails deterrence and containment against the nuclear threat via alliance management, the nuclear umbrella, the UN, and regional nuclear diplomacy. Between the two, the international measures produce immediate impacts, and yet, do not require much time or

budget, all the while being extremely necessary for the stability of South Korea. At a point in time when the nuclear threat emanating from the North has intensified post-second nuclear test and continual missile tests, it has become almost an obvious conclusion to fortify the ROK-U.S. alliance as well as the nuclear umbrella to counter the threat. Taking into account the latest dynamics of the international society, it is high time for the U.S. to strengthen its allies in East Asia from Pyongyang's nuclear threat.

## SOUTH KOREA'S VULNERABILITY

### *Expansion of Pyongyang's Nuclear Capabilities*

Despite repeated dialogue and agreements during the past two decades, the North Korean nuclear threat has successively increased. The focus of the nuclear problem was on plutonium production in the early 1990s, but regardless of the various attempts at resolution, including the 12 subsequent sessions of the Six-Party Talks, North Korea has thus far managed to pull off two nuclear tests and consolidated its position as a de facto nuclear weapon state. If one examined only the consequences of the process of the North becoming a nuclear state, such pacts struck through the channels of the Six-Party Talks during the Roh government – the September 19 joint statement of 2005, February 13 and the October 4 agreements of 2007 – only exemplifies the logic of 'two steps forward, one step back.'

Up till now, experts tally the amount of plutonium stock of the North to be somewhere around 50 kg, and thus, predict Pyongyang to be in possession of roughly 5 to 10 nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> During the period of more than half a century of nuclear development, there

have been 140 high-explosive tests and two nuclear weapon tests, backed by an intense motivation to acquire such weaponry. Taking all this into account, it is not far fetched to assume that Pyongyang would have aspired to produce and weaponize the maximum amount of nukes with its plutonium stock, including miniaturization and coupling with missile delivery vehicles. Historically, given that there has not been a nuclear weapon state which has relied only on one single source of either plutonium or uranium, there is no problem assuming that the North also pursued a parallel program of producing uranium bombs alongside the plutonium type.<sup>7</sup> There is no reason to doubt the validity of North's statement that "reprocessing is successfully moving along."<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, North Korea has in its possession various delivery vehicles. Presumably, Pyongyang has approximately 1,000 missiles above the Scud-C level scattered across 20 or so missile bases, which

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6- Although North Korea had declared 30kg to Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill upon his visit to Pyongyang in December 2007, the figure was revised to 37kg immediately after the working level meeting in April of 2008 in Pyongyang among American North Korea experts. Since there is a discrepancy between North Korean report and estimate of foreign experts, much effort and time will be needed in the future to verify the difference.

7- Though North Korea did not self-reference the enrichment issue before 2009, experts including this author have been asserting the existence of enrichment program based on imports from Pakistan of enrichment components and dual-use items since 5-6 years ago. See Taewoo Kim, "Implications of A.Q. Khan's Testimony," *Weekly Defense Review* (Korean), Vol. 994 (May 10, 2004). Nevertheless, a cautious evaluation is needed about whether Pyongyang has reached a stage where it could produce a uranium bomb, synthesizing the technologies required for enrichment.

8- In a letter to the UNSC Chair dated September 3, 2009, North Korea's Ambassador to the UN stated, "uranium enrichment has been successful and is now entering the completion phase. Likewise, the reprocessing of spent fuel rods has entered the final stage and the extracted plutonium is being weaponized." Furthermore, Pyongyang flatly denounced UNSC 1874. The author sees such actions as the North expressing its distaste with the passive reaction of the international community to its appeasement, with hopes of using the enrichment issue as a new card in its toolkit during future nuclear negotiations.

places the entire South Korean area in its range. For the North, aircrafts also serve as an effective delivery vehicle, and in this category, the following models can be listed – IL-28 jet bomber aircraft, and the fighter aircrafts such as the MIG-21, MIG-23, and MIG-29.

## Geographical Conditions

If the North were to attack the South via a ballistic missile loaded with a nuke, the concept of successful defense becomes hardly possible. Pyongyang's ballistic missiles can reach any South Korean target within the 3-7 minute mark, which makes for any response given the tight time and spatial leeway extremely limited. The missile defense system currently under development in South Korea is based on terminal phase interception, which means such interception of high-speed ballistic missiles at the mid-course stage is not possible. In fact, even the chances of the former being successful are not high. One of the most frequent questions from the Western media is "has Pyongyang succeeded in miniaturizing the nuclear warheads to fit on the tips of missiles?" For South Korea, geographically adjacent to the North, this question is both irrelevant and annoying. Without having to use missiles or aircrafts, the North can easily use sea or land routes coupled with Special Forces to penetrate South Korean territory and utilize the nuclear weapons along a terrorist tactic. Even a Radiation Dispersal Device (RDD), or a 'dirty bomb,' that simply disperses fine plutonium powder could just as easily throw major cities in South Korea into a state of panic and fear.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>- For detailed analyses on the North's nuclear capacity and South Korea's vulnerability, see Tae-woo Kim, and Hyeong-pil Ham, "ROK's Security and Military



## *North Korea's Nuclear Strategy*

Up till the first nuclear test in 2006, North Korea was seen to be implementing a strategy of ambiguity,<sup>10</sup> preventing any conclusive conviction as to whether it had indeed nuclear weapons in its possession. However, now after the nuclear test, it is hard to rule out the possibility that the North has nukes as part of its incremental nuclear strategy for politico-diplomatic or military purposes. There may be several possible strategies for use of nuclear weapons in North's toolkit: *nuclear blackmail*, *nuclear hostage*, *demonstrative use*, *tactical use*, and *strategic use*.

Foremost, *nuclear blackmail* refers to verbal statements or declarations to threaten the use of nukes, a tactic that the North has long used. After President Lee's inauguration in 2008, the North has made references to 'a pile of ashes' and 'annihilating strike capabilities,' explicitly adopting a *nuclear blackmail* posture towards the South. Immediately following the second nuclear test in 2009, the North even claimed that "Washington and New York is no longer safe." For the North, *nuclear blackmail* can offer various ways to turn the tables around by promoting tensions or expediting negotiations. Additionally, *nuclear blackmail* paves the way for *nuclear hostage strategy*. In other words, by creating sense of danger by threatening use of nukes, countries like South Korea and Japan

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Strategy in the Face of DPRK's Nuclear Threat," (Korean), 2007 KIDA Research Paper; Tae-woo Kim, "ROK Navy's Role in Responding to DPRK's WMDs," presentation at the 13<sup>th</sup> On Board Debate on May 14, 2009, co-hosted by Naval Headquarters and the Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy.

<sup>10</sup>- Nuclear ambiguity refers to neither confirmation nor denial of the possession of nuclear weapons, thereby both dodging sanctions and leveraging deterrence against its opponent. Israel's nuclear strategy is a representative example. In the case of North Korea, since the prediction that the North had developed a nuclear device before 1993 was established, it is reasonable to assume that it has been playing the ambiguity card for quite some time.

are taken hostage, thereby allowing for leverage in negotiations with the U.S. and wider international audience, and/or providing a tool to politically or diplomatically pressure the hostage states. Ever since the first nuclear test, both South Korea and Japan have become *nuclear hostages* by the North – particularly for the South, being so geographically positioned.

*Demonstrative use* represents the initial stage of actual use of the nukes. However, instead of aiming for bloodshed or destruction, the targets are non-populated areas such as remote mountain areas or above the sea. This has the effect of demonstrating the explosive power of the nuclear weapon, thereby protecting oneself. For example, it is possible to use this defensive strategy during a phase of instability whereby the North perceives the threat of regime collapse whilst engaged in combat with the U.S. or South Korea, or feels unease towards the opponent's military actions or motivation for escalation.

*Tactical use* is a counter-force strategy aimed against militarily populated areas or military facilities, often regarded as a typically-expected behavior by nuclear weapon states engaged in nuclear war. If the North were to employ this strategy, possible South Korean targets could include air force bases, naval ports, and areas wherein military bases are clustered together. Once the relocation of the U.S. base to Pyongtaek has been completed, the area of Pyongtaek-Osan will become the most militarily-dense area and thus, the optimal target for tactical use of nukes by the North.

*Strategic use* is the last resort that seeks to destroy the opponent's state infrastructure through nukes and thereby, aim for massive destruction of both facilities and lives. Potential targets include major cities, industrial infrastructure, and supporting facilities. Here, Seoul or industrially-dense city of Ulsan would be

optimal targets, with Seoul serving as the very last target given its characteristics of population density and serving as the engine for at least half of the state's national strength.

### *Estimated Damage from Use of Nukes*

Regardless of actual possibility of a nuke being used against Seoul, if such event were to occur, astronomical damage is inevitable. Based on simulations run by experts, if a 20 kiloton nuclear device targeted at Seoul under typical weather conditions were to detonate at ground level, 900,000 people will die within 24 hours, 1.36 million will be injured, with greater numbers as time lapses due to fallout. If the yield increases to 100 kilotons, 5.8 million or roughly the half of Seoul's total population will be either dead or injured, turning the capital city into a smelting furnace.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, if a 20 kiloton nuclear device went off in the skies 300 meters above Yongsan, 490,000 people will die within the month, while 480,000 will be injured. Similarly, a 100 kiloton-yield device detonated at 300 meters above ground will produce 1.8 million deaths and 1.1 million casualties.<sup>12</sup> As such, just one nuclear attack can extinguish roughly one fifth of the entire South Korean populace, and not to mention burn Seoul to the ground.

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<sup>11</sup>- Simulation study conducted in 2007 by Dr. Hyung-pil Ham of KIDA, using version HPAC4.0.

<sup>12</sup>- Simulation study conducted in 2007 by Dr. Seong-taek Shin of Center for Non-proliferation Studies (CNS), the Monterey Institute of International Studies, using HPAC3.2. See Tae-woo Kim, Yeol-soo Kim, and Seong-taek Shin, "North Korea's Nuclear Threat and South Korean Response," research work employed in 2007 by the Emergency Planning Commission.

### ***Vulnerability against Biological/Chemical Weapons***

Of course, the threat from North Korea's WMD does not just stop at nuclear weapons. North Korea, a non-party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), ranks third in terms of states possessing chemical weapons. From the 1980s, North Korea has been developing a variety of chemical weapons, including blister, nerve, and choking agents and have deployed them along the front lines in forward areas from the 1990s onwards. Pyongyang has shown its inclination to use chemical weapons as conventional weapons by conducting chemical weapons military exercises at the division-level, which increases the likelihood of a direct threat upon breakout of war. Chemical weapons can be delivered by various means, including aerial dispersal equipment, antisubmarine artillery, grenades, missiles, aircrafts, and combat ships. By merely employing field artillery lined up alongside the cease-fire line, it is possible to calculate that ten thousand chemical shells can be shot across Seoul within the hour.<sup>13</sup>

Biological weapons are another type of WMD that incapacitates the opponent's war-fighting capabilities by using pathogenic microorganisms or toxins. There are various germs used. Such examples are bacteria, virus, ricketta, and fungi. Then under toxins, there are botulinus, ricinotein toxin, and rivalenol. Microbes penetrate the human body and after a certain period of dormancy, infection occurs thereby causing fatal wounds or killing of the body. Similarly, toxins can lead to death by causing difficulties in breathing, blood infections, blisters, bleeding, vomiting, and

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<sup>13</sup>- It is estimated that North Korean artilleries, if not interrupted, can shoot some 50,000 shells an hour. It is also assumed that a quarter of the shells can consist of chemical nature.

diarrhea. Pyongyang has been studying biological weapons from the early 1960s, and it is estimated that it has cultivated various bacteria and toxins, including anthrax, cholera, the bubonic plague, smallpox, typhoid fever, and yellow fever.

Biological weapons in comparison to nuclear or chemical weapons are relatively cheaper in terms of development costs. Plus, they are easier to use, which means that once they have been dispersed, they have a self-sustaining nature of multiplying and expanding, thereby increasing lethality of the weapon. One can use an aerosol to disperse microbes, with even a small amount leading to multiple deaths. According to calculations, the amount of anthrax needed to kill half of Seoul's population within 10 days does not exceed 20 kg. Using biological weapons in terrorist methods will not only make detection and diagnosis extremely difficult, but also allow for the terrorists to flee before clinical symptoms are visible, which severely limits counter-measures.

### ***Interim Conclusion: Deterrence Is the Best Response***

The previous section has clearly shown that the North's nuclear or biological and chemical arsenal is not an object to be *defended* against, but in fact objects to be *deterred* from South Korea's perspective. There is no significance to efforts at 'minimizing damage' after the use of such weapons. There are several factors that inhibit the construction of a reliable defense system to thwart a WMD attack from the North: geographical proximity of the two Koreas; a division separating a homogenous nation; short spatial area between the front and rear bases; North Korea's array of delivery vehicles; a democratic system that provides the freedom and an advantageous environment for any suspicious persons to act;

the population-dense characteristic and congestion of major cities, the budgetary limits; and, technical facets.

Moreover, given the bilateral sensitivities between the two Koreas, it is impossible to conjecture a situation wherein the South could preemptively exercise a surgical-strike against the North with a mere indication of the North willing to use its nukes. Against this backdrop, South Korea's response must focus on 'deterrence.' This is the optimal response that will protect and free the state and the citizenry from a nuclear hostage situation along with the threat from North's WMDs.

## **TRAJECTORY OF STRENGTHENING EXTENDED DETERRENCE**

### *Autonomous and International Measures*

It has already been noted that there are autonomous and international measures in deterring the North Korean nuclear threat. Autonomous measures are exploring self-reliant methods to deter the North's nuclear threat, such as fashioning an effective deterrence capability through particular weapon systems, military power and strategies—all within the compliance parameters of the nonproliferation regime. To this end, considerable expenses and time as well as socio-political consensus are needed since the task requires redistribution of limited military expenditure. This route is much like traditional Korean medicine, in that although it does not immediately heal the wound, it does create long-term effects of building up overall immunity. This is why autonomous measures must be evaluated and pursued in the mid-to long-term under

the strategy of 'selection and focus.'<sup>14</sup>

Conversely, international measures mean mechanisms such as the alliance, the nuclear umbrella, UN, and diplomacy among regional states to prevent the North's attempts at creating a nuclear hostage situation or use of nuclear weapons and neutralize the politico-diplomatic might of its nuclear weapons. This method produces immediate and potent effects. For example, a firm commitment by the U.S. towards extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella contributes substantially to deterring North Korea's nefarious motivations. This in turn, provides positive impacts in stabilizing the mental state and economic activity for the South Korean populace. Moreover, since a formidable nuclear weapon state is demonstrating its will and capability of retaliation upon nuclear attack on its ally, it surpasses the limitations of having to thwart a nuclear threat via conventional military capabilities as provided for by the autonomous route. The trust behind the commitment can be guaranteed through the vibrancy of the alliance, making additional budgetary concerns or time unnecessary. In this sense, the international option is akin to Western medicine, as it creates immediate results with a relatively small budget.

South Korea is placed in a situation wherein defense must rely on limited resources, however, autonomous and international measures can work at a mutually-reinforcing dynamic. The rational choice is to pursue international measures in the short-term, while considering the autonomous measures as a mid-to long-term task.

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<sup>14</sup>- Autonomous measures are not in the scope of research in this paper. For more analysis, see: "ROK Navy's Role in Responding to DPRK's WMDs"; Taewoo Kim, "South Korea's Survival Strategy against North Korea's Nukes," presented at a seminar on June 8, 2009, co-hosted by Korea Institute for Crisis Management, Grand National Party Advisory Committee on National Policy, Parliamentary Forum on Crisis-Management and International Forum on Diplomacy and Security.

### *Accomplishments of the June 16 Summit*

Typically, ‘deterrence’ refers to the prevention of an opponent’s threatening actions or provocations by demonstrating both the retaliatory capability and intent, while ‘extended deterrence,’ signifies the same line of logic extended to an ally. In other words, the U.S. will equate an attack by the North against South Korea as one against itself, thereby protecting an ally from an attack by a third party through declaring its promise of retaliation. This concept in the scope of the nuclear problem becomes synonymous with the nuclear umbrella, and at least in discussions limited to the nuclear issue. The concepts of extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella are interchangeable.

After the second nuclear test by North Korea, the most immediate measures necessary for the South were fortifying the credibility and stability of the nuclear umbrella. During such process, it was imperative not to overlook the threat of biological and chemical weapons of the North. Therefore, the most exigent measures in regard to the nuclear umbrella were to elevate its legal standing and expand the scope of protection. To elevate the legal standing means to surpass the Joint Statement of the annual ROK-U.S. defense ministers’ meeting – which does not carry any international law-level binding force – and to clarify the nuclear umbrella in the documents of higher level.<sup>15</sup> To expand the scope of protection means to provide the necessary protection against not only the North’s nuclear arsenal, but also other weapons of mass des-

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<sup>15</sup> Since 1978, the nuclear umbrella promise has so far been confirmed annually through the Joint Statement at the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM); while the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty neither includes automatic intervention clause nor specifies nuclear umbrella, thereby making it difficult to imbue the nuclear umbrella with any binding force in international law.



truction such as the bio-chemical weapons and missiles. Even though the North's nuclear arsenal claims the spotlight, North's chemical and biological weapons may in fact be more threatening to South Korea. By placing the chemical and biological stock as objects for deterrence, the concept of the 'nuclear umbrella' and 'extended deterrence' cannot be one and the same. For the South, it may be adequate to use the more comprehensive term of 'extended deterrence.'

In this vein, it was an extremely necessary and appropriate international measure to strengthen the nuclear umbrella during the June 16 ROK-U.S. summit. The *Joint Vision* signed by both presidents includes the intent to continually provide for 'extended deterrence, including the nuclear umbrella.'<sup>16</sup> By way of inserting the nuclear umbrella in the summit document, its legal status did somewhat increase. Furthermore, by placing the nuclear umbrella as a sub- component of extended deterrence, there is now wiggle room to include protection from other forms of weapons of mass destruction aside from simply the nuclear arsenal. In all, the June 16 summit can be viewed as a success in both elevating the legal standing of the nuclear umbrella as well as expanding the scope of protection.

However, to avoid this agreement becoming a mere symbolic gesture, specific follow-up actions at the working-level must take place. North Korea has proceeded with its second nuclear test, upping the ante in the nuclear threat arena. Meanwhile, both the ROK and the U.S. are in the process of recovering the alliance that

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<sup>16</sup> Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, "We will maintain a robust defense posture, backed by allied capabilities which support both nations' security interests. The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance."

was weakened during the prior administrations under Presidents Daejung Kim and Moohyun Roh. Therefore, extended deterrence agreed to during the summit must be continually reinforced by specific follow-up measures at the working-level.

### ***Pressing Follow-up Measures***<sup>17</sup>

Foremost, in order to add credibility to the promised extended deterrence as agreed to at the summit, the most pressing measure is to let North Korea unmistakably be on notice that a WMD attack against the South will lead to unsparing retaliation by the U.S. To that end, the U.S. could consider customizing its regular military exercises and deploying nuclear submarines or other weapons of deterrence at all times in East Asia against North Korea. Once such measures are in place supporting what was agreed to at the summit, North Korea will fully understand the consequences any levity of the situation will bring about. Second, the U.S. must include North Korea's chemical, biological weapons as well as missiles in its basket of extended deterrence. Therefore, it is important for the heads of both countries to understand that the expression referenced in the June 16 agreement of an 'extended deterrence including the nuclear umbrella,' should be repeatedly elucidated in later documents or verbal agreements. If the use of the expression 'nuclear umbrella' confuses consensus-building, such usage should be abandoned and instead use 'extended deterrence.'

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<sup>17</sup>- Also see: Tae-woo Kim, "DPRK's Nuclear Test and ROK-U.S. Alliance: A South Korean Perspective," presented at the U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue, co-hosted by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency and Pacific Forum CSIS on July 26-28, 2009, in Maui, Hawaii; "Nuclear Threat and Nuclear Umbrella," *New Asia*, Autumn 2009, pp. 13-29.

Third, a revision along with a supplement of the OPLAN 5027 is critical. OPLAN 5027 serves as the main operation plan in deterring a war from arising on the Korean peninsula. Since the 1980s, it has been revised to exclude South Korea's participation in the U.S. decision making with regard to use of nuclear weapons. After 1992, the plan was completely devoid of the mention of nuclear weapons. Currently, wartime operational control (OPCON) is under the U.S.-led authority of the Combined Forces Command (CFC), and according to the 2007 agreement, OPCON is scheduled to be transferred to the ROK forces as of April 17, 2012. Accordingly, some experts negate the need for any revisions considering that the OPLAN 5027 will be dissolved with the separation of OPCON in 2012.

However, if we were to focus on the classic truth of “never allowing for a blind spot in security” until OPLAN 5027 is substituted, there has to be measures to counter the extant of the North Korean nuclear threat—especially considering the possibility of delay in the scheduled transfer date of OPCON.<sup>18</sup> For a more formidable deterrence against North's WMDs, it is necessary to include policies and methods of extended deterrence through nuclear weapons in OPLAN 5027. By referencing the European model of mutual agreement in case of use of nuclear weapons, the road must be paved at least in a limited capacity for the South to

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<sup>18</sup>— Since the inauguration of President Lee's administration, both governments of the ROK and the U.S. have not mentioned any changes to the 2007 agreement on OPCON transfer, with the necessary preparatory work ongoing as scheduled. However, opposition by conservative NGOs and some portion of South Korean population continue to oppose the OPCON separation and dissolution of the CFC. So far, some 9 million people have signed up for the opposition campaign which has been initiated by the Korea Veterans' Association. Subsequently, one cannot completely rule out the possibility of the ROK-U.S. renegotiation over the timing of the OPCON transfer.

participate in the U.S. decision making with regard to the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>19</sup> If OPCON transfer does proceed as scheduled in 2012, whatever operation plan that may follow thereafter must share in the prior mutual consensus on specific methods for extended deterrence.

If the points above are mutually-agreed upon and subsequently reflected in the upcoming Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the credibility of extended deterrence will be further fortified. Considering that the NPR is a trusted document advocating the tenets of the U.S. nuclear strategy to the outside world, it will be extremely important to give relative weight to the provision of extended deterrence to South Korea. Extended deterrence will become even more tenable, if the NPR deals simultaneously with how to protect Japan as well as South Korea, the main U.S. allies in East Asia.

### ***Trends in the New U.S. Nuclear Doctrine***

As the global superpower and vested overseer of the non-proliferation regime, the U.S. has strategic interests at a global level, different from that of South Korea. Therefore, South Korea must make effort to minimize any rift or contradictions in strategic, if any, between the two allies. Nevertheless, President Barack Obama seems to be immersed in the notion of ‘a world free of nuclear weapons’ or ‘zero option’ espoused by such individuals like Henry Kissinger.<sup>20</sup> In summarizing nuclear-related statements made by

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<sup>19</sup>– Japan also seems to be trying to include similar content in the U.S.-Japan joint operation plan which is currently under revision. “Upon Contingencies, Japan Requests U.S. for Prior Notification on Use of Nuclear Weapons,” *Yonhap News*, March 2, 2007.

<sup>20</sup>– George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nun, “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 15, 2008. Swayed by

President Obama since his inauguration, the following seems to be a likely course: a focus on reducing nuclear weapons stockpile as well as dependence on such weapons; maintaining the necessary nuclear force needed for the basis of a new nuclear doctrine; pursuing further nuclear disarmament agreements with Russia and a drastic cut in nuclear weapons; and, reinforcing the management of the nonproliferation regime.<sup>21</sup> Unilateral measures specified in the 2002 NPR during the Bush administration such as the renunciation of the *No First Use* (NFU) policy, a strengthened new triad reinforcing the prior triad architecture, and the pursuit of a clear nuclear superiority had gained much international criticism.<sup>22</sup> Factoring this into account, it is likely that the unilateral tint will be faded out in the new NPR under the Obama administration, which reflects the basic current in nuclear strategy of the U.S. Moreover, the awarding of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize to President Obama will most likely add momentum to his policies in moving away from a unilateral nuclear strategy and closer towards nuclear disarmament.<sup>23</sup>

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such logic, President Obama emphasized during his speech in Prague on April 5, 2009: “Despite the end of the Cold War, thousands of nuclear weapons still exist,” and promised to reduce the role of nuclear weapons.” Thereafter, President Obama on numerous occasions, have promised to make efforts toward the ‘zero option.’

- <sup>21</sup>- The Obama administration is making internal headway into publishing the new NPR by the end of 2009. One can observe the overall trajectory of the NPT through prior research undertaken by a task force with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) funded by Congress. See, William J. Perry and James R. Schlesinger, *America’s Strategic Posture* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Press, 2009).
- <sup>22</sup>- For a detailed analysis of the second NPR, see Tae-woo Kim, “U.S.’ New Nuclear Doctrine and South Korea’s Policy Options,” KIDA Research Paper, 2002; “Nuclear Posture Review and U.S. Nuclear Doctrine,” Presented at conference on “Reevaluation of the Nuclear Issue on the Korean Peninsula & South Korea’s Security,” hosted by the National Defense University (NDU), June 20, 2002.
- <sup>23</sup>- On September 12, the Nobel Prize committee announced that it had designated President Obama as the 2009 peace laureate for his efforts toward multilateral approach and a world free of nuclear weapons.

The problem lies in the fact that under such trends, the U.S. government may not place much gravity on providing extended deterrence for its allies, while concentrating on how to reduce the number of and reliance on nuclear weapons. If the relative importance given to extended deterrence for South Korea turns out to be insufficient or the entire concept is conspicuously missing in the 2009 NPR, this will nullify much of what was agreed to in the June 16 summit and represent an immense strategic loss for South Korea.

While the NPR is undergoing revision, it is necessary South Korea to hold prior consultations on issues that may either strengthen or weaken the provision on extended deterrence. For example, the 'new triad' laid out by the Bush administration in the 2002 NPR had coupled high-tech conventional capability with tactical nuclear weapons to compose retaliatory measures. Conventional weapons are high on the usability list, which contributes to the credibility of extended deterrence. If such measures are deleted in the revised NPR during a time wherein nuclear disarmament is the favored trend, there will be a perception of a weakened U.S. commitment on protecting its allies. In order to effectively deter the North, the intent to adopt advanced conventional weapons in the overall nuclear retaliatory system as envisioned by the second NPR must continue in effect under the Obama administration.

Simultaneously, the NPR should not be revised in a manner so as to dilute the deterrence capability against the North's chemical and biological weapons. Former President Bush at a press conference in 2002 clearly advocated "retaliation against states threatening the U.S. and its allies with WMDs" with the second NPR also outlining three scenarios upon which nuclear weapons may be

deployed: (1) in order to destruct Hard and Deeply Buried Targets (HDBT) that cannot be totaled with conventional weaponry; (2) to retaliate against a preemptive attack by an opponent using nuclear or chemical/ biological weapons; and, (3) to counter a situation wherein a rogue state or terrorist organization employs an unexpected arsenal. It is possible to assume that the second NPR clearly included the North Korea's use of its chemical and biological weapons under a category requiring deterrence. At a time where South Korea needs additional protection against the North's bio-chemical weapons to the nuclear umbrella, a move by the Obama administration in a direction of diminishing the said need will undermine the bilateral alliance. In other words, the Obama administration will have to underscore its commitment to retaliation against a third party that attacks an ally under the U.S. nuclear umbrella through WMDs not limited to nuclear weapons.

### ***NFU, NFC, Nuclear Disarmament and Policies on Targeting***

Among the components of the new nuclear doctrine put forth by the Obama administration, there may also be points that could garner strategic understanding and harmonization with the ROK. For example, even if the U.S. were to come back to a *No First Use* (NFU) and *No First Strike* (NFS) policy, there may be no ripple effect for the extended deterrence. 'First use' implies using nuclear weapons first in a defensive sense, while 'first strike' connotes wiping out the opponent's strategic potential through a surprise attack detached from a defensive concept. Traditionally, the U.S. has negated any policy of NFU, and during the Bush administration, both the NFU and NFS were repudiated. That is, the U.S. espoused a nuclear strategy of neither excluding the use of 'first use' in a

defensive capacity nor 'first strike' through nuclear weapons.

Extended deterrence against North Korea will be valid so long as the U.S. clearly demonstrates its intent and capability to retaliate against any North Korean attack using WMDs on its southern neighbor. Since the extended deterrence only applies to a situation wherein the North provokes first, there is no reason for the adoption of the NFU or NFS principles to weaken the extended deterrence. In fact, the South should welcome it if a return to NFU and NFS elevate moral status of the U.S. as the overseer of the nonproliferation regime. In a similar vein, the U.S.-Russia nuclear disarmament agreements and substantial arms reductions will not encroach on the validity of extended deterrence, either. Further cuts in the nuclear arsenal at this point where both the U.S. and Russia have more than 20,000 weapons stockpiled signifies a reduction in overkill capacity, which means that a situation wherein the U.S. will not be able to retaliate against North Korea due to an inadequate number of weapons or methods which will not transpire. Nuclear arms reduction is also a policy measure to enhance the moral standing of the U.S., thus, there is no reason for South Korea to oppose such measures on the basis of extended deterrence against North Korea.

Extended deterrence also accompanies the policy of targeting. In order to retaliate against the North, a plan on which targets to attack must be formulated and some portion of the targeting policy needs to be declared. For the U.S., which experienced upsurge of anti-American sentiments in South Korea during the Daejung Kim and Moohyun Roh administration, the choice between adopting a counter-force strategy with military assets as targets and a counter-city strategy of targeting cities is an extremely sensitive issue. In part, the latter is easily susceptible to criticism from a section of the South



Korean populace that may view the plan as a ‘massive massacre against homogenous peoples.’

However, a cool-headed analysis is needed. Here, the ethical debate surrounding the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and strategy of nuclear war-fighting that unfolded in the U.S. during the Cold War should serve as reference. Lest we forget in the 1980s, when fierce debate raged on between MAD based on a counter-city targeting strategy and the strategy of war-fighting with counter-force as its premise, Pope John Paul II in his famous ‘Pastoral Letter’ asserted that “strategy of MAD is immoral, but the strategy of war-fighting is more immoral.”<sup>24</sup> Counter-city targeting should not be put aside due to sensitivities, if the wiping out possibility for the North’s WMD use is the foremost objective and if it is the best policy to achieve that objective. Of course, one must keep in mind that so long as Pyongyang does not push ahead with any WMD provocation, such targeting policies will not become operational to begin with.

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<sup>24</sup> During the apex of the nuclear competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union in the early 1980s, there was a fierce debate within the U.S. academia about the wisdom of counter-force targeting vs. counter-city targeting. Those that advocated for a nuclear war-fighting technique premised on counter-force, criticizing the logic of MAD by stating that, “counter-city targeting aims innocent civilians under the glossy rhetoric of preventing the opponent’s nuclear attack.” Conversely, those espousing the MAD doctrine countered by stating, “by targeting military facilities, one is making nuclear weapons operational, thereby lowering the barrier of use which subsequently increases the chances of a nuclear war.” During this time, Pope John Paul II warned about the nuclear threat faced by humanity at the second Vatican conference and requested the Pontifical Academy of Sciences to research the immorality of nuclear weapons and its concomitant doctrines. The Pastoral Letters contained the results of such research and were distributed to the presidents of the nuclear weapon states along with the UN Secretary General. Through the Pastoral Letter, the Pope designated nuclear weapons, whether for deterrence or tactical use, as unethical. Nevertheless, he evaluated those used under the premise of tactical use as being more unethical, thereby indirectly admitting the inevitability of counter-city targeting for deterrence purposes.

### ***Protection of Non-Nuclear Weapon States under NPT***

Generally, extended deterrence or the nuclear umbrella does not represent a unilateral act of favor by a strong power bestowed unto its less powerful ally. Non-nuclear Weapon States (NNWS) are entitled to protection under the spirit of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). In order to clearly understand this logic, we must consider the concepts of Positive Security Assurance (PSA) and Negative Security Assurance (NSA) which came about during the process of the NPT formation. From the perspective of a NNWS, it is not totally rational to voluntarily enter into the NPT and abandon nuclear options if it is exposed to a potential nuclear attack. The concept of PSA is rooted in the intent by the initial nuclear weapon states (NWS) to protect the NNWSs with the aid of the UN if “a non-nuclear weapon state that is a party to the NPT comes under threat or attack from a nuclear weapon.” To this end, the UNSC purported the notion of PSA through the adoption of resolution 255 in June 1968. However, it was inevitable that the promise of protection by the UN towards a cluster of unspecified NNWS would become ambiguous. In particular, there was no way to guarantee the safety provision given that the five strong nuclear powers all with the capacity to wage a nuclear attack so happened to be the same permanent members of the UNSC with veto power. Despite such vulnerability, efforts to protect specific allies by espousing PSA went forth, manifesting in the nuclear umbrella.

Negative Security Assurances (NSA) supplements the weakness of the PSA, in a way as to promise the non-use of nuclear weapons by NWS against all NNWS parties to the NPT. Accordingly, the five NWS declared a ‘guarantee of no-use policy of nuclear weapons towards all non-nuclear weapon states,’ at the

1978 UN Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD).<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, from the perspective of individual states, there were limits to placing confidence on such a collective declaratory promise of no-use of nuclear weapons aimed at unspecified nations. This is why the U.S. in certain cases had to offer the promise of NSA to individual states. In 1994, the NSA was offered to Ukraine during the process of persuading the state to join the NPT, as well as a type of NSA to North Korea in trying to realize the 1994 Agreed Framework.<sup>26</sup>

From a different perspective, the NPT is indeed a discriminatory system that cemented the nuclear privilege for the five NWS, making the continuing existence of such system a source of immense national interests for those powerful NWS that seek to maintain the 'nuclear monopoly.'<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is hard to dispel the

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<sup>25</sup> The U.S. pledged to "not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by any state allied to a nuclear weapon state or associated with a nuclear weapon state in carrying out or sustaining the attack."

<sup>26</sup> Article 3, Clause 1 of the Agreed Framework states: "The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S." However, theoretically, the promise of a NSA to the North conflicts with the PSA offered to the South, thereby undermining the credibility of a nuclear umbrella promised to South Korea. The author raised such issues immediately at the time. See, Tae-woo Kim, "The Geneva Accord and Its Pitfalls," in Tae-woo Kim and Selig Harrison ed., *Dealing With the North Korean Nuclear Problem* (Seoul, 1994); "The U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Rapprochement in the South Korean Dilemmas," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (November 1995), pp. 661-674. Nevertheless, there is no need to view the NSA granted to the North in equal standing as the PSA provided to the South. The Agreed Framework states, "both sides will work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula...the DPRK will consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," which in effect granted conditional NSA. Moreover, the 2002 North Korean nuclear crisis basically killed the Agreed Framework, and North Korea withdrew from the NPT after its two nuclear tests, thereby nullifying the NSA granted by the U.S.

<sup>27</sup> Due to these reasons, the NPT from the viewpoint of scholars in developing nations has been criticized as being 'an imperialist mechanism solidifying the privilege of the powerful in perpetuity.' India had argued along this logic and

accusation that behind the reasons for the NWS to sustain the NPT structure and provide safety for the NNWS is the robust motivation to keep the monopoly on nuclear weapons. This is the very reason why extended deterrence or the nuclear umbrella cannot be treated as unilateral acts of benevolence. The reason that South Korea or Japan, both susceptible to a nuclear threat or attack, has forgone the route of responding in kind to the North's nuclear threat and joined the NPT is because of the rightful expectation of protection from the nuclear weapon states.

However, the aforementioned generalities are not totally replicated in the ROK-U.S. bilateral relations. Although South Korea and the U.S. are respectively, a NNWS under the NPT bound by nonproliferation compliance measures and an overseer of the NPT regime advocating its maintenance, the two have been engaged in a 60-year alliance of a special nature. One cannot deny that South Korea has reaped more benefits throughout the years with the participation of the U.S. in the Korean War, the contributions toward the development in Korea's democracy and market-economy, and deterrence of the North Korean threat through deployment of the U.S. forces in South Korea. Therefore, it is prudent to assume that the main priority for the U.S. in providing for the nuclear umbrella up till now has been the 'protection of its allies,' rather than the 'fulfillment of duties as a NWS.'

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demanding for a pledge of disarmament from the nuclear weapon states in order for India to join the NPT. Subsequently, India itself became a nuclear weapon state in 1998, thereby playing the nuclear politics game of using the 'nuclear imperialism' logic as a tool to consolidate its own status as a de facto nuclear state. Notwithstanding, this author would like to emphasize that the NPT did prevent horizontal nuclear proliferation and protect humanity from the fear of nuclear war. One must approach the understanding of the NPT in a balanced fashion, keeping in mind the 'two faces of the NPT.'

## CONCLUSION: HIGH TIME FOR REINFORCING EXTENDED DETERRNCE

For South Korea that faces a nuclear threat from North Korea, there is a grand principle of ‘balance and harmony.’ Foremost, Seoul must recognize the two faces of Pyongyang, a ‘homogenous race’ as well as a ‘main enemy.’ Inevitably, Seoul’s policies should run a parallel track of ‘co-existence, co-prosperity, and reconciliatory co-operation towards reunification between two homogenous peoples,’ along with another track of ‘guarded security against its main enemy.’ Nonetheless, balance and harmony is needed between the two tracks. While the rather ideal objective of co-existence and co-prosperity may or may not come to fruition, security represents a realistic objective for today, which holds the key to tomorrow. Likewise, we need balance and harmony between ‘inter-Korean collaboration’ and ‘international collaboration.’ Although South Korea aspires to resolve the nuclear issue within the inter-Korean framework, this will be difficult so long as the North remains reticent. Conversely, the international society not only provides South Korea with the grounds for economic survival and prosperity, but also the leverage for a resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. Therefore, if inter-Korea national consensus is an ideal aspiration, international consensus is a realistic target.

Weight will have to be adequately distributed depending on priorities of the gamut of ideal and realistic goals. Even though South Korea as a separated country cannot abandon the ideal goals, this does not imply that such goals should take precedence over the realistic goals. The path towards genuine ‘balance and harmony’ lies in recognizing the necessity of both goals, and yet acknowledging the discrepancy in the importance of the goals. This principle was

ignored during the Daejung Kim and Moohyun Roh administration. Instead, ideal goals were placed at center stage while security was on the back burner, resulting in a weakened international relations and ROK-U.S. alliance. Though much of this has been patched up with the inauguration of the Lee administration, balance and harmony are national tasks that must continue well into the future. Under this logic, even under the duress of a nuclear threat from North Korea, South Korea should keep open the window for amelioration in inter-Korea relations. Likewise, even under gestures of appeasement by the North or progression of nuclear negotiations, efforts to counter the North Korean nuclear threat must continue.

In this context, the 'grand bargain' espoused by President Lee is a proposal directed to both the North and the international community, which reflects the 'balance and harmony' principle. Offering the North massive assistance for a demonstration of a trustworthy commitment towards fundamental change including nuclear disarmament while reform/openness is based on the premise of considering the North as the 'same race,' thus giving the North the opportunity to opt for such changes.' By sequencing the provision of the guarantee of safety for North Korea and international assistance at the point "when dismantlement of core features of the North's nuclear program' occurs," President Lee discloses his will to swing away from the non-productive dialogue cycle of the past, though he does not expect an immediate outcome to that direction. This recognizes the current nuclear threat emanating from the North, and therefore, emphasizing the need to continue a two-track approach until one can conclusively confirm willingness from the North towards fundamental change or until the international community as a whole agrees on needs to change its stance.

Naturally, until we can confirm a fundamental shift in North

Korea, responses in the context of nuclear security must continue. In particular, the time is right for reinforcing extended deterrence through the ROK-U.S. consensus. The threat of North's nukes has materialized with Pyongyang's second nuclear test of multiple test-firing of missiles, which has consequently fomented a wide international consensus regarding the danger behind the North's nuclear trajectory. Just as the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953 played the role of a security bulwark enabling decades of stability and dynamic economic development for South Korea, the ROK-U.S. consensus and reinforcement of extended deterrence at this time will serve as the soil upon which stability and economic prosperity will again be possible, until the complete resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem. In accordance, South Korea will need to foremost start negotiations with the U.S. on supplementary follow-up measures to the concept of extended deterrence as expressed in the June 16 agreement of the ROK-U.S. summit meeting. It is an imperative of the South to deter the North's nuclear threat through cooperation with the international community. It is time for South Korea to truly maximize its foreign policy capabilities to frame the North's threat or its use of nuclear weapons as 'unacceptable and unthinkable,' by collaborating through channels such as the alliance, UN, and regional diplomacy. Among such pressing tasks, priority number one is strengthening the U.S. provision of the extended deterrence that includes the nuclear umbrella. Simultaneously, efforts to elevate the legal standing of the extended deterrence must continue.<sup>28</sup>

It is also an opportune time for the U.S. to reflect on its alliance

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<sup>28</sup> Considering that there is no provision of a nuclear umbrella in the NATO and the U.S.-Japan Defense Treaties, the chances for the U.S. to reference extended deterrence to each individual ally in the form of a treaty are slim. Nonetheless, to what extent and how extended deterrence can be provided to South Korea should depend primarily on the level of the North Korean threat.

policies and implement the necessary measures to buttress the alliance, including the extended deterrence promised to its allies in East Asia. There are various reasons underscoring this necessity: the looming possibility of emergence of a new international order with one superpower plus multiple strong powers; China's augmentation in power and the rise of 'Chindia'; hints at a new Cold War brewing; limitations of a foreign policy rooted in hard power; saliency of international real politics over energy; dark clouds casting over the long-term survivability of the nonproliferation regime by North Korea and Iran; and, the increase in non-traditional security threats. Against this background, if the U.S. were to become engrossed by the trends in its new nuclear doctrine and remain nonchalant towards the nuclear susceptibility faced by its allies in East Asia, the mainstream strata in each country that viewed its alliance with the U.S. as a pivotal element to its state survival strategy will eventually be shaken. In the end, this will only deteriorate the longevity of the alliance. Like the saying goes, 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder,' – the credibility of extended deterrence will be contingent upon the perspective of the potential attackers. The time is now for the U.S. to make North Korea clearly recognize the credibility of the extended deterrence, and to take the necessary measures to that end.



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*Coordinating U.S.-ROK Defenses  
against North Korean  
Nuclear/Missile Threat*

*Stanley B. Weeks*



The North Korean nuclear and missile threat continues to increase at the same time as the U.S.-South Korean Alliance is being adapted to better address these and other evolving threats in and beyond the Korean peninsula. Beginning with a brief overview of the status of the North Korean nuclear and missile threats, and a consideration of the status of the U.S.-ROK Alliance defenses against such threats, we then examine the recent evolution of the Alliance. The June 2009 U.S.-ROK Joint Vision for the Alliance, and prior agreements to transition wartime operational control (OPCON) of ROK military forces, establish potential new roles for the Alliance not only in peninsula defense but also in the region and globally. The maritime component of the U.S.-ROK Alliance is addressed in some detail as it has the potential to be of increasing importance in countering the nuclear and missile threats from North Korea and in leading the adapted Alliance in cooperation against non-traditional threats, regionally and globally. In this regard, the May 2009 adherence of the ROK to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is particularly promising as a basis for U.S., ROK, and other multilateral cooperation against a major aspect of the North Korean nuclear and missile threats – the threat of proliferation. The ROK Navy’s new blue water, open ocean capabilities not only enable PSI interdictions at sea, but have the potential to add a vital mobile sea- based element to defense against North Korean missiles. The ROK Navy can also lead in cooperation with other navies in and beyond the region in protecting the regional and global sea lines of communication (SLOCs) whose security is essential to the trade and energy flows which the ROK economy depends upon. As a result, U.S. and ROK naval cooperation can lead the Alliance in implementing its new longer-term vision for a mature cooperation broadened beyond just peninsula defense.

## STATUS OF NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR/ MISSILE THREAT

### *Nuclear Threat*

Many other writings have addressed in detail the nearly two decade long pattern of U.S.-led attempts to halt North Korean nuclear and missile development through the means of diplomacy (bilateral and then Six Party Talks) and sanctions, followed by agreements later disputed and violated by North Korea.<sup>1</sup> The focus in this discussion will simply be on the current status, based on open sources, of current North Korean nuclear and missile threats which the US and ROK must prepare to defend against.

In its nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, North Korea is estimated to have produced enough weapons-grade plutonium for five to eight nuclear weapons (some estimates are as many as twelve weapons).<sup>2</sup> Following its February 10, 2005 announcement that it had manufactured nuclear weapons, North Korea conducted an initial nuclear test (with a very low yield of less than one kiloton — which may have reflected a failure or may have been intentional) on October 9, 2006.<sup>3</sup> Following the December 2008 breakdown (over verification issues) of the Six Party Talks and the February 2007 denuclearization agree-

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<sup>1</sup> See particularly Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Development and Diplomacy," *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress*, September 9, 2009 and Mary Beth Nikitin *et. al.*, "North Korea's Second Nuclear Test: Implications of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874," *CRS Report for Congress* (July 23, 2009) and Min-soon Song, "Restoring Boldness and Flexibility to U.S.-ROK Coordination on North Korea," *Center for U.S.-Korea Policy*, Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 8 (September 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Development and Diplomacy," Summary page.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Beth Nikitin, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Technical Issues," *CRS Report for Congress* (July 1, 2009).

ment, North Korea on April 14, 2009 announced its withdrawal from the Six Party Talks and then on May 25, 2009 tested a second nuclear device, estimated as somewhat larger than the 2006 explosion.<sup>4</sup> If the Yongbyon reactor is restarted, additional plutonium for up to four to six nuclear weapons for each full reactor control rod load (or enough for one additional weapon after four to six months in operation) could be produced. Additionally, North Korea has now again claimed to have a separate capability path to nuclear weapons through uranium enrichment, which could produce two more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational.<sup>5</sup> As to weaponization of North Korea's existing nuclear devices, an unclassified report for Congress in August 2007 by the Director of National Intelligence stated: "North Korea has short and medium range missiles that could be fitted with nuclear weapons, but we do not know whether it has in fact done so."<sup>6</sup> Despite some very recent improvement in North Korea's defiant attitude toward the Six Party Talks, following former President Bill Clinton's early August 2009 visit to Pyongyang and meeting with Kim Jong-Il, at this writing any agreement on resumption of the Six Party Talks, much less restarting the process of North Korean denuclearization still appears distant. In the meantime, North Korea is again preparing its Yongbyon reactor and plutonium reprocessing facility to resume production.

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4- Mary Beth Nikitin, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Technical Issues," *CRS Report for Congress* (July 1, 2009).

5- *Ibid.*, p. 27.

6- *Ibid.*, p. 10.

## *Nuclear Threat - Implications*

The implications of North Korea having nuclear weapons are broader than often realized. Of course, such weapons pose a direct threat to U.S. and ROK military forces and facilities, and civilian populations, in South Korea, when mated with some of the over 600 Scud missiles with a 300 mile range covering all of South Korea. As discussed below, if North Korean nuclear weapons were mated with some of the 200-300 intermediate-range Nodong ballistic missiles with a range of over 900 miles, they could reach most of the main islands of Japan. If nuclear weapons were mated to some of the reported new Taepodong X/Musudan ballistic missiles with a longer range of 1,500-2,400 miles, they could threaten Okinawa and Guam.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this direct nuclear attack threat to U.S. and ROK military in South Korea, and to Japan and to U.S. forces in Japan and Guam, North Korea's nuclear weapons provide a potential coercive threat to U.S. and ROK military plans for defense of South Korea and counter-attacks on North Korea. While it is very unlikely that the U.S. would be deterred from coming to the aid of its South Korean ally in the event of a full North Korean attack, North Korea must hope that its nuclear weapons might deter the U.S. and the ROK from respondiing with military force to lesser North Korean hostile actions and, especially, from eventually responding to a full North Korean attack on South Korea by moving forces to North Korea to overthrow the Pyongyang regime.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>- Mary Beth Nikitin, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Technical Issues," *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup>- Bruce W. Bennett, "Revisiting the ROK Defense Reform Plan 2020: ROK National Security Planning in a Changing Environment," August 2007 paper provided by the author.

Beyond direct attack and coercion in the peninsula defense context, the U.S. (and the ROK) must be concerned about the potential for further proliferation of nuclear (and missile) technology from North Korea to rogue states and even to non-state terrorist actors. North Korea already has a long track record of exporting Scud missiles to Middle East countries such as Syria and Yemen, and has exported longer-range Nodong missiles and technology to Iran, Pakistan, and Libya.<sup>9</sup> Of even greater concern, North Korea has also reportedly collaborated in nuclear activities with Iran and Syria.<sup>10</sup> Given North Korea's serious economic situation and demonstrated willingness to sell nuclear and missile technology to rogue states, there is real concern that such weapons and technology could be provided, directly or indirectly, to non-state terrorist actors.

Yet another concern regarding North Korea's nuclear threat is the danger of "loose nukes" in the event of a collapse of the North Korean regime. Such a collapse, as a result of disputed leadership change, internal uprising or civil war, or other measures leading to an end to the North Korean state's traditional harsh control of its people, could lead to contending factions in North Korea proliferating or even using nuclear and other weapons and technology of mass destruction.<sup>11</sup> The U.S. and ROK (as well as other major regional states) will need to have in place close coordination to deal with the consequences of such a sudden collapse of the North

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<sup>9</sup>- Larry A. Nicksch, "Korea-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress* (Updated July 25, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>- *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>- Bruce W. Bennett, "Revisiting the ROK Defense Reform Plan 2020: ROK National Security Planning in a Changing Environment," p. 25. An excellent discussion of this broader challenge is contained in Paul B. Stares and Joel S. Wit, "Preparing for Sudden Change in North Korea," *Council on Foreign Relations Special Report*, No. 42 (January 2009).



Korean regime. This area is ripe for resuming the previous planning dialogue on this issue within the U.S.-ROK Alliance.

### ***North Korean Missile Threat***

As noted above, North Korean ballistic missiles pose a significant threat in and beyond South Korea. Most numerous are the more than 600 Scud missiles with 300 mile range reaching all of South Korea. Some newer versions first tested in 2006 are more quickly launchable solid-fuel missiles, and there are also recent reports of improvements in the accuracy of these and other North Korean missiles. Then there are the 200 to 300 intermediate- range Nodong missiles, with over 900 mile range, covering the main islands of Japan. The new longer-range Taepodong X/ Musudan missile, with its 1,500 to 2,400 mile range can reach vital U.S. military forces on Okinawa and Guam. This missile has also now been exported to, and publicly displayed by, Iran. North Korea additionally continues to develop a very long-range missile, Taepodong II, that could reach Alaska, Hawaii, or the U.S. west coast. Unsuccessful flight tests of this missile were conducted in August 1998 and again in July 2006, and most recently in April of 2009. This most recent flight reached a range of 1,980 miles. This numerous and varied North Korean ballistic missile inventory and active development program is a matter for great concern to the U.S. and ROK in and beyond the Korean peninsula, particularly if mated with North Korea's nuclear or (much more numerous) chemical and biological warheads, and can be used by North Korea not only for direct attack but also for coercion and proliferation.

A final North Korean nuclear and missile threat impact is more indirect — the impact of potentially destabilizing the longstanding

U.S.-ROK Alliance. As Victor Cha recently wrote, “Policy on North Korea is perhaps the most important challenge for future alliance interaction.”<sup>12</sup> Under the previous two South Korean Presidents, the higher priority given by the U.S. to ending North Korea’s nuclear (and missile) threats contrasted and often clashed with the South Korean Presidents’ prioritization of a “Sunshine Policy” of engagement and dialogue with North Korea. Maintaining the recently restored close coordination and common strategy agreed between the U.S. and the ROK on dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem must be a continuing priority in future Alliance relations.

### ***U.S.-ROK Agreed Policy on the North Korean Nuclear/ Missile Threat***

The Joint Communique issued in Seoul on October 22, 2009 after the annual U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between the Defense Minister, military heads, and senior defense and foreign affairs officials of the two states clearly stated an agreed U.S.-ROK policy on the North Korean nuclear and missile threat. The SCM Joint Communique “reiterated that the ROK and the U.S. will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapon state,” criticized recent North Korean nuclear and missile tests as violations of UN Security Council resolutions and Six Party Talks agreements, and pledged both nations to fully implement the UN Security Council Resolutions (1718 and 1874), and “to continue joint efforts to achieve the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea

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<sup>12</sup> Victor D. Cha, “Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance,” in Kurt M. Campbell, Victor D. Cha, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, Randy Schriver, and Vikram J. Singh, *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance*, Center for a New American Security (February 2009), p. 21.

in a peaceful manner through the Six-Party Talks.”<sup>13</sup> The SCM Joint Communique went on to make clear that the U.S. would support ROK efforts “to develop inter-Korean relations through dialogue, while making the denuclearization of North Korea a top priority.” This statement reflects the agreement now of both nations on relative priorities following the election last year of the more conservative South Korean President Lee Myung-bak.

### ***Implications of the North Korean Nuclear/Missile Threat for U.S.-ROK Defense Cooperation.***

This review of the North Korean nuclear and missile threat in its various dimensions suggests several implications for coordinating U.S.-ROK defenses. First, as clearly stated in the SCM Joint Communique, is the need for extended deterrence and close U.S.-ROK “Secretary Gates reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence for the ROK, using the full range of military capabilities, to include the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities...and both sides agreed to work closely together to enhance the effectiveness of extended deterrence.”<sup>14</sup> As part of this extended deterrence, U.S.-South Korean cooperation in missile defense looms large, as do all the Alliance C4ISR capabilities associated with air and missile defense. The SCM Joint Communique also acknowledges the broader regional and global threats to stability from proliferation of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles, and acknowledged “the importance of mutual support and cooperation on PSI-related

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<sup>13</sup> “41<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communique” (October 23, 2009), <<http://www.defenselink.mil/Releases/>>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

activities, including exercises and information-sharing.”<sup>15</sup> The importance of these agreed areas of U.S.-ROK defense coordination to counter the North Korean nuclear and missile threat will be considered below in more detail regarding naval cooperation in PSI and missile defense.

## **STATUS OF U.S.-ROK DEFENSES AGAINST THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR/MISSILE THREAT**

There is much room for improvement in U.S.-ROK defenses and coordination against the North Korean missile and nuclear threat. U.S. and South Korean top-level policy coordination — with the goal to halt North Korean nuclear development through diplomacy, the Six Party talks, and enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions sanctioning North Korea — has improved greatly in the past year, as indicated by the recent SCM Joint Communique. But there is a need for closer coordination to deal with the existing North Korean nuclear and missile threats in their various implications. As a threat of direct attack, North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles will require enhanced U.S.-ROK rapid command and control for operational coordination of both missile defenses (as elaborated below) as well as enhanced passive defenses (particularly against the threat of North Korean missiles with chemical or biological warheads). As a threat of coercion, North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles should spur closer prior U.S.-ROK political and military planning consultations (as well as consultations with Japan, which hosts

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<sup>15</sup> “41<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communique” (October 23, 2009), <<http://www.defenselink.mil/Releases/>>.

critical rear support bases also now at risk). Regarding the various “loose nukes” threats of a North Korean collapse, more detailed consultation now between the U.S. and ROK (as well as some discussion then with the PRC, Japan, and Russia) are essential to coordinate and anticipate potential challenges. The threat of further North Korean proliferation of nuclear technology (or even weapons) and missiles requires enhanced U.S.-ROK cooperation, in a regional and global, as well as peninsula context, in implementing the PSI, particularly in the maritime domain.

With ballistic missiles being the most likely delivery vehicles for any attack by North Korea with nuclear (or chemical or biological) weapons, the current status of missile defense in South Korea merits serious concern. The U.S. has deployed numerous more advanced Patriot PAC-3 air and missile defense batteries in South Korea to defend critical bases, and has missile defense capable Aegis ships based in Japan. But South Korea itself lacks a missile defense capability today, having lagged behind the U.S. (and Japan) in deploying land and sea-based missile defenses. In 2008, South Korea finally began to take delivery of U.S.-made (refurbished German) Patriot PAC-2 missiles (which the Koreans term “SAM-X”), with 48 interceptors to be operational in 2010 to provide the beginnings of a national lower-tier missile defense capability.<sup>16</sup> Longer term, the ROK has plans to develop by 2020 its own air and missile defense system, termed M-SAM.<sup>17</sup> South Korea is building three large KDX-III destroyers equipped with the Aegis system, the first of which is now in commission, to be joined by two others by

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<sup>16</sup>- Sung-ki Jung, “U.S. Promises Missile Shield for S. Korea,” *Defense News* (October 26, 2009), p. 4; “South Korea to Complete Missile Defense by 2012,” *Defense News*, February 15, 2009.

<sup>17</sup>- Bruce W. Bennett, “Revisiting the ROK Defense Reform Plan 2020: ROK National Security Planning in a Changing Environment,” p. 35, pp. 47-48.

2012. These destroyers could (and should) be modified — as Japan has already done with four of its six Kongo-class Aegis destroyers — to provide the ROK with a sea-based mobile missile defense capability, using the U.S. SM-3 interceptor missiles. Finally, there will clearly be a need for the ROK and the U.S. to closely coordinate and integrate both South Korean and U.S. land-based Patriot missile defenses and eventual sea-based missile defenses.

## JOINT VISION FOR THE ALLIANCE

The challenge of coordinating U.S.-ROK defenses against the North Korean nuclear and missile threat needs to be considered in the broader context of what the recent SCM Joint Communique reaffirmed as “the commitment of the ROK and U.S. Presidents to build a comprehensive strategic Alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope, based on common values and mutual trust, as set forth in the Joint Vision for the Alliance of the ROK and the U.S. on June 16, 2009.”<sup>18</sup> The SCM Joint Communique expressed the commitment of the U.S. and ROK “to closely cooperate to implement and build upon the Joint Vision through continued development of measures for the direction of ROK-U.S. defense cooperation.” The discussion that follows here will indicate how the maritime component of the Alliance is particularly well suited to address the North Korean nuclear and missile challenges, in the bilateral context as well as the broader regional and global contexts foreseen in the Joint Vision for the Alliance.

The recent SCM Joint Communique also addressed the

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<sup>18</sup> “41<sup>st</sup> U.S.-ROK SCM Meeting Joint Communique” (October 23, 2009).

separate but closely related issue of the ongoing transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) of ROK forces back to the ROK on April 17, 2012. This OPCON transfer will replace the current U.S.-ROK command arrangements through the Combined Forces Command (CFC) with separate ROK and U.S. commands coordinated through an “Alliance Military Coordination Center.”<sup>19</sup> The SCM Joint Communique “agreed with the CFC Commander’s report that the transition of wartime OPCON of ROK military forces is proceeding smoothly and on schedule, and...reaffirmed their intent for the transition to occur on April 17, 2012.” The details of the new national commands and the eventual structure of the coordinating center will be important backdrops to future U.S.-ROK cooperation to counter the North Korean nuclear and missile threats on the peninsula.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE MARITIME COMPONENTS

An insightful recent analysis of the future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance noted that recent South Korean naval modernization developments “appear particularly promising for future alliance cooperation.”<sup>20</sup>

With South Korea’s near-total dependence on the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) to carry the trade and energy flows power-

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<sup>19</sup> Bruce W. Bennett, “Revisiting the ROK Defense Reform Plan 2020: ROK National Security Planning in a Changing Environment,” p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Kurt M. Campbell, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, and Vikram J. Singh, “Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance,” in *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance*, Center for a New American Security (February 2009), p. 65.

ing its globalized economy, South Korea began in the 1990s a naval modernization program designed to transform the previous localized defensive South Korean Navy into an open-ocean, blue water Navy of regional and even global reach. Well before the September 2005 ROK adoption of the 15-year Defense Reform Plan (DRP) 2020, then-South Korean President Kim Dae Jung in March 2001 announced that South Korea would create a new “strategic mobile fleet” to protect the state’s interests and play the role of peacekeeper in the oceans of the world.<sup>21</sup> The current ROK President Lee Myung-bak similarly stated last year that “we have to build a state-of-the-art force that can protect our maritime sovereignty. With a vision for an advanced, deep-sea Navy, our Navy should become a force that can ensure the security of maritime transportation lines, and contribute to peace in the world.”<sup>22</sup> In short, the South Korean Navy, backed by the vigorous ROK economy and the world’s largest shipbuilding industry, is now a decade into its transformation to a modern, open-ocean Navy whose roles potentially go far beyond the previous ROK Navy’s defensive missions of interdiction of North Korean ships and submarines and support for the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

The expanding capabilities and potential regional and global reach of this new ROK Navy fortuitously coincide with the recent broader conception in the Joint Vision for the Alliance. Countering nuclear and ballistic missile threats of both attack and proliferation, the ROK Navy is well positioned to take the lead role as the Alliance expands its scope beyond just peninsula defense to regional and

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<sup>21</sup>– Thomas Bowditch, “Peacetime Energy Security: What is the Threat and is there a Naval Mission?” Paper prepared for the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA)-Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy (KIMS) conference in San Francisco, CA, August 27-28, 2009, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup>– *Ibid.*, p. 19.



global cooperation. Three areas detailed below are particularly significant: the potential to contribute to air and missile defense, the potential for the ROK to more effectively counter the threat of nuclear proliferation by sea as a new (May 2009) PSI adherent nation, and the ability to contribute to security of the global maritime commons and its vital sea lanes against a variety of non-state threats such as piracy and maritime terrorism.

Before examining in some more detail these three areas for broader U.S.-ROK Navy Alliance cooperation, it is useful to briefly summarize the main elements of this new oceangoing ROK Navy.<sup>23</sup>

*Surface Ships.* The surface ships of this modernized ROK Navy include three classes of Destroyers. The largest and most capable class consists of three (and perhaps eventually another three) KDX-III 7650 ton destroyers equipped with the Aegis weapons system. The first of these destroyers is now operational, with two more building to complete by 2012. Though initially equipped with the long-range SM-2 air defense interceptor missiles, these destroyers could later be upgraded to provide missile defense capability using SM-3 interceptor missiles.<sup>24</sup> The ROK Navy also has six new KDX-II 4500 ton destroyers, and three earlier KDX-I smaller 3000 ton destroyers. Four underway replenishment ships are now available to extend these ships' range of operations and sustainability. A new class of Frigate, FFX, is planned to enter service in the next few years

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<sup>23</sup> This section draws from the author's briefing on "Naval Defense of the ROK: The Evolution of Roles and Missions Because of Wartime OPCON Changes," presented at the CNA/KIMS Conference on "The Future of ROK Navy-U.S. Navy Cooperation," Honolulu, Hawaii, 21-22 June 2007.

<sup>24</sup> For a good summary of evolving SM-3 missile defense capabilities, and the use of these missiles on Japan's Kongo-class Aegis destroyers, see Geoff Fein, "Raytheon's SM-3 on Target in Latest Test," *Defense Daily*, October 30, 2009.

to supplement the thirty smaller Corvettes and dozens of Fast Patrol Boats (including the new 500 ton PKX class) used in littoral defense against North Korea. (Unfortunately, given the potential mine threat, the ROK Navy has less than a dozen mine countermeasures vessels, and no plans to build more.)

*Submarines.* The ROK Navy is building nine of the larger German Type 214 1800 ton submarines, with the first two recently completed, to add to their existing nine shorter-range German Type 209 1200 ton submarines. With air-independent conventional propulsion allowing extended quiet submerged periods, the nine new larger submarines will have longer range and endurance, enabling more distant patrols of sea lanes.

*Amphibious Ships.* In 2007, the ROK Navy commissioned the Dokdo, the first of three planned Landing Platform Helo (LPH) amphibious ships. At 14,000 tons and over 660 feet in length, with a welldeck for deploying landing craft and a capacity to carry up to fifteen helicopters and up to 750 Marines, these ships provide a significant capability for the ROK Navy to project force (and influence) regionally and globally. In the future, such ships could even be modified to serve as carriers for short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft.<sup>25</sup> These ships have extensive command and communications capabilities and are a potential centerpiece, with the KDX-III Aegis destroyers, of the “strategic mobile squadrons” the ROK Navy plans to base and deploy from a new ROK Navy base strategically located south of the peninsula on JeJu island, which is planned to be completed by 2014.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>- Strategic Forecasting (STRATFOR), “Japan, South Korea: A Naval Competition Speeds Up,” March 19, 2009 and Kurt M. Campbell *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>26</sup>- “JeJu Naval Base to Open by 2014,” *Korea Times*, April 27, 2009.

*Aircraft.* The current ROK naval aircraft inventory includes two dozen Lynx helicopters for use from destroyers and LPHs, plus eight P-3C long-range maritime patrol aircraft (with plans to purchase eight more P-3C aircraft from the U.S.)

As this brief summary indicates, the ROK Navy is well on its way to being a very modern blue-water Navy capable of operations throughout the Asia-Pacific region and even beyond. With this in mind, we now consider some of the potential operational uses for these forces in the future.

## **ROK NAVY POTENTIAL TO COUNTER PROLIFERATION**

In dealing with one of the major North Korea nuclear and missile threats—proliferation by sea—this new blue-water ROK Navy has great potential to contribute to U.S. and multinational efforts. Both the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) (which South Korea adhered to in May 2009) and UN Security Council Resolution 1874 provide for international cooperation to interdict North Korean shipments of nuclear and missile weapons or components.

*PSI.*<sup>27</sup> Initiated by the U.S. and ten other nations in May 2003, the PSI is an activity (not an organization), whose adhering states pledge to endorse a statement of anti-proliferation principles, strengthen national authorities as required to prevent proliferation, identify national points of contact and exchange information, identify national assets to contribute to PSI efforts, and be willing to

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<sup>27</sup> Mary Beth Nikitin, “Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI),” *CRS Report for Congress* (September 10, 2009), provides a more detailed discussion of the PSI.

actively participate in PSI interdiction training and exercises or actual activities. An informal PSI coordinating structure, the twenty-nation Operational Experts Group (OEG) meets periodically to discuss proliferation concerns and plan future events and exercises. In the six years since the initiation of the PSI, 95 nations have adhered to it, most recently South Korea. The latest of several annual PSI exercises just completed in Singapore on October 29, 2009 with a demonstration of a ship search inport.<sup>28</sup> Although the PSI covers interdiction of air, ground, or sea transportation in proliferation of WMD, delivery systems (such as ballistic missiles), or their components, most of the PSI exercises have focused on procedures for at-sea interdiction by locating, boarding, and search.

*UN Security Council Resolution 1874.*<sup>29</sup> The UN Security Council, following North Korea's second nuclear test in May 2009, unanimously passed Resolution 1874 on June 12. Resolution 1874 placed sanctions on any North Korean arms transfers (except small arms and light arms) and (like existing UN Security Council Resolution 1718 of October 2006) forbids North Korean transfer of any WMD and missile related equipment or technologies. Notably, UNSC Resolution 1874 calls on all states to inspect North Korean or other vessels suspected of carrying such shipments. (Such inspections, however, must be within the quite restrictive constraints of international law, which requires prior consent of the suspect commercial ship's flag state to search, and forbids any inspection at all of sovereign immune government vessels)

The ROK is now not only an adherent to the PSI, but also is

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<sup>28</sup>- "Exercise Deep Sabre II Concludes with Port Search Demonstration," Channel-newsasia.com, October 29, 2009.

<sup>29</sup>- Mary Beth Nikitin, "North Korea's Second Nuclear Test: Implications of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874," *CRS Report for Congress* (July 23, 2009), provides a more detailed discussion.

bound by UN Security Council Resolution 1874. Accordingly, the ROK Navy can contribute to interdicting North Korean nuclear and missile proliferation by sea in three ways. First, as the nation closest to North Korean ports, it can share information on North Korean shipping with the U.S. and other Navies. Second, the ROK Navy can now participate fully in PSI maritime exercises and meetings. Finally, should the occasion arise, the ROK Navy could participate in actual maritime interdiction of nuclear and/or missile shipments. Such maritime interdiction is a good area for enhancing the U.S.-ROK Alliance in its regional and global dimensions by more extensive information sharing, coordination, and combined training.

## **SEA-BASED MISSILE DEFENSE**

The earlier review of the North Korean missile threat indicated both the broad scope of this threat in and beyond the Korean peninsula and the fact that the ROK is only now beginning to develop land-based missile defenses.

In this context, the inherent capabilities of the three new KDX-III destroyers with the Aegis combat system loom large. The ROK should hasten to cooperate with the U.S. Navy in equipping its KDX-III destroyers with the necessary modifications and SM-3 missiles to be capable of sea-based missile defense. The U.S. and Japan also face the North Korean missile threat, and already have numerous Aegis destroyers and cruisers in the region which have been modified for sea-based missile defense, facilitating bilateral and trilateral training, exercises, and coordination of these capabilities with the ROK Navy (and with other services of all three nations having land-based missile defense capabilities.) Enhanced

cooperation and coordination of all such capabilities is essential to counter the serious, already existent North Korean missile threat. This existing threat warrants a greater sense of urgency than shown to date by the ROK in developing sea- and land-based missile defenses.

## **ROK NAVY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BROADER ALLIANCE VISION**

Clearly, the ROK blue-water Navy has a potential lead role in helping build the “comprehensive strategic Alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope” endorsed in the recent SCM Joint Communique. This role is most immediately manifested through cooperation with the U.S. and other nations in countering the North Korean nuclear and missile threat through interdiction of proliferation by sea, and through sea-based missile defense. Beyond this, however, the ROK Navy now has capabilities to contribute to the Alliance’s broader vision by making operational contributions to U.S. and multilateral maritime cooperation against various non-state threats such as piracy and maritime terrorism.

Indeed, the distant deployment this year of new KDX-II ROK Navy ships (carrying Marines and helicopters) for anti-piracy operations off Somalia marks a new era of ROK Navy cooperation with the U.S. Navy and other Navies. In so doing, the ROK Navy is of course directly defending its own national interests in secure sea lanes for its vital trade and energy flows across the Indian Ocean from the Persian Gulf. But the ROK Navy, in contributing to the international anti-piracy effort, is also, with the U.S. and other Navies, contributing to broader global security interests in the

maritime commons.

Another area of potential future ROK Navy contribution is in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR). The ROK Navy's new Dokdo-class LPHs are ideal platforms from which to conduct such operations, which are increasingly in demand in, and beyond, the region. The U.S. Navy can contribute to broadening the Alliance in this area by dedicated training and exercises with the new ROK LPHs and perhaps a joint humanitarian deployment in the region.

Finally, the U.S. Navy is increasingly concerned with naval operations in the closer-in littoral seas. The ROK Navy, with its past extensive experience of coastal operations and its new Fast Patrol Boats, is well positioned to help the U.S. Navy in this area, through shared information and combined exercises, particularly as the U.S. Navy deploys its new class of Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) in the region.

In summary, the U.S.-ROK Alliance can be further broadened in the maritime domain by enhanced U.S.-ROK Navy cooperation and operations in global counter-piracy/counter-terrorism, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, and coastal operations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The growing North Korean nuclear and missile threat poses serious challenges to the U.S.-ROK Alliance, in and beyond the Korean peninsula. At the same time, the new U.S.-ROK Joint Vision for the Alliance commits both countries to expand their defense cooperation to "build a comprehensive Alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope." As the ROK Navy has expanded its capabilities

and reach to the open ocean, there is a particular need and opportunity for U.S.-ROK Navy cooperation to counter the North Korean nuclear and missile threat through cooperation on interdiction at sea through the PSI, and through ROK Navy development and cooperation with the U.S. Navy in sea-based missile defense. ROK Navy and U.S. Navy cooperation can further lead in implementing the agreed expanded vision of the Alliance through ROK Navy contributions and cooperation with the U.S. and other Navies in regional and global counter-piracy/ counter-terrorism operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, and littoral operations together. In so doing, the U.S. and ROK Navies may supplement the classic Alliance Army slogan “we go together” with a classic maritime slogan — “two if by sea.”



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*The ROK's Perspective  
of the ROK-U.S. Cooperation  
in the Transformation of the DPRK*

*Sung-Wook Nam*



## RAISING ISSUES

A decision time is coming. Every matter takes its move from a quantitative change to a qualitative change when it reaches on the critical value. This can be called the law of changes in mass. Since the death of his father Kim Il Sung in 1994, Kim Jong Il has slowly given way due to his biological aging and illness. While it is unknown until when he will remain in his seat of power, he has to make a decision over the short haul on how to manage the current unclear situation without firmly established succession planning.<sup>1</sup> Now, with the passage of physical time, beyond a wishful prospect, the transformation of the DPRK becomes an unavoidable issue to discuss without delay. The DPRK's transformation is expected to occur both inside and outside the country in parallel.

For inside the DPRK, desires for survival should be expressed by those who live there. In a book published by the former Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Schmidt, titled, "*On the Way to German Unity (Auf dem Wege zur deutschen Einheit)*" in 2006, he pointed out that the biggest cause for the collapse of socialist systems in East Germany and East Europe was a 'mind (idea) of freedom' of the people. In other words, the power of freedom became the driving force behind the system transformation.<sup>2</sup> It is not easy at all that a policy reflects a bottom-up desire of the people in such a country governed by tyranny and surveillance without parallel in history. Especially it is difficult that a modern civil society takes a root in this one-man ruling system that is covered with the

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1. Woo-tak Lee, *Survival Game between Obama and Kim Jong Il* (Seoul: Changhae, 2009), p. 48.

2. Sung-cho Park, *Collapse of the Korean Peninsula* (Seoul: Random House, 2006), p. 190.

monolithic ideology system (Yuil Sasang Chegye) that have developed through the feudal Suryong system after the occupation of the Japanese Imperialism. However, having broadened contacts with the outside world, its people go through the change in their recognition even at a low level, which will be an important motive for the system transformation. Particularly, anticipating the Kangsong Taeguk in 2012, its public pledge to resolve problems related to food, clothing, and shelter is unattainable without assistance from outside in a large scale. A society in which only 1.5% of its members enjoy fundamental human rights cannot secure its existence in future.

Outside the DPRK, the ROK and the international society will provide the key for the transformation. The coming four to eight years led by U.S. President Barack Obama will be the real 'last chance' for the DPRK to resolve the nuclear issue and to maintain the current regime. As time goes by, it is imperative for the DPRK to face a scene in which profitable material exchanges with the ROK through Mt. Geumgang and Kaesung Industrial Complex gradually becomes an important and necessary element for its system maintenance in an economical sense. No matter how it tries to put up a mosquito net over the whole North against 'Capitalism' and the outside world, it is impossible to completely intercept the electric wave. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874, was adopted after the DPRK had fired its missiles and for the nuclear testing. The DPRK has turned its economy into a Robinson Crusoe economy by thoroughly containing non-necessary trade from the outside world. The improvement of human rights in the DPRK is a task of the age. North Korean defectors who reside in the third countries, including China should also be recipients of the transformation.

After all, the transformation requires urgent solutions both inside and outside. Current status within the DPRK tells that it is difficult to delay the solutions any more. The transformation should occur equipped with smart power<sup>3</sup> balanced with hard power and soft power; the former depends on military strength and economic power and the latter consists of culture conformed to human emotions and rational social consensus and guarantees political value, ideal, and humanism. This study approaches the DPRK's transformation through the ROK-U.S. cooperation in four dimensions; inside, outside, soft power, and hard power.

## EVALUATION ON THE DPRK'S MILITARY ADVENTURISM AND ITS DURABILITY

### *Military Adventurism and Establishment of the Kangsong Taeguk*

For the DPRK, stabilizing system and resolving economic difficulties are on the front burner. The DPRK has a goal to turn over the reins of the government to the successor by solving these two issues by 2012, the 100th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il Sung, and the 70th birthday of his son, Kim Jong Il. But the prospect is gloomy. Since Kim Il Sung had declared to resolve problems concerning food, clothing, and shelter in the 1960s, the

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3- Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, *Smart Power*, Sun-sik Hong translated (Seoul: Samin, 2009); Sang-bae Kim, "Smart Power and Policy toward the DPRK under the Obama Administration: Conceptual Understanding and Critical Examination," May 2009, Symposium on the Third Anniversary of the Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies.

situation of “meat soup, a tile-roofed house and silk clothes” that he promised still seem unreachable just yet. Still in 2009, the poor progress in grain production and discontinuance of the outside aid continue to increase the food shortage. The DPRK protests that the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK is the main cause for unsteadiness of the system and economic crisis. However, the real cause dwells on its exclusively closed domestic and foreign policies. Even though its strategy to bring in huge outside aid through threatening the international society vis-a-vis military adventurism equipped with nuclear weapons and missiles development-has certain limits, the DPRK continues to concentrate its efforts on this method.

The DPRK fired a long-range rocket on April 5, 2009 as it previously had announced. On May 12, as a part of the preparation for the launch of an Experimental Communications Satellite ‘Kwangmyongsong-2’, the DPRK formally notified the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that it would launch a satellite between April 4-8. Prior to this, in a flurry, it signed up for the ‘Outer Space Treaty’ on March 5 and for the ‘Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space’ on March 10, with Russia and UN secretariat respectively. It was contrary to the fact that it did not take necessary procedures for safe navigation of flights and ships when it had fired ‘Daepodong-1’ in August, 1998. In addition, it propagated that it has the sovereign right to send up rockets for a peaceful space development by Pyongyang’s state-run Korean Central News Agency and Chosun Shinbo, the journal of Chongryon (General Association of North Korean Residents in Japan). After all, it was all for creating and displaying a proper cause for launching a satellite.

However, a ballistic missile and a satellite projectile share commonalities in fundamental principles such as a propulsion

device, an induction control device, and a machine design. They only have differences in loading materials and traces. Especially, for oxidizer, while usual projectiles take liquid oxygen, the DPRK used Red Fuming Nitric Acid which is usually used for a ballistic missile. Red Fuming Nitric Acid is used for a ballistic missile due to its high storability despite its harmfulness to human body and high corrosiveness. Against this backdrop, the Chosun Shinbo admitted its diversion to military use by reporting “rockets for a satellite and an ICBM have the same body which creates strong restraint against the U.S. supremacy.”

Three purposes are displayed in the DPRK’s rocket launch. First is to propagate its regime. It is to display inside and outside the state the first session of the deputies selected through the Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) election on March 8 and Kim Jong Il’s third-term marked as the leader of the DPRK on April 9. Its intent is to display for public a performance of reaching closer to the Kangsong Taekuk in space science technology, which is useful to strengthen the national unity. The DPRK utilizes the rocket launch by propagating its superiority comparing the times of the launch and technical independence to the ROK.

Second, it is publicity stunt for missile export. When the DPRK succeeds in the satellite launch, it is likely to utilize it for weapon export by displaying its ICBM technology. In case the satellite fails to safely arrive in an orbit, it can still prove its technical capacity for a mid and long-range ICBM, which increases a possibility of missile export. Due to a decrease in missile export since 2005, the DPRK switched over to co-development of missiles with Iran. After this launch, it can return for exchange of technical expertise or sales of its components. The ‘2008 Defense White Paper’ published by the Military of National Defense



estimates that the DPRK put their efforts by placing IRBMs with an operational range at 3,000km after Rodong missiles with a range of 1,300km.

Final intention is to induce the U.S. to a further positive attitude in regard to negotiation. With the rocket launch, the nuclear and missile issue which has been delayed in Obama administration is likely to emerge as a pending question. This can promote a contact between the DPRK and the U.S.

### ***Countermove of the International Community and Evaluation on the Durability of the DPRK***

Eight days after the rocket launch, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted the Presidential Statement blaming the DPRK. The UNSC condemned the rocket launch, while the DPRK was in breach of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718 which had been adopted after the DPRK's nuclear test in October 2006. The Presidential Statement urged the DPRK to adhere to the Resolution 1718 and not to launch another rocket.

Through nuclear tests the DPRK entered into a different state by making a presumption that having nuclear weapons as an accomplished fact. The DPRK's nuclear possession has been materialized in spite of implicit denial of the outside world. The DPRK's nuclear possession is anticipated to not only increase its negotiating power with the U.S, but also contribute to the succession process of Kim Il Sung → Kim Jong Il → Kim Jong Un. Especially, since his stroke in August 2008 Kim Jong Il has seemed to recognize that there is no enough time for completing the succession plan and achieving the Kangsong Taeguk (strong and prosperous country) by

2012. A time variable is expected to be a main factor which will make him to speed up in every policy decision. Considering all variable factors including time and international politics, this issue is not simple at all and comparable with an equation of high degrees. However, can the possession of nuclear weapons which is denied by the outside world guarantee the DPRK's hereditary power transfer? Due to the pressure given by the international society, the DPRK will participate in bilateral and multilateral talks. There is no difference between 'grand bargain' of the ROK government and the 'comprehensive package deal' of the U.S. government in terms of exchanging economic rewards and the system's stability with nuclear abandonment. While there is deep mutual distrust, it is unable to lead international aid to the DPRK if this principle is not well kept. Ultimately the durability of the DPRK increases in direct proportion to the possibility of nuclear abandonment. With a feeble mind to give up nuclear weapons, its durability also becomes frail.

〈Table 8.1〉 The DPRK's Nuclear Issues and International Countermeasures

Years	Provocations of by the DPRK	Sanctions by the international community	Mediation	Stages of Talks phase
1993~1994	Refusal of the IAEA nuclear inspection	Examination on regional attack by the U.S. government (June 1994)	Visit to the DPRK by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter (June 1994)	Reopening of the High-level talks between the DPRK and the U.S. (July 1994)
2002~2003	Admits to having a uranium program (October 2002)	Adopting of IAEA reports on nuclear issue by the UN Security Council (February 2003)	Three Talks with China (March 2003)	Release of the DPRK Foreign Ministry's statement on the Six-Party Talks (August 2003)
2006	The First nuclear test	Adoption of the UN 1718 (October, 2006)	China's diplomacy tour (October, 2006)	Release of the DPRK Foreign Ministry's statement on the Six-Party Talks (November 2006)
2009	A long-range rocket launch, The Second nuclear test	Adopting of the UN Security Council Resolution 1874 (June, 2009)	China's diplomacy tour(July~September, 2009) * Dai Bingguo, Special Envoy to President Hu Jintao of China, handed an signed letter from Hu to Kim Jong Il	Kim Jong Il's desire to have bilateral and multilateral talks (September 18, 2009)

## CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DPRK'S TRANSFORMATION

### *Kim Jong Il Era:*

#### *Double Difficulties of Economic Disaster and Transition of Power*

While Kim Jong Il's health has been evaluated as good, characteristic symptoms considered as sequelae have been noticed.

Particularly, there were observations that he often became angry and lacked patience. Some doctors in other countries such as France have carefully suggested the possibility of hallucinosis.

The DPRK did not wait to test during the mourning period of the former president of the ROK, Roh Mu-Hyun. Instead it enforced the test in spite of antipathy of the South Korean people. In an unprecedented move by the DPRK, it directly criticized China and Russia. Kim also facilitated an atmosphere of vigorous offense of being crude and pushy, in which hard liners from the military and security parts initiated a flow of current decision making. O Kuk Ryol, Jang Song Taek, U Tong Chuk, Ju Kyu Chang and Kim Jong Gak were named to the National Defense Commission (NDC) while the NDC's position and role were considerably strengthened during the first plenum of the 12th Supreme People's Committee, which seems to be not unrelated. The strengthening of the NDC will bring to power its instructional functions in various ways. Kim is striving to reinforce its status as a nuclear state and to build up a strong economy by 2012, the Kangsong Taekuk. For this purpose, it seems to set an unprecedented hard line on its domestic and foreign policies with much impatience.

Kim clings to the hereditary power transfer because ensuring the succession process is the best choice for the political survival of Kim's clan members its followers.<sup>4</sup> Examples that dictators of the Soviet Union, East Europe, and China experienced after their death provided important motivation for this decision. Kim Il Sung who watched what had happened related to a succession issue in those countries confirmed that family members would be the only trustworthy choice. Kim Jong Il who received his father's power and

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<sup>4</sup>- Sung-min Jang, *War and Peace* (Seoul: Kimyongsu, 2008), p. 37.

watched his father not denounced after his death led him to reach a decision that the hereditary succession is the best option. Another reason is that a power transfer to a third-generation Kim can help to keep power from leaking by displaying that the current regime is solidified. Following the teachings left by Kim Il Sung (or ruling based on dying injunctions), Kim Jong Il has prevented the slackness of his father's and his own power, and therefore has concentrated to draw out the elite group's loyalty from the power structure for the future of the regime.

Therefore, the power structure around Kim Jong Il understands that the third hereditary succession rather than the power transfer to someone outside the family is necessary to keep their privileges. Kim's followers have that in case another one besides Kim's son becomes the successor they have no choice but to be eliminated. And this is considered to be a promoting factor to support the third hereditary succession. In conclusion, while the third hereditary succession is nothing but an anachronism, they pursue this unreasonableness for their own political survival and maintenance of power.

### ***Post - Kim Jong Il Era:***

#### ***Can Kim Jong Un become his father's successor?***

Kim Jong Il's three sons have respective strengths and weaknesses. In the oriental order of primogeniture, Kim Jong Nam (age 38) who is the first son and the son of Sung Hae Rim, his first wife, was in a superior position to become his father's successor. Yet he lost his prestige and image as a leader by being arrested on suspicion of trying to smuggle himself and his family into Japan. The second son, Kim Jong Chul (age 28) could have some advantages in succession thanks to his mother, Ko Yong Hui's support.

But she died before her support could have mounted to something while his health due to hormone imbalance is an issue along with his lack of a vigorous personality, which has led to his exclusion in the succession process. Kim Jong Un (age 26), born on January 8 1984, the second son of Ko Yong Hui, is known to be vigorous and has an innate respect for authority, which makes him to be the favorite son to his father. It seems that Kim Jong Un has been named as his father's successor due to his aggressive character and good look.

It was not until October 2008 that Kim Jong Un became a subject of discussion concerning the succession process. For now it is considered to be at the initial stage of the process. There was a hint of building up in the process in expressions by the DPRK authorities. If it is true that Kim Jong Un has been given the title of "Brilliant Comrade" or "Mangy ngdae Lineage," this might be in similar steps with his father's succession path.

Even without these names, a recent policy task that was like one of a successor provides more meaningful evidence. The 150 days-battle undertaken to boost the economy since April 2009 was similar to the 70 days-battle in the second half of 1974, which was added to Kim Jong Il's contribution in the economic area. After all, this event of mass mobilization that came to an end this autumn would be a mean of contribution as a successor by being exposed to the public. Kim Jong Un was known to manage the "May 1 celebration" and was appointed to the powerful NDC just before the first plenum of the 12th Supreme People's Committee (April 9). This seems to emphasize the Military First Politics in the succession process. Hereafter, he is expected to begin his ascension through the ranks of the ruling party.

Official proclamation of succession will depend on (1) personal

variables: Kim Jong Il's health and Kim Jong Un's capability to take authority and (2) material variables: domestic and foreign affairs. The DPRK has a plan to make stable circumstances to go on the record for the hereditary succession and to idolize the successor by 2012 (which the North Koreans refer to as Juche 100), a year to complete a "strong and prosperous country (Kangsong Taeguk)" at least outwardly. First, the material variables accounts for overcoming the economic crisis through improving relationship with the U.S., completing the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, ceasing threats to current regime, securing advantageous asymmetric weapons against the ROK, and ensuring political leverage. If strong sanctions imposed to the DPRK by the international community are persistent, the power transfer will be delayed. With postponed development of nuclear weapons and missiles, the transfer can be delayed as well. In conclusion, with a careful judgment that threats to the regime are dissolved, the DPRK is expected to begin in earnest its operation of succession. In case that Kim Jong Il continue to be in good health, the third hereditary succession in 2012 is much likely to happen.

However, succession scenarios would enter upon totally different phases dependent to the personal variables, pertaining to such as the sudden death of Kim. There are five potential scenarios related to Kim's health: a sudden death, comatose existence, a serious illness, and a light illness, and status quo of the current health. First, a sudden death of Kim Jong Il refers to the case that he dies intestate like his father. Here, the power transfer to Kim Jong Un is likely to be shrouded in mystery. To consolidate the regime led by Kim Jong Un and Kim Jong Chul, supported by Chang Sung Taek and Kim Gyong Hui, the keen backing of the military authorities is indispensable. In case of a sudden death, it will be

inevitable to choose a collective leadership system by coalition groups through a leadership struggle among the pro-Sino military authorities and the party. Kim Jong Un will have difficulties in holding real power due to lack of foundation for succession.

The second scenario is Kim being in a brain-dead state, where he would, only sustain physical life span without abilities to perceive or act. This is about a judgment of 'death with dignity' which has been an issue in the ROK recently. He hangs on to life with the assistance of respirator while medically his death cannot be necessarily defined. In this case, the DPRK will prevent the disturbance of the power structure and concentrate on managing it stably under the remote control by China. Until an official notice of death, outwardly it will keep tranquility between the party and the military. Yet, it will be a time to struggle for leadership behind the scenes so that succession process will not be discussed openly.

The third scenario is a case of a serious illness when Kim Jong Il has awareness without an ability to act. Outwardly the regime will keep quiet but the weakening of control and power leak come in earnest and accelerate succession process. With a delayed policy decision-making process, the contents of reports to Kim Jong Il will mostly contain only the best and pleasant information. As the leader's life in seclusion become drawn out, the final decision-making by a collective leadership system will be accelerated. This case also makes the succession shrouded in darkness.

The fourth scenario is a light illness which allows Kim to have a normal status with abilities to perceive and act but has some difficulties walking and needs a caretaker to assist him. Under his instruction, the establishment of succession process will come into being. Outwardly, the regime is tranquil and takes hospital politics as a matter of form. Due to his physical limitations, he may be unable



to provide on-site guidance such as being present at the 53rd ceremony to celebrate the foundation of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) on October 10. This may bring miscarriages in policy implementation from the lower units and delay normal operation of a state in each field.

Finally a succession can undergo in phases when Kim maintains his current health but with the aging process. In this scenario, the succession will take place in about five years. Kim Jong Un will occupy the position in the KWP and be trained for succession. This kind of succession will go through relatively smoothly and calm much of the instability of the system maintenance.

Any of the above scenarios will unfold depending on the time taken in relevant circumstances. With the exception of the fifth scenario, no matter which scenario is realized, it becomes shrouded in mist as it is more drawn out further. It depends on whether Kim Jong Un can deliver a proposition that "Power can be taken, but not given." In conclusion, this is all about whether Kim Jong Un can take his father's place, the power and be able to keep it. Especially, it is very important to know whether Kim Jong Un has the ability to cleverly phase in his own power in harmony with surroundings while the elder Kim exercise his power.

〈Table 8.2〉 Scenarios in Kim Jong Il's Death

	Perceptive ability	Behavioral ability	Remark
Sudden death	×	×	Natural death
Vegetable existence	×	×	Physical death
Hospital politics	○	×	Conversation by writing
Bed politics	○	○	Discomfort in walking
Normal politics	○	○	General prostration

### ***Implications of the Third Hereditary Power Transfer and Transformation***

The third hereditary power transfer of the DPRK has several implications. First, this means the making official the succession planning and weakening of the ability to govern. The third heredity succession will open a way to challenges within an inner circle and increase insecurity of the regime. The succession of power invokes inefficiency in managing an organization and selecting people so that a possibility to weaken the regime increases. Lack of time to prepare the succession and incomplete transfer of real power may augment the instability of power transfer and political unrest including a possibility of another figure or power to rise.

Second, adherence to an image of despotic dynasty will cause oddity and mockery from neighboring countries and the international community. Heightened attention from the outside world may help the DPRK to take part in globalization and along with an increase in the number of North Korean refugees potential resistance to the regime has more chance to spread out. On the other hand, against an amplified argument of verification and qualification of the third hereditary succession from the outside world, the DPRK may become more closed than before.

Third, concerning a successor's ability to resolve the nuclear issue, relationship with the ROK, and domestic issues, the hereditary power transfer can bring opportunities to change the environment for unification of the Korean Peninsula. When the successor lacks ability to lead the DPRK and it is visualized that will be some radical changes in policy direction. As long as Kim Jong Il survives, the DPRK will keep standing on the basis of its current policy direction. Yet if lack of ability to handle insufficient learning

and experience is exposed, it will not be the least to display a quite different tendency in policy direction. With an increasing chance that the military authorities come to the front, tension between the ROK and the DPRK can be escalated.

## **ROK-U.S. COOPERATION FOR THE DPRK'S TRANSFORMATION**

In the spatial sphere, drives toward the DPRK's transformation exist inside and outside the system. The main group that motivates and behaves divides into two; people within the system and the international society including the ROK.

### *Cooperation for the Transformation: Inside*

Inside the DPRK, due to the immaturity of its civil society and the thorough surveillance system under the tyranny, it is difficult to anticipate a self-motivated drive by the people such as the declaration of intention expressed out in East Europe. Every individual belongs to an each group so that it is not easy to secure the least of freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and association. To infer a possibility of the transformation from inside, it is meaningful to compare with the case of Germany, a formally another divided country.

The event on July 1953 which took place in East Germany with more than 500,000 workers resisting against the government of East Germany, will unlikely to happen in the DPRK.<sup>5</sup> At that time,

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<sup>5</sup> Chi-won Choi, "Peace Questions of Northeast Asia in the Context of the

the East German workers marched toward West Germany through the Brandenburg Gate to unite with the West German workers. A group behavior like this<sup>6</sup> will be disclosed in its planning stage and quelled ruthlessly within the DPRK. Particularly, an assembly is totally blockaded when the authorities do not have any mobilizing plan for denunciation of the U.S. or idolization of Kim Jong Il in commemoration of the anniversary. It is not allowed for certain people to even draw up a plan. In East Germany, the drift of change had quickened in the beginning of the 1980s. With churches at the head, various resistance movements regarding issues of peace, environment, and women against the suppression by the Ministerium für Staatssicherheit or Stasi had started in a closed form; for instance, Liebknecht-Luxemburg-Demo, a protest movement against stealing the election by organizing a monitoring group for local election, a protest movement against the Tiananmen Square massacre. Insurgent groups that had watched a great wave of Glasnost-Perestroika in the former Soviet sowed seeds of protest movements around the time of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989-against the government which increased the intensity of suppression. In 1989, by establishing official organization such as Neues Forum, Demokratie Jetzt, Demokrat, Aufbruch, the resistance against the authorities had been systemized.<sup>7</sup> It took twenty years

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Collapse of the Berlin Wall,” materials from the seminar of the 20 Years after the Collapse of the Berlin Wall and Lessons for the Unification of Korea, September 10-11, 2009, p. 29.

6- The East German government prescribed this uprising as an attempt of fascist coup d'état. The Russian stationary troops blocked their march. On June 17, the Russian tanks fired toward the protestors and many fatalities and injuries occurred.

7- On October 6, 1989 while the East German authorities was celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the state, East German citizens got into a protest by requesting freedom of thought, the right to free access to public information, the right to public discussion of politics, and the right to exercise

for civil movements to require and win political freedom in once-divided Germany without a domestic warfare.

Considering the current surveillance system of the DPRK and the political awareness of its people, it is not possible to quicken to a self-motivated resistance movement like that of Germany. Since 1945, with justification to guarantee the minimum of material affluence, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il had insisted on patience and sacrifice to the people. However, it is unclear to obtain such a goal by 2012. Not to show the economic accomplishment of the ROK to the people is the highest priority of the DPRK. Thus, for the DPRK authorities, it has been the most urgent task to isolate information and people from each other. This has been quite successful. The only purpose of the guidance division of the DPRK is the maintenance of the system or the current regime.<sup>8</sup>

To anticipate a resistance movement by the civil society like the German case within the DPRK-had originated from a feudal society, then had gone through the Japanese colonization, and then has been fortified with the Juche Ideology-all due to misunderstanding of the DPRK. Injecting outside culture into the people and carving awareness toward a new (another) world is an urgent problem. In the German case, the West German churches supported

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influence on the government. Their behaviors showed that unless the right to proactive participation in public interest is not guaranteed, true freedom cannot be realized. In the mid of October 1989, demonstrations requiring freedom of thought and the press, free election and traveling, under the catchword of “we are one people,” deployed in many cities including Leipzig. A “wonder” of freedom bases on “being able to start.” During the collapse of the Berlin Wall, this kind of wonder of freedom has been displayed. Chi-won Choi, “Peace Questions of Northeast Asia in the Context of the Collapse of the Berlin Wall,” p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>- Andrei Lankov, “A Prospect on South-North Korea Relations after the Nuclear Test,” The Second Nuclear Test and the Change in Security Conditions on the Korean Peninsula, materials from the 2009 Academic Conference of the Institute for National Security Strategy.

material assistance to the East German authorities and accomplished the releases of political offenders and reunion of dispersed family members in return. This had awakened the awareness of the East German people.

To draw out internal transformation through the ROK-U.S. cooperation, two ways of support need to be combined one of German stylized soft landing with the extraordinary nature of the DPRK and the other approach to collapse the sound system of the DPRK in an espionage way. Monitoring agents for assistance materials from the ROK and the U.S. should be dispatched deep into the local areas. By intensifying the broadcast to the DPRK, it has to induce awareness toward the outside world. It is also necessary to widen contacts with people through churches and religious institutions. Fund assistance by the North Korean refugees to help their relatives to get out of the DPRK should be done through the ROK-U.S. cooperation as well.

### ***Cooperation for the Transformation: the Outside***

Due to the particularity of the DPRK system, it is necessary to infuse heterogeneous cultures and values gradually in phases to transform the DPRK. A psychological warfare that flexibly changes the psychological status of the people toward the DPRK should be used. The psychological warfare includes all kinds of activities to flow in outside information to the people through broadcasting and leaflet. The ROK-U.S. cooperation in pursuing a series of activities that helps people to become aware of the reality of the outside world exactly is desirable for its maximize its outcome. ‘North Korea Human Right Act of 2004’ enacted by the U.S. has been a base for the psychological warfare of the international society. If the U.S. offers

budget support to the North Korean refugees so that they promote psychological warfare to their native homeland the ROK-U.S. cooperation can provide a small clue.

For both the ROK and the U.S., it is also necessary to assist in the inflow of various information including DVDs and videos of ROK television program through China. This inflow will cause serious impact on the credibility of the official propaganda and government-patronized public opinion of the DPRK. Since the July 1, 2002 Economic Management Reform Measure the rationing system by the authorities has collapsed. To utilize the increased economic activities of people through market can be one of the solutions. To control the Pyongseong Market, a trading center for consumer goods made in China in 2009 can be seen as evidence that increased amount of current money is a threat to planning the economy system. This can provide a momentum for the outside information to spread out.

It is also considerable to establish a division for this, in cooperation with the ROK and the U.S. There is a limitation on drafting and implementing policies by each country respectively. It is necessary to build and drive forward a master plan yearly in mid-to-long term basis.

### ***Cooperation for the Transformation: Hard power***

In the second half of 2009, the U.S. Department of Defense (USDOD) examined a scenario of a regime collapse of the DPRK with security strategies in mid-to-long term range. In preparing the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) to submit to the U.S. Congress in the beginning of 2010, the USDOD investigated a case of the collapse of the DPRK among eleven threats that the U.S. will face in

the present and future. This is meaningful in two senses. There is a high possibility of sudden change due to instability of the DPRK. On the other hand, a scenario of the collapse of the DPRK that has arisen from the U.S. Congress and the U.S. academic world has finally dealt with the issue as a formal agenda by the U.S. authorities. The recent plan regarding the rapidly changing situation will contribute on the U.S. policy toward the DPRK during the Obama administration, which is under the direct influence of the QDR. The QDR is released every four years. Establishing a preparation plan on the sudden change of the DPRK by the Obama administration is analyzed as a result of a request within the U.S. and the rapidly arising succession plan since the rumor of Kim Jong Il's failing health in August 2008. Since the rumors, major U.S. think tanks have continuously insisted, toward the U.S. government, a necessity of establishing a plan based on the change of the DPRK regime.

The examination on the defense plan of this time is quite different from the one of the former conservative regime of the Bush administration. During the Bush administration there was an argument to apply the expulsion method similar to that of Saddam Husein, "regime change from outside" to the DPRK. But the current plan is preparing a possibility of a collapse of the regime from inside. As the regime of Kim Jong Il has been weakened, a necessity has risen to provide for an unexpected situation, such as a unexpected before, such as vacuum of power or loss of control. Scenario on the collapse of the DPRK regime, examined by the USDOD includes a rise of refugees in large scale, occupancy of nuclear substances, and recovery of public order within the DPRK. This consideration on policies closely relate to the change of the DPRK system.

The ROK and the U.S. should investigate both how to make prepare for the sudden change in the DPRK and how to induce it.



Sudden change of the Korean Peninsula, in the past dealt with a sovereignty dispute occurred during discussion of “Operational Plan (OPLAN) 5029” between the ROK and the U.S. The two hold a different view on the subject of intervention while discussing concerted operation and countermove on emergency, the consultation was dispersed. It should be approached in a concrete and in tangible manner because the sudden change in the DPRK is expected to go through a very complex process. As the second nuclear test in May 2009 led to a security crisis, the possibility that OPLAN 5029<sup>9</sup> – consulted to develop from CONPLAN (An Operation Plan in Concept Format or Concept Plan)<sup>10</sup> – would be again promoted and should be examined.

The U.S. considers the situation in which a coup d'état or civil war occurring in the DPRK with the rebel troops taking the nuclear weapons to threaten or smuggle them out to an overseas terrorist organization, as the worst scenario.

### *Cooperation for the Transformation: Soft power*

When considering the impact on the people when the transformation is peacefully managed, utilizing soft power of cultures and value is very important. While an approach toward the DPRK which is wholeheartedly devoted to hard power is effective in a short-term, its side effect such as resistance to the DPRK and the

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<sup>9</sup>– OPLAN 5029, written in 1999, is a military precaution of the ROK and the U.S. against several contingencies such as the sudden death of Kim Jong Il, a large-scaled escape of the North Korean people, or a riot.

<sup>10</sup>– CONPLAN refers to a somewhat abstract and general plan which does not include details such as mobilization of force of armed forces or troops disposition. On the contrary, OPLAN includes such details and refers to immediate implementation comparing with the CONPLAN.

tension on the Korean Peninsula are not small. Particularly, when the DPRK does not display its military power directly through nuclear weapons and missiles, hard power is limited. Thus, it is desirable to promote a change of the DPRK with nonmilitary means. As Kagan pointed out,<sup>11</sup> a basic conception of soft power prioritizes culture, negotiation, trade, and international law rather than power and military diplomacy. It also prefers multilateral relations, precedes patience and continuity, and values a process rather than a result. Its benefit is no less to face the closed DPRK system.

The German approach toward the DPRK gives useful implications on a strategy based on soft power. Considering its special relation between East Germany and the DPRK before, Germany, with humanitarian assistance of food, is researching how to emerge itself into the DPRK society culturally and mentally.<sup>12</sup> Germany has pursued cooperation in various ways: cooperation between artists and musicians such as the recital tour of the German youth symphony orchestra in 2002; scholarly interchange in natural science such as a joint seminar on physics in Heidelberg University; cooperation in IT such as receiving an order of software by the Korea Computer Center in Berlin. Understanding that politicians are unable to solve every problem, Germany deploys a direct approach between common people, emphasizing nongovernmental exchanges. While it is difficult to assert that there has been a characteristic change, it is noteworthy that it has raised the level of continuous contacts.

Ideological variables such as democracy, human rights, freedom, and peace or cultural variables like pop-culture of the U.S.

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<sup>11</sup>- Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power, America and Europe in the New World* (New York, 2004).

<sup>12</sup>- Sung-cho Park, *Collapse of the Korean Peninsula*, p. 86.

do not bring instant effect. An offensive of this soft power takes a slow but, in part, fundamental strategy. The impact of soft power that changes the DPRK is a prescription for the long-run.

Having combined inside/outside transformation with hard/soft power, four dimensions are deduced. <Dimension-1> indicates a situation in which military power and economic power of both the ROK and the U.S. give shock into the DPRK so that the people strongly recognize the power of the outside world while the authorities radically oppose it, blaming that as an intent to collapse the DPRK regime. This can cause a high tension on the Korean Peninsula. The only question is a difficulty of the internal drive to quicken due to the thorough control by the authorities. <Dimension-2> is a case in which the culture and values of both the ROK and the U.S. flow into the DPRK through governmental and nongovernmental sectors. Even though the inflow of the outside culture is insufficient in terms of quality and quantity, the interest by the people toward the inflow is substantially high.

<Dimension-3> indicates a case in which the ROK and the U.S., heading their hard power, pursuing various policies to lead attentions of the international society on themes such as human rights, North Korean defectors, non-democratic aspects of the DPRK authorities. Upon the DPRK takes on nuclear abandonment both countries will send economic aid in large scale. On the other hand, when it continue to pursue its nuclear development, the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718/1874 and the effectuation of the proliferation security initiative (PSI) will be promoted. A report of “North Korea: Economic Leverage and Policy Analysis” announced by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in September 2009 is considered economic power as one scenario of the DPRK transformation. To lead to the nuclear non-

proliferation of the DPRK, it suggests the following: △normalizing diplomatic Relations, △negotiating a trade agreement, △easing U.S. sanctions, △allowing the DPRK to join international financial institutions (IFIs), △fuel and food aid, △duty free entry of products from the Kaesong Industrial Complex into the U.S as an economic incentive toward the DPRK.

<Dimension-4> is a case in which the ROK and the U.S. raise attention of the international society toward the situation within the DPRK, heading their soft power. Both the ROK and the U.S. will cooperate diplomatically to make more countries to approve of the UN Resolution on North Korean Human Rights. It also includes nonmilitary, diplomatic, and cultural activities based on the universal human values.

<Table 8. 3> ROK-U.S. Cooperation Plan  
: Inside/outside transformation and hard/soft power

Cooperation Plan	Cooperation for Internal Transformation (Internal drive within the DPRK)	Cooperation for External Transformation (Drive of the ROK and the international society)
Hard Power (military power, economic power)	<Dimension-1>	<Dimension-3>
Soft Power (culture, human rights, values)	<Dimension-2>	<Dimension-4>

To make the DPRK transformation possible, activities of dimensions above should occur simultaneously. Especially it is important to deploy a synergy effect through a proper combination of hard power and soft power. Richard L. Armitage, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State during the first term of the Bush W. administration and Joseph Nye organized the Commission on Smart Power and published a report on the strategy for Smart Power at the Center for

Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).<sup>13</sup> Smart power is a kind of strategy toward a virtuous cycle, combining hard power of the national defense and economic power with soft power of knowledge, experience, and cultural attractiveness to maximize the effect of hard power and to attempt an increase of soft power. Combination and deployment of hard power and soft power is necessary for doubling of effects and minimizing the side effects in the DPRK transformation process.

## CONCLUSION

The DPRK transformation is the task of our time. It is closely related to nuclear non-proliferation. The DPRK's abnormal running of the state under the name of security threats leads to threaten neighboring countries. In the system that cannot guarantee self-sufficiency of the least of food, clothing, and shelter, to hamper nuclear development that costs enormous budget requires opposition from the people. The authorities also should not attempt, through regime transformation, to recover their failure in policy implementation and then to military adventurism again.

A vicious cycle of conducts that the DPRK develops nuclear weapons and the international society negotiates to compensate for it and the DPRK provokes, and then again the assistance

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<sup>13</sup> CSIS *Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2007). Smart power refers to neither only hard power nor soft power. Smart power is a development of comprehensive strategies, foundations of resources, and tool boxes to achieve a goal by utilizing both hard power and soft power. This emphasizes on the necessity of strong military power. However, coincidentally it also invests in alliance, partnership, and institutions to secure legitimacy and to enlarge influence of the U.S.

provided should stop. The DPRK transformation through the ROK-U.S. cooperation is not for the collapse of the DPRK regime but a part of policy to lead the DPRK to a normal state in the North East Asia. None of the member countries of the Six-Party Talks expect the ultimate collapse of the DPRK. Instead, it is expected that the “nuclear free world” continue to be the DPRK’s running slogan.

Countries like the Ukraine, Libya, and the Republic of South Africa accomplished nuclear non-proliferation on their own will or with the help of the others. Nuclear armament of the DPRK will bring the nuclear domino phenomenon in the North East Asia. In self-defense, neighboring Japan and the ROK also cannot help but put their efforts in the establishment and armament of their nuclear defense system. The effect of nuclear domino phenomenon will make the nuclear armament titular and hamper the effective and constructive development of the state. Nuclear non-proliferation of the DPRK requires compensation provided by the participants of the Six-Party Talks. Rather than ending in temporariness, the compensation should run parallel with the system transformation for steady development of the DPRK. When the DPRK takes a successful leap to a normal state through economic assistance, it will not feel keenly the necessity of nuclear development. The DPRK transformation is of a particular interest to the participating countries of the Six-Party Talks. Due to the burden of economic assistance, alliance and cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. should be done continually and systematically. When the two countries cooperate in various ways with a combination of soft power and hard power, inside and outside the DPRK, the DPRK’s transformation and nuclear non-proliferation could go on coincidentally.

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*The U.S.-ROK Alliance  
in the 21st Century*







*Needed: A Joint ROK-U.S. Strategy  
for Dealing with North Korea*

*Ralph A. Cossa*

9

This chapter offers some suggestions on how best to coordinate U.S. and ROK policy to facilitate change in Pyongyang's behavior in a way that helps bring about a nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula while preserving the ROK-U.S. alliance relationship and setting the stage for eventual peaceful Korean Peninsula reunification. It recognizes that there are no guarantees for success, regardless of how closely the two allies cooperate — North Korea remains a formidable adversary whose strategic objectives are diametrically opposed to those of the ROK and U.S. But it also argues that a failure for Seoul and Washington to develop near — mid — and long-term common visions and strategies for achieving common goals will guarantee failure. It recognizes that North Korea has long pursued a “divide and conquer” strategy that is aimed specifically at driving a wedge between the ROK and U.S. and between both and their fellow Six-Party Talks interlocutors — Japan, China, and Russia — and offers some prescriptions for dealing with this time-honored and all-too-often successful North Korea approach.

Please note that the goal, as stated above, is not merely to bring about a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. This, along with the even more urgent task of halting North Korea proliferation activities, must remain the most immediate goals. But, if we achieve denuclearization at the expense of the alliance relationship, we are likely to cause more long-term instability than we will prevent. And, we must also always keep one eye on the long-term goal, which remains eventual peaceful reunification. It is also important to understand how day-to-day policies affect this eventual outcome and how pursuit of this long-term goal affects the pursuit of our near- and mid-term goals.

Note also that the goal is not merely to bring Pyongyang back

to the Six-Party Talks. This multilateral dialogue mechanism is merely a vehicle, albeit an important and perhaps even irreplaceable one. But, it is still just a means toward the desired end, not the end itself. One of the problems with the current approach toward North Korea has been the tendency to make the resumption of talks (i.e., the process of getting North Korea back to the negotiating table), rather than denuclearization or counter-proliferation, the primary near-term objective. This plays into North Korea's hand and leads to the "reward-engage-reward-disengage-reward" cycle that the current administrations in Seoul and Washington recognize and are trying to avoid.

## DEFINING COMMON OBJECTIVES

Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Barack Obama, in their June 2009 "Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea" outlined as a common aim and long-term objective "to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula, and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy."<sup>1</sup> This was (wisely) listed immediately before pronouncing their more immediate common goal: "to achieve the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Myung-bak Lee and Barack Obama, "Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea," hereafter cited as Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement, June 16, 2009, available on the White House website <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Joint-visionfor-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-visionfor-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/)>.

ballistic missile programs, and to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.”<sup>2</sup>

The Joint Vision goes on to list a number of other common goals, including working closely together “to address the global challenges of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, organized crime and narcotics, climate change, poverty, infringement on human rights, energy security, and epidemic disease,” while enhancing coordination on “peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization and development assistance, as is being undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan.” It also promises to “strengthen coordination in multilateral mechanisms aimed at global economic recovery such as the G20,” and commits both sides to “chart a way forward” toward the presumed (but not explicitly stated) goal of enacting the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement.<sup>3</sup>

This is all well and good. But what’s more significant are three things that are not listed and thus need to be included in any future “Joint Vision” or joint statement. First, there is no reference in the 2009 Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement to the future role of the alliance post-reunification. Second, there is no reference to division of labor and the respective ROK and U.S. roles when it comes to both denuclearization and the broader issue of Korean Peninsula peace and stability. Finally there is no reference to mid-term goals that would (or at least should) be acceptable to Pyongyang in charting a future path. The Joint Vision, as currently stated, is likely to reinforce rather than overcome or neutralize

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2- Myung-bak Lee and Barack Obama, “Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.”

3- *Ibid.* As will be discussed later, KOR-U.S. passage has become a sensitive political issue in both countries, with candidate Obama arguing it must be renegotiated, which would be politically difficult if not impossible for the Lee administration to do.

Pyongyang's assertions of American and ROK "hostile policy" toward the North and make denuclearization more unlikely. There needs to be some pronouncement that the two sides are prepared to deal with the North Korea we have rather than the one we would like to have (or would like to fade peacefully into the sunset) if there is going to be any hope of achieving either our near- or long-term objectives.

### ***The Role of the Alliance Post-Reunification***

What is the long-term goal or vision for the alliance? Is it there merely to deal with the North Korean threat or does it have a role in preserving and promoting regional stability that would remain and perhaps even grow in importance if or once the North Korea issue is "resolved"? Citing the important role of the alliance, *both today and post-reunification*, used to be a common element in joint ROK-U.S. statements. President Bill Clinton, in particular, mentioned at almost every opportunity during his meetings with President Kim Young-sam in the mid-1990s that "I reaffirm America's pledge to stand by [the ROK-U.S.] partnership. Our forces will remain in Korea as long as the Korean people want them there."<sup>4</sup> Clinton also explained in his 1993 speech to the ROK National Assembly that a continued U.S. presence served both Korea's and America's interest and went well beyond merely defense of the Peninsula; U.S. forces were there "to deter regional aggression, perpetuate the region's robust economic growth, and secure our own maritime and other interests."<sup>5</sup>

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4- William J. Clinton, "Remarks Welcoming President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea," Washington D.C., July 27, 1995.

5- William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the Korean National Assembly," Seoul, July 10, 1993.

Previous ROK leaders like Nobel Laureate Kim Dae-jung also pointed out that the alliance was a prerequisite for achieving Seoul's broader regional foreign policy objective of simultaneously having good relations with all four neighboring major powers – the U.S., China, Japan, and Russia – and that this would remain even after reunification. The U.S., as the “outside balancer” and with no territorial claims or aspirations toward the Peninsula, provided the security blanket which would then allow Seoul – as the proverbial “shrimp among whales” – to deal with the other three giants without fear of compromise or being engulfed. Without American security assurances, Seoul would likely have to seek accommodation with one of its other neighbors – to the alarm and dismay of the two being left out – or develop an independent military capability (read: nuclear weapons) which would bring a new source of instability and could very easily result in further nuclear dominos falling. Hence, to Kim Dae-jung and his predecessors, the alliance relationship made sense not only while the Peninsula was divided but even after unification, given the dangerous neighborhood in which the ROK resides.

Unfortunately, such references to the value of the alliance post-reunification ended during the George W. Bush – Rho Moo-hyun era, when both near- and long-term visions seemed to drift apart, as did our approaches toward North Korea. The two did talk about the importance of the alliance in terms of defending the ROK today but seemed to have widely differing views – and even more widely differing presumed or apparent motives – on if or how best to preserve the alliance relationship.

The OPCON transfer issue illustrates this point. Both sides agreed, after intense and emotional discussions, to the transfer of operational control (OPCON) of ROK forces in wartime from the

U.S. (under the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command or CFC) to the South no later than 2012. The U.S. argued that this reflected the increased capabilities of ROK ground forces to take the lead role in defending the South, with a continued commitment of U.S. naval and air force support (and the continued U.S. nuclear defensive umbrella providing extended deterrence against the now-acknowledged and demonstrated North Korean nuclear weapons capability). This was essentially endorsed in the Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement, which noted: “In advancing the bilateral plan for restructuring the Alliance, the Republic of Korea will take the lead role in the combined defense of Korea, supported by an enduring and capable U.S. military force presence on the Korean Peninsula, in the region, and beyond.”

Note that the two presidents did not mention the time line, however. The 2012 date remains a source of concern, expressed publicly by retired military officers and privately by some of their active duty counterparts, many of whom were against the OPCON transfer from the onset. During the Roh administration, when wartime OPCON transfer was discussed and ultimately agreed upon, the conservative and retired military communities in the ROK (and some of their American counterparts) saw this as the first step toward U.S. “abandonment” of the ROK, which they claimed was driven by perceived (and real) American anger at a variety of Roh administration actions and events. Despite the logical arguments that can be made in support of the ROK taking a lead role in its own defense (including its clear qualitative superiority over the North), South Korean colleagues have frequently stated their belief that OPCON transfer actually represented then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s “punishment” of the ROK in retaliation for the candlelight vigils and (isolated instances of) American flag burning

protesting an earlier accident involving U.S. military vehicles and two ROK teenage girls.<sup>6</sup> Less emotional ROK critics fear that such a step, especially if done in conjunction with the simultaneous dissolution of the CFC – which is the current plan – would send the wrong signal to Pyongyang regarding the U.S. defense commitment or future intentions.<sup>7</sup>

If Washington's motives were seen as suspect, Roh Moo-hyun's motives were even more so, with some seeing OPCON transfer as a first step toward breaking up the alliance and pushing the U.S. out. Even more disconcerting were reports that Roh approached OPCON transfer out of a strong desire to prevent Washington from "dragging the ROK into America's war with the North over the denuclearization issue."<sup>8</sup> This reflected both a lack of awareness on how the alliance relationship works and the underlying level of distrust felt toward the Bush administration by the ROK government at the time.

It was no surprise then that the Joint Statement issued by Bush and Roh when they met along the sidelines of the Korea-hosted APEC meeting in 2005, while containing the usual references to the alliance's past and current role in ensuring stability, made no

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<sup>6</sup> The girls were accidentally run over during U.S. troop movements while walking along the road and the involved military personnel were subsequently found "not guilty" after a military trial. As a result, no one was held accountable for the tragic accident, prompting protests that were largely peaceful but widely publicized. Urban legend in South Korea has it that Rumsfeld was watching the demonstrations on TV and saw an American flag being burned and swore he would teach the Koreans a lesson - this has never been substantiated by anyone but is widely accepted as Gospel in South Korea.

<sup>7</sup> For a ROK argument against the 2012 transfer, see Tae-seop Bang, "Prerequisites to Upgrading the ROK-U.S. Alliance: North Korea and Wartime Operational Control," *SERI*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 2009), pp. 112-123.

<sup>8</sup> This viewpoint was revealed to me privately by a senior official close to Roh Moo-hyun during the process and substantiated by several others in a position to know in follow-on off-the-record conversations.



reference to its future relevance. In its place was an agreement “to make common efforts to develop a regional multilateral security dialogue and a cooperation mechanism, so as to jointly respond to regional security issues.”<sup>9</sup> This seemed to implicitly deny a regional security role for the alliance. It further implied – contrary to U.S. assertions before, during, and since – that multilateral security cooperation in East Asia would replace, rather than be built upon or complement, Washington’s bilateral alliances. The next time the two leaders met, they did not even issue a joint statement, another reflection of how bad things had gotten.

A failure to articulate the alliance’s long-term role post-reunification – *assuming both sides agree that there is one, which they should* – has direct relevance to how one deals with North Korea today since Pyongyang has made no secret of its view that Washington continued alliance with Seoul and the resultant continued presence of U.S. forces in the ROK constitutes “proof” that the U.S. maintains its “hostile policy” toward the North. Removing U.S. forces from the South and closing the U.S. nuclear umbrella have been and remain relatively transparent North Korean goals. The two allies need to constantly remind Pyongyang that the future of the alliance is for the ROK and U.S. alone to decide. It should not become a “bargaining chip” in either U.S. or ROK negotiations with Pyongyang.

There was real concern (in the U.S. and among many in the ROK) that President Roh would agree to end the U.S. military presence on the Peninsula when he finally got his chance for a summit meeting with North Korean “Dear Leader” Kim Jong-il in

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<sup>9</sup> Moo-hyun Roh and George W. Bush, “Joint Declaration on the ROK-U.S. Alliance and Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” November 17, 2005, Gyeongju, Korea, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/print/20051117-6.html>>.

2007, just before leaving office. Fortunately, this did not occur.<sup>10</sup> But before any new denuclearization deliberations take place, it is imperative for both Seoul and Washington to put Pyongyang on notice that the alliance and U.S. force presence are not on the negotiating table.

### ***Defining Roles and Missions***

The second thing missing in the Joint Vision is a “roles and missions” statement or, more specifically, an articulation and validation of Seoul’s determination to take a lead role in determining the Peninsula’s future and America’s commitment to this approach, despite the apparent necessity of Washington serving as a “lead negotiator” when it comes to the specific topic of Korean Peninsula denuclearization or to address more immediate proliferation concerns. There can be no doubt that one of Pyongyang’s long-standing and constantly demonstrated objectives is to marginalize or delegitimize the South. One only needs to go to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) web site<sup>11</sup> and see the constant references to “south Korea” (as opposed to strict use of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea or DPRK when referring to itself) to underscore Pyongyang’s demeaning attitude toward the “U.S. lackey” government in Seoul.

There is also little doubt that during the closing years of the George W. Bush administration, Seoul (and, for that matter, Tokyo and even Beijing) began to once again feel marginalized as the lead

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<sup>10</sup>- Instead, he just promised untold economic benefits and assistance that no ROK administration could have delivered upon, largely with no strings attached; a promised deal no doubt aimed at limiting his successor’s options and which has complicated North-South relations ever since.

<sup>11</sup>- <<http://www.kcna.co.jp/indexe.htm>>.

U.S. negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill, met more and more frequently with his North Korean interlocutors in settings far removed from (although ostensibly still “in the context of”) six-party deliberations. While this was deemed necessary in order to achieve some “progress” in denuclearization, it increased the sense of ROK alienation, especially after “regime change” in the South brought to power a government much more suspicious of North Korea’s intention than the administration that had endorsed more direct U.S.-DPRK talks.

The frequent complaint heard in Seoul (and even more frequently in Tokyo and increasingly in Beijing) was that the U.S. and North Korea were now driving the process with the Six-Party Talks merely functioning as a validating mechanism. The damage in such an approach was readily apparent in December 2008 when a Six-Party Talks meeting was held in Beijing to formalize and multilateralize the alleged U.S.-DPRK verification regime, only to have Pyongyang claim that no such agreement existed. One primary reason for taking the six-party approach in the first place was to prevent Pyongyang’s so-called “salami tactics” where it makes different promises to different interlocutors and then plays one against the other. As a result, the Bush administration initially thought it was “essential” for the ROK, Japan, and Beijing to be in the room together with the U.S. in negotiating with Pyongyang.<sup>12</sup> The wisdom of this earlier approach was demonstrated once it was abandoned in favor of direct negotiations by Assistant Secretary Hill, who managed to create suspicions and anxiety in Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing regarding his tactics (and even his motives) and still, at the

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<sup>12</sup> The U.S. initially proposed five-way dialogue. It was Pyongyang that insisted that the Russians be added, no doubt after fondly recalling how it successfully played Moscow and Beijing off against one another throughout the Cold War.

end of the day, have Pyongyang pull the rug out from under him.<sup>13</sup>

In one sense, this was *deja vu* all over again. During the bilateral U.S.-DPRK deliberations that brought about the 1994 Agreed Framework, ROK officials were literally in the next room and consultations between the allies were close and constant. Nonetheless, to this day, the prevailing view among the general public in South Korea and even among security specialists and current and former officials (including those who should know better) is that the ROK was cut out of the process, simply because it did not have a seat at the table.<sup>14</sup> Form matters! It was awareness of this attitude that helped persuade Washington to pursue a multilateral approach to dealing with the current crisis when it began in 2002. Concerns about being marginalized are no less deep today than they were in 1994.<sup>15</sup>

One should look at how the Clinton administration corrected its Agreed Framework “mistake” as a guide for future policy prescription. Following an address to a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress in which he expressed the view that “peace on the Korean Peninsula can only take root through dialogue and cooperation

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<sup>13</sup>- For details of the December 2008 Six-Party Talks meeting, see Ralph A. Cossa and Brad Glosserman, “Regional Overview: From Bad to Worse,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (January, 2009), available on the Pacific Forum web site <[www.pacforum.org](http://www.pacforum.org)>. Earlier issues of *Comparative Connections* provide a blow-by-blow accounting, on a quarterly basis, of Six-Party Talks deliberations (Regional Overview chapter) and U.S. relations with both the ROK and DPRK (U.S.-Korea Relations chapter, written by Victor Cha).

<sup>14</sup>- For documentation, see Eric Larson, Norman Levin, Seonhae Baik, and Bogdan Savych, *Ambivalent Allies? A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* (Washington D.C.: RAND Corporation, March 2004).

<sup>15</sup>- For insights into current thinking about the reliability of the U.S. as an ally and concerns about marginalization, see “A Question of Confidence: The First U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue (A Conference Report), *Issues & Insights*, Vol. 09, No. 18 (September 2009) published by the Pacific Forum CSIS and available on the Pacific Forum web site.

between the South and the North, the two parties directly concerned.”<sup>16</sup> President Kim Young-sam held a summit meeting in April 1996 on Cheju Island off South Korea’s southernmost coast with President Clinton to unveil their “Four-Party Talks” proposal to replace the 1953 Armistice with a Peace Treaty between the North and the South, with the backing and support of China and the United States. Most significantly, the joint U.S.-ROK statement announcing this agreement “confirmed the fundamental principle that establishment of a stable, permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula is the task of the Korean people” and that “South and North Korea should take the lead in a renewed search for a permanent peace arrangement.”<sup>17</sup> To underscore the latter point, the two presidents stressed that “separate negotiations between the United States and North Korea on peace-related issues can not be considered.”<sup>18</sup>

This does not negate a direct role for Washington in denuclearization and non-proliferation discussions with Pyongyang. To the contrary it can help put such bilateral talks in the broader context of not just the Six-Party Talks but the future peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula as well. The ROK government — and the Korean people — would be less concerned about direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang if they were more assured that its focus was limited to non-proliferation and denuclearization issues and that broader issues — including U.S. force structure or the future of the alliance — were not on the table.

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<sup>16</sup> “Address by President Kim Young-Sam of Korea at a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress,” July 26, 1995, as contained in Yonhap News Agency, *Korea Annual 1996*, pp. 360-362.

<sup>17</sup> “Korea-U.S. Joint Announcement Between Presidents Kim Young-sam and Bill Clinton,” April 16, 1996. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

The same holds true for Washington's view of South-North dialogue. Some mutual reassurance appears in order.

One can see Lee Myung-bak's "Grand Bargain" – his September 2009 proposal to Pyongyang offering a comprehensive economic assistance package in return for denuclearization and constructive South-North dialogue – in this context. The proposal, made before a Council on Foreign Relations audience in New York (and which reportedly caught the Obama administration somewhat by surprise), signaled that for political as well as for security reasons, the ROK government cannot allow itself to be, or even appear to be, marginalized or too far removed from the center of discussions dealing with Korean Peninsula security.<sup>19</sup> This proposal is not that far removed from Lee's campaign promise to raise North Korea's per capita income to \$3,000 in return for denuclearization, a point that did not escape Pyongyang's notice:

"The 'Grand Bargain' is just a replica of the watchwords of 'no nukes, opening, and 3,000 dollars' that proved bankrupt," proclaimed KCNA, branding the proposal as "rubbish," and continuing: "The south Korean chief executive and his 'advisers' team' had better have a midday nap under the nuclear umbrella provided by the U.S. rather than running helter-skelter, unable to sound out its master, much less knowing how the world moves. They are seriously mistaken if they calculate the DPRK would accept the ridiculous 'proposal' for 'the normalization of relations' with someone and for sort of 'economic aid'."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>– For an assessment of Lee's "Grand Bargain" and Pyongyang's reaction to it, see Aidan Foster Carter, "North Korea-South Korea Relations: On the Mend?" *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (October 2009).

<sup>20</sup>– See, for example, "KCNA Dismisses S. Korean Chief Executive's 'Proposal' as Rubbish," KCNA, Pyongyang, September 30, 2009.

In short, attempts to tie North-South normalization to denuclearization raise hackles in the North, just as Roh's prior willingness to give unrestricted aid to the North regardless of progress (or the lack thereof) in denuclearization upset Washington and was seen as undercutting six-party efforts to get Pyongyang back to the negotiating table. Some happy medium needs to be found. But, at the end of the day, it is more important for Washington and Seoul to take each other's feelings and concerns into account in order to jointly limit or restrict Pyongyang's options.

### *North-South "Peaceful Coexistence" as the Mid-term Goal*

Finally, the Joint Vision statement failed to identify a mid-term goal or approach that would not alienate Pyongyang but lay the groundwork for positive cooperation and eventual denuclearization. It's one thing to be firm in dealing with North Korea, as previous comments suggest we must. It's another to leave the North with no option other than capitulation. If you ask 10 North Korea-watchers a question regarding Pyongyang's motives or tactics, you are likely to get 12 different answers; we seldom agree (even with ourselves). But if you ask what is Pyongyang's overriding objective, you are likely to get the same answer: regime survival. The efforts underway in North Korea to prepare the way for a second transition of power from father to son underscore this point (and the unique nature of this regime, which provides an unprecedented melding of communism and nepotism).

One of Kim Dae-jung's major contributions to the North-South debate when he visited Pyongyang for the first North-South Summit in June 2000 was his decision, through his "Sunshine Policy," to set reunification aside in return for an unspecified period

of “peaceful coexistence” (though that term itself was seldom if ever used). Through their lifetimes, Kim Dae-jung and North Korean founder and “Great Leader” Kim Il-sung had spoke of a number of different (seldom fully defined) federation or confederation agreements that would allow both Koreas to exist side by side until the point of eventual reunification (which neither side could reject as an ultimate goal but which each knew was impossible to achieve peacefully absent the other side going quietly and willingly into the night).

This de facto “two Koreas” solution is implied in Lee Myung-bak’s “Grand Bargain” but his approach comes across as too condescending and, as already documented, has been soundly rejected by Pyongyang (which eagerly receives Seoul’s handouts but only when they are called something else). Washington and Seoul need to spell out more explicitly a plan for peaceful coexistence that is premised on the continued existence of the North Korean state, if they are ever to entice North Korea back into any serious negotiations. This would go to the heart of Pyongyang’s central concern about regime survival. The brutality of the North Korean regime makes this a bitter pill for some to swallow, but failing to deal with the North Korea that fate or history has dealt us is not going to move us closer to reaching our near- or long-term objectives.

In fairness, during his term in office, President George W. Bush on a number of occasions proclaimed that the U.S. would not attack the North and was not aiming at “regime change.” Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons (some not entirely unreasonable), Pyongyang refused to believe those assurances, pointing *ad nauseam* to Bush’s “axis of evil” speech and the frequent references by Bush and senior members of his administration to the evil nature of Pyongyang’s truly despotic regime as “proof” that its existence was



being threatened.<sup>21</sup>

Added to this paranoia are frequent North Korean references to America's "preemptive nuclear attack strategy" which, while based on a distorted interpretation of the Bush administration's 2002 *Nuclear Posture Review*,<sup>22</sup> is nonetheless used by Pyongyang to blame Washington for its own nuclear ambitions: "the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is a product of the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK and its nuclear threat from A to Z. It was none other than the U.S. that compelled the DPRK to have access to nuclear deterrent and, therefore, the U.S. is wholly to blame for the nuclear issue on the peninsula."<sup>23</sup> To claim otherwise is "shameless, preposterous and brigandish sophism," proclaimed Pyongyang, which never seems to be at a loss for colorful words when describing either U.S. or South Korea policy.<sup>24</sup>

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21\_ Bush's reference in his 2002 State of the Union address about the "axis of evil" was really aimed at promoting missile defense, with North Korea reportedly being added in at the last minute so as not to make his remarks appear "anti-Islamic." Nonetheless, the damage was done. More important than the North's reaction were the suspicions raised among the liberal-progressive community in South Korea about the Bush administration's "real intentions" toward the North.

22\_ The *Nuclear Posture Review* was classified but large segments were leaked and posted on the Internet, See, for example <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>>.

Nowhere in the document are there any references to "preemption" but it does identify "a North Korean attack on South Korea" as one of the contingencies for which the United States must be prepared. The 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* does make reference to the right of preemption in response to an imminent weapons of mass destruction attack but does not threaten or even imply that nuclear weapons would be used to preempt such an impending attack.

23\_ "U.S. Entirely to Blame for Spawning Nuclear Issue on Korean Peninsula," KCNA, Pyongyang, October. 14, 2009, citing a *Rodong Sinmun* commentary.

24\_ *Ibid.* Pyongyang has also used colorful language in condemning Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, calling her "vulgar" and "by no means intelligent," and noting that "sometimes she looks like a primary schoolgirl and sometimes a pensioner going shopping," in response to her comments that the North's behavior sometimes reminded her of "unruly teenagers." However, to date, it has refrained

Blaming the U.S. or ROK-U.S. Alliance for its nuclear program is convenient but clearly suspect. The first nuclear crisis took place in the early 1990's at a time when North-South rapprochement had reached new heights, with the signing of a South-North "Basic Agreement" outlining mutual confidence building measures, with a companion North-South Denuclearization Agreement which, among other things, including a pledge by both sides to forego spent fuel reprocessing, an agreement Pyongyang obviously did not honor (and which the South now wants to reconsider, much to Washington's dismay). The George H.W. Bush administration even agreed at the time to open up U.S. military facilities in the South to North Korean inspection in support of the denuclearization agreement (providing, of course, that the North was equally transparent).

It has become increasingly clear that the 2002 crisis had its genesis not in the "axis of evil" speech but in the North's illegal efforts to begin a parallel enriched uranium program that was actually initiated at a time of apparent close cooperation and increased trust between Washington and Pyongyang, (recently dubbed the "high point for diplomacy between the two countries" by *Newsweek* magazine).<sup>25</sup> Even as North Korea's number two strongman Marshal Cho Myung Rok was visiting Washington and then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was subsequently applauding a gala performance at the Worker's Stadium in Pyongyang in October 2000, the North was secretly obtaining centrifuges

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from calling President Obama names and seem to have focused more criticism on President Lee's team of advisors than on Lee himself.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Hirsh, "Clinton's Second Chance in Pyongyang: The real story behind President Clinton's surprise mission to North Korea dates back to the 1990s," *Newsweek Web Exclusive*, August 4, 2009, <<http://www.newsweek.com/id/210355>>.

from Pakistan for a uranium enrichment program they first acknowledged (privately), then denied (publicly), and now publicly acknowledge, recently proclaiming in a letter to the UN Security Council that the “experimental uranium enrichment has successfully been conducted to enter into completion phase.”<sup>26</sup>

Even putting all of Washington’s real and imagined sins and evidence of “hostile policy” together, we should not overlook what I would argue was the most probable and earliest motivating factor behind of North Korea’s nuclear ambitions, namely, the collapse of the Soviet Union and its nuclear umbrella over the DPRK. This forced Pyongyang to put all its security eggs in the Chinese basket at a time when the ROK was getting stronger and stronger – economically, politically, and militarily – and Sino-ROK relations were steadily improving.

Regardless of which theory you subscribe to – and all of the above could be at least partially true – it’s clear that Pyongyang’s concerns about “regime survival” are genuine (and probably should be, given the failed nature of its political and economic systems and its lack of reliable allies). Add to that the collapse and disappearance, almost overnight, of like-minded East European regimes, and it’s no wonder Kim Jong-il seems more than a bit paranoid today. The point here is not to promote sympathy for the North Korean regime – they are a product of their own making – but to come to the obvious but all too frequently disputed conclusion: nuclear weapons are not just a “bargaining chip” or tool for negotiations but an essential element in Pyongyang’s quest for regime survival in the post-Cold War world. The task of containing and then eliminating this threat must take Pyongyang’s paranoia into account.

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<sup>26</sup> “DPRK Permanent Representative Sends Letter to President of UNSC,” KCNA, Pyongyang, September 4, 2009.

## GETTING IN SYNCH: THE NEED TO ESTABLISH AND DEMONSTRATE A COMMON APPROACH

As noted at the onset, North Korea's "divide and conquer" or "salami" tactics require a closely coordinated approach on the part of Washington and Seoul at a minimum and ideally among Tokyo, Beijing, and Moscow as well. Unfortunately, for much of the Bush administration, beginning with what many described as a disastrous initial meeting between Bush and ROK President Kim Dae-jung, Washington and Seoul appeared out of synch.<sup>27</sup> If the Bush-Kim Dae-jung dynamics were bad, things only got worse once the "anti-American" Roh Moo-hyun came to power.<sup>28</sup> Bush and Roh began as almost polar opposites in their approach toward North Korea, with Roh appearing to endorse engagement at almost any price while Bush's position appeared to increasingly harden, especially after the October 2002 meeting between Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and his North Korean interlocutors, when the North's uranium enrichment program became a show-stopper.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>— I would argue that the meeting was better than advertised Bush actually praised Kim as a visionary. But there were enough miscues to send the wrong signal, exacerbated by the Bush administration's (very sensible) decision to review its Korea policy before making major decisions. That review actually resulted in a decision to meet with the North "any time, any place, without preconditions," but the game changed dramatically after September 11, 2001 and especially after the "axis of evil" speech.

<sup>28</sup>— Again, Roh made every effort to say the right things regarding the alliance and importance of close ROK-U.S. ties but he was perceived (not entirely inaccurately) of running against Washington during his presidential campaign and initial images die hard.

<sup>29</sup>— For details on the October 2002 meeting and its aftermath, please see Ralph A. Cossa and Jane Skanderup, "Multilateral Solutions to Bilateral Problems Help Contain Unilateralist Tendencies," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 2003).

Ironically, in the later years of the second Bush administration there was an abrupt softening of its position toward Pyongyang, about the same time the South Korean people were becoming less and less supportive of Roh's over-conciliatory approach. When the more conservative Lee Myung-bak government came to power in 2008, the role reversal was complete, with the ROK concerned that the U.S. seemed too eager to cut a deal with Pyongyang, perhaps even at Seoul's expense. As explained earlier, Washington's new "soft" approach failed to get the desired results when the North walked away from the December 2008 Six-Party Talks plenary session in Beijing, claiming that the Verification Protocol being touted by Washington was sheer fantasy.

Candidate Obama had expressed some tough views regarding the North's need to honor its verification obligations when he gave his conditional support to President Bush's decision to remove North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism and Trading with the Enemy Act restrictions:

"President Bush's decision to remove North Korea from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism is an appropriate response as long as there is clear understanding that if North Korea fails to follow through there will be immediate consequences... If North Korea refuses to permit robust verification, we should lead all members of the 6 Party talks in suspending energy assistance, re-imposing sanctions that have recently been waived, and considering new restrictions. Our objective remains the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For this and other comments on Asia policy by presidential candidate Obama, please see "Occasional Analysis: U.S. Presidential Candidates' Views on Relations with Asia," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (October 2008), which was prepared specifically for *Comparative Connections* by Senator Obama's (and Senator McCain's) Asia advisory team.

Nonetheless, many in the South (and in Japan) were worried that his “outstretched hand” approach would place Washington once again on a too conciliatory path.<sup>31</sup> These concerns were laid to rest when Pyongyang, rather than unclenching its fist, decided to give Washington and the international community writ large the finger, first by conducting a provocative long-range missile test in direct violation of UNSCR 1718 and then, in response to a mild UNSC Presidential Statement scolding the North, by conducting a nuclear weapons test in May 2009. This, more than anything else, compelled the Obama administration to harden its position toward North Korea. It also brought the five parties (sans North Korea) together, speaking with one voice through UNSCR 1874, which tightened sanctions against the North Korean regime (while still not authorizing the use of force to enforce these measures).

Since that time and to date, Washington and Seoul have been in synch in insisting that Pyongyang honor its previous commitments (for which it has already been rewarded through heavy fuel oil shipments and various aid and development packages) and return to the Six-Party Talks. During their joint press conference announcing the Joint Vision, both presidents also proclaimed that the old crisis- reward cycle must and will end. President Lee stated clearly that

“North Koreans must understand that they will not be able to gain compensation by provoking a crisis. This has been a pattern in the past, but this will no longer be... the North Koreans must understand that their past behavior will not stand... the North Koreans will come to understand that this [situation] is different,

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<sup>31</sup> I'm referring to President Obama's historic inauguration address where he explained to those “on the wrong side of history” that the U.S. “will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.”

that they will not be able to repeat the past or their past tactics and strategies.”<sup>32</sup>

President Obama strongly endorsed and amplified Lee’s remarks:

“I want to emphasize something that President Lee said. There’s been a pattern in the past where North Korea behaves in a belligerent fashion, and if it waits long enough is then rewarded with foodstuffs and fuel and concessionary loans and a whole range of benefits. And I think that’s the pattern that they’ve come to expect. The message we’re sending – and when I say “we,” not simply the United States and the Republic of Korea, but I think the international community – is we are going to break that pattern. We are more than willing to engage in negotiations to get North Korea on a path of peaceful coexistence with its neighbors, and we want to encourage their prosperity. But belligerent, provocative behavior that threatens neighbors will be met with significant, serious enforcement of sanctions that are in place.”

This brings us to a central and most vital policy recommendation: *When it comes to dealing with North Korea, say what you mean and mean what you say!* As one former senior official quipped in an off-the-record comment: “Clinton bought Yongbyon once and Bush bought it twice, why shouldn’t the ‘Dear Leader’ think he can sell it a few more times to Obama?” The only way to break bad habits is to demonstrate that there really are consequences to bad behavior and this requires strict enforcement of UNSCR 1874, not just by Washington and Seoul, but by the entire international community and most importantly by North Korea’s two giant neighbors, China and Russia. The economic package announced during Chinese President Wen Jiabao’s visit to Pyongyang in October 2009, which

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<sup>32</sup> Joint Remarks by President Obama and President Myung-bak Lee, June 16, 2009.

many claim is an outright violation of UNSCR 1874,<sup>33</sup> bodes ill for future solidarity, especially given the reluctance of U.S. and ROK authorities to criticize this latest example of Chinese largesse (read: bribe) toward North Korea.<sup>34</sup>

While always getting the Chinese to agree may be a bridge too far, it is essential at a minimum that Washington and Seoul continue to see — and be seen as seeing — eye to eye. President Obama has appointed a Special Representative for North Korea, Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, who continues to make the rounds in Seoul, Tokyo, Beijing, and (occasionally) Moscow to build consensus on how best to deal with Pyongyang. The Lee government should consider identifying a similar seasoned veteran — former Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the U.S. Han Sung-joo comes immediately to mind — to be his point person on Six-Party Talks deliberations, and the two should be making rounds to the other capitals together. This would demonstrate to Pyongyang, and to the South Korean people, that close coordination and cooperation truly exists and is a top priority for both countries. Double-teaming Beijing should also increase the prospect of getting and keeping China on board.<sup>35</sup>

It is worth noting here that the Four-Party Talks proposal was

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<sup>33</sup>— See, for example, Gordon G. Chang, “Beijing is Violating North Korea Sanctions,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 16-18, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup>— To the contrary, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell went out of his way to once again praise Chinese efforts to bring North Korea back to the table shortly after the Wen visit. As will be discussed shortly, such action seems counterproductive to building and sustaining a sanctions consensus.

<sup>35</sup>— Triple-teaming would be even better and, until recently, seemed possible since Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo (under the then-ruling Liberal Democratic Party or LDP) seemed more in synch than they had been for years. The policies and proclivities of the new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government in regards to North Korea policy are less clear but at least initially still seem in line with Washington and Seoul.



made jointly by Presidents Clinton and Kim Young-sam. So too should be any future major initiatives, be they about a new dialogue forum (if the Six-Party Talks are officially pronounced dead) or a new “Grand Bargain” or package deal for the North. This is what real allies do, and how they underscore that they are in this together.

## REFINING AND EMBELLISHING THE JOINT VISION

A number of other policy recommendations flow logically from the earlier discussion of the shortcomings of the current Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement. But they should be prefaced with general praise directed toward the two leaders for getting the relationship on as positive a track as they have done. The embellishments being recommended here do not require the old statement to be discarded or even formally amended. Any follow-on Joint Statement by the two leaders will serve the desired purpose as long as it first makes reference to the Joint Vision and then specifically note that new pronouncements are aimed at building upon or amplifying the original statement.<sup>36</sup> Many of these recommendations were implied or stated in the earlier discussion but are briefly summarized here.

### *The Role of the Alliance Post-Reunification*

The two leaders need to start inserting the phrase “both today and post-reunification” into their statements about the viability of

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<sup>36</sup> A good place to start would be with whatever joint statement comes out of President Obama’s first visit to Seoul in November 2009 after the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting in Singapore.

the alliance, both to underscore the long-term nature of the U.S. commitment — as long as the Korean people want and need us there — and to serve notice to Pyongyang that the alliance and associated U.S. force presence is not a bargaining chip but an issue for Washington and Seoul alone to determine.

Attempts to broaden and deepen the alliance to assure its post-reunification relevance are already underway and should be continued and reinforced. To its credit, the June 2009 Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement already underscores the alliance's broader role and utility. It begins by noting that "the United States of America and the Republic of Korea are building an Alliance to ensure a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Korean Peninsula, the Asia-Pacific region, and the world," while further noting that "together, on this solid foundation, we will build a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral, regional and global scope, based on common values and mutual trust."<sup>37</sup> Pointing to the broader regional and even global benefits of the alliance helps provide the rationale for its continued applicability post-reunification.

As both countries continue to encourage and endorse closer multilateral security cooperation in the region — which they should — they need to continually underscore that this is not an "either-or" choice: U.S. bilateral security alliances with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and Thailand, as well as with the ROK, provide the foundation upon which multilateral security cooperation can be built and remain the most logical, capable, and willing vehicle for responding to regional challenges or crises. As a result, the two leaders also need to make sure, when expressing their support for multilateral security cooperation, that they also add this caveat:

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<sup>37</sup>— Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement.

*provided such multilateral initiatives and mechanisms build upon and do not seek to replace or diminish our bilateral security relationship.*

### ***Defining Roles and Missions***

As argued earlier, there is also a need for both leaders to remind North Korea, its other six-party partners, and their respective publics that, while the U.S. may take the lead in denuclearization and non-proliferation discussions with Pyongyang, in the final analysis, *“peace on the Korean Peninsula can only take root through dialogue and cooperation between the South and the North, the two parties directly concerned.”* As Presidents Clinton and Kim Jong-sam pledged before them, Presidents Obama and Lee need to confirm “the fundamental principle that establishment of a stable, permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula is the task of the Korean people” and that “South and North Korea should take the lead in a renewed search for a permanent peace arrangement.”

Pyongyang clearly still sees it otherwise, noting in one of its frequent blasts that “a peace accord should be concluded between the DPRK and the U.S. if the nuclear issue on the peninsula is to be settled,” and that “the U.S. should roll back its hostile policy toward the DPRK and opt for the conclusion of the peace agreement as it would help clear the Korean Peninsula of the nuclear threat and ensure peace there.”<sup>38</sup> The two presidents need to make it clear that this is not going to happen. Even if a U.S. president was tempted to go in this direction — and none thus far including the incumbent has — it is inconceivable that the U.S. Senate would approve such a bilateral Peace Treaty, as it would have to (with a 2/3 majority) for it

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<sup>38</sup> U.S. Entirely to Blame for Spawning Nuclear Issue on Korean Peninsula, KCNA, Pyongyang, October 14, 2009.

to enter into force.

One of the important features of the Six-Party Talks were its five working groups aimed at Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Normalization of DPRK-U.S. Relations, Normalization of DPRK-Japan Relations, Economy and Energy Cooperation, and a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism, respectively. It was no accident that the one dealing with Economy and Energy Cooperation was chaired by Seoul. Should the Six-Party Talks resume, or if some new forum is ultimately established to replace this dialogue mechanism, Seoul's lead role in the Peninsula peace and economic development process must be maintained, and the U.S. must be seen as encouraging and supporting this role.

Reunification remains the long-term goal and here Seoul must remain in the driver's seat. While all would like it to come faster, it is becoming increasingly clear that denuclearization is a mid-term goal and here Washington will likely be required to serve as the lead facilitator, but within the context of the Six-Party Talks or some other broader forum involving the other dialogue partners as well. The most immediate goal is counter-proliferation — keeping what's in North Korea (nuclear weapons, fissile material, technical know-how) in North Korea, and keeping what's not already there (in terms of missile and nuclear equipment and technology) out — and this is everybody's responsibility, although the U.S. has already assumed a leading role, through its international efforts to ensure that UNSCR 1874 sanctions are honored and enforced. Recall also that South Korean and Japanese UN representatives played a key role in bringing about this resolution and the earlier Presidential Statement condemning the April 2009 missile launch.

## *North-South Peaceful Coexistence as the mid-term Goal*

While all Koreans are history – and duty-bound to pay allegiance to the idea of reunification – and every American government should be seen as supporting the goal of “peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy”<sup>39</sup> – few see reunification as a credible near-term goal, absent the quiet collapse of the North Korean regime (which one can always hope for but should not base one’s foreign policy upon). What’s been missing since the days of Kim Dae-jung’s “Sunshine Policy” is a mutually acceptable mid-term goal that can provide the basis for North-South reconciliation and serve as a vehicle for providing the assurance necessary to proceed with denuclearization.

Here, the critical issue is timing. Normalization of relations between Pyongyang and either Washington or Seoul cannot and should not happen with a nuclear weapons-equipped DPRK. Both countries repeatedly assert that “under no circumstance are we going to allow North Korea to possess nuclear weapons,”<sup>40</sup> but in practical terms, what does this mean? Since North Korea has already declared and demonstrated at least a rudimentary nuclear weapons capability and no one is marching on Pyongyang, the international community writ large has *de facto* accepted this situation at least as a temporary condition. It might make more sense to state that *North Korea’s nuclear status will never be accepted or formally recognized and that normalization of relations and the lifting of sanctions are contingent on denuclearization.*

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<sup>39</sup>– As outlined in the Lee-Obama June 2009 Joint Vision statement.

<sup>40</sup>– See, for example, President Lee’s comments to reporters during his June 16, 2009 joint press conference with President Obama: “Joint Remarks by President Obama and President Myung-bak Lee, June 16, 2009.”

While President Lee Myung-bak's "Grand Bargain" and earlier "\$3,000 per capita" campaign pledge could be viewed as implicit acceptance of North Korea's continued existence as a separate entity, these appeared aimed more at the gaining acceptance of progressives and middle-of-the-roaders in South Korea than at capturing the hearts and minds of the leadership and people of the North. The "Grand Bargain" can, nonetheless, help form the basis of a joint ROK-U.S. package deal which offers eventual recognition and acceptance within the international community plus economic and developmental assistance in return for denuclearization and the North's willingness to develop and adopt a South-North "peaceful coexistence" framework where both sides may still profess their long-term goal (with different interpretations) of reunification but officially recognize one another's right to exist and independent sovereignty today.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### *OPCON Transfer*

The decision to include an endorsement of OPCON transfer in the Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement without specifying the already agreed upon April 2012 turnover date will likely intensify rather than settle the debate over when and if wartime operational control of ROK forces should be transferred from the U.S. to Korea. My own inclination is to stick with the current time line since it is clear by almost every measure (other than nuclear weapons) that the ROK is more than capable of taking the lead in defending itself against a depleted North Korean army which is

probably still capable of firing a loud first shot but highly suspect when it comes to being able to sustain combat operations, especially since Chinese and Russian support is not only not guaranteed but actually unlikely if Pyongyang initiates the conflict (which is the only feasible way a ground war on the Peninsula would start). If, for political reasons, some delay is deemed necessary – or if military planners report that carefully laid out preparations and benchmarks cannot be accomplished on time – then the sooner this decision is (jointly) announced the better. The bottom line is the two leaders (and not just their generals) must agree upon and jointly state a date certain for OPCON transfer to occur, be it 2012 or later.

The question more worthy of debate and more to the point of demonstrating (to the South as well as the North) the level of U.S. commitment centers around the plan to disestablish the Combined Forces Command. Why? Does this really need to occur at the time of OPCON transfer? Shouldn't some type of joint war-fighting command structure remain in place as long as the North Korea threat exists, which it clearly will post-2012, even if by some miracle denuclearization occurs before then. Apropos previously-cited ROK concerns about not sending Pyongyang the wrong signal, it would seem that keeping the CFC command structure in place, even if responsibilities and command lines are changed, makes sense and goes to the heart of both the deterrence issue and ROK concerns.

### ***Six-Party Talks: A Vehicle, Not the Goal***

As noted in my opening section, constant reference to the need for Pyongyang to “return to the Six-Party Talks” – included in every UNSC resolution and almost every statement by American and

Korean (or Japanese or Chinese) official commentators on the subject — risks sending the message or establishing the mind set that merely getting the North to return to the Talks is the primary objective. Instead the other five parties, lead by Washington and Seoul, should be calling on Pyongyang “to honor its previous commitments and return to the negotiating table,” with equal emphasis on the “prior commitments” part. Having the North Koreans come to the table, just to announce that they had no intention of honoring past agreements (as they did in December 2008) serves little purpose and keeps the diplomatic initiative and veto in Pyongyang’s hands.

A distinction must be made between the current seemingly “dialogue at all costs” approach and dialogue which builds upon and recognizes commitments already made and payments already delivered. Otherwise, despite the best of intentions, and firm pronouncements notwithstanding, the old cycle will just repeat itself and we will end up buying Yongbyon yet again.

### ***Containment as the near-term goal?***

What’s needed today and until Pyongyang begins taking positive steps toward honoring previous commitments is a full-fledged containment policy. Simply calling for the Six-Party Talks to reconvene is not a strategy. While the Talks might provide additional confirmation of Pyongyang’s strategic decision not to denuclearize, this is not likely to get us any closer to our overall objective, which ROK and U.S. leaders (rightfully) continue to insist is the *complete, verifiable, irreversible elimination* of North Korea’s nuclear weapons capabilities.

While Pyongyang’s decision to walk away from the Six-Party Talks and restart its nuclear weapons programs clearly represent a



major step backwards in this regard, it is not cause for immediate alarm. Estimates are that it will take six months to a year or more to get Yongbyon back into full operation, after which it could at best produce about one bomb's worth of plutonium annually (to add to the 6-8 bombs worth they are believed to already possess). This may have some psychological value to the North but has very little if any military significance. As a result, a smart, well coordinated response is more important than a quick one.

Perhaps the best thing to do now with Pyongyang is to do nothing. Presidents Lee and Obama might consider taking a page out of the Dear Leader's play book and announce that a resumption of dialogue will require an end to Pyongyang's "hostile policy" toward its neighbors and that the best way to demonstrate its willingness to do this is to pick up where the Six-Party Talks left off in December 2008, with discussion of the modalities of a denuclearization verification regime. Until then, the international community will have no option other than to tighten up sanctions (and their enforcement) under UNSCR 1874. This should include a pledge of no direct *negotiations* between Washington and Pyongyang outside the context of the Six-Party Talks. This does not rule out an eventual Special Envoy visit or use of the "New York channel" or other venues to deliver a firm joint message; it does rule out the type of bilateral negotiations by former U.S. six-party negotiator Christopher Hill that played into the hands of Pyongyang's "salami" game.

In short, what's needed at this point is a clearly expressed policy of containment aimed at preventing North Korea from proliferating its nuclear material and technology and which keeps anything else that would help the regime further develop its nuclear or missile capabilities out of North Korean hands. This does not mean that Washington (or anyone else) is prepared to recognize

North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. The goal still remains the complete, verifiable, irreversible elimination of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons capabilities; under no circumstance should any nation give the impression that there is a willingness to accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. It does recognize, however, that this will be a multi-stage process and that counter-proliferation is a major — and the most immediate and urgent — step in this process. So is tightening the noose around Pyongyang to increase the political, military, and economic costs associated with going down the nuclear path.

As part of this North Korea containment policy, Seoul should examine the continued wisdom of pumping money into the North through the Kaesong industrial complex. The North seems to take great delight in periodically restricting access to Kaesong or employing harassment techniques against South Koreans working there but it has more to gain (or lose) from Kaesong than does Seoul, despite the considerable investment already made there. Given the South's economic slowdown, wouldn't those jobs be put to better use in the South? A "temporary" shutdown of Kaesong by Seoul, until such time as the North resumed good faith negotiations, might be a bit extreme at this point (although it would send a powerful message). But at a minimum, Seoul needs to realize that the leverage lies in its hands, not the North's, and act accordingly.<sup>41</sup>

The U.S. and ROK alone cannot contain North Korea. It takes a coordinated international effort. But Washington and Seoul, hopefully together with Tokyo (once the new DPJ government's position on these matters becomes more clear) must set the tone. Most

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<sup>41</sup>- Seoul seems to be coming around to this way of thinking. During his joint press conference with President Obama in June, President Lee warned Pyongyang "not to make unacceptable demands," since 40,000 workers would lose their jobs if Kaesong closed its doors. At the time it was demanding a 400 percent raise for Kaesong employees; it subsequently settled for a 5 percent raise.

effective of all would be a decision by China and Russia to get on board the containment train. Beijing could send a powerful signal to Pyongyang (and the rest of the world) about its commitment to non-proliferation by joining the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a “coalition of the willing” formed during the Bush administration to help ensure that weapons of mass destruction did not fall into the hands of non-state actors or others who would do us harm. Presidents Lee and Obama should be calling on Beijing, frequently and publicly, to join this effort.<sup>42</sup> In fact, since it claims not to be a proliferator, North Korea should be invited to join as well.

Seoul and Washington should also pressure Beijing, as Six-Party Talks host, to schedule a plenary session and invite Pyongyang to attend, but make it clear that the meeting will take place regardless. The time is long since passed for the other five to continue giving Pyongyang a veto over its activities. An alternative approach would be the initiation of Five-Party Talks to determine the best way to persuade Pyongyang to come back to the table and, in the interim, to contain North Korea’s nuclear aspirations and capabilities. If Beijing is not prepared to call such talks then perhaps Seoul should. China would then be compelled to choose between being part of the solution (by attending) or part of the problem (by staying way).

### ***Enforce UNSCR 1874***

Pyongyang will return to the negotiating table when it perceives it in its best interest to do so. There are two ways of bring-

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<sup>42</sup>– Japan is a charter member. Russia joined in 2004 but has not been an active participant in PSI exercises in recent years. Seoul joined after the May 2009 nuclear test.

ing this about. The tried and true way is to dangle more carrots. This might get the Dear Leader back to the table temporarily, but only until he has once again eaten his full. He will then surely walk away. Perhaps a better approach would be to increase the cost of staying away, to provide some “incentive” to cooperate on someone else’s, rather than on Pyongyang’s terms. UNSCR 1874 is supposed to help achieve this objective. But the key is not merely pronouncing or strengthening sanctions but actually enforcing them, to demonstrate that bad behavior has serious, enforceable, and long-lasting consequences.

Both leaders must continue to remind the international community that adherence to UNSCR 1874 is not optional. As President Lee has clearly stated: “the recent Security Council resolution is not simply about words; it is about taking follow up action and vigorously implementing the U.N. Security Council resolution.”<sup>43</sup> Easy to say; not so easy to do, especially in the face of Chinese resistance. At least privately, if not publicly, both leaders have to take China to task when it demonstrates (as it did during the Wen visit to Pyongyang) that sanctions can be turned off or on at will. If the past provides precedent – and Pyongyang will assume it does until proven otherwise – Kim Jong-il likely assumes that merely returning to the negotiating table (as he has hinted he might be willing to do) will be sufficient to have sanctions relaxed or ignored. Washington and Seoul must make it clear that the situation this time really is different.

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<sup>43</sup> “Joint Remarks by President Obama and President Lee Myungbak,” Washington D.C., June 16, 2009.

### *Strengthen Extended Deterrence.*

In the face of the North Korean nuclear threat, Washington must strive to remove any doubt that might exist in the minds of the ROK people and their leadership about the credibility or reliability of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. President Lee's public insistence that extended deterrence assurances be expressly included in the Lee-Obama June 16, 2009 Joint Vision statement – in referring to the U.S. defense commitment it states that “the continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance”<sup>44</sup> – can easily be interpreted as a lack of trust in the alliance, even though Korean security specialists argue its real intent was not only to provide reassurance to South Koreans but also to send a clear warning to North Korea underscoring the U.S. commitment to defense of the ROK.<sup>45</sup>

From my own discussions with ROK specialists on this issue, it is clear that the reference to extended deterrence in the Vision Statement is only a starting point. South Koreans want follow up at the government-to-government level to more fully discuss strategy, structure, operational doctrine, and even nuclear targeting.<sup>46</sup> This despite the fact that the ROK bench is not deep on these topics and it is not real clear if South Korean society is prepared to meaningfully address these issues. The sobering and disturbing fact that the majority of South Koreans believe that their nation should possess its own independent nuclear weapons capability obviously runs contrary to mutual efforts to denuclearize the

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<sup>44</sup>– Lee-Obama Joint Vision statement.

<sup>45</sup>– As explained in detail in “A Question of Confidence: The First U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue (A Conference Report), *Issues & Insights*, Vol. 09, No. 18, September 2009.

<sup>46</sup>– *Ibid.*

Korean Peninsula.<sup>47</sup> And, make no mistake about it, Pyongyang is not going to accept any denuclearization deal that does not provide assurances that there will also be no nuclear weapons on the south side of the DMZ as well.

### ***Be Prepared for Future Contingencies.***

When one mentions future contingencies regarding North Korea, the first thing that usually comes to mind is preparation for a North Korean regime collapse. While I would not argue against the ROK and U.S. being prepared for such a contingency (and for bringing China into the discussion if possible), the much more likely contingency for which the U.S. and ROK need to be prepared involves another North Korean escalation of tensions. If, as recommended, the two allies (hopefully along with others) elect to follow a containment strategy and a policy of not-so-benign neglect until the North agrees to pick up negotiations where they left off, it would be a pretty safe bet to predict that Pyongyang will do something to ratchet up tensions, such as additional long-range missile or nuclear tests. It would be wise to prepare in advance for the type of additional sanctions and other measures both sides would want to take—and would want to persuade China and others to take—in order to be able to build a consensus in advance. The fact that it took 17 days between the North's May 25 nuclear test and the passage of UNSCR 1874 (on June 12) is

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<sup>47</sup> See "South Korean Opinion Polls: Majority Favors Nuclear Weapons," WMD Insights (December 2005/January 2006), for background in this issue. JoongAng Ilbo polls have shown a consistent majority, ranging from 51 percent in 2004 to a high of over 66 percent in 2006 to around 56 percent today supporting an independent ROK nuclear weapons capability.

embarrassing and reinforces Pyongyang's belief that such actions cause more division and debate than unity.

### ***Pass KORUS***

Finally, one cannot pass up the opportunity to make a plug for passage of KORUS, the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, negotiated by the Roh Moo-hyun and George W. Bush administrations and whole-heartedly endorsed by President Lee but criticized by the Obama administration. Candidate Obama had argued that it should be renegotiated. As president, he has been a bit more cautious in his choice of words but still seeks some modifications to get it past a Democratic Congress. Failure to pass KORUS or demands on President Lee that it be significantly altered or renegotiated will seriously strain the Alliance and are counterproductive to the "broadening and deepening" of the relationship that both sides profess to support. Such strains obviously play into Pyongyang's "divide and conquer" tactics.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is essential that Washington and Seoul closely coordinate their foreign policy approaches toward North Korea if they are to stand any hope of bringing about a nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula or stemming proliferation. In pursuing these goals, however, equal if not greater attention must also be paid toward preserving and enhancing the ROK-U.S. alliance relationship not just to deal with Pyongyang but to promote regional stability, even while setting the stage for eventual peaceful Korean Peninsula

reunification. While there are no guarantees for success, a failure for Seoul and Washington to develop near-, mid-, and long-term common visions and strategies for achieving common goals is likely to guarantee failure.

The good place to start in building this unified approach is through the embellishment and strengthening of the already praiseworthy June 2009 “Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea” signed by Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Barack Obama. This can be done by more clearly identifying and underscoring the important future role of the alliance post-reunification and by more clearly defining the respective ROK and U.S. roles when it comes to both denuclearization/non-proliferation and the broader issue of Korean Peninsula peace and stability. As regards the latter, Seoul (and Pyongyang), not Washington, must take the lead. Most importantly, the U.S. and ROK need to agree upon and then jointly articulate a pre-reunification mid-term goal that is non-threatening to Pyongyang, one that espouses “peaceful coexistence.”

Seoul and Washington must be – and must be seen as being – in lock-step in dealing with the North. The appointment of a South Korean Special Envoy to work in close consultation with Ambassador Stephen Bosworth and a decision to make future major pronouncements regarding either denuclearization or broader peace and development efforts jointly would send a powerful message in this regard and should help build and sustain an international consensus in dealing with the North’s flagrant violations of UNSC resolutions. The two leaders are already saying the right things in this regard; now they must practice what they preach and bring others on board.



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*Strengthening the U.S.-Korea Alliance  
for the 21st Century*

*- The Role of Korean-American Partnership  
in Shaping Asia's Emerging Order*

*Daniel Twining*

*10*

Is the U.S. alliance with the Republic of Korea (ROK) stuck in the past? A comparison with many of Washington's other relationships with Asian powers might make it seem so. Despite uncertainties arising from Japan's new domestic political constellation, the U.S.-Japan alliance has transformed beyond recognition over the past 15 years as the two countries used their partnership as a framework to promote Japan's evolutionary "normalization" as a great power. From attempting to constrain Indian power in the 1990s through technological and other sanctions, the United States in the 2000s has invested systematically in propelling India's geopolitical rise as an Asian balancer and global player. The U.S.-Australia alliance has been modernized, and Washington has forged qualitatively closer relations with Indonesia and Vietnam, Southeast Asia's key swing states. By contrast, the U.S.-South Korea alliance has not been similarly transformed; it remains in some ways frozen by the continuing conflict on the Korean peninsula.

Perhaps it could not be otherwise. The threat the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Australia alliances were forged to contain — the Soviet Union — is long gone, and with it the source of tension between America and the tacitly Soviet-allied India of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Vietnam, once a battlefield for American soldiers who relied on the U.S. alliances with Thailand and the Philippines for rear-area support, is now anxious to preserve an American forward presence in Asia to countervail China. Indonesia, once home to archetypical Asian strongman General Suharto, is now a flourishing democracy, creating a values-based foundation for closer ties to Washington, including a new congruence of outlook on issues like Burma that once divided the two countries. By contrast, North Korea's regime and armed forces remain an

existential threat to South Korea; the primary purpose of Seoul's Cold War-era alliance with Washington endures.

South Korea itself, however, has changed beyond all recognition. The country that once possessed a smaller economy and less capable armed forces than North Korea has become the world's 10<sup>th</sup> largest economy and a pacesetter for the Asian renaissance that is transforming the international system. Once ruled by strongmen whose power base rested with the security services — as in North Korea — South Korea now boasts a consolidated and flourishing democracy, bolstered by several peaceful transfers of political power between parties, making it a model for its region. South Korean soldiers have deployed far beyond the peninsula, including to Iraq and Afghanistan, and South Korean ships patrol international waters as part of the Proliferation Security Initiative coalition. South Korea is a member of the Group of 20, the world's economic and financial steering committee that has replaced the once exclusively Western (and Japanese) club of the G-7. Americans and Chinese drive South Korean cars, watch South Korean high-definition televisions, and use laptops powered by South Korean microchips. South Korea is unquestionably one of Asia's leading economic and political success stories.

As South Korea has changed, so too has Asia. China is poised to surpass Japan as the world's second-largest economy at market rates. China, India, and Vietnam have ranked among the world's fastest-growing economies during the first decade of this century. Japan has undergone a political revolution with the ascension to power of the Democratic Party, calling into question the future of a Liberal Democratic Party that had ruled nearly without interruption for over five decades. On the other side of the regional balance sheet, North Korea now possesses nuclear weapons and

advanced long- range missiles and has proliferated their underlying technologies to the Middle East and South Asia. China has pursued an aggressive and sustained military buildup focused on power-projection capabilities that calls into serious question both its intentions and the ability of the United States and its allies to maintain a regional balance that deters aggression.

The transformed regional and global environments, like South Korea's transformed political and economic outlook, call for a new U.S.-South Korea alliance for the new century. This is true both with respect to managing the danger from North Korea but, as importantly, to shape the evolution of the Asian regional system as it moves beyond an exclusive reliance on America's Cold War hub-and-spokes alliance system as the foundation for regional security. To understand both the continuing importance of the U.S.-ROK alliance and the urgency of updating it to better manage security order in 21st century Asia, this chapter seeks to frame the alliance in its wider context and analyze its interaction with the broader catalysts of regional change.

The first section of the chapter examines the nature and role of American power as a foundational source of the regional order in which South Korea's post-World War 2 development has been nested. The second section analyzes key trends in Asia that are transforming the regional order and their implications for the Republic of Korea. The third section outlines different scenarios for Asia's future regional order to create the context for a fourth section assessing why South Korea is better off with a strong and healthy U.S. alliance in light of any anticipated pathway for Asia's regional evolution. The fifth section outlines specific policy initiatives to strengthen the U.S.-South Korea alliance to position both countries to thrive and prosper in an Asia-Pacific century.

## THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN EAST ASIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SOUTH KOREA'S DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY

Since the early 1950s, the U.S.-South Korea alliance, like the U.S.-Japan alliance and Washington's other regional security partnerships, have enabled the United States, despite its great distance from East Asia, to play the role of "resident power"<sup>1</sup> and guarantor of an East Asian security and economic system that offered a distinct pathway for regional order, and for South's Korea's economic and political development within it. While Koreans deserve full credit for their country's extraordinary success, Korea's economic miracle also was made possible by the role of its U.S. alliance in safeguarding the country's security against its aggressive, militarized neighbor on the peninsula. Reversal of North Korean aggression from 1950-53 was followed by American containment and deterrence of the North's continuing ambitions to overthrow the regime in Seoul and unify the peninsula by force. While it is hard to recall today, for several decades after the division of the peninsula in 1945 North Korea possessed the larger economy and more capable military; at the height of the Cold War it was not at all clear that the future lay with the United States and its South Korean ally rather than with the Pyongyang regime and its allies in Moscow and Beijing.

The forward presence of American forces in East Asia over the past 60 years, and the role of the U.S. alliance system in enabling

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Gates, "Challenges to Stability in the Asia-Pacific," Speech by the Secretary of Defense to the Seventh IISS Asian Security Dialogue, Singapore, May 31, 2008, <<http://www.iiss.org/conferences/the-shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2008/plenary-session-speeches-2008/first-plenary-session-challenges-to-stability-in-the-asia-pacific/first-plenary-session-the-hon-robert-gates/>>.

access to American trade and investment, also provided a number of broader benefits for the Korean people. U.S. defense of the air and sea lanes of maritime Asia made possible the explosion of trade, both within the region and with the rich economies of the West, that characterized East Asia's post-World War 2 development model. American security guarantees to Japan and South Korea and the garrisoning of American forces in these and other countries prevented the emergence of raw balance-of-power politics in East Asia, precluding the kind of self-help behavior that might otherwise have induced leaders in Tokyo and Seoul to consider developing nuclear weapons to bolster their country's security. America's dominant role as an Asian security provider helped guarantee the autonomy and independence of smaller states, including South Korea and many Southeast Asian nations, that might otherwise have fallen into larger rivals' spheres of influence, or worse.

American preponderance in East Asia contributed to what political scientists call under-balancing: U.S. defense commitments to its allies enabled them to spend more of their national resources on social goods and less on defense. The most significant impact was on Japan, which had been Asia's leading revisionist and aggressive great power since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Not only was Japanese military power neutered with its defeat in World War 2; the U.S.-Japan alliance effectively contained Japan's remilitarization, enabling Japanese leaders to channel their energies towards economic growth while spending less than one percent of GDP on what was truly a "defensive defense," given the dominant role of America's armed forces in safeguarding Japan from coercion and aggression. In turn, Japan's postwar redefinition of its national interests meant that Korea was, for the first time in centuries, not a subject of predation by its eastern neighbor.



During this period, American leadership of an open international economic order, based in part on U.S. control of the global commons, allowed South Korea and other Asian states to develop deep linkages with a Western-dominated international economy that has produced a greater degree of wealth for more people than any other economic system in world history. And although Washington supported South Korean dictators for far too long, the democratic nature of the American hegemon led it, from the 1980s if not sooner, to identify its regional interests with the political liberalization of its Asian allies. South Koreans, Taiwanese, Filipinos, Thais, and others earned their democracies through people power. But they would not have enjoyed the international support that empowered their grassroots campaigns for democracy had the region's preponderant power been an authoritarian state that eschewed those values and offered an alternative developmental model.

## **TRENDS IN EAST ASIA AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Despite the unquestionable staying power of the U.S. alliance system, East Asia arguably has transformed more than any other region since the end of the Cold War. Based on their impact on South Korea's security outlook, key developments include: (1) the resilience of North Korea's regime and its development of advanced nuclear and missile capabilities; (2) China's considerable expansion of its military capabilities and the international influence it derives from the scale and pace of its economic growth; (3) Japan's gradual and U.S.-prodded "normalization" as a great power even as its

relative capabilities are eroded by Asia's power shift; and (4) the rise of Asian regionalism and the competition between leading Pacific powers over the form and scope of Asia's emerging institutions. These key trends, in turn, are impacting the role of the United States in East Asia, with important implications for the Republic of Korea.

Despite widespread expectations in the 1990s that North Korea's regime could not long endure in a globalized, marketized world, and, later, that comprehensive engagement with Pyongyang through Seoul's "sunshine policy" could mellow the threat posed by the North, its regime appears durable. The leadership succession from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-Il in the early 1990s may well be followed by a third dynastic succession from Kim Jong-Il to one of his sons. To build the political foundation for the regime's continuation in power, Kim Jong-Il has pursued a "military-first" domestic politics, experimented with limited market liberalization, leveraged huge amounts of financial, energy, and food aid from the international community, and pushed the boundaries of North Korea's military capabilities by successfully testing nuclear weapons.

While the Pyongyang regime is brittle and fissures exist within its elite, North Korea does not appear close to collapse. Despite a welcome change in attitudes within the South Korean government following the presidential succession of Roh Mu-Hyun by Lee Myung-Bak, it remains unlikely that the international community can muster the will to impose sufficiently punitive sanctions on North Korea to fatally weaken its regime. The logical conclusion for South Korean security planning is that the country will continue to live with the existential threat from the North for the foreseeable future.

China's growth across the full spectrum of national capabilities has made it a potential Asian hegemon and ascendant world

power in the span of just a few decades. China spends more on its military than any country save the United States. It is deploying new capabilities for extra-regional power projection, including a rapidly expanding air force and blue-water navy. Its offensive ballistic missile buildup gives it new means for possible coercion within its region.

China has become South Korea's largest trading partner, fuelling the latter's prosperity but raising hard questions about the risks of dependency on a non-allied, non-democratic power with revisionist ambitions. Polling shows that a majority of South Koreans deem China an important economic partner but at the same time a potential security threat.<sup>2</sup> Not only do China's rising power and uncertain intentions stir the Korean people's well-founded historical wariness toward their giant neighbors; China's military buildup creates a security dilemma that motivates Japan to expand the roles and capabilities of its armed forces, which in turn set off alarm bells in Seoul.

Since the mid-1990s, Washington and Tokyo have used the framework of their alliance to expand Japan's security roles and capabilities, moving it systematically in the direction of becoming a regional and global security provider. Japan has taken on new responsibilities within the alliance, developed important new capabilities for power projection (including through missile defense cooperation with offensive military applications), and, in a historic first, deployed its Self Defense Forces to the Afghan and Iraq theaters of war. Successive Japanese Prime Ministers have articulated unprecedented ambitions for Japanese grand strategy, whether through casting Japan as the "thought leader of Asia," forging new

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance "World Still Wary of Modern China," *BBC News*, August 4, 2008, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7540871.stm>>.

bilateral alliances with India and Australia, cooperating with these and other democratic powers in an “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,” formalizing security cooperation with NATO, or constructing a Pacific community around an “inland sea” centered on Japan as the hub of the international economic and political order.<sup>3</sup>

Japan’s strategic future remains uncertain in light of the country’s churning domestic politics and troubling economic and demographic trends, but there is no question that military modernization in China and North Korea have spurred a new Japanese search for security and identity that has moved Tokyo decisively beyond the constraints that structured its foreign policy for fifty years. Arguably, the ascent of the DPJ, with its calls for a more equal U.S.-Japan alliance and greater Japanese independence in security and diplomacy, is yet another step forward in Japan’s transformation into what DPJ leader Ichiro Ozawa famously called a “normal country.”<sup>4</sup>

A fourth key trend defining South Korea’s security outlook is the rise of Asian regionalism. It is notable that Asian institution-building has been characterized as much by competition between regional powers to set its terms and scope as by cooperation to construct a new Asian community. Since the mid-1990s, Japan and China have viewed Asian regionalism as one arena in which to play out their contest for status and influence, demonstrated most

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3- Taro Aso, “Asian Strategy as I See it: Japan as the Thought Leader of Asia,” Tokyo, December 7, 2005, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0512>>; Shinzo Abe, *Utsukushii Kunihe (Towards a Beautiful Country)*, (Tokyo: Bunshun Shinsho, 2006); Taro Aso, “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons,” Tokyo, November 30, 2006, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html>>; Yasuo Fukuda, “When the Pacific Ocean Becomes an ‘Inland Sea,’” Speech to the 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Future of Asia, Tokyo, May 22, 2008, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/speech0805-2.html>>.

4- Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994).

dramatically in the runup to the inaugural East Asia summit in 2005. Then, Beijing supported a closed grouping — comprising the states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan, and South Korea — while Tokyo, working closely with Singapore and other-like minded states, supported a more open forum that included India, Australia, and New Zealand to balance China's influence in the new forum.

In addition to competition between big Asian powers to drive regional institution-building in ways that maximize their influence, Asian regionalism has also been impacted by a two-decade-long wave of democratization in East and Southeast Asia that has changed the domestic composition of key states like Indonesia — and thereby affected the terms by which they relate to their neighbors. From Seoul's perspective, the big questions for Asian institution-building going forward are whether they sustain an open regionalism that includes the United States and other friendly powers, and for those forums that do not, whether they retain sufficient pluralism to protect the autonomous interests of smaller states from being trampled by regional giants, led by China.

## **FOUR SCENARIOS FOR EAST ASIA'S FUTURE REGIONAL ORDER AND KOREA'S PLACE WITHIN IT**

In light of these key trends, four broad pathways for East Asian security order are possible over the coming decades. They are (1) a continuation of the present, Lockean order that mixes rules-based cooperation and quiet competition within a regional framework structured around existing alignments sustained by American leadership; (2) a Hobbesian balance-of-power order of

unconstrained great power competition fueled by dynamic shifts in relative power and a reduced U.S. role that induces aggressive self-help behavior among regional states; (3) a Kantian security community in which an East Asian community develops along the lines of Europe's democratic peace, with China's political liberalization a precondition for such a regional evolution; or (4) a Sinocentric regional order that sustains a different kind of East Asian community on the basis not of common regime type but of China's extension of a sphere of influence across the region, in keeping with the pre-modern Asian order in which a hierarchy of deference to a Chinese "Middle Kingdom" structured East Asian international relations.<sup>5</sup>

In the first scenario, continued American maritime preponderance and the U.S. alliance system sustain a security order in which China's "Prussianization,"<sup>6</sup> North Korea's nuclear mischief, and other potential security dilemmas in East Asia are mitigated by the preponderance of power enjoyed by the United States and its allies, deterring aggressive revisionism on the part of Beijing or Pyongyang and continuing to supply the public goods that underlie East Asian prosperity. In such an order, Asian regionalism could continue to sink roots, but on the basis of an open regional outlook in which the United States remains a "resident power" and economic integration continues to be oriented around a trans-Pacific rather than exclusively Asian axis. Great powers like Japan and India, secondary powers like South Korea, and the states of Southeast Asia could continue to engage economically and diplomatically with

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5. David Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

6. Holger Herwig and William Sater, *The Grand Illusion: The Prussianization of the Chilean Army* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

China, confident that their security ties with the United States constituted a hedge against falling under Beijing's sway.

In turn, China's development would be shaped by the combination of engagement with the United States and its friends and by the deterrent effect of America's forward military presence and alliance commitments. These raise the costs of Chinese adventurism, allowing Beijing to focus its resources on internal development and peaceful external engagement rather than on threatening or using its growing national power to revise Asia's order against the wishes of lesser states.

In the second scenario, a U.S. retreat into isolationism (perhaps following withdrawal leading to a self-inflicted defeat in Afghanistan) or accelerated material decline (perhaps induced by failure to reverse America's alarming levels of national debt)—perhaps toxically combined with reduced U.S. defense expenditures and/or political leaders unwilling to rally the American public for a continued leadership role in world affairs—would induce the weakening of Washington's alliance commitments in East Asia and its willingness to remain the region's security guarantor. Such a regional order that was "ripe for rivalry" would resemble that forecast by American strategists after the Cold War, when an American withdrawal from the region and raw balancing behavior in the midst of dynamic power shifts seemed likely to make "Asia's future look like Europe's [conflict-prone] past."<sup>7</sup>

Such a balance-of-power order would feature self-help behavior by Asian states of the kind that has been mitigated to date by American defense commitments. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan might develop and deploy nuclear weapons as the only means of

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<sup>7</sup> Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/4), pp. 5-33.

securing their autonomy and defense against the Chinese military giant in their midst (and additionally, in South Korea's case, against a Japanese neighbor of whom Seoul historically has been equally wary). Chinese leaders might find themselves free to pursue their declared revisionist aims in the South China Sea, no longer constrained by America's Seventh Fleet and robust alliance network, while lesser Asian states whose territorial claims conflict with China's would find they had less ability to leverage a less-engaged America's support in their favor.

In the third scenario, Asia would in fact evolve in Europe's direction — not the Europe of great power balancing and war, but of today's European Union, in which de-militarized societies between which war is inconceivable enjoy the fruits of the democratic peace within a framework of shared economic governance and institutionalized political coordination. Such a pathway for regional order presumes that Asian regionalism develops in a pluralistic way that preserves the autonomy of lesser Asian states, rather than deriving from a non-consensual extension of China's sphere of influence. It also presumes a dovetailing of Asian regime types in a democratic direction. After all, it was only the political liberalization of previously fascist and militaristic European regimes following their defeat in war that made possible the institutional deepening that has defined the post-World War II European project.

Another necessary, and often unstated, condition for the development of Europe's Kantian order of perpetual peace has been the American security umbrella. It has created a security cocoon within which European governments could dedicate their national resources to domestic welfare rather than military defense and maneuvering against potential adversaries. Ironically, then, the development of a pluralistic and peace-loving East Asian community



along the lines of the European Union may require the continued role of the United States as the region's security guarantor, a role that would naturally be more amenable to Washington's leading regional competitor – China – should that country pursue the political liberalization that would make an Asian democratic peace both possible and self-reinforcing.

In the fourth scenario, an East Asia community of economic interdependence and pan-regional cooperation would develop not along lines of democratic pluralism but as an extension of an increasingly dominant China's economic and political influence. Rather than the horizontal sovereignty between states that developed in post-Westphalian Europe through the institution of the balance of power, such a regional order would feature hierarchical relations of suzerainty and submission of the kind that characterized pre-modern East Asia when China's "Middle Kingdom" was strong and cohesive, and lesser neighboring states paid ritualized forms of tribute to it. A Sinocentric East Asia could emerge out of this historical past; it could also emerge through what neorealist international relations scholars understand to be the imperative of great powers to enjoy regional hegemony.<sup>8</sup> The Monroe Doctrine and its Roosevelt Corollary epitomized this process in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with respect to the United States and Latin America.

A Chinese sphere of influence encompassing East and Southeast Asia presumes that states like Japan and South Korea would bandwagon with, rather than balance against, Chinese power. This could follow from either a lack of external alliance options or out of a reemergent Asian identity; in a scenario in which

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<sup>8</sup> John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

they were economically and geopolitically “Finlandized,” they might have no choice.<sup>9</sup> An Asian system in which China sat at the summit of a hierarchical regional order presumes that Asian institution-building develops along closed lines of Asian exclusivity, rather than being characterized by the open, trans-Pacific regionalism that has been the dominant impulse behind Asian community-building since the early 1990s.

### **KOREA’S PREFERRED PATHWAYS TO REGIONAL ORDER AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE**

Where do South Korea’s interests lie in light of each of these possible pathways for East Asian regional order? It seems clear that Pathways 1 and 3—the current Lockean order sustained by American preponderance and provision of the public goods that underlie East Asia’s peace and prosperity, and the development of a Kantian security community grounded in the democratic peace—are most favorable to the security and welfare of the Korean people. Pathway 2, that of zero-sum balancing and self-help behavior among Asian states subject to predation by larger neighbors, recalls the historical dilemmas of Korean leaders deriving from their inability to independently deter great powers like Japan, Russia, and China from exerting undue influence, if not outright territorial control, on the peninsula. Pathway 4, that of a Sinocentric regional sphere from which the United States is excluded and lesser states

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<sup>9</sup>- Gary Schmitt, ed., *The Rise of China: Essays on the Future Competition* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009).

lose their ability to maneuver freely as their autonomy erodes in the face of overweening Chinese influence, is clearly not the kind of regional order to which South Korean leaders, determined above all to main the integrity and independence of their country, aspire. That most South Koreans view China as a potential security threat reinforces the claim that they do not want their country to be subject to its tutelage in domestic politics or external affairs.

The strengthening of the U.S.-ROK alliance is vital to shaping an Asian future that develops along the lines of Pathways 1 and 3, and that hedges against a regional evolution along the lines of Pathways 2 and 4. With respect to Pathway 1, the alliance enables the United States to project its power and influence in East Asia, providing security to South Korea and its other allies, deterring military conflict, reinforcing a liberal economic order conducive to free flows of trade and investment, and enabling the development of an open form of Asian regionalism that preserves pluralism among regional states by enmeshing great powers further afield like the United States and India.<sup>10</sup> For these same reasons, the alliance and the externalities it provides mitigate against the development of a raw balance-of power-order of the kind described by Pathway 2, preventing South Korea from subjecting itself to the Hobbesian impulses inherent in a system reliant on zero-sum calculations of self-help.

By structuring an Asian security system that favors democratic forms of social organization and cooperation among liberal states to provide the public goods that undergird the regional order, the U.S.

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<sup>10</sup>— On enmeshment, see Evelyn Goh, “Southeast Asia: Strategic Diversification in the Asian Century,” in Ashley Tellis, Mercy Kuo and Andrew Marble, eds., *Strategic Asia 2008-9: Challenges and Choices* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2008).

alliance system, and the U.S.-ROK alliance within it, the institutional partnership between Washington and Seoul helps Asian states move towards regional community-building based on consensual norms of economic liberalism, good governance, military and diplomatic transparency, and the common security they provide. At the same time, South Korea's alliance with America hedges against the development of a non-consensual order by shaping a regional balance of power and influence that constrains the possibilities for Chinese hegemony and shores up the independence of lesser states within a pluralistic regional order.

Therefore, South Korea's alliance with the United States should remain its preferred external alignment because it reinforces Seoul's position within its preferred pathways to regional order and serves as a useful hedge against the development of alternative regional systems detrimental to South Korea's autonomy and security. In this reading, the U.S.-ROK alliance is not a Cold War legacy whose utility ended with that conflict. Nor is it merely a hedge against North Korean aggression until the Pyongyang regime mellows in a way that diminishes the danger it poses to the South and/or puts the peninsula on a track towards peaceful reunification. Rather, the U.S.-South Korea alliance is a vital tool for both Seoul and Washington to shape Asia's developing regional order and their respective roles within it.

## **STRENGTHENING THE U.S.-KOREA ALLIANCE FOR THE 21st ALLIANCE**

In light of this wider frame — the imperative of strengthening the partnership between Washington and Seoul to shape Asia's

evolving order and Korea's leadership at its core — what would an agenda for strengthening the U.S.-South Korean alliance over the coming decade look like? Both countries have conducted the Strategic Cooperation for Alliance Partnership talks in an effort to define and operationalize a broader role for the alliance in regional and global affairs. Such a program could be built around the four pillars of enhanced military cooperation, regional security architecture, regional economic liberalization, and global partnership.

### *Enhanced military cooperation*

The U.S. troop presence in South Korea remains the living embodiment of the alliance and the U.S. commitment to the security of the Republic of Korea. The revolution in modern warfare that allows effective power projection from offshore air, sea, and space platforms should not overrule the common-sense judgment that there is no substitute for the permanent deployment of an integrated American military presence on the Korean peninsula. Contrary to some conventional wisdom, such a deployment may prove as valuable to the security of Korea and the interests of the United States in a post-unification environment as they do today in deterring North Korean aggression. Therefore, any roadmap for strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance should include bolstering political and public support for a continuing American troop presence on the peninsula, even as the U.S.-ROK command structure evolves. South Korea's planned assumption of full command authority over Korean forces in 2012 modernizes the alliance as an equal partnership; the challenge for military leaders in both countries will be ensuring that changing command-and-control authorities do not dilute the potency of what has been one

of the world's most effective combined military force.

As part of the ongoing force modernization and realignment, Washington and Seoul should cooperate more systematically to enhance South Korea's ability to project military power beyond the peninsula as a regional and global security provider. The ROK's decision to join the Proliferation Security Initiative creates a framework for Korean air and naval forces to police the commons in wider Asia and globally to help stem the illicit trade in nuclear weapons components. Like PSI, the increasing imperative of a joint Asian humanitarian-relief capability to manage the fallout from tsunamis, typhoons and other natural disasters provide frameworks for expanding joint exercises and operations between the navies of South Korea and other major Asia-Pacific powers to provide regional public goods that are in demand, and that create a functional basis for deeper cooperation in other fields.

With regard to land power, South Korea's military deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq set an important precedent for future contributions by the Korean armed forces to stabilization and security operations in the arc of instability encompassing the Middle East and South Asia. U.S.-ROK combined training and exercises could increasingly focus on enlarging the South Korean army's capacities for counterinsurgency and post-conflict stabilization with an eye on future challenges beyond the peninsula. This program to add a global-operations dimension to the interoperability between the American and South Korean armies on the peninsula would build on existing joint training and planning for stabilization operations following a potential collapse of the North Korean regime.

An additional area for expanded security cooperation is integrating South Korea into U.S.-Japan missile defense cooperation.

The integration of American and Japanese communications, command, control, and intelligence (C3I) capabilities to jointly monitor and defend against ballistic missile threats would be strengthened by including South Korea, creating a Northeast Asian security space hardened against blackmail or attack by unfriendly regimes using standoff technologies. Trilateral missile defense cooperation would deepen defenses against the alarming rate of missile deployment and proliferation in Northeast Asia – including laying the groundwork for the defense of an ultimately united peninsula. Such functional cooperation would have the important additional effect of building a mutual-security regime between Seoul and Tokyo, which for too long have been divided, in part by a U.S. alliance system that during the Cold War actually discouraged cooperation between the Japanese and Korean “spokes” of alliance relationships in Asia centered on the American “hub.” By operationalizing cooperation and building trust, trilateral missile defense cooperation could contribute to the construction of a minilateral security community in Northeast Asia, in which Japan, South Korea, and the United States actively assist each other’s defense and could gradually incorporate other friendly states into an expanding framework of shared security.

### ***Regional security architecture***

Both the United States and South Korea have a compelling interest in moving their security partnership beyond the bilateral realm. A natural next step is deepening trilateral defense cooperation with Japan – not simply on functional missile defense cooperation as argued above or vis-à-vis North Korea, as the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group has sought to do

since 1999, but with regard to the broader security environment in East Asia and the Pacific. One useful model is the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, an important vehicle for defense coordination and planning among the United States, Japan, and Australia which has had the additional benefit of fostering enhanced bilateral security cooperation between Tokyo and Canberra, who signed a separate defense pact in 2007. The ascent to power in Japan of a less nationalist Democratic Party leadership committed to greater Asian regional cooperation makes this a propitious moment to expand the scope and ambition of the U.S.-Japan-South Korea triangle.

It also makes possible the creation of other multilateral groupings that would not replace the U.S. alliance system but, if appropriately structured along a trans-Pacific axis, would complement it. These include an institutionalized forum bringing together the five parties that have cooperated in negotiations with North Korea through the Six-Party Process. An institutionalized Asian concert bringing together the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia could be a useful forum both for near-term coordination on North Korean denuclearization, longer-term planning for contingencies surrounding reunification of the peninsula, and agreeing on rules of regional conduct beyond the peninsula along the lines of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Concert of Europe.

Another new multilateral mechanism could be functional groupings of principal Indian and Pacific Ocean powers, including the five above plus India, Australia, and Indonesia, (1) to develop a joint anti-piracy and disaster relief naval force, and (2) to build regional peacekeeping capacity for joint peacekeeping operations under UN-mandated operations in Africa and the Middle East. South Korea, with its capable armed forces, could play an important



role in both the peacekeeping and the anti-piracy forums, inculcating habits of cooperation among Indo-Pacific powers that could spill over into other functional realms.

### ***Bilateral and regional trade liberalization***

Expanding U.S.-ROK economic ties is important to provide ballast to a relationship heavily tilted toward security – and because in today’s Asia, economic agreements are a strategic tool of statecraft. The pure economic logic of bilateral trade liberalization is also undeniable: South Korea is already America’s seventh-largest trading partner, and a free trade agreement is forecast to increase trade between them by as much as 20 percent. The United States Congress should expeditiously pass the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), in what would be the most consequential U.S. trade initiative since NAFTA. Contrary to what appears to be the thinking of the Obama administration and the Democratic-led U.S. Congress, trade liberalization takes on even more urgency in the context of slow growth at home, particularly given the success of the dynamic South Korean economy in bouncing back from the global financial crisis to achieve striking rates of economic growth.<sup>11</sup> For South Korea, KORUS provides important economic and strategic diversification from an overdependence on the Chinese market, and by further binding the U.S. to East Asia economically contributes to an open regionalism conducive to Seoul’s broader interests.

Another possibility the United States and South Korea could consider, following the successful implementation of KORUS, would be the establishment of an APEC-wide free trade area, which

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<sup>11</sup>– Stephen Smith, “Economic Cheer Pushes Seoul Higher,” *Financial Times*, October 27, 2009.

extra-regional powers like the European Union that have signed free trade agreements with South Korea and other leading Asian economies would be free to join. Less ambitiously, Washington and Seoul could jointly pursue sectoral liberalization in specific sectors like energy and green technologies. U.S.-South Korea economic ties would also be strengthened and diversified if Seoul, once KORUS is enacted, were to accede to the TransPacific Partnership (TransPac), launched at the 2008 APEC meeting. TransPac would link countries with which Washington enjoys bilateral free trade agreements, multilateralizing the dividends of trade liberalization and keeping the United States active in Pacific economic diplomacy as regional forums excluding the United States proliferate.

### ***Taking the Korean-American partnership global***

A fourth dimension of an agenda for a more vibrant and comprehensive U.S.-ROK partnership is more systematic cooperation on global issues. A ratified KORUS agreement would strengthen Washington's hand in pushing for completion of the Doha Round of global trade liberalization. Korea's ascension to the ranks of the G-20, with strong U.S. support, vests a new level of leadership and responsibility in Seoul for constructive cooperation on international financial regulation and tackling global climate change, to which South Korea has already contributed in the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. Washington and Seoul would be well advised to enhance their bilateral planning and caucus with like-minded states before G-20 meetings, a prospect that will of necessity deepen U.S.-Korea cooperation in a subset of issues not traditionally related to alliance management.

One such area has been Korean-American cooperation to

promote democracy and human rights. The two countries have worked closely to lead the Community of Democracies: South Korea hosted its second ministerial meeting in Seoul in 2002. America and the ROK were founding members of the Partnership for Democratic Governance, a global initiative to strengthen the institutional foundations of free societies.<sup>12</sup> In 2007-8, the ROK and the United States cooperated closely to launch the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP), a grouping uniting them with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, India, Indonesia, and East Timor to promote free elections and good governance in Asia. South Korea hosted the first APDP Senior Officials' Meeting in 2008, and its government has been outspoken about strengthening good governance and human dignity as sources of international stability and security.<sup>13</sup> By supporting South Korea's constructive leadership as an Asian democracy and economic success story, America can help position the ROK to be a key player and thought leader for Asia in strengthening democratic security and tackling threats to the global commons that defy regional boundaries.

## CONCLUSION

President Lee Myung-Bak is eager for a closer strategic and economic relationship with the United States. The shared challenge is to strengthen the economic foundations of U.S.-South Korean

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<sup>12</sup>- See "Partnership for Democratic Governance," at <<http://www.oecd.org/pdg>>.

<sup>13</sup>- See for instance, Foreign Minister, Myung-hwan Yu, "Human Rights and Democracy," *Korea Times*, December 24, 2008.

relations; cooperate more closely in regional diplomacy, including in the realm of promoting good governance and human rights; and shift the military alliance from its focus on defending against North Korean aggression – which remains a necessary but not sufficient ambition – to conducting regional and global operations. An enhanced U.S.-ROK alliance would advance U.S. interests across Asia by ensuring that the United States remains integrated in the pivotal region where four great Pacific powers – South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia – meet.

Looking ahead, Asia's political transformation – with the expansion of democracy from Japan and India to South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, and beyond – may prove as important as Asia's economic transformation in determining the region's strategic future. More people live under democratic rule in Asia today than in any other region. China remains the great exception, but with deft diplomacy and wise leadership, American leadership in Asia will help sustain a pluralistic regional order in which norms of good governance can flourish; over time, this trend is likely to shape China's own internal debate on political reform. In this regard, South Korea – prosperous, democratic, at peace with its neighbors, and enjoying close ties to the United States and other major powers – may represent a model not only for North Korea but for China to follow as the Asia-Pacific era dawns.

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*Strengthening of the ROK-U.S. Alliance  
for the 21st Century*

*Sung-Han Kim*

*11*

## **FOUR SCENARIOS**

The 21st century began with strains in Korea-U.S. relations, particularly over how to deal with North Korea and the nuclear issue. There was a rise in manifestation of anti-American sentiments in Korea, which disappointed many Americans who thought Koreans were ‘ungrateful’ for the U.S. support during the Korean War, and its overall democratic and economic development. In due course, however, the relationship improved gradually. South Korea sent troops to Iraq, which became the third largest contingent after the U.S. and the U.K. The two governments agreed on the relocation of the U.S. troops in Korea and South Korea accepted the principle of strategic flexibility of the U.S. troops in Korea. They also agreed on the transfer of the war-time operational control (OPCON) of the Korean armed forces by the year 2012. Once the United States agreed to the six-party agreement in the spring of 2007, the U.S. and South Korea even agreed on how to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue. The two countries also successfully negotiated, concluded and signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), pending only the approval of the U.S. Congress and the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

Against this backdrop, the two allies began to think of envisioning the alliance. Discussions on the future of the ROK-U.S. alliance fall under four different views. The first scenario is that the current ROK-U.S. security alliance would be left intact for the primary purpose of continuing to serve as a deterrent against North Korea. This is because an alternative security arrangement may not necessarily be consistent with the strategic interests of the countries in the region. For example, should the United States become engaged in a Taiwanese security crisis, Korea may find itself trapped



in a situation of being obligated to extend assistance to the United States. As such, rather than expanding the ROK-U.S. alliance into a regional security arrangement, Seoul may have to focus on selectively strengthening its security relations with Washington. While the U.S. forces would remain committed to the defense of Korea before the peninsula is unified, Korea would gradually come to play a more central role in the operation of the current Combined Forces Command (CFC). When external threats are no longer a concern, the U.S. troop levels in Korea should be sharply reduced with only a symbolic presence remaining thereafter.<sup>1</sup>

The second scenario involves the development of a strategic partnership between Seoul and Washington. Under this scenario, the United States would withdraw most of its troops from Korea, along with the combined defense system being scrapped and the United States conducting only occasional military maneuvers with Korea.<sup>2</sup> Since the United States would thus offer a nuclear deterrent and the deployment of rapid-reaction forces in response to an emergency, Korea would face the prospect of having to defend itself primarily on its own. Once the threat from the North is eliminated, the ROK-U.S. security alliance would automatically lose its *raison d'être*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As to the potential roles of the USFK if and when North Korea collapses, see William O. Odom, "The U.S. Military in a Unified Korea," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp.7-28.

<sup>2</sup> Many are warning against a possible arms race including nuclear arms when the U.S. troops leave the region: Larry M. Wortzel, "Planning for the Future: The Role of U.S. Forces in Northeast Asian Security," *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder* (July 26, 2000). Concerning the dynamic structure of the U.S.-China-Japan relationship, see Neil E. Silver, "The United States, Japan, and China," *A Council on Foreign Relations Paper* (New York: CFR, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Harrison argues that the future changes to the U.S. force structures should be determined by what he views as the ultimate peace formula on the peninsula amenable to the North. This includes phasing out the United Nations Command (UNC) and Military Armistice Commission (MAC), and replacing

The third scenario involves the formation of a comprehensive security alliance. As long as North Korea continues to pose a tangible threat, Korea should push ahead with the “Koreanization” of its defense. However, once this threat has dissipated, Korea should seek to transform the alliance into a comprehensive security arrangement designed to serve as a stabilizing force in Northeast Asia. Rather than solely being focused on security threats, this alliance system would enable the two countries to share the values of democracy and a market economy, while also striving to maintain peace and stability in the region. Moreover, this security alliance would also allow Korea and the United States to pursue horizontal rather than vertical relations, thus contributing to the increased flexibility and autonomy of Korea’s national security initiatives. In this manner, the two allies would be able to create an upgraded alliance that would facilitate enhanced inter-operability as compared to the existing security arrangement. Rather than being narrowly focused on dealing with traditional military threats, such a comprehensive ROK-U.S. security arrangement would address 21st century-type security matters, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental destruction, illegal migration, and piracy. Under such a scenario, Korea would gradually regain operational control over Korean forces from the United States in times of military contingency. And in this case, Korea and the United States would be able to operate a parallel command system.

Under the fourth scenario, a multilateral security system for Northeast Asia would be pursued. Since bilateral military alliances have increasingly come to be regarded as outdated in this post-Cold

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these with a U.S.-DPRK-ROK Mutual Security Commission. In this plan, USFK would become “blue hats” monitoring peace between the two Koreas: Selig Harrison, “Time to Leave Korea?” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2001).

War era, the six countries — South and North Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia — need to consider joining hands to form a “Northeast Asian Multilateral Security Dialogue” (or Northeast Asian Peace Community), which would be modeled after the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In this regard, the current Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis should be transformed into a regular multilateral security dialogue channel. Some observers contend that Korea could contribute more to bringing about a multilateral security format in Northeast Asia by abandoning the ROK-U.S. security alliance. However, others recommend that Korea promote a multilateral security environment, while maintaining the Seoul-Washington alliance as the cornerstone of such an initiative. This latter group has noted that despite its limited national strength, the United Kingdom is nevertheless able to function as a facilitator of European issues, especially those involving German-French relations, because of its special relationship with the United States.<sup>4</sup>

## OPTING FOR A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

The alliance in the 21st century may be broader and deeper in ways other than security where it may become less operationally important. It would be based on three legs:

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<sup>4</sup> Sung-han Kim, “Envisioning the ROK-U.S. Alliance: A Korean Perspective,” Presented at SAIS-IRI Conference on *U.S.-Korea Alliance and the Future of Northeast Asia*, Washington D.C., December 6-7, 2004.

### ***New Security Agenda***

The core of the alliance would be a treaty commitment and a web of joint military activities, such as exercises and joint planning. The presence of some U.S. forces would represent the most prudent course of action. The focus of the new security tie would be on deterring attack if necessary, but also on preventing the emergence of dangerous conflict situations and power projection by others along the East Asia littoral. Military ties would be supplemented by a broader security agenda. In keeping with Seoul's interest in becoming a more prominent actor in the region, it should play a more active role in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, piracy and drug smuggling operations and combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

### ***Common Values***

The second leg of the alliance, a mutual commitment to democratic values is critical in sustaining the close relationship. The April 2008 summit statement by Presidents Lee Myung-bak and George W. Bush highlighted this mutual commitment. In this context, both countries should remain concerned about human rights in North Korea.

### ***Deepening Economic Ties***

The third leg would be deepening economic ties and working together in developing regional cooperation. Not only have both countries benefited from these ties, but trans-Pacific economic interdependence has been the backbone of East Asian prosperity for

the last few decades and will constitute the most important factor determining the region's economic order in this century. Korea can help to link developed and developing countries.

Against this backdrop, Presidents Lee Myung-bak and George W. Bush announced their vision of a "strategic alliance" at Camp David on April 18, 2008. Key elements included:

- Proceeding with the existing agreements for transfer of wartime OPCON and elevating the ROK's FMS (foreign military sales) status;
- Approval of KORUS FTA within the year;
- Calling on North Korea to produce a full and complete declaration of its nuclear weapons and programs;
- Coordination of inter-Korean relations and denuclearization;
- Cooperation on achieving a post-2012/post-Kyoto international framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and,
- Cooperation in reforming the UN and strengthening multilateral organizations such as APEC, including advancement of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific.

The strategic alliance declared by the two leaders means the alliance will go beyond the Korean Peninsula and expand its scope of cooperation to the Asia Pacific region and the world. With the military cooperation at the center (particularly on the Korean Peninsula), the countries should closely cooperate and create exchanges in politics, diplomacy, economies, and culture. However, the strategic alliance does not mean a "globalization" of the ROK-U.S. military alliance since South Korea, unlike the United States, is yet to have the capability to commit itself to global issues militarily.

The alliance between South Korea and the U.S. can be con-

sidered the most successful of those formed in the Cold War era. Since the Cold War ended, the alliance has developed into a strong security alliance based on liberal democracy. Fifty years ago, there was no understanding whatsoever between the two, except regarding their shared enemy North Korea, but since then, the two countries have established strong political, economic, social and cultural ties. Faced with constant threats from North Korea (with the nuclear threat being the most recent reminder) a solid alliance has supported the two countries to continue in deepening their economic and social interdependence.

Then at the June 16 summit meeting, Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Barak Obama agreed that the geo-strategic range of the ROK-U.S. alliance should not be limited to the Korean peninsula. They also agreed that, in addition to deterring the 19<sup>th</sup> century-style hegemonic struggle between China and Japan, the alliance should be a strategic deterrent against new threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: terrorism, proliferation of WMDs, drugs, illegal immigration and piracy, among others.

At this summit meeting, both leaders signed on a vision statement entitled, 'the Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.' The most impressive and conspicuous sentence in the statement is that, "Through our alliance we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy." This signifies two things the ROK-U.S. alliance: (1) an alliance of shared values; and, (2) an alliance for peace-building and Korean reunification.

An 'alliance of shared values' means that the two countries, as partners who share the values of democracy and a market economy,

cooperate in dealing with threats on human beings (human security threats), such as human rights violations, terrorism, drugs, and environmental/natural disasters. In particular, South Korea and the U.S. may strengthen human security cooperation with such democracies as Japan, Australia, New Zealand and India, while stamping out global human rights violations, including those in North Korea. Those two leaders also emphasized in the vision statement that they would work together to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people. It is particularly notable that these two allies made it clear that the alliance would contribute to peaceful reunification on the principles of freed democracy and a market economy, which means the Korean reunification will have to take place in South Korean terms with the help of the United States.

In addition, the summit meeting on June 16 between Presidents Lee and Obama marked the turning point where the two allies will work towards 'real peace,' and not 'declaratory peace' on the Korean Peninsula. There are two types of peace: (1) 'declaratory peace,' where one declares there is peace; and, (2) 'real peace,' where one proves the peace by action. The Lee administration will focus not on 'declaratory peace' that is, relying on a 'declaration of peace' or a 'declaration of the end of the war,' but on building 'real peace,' in which denuclearization would eliminate the threat of war and reduce conventional weapons. The Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, where a number of declarations did not guarantee peace, suggest the importance of real peace.

## **RATIONALIZING THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**

There are three reasons why the ROK-U.S. strategic alliance system is needed. First, it can work as an effective countermeasure against the struggle for regional hegemony between China and Japan as well as against new security threats. South Korea and the U.S. should cooperate even after the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue to deal with security threats in the 21st century, including terrorism, proliferation of WMDs, the humanitarian crisis, energy security and in minimizing the possibility of struggle for hegemony between China and Japan.

The second advantage would be for mediating the interests of major powers during the process of reunification. As was seen in the case of the unification of Germany where the U.S. played the go-between role for the U.K., France and Russia, the U.S. will be an important mediator between neighboring powers during the reunification process on the Korean peninsula.

Thirdly, the strategic alliance can work as protection against possible foreign interference after reunification. A unified Korea, which will need enormous resources to rebuild the northern region, will remain at a disadvantage to Japan and China for a long time – recalling the case of Germany, it could take more than 20 years. Thus, a unified Korea will desperately need protection – i.e., a Korean-U.S. strategic alliance – against unwelcome interference from its neighbors.

Against this backdrop, security cooperation between Seoul and Washington could comprise of three levels: global, regional and local – i.e., the Korean peninsula. On a global level, South Korea can help the U.S. fight terrorism, in disaster rescue operations and in human security.



On a regional level, or in Northeast Asia, the U.S. can safeguard the survival of South Korea by balancing the relationship between China and Japan, while South Korea acknowledges the U.S. leadership and its role as a regional stabilizer, in return. At the regional level, we are witnessing the growing influence of China on the Korean peninsula. As reflected in other countries' expectations of its role in the nuclear issue, China's role in the region continues to expand. However, there is no strategic discussion between South Korea and the United States on how to respond to or how to deal with the increasing influence of China. The ROK-U.S. strategic alliance can play its 'regional' role as an effective stabilizer against the potential struggle for regional hegemony between China and Japan. Without the alliance with South Korea, the United States might be tempted to contain China by strengthening its alliance with Japan. The United States may be able to play the role of a strategic stabilizer between China and Japan, however, when it is allied with South Korea which is a strategic rival neither to China nor to Japan.

On a local level, South Korea should lead in the issues of reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea, denuclearization and the creation of a peace regime. To this end, however, it must encourage the U.S. to have confidence that the ROK-U.S. alliance will continue. The framework alliance should be maintained as long as the threat from North Korea exists. Once the threat is gone, certainly the nature of the alliance can be readjusted. For the past several years, South Korea and the United States have focused upon the North Korean nuclear problem from a 'technical' perspective. They did not have a 'macro perspective' in which they may discuss how to deal with such issues as North Korean humanitarian situation, political contingencies, conventional military threats, etc. The uni-dimensional focus on the nuclear issue has led to

perception and policy gaps between Seoul and Washington, thereby hampering a comprehensive and strategic approach to the ‘North Korean question’ as a whole. While the nuclear issue was the basis for continued need of the alliance, i.e., proof that the ‘threat’ is real, they differed on understanding of the matter and the solution. While the U.S.-North Korea policy focused on nuclear non-proliferation, South Korea’s main concern was the possibility of a war on the peninsula if diplomatic efforts should fail. Policy priorities thus showed a clear difference. In this light, a strategic alliance is needed for Seoul and Washington to deal with the North Korean question in a comprehensive manner.

With this, we need to recognize the challenges while expanding the role and structure of the alliance. Expanded role of the ROK forces could provoke domestic political controversies. Expanded role of the USFK, which is based on the concept of “strategic flexibility,” could produce security concerns on the part of the ROK. Sophisticated approach and close consultation are thus needed between Seoul and Washington while expanding the role and scope of the alliance. Seoul and Washington should cooperate with each other to “manage” domestic misunderstandings and/or oppositions so that Korea’s expanded international contribution may be conducted on the basis of the national consensus. The future role of the USFK should develop into the direction that promotes peace on the Korean peninsula and mutual trust in Northeast Asia.

The ROK-U.S. cooperation should not be solely confined to security issues but expanded to other areas. We should try to disseminate an image that the ROK-U.S. alliance is being transformed into a comprehensive alliance, rather than a global military alliance. The U.S.-ROK cooperation in those issue areas

like G-20 and climate change is being well received by our two nations. The expanded role of the ROK-U.S. alliance should be based on strategic consideration of its impact on the power relationship of Northeast Asia. A Coordinated approach to the Chinese position (or China factor) is thus vital.

## DEALING WITH THE NORTH KOREAN QUESTION STRATEGICALLY

### *Agreeing on North Korea's Course of Change and Efforts toward Comprehensive Arms Control*

While the U.S. policies toward North Korea are centered on maintaining peace and stability, it is necessary for South Korea and the U.S. to cooperate to draw out North Korea's change. They need to reach an agreement on what kind of "change" the two nations want from North Korea and discuss ways to lead North Korea to change in that direction.

South Korea and the United States should not formulate policies on the optimistic premise that North Korea will give up its nuclear programs. Of course, the denuclearization of North Korea is a goal that we all strive for, but it is not very easy to attain that goal. The two countries need to employ policies of their own and focus on the complete denuclearization of North Korea. A gradual approach is inevitable in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Therefore, efforts should be made towards taking gradual steps. Yet, both South Korea and the U.S. need to take precautions so as not to make haste in negotiating with North Korea. If North Korea were to receive financial support, normalized diplomatic ties, and a peace

regime before its nuclear disarmament, this process would be a huge misstep for South Korea and the United States, because it would be tantamount to recognizing North Korea as a nuclear power.

North Korea's change should take place in the right direction. Otherwise, it may lead to a "regime collapse." For North Korea's Kim Jong-il, who is concerned about the "collapse of power," a change in the right direction may not even be on a wish list. In this light, Korea, the United States, and Japan should reach a consensus on what kind of support they would pledge to entice North Korea to change in the right direction (Plan A). Should we seek after a fundamental change in North Korea, or would it be enough to achieve the policy goals of each country case by case, without changing the essence of North Korea? In that regard, the three countries should give concrete shape to their North Korea policies. Of course, Plan B should be drawn up also, in case Plan A fails to change North Korea. In that sense, the ROK-U.S. "CONPLAN 5029" should be upgraded to "OPLAN 5029."

The ultimate goal in addressing the North Korean nuclear issue is to make the Korean Peninsula a WMD-free zone. The goal is, aside from North Korea's nuclear disarmament, a "comprehensive arms control," such as the removal of biological and chemical weapons and conventional threats. Even more of an ultimate goal is the creation of a peace order in Northeast Asian through the normalization of a triangular relationship among South Korea, North Korea and the United States. The following principles should be adhered to in the course of settling the North Korean nuclear issue: first, the parties concerned should stop North Korea's nuclear activities and prevent a war on the Korean peninsula; second, the North Korean nuclear issue is not a bilateral issue between North Korea and the United States, but an inter-Korean issue; third,

Seoul-Washington-Tokyo cooperation should serve as a foundation for attracting other countries' cooperation; fourth, the parties concerned should find a solution through a balanced use of carrots and sticks; and, fifth, the parties concerned should make due preparations in advance, in case North Korea rejects dialogue and chooses to take the path of nuclear armament. The North Korean nuclear issue is viewed as an international issue that goes beyond the Korean Peninsula, and Korea should head in a direction that values "international universalism," which is based on human rights protection, denuclearization, and counter-proliferation, rather than "Korean exceptionalism," which stresses the uniqueness of inter-Korean relations.

### *Overhauling the Chains of Command*

In discussing the details of the ROK-U.S. strategic alliance, it is necessary to coordinate chains of command between the two countries under various circumstances. When the two countries signed a strategic change plan in June 2007, Korea and the United States planned to build a military cooperation system, establish new operational plans, and expand and realign the Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff's (JCS) operational system in order to attain "initial operation capabilities (IOC)." In addition, Seoul and Washington planned to establish an Alliance Military Cooperation Center (AMCC) under the Military Committee (MC), a council between the two countries' JCS. An AMCC was due to replace the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC). There appear to be pros and cons about the establishment of an AMCC, but clearly, the two countries must create a cooperative mechanism that is no less than the CFC, so that a joint defense system led by Korea and supported by the United

States can function.

Based on such a cooperative arrangement, it is necessary to establish chains of command and operational plans hypothesizing various circumstances, including an all-out war on the Korean peninsula, sudden change in North Korea, and a regional or international crisis. In order to remain true to the intent of the ROK-U.S. joint defense system and achieve substantial effects of joint defense, a single leader should be appointed to the AMCC under a bilateral agreement in case an all-out war breaks out on the peninsula. In the case of a sudden change in North Korea or a regional or international crisis, the AMCC can be run by “joint leadership.” For example, in case of contingency requiring military operations to the north of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), Korea could play a leading role while the United States takes the responsibility of controlling WMD-related equipment. As in this scenario, the AMCC leaders could share roles, with mutual support from both parties.

In case a “regional contingency” breaks out in the Asia-Pacific region and it has to respond to the crisis at a bilateral level with the United States, South Korea may face an enormous burden, because it will have to consider the China factor. In the days of the Roh Moo-hyun government, the “strategic flexibility” issue created tensions between Seoul and Washington, and the main reason behind it was the China variable. Therefore, if a mechanism to respond to regional situations can be linked to an authoritative international organization like the UN (for example, the UN Command’s evolving role). International organizations could relieve South Korea’s emotional burden and easily solve the problem of establishing a chain of command between South Korea and the United States.

As for discussing ways to establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula through inter-Korean dialogues or Four-Party talks, there will be a heated debate over the disestablishment of the UN Command (UNC). It would be enormously troublesome to deal with the issue of the UNC's status change without taking precautionary measures. The UNC performs and supervises armistice affairs through Military Armistice Commission activities. The UNC is also in charge of leading and controlling the UN member nations' participation in case of an emergency. At the same time, it also works to maintain the rights to use the UN (the U.S. military) bases in Japan through the Rear Area Operations Command in Japan. In dealing with issues on the UNC's changing status, Seoul and Washington should first hold close strategic consultations and come up with solid alternatives for building a deterrent on the Korean peninsula. In addition, if necessary, they may consider transforming the UNC from the current armistice management organ to a multinational organ that works toward regional peace and stability.

## **MAKING THE ALLIANCE COMPATIBLE WITH NEAPSM**

In Northeast Asia, bilateral security arrangements will remain the backbone of Northeast Asian security for a considerable period of time. This means a strategic thinking based on realism is still necessary in order to foster the basis for multilateral security cooperation. Despite the strategic uncertainty and prevailing bilateralism, Northeast Asia needs to search for a multilateral arrangement like the Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism (NEAPSM). In this light, SPT needs to be kept alive, since the existing norms and

procedures within the SPT will be used to deal with new problems. This means the countries need to rely on historical institutionalism. The NEAPSM should take the following points into consideration:<sup>5</sup>

First, the NEAPSM should be seen as a supplement, rather than as a substitute for the system of bilateralism in the region, for a considerable period of time. Bilateralism and multilateralism, even trilateralism, are not mutually exclusive concepts. Second, the U.S. attention toward Asia should be “restored” either by expanding the security role of the APEC or by its participation in the East Asia Summit (EAS). For the past several years, the United States has been preoccupied with the Middle East. Asia Pacific regionalism, not East Asian regionalism, would not be possible without the active attention and commitment of the U.S.. Among the 27 EU member states, 21 states are NATO members, which means the United States should actively pursue Asia Pacific regionalism, while going beyond its traditional “hub-and-spoke” approach to expand its alliance network in Asia. Third, China should create an image of championing of East Asian regionalism plus(+), not minus(-); while Japan should be reminded of former Prime Minister Keiozo Obuchi’s “human security diplomacy.” In this context, China could propose that the U.S. join the EAS. In the meantime, Japan and South Korea should set a role model for human security cooperation. Fourth, Northeast Asia should reinforce the forging of a credible sub-regional CSBM mechanism. Examples include greater transparency in force modernization and enhanced coordination regarding non-traditional security threat.

Finally, the NEAPSM should be pursued in a manner consistent with and conducive to the progress on the North Korean

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<sup>5</sup>- Sung-han Kim, “Searching for a Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2008), pp. 127-156.



nuclear problem. A charter of the NEAPSM emphasizing multilateral security cooperation and non-aggression could be used by North Korea to legitimize its nuclear power status. As long as inter-Korean relations remain unstable, real peace and stability in the region will be remote. Tangible progress in inter-Korean relations should be the precondition to guaranteeing the stability of Northeast Asia. For South and North Korea, participation in such a multilateral security mechanism could contribute to the establishment of a solid peace regime on the Korean peninsula.

There were significant differences between the security environments in Asia and Europe. Northeast Asia was faced with a dual challenge, stemming from existing traditional security threats as well as new ones. Although it might be premature to replicate the OSCE process and the experience directly in Northeast Asia, the OSCE experience provided a useful lesson for addressing the region's dual challenges. In particular, the OSCE's experience with the CSBM regime could serve as an important reference, *mutatis mutandis*, for building upon multilateral dialogue and mutual trust, bearing in mind the unique situation in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asia needs to make extra efforts to enhance international cooperation on addressing new security threats, including terrorism, human trafficking and natural disasters. In that regard, the role of the OSCE missions and other field activities in managing conflict could serve as a valuable reference for the region.

A sense of urgency and continued negotiations and dialogue are needed in order to bring about a complete resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through peaceful and diplomatic means. Some expectations and hopes have been expressed that, once the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons is peacefully resolved, the SPT will evolve into a multilateral security forum to

address other common security challenges that Northeast Asia is facing and will be facing in the future. Both traditional existing bilateral security arrangements and multilateral security dialogue efforts are highly important in that the United States still plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The need for enhanced cooperation between the OSCE and the ARF should also be emphasized. To achieve that goal, it can be suggested that a conference of the OSCE and the ARF be held and that in that context some Track II efforts also be made to hold a Euro Atlantic and Northeast Asia meeting to address common issues and common interests. Additionally, the idea of pursuing sub-regional dialogue on the occasion of a region-wide meeting such as the ARF can be suggested. But, all of these ideas and efforts should be implemented with the sense of realism. Otherwise, they could evaporate in the air overnight.

## FURTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Maximizing the 'Strategic Assets'*

To keep the alliance sound, there should be a structure that enables the exchange of strategic assets because one-sided security support is not desirable in the long run. For example, for the U.S. to advance into the South Pacific region, cooperation with Australia, which knows the region best, is indispensable. Thus, Australia has a 'strategic asset' in this respect. Moreover, it has more experience in sending its troops overseas than other U.S. allies due to its participation in peace-keeping missions, and it has long worked with the U.S. on intelligence matters. As far as Japan's strategic asset,

it is a maritime power in the region and can work to deter the expansion of China.

Some Koreans think that the U.S. cannot abandon South Korea, even if the country is full of anti-American sentiment. But this is not the right attitude to make good use of the U.S. alliance, which is an important asset for maximizing Korean national interests. To enhance the alliance as a durable security mechanism, the two should have a system by which they can exchange strategic assets. In this context, South Korea should make an effort to maximize its strategic assets, including, for example, its geopolitical location between continental and maritime powers, its status as a U.S. ally that has achieved a democratic system and economic development, its expertise on North Korea, its discriminating understanding of China compared to Japan, and military compatibility.

### *Adjustment of the Strategic Gap*

If the relationship between the U.S. and China shifts from cooperation to rivalry, South Korea will find itself in a difficult situation, because it cannot simply ignore the Chinese influence on the peninsula. Thus, the South should help the U.S. to be the strategic *mediator* between China and Japan instead of a deterrent, while keeping the alliance with the U.S. as its strategic axis. Also, it should promote this strategy for meeting the needs of countries in the region. The basis for such adjustment of the strategic gap in confidence between South Korea and the U.S. is that South Korea be a dependable ally to the U.S., and not an ambiguous ‘middleman.’

At the regional level, the current U.S. strategy asks South Korea to choose between the East Asian Regionalism preferred by China and Asia-Pacific Regionalism promoted by the U.S. For South

Korea, Asia-Pacific Regionalism which includes Pacific nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, seems to be a better choice to satisfy both China and the U.S. than the East Asian Regionalism that includes ASEAN Plus Three Countries. Still, it should not damage cooperation with China, and should lead the effort in regional cooperation.

### ***Establishment of a Position on North Korean Human Rights***

Again, it should be noted that the moral basis of the ROK-U.S. alliance is liberal democracy, whose values cannot be compromised under any circumstances. In this respect, both governments need to promote human rights around the world as well as in North Korea.<sup>6</sup> The North Korean human rights issue, in particular, should be approached in terms of universal values. As time goes by, it will be more difficult to ask the U.S. to refrain from promoting the North Korea human rights issue for the settlement of the nuclear weapons problem. Thus, the South Korean government should be prepared for the situation, with policy based on universal values.

If the South Korean government approaches its relationship with the North based on human security, it can deal with comprehensive issues from economic cooperation and humanitarian support to conventional arms control and non-proliferation of WMDs.<sup>7</sup> Still, it should seek incremental improvements by starting

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<sup>6</sup> A Joint Report by the Seoul Forum for International Affairs, Center for Strategic and International Studies, & Georgetown University, *Strengthening the U.S.-ROK Alliance: A Blueprint for the 21st Century* (2003).

<sup>7</sup> For information on the regional cooperation plan for improving human security, see Sung-han Kim, "Human Security and Regional Cooperation: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century" in William Tow *et. al.*, *Asia's Emerging Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2000), pp. 289-301.

with “softer” issues such as transparency in food distribution — then moving to rather sensitive ones — i.e. protection of defectors and improving human rights.

### ***Keeping a Strategic Deal Alive: KORUS FTA***

With the growing importance of political economy in international relations, the prominent position of market economies in Northeast Asia harbors political, strategic and economic implications. In this context, trans-Pacific economic interdependence has been the backbone of prosperity for the last few decades and will constitute the single most important factor determining the region’s economic order in this century. This interdependence is a two-way street, benefiting both Asia, including South Korea and the United States. In this context, Seoul and Washington need to deepen bilateral economic ties and work together on regional economic cooperation. South Korea can play an important role throughout the region. For example, in view of the enormous differences in the level of economic development, it can act as a bridge between developed and developing countries.

In this vein, the ROK-U.S. FTA should be understood as a part of the strategic alliance. President Obama should recognize the fact that the United States has acquired invisible strategic benefits from the ROK-U.S. FTA since the United States can utilize its FTA with South Korea to encourage a regional FTA and to discourage East Asian regionalism which excludes the United States.

### ***Deepening Bilateral Relations with the Four Powers***

It is most probable that the Northeast Asian regional order will be maintained by the U.S. leadership based on American economic and military power for quite a long time. South Koreans usually refer to the Korean triangle as South Korea's position: wedged between China and Japan. Just as Poland suffered because of its geopolitical placement between Germany and Russia, South Korea has faced the ambitions and influences of China as well as Japan for centuries. For this reason, the 'triangle' of South Korea-Japan-China threatens the South. Also, it is difficult for Korea to be aloof from the competition between China and Japan. Moreover, it is not desirable to take sides. As the Northeast Asian region lacks such multilateral security cooperation mechanism in Europe, the triangle of South Korea-China-U.S. can be a good alternative and opportunity for survival. Under this structure, South Korea can be detached from the power struggle between China and Japan. Moreover, the U.S. involvement in the region creates diplomatic space for South Korea between China and Japan.<sup>8</sup>

Whether the Korean peninsula is united or remains divided, the power struggle between China and the U.S. is a big challenge for Korea, and requires close cooperation with the U.S. now, more than ever. The U.S. and China policies toward the Korean peninsula will be affected by the changes in the situation of the peninsula, the relationship among major powers, and the nature of international situation, which could revive the same power struggle of the past at any time. Still, the most important factor is the will of the South Korean people to take such issues as peace building and reunification

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<sup>8</sup> Sung-joo Han, "The Birth of the Triangular Relationship: The U.S., China and the Korean Peninsula," *Sasang Quarterly* (Fall 1999), p. 68.

in their own hands.

South Korea should keep its alliance with the U.S. based on the principle that it should not be an enemy with any of its neighbors, and in that light, should expand strategic dialogues and exchanges with China, Japan and Russia. This means the consolidation of a partnership with Japan and the establishment of strategic relationships with China and Russia. Above all, the relationship with China requires special attention as the South needs China's cooperation on some key issues, such as North Korea's nuclear and missile development.

### *Utilizing 'Minilateralism'*

If a small-scale, three-way multilateralism, or "minilateralism" can be activated even before the multilateral cooperation among the members of the Six-Party Talks (2+4) is established, it can act as a catalyst for security cooperation in the region. Relations between the U.S. and China and between Japan and China can be stabilized by opening up channels for (official or unofficial) three-way talks between South Korea, Japan and the U.S. (or, between South Korea, Japan and China). One way is to create a "dialogue web" between the four powers based on foreign ministers' meeting regarding non-political issues of the three countries and expand it gradually to the summit-meeting level.

While it is a goal of the South Korean diplomacy to take advantage of such 'minilateralism' so as to manage different views on multilateral cooperation among the four countries, this vision can only be realized with the help of the U.S. It is the same as the role of the U.K. in European politics: Despite its limited power, the U.K. is able to act as a mediator between Germany and France because of its

special relationship with the U.S.

Based on minilateralism, South Korea should seek to establish multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia. To this end, however, a strong alliance with the U.S. is a prerequisite. The U.S. did not object to the expansion of OSCE because Europe acknowledged the privilege of the U.S. by keeping NATO alive even after the end of the Cold War. The same applies to Northeast Asia: the multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia can be realized when the U.S. has confidence in its alliances with South Korea and Japan. And since multilateral security cooperation can be instituted only when the ROK-U.S. alliance is well maintained, South Korea's security policy should be so directed.



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