

chapter one

The Northeast Asian Security Setting

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The Asia-Pacific Security Situation

We may now be experiencing one of those relatively rare periods in world affairs when the structure of the international system does not dominate foreign policies. While the old cold war alliances have not completely disappeared from U.S. security policy, their ability to determine reflexively America's foreign relations on issues from Bosnia in Europe to the Spratly islands in the Pacific has greatly atrophied. For other states, too, domestic considerations and nearby regional concerns take precedence over alliances with remote great powers whose reliability is problematic in this new era. To better understand this unfamiliar international security environment, analysts should concentrate on internally generated alternative national visions of security which, in the aggregate, are creating a new, innovative structure of international politics.

Since this paper deals with visions of Asian-Pacific security, perhaps the best way to begin is to ask how realistic is the concept of a Pacific Community? At bottom, in a post-cold war setting, hopes for such a Community are based on the optimistic belief that positive social, economic, political, and military linkages among Asian-Pacific states will create a sufficiently large number of benefits that conflicts among these states will invariably be resolved peacefully. Yet, many centrifugal forces operate against the Pacific Community concept. Global economic integration, epitomized by the World Trade Organization (WTO), and global pressures for democratization are examples of pressure from above; from below, sub-regional economic and financial networks such as the South China growth zone encompassing Fujian, Hong Kong, and Taiwan as well as local security dynamics may be supplanting the American balancing role. Moreover, as Robert Manning and Paula Stern argue: "To begin the process of turning the [Asia-Pacific] region into a community, its two giants, China and Japan, will have to work out their relationship's formidable security problems, just as France and Germany did 40 years ago."¹

Europe is catching up with North America in its relations with the Pacific rim. By 1992, the Europeans had already begun to trade more with Asia than with the United States (\$249 billion to \$206 billion); and the book value of the EU's direct foreign investment in Asia now roughly equals that of the United States. In fact, the trade pattern of most East Asian economies is equally distributed among the United States, Europe, and intra-Asian trade with the last growing markedly faster than the other two.² This dispersion of Asia-Pacific economic relations can only loosen trans-Pacific ties over time.

Finally, many Asian states are distancing themselves from American pressures with respect to democratization and human rights, emphasizing

instead the differences between Western and Asian cultures and stages of development. Both considerations place economic and social rights ahead of individual rights. Moreover, Asian spokesmen, such as Singapore's senior minister Lee Kwan Yew, reject lectures coming from Americans whose country leads the world in murder rates, per capita incarceration, and gun ownership. U.S. efforts to inject labor and environmental rights into international economic negotiations are seen as self-serving protectionism rather than sincere human rights concerns. To several East Asian leaderships, then, the United States is seen to be as much a problem as a solution for regional security. While the American military presence remains welcome for the promotion of regional stability, Washington's pressures on human rights, democracy, and labor standards are perceived as threats to domestic stability in states where regimes have not yet worked out their own new relationships between governments and societies.³ The notion of liberal governance which provides a space for societal autonomy is less accepted in much of Asia. Because the state is privileged over society in the region, American efforts to stress the latter's legitimacy are seen as domestic political interference.

External security architectures are also moving in a new direction as the millennium approaches. In a region where there are no declared adversaries (with the exception of the Korean peninsula), multilateral efforts are on the rise as a means for promoting security with rather than against states.⁴ New fora have been created at both the nongovernmental Track II level (The Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, CSCAP) and at the official level (The ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF) to provide early warnings of impending security conflicts and to offer suggestions for coping or resolving them short of combat. An integral part of this process entails a search for confidence building, reassurance, and transparency measures among states which may confront each other over territorial, boundary, resource, refugee, smuggling, drug, and piracy issues. Track II discussions permit officials in their "private capacities" to test proposals and raise issues that may be too sensitive to address in formal government negotiations.

Nevertheless, older arrangements have not been jettisoned. Indeed, some have even been enhanced. Thus, at ASEAN's fourth summit in 1992, Association leaders took an expansionary view of security by explicitly adding the topic to ASEAN's agenda with its dialogue partners, including the United States, Japan, and China. Northeast Asia, too, is moving tentatively toward new security linkages. Although there is still no Northeast Asian security forum as a counterpart to the ARF, South Korea is urging its creation. What may be the first Northeast Asian security collaborative effort is found in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

(KEDO) whose primary members are the ROK, Japan, and the United States. KEDO is responsible for funding and building light water nuclear reactors in North Korea to replace the more weapons-grade plutonium-prone graphite reactors built by the Russians. This project, whose ostensible purpose is to provide electrical energy for the DPRK, also has an important security dimension. It has brought Pyongyang's weapons grade plutonium production to a halt and resuscitated the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspection program of North Korean reactors. If peace on the Korean peninsula is Northeast Asia's most important security problem, then the multilateral KEDO is providing support parallel to the bilateral ROK-U.S. Security Treaty.

U.S. Foreign Policy Values and Asia-Pacific Security

Since national security policies appear to be driven by domestic dynamics in the post-cold war, assessing contending schools of thought in the Clinton administration and its Congressional antagonists should help us understand underlying U.S. foreign policy values. As we shall see, this clash of values may account for the apparent incoherence in U.S. policy toward the Asia-Pacific.⁵ Four competing value sets can be identified in contemporary American foreign policy. For any particular issue, one or more may dominate the others. In the aggregate, however, they seem to create a series of actions which move in contradictory directions. Three of these sets coexist within the Clinton administration: neo-Wilsonianism, economic nationalism, and strategic realism. The fourth—minimalism—is found in the Republican-dominated Congress.

Neo-Wilsonianism represents the thinking of both the President and his former National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake. It is based on the belief that modern democracies are essentially peaceful trading states which, at least in the 20th century, have not fought one another. Committed to their peoples' prosperity and well-being, prospects for a peaceful world in the post-cold war will be enhanced as democracy expands. Therefore, U.S. foreign policy should urge other states to create the conditions for democratic governance. Neo-Wilsonians are also committed to multilateral institutions as instruments of diplomacy, particularly within the United Nations system. The UN and other multilateral fora permit the United States to remain involved in the world at a reduced cost through burden-sharing. Multilateral arrangements also reduce the probability of unilateralism which has been a primary source of instability in recent times. The Clinton administration believes that the United States can promote democracy in this new era because it need no longer back authoritarian regimes simply because they are anti-Communist. Multilateralism promotes security through reassurance and confidence-building rather than balances of power.

Coexisting with neo-Wilsonianism in the Clinton administration is economic nationalism. Best represented by the late Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, and the U.S. Trade Representative, Mickey Kantor, the economic nationalists have emerged from the President's belief that domestic political success depends upon the creation of jobs within the U.S. economy. Promoting exports creates American jobs.

Therefore, a major goal of U.S. foreign policy is to open foreign markets by breaking their trade barriers. Thus, the United States has been willing to risk other strategic and political interests in pressing long-time partners, such as Japan and South Korea as well as important regional powers such as China, to make room for U.S. exports, protect U.S. intellectual property rights, and cease "unfair subsidization" of their own domestic industries or face consequent American trade sanctions. Economic nationalism, although partially successful in opening some markets, for example, semiconductors in Japan, risks alienating long-term friends and degenerating into renewed protectionism if sanctions are widely invoked. Moreover, the unilateralism inherent in this approach undermines the new more comprehensive multilateral trade liberalization found in the WTO. Paradoxically, because the United States is a founding member of the WTO, Washington's policy of economic nationalism also undermines the more consensual global economic order which the WTO seeks to create.

The third school of security thought in the Clinton administration has carried through all American presidencies since World War II. Strategic realists are currently found primarily among the foreign policy and defense professionals in the Departments of State and Defense. They emphasize the importance of sustaining U.S. cold war bilateral relationships and forward-deployed forces in both Europe and Asia as a kind of general deterrence against any rising powers which may be contemplating the use of force to alter the territorial status quo. They argue that peace is best sustained through power balances and that in the post-cold war, a U.S. political, economic, and military presence in the Asia-Pacific provides the stable environment needed for the kinds of political and economic changes advocated by the preceding foreign policy schools. Indicative of strategic realism is the February 1995 Department of Defense Report, *U.S. Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*. It promises to retain 100,000 forward-deployed forces in East Asia so that America will continue to be a stabilizing factor in the region. It also promises to sustain bilateral alliances as the framework for that deployment, while simultaneously nurturing multilateral relationships to complement the U.S. presence. Finally, the Report reaffirms the importance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty as the linchpin for continued regional security. Implicitly the United States and Japan together ensure

that no other state can attain hegemony. As a former senior official at the Japan Defense Agency puts it:

. . . if Japan and the PRC were to form an alliance relationship, other countries would believe that a terrible threat had appeared. Conversely, if Japan formed an alliance with the island countries, the PRC would regard it as an alliance encircling it.⁶

Although U.S. forward deployment advocated by the strategic realist school is generally welcomed throughout Asia as a guarantee of a continued American commitment, its reliability is questioned. Because of the budget-driven downsizing of U.S. forces, there is a general belief that the United States sees few issues in the Asia-Pacific worth the risk of American lives and treasure. Contention over ownership of the Spratly islands, boundary and resource disputes among neighbors, or possibly even a PRC threat to Taiwan are not seen as events which would automatically elicit a U.S. military response. At bottom, regional specialists question the relevance of the U.S. military for most Asian security conflicts in the post-cold war era.⁷

Nevertheless, the United States seized the opportunity presented by PLA missile tests and combined arms exercises in the Taiwan straits in March 1996. Designed by the PRC to intimidate Taiwan voters during the country's Presidential election, Washington responded by deploying two carrier groups to the region, ostensibly to monitor the exercises—a normal Seventh Fleet activity in a calmer political environment. In this highly charged context, however, the Seventh Fleet action sent messages not only to China and Taiwan but equally important to the Asia-Pacific generally: that the United States was still prepared to insert its armed forces into potentially destabilizing situations to deter the use of force. The American action was, in fact, fairly low risk. The PLA possesses neither the intention nor capability of invading Taiwan at this point in time. Indeed, China was engaged in coercive diplomacy, not a prelude to war. However, had the United States not responded to China's display of force, regional apprehensions about America's willingness to continue as an Asia-Pacific power balancer would have been exacerbated and U.S. political stature further eroded. For the time being, at least, American credibility as an Asia-Pacific security contributor has improved.

Finally, minimalism challenges all of the preceding approaches to U.S. foreign/security policy. Epitomized in the Congress by Senators Phil Gramm and Jesse Helms as well as House Speaker Newt Gingrich and outside Congress by former presidential hopefuls Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot, minimalists are characterized by leadership and compassion fatigue. They argue that the United States has borne the burden of world leadership since 1945.

With the cold war's end, there is no need to continue. Let the world's ills be treated by those countries most directly affected. Multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations or, for that matter, regional and bilateral alliances, are also suspect for they entangle the United States in the problems of far-off lands. The minimalists, then, plan to reduce U.S. overseas commitments and withdraw forward-deployed American forces. They have a kind of late 19th century view of world politics in which the United States can best prosper outside the mainstream of world affairs. However, there is an important difference between the minimalists and classic U.S. isolationists: the minimalists advocate a large American defense budget. U.S. armed forces would not be committed to multilateral organizations, however. Rather, they would be structured for unilateral intervention if America's vital interests were threatened anywhere on the globe. Fortunately, the minimalists remain a distinct minority in elected office. However, they are sufficiently powerful that both the neo-Wilsonians and strategic realists must consider their objections whenever the use of American forces is contemplated.

At best, then, U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific—with the exception of the Korean peninsula—is one of calculated ambiguity. Then Secretary of Defense Perry stated (Beijing, October 1994) that the peaceful settlement of contending Spratly claims is exceedingly important because military action there could upset regional stability and threaten the sea lines of communication (SLOCs). The U.S. Navy is committed to keeping the SLOCs open; therefore, Perry's statement could be interpreted as an implicit warning to the PRC about tolerable limits to its actions in the South China Sea. Nevertheless, offshore American forces are no tripwire as demonstrated by China's construction of communications facilities at Mischief Reef, adjacent to the Philippines. The building of more such structures by the PRC would constitute a creeping assertiveness against which the Seventh Fleet is not a serious obstacle.

China's Strategic Vision

The most difficult time in any authoritarian state's foreign/security policy is during a period of political transition when contenders for leadership search for important institutional backers (in the PRC, the PLA) to consolidate control and create legitimacy for their authority. During transitional periods, leaders may adopt particularly hard lines toward adversaries to demonstrate leadership strength and, therefore, ability to uphold the national interest.

For the PRC, major foreign policy goals have remained consistent since the late 1970s:

(1) to achieve national prosperity through export-led growth and foreign investment, while simultaneously protecting the Communist Party's dominant political position from being undermined by "bourgeois values" which enter China with the influx of foreigners and the economy's integration into the global capitalist system. Since Tiananmin Square (1989), the Party's opposition to domestic political liberalization has reached extremely high levels. However, the Party also understands that its only claim to authority rests on the country's continued high economic growth so that the populations can foresee the prospect of increasing living standards despite the leadership's authoritarianism. To smooth the way for trade and foreign investment, PRC leaders insist that a tranquil environment and peace with all their neighbors have the highest priority.

(2) China's second goal is, however, somewhat contradictory to the first; and here is where trouble in China's foreign policy arises. The second goal is the reunification of all territory claimed by Beijing. This nationalist goal—possibly a substitute for the collapse of Marxist ideology as a unifying force—immediately brings China into territorial conflict with several neighbors. While Taiwan is the primary target, there are also significant disputes with Japan (the Senkaku islands) and all the ASEAN states because of PRC ownership claims to the whole of the South China Sea and all of the island groups within it.

The more China emphasizes the second of these two goals, the more the first is in jeopardy, particularly because Taiwanese investors fear their commercial holdings on the mainland could become hostage to nationalist ends. If China chooses to use force to achieve any of its unification claims, trade and investment could be devastated through embargoes and capital flight with unforeseen consequences for China's domestic political stability.

From these contending foreign policy goals emerge two schools of thought about China's foreign/security policy future. Either could be correct. Each could be right within two different time frames. The first school argues that the leadership will continue on the path of foreign investment-led growth and encourage a stable regional environment. All Asia-Pacific states support this policy. Underlying its validity is the belief that, despite its very impressive aggregate economic growth, the PRC will remain a poor country (in per capita income) well into the next century. Consequently, China's leaders will have to focus on feeding, clothing, sheltering, and educating its population. Territorial expansion, in this scenario, at best will be quietly dropped or, at worst, indefinitely postponed. The second school of thought sometimes acknowledges that the first school's assessment may be accurate for the next five to ten years. Subsequently, however, as China modernizes, if the nationalists prevail, it

will aspire to regional hegemony by moving to occupy Taiwan and the Spratly islands. To forestall these developments, Asian-Pacific states agree that the PRC must be integrated into a regional political-economic-security framework. In effect, China's neighbors wish to buttress the China of the coastal, commercial south against the nationalist party, PLA, bureaucracy of the north and the PRC's interior.

For now, the U.S. General Accounting Office assessment of the PLA seems reassuring. It notes that modernization is proceeding very gradually from a base of 1950s and 1960s equipment. Since effective power projection requires command, control, and communications capacities as well as an extensive logistics train, the PLA remains years behind. Thus, the United States views the PLA missile tests near Taiwan as little more than crude efforts at political intimidation and not a prelude to invasion. To place China's military modernization in context, its acquisition of 24 SU-27 fighters gives the PLA a roughly equivalent modern air combat capability to Malaysia, which is acquiring 18 MiG-29s and six F-18s.

Moreover, Chinese leaders understand that the Communist Party's continued control depends on its ability to sustain the country's economic growth via trade and foreign investment. A China which creates a larger space for societal activity in commercial affairs and private life does not necessarily lead to democracy, however. PRC leaders insist that rapid social change requires a strong government to maintain domestic order. In opposition to those advocating democracy, defenders of the regime note that "an anarchical China would post a genuine threat to the outside world."⁸ The most serious threat to China's security, then, is not an external military challenge (there are none) but Western schemes to promote "peaceful evolution," a code phrase to subvert CPC leadership by political and cultural infiltration designed ultimately to make China a Western dependency. Furthermore, Chinese officials interpret Taiwan's efforts to play a larger global role and Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's plan to democratize Hong Kong as elements in a hidden Western agenda to keep China divided and subject to Western interference.⁹

This suspicion of Western goals carries over into regional security discussions. While China is a member of the ARF—the Asia-Pacific's first pan-regional security discussion organization—Beijing is intent on limiting any interference by the ARF in China's military development. The PRC is particularly reticent about publicizing the PLA's doctrine and order of battle to accommodate ARF transparency requests, implying that such demands are really thinly disguised quests for intelligence.¹⁰ When China finally did release its first White Paper on Arms Control and Disarmament, it was

essentially a restatement of its well-publicized arguments that the PRC constituted a threat to no one, that its military budget was minimal, that its forces were being reduced, that it behaved responsibly in transferring military hardware to other countries, and that it actively promoted arms control and disarmament. There was no discussion, however, of the capabilities and role of China's new air and naval platforms or of the PLA's long-term weapons development plans and how they relate to its overall strategy. The U.S. Department of Defense believes that the PLA is probably fifteen years away from developing a modern sustainable force projection capability with command and control, aerial refueling, and possibly an aircraft carrier.¹¹ Needless to say, these prospects were not discussed in China's White Paper.

Taiwan's Future and Regional Security

As long as an unreformed, authoritarian Kuomintang (KMT) governed the island of Taiwan, its future relationship to mainland China could be postponed well into the 21st century. PRC officials stated in the early 1980s that their country's economic growth would bring the mainland abreast of Taiwan within about 50 years. By that time, a new political relationship could be forged because the standards of living of the two polities would be equalized. Thus, the question of whether Taipei or Beijing was the legitimate government of the whole of China could be finessed through two to three leadership generations on both sides of the Taiwan strait.

Ironically, from the perspective of the Clinton administration, which has emphasized the desirability of democratization for global peace, the recent liberalization of Taiwanese politics and the legitimation of political parties committed to the island republic's independence have created a potential crisis in PRC-ROC relations. In effect a new political identity is being created in Taiwan based not on ethnicity but rather political participation. With the presidential election in March 1996, both the executive and the legislature are now democratically constituted and can, therefore, claim legitimacy—a condition notably absent on the mainland. Although Taiwan authorities have been careful not to forecast independence, the elections are interpreted by PRC leaders as the first step in that direction—a step that must be resisted.

To a certain extent, economic ties across the strait could ameliorate political tensions. The PRC has strongly encouraged Taiwanese trade and investment in the mainland. By 1994, the PRC accounted for 16 percent of Taiwan's total trade, a figure worrisome to island officials since anything over ten percent is considered dangerous dependence.¹² On the other hand, insofar as PRC prosperity is dependent on commerce with Taiwan,

the probability of a military option for unification should be reduced. Moreover, Taiwan is more than a simple trade partner. It is a conduit for overseas Chinese capital through joint ventures as well as a source of technology transfer which permits the PRC to upgrade its economy. Given the uncertainty of Hong Kong's role after 1997, Taiwan's importance to China's prosperity can only grow.

Beijing acknowledges Taiwan's economic strength by agreeing to the latter's membership in international economic organizations such as APEC and ultimately—following China's own admission—the WTO. However, the PRC opposes Taipei's participation in any body devoted to security discussions such as the ARE, since membership would imply the island's recognition as a political entity. Moreover, China does not want to be placed in a setting where Taiwan could raise bilateral security issues for other Asia-Pacific states to debate.¹³

During fall 1995 interviews in both the PRC and Taiwan, the author found specialists on both sides concerned with developing some new way to continue peaceful coexistence which takes into account the political changes in Taiwan. Without a new relationship, both economies could be harmed. China could lose its most important external investor, and PRC military threats could destroy confidence in Taiwan's future. The PLA missile tests off the Taiwan coast in July 1995 led to a precipitous drop in the Taipei stock market. These same missile tests also caused Taiwan's pro-independence party to back away from its insistence on complete separation from the mainland. The even more provocative March 1996 missile tests within 20 miles of Taiwan's two largest ports demonstrated that Beijing could disrupt the island's international trade and negatively impact its stock market again. The PRC is particularly incensed at Taiwan's efforts to secure a seat in the United Nations, though it is a fruitless endeavor. No major country supports Taipei's application and, if necessary, Beijing could veto it.

Taiwanese researchers have discussed two models for future relations with their PRC counterparts.¹⁴ One is based on the Finland-USSR relationship in which the former guaranteed the latter that it would not ally with any country and thus could not pose a threat. The acceptability of this model to Beijing is slim, however, since it is premised on Taiwan's independence. A second model would construct a confederation between the two entities. Each side would retain political autonomy; but independence would be ruled out. In this model, the two sides could move closer together over time—particularly if liberal political changes occurred on the mainland and its economy continued to prosper.

This model is an application of the PRC's early 1980s idea that over several decades the PRC and ROC would gradually come together. However, it is also based on assumptions of political liberalization and continued high economic performance as well as a cap on the rise of militant nationalism for both sides.

The democratization of Taiwan also possesses positive security implications. Other democratic states, led particularly by the U.S. Congress, have become committed to the island's political survival because its government now reflects the will of the electorate. It would be difficult for Washington and other democratic governments to sit by idly if Taiwan were blockaded or invaded. Taiwan continues to rely on the U.S. Seventh Fleet's deterrent effect, especially since the Navy has been very clear that any interference with the freedom of international commerce would be viewed as a serious threat to regional security. Meanwhile, Taiwanese Track II groups work hard to be included in regional security discussions where they can engaged their PRC counterparts and other regional members. Taiwanese think tanks are meeting annually with the Malaysian and Philippine ISIS and with a Northeast Asia Security discussion forum jointly sponsored by the New York-based Asia Society and the Japan Institute of International Affairs.¹⁵

In sum, unless cooler heads prevail in both Chinese capitals, Beijing and Taipei could be on a collision course. The PRC believes Taiwan to be following a course of "creeping independence" by raising its international profile, seeking a seat in the United Nations, serving a major trade and investment partner for Southeast Asia, and legitimating its new national identity through free elections. The Chinese Communist Party has held no such legitimating procedure for its rule. PRC leaders may have concluded, therefore, that time is no longer on their side. To delay a political showdown with Taipei may risk losing the unrecovered territory. Hence, the Communist Party's Leading Group on Taiwan Affairs recently ruled that a "covert independence movement" by itself constitutes sufficient grounds for an invasion even without a formal declaration of independence. Concurrent with this declaration the PLA has created a "Nanjing War Zone" covering the Taiwan Strait, with the authority to call upon units from neighboring regions.¹⁶

In effect the PRC is following a strategy of coercive diplomacy toward Taiwan, combining threatening statements, military deployments, missile firing, and invasion exercises to influence the island's elections and ultimately force it to negotiate with Beijing on the future political relationship. These pressures are sufficiently alarming that Japan, despite its own domestic political disarray, used some of its strongest postwar diplomatic lan-

guage in talks with China, insisting that the latter settle its differences with Taiwan peacefully.¹⁷ Continuation of this downward spiral need not be inevitable. Conciliatory gestures have been made by both Taipei and Beijing in the presidential election's aftermath. Compromise must come from both capitals. Time is not on Taiwan's side in an atmosphere of confrontation, however. The PLA will only get stronger; and prolonged tension in the strait will drain Taiwan's economy. An atmosphere of reconciliation, on the other hand, would benefit both sides. Over the decades, if China stays on a free market track, Taiwan can play an important facilitative role. Unification can be postponed in this setting to future generations. At bottom, Taiwanese authorities must somehow reassure their mainland counterparts that the island's *de jure* political independence is not part of the KMT agenda.

The U.S.-Japan/U.S.-Koreas Security Relationships

Although Japan's domestic political malaise and protracted trade conflict with the U.S. cloud the overall relationship between these two economic superpowers, virtually all regional observers continue to perceive the U.S.-Japan nexus as a linchpin for regional security. Indeed, the overall Asian-Pacific interest in the maintenance of U.S.-Japan defense ties may be out of sync with bilateral developments between Tokyo and Washington. Budget cutbacks in both capitals are reducing military deployments. And, the end of the cold war has led attentive publics in both countries to question the necessity of having 47,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan. Neither the Japanese nor South Korean governments seem to have convinced their citizens that the American military presence is crucial for their continued security. A recent *Sankei Shimbun* poll found that only five percent of those surveyed believed that U.S. bases in Japan were primarily for their own country's benefit. Similarly, in South Korea, there is a growing popular belief that North Korea is not a lethal threat because of its impending economic collapse. Government positions in both Japan and the ROK—which emphasize the necessity of the U.S. connection—seem out of step with popular opinion.¹⁸

Yet, there is little doubt that the U.S. security treaties with both countries will be sustained well into the coming century. Because Japan, unlike Germany, has not successfully assured its neighbors that it has genuinely repented its 1930s-1940s militarism, and because Japan needs to convince these same neighbors that its economic strength will not be translated into independent military power, the U.S.-Japan treaty constitutes a kind of guarantee that Japan will not resume its old ways.¹⁹ And, indeed, even the Socialists under Prime Minister Murayama reversed their long postwar anti-U.S. treaty policy to embrace the LDP commitment as well as U.S. forces on Japanese soil.

Should the Security Treaty be tested, however, with, for example, a crisis on the Korean peninsula requiring an American military response, the U.S.-Japan tie could be severely strained. Washington and American public opinion would expect direct Japanese military support. If that support was not forthcoming under the prevailing interpretation of Article IX of Japan's Constitution, the U.S.-Japan alliance might well collapse. Moreover, Washington might even impose trade sanctions against a Japan that stood by while a neighbor crucial to Japan's security was being defended by the United States alone.²⁰ Finally, another issue that Washington and Tokyo must discuss is whether the treaty's scope will be expanded beyond East Asia, say, to the Persian Gulf. Japanese officials are reticent about endorsing such an expansion of responsibilities which would imply the permanence of U.S. bases in Japan.²¹ For example, Diego Garcia is completely dependent on support from Japan. Without the Japanese bases, the U.S. ability to sustain a permanent presence in the whole Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean region would be greatly eroded. Yet, if Japan is to continue to provide these facilities indefinitely, Tokyo should become a more equal partner in determining how and when these forces would be used. A more equal security partnership, however, would also entail a revision of Article IX. Under the article's current interpretation, areas beyond East Asia appear to be excluded.

Another prominent issue is the creation of a new, independent role for the JSDF through United Nations peacekeeping activities. After a tentative and not completely successful participation in the UNTAC Cambodian force, Japan has subsequently sent JSDF personnel to Africa and the Middle East. In addition to signifying Tokyo's commitment to global peace, this more pro-active policy toward UN collective security is forcing Japan to confront Article IX's prohibition of collective security and consider either an amendment to the Constitution or, at least, a more flexible interpretation of the Article. Japan's second largest party—the New Frontier composed of younger ex-LDP reformers—goes even further by arguing that Japan should evolve toward a “normal state” with regular commitments to UN security activities. The United States would welcome this development. However, the PKO Law would require extensive revision if these changes are to occur. Currently, the Law prohibits the SDF from participating in peace enforcement activities. It also requires new Diet approval for any new SDF action related to peacekeeping, including monitoring cease-fire agreements, troop withdrawals, and buffer zone patrols. Japanese public opinion polls show that while there is considerable support for JSDF humanitarian actions through medical aid and infrastructure repair in war-torn countries, that consensus evaporates when the SDF might be put in harms way by monitoring opposing sides in a conflict.²²

Nevertheless, recent official advisory commissions to the Japanese government have recommended a larger role for the JSDF in joint exercises with U.S. forces and a revision of the Self-Defense Force Law to provide for participation in UN peacekeeping. Additionally, Japan's sponsorship of multilateral institutions such as APEC and the ARF are means of "softening the dominance of U.S.-Japan relations."²³ Multilateralism helps to restore Japan's legitimacy and is a way of responding to Asian criticism about the country's self-absorption.

If the Japan-U.S. security relationship is the linchpin for the American forward presence in East Asia, the ROK-U.S. defense treaty constitutes the commitment for which most U.S. forces in the region are prepared. For Northeast Asian states, avoiding war on the Korean peninsula and helping Pyongyang survive its current economic implosion are high priorities. Security specialists agree that the alternatives could be devastating to Asian stability: either a costly war with high casualties and severe strains in Japan-U.S., China-U.S., and ROK-China relations or a precipitous collapse of the North Korean regime accompanied by massive population movements to the South which Seoul is prepared to handle neither politically nor economically.

A PRC analyst noted that Beijing is introducing North Korean specialists to China's southern Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and encouraging the DPRK to be more receptive to foreign capital. China is also recommending that the North seek better relations with its southern neighbor, Japan, and the United States—all of which could provide the capital and aid Pyongyang needs to rebuild its economy. Overcoming North Korea's history of autarchy (*juche*), however, will be a slow process. And, it is best that outsiders use carrots, not sticks, to achieve these changes.

For South Korea, the two key players in dealing with the North are the United States and China. The former provides the deterrent, while the latter serves as an interlocutor, urging the North Koreans to effect a rapprochement with the ROK. Nevertheless, strains are apparent in the ROK-U.S. relationship. Some South Korean officials resent what they see as the secondary role assigned their government in negotiating the nuclear power equipment agreement with the North, particularly since the South will bear most of the costs of building the \$4 billion light-water reactors in the DPRK. South Korea is concerned that the U.S. will construct a separate relationship with Pyongyang, ignoring Seoul's advice. Therefore, the South Korean government is interested in creating a multilateral security forum for Northeast Asia which would guarantee Seoul's involvement in all regional security discussions.

Overriding the ROK-U.S. security relationship are the political-security implications of the peninsula's unification either through a gradual process of change in North Korea or Pyongyang's precipitous implosion. If a peaceful Korean unification is achieved, the *raison d'être* for American forces in that country disappears. Moreover, once U.S. forces leave Korea, the Japanese public will also question the necessity for American forces in Japan. After all, their primary rationale currently is to deter and, if necessary, repel a North Korean invasion of the ROK. While a persuasive rationale for U.S. Navy bases (and perhaps an Air Force contingent) can be devised in terms of western Pacific SLOC protection and as a regional balancer, there would be no justification for U.S. ground forces, including marines, any longer in Northeast Asia. This further reduction in forward-deployed American military would undoubtedly provide an impetus for the development of a new, unified Korea's regional power projection capability in order to protect the country's trade routes and promote its territorial claim against Japan with respect to the Tokdo/Takeshima islands. In sum, in the absence of regional arms control arrangements, Korea's unification, the withdrawal of American forces from the peninsula, and their subsequent reduction in Japan, would probably accelerate a Korean air and naval power projection buildup and possibly similar countervailing developments in Japan and China. Interestingly, a high ranking North Korean military officer told Selig Harrison that this is precisely the reason why North Korea no longer insists on an American exit from the Korean peninsula. Any U.S. withdrawal from Korea, it is feared, would precipitate Japan's rearmament.²⁵

Russia as a Minor Player

Russia's role in post-cold war East Asian security is a mere shadow of its Soviet predecessor. Where once Moscow was the primary backer of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia and the dominant underwriter of North Korea's economy as well as the home of the region's second most powerful naval force, now its minimal economic and military presence scarcely register on the region's political radar screen. Although Russian leaders still consider their country to be an Asian power, with two-thirds of its territory east of the Urals, in fact, Moscow's practical ability to affect regional developments is hardly visible. Indeed, it would not be amiss to say that Russia does not have an Asian security policy. Rather, it promotes an Asian commercial policy with sales of advanced weapons to China (SU-27s, SAMs, and armor), the ROK (some armor so that the ROK army can exercise against elements in the North Korean inventory) and Malaysia (MiG-29s). Because Moscow concentrates its foreign policy attention almost entirely on the "near abroad," even its own Far East has been ignored and left to its own devices.

Russia has been excluded from involvement in solutions to the North Korean nuclear issue. Although KEDO has expanded to include ASEAN and western Europe, Russia is not involved. Russian diplomats are eager to participate in a Northeast Asian security dialogue if one is created; but the Russian Far East's lack of appeal to East Asian investors continues to undermine Moscow's hopes for a larger political role. Siberia's adamant opposition to the return of the northern islands to Japan precludes large scale Japanese investment in the Russian Far East. In essence, that issue is stalemated.

Even the relationship with the ROK which began so well under Gorbachev has faded in recent years because of Russia's economic decline. In 1995, trade volume had stalled at around \$3 billion, well below the projected \$10 billion. And the ROK has invested less than \$30 million.²⁶

In time, Russia will recover from its economic and political turmoil and demand its proper role in East Asian affairs. It would be wiser to open the door to regional dialogue so that Moscow can bring its influence to bear in a positive manner than to shut it out until the time comes when it may see itself in an adversarial position.

Conclusion: The Development of Multilateral Regional Security

The essence of external security in the post-cold war Asia-Pacific is the quest for a concert arrangement through which states might be able to offset threats perceived to emanate from one another by adopting policies of reassurance, transparency, and confidence-building.²⁷ Most Asia-Pacific states, via such groups as APEC and the ARF, are attempting to create a sense of community, institutions, and practices—sufficiently strong and widespread—to elicit expectations of peaceful change. While the security dilemma is not completely overcome by members of this "community," they, at least, believe that all-out war will not occur among themselves as a means of conflict resolution. To achieve this end, small states within this community will support principles of nonintervention and/or the promise of assistance from other members. Some may still desire to keep defense pacts with larger states, usually to deter regional powers. Indeed, regional norms of nonintervention, preventive diplomacy, and confidence-building comprise the strategies of small states vis-à-vis their more powerful neighbors. However, these cooperative communities cannot form successfully if a potentially deviant state is bent on seeking relative gains at others' expense.

Without publicly identifying an Asian regional threat, a hidden consensus seems to be forming centered on China's future capabilities and intentions.

Indeed, Beijing's regular refutations about a "China threat" are designed to defuse these concerns, but to little avail. The PRC's long-standing claims to the Spratly islands and all their surrounding seas plus Beijing's more recent military action across the Taiwan strait have created a powerful impression that China is the only major unsatisfied power in the Asia-Pacific. Compared to this, unresolved border demarcations and conflicting claims to small islands pale in significance.

The region's members have abjured any strategy of confrontation with China, however. Instead, they are following an inclusive approach to the PRC, welcoming its membership in regional groups and urging transparency, confidence-building, and multilateral negotiations upon Beijing. Concern about China has also worked in favor of maintaining external security ties to the United States as a hedge. Washington could expand these arrangements by building on existing multilateral activities such as the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises to involve more Asian participants. Through RIMPAC, for example, the United States can facilitate new patterns of naval cooperation between South Korea and Japan. RIMPAC might also be useful as a way of involving the Russian Pacific fleet in multilateral exercises and possibly even elements of the PLA Navy if the PRC is willing to experiment with multilateral cooperation. In the absence of arms control arrangements for Northeast Asia, a modest level of joint military exercising could, at least, enhance transparency.

Joint exercises in Northeast Asia might also serve as a device to begin to break down secrecy. Information exchange among armed forces is a particularly important CBM, leading to both transparency and reassurance. If countries exercise together, then they should be able to ask questions and expect answers about systems capabilities and doctrines for their use.

Before assessing the prospects for a multilateral or cooperative security forum in Northeast Asia, an important caveat should be acknowledged. Unlike Southeast Asia where a regional political organization (ASEAN) has been in existence for about 20 years and where the region's major security challenge is, indeed, multilateral (ownership of the Spratly islands and their surrounding waters), in Northeast Asia, the major security problems remain predominantly bilateral (North and South Korea; China and Taiwan; China and Russia; Russia and Japan). Most claimants are wary of outside involvement, particularly if that involvement entails restrictions on the deployment of armed forces.²⁸ China and North Korea have long opposed a multilateral security approach. Even in KEDO, North Korea acts as if the multilateral nuclear energy program is strictly a bilateral U.S.-DPRK concern, minimizing the roles of the ROK and Japan. It would be

very difficult, therefore, to transfer Northeast Asia's two most intractable conflicts—the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan strait—to a multilateral venue.

Having said that, multilateral arrangements may still be useful to states hoping to contain conflicts and demonstrate that their intentions are defensive/protective. Hypothetically, if a Northeast Asian security forum was to focus on the Korean peninsula, it might begin at the low level of information exchange by both sides to enhance transparency.²⁹ A forum might subsequently provide opportunities for each side to raise questions concerning information provided by the other. These initial two stages of the forum are probably sufficiently difficult to remain its only Korea-oriented activities for some time. Should the antagonists agree to proceed from there, a third task would be the development of norms to promote a degree of disengagement along the 38th parallel, notification of exercises, exchanges of observers, and explanations for any new arms buildups and deployments. An international forum, acceptable to both sides, could render objective assessments of the foregoing and make its findings available to both Koreas and the international community. The basic problem is, of course, obtaining Pyongyang's agreement. For example, the DPRK has not responded affirmatively to requests for dialogue by the Track II CSCAP, informally explaining that the DPRK trusts none of its potential dialogue partners to discuss the Korean peninsula: the ROK, Japan, and the United States are antagonists; Russia has turned on North Korea; and China is unreliable. This deeply ingrained suspicion of all other actors does not augur well for Korean CBMs.³⁰

A variety of regional security views, interpretations, and policy preferences were expressed by Asia-Pacific specialists to the author in the autumn of 1995. These views ranged from a strong endorsement for multilateral fora to considerable suspicion about their purposes and efficacy. It would certainly be fair to say that no consensus has yet emerged. A discussion of these views with an emphasis on Northeast Asia concludes this paper.

Respondents throughout the Asia-Pacific identified China as their major long-term external security concern, but none advocated confrontation. All believed the best approach to China was engagement politically and economically, bilaterally as well as through regional organizations. PRC respondents demurred, by contrast, over the proliferation of multilateral security venues in the Asia-Pacific. Ji Guoxing of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies supported the idea of unilateral transparency through the independent publication of White Papers. (China reportedly produced such a document for the first time in 1996.) He sees a progression toward confidence-building which goes from White papers and mil-

itary personnel exchanges to military doctrine discussions, and ultimately arms control and institution-building. Ji believes that territorial disputes should be separated from CBMs so that the former do not obstruct progress on the latter.³¹

In many ways, the ARF's creation was a logical extension of ASEAN-based security discussions which had gone on for over a decade, that is, since Vietnam's Cambodian intervention in late 1978. By initiating an Asia-Pacific-wide security dialogue, ASEAN hoped to reassert the association's primacy after APEC had been "captured" by the United States and Japan. The ASEAN states wanted to ensure there was no repetition of this experience in security matters. With ASEAN at ARF's core, presumably the "Asian way" would dominate regional security, that is, dialogue rather than the creation of binding legal arrangements. ARF was also seen by both ASEAN and Tokyo as a device to involve Japan in regional security without threatening its neighbors. And, indeed, Japan has taken the lead in funding and directing a kind of secretariat for ARF on CBMs between the Forum's annual meetings. ARF also provides, of course, an opportunity to engage China.

Indeed, ARF's most prominent "success" in its short existence grew out of China engagement at the July 1995 Brunei meeting. The ASEAN members pressed China on negotiations over the Spratly islands at a time that Beijing feared diplomatic isolation in the region. Relations with the United States and Japan were tense because of human rights concerns, nuclear testing, and PRC military efforts to intimidate Taiwan during its elections through missile tests over the Taiwan strait. In this highly charged atmosphere, Beijing did not want to alienate ASEAN as well over the Spratlys, so at least a rhetorical concession was made. The ASEAN states interpreted that concession as a possible breakthrough, though, in fact, little subsequent follow-up has occurred. China agreed for the first time in Brunei to engage in multilateral negotiations on the Spratlys with other claimants and to consider the 1982 Law of the Sea (LOS) as the basis for these negotiations. The significance of the latter is that the 1982 LOS provides that all littoral states with overlapping territorial waters and EEZs should negotiate out their overlapping jurisdictions. According to ASEAN analysts, this meant that China had implicitly accepted the legitimacy of others' claims on the Spratlys—a substantive change from its earlier rejection of their holdings as invalid because of PRC sovereignty over all the South China Sea.³² The Brunei "breakthrough" on the South China Sea disputes would not have occurred had ARF not been in place and, therefore, China had not been pressured to negotiate. Interestingly, the LOS principle of overlapping territorial jurisdictions could also extend to PRC-Japan conflicting claims with

respect to the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands and ROK-Japan claims to the Takeshima/Tokdo islets.

A major reason for Taiwan's keen desire for membership in the ARF is also to use the forum for internationalizing the cross-strait dispute with the PRC. Taiwan-based analysts believe that a regional security framework in which both Taipei and Beijing hold membership would block the PRC's military assertiveness. After all, a PLA attack on Taiwan would threaten freedom of the SLOCs and potentially destabilize the whole region by interfering with trade and undermining investment. Beijing perceives possible Taiwanese membership in ARF in exactly the same fashion and, therefore, adamantly opposes it. China insists that its actions toward Taiwan are an internal matter which brook no international interference. Moreover, Taiwan cannot be permitted to enter the ARF because the latter is explicitly devoted to security; and only sovereign states can be members of international security groups. To admit Taiwan would be to accept the prospect of its sovereignty.

At the very least, Taiwan is lobbying for membership in the Track II CSCAP. However, even in that body, Beijing has raised strong objections. In hopes of effecting a compromise, the U.S. delegation at the June 1995 CSCAP International Steering Committee tabled an amendment to the CSCAP Charter which provides for a new category of "Observer/Affiliate." This category was established specifically to provide a vehicle for Taiwan's informal participation. While the new category of "membership" has been approved by CSCAP, Taiwan has not yet been invited to participate because the PRC continues to raise objections even in Track II forums.³³

In summary, for the smaller states of the Asia-Pacific, the ARF is a way of keeping big powers inside a collaborative organization where they might be required to explain and justify their security policies toward the region. In a sense, ASEAN respondents to the author's interviews saw the ARF as a means for extending ASEAN's successful experience in preventive diplomacy to the whole Asia-Pacific. Yet ASEAN members do not want the ARF to move into transparency and CBMs too quickly. There is a fear that this would spook China. Thus, ASEAN's original idea for the ARF to establish a regional security studies center was dropped at the July 1994 Bangkok meeting because it was considered to be a device for mandating transparency. The region as a whole does not yet seem ready for this step because to some, particularly China, transparency requirements equate to intelligence gathering.

What role, then, for the future of multilateralism? In general, the Asia-Pacific preference is informality and an expansion of existing arrangements

rather than the imposition of new ones. Expanding existing maritime cooperation efforts might be a good place to begin, building on the old U.S.-Soviet or recent Russia-Japan incidents-at-sea-agreements and broadened to include other countries as well as a safety-at-sea dimension. A similar expansion of anti-piracy cooperation beyond the current Strait of Malacca arrangement to the China Seas seems feasible. Signatories could also add pollution control and search and rescue operations.³⁴

Buttressing these multilateral arrangements, however, for the foreseeable future, should be the maintenance of forward-deployed U.S. forces. They balance North Korea and China and render Japan's own growing military capability acceptable to the rest of the region. It would be unwise, however, to go beyond defense arrangements among neighbors by attempting to create a multilateral security community for the Asia-Pacific at this time. No real community consisting of common values, interlocking histories, and the free movement of peoples and firms across national boundaries exists yet. Hence, the reticence about creating political institutions that would entail policy-making based on legal procedures. Successful institutions require common views of objectives as well as cost and benefit sharing.³⁵

Trust and confidence can be achieved even if a security community is not created, however. CSCAP recommendations to the ARF for greater transparency on military doctrine, capabilities, and intentions could provide the reassurance necessary to insure that military modernization does not escalate into arms races. Toward this end, uniform outlines to provide comparability for defense policy white papers, arms registries, and defense expenditures would be most helpful.

Finally, Asia-Pacific states must understand that in the current U.S. political climate, overseas security commitments may not be sustainable if it appears that U.S. forces are protecting the external security of countries which have become long-term creditors of the United States and which appear to keep their markets closed to American products. In the post-cold war, American foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific is driven primarily by commercial considerations. Security is tied to trade and investment. If the United States is to continue to provide a significant proportion of the former, the region must open itself even more to the latter.

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chapter two

Changing U.S.- Korean Security Relations

■ *Edward A. Olsen*

United States-Korea security relations are experiencing a period of dynamic change that raises serious questions about the way that the relationship will evolve during the 21st Century. A number of well-known factors have provoked this phase. The end of the U.S.-Soviet cold war, North Korea's use of its nuclear card to engage the United States in a broader dialogue, South Korea's pursuit of diverse multilateral approaches to its security to shore up the U.S.-ROK alliance, and the emergence of Chinese and Japanese assertiveness in the regional balance of power, cumulatively have altered the context in which Washington and Seoul conduct their bilateral security relations. Both allies are struggling to come to grips with these new—and sometimes troubling—circumstances.

Post-cold war American policy in Asia as a whole, including the key Northeast Asia sub-region where two of the United States' most important alliances are located, suffers from the relative lack of sharp focus characteristic of overall U.S. foreign policy since the demise of the Soviet Union. During the cold war the U.S.-Japan alliance possessed a generic sense of purpose vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Similarly the U.S.-ROK alliance focused on the North Korean threat, with the Soviet Union looming in the background. Absent the Soviet Union, the U.S.-Japan alliance tended to drift, propelled by momentum, in a search for a new vision. The U.S.-ROK alliance remained on firmer ground than the U.S.-Japan alliance after the end of the cold war because North Korea remained as a tangible threat. If anything, the DPRK's threat stature grew in comparative terms in an environment of diminished global threats, exaggerated by its use of the nuclear card. Nonetheless, even the U.S.-ROK alliance suffered in the wake of the cold war because the North Korean threat's ability to escalate tensions to global dangers that would imperil the United States lost its immediacy. Moreover, South Korean anxiety about American responses to North Korean actions created a sense of uncertainty within the alliance. At best, the Korean situation imbued Northeast Asia with a remnant of the cold war to help sustain U.S. commitments to the region.

Something was missing, however, in terms of a firm foundation for U.S. relations with Japan and Korea. In its place the Bush and Clinton administrations dwelled on the need to preserve generic peace and stability with the United States as the core player. Although both administrations stressed their respective innovations, in many respects both were intent upon pouring cold war wine into post-cold war bottles because of their desire to retain an emphasis on an American coordinating role. A major difference between the Bush and Clinton approaches to the Northeast Asian allies was the degree to which each was prepared to share strategic burdens through power sharing. In short, the Bush approach was more

unilateralist and the Clinton approach is more tolerant of a kind of multilateralism. This is not to suggest that the Clinton administration is committed to full-fledged multilateralism that could reduce American power and prestige in the region via a process of gradual marginalization, but it is willing to experiment with modest forms of multilateralism and to entertain Asian ideas for new forms of multilateralism.¹

As Americans and Asians attempt to adapt their policies to the post-cold war era, there are a number of themes that shall influence them which will be addressed here. First is the question of whether American leaders know what they want and how to go about achieving it. Or, conversely, are American leaders as inept as some in Asia and the United States think they are? After examining that fundamental question, this paper shall evaluate the status of, and prospects for, the two regional alliances. Therefore, the second and third themes this paper shall address are the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances' impact on the prospects for Northeast Asian multilateralism. Next, this paper shall examine three future circumstances that could influence Northeast Asian multilateralism as the context for U.S.-Korean security relations. These are, on the positive side, some ways that multilateralism could be enhanced and institutionalized. On the negative side, this paper shall examine one way that the economic interdependence which sustains strategic interdependence could be severely undermined by economic events. It also will explore the potential impact of a return to U.S. unilateralism in future administrations. Finally, it will suggest means to improve U.S.-Korean security cooperation.

Ambiguous Hegemonism

One key component of the U.S.-ROK security relationship is the level of consistency and predictability of Washington's position in Asia. U.S. policy toward Asia in the post-cold war period is subject to widespread criticism for lacking a clear agenda and often being out of focus.² This accusation applies to both the Bush and Clinton administrations which struggled with formulating a post-cold war foreign policy capable of meeting the disparate challenges of the new era. Neither were able to discern a viable central organizing principle that could act as a surrogate for the anti-Soviet animus of the cold war. These circumstances fostered sometimes strident criticism because the United States tries to perpetuate many of the same central roles it played in Asia during the cold war but does so without truly clear objectives or policy instruments to achieve them. As a result of these residual policy behaviors without readily evident goals, the United States has been described by Asians and by Americans who are frustrated by their own policy-making shortcomings as an "incompetent hegemon."³

That description appears to be apt because the United States regularly acts like a hegemonistic power, trying to shape both the environment and outcomes of policy-making. Many people in the U.S. foreign policy and national security bureaucracies treat their post-cold war functions as carry-overs from the cold war, requiring the United States to lead and be responsible for much of the world.⁴ To many people in Asia if Americans walk the walk, and talk the talk of hegemonists, then that must be what they are.

China is particularly blunt in its denunciations of U.S. hegemonism, seeing it as an effort to create a de facto neo-containment policy aimed at the PRC.⁵ The Chinese are not alone, however, because many other Asians consider the United States to be the self-selected leader of the Asia-Pacific region. This is not to suggest these other Asians share China's criticism. On the contrary, most want the United States to remain a combination of diplomatic ringleader, political cheerleader, economic benefactor, and provider of a strategic safety net for the region. Virtually all South Korean and Japanese security specialists share that perception. In short, they wish the United States would be a benevolent hegemon without using the title.⁶ American leaders and bureaucrats who deal with Asia are the recipients of these wishes and let them influence U.S. choices to remain committed to post-cold war Asia on a direct continuum with former U.S. policies.

There is a fundamental problem inherent in this situation. As much as many American elites behave like hegemonists toward Asia, and some may think that role is the United States' noblesse oblige mandate, the overwhelming majority of Americans have no more desire to be hegemonists in late 20th and early 21st century Asia than an earlier generation of Americans wanted to be authentic imperialists in late 19th and early 20th century Asia. A well-known book, *Sentimental Imperialists*, examined the reasons Americans were decidedly reluctant imperialists who ultimately failed because our national heart and will simply were not in it.⁷ A similar principle is at work in U.S.-Asian relations at this watershed point in the post-cold war era.

Americans cannot accurately be considered "incompetent hegemonists" because the people of the United States and the great majority of their leaders have no more desire to be hegemonistic than our forebears did to be imperialistic. Americans have evolved from being "reluctant imperialists" to being "ambiguous hegemonists" who cannot get their act together policy-wise, despite serious efforts, because they do not really want the job.

Americans frequently fumble and stumble in U.S. policy toward Asia since creating a truly coherent policy would require us to accept totally a role we

are not emotionally or intellectually ready to tolerate. It goes against the grain of American experience and instincts. Americans do feel a tenuous obligation today to perpetuate many of the commitments the United States has in Asia. Moreover, there are logical economic and strategic reasons why a great power would want to dominate a zone of influence. But this logic is more than offset by profound American ambiguity about the costs of leadership in human and financial terms.

In fact, much of that ambiguity existed during the cold war as well, but it was concealed by the anti-communist rationales that drove the cold war and generated a sense of internationalist duty among Americans. That mission ended with the demise of the cold war which revealed starkly the ambiguity of Americans about being Asia's *de facto* hegemon. Cumulatively this often causes Americans to behave ineptly, lack coordination, and seem essentially incompetent to both Asians on the receiving end of U.S. policy and to Americans who are frustrated at their inability to be more cohesive and coherent in deciding what we want to do in Asia and how we want to do it.

While Asians may continue to suspect Americans of being incompetent hegemon, they and Americans would be far better off if we all adjusted to the reality that Americans are ambiguous hegemon who are so reluctant to fulfill an unwanted role that we are unable to achieve any meaningful consensus on what to do or how to do it. This explains the poor planning, poor organization, and poor implementation evident in post-cold war U.S. policy in Asia, all of which are exacerbated by domestic U.S. budget problems, anxiety about a national "decline," and the resurfacing of a prewar strain of non-interventionism that often is described as "neo-isolationism."⁸

None of this augers well for any attempt to regenerate a new sense of U.S. mission to be a strongly motivated hegemon for the Asia-Pacific region—even a "hegemon" that is more than willing to share limited geopolitical power with regional cohorts as the United States clearly is today. In short, we were lousy imperialists and we are equally lousy hegemonists.

Recognition of this reality is not bad news for Asians or Americans. It is obvious that the level of U.S. dominance in postwar Asia was an aberration in the context of Asia's long history that could not last. The kind of obvious and subtle power shifts that are occurring today in the Asia-Pacific region are natural and inevitable. They, too, feed the American sense of ambiguity about being a hegemon of any sort.

As Americans try to come to grips with their problems in formulating a viable Asia policy, an old saying is often used to criticize the apparent drift

of U.S. leaders, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." It is clear that Americans, leaders and masses, are experiencing great difficulties figuring out where the United States is "going" vis-à-vis a quasi-hegemonistic leadership role in Asia because we are so ambiguous about it. In this context, and until Americans make some profound decisions about the real directions of U.S. foreign policy for the future, it is not so terrible to be on "any road" or on several roads simultaneously because that kind of flexibility connotes an innovative and reactive posture in U.S. foreign and national security policies which permits Americans to prudently muddle through from problem to problem as we seek a sense of vision about a yet-to-unfold grand strategy. This is a hallmark of the Clinton administration for which it receives much unwarranted criticism. Moreover, it is likely to remain a characteristic of U.S. foreign policy toward Asia in subsequent administrations for the foreseeable future.

Since that evolving national strategic vision is unlikely to be hegemonistic, there is nothing wrong with Americans being ambiguous hegemonists whose reluctance produces a less than clear U.S. policy for Asia. All those Asians and Americans who press for much greater clarity and purpose in a U.S. agenda for Asia are destined to be disappointed because the times and circumstances are not propitious for generating such a renewed vision.⁹ Most importantly, the half-hearted hegemonism of U.S. self-imposed obligations is destined to frustrate ambitions for a more coherent U.S. policy toward Asia. This is evident in U.S. relations with both Japan and Korea.

U.S.-Japan: Mixed Signals¹⁰

This policy blandness seems to be contradicted by President Clinton's summit with Prime Minister Hashimoto in April 1996. There has been a spate of analyses interpreting its consequences for U.S.-Japan security relations. Virtually all of it has been positive in the United States, praising Washington for its creativity and boldness. Greater reservations have been expressed in Japan where some critics of the Hashimoto government believe it may have walked into a trap, unwittingly or knowingly. For Japanese critics it is difficult to decide which is worse—whether their government was consciously duped by the Americans to start down a path which could lead to greater Japanese involvement in regional collective security or whether Tokyo was Machiavellian in the ways it maneuvered the Clinton administration into seeking an expanded Japanese strategic option that some Japanese conservatives desire but which cautious Americans long have been reluctant to sanction for Japan.

The intricacies of that debate have been lost on most Americans because it is being poorly reported in the United States. Furthermore, when the debate is raised for discussion it seems patently hypothetical since Japan's actual commitment to do more for mutual U.S.-Japanese defense any time soon remains nebulous and rhetorical. The latter facet of the Clinton-Hashimoto summit is at the core of one trenchant American critical analysis by Cato Institute defense policy analyst, Ted Galen Carpenter. He accurately described it as an exercise in "smoke and mirrors" with changes that are "tepid" and "cosmetic."¹¹ The difficulty is that Carpenter and Cato are often discounted unfairly by more orthodox U.S. analysts of Japan as libertarian neo-isolationists who are out of the mainstream. Nonetheless, he and critics who are better known in Japan, such as Professor Chalmers Johnson of the University of California, are highly skeptical about Japanese commitments to really do anything to defend the United States and the interests in Asia which it shares with Japan to an extent remotely approximating the level of long-standing American commitments to defend Japan and its interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

As someone who in the past has been just as critical of Japan's defense policies, and of U.S. acquiescence to Japan's reluctance to engage in truly mutual defense, I am tempted to join the critical chorus once again. This time I am constrained from doing so by several factors. Not the least is the emphasis in the Clinton-Hashimoto summitry and associated documents on the concept of reciprocity in U.S.-Japanese defense. As the author over a decade ago of a volume called *U.S.-Japan Strategic Reciprocity*,¹² use of this concept in this contemporary context must elicit a positive response from this analyst. Nonetheless, cynicism remains warranted about the genuine commitment of Japan to reify its rhetoric. Only time will tell, of course.

What is most intriguing about the results of the Clinton-Hashimoto summit and nascent actions in its wake is that both the United States and Japan may have maneuvered themselves into a new type of relationship that neither actually intended. Inadvertently the generally liberal Clinton administration has begun using a very conservative approach to this specific defense issue. By "conservative" I am not referring to the type of defense conservatism usually associated with Hoover, the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, or other conservative think tanks normally considered to be on the cutting edge of the Republican Party's policies. They are generally more cautious about doing anything which might diminish American control of regional defense strategies in any part of the world. Bill Clinton was not emulating Bob Dole in this instance, unlike some of the recent presidential campaign's other issues. In that case, what is so "conservative" about this liberal administration's overtures to Japan?

On the face of it Clinton administration officials certainly do not consider their defense policies in Asia to be conservative. Their emphasis on multilateralism, an instrument for reinvigorating internationalism and globalism, is intended to be an antidote to the dual strategic tracks that characterize contemporary American conservatism—a strong unilateralist wing and a resurgent non-interventionist wing (often erroneously labeled “isolationist”). As the United States copes with the diverse challenges of the post-cold war era with no clear blueprint to guide it, the Clinton administration is creatively recycling the liberal internationalist notions that have been the foundation of U.S. foreign policy since the Second World War.

In adapting these notions to the uncertain new era Washington has tried to make them fit the times by demonstrating respect for the accomplishments and stature which U.S. allies during the cold war accrued over the years. In short, some effort is being devoted to moving beyond the rhetoric of burden-sharing to put teeth into the security arrangements through power-sharing. It is problematical whether there is genuine substance in these modified arrangements or merely improved rhetoric with better spin. In the case of the U.S.-Japan security relationship the Clinton-Hashimoto summit was supposed to convey real movement on both sides toward authentic substance. While Ted Carpenter is correct to express cynicism about the level of diplomatic obfuscation and spin that was evident, and to call for a move toward bilateral “burden shifting,” it is clear that neither Tokyo nor Washington intended to go that far. This is what seemingly warrants Carpenter’s call for a new U.S. policy toward Japan.

Although neither Japan nor the United States appears ready to make such a dramatic step, both may have inadvertently created a joint policy agenda which will foster more than greater coordination of alliance leadership. The consciously non-revolutionary moves by Tokyo and Washington designed to reassure each other and the region have unleashed an evolutionary transition calculated to produce what might be called “leadershift,” in a play on words. Americans are transferring local leadership incrementally to Japan, whether it wants it or not. This is a *de facto* conservative policy stemming from liberal geopolitical motives. In the name of creating greater parity in regional security leadership and responsibility that is commensurate with the relative economic and political status of the United States and Japan as they prepare to cope with the 21st century, both countries have taken steps that promise to inject a new and very conservative dynamic into their respective roles in world affairs.

In effect the United States and Japan after the Clinton-Hashimoto summit are rearranging the United States’ global policeman’s role in favor of an

Asian variant of what Americans in a domestic context call "community policing." Normally this, too, is a liberal theme, because it connotes an emphasis on a local community's control of its police force's activities in ways that help assure ethnic and racial diversity and make the police more sensitive to community needs and aspirations. It is considered in the United States to be a very "politically correct" approach to police work. But when this paradigm is transferred out of its domestic context to international affairs, it assumes decidedly conservative proportions because it represents a means for Washington to devolve the United States global policemen's role downward to a regional power which can assume burdens, costs, and responsibilities that Americans no longer want to bear to the extent they did in the cold war. This does not suggest that a regional power will assume all the former roles played by the United States, because America expects to remain as a nexus, coordinating global policing, but it would be substantially supplemented by a "regional cop." In this case, Japan is being maneuvered into being Asia's regional *omawari-san* sitting in its neighborhood *koban*, keeping an eye out for trouble.

This devolution of strategic power toward regional community policing is a very conservative theme because it entails several of the hallmarks of contemporary American conservatism. It is a move away from a centrally controlled form of governing, with its rigid and stifling authority patterns, toward local engagement and responsibility. In terms of the "leadershift" concept, it represents the strategic version of corporate or bureaucratic downsizing and rightsizing because essentially the same geopolitical goals are achieved in a streamlined fashion by outsourcing the necessary defense tasks to another entity—namely Japan.

This process has injected something new into the long-term debate occurring in Japan about its security options. Against the background of growing legitimacy for an expanded Japanese defense role, overt expressions of concern about developments in North Korea (and a future united Korea) that may threaten Japan, post-Gulf War pressures on Japan to do more than engage in rhetoric, and renewed appreciation for the role of the military portion of Japan's comprehensive security doctrine, the Clinton-Hashimoto summit reinforced the notion that Japan might be expected to undertake greater strategic responsibilities than it has previously within the confines of the U.S.-Japan alliance. This does not mean that Tokyo is ready to precipitously accept an expanded role, but it does mean that mutual sanctioning of such a role is now on the record. That could be a crucial event if one bears in mind the tendency of the Japanese not to devise grand strategies as blueprints for future policies. Instead, the Japanese tend to wrap new labels on successful ongoing un-labeled policies that evolve

gradually. It is this process of gradual evolution that has been nudged in a significantly different direction by the Clinton-Hashimoto summit. Fortunately for Japan's neighbors in Asia, this new direction shows no signs of being a radical departure from the present. Almost certainly a Japanese "regional cop" would be concerned with the same elements of comprehensive security Tokyo today stresses and would seek to build regional stability through enhanced confidence and interdependence.

A perverse aspect of this evolving form of cooperation is that it perpetuates in the U.S.-Japan alliance a new variant of the peculiar form of psychological co-dependency called *amae* in Japan.¹³ In the past the alliance's *amae*-style interdependence was characterized by U.S. strength and Japanese deference. While stressing the positive virtues of cooperation among partners, it displayed the classic signs of co-dependency marked by external referencing to measure credibility, sacrificing one's interests for the sake of others who often are ungrateful, controlling behavior in order to manipulate others, and generating a sense of importance by being needed by others. In the aftermath of the Clinton-Hashimoto summit and gradual movement toward a stronger regional cop's role for Japan, it is very uncertain what impact "leadershift" will have upon U.S.-Japan co-dependency. Before both countries go too far down this path, Washington and Tokyo should pay closer attention to this troubling issue and its consequences for Northeast Asian regional stability.

U.S.-Korea: Anxious Times

There is little doubt that South Koreans will keep an attentive eye on these shifts in U.S.-Japan security ties because they cause considerable anxiety among the Korean allies.¹⁴ One of the deep-seated fears long motivating South Korean strategists is the prevention of undue Japanese influence over American defense and foreign policy specialists in Asian affairs. Most pointedly, Seoul has sought a level playing field where South Korean interests and opinion would receive a roughly equal hearing from Americans. This is a major incentive for Korea to pursue multilateralism. ROK officials and security-oriented scholars have chafed at an American preoccupation with the U.S.-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific region. That frustration has been underscored by a long-standing Korean belief that the ROK is a far better ally than Japan is for the United States because South Korea is more cooperative and flexible than Japan.¹⁵ That Korean perception has great validity, but so does the American perception of Japan as a "cornerstone" for the United States in Asia.

During the post-cold war period prior to the Clinton-Hashimoto summit South Koreans were uncertain about U.S. intentions, but remained confi-

dent that events were unfolding in ways overwhelmingly advantageous to the ROK. Seoul knew it was part of the winning coalition in the cold war. As important, Seoul knew that North Korea was a major loser in the cold war, albeit a state that survived the cold war's termination. The strategic pendulum has swung decidedly in South Korea's favor. Even the North-South Korean military tensions that loomed larger in global terms after the cold war ultimately served the ROK's strategic purposes because the nuclear threat, increased risks of renewed warfare, concerns about North Korean domestic instability, and the means used to cope with all three helped to focus American attention on Korea in ways that gave the ROK greater parity with Japan. Also entering into these calculations were South Korea's economic ascendancy, Seoul's creative diplomacy with many countries (but especially vis-à-vis China), and South Korea's expansive strategic thinking.¹⁶ The latter encompasses a greater readiness to become a more viable regional partner for the United States through enhanced sea and air power, development of an omnidirectional defensive mindset that put a hint of distance between Korea and the U.S.-Japan alliance, exploration of various multilateral options for the future (that shall be assessed below), and contemplation of a range of strategic contingencies for a united Korea.

All of these factors seemed to place South Korea in an excellent position to deal with a dual-pronged American policy for Northeast Asia. In short, there were ample reasons for Seoul to think that the ROK was approaching parity with Japan in American eyes and could aspire to regional equality as a partner of the United States.¹⁷ It is, of course, still possible to visualize South Korea or a united Korea evolving toward that sort of regional role. However, the Clinton-Hashimoto summit and its impact on U.S.-Japan relations diminishes Korea's prospects for level playing field treatment by Americans. Unless a future U.S.-Korea summit devises comparable revitalization formulations for Korea, it will be increasingly difficult for Seoul to compete with Tokyo for Washington's attention.¹⁸

Fortunately for Koreans, neither Americans nor Japanese appear to be in any rush to fulfill the intensification of U.S.-Japan cooperation, much less the kind of strategic "outsourcing" noted above. This provides Korea with several opportunities. Foremost today, especially with a second Clinton term in office, Seoul can contemplate various forms of multilateralism as vehicles for Koreans (and other Asians) to dilute the dominant influence of Japanese over Americans. It is much easier for Koreans to appear important and useful to Americans if Korea is measured on a broader international spectrum and not compared only to Japan.¹⁹ Furthermore, given the likelihood of a "muddling-through" reactive process in U.S. policy-making and an absence of an overriding strategic threat, Seoul has additional opportunities to shape the context in which it will be treated by Washington.

As anxious as Koreans are about Americans' reinvigoration of the U.S.-Japan alliance, which can be seen as occurring at Korea's expense, there are two more problematical prospects on the horizon. One is the perennial problem of North Korea. As much as South Koreans would like to be rid of that danger and enjoy the fruits of unification, there are enormous uncertainties surrounding the strategic questions of how (and when) Korean unification shall occur, and what comes next after unification. Korea has been a front burner issue for the United States and Japan precisely because it is a divided nation whose tensions endanger the entire region. Once its division is resolved, will Korea matter nearly as much? To be sure, Korea's location assures that it will always matter in the regional balance of power. But there is much less reason for confidence about how Americans will perceive a united Korea versus U.S. interests in China and Japan. Therefore, Seoul has strategic reasons to want to drag out the resolution of Korea's division long enough that Seoul can try to cultivate post-unification arrangements and to hedge its bets against the day when Korea may not be able to rely as much on the United States in the context of a Sino-Japanese dominated Asia.²⁰ This could be a major conditioning factor in the evolution of U.S.-Korean security relations. Seoul's uncertainty about American plans and intentions can be seen in ill-concealed South Korean suspicions about U.S. motives. It also may be a factor behind South Korea's unseemly espionage against the United States, apparently intended to acquire more accurate information about the United States' policies than South Koreans thought they were receiving from American officials.²¹

In another variation on that theme Korea also has to be concerned about signs that Asia may confront a new form of coalition containment focused on China. While that prospect might seem desirable as a means for Seoul to reinforce its importance to Washington, perhaps at Tokyo's expense, there are many risks associated with such a development. It is not clear that South Korea or a united Korea would want to line up against China in cooperation with the United States and Japan, making itself an instrument of U.S.-Japanese policy.²² That option would fly in the face of everything Seoul has been doing diplomatically and economically in recent years to ingratiate itself with China. It also would pose great risks to any Korean hope to rely on China in the future should the United States not be there to buffer Korea from Japan.

In short, as the post-cold war era begins to encompass the 21st century, Korea faces a series of daunting challenges. They all point to a Korean need to develop a relatively autonomous Korean national strategy. Moreover, Korea needs to cultivate a cadre of capable strategists, rather than tacticians.

This formidable task is complicated by the dependency characteristics of the U.S.-ROK alliance with its frequent overtones of *sadae jui* (subservience). Unfortunately, Korea's relations with its Asian neighbors do not offer brighter alternatives. As much as Korea has changed over the past half century, one factor remains surprisingly constant. There is a Korean saying about Korea being a "shrimp between two whales." South Korea's successes, and the prospect of a still stronger and larger united Korea one day, allow Koreans to joke that it now a "jumbo shrimp." But the reality remains that China and Japan are disproportionately more powerful than Korea. There is scant likelihood of that truism ever changing. This shall compel Korea to be as creative as it can be and to consider not just the next decade or two, but how it will get along with the two "whales" for many generations to come.²³ This constraint is a crucial variable for Koreans and Americans to bear in mind as we try to adjust to unfolding circumstances, and to Korean efforts to assert leadership.

Future Factors

Clearly one of the key conditioning factors that will shape Northeast Asian security will be the degree to which multilateralism becomes institutionalized. At present the main model of the region is the Southeast Asian experiment in multilateral security cooperation being carried out by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). This entity is "institutionalized," but just barely. It is, as its name suggests, a forum for discussing security concerns rather than resolving them or taking coordinated action. At best it is evolving toward a regional concert of powers. It is a far cry from NATO or even the CSCE. The basic reason for ARF's diffuse nature is the loose character of ASEAN as a parent organization. As much as Koreans and Japanese who would like to pursue some kind of regional security organization are critical of the shortcomings of ARF and would prefer something more substantial, such as a CSCA, they have had great difficulty achieving any unity of purpose.²⁴ Despite ASEAN's looseness and ARF's diffuseness, the Southeast Asians have at least created them and made them work, more or less. Northeast Asia is not yet close to that level of success. The best prospect today would seem to be some variant of what is now called the Northeast Asia Security Dialogue (NEASD).²⁵ This plus various second-track efforts, such as those which spin off from economic cooperative measures, more specific efforts at regional arms control,²⁶ and security-related confidence-building measures²⁷ provide reasons to hope that multilateral security agendas may be able to be more thoroughly institutionalized.

As much as advocates of multilateralism want to build stable Northeast Asian security on the foundation of the region's lasting economic interde-

pendence with the rest of Asia and the West, there are reasons to be cautious about such projections. Interdependence may be more perilous than is commonly thought today by the partners in the U.S.-ROK alliance. As the 21st century approaches, conventional wisdom holds that it may be the "Pacific Century" because of Asia's vaunted economic growth. East Asia, Southeast Asia, and—increasingly—South Asia are growing rapidly, elevating several regional economies to world class proportions. If these trends continue, many analysts expect by 2020 or so that China and Japan will become the world's largest economies, ahead of the United States, and a few others in Asia—notably Korea—will surpass some European countries accustomed to being near the top of the heap. This adjustment process may be difficult psychologically for the West, but an even more troubling prospect is the uncertain outlook for Asia's adjustment to capitalist economic cycles—booms and busts—that Western economies have experienced repeatedly. This uncertainty poses a genuine risk for security bonds such as the U.S.-ROK alliance.

For most of Asia the widespread adoption of capitalist ways under Asian, rather than foreign imperialist control, is a post-Second World War phenomenon. Even for Japan which practiced an imperialist form of capitalism in the pre-war era, Western-style free market-based capitalism is largely a postwar development. In this past half century Asia's economies have experienced the ups and downs of market forces, periodic stock market "adjustments" plus less frequent but more prolonged bear markets that spawn recessions. However, they have been relatively minor fluctuations compared to the severe crashes and lengthy depressions Western capitalist economies have lived through for many generations.

In the wake of the Great Depression several national and international governmental instruments have been devised to try to modulate the market cycle and prevent extreme bottoming out. Despite those efforts and other preemptive mechanisms that probably will be devised over time, the odds are very strong that we have not seen the last of radical economic busts. While troubling enough when they occurred amongst nations which share substantially similar values, perceptions, and traditions, the modern world economy has not experienced an economic crash encompassing peoples of vastly divergent cultures. Certainly the U.S.-ROK alliance, maturing in an age of prosperity, has not yet confronted one of these extreme cycles. As the world economy grows and prospers, praise is routinely heaped on the merits of interdependence.²⁸ Clearly, we are far more integrated economically today than has ever been true for the West and Asia. To paraphrase Kipling, the "twain has met." The global economy today has three conjoined motors in Europe, North America, and Eastern Asia. Arguably the most

dynamic of these is in Asia, centered in Northeast Asia. If prosperity continues long enough for Asian leaders and masses to truly internalize Western capitalism's economic values into their cultural and intellectual make-up on a widespread basis, there should be no reason to worry unduly about Asia's different reactions to a future economic depression. Unfortunately, this full-fledged socialization of economic values could easily take several generations. Moreover, this process may never occur if Asians do not fully accept Western forms of capitalism. Instead, they may continue to adapt free market capitalism to local circumstances, modifying the associated values to conform with the group-oriented interests of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and China versus the individualism which undergirds Western capitalism.

Were an international depression to erupt without most Asian capitalists marching to approximately the same drummer as Westerners, East-West interdependence and harmony could be shaken to its roots. Asian, American, and European reactions to such a severe downturn in the economic cycle could prove highly destabilizing for the global economy that would already have been buffeted severely by the crash itself. These differing reactions could exacerbate the next major depression and wreak havoc with global security. The repercussions likely would be particularly severe in Northeast Asia where the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances could be devastated.

This is not to suggest that Western responses to a prospective depression would necessarily be more efficacious. It is certainly possible that the Asian predisposition to doing what is best for their own group could yield effective solutions. What is far from certain, however, is the ability of Asian and Western leaders to work together harmoniously for the well being of the pan-national/pan-ethnic group that is the result of global economic interdependence. It is all too easy to visualize the members of this still unwieldy clutch of partners engaging in mutual scapegoating because of past episodes of recrimination over far smaller crises. Similarly, one can readily imagine the consequences for alliance cohesion and the impact on multilateral security arrangements. American-Japanese relations have weathered minor versions of such impugnments without damaging the U.S.-Japan alliance, but it is uncertain whether depression-induced blame would permit that alliance to survive. It is far less certain that the U.S.-ROK alliance could survive such a traumatic event.

Against this background it is in the interests of Asian and Western political and economic leaders to pay far more preemptive attention to the disruptive potential of economic cycles in a cultural and strategic context that has

not attained the level of interdependence reached by the economies. Just as presidential candidate Bill Clinton was noted for his 1992 campaign slogan, "It's the economy, stupid!", the leaders of diverse societies that are interdependent—whether they like it or not—should post a similar motto, "Depressions happen, stupid!" to sensitize themselves to the new dangers posed to regional security by Pacific Century economic cycles.

Continuing on that political note, much of what has been discussed in this paper could be influenced significantly were any future U.S. administration to steer the United States back toward greater unilateralism, backing away from the Clinton experiments with multilateralism. Senator Dole's campaign statements clearly suggested that a Dole administration would have stressed unilateralism and bilateralism and minimized multilateralism on the global level, with special scorn reserved for putting U.S. forces under UN command. Although the Dole campaign did not make any explicit comments about multilateralism in Northeast Asia, there is no reason to assume a Dole administration would have been more receptive to the notion than the Clinton administration. On the contrary, any conceivable Republican administration in the next decade would likely reemphasize its bilateral ties with Japan and Korea, in keeping with the party's principles. While that brand of conservatism and its stress on strengthening U.S. commitments to long-term allies would be welcome by many contemporary Japanese and South Koreans as a sign of U.S. steadfastness, it also would be a mixed blessing for them. After all, any administration over the next 10-15 years will inherit the legacy of a revitalized U.S.-Japan alliance (post-Clinton-Hashimoto summit) and might well perceive the regional cop role for Japan as an asset enabling the United States to guide a more efficient system.

Were a more conservative administration to succeed the Clinton administration, this could pose unanticipated problems for Tokyo and Seoul because they probably would face a more proactive U.S. administration with new tools available to it. That prospect is underscored by the virtual certainty that Republicans in Congress will push an agenda incorporating regional theater missile defenses and a much harder line toward North Korea. For South Korea, in particular, these prospects could cause consternation. On the one hand, were these elements in the United States to take the lead, South Korea would gain greater attention by the United States, but that might be more than offset by the increased risk of war, greater U.S. emphasis on Japan's regional leadership, fewer opportunities to use multilateral forums as means to diffuse Japanese influence, and—perhaps most unsettling—far greater chances of a U.S. effort to contain (rather than engage) China. In contrast to the past when South Korean leaders auto-

matically could be expected to prefer conservative U.S. politicians, that may no longer be true.

Any U.S. administration also will have to contend with non-interventionist tendencies among Republicans in Congress. It is highly speculative to estimate with any specificity what the consequences of their influence might mean for Korea, but there are some signs worth noting. Given their desires to cut costs, avoid gratuitous strategic entanglements, and encourage strong regional allies to fend for their own interests, were the non-interventionists to enjoy a dominant voice, there is no guarantee that the long-standing U.S. commitment to the ROK against its North Korean enemy would be automatically transferred to a new long term commitment to a united Korea under Seoul to defend it against whatever threats it might perceive.

U.S. policy toward Korea also will be influenced by inter-Korean politics and policies. In the short term, as American policy toward a reuniting Korea takes shape, there remains a real chance that the elimination of North Korea will not be a peaceful event. Were war to erupt again in Korea en route to ending the Korean version of the cold war, most analysts believe it would not last very long. Whether short or more prolonged in duration, a new war in Korea poses dangers well beyond the damage that would be inflicted on the Korean nation. The main danger for regional security is that the other U.S. ally in Northeast Asia would do little or nothing on behalf of what Americans widely perceive to be a common cause.²⁹ Were Japan to abstain in those circumstances, tremendous damage will be done to American support for a U.S. commitment to Northeast Asia. One need only recall the anxieties aroused by Japan's weak initial responses during the Gulf War and its wishy-washy attitudes toward cooperation during the spring 1996 U.S.-PRC confrontation over Taiwan to get a sense of what could occur if Japan does not actively offer military support to the U.S. and ROK against the DPRK in a crisis that will end the Korean cold war in ways that directly serve Japanese interests. Conservative congressional reactions to such prospective events are very predictable, regardless of who occupies the White House, but they would be particularly acute if non-interventionist Republicans were to control the Congress and the White House.

Outlook

Without making any predictions about U.S. or Asian politics, it is nonetheless important to note that there is a chance that during the next five years the United States, Japan, China, and either both Koreas or one Korea could be led by a new cast of characters. Because of that political volatility all parties should carefully consider their options, weigh the alternatives, and pre-

pare contingency plans. The Asian parties in this delicate balance shall do so as their interests dictate and probably will be able to perceive relatively clear-cut agendas. For the reasons outlined above with regard to warranted American ambiguity about a hegemonistic role, the United States is less likely than the others—no matter who leads in Washington—to create a clear policy blueprint. Because of this evolving tendency to pursue a reactive policy rather than set the pace and tone for the Northeast Asian region, the states of the region need to adjust to a more accommodationist America and to pay greater attention to their own strategic visions that will in the long run shape East Asia's balance of power.

In that light and in order to close on an upbeat note, these circumstances may be conducive to an indirect American initiative supportive of Asian initiatives. If Americans are unlikely to pursue bold initiatives and run risks for Asian peace, and that seems to be a prudent assumption, there is no reason why the United States cannot make a virtue out of its relative passivity by indicating its receptivity to leadership initiatives from Asian countries. Such a reactive policy of indirection actually would be very "Asian," giving potential proponents enough wiggle room to avoid losing face. Were any country in Asia to devise such a proposal, put it on the table for consideration, and work toward fostering a consensus about its desirability and feasibility, it could work. Moreover, it could yield an Asian form of stability without undue overt dependence on the United States.

The possibilities in this regard are as diverse as the imagination of Asia's leaders. For present purposes, however, the United States could—and should—indicate its readiness to consider and support ideas from Korea (South and North) about resolving tensions on the peninsula, and creating new security structures, developing broader and more flexible approaches to regional security. Given the uncertainties about Korea's future status as a unified country, and what that may imply for the United States' commitment to its security,³⁰ it is important that Koreans and Americans be prepared to contemplate a wide range of contingencies. Leadership in that process is best shared, rather than imposed by one side.

notes for chapter two

1. For a review of that transition, see Edward A. Olsen and David Winterford, "Asian Multilateralism: Implications for U.S. Policy," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* (Summer 1994): pp. 9-40.
2. The most cogent and persuasive critique is Chalmers Johnson and E.B. Keehn, "The Pentagon's Ossified Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1995): pp. 103-114.
3. This pungent phrase was used by a panel of experts to summarize the prevailing view held by Asian critics of U.S. policy toward Asia at a U.S. Air Force-sponsored conference on Asian Regional Security Issues, Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia, 26-27 June 1996.
4. The leading proponent of that view in the Clinton administration was Joseph Nye. See his "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1995): pp. 90-102, and *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990). See, also, Joshua Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership, A Challenge to Neo-Isolationism* (Washington: The AEI Press, 1996).
5. For analyses of Chinese policies that could precipitate a new containment policy by the U.S., see the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (13 April 1995): pp. 24-30; *The Washington Post Weekly* (31 July-6 August 1995): pp. 16-17; and Ron Montaperto, "China as a Military Power," *NDU Strategic Forum* (December 1995).
6. For an example of Americans who share this desire that the United States pursue a role as a "benevolent hegemon," see William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward A Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1996): pp. 18-32.
7. James C. Thompson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, and John Curtis Perry, *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).
8. The author examined the crucial differences between these labels in "In Defense of International Abstention," *Strategic Review* (Spring 1996): pp. 58-63.
9. For a recent example of American advocacy of greater clarity in U.S. policy toward Asia, see Daniel I. Okimoto, Henry S. Rowen, Michel Oksenberg, James H. Raphael, Thomas P. Rohlen, Donald K. Emmerson, and Michael H.

Armacost, *A United States Policy for the Changing Realities of East Asia* (Stanford: Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, 1996).

10. Portions of this section appeared in the *Nikkei Weekly* (19 August 1996), under the title "Liberal U.S. Motives Have Conservative Results in Security Pact."

11. Ted Galen Carpenter, Cato Foreign Policy Briefing No. 41, 16 May 1996.

12. *U.S.-Japan Strategic Reciprocity* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985).

13. For an explanation of the nuances of this kind of dependency, see Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971).

14. For an overview of those anxieties, see Song Young-sun, "Korean Concern on the New U.S.-Japan Security Arrangement," *Korea and World Affairs* (Summer 1996): pp. 197-218.

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chapter three

**The
Viability of
U.S. Security
Strategy
Toward the
Korean
Peninsula**

*William J. Taylor, Jr. &
Abraham Kim*

Introduction

The end of the cold war resulted in a mixed bag of challenges in the Northeast Asia region. The Soviet threat is gone, but the danger of regional instability is not. Lingered conflicts, old rivalries, and security challenges pose an uncertain future for the Asia-Pacific. The U.S. military presence still remains an important stabilizer in the region. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense, William Perry stated: "It is [the U.S. military] presence that the countries of the [Asia-Pacific] region consider a critical variable in the East Asia security equation. . . . [and] the most important factor in guaranteeing stability and peace."¹

Three basic principles of the U.S. strategy of engagement in Asia are spelled out in United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region. The first principle is reinforcing alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines to identify their new foundations in the post-cold war world. The second is to maintain 100,000 forward-deployed American troops in key locations throughout the Asia-Pacific to provide continual deterrence against belligerent countries (e.g., North Korea), to insure U.S. involvement in emerging Asian affairs and to protect U.S. interests in the region. The third principle is the development of regional and multilateral institutions (e.g., APEC, ARF) to buttress existing treaties and commitments with allies and nurture cooperation and confidence among Asian countries.²

Central to U.S. security interest in the region is promoting stability and peace on the Korean peninsula. For more than five decades, the United States has heavily invested both money and lives to deter, thwart and rollback North Korean military aggression. Today, 37,000 American troops still remain as a "tripwire" to ensure hostility and conflict do not breakout along the most heavily fortified border in the world, the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

Although the end of the cold war did not end Korean hostilities, the two Koreas were not unaffected by the global political changes. The dissolution of the communist world was clearly a turning point in the balance of power on the Korean peninsula. Most notably, it spelled doom for Pyongyang. Virtually abandoned by the Soviet Union and kept at arms length by China, North Korea lost its fundamental political, economic and security relationships in its struggle against the South. Isolated by its economic partners and burdened by its inefficient command economy, North Korea's economy quickly crumbled, becoming no longer sustainable. Economic deterioration accelerated in 1995 and 1996 as waves of torrential rain battered the DPRK countryside destroying crops, infrastructure and homes. North Korea is facing a severe economic crisis that is undoubtedly undermining

the uncertain leadership of Kim Jong Il. Political and economic change is inevitable; it is a question of how this transformation will occur—reform, coup d'état, collapse and/or war.

With the rapidly developing events and changing conditions on the Korean peninsula, analysts and policy-makers in Seoul and Washington realize that the parameters for the Korean problem have changed; we are no longer facing a strong, stable North Korea with a menacing military, but an unstable, starving and increasingly desperate country with a "loaded gun"—the military and a potential nuclear threat. The conditions now are more volatile than they were during the cold war. Washington, Seoul and other regional allies share a common objective to avoid violent conflict from breaking out on the peninsula. Many are asking, is the current U.S. defense strategy capable of addressing the increasingly complex security situation on the Korean peninsula? Is there more that Washington can do to insure South Korean security and regional stability with the unpredictable future of North Korea? This paper will attempt to address these difficult questions.

A Changing Region

With the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the dynamic economic growth of the Asia-Pacific, the regional balance of power in Northeast Asia is undergoing a transition. Principles and commitments that served as the foundation of many relationships during the cold war are being reexamined. Many of these changes have important implications on the power balance on the Korean peninsula and the effectiveness of U.S.-ROK military forces in sustaining peace. Let us examine some of the changes.

Russia

The most significant global change in recent years was the demise of the Soviet Union. For decades, American allies in the Asia-Pacific region lived under the constant threat of Soviet military aggression, while Pyongyang depended on the Soviet strategic umbrella for leverage and protection against the South and the "imperialist" United States. But, within a few dramatic years, the Soviet Empire collapsed and the threat evaporated. From the ashes, an ailing Russia, plagued by economic chaos and political strife, emerged seeking economic assistance from the countries it once threatened.

Russian military activities and exercises in Asia have decreased significantly since the end of the cold war, and general military readiness has declined due to Russia's economic crisis and low military morale. With a lack of internal political stability and resources, it is unlikely that Russia will be a signif-

icant military and political player, let alone a security threat in the Asia-Pacific region, for the foreseeable future.

But, Russia has gone through periods like this before, when domestic considerations and difficulties have diverted its attention away from the Pacific. In each case, the preoccupation has passed and Russia has returned to the region with new vigor. There is little reason to expect that it will be different this time. The question is, how long before Russia revives its strength in the region? No one can know for sure, but twenty years would be a reasonable time frame, assuming that no further disasters befall its transition from the Soviet state.

The dramatic changes that were occurring in the Soviet Union had a direct impact on the Korean peninsula's political environment. For five decades, the Soviet Union not only supplied the DPRK with modern arms and military training, but assured protection under its nuclear umbrella and promised unequivocal support for North Korea in the case of war. Moscow's commitment to Pyongyang, however, began to falter in the late 1980s as the Soviet leadership saw the potential benefits of establishing ties with Seoul. By 1988, when Moscow announced that it would attend the Seoul Olympics over the objection of Pyongyang, it became clear that ROK-USSR relations were warming, and heading for a fundamental change. In 1989, President Roh Tae Woo and President Mikhail Gorbachev met in San Francisco for a summit meeting. One year later, Moscow and Seoul signed a basic treaty formalizing ties between the two governments.³

Moscow's ties with Pyongyang, on the other hand, turned sour. The North Korean newspaper, *Nodong Shinmun*, lashed out against the Soviet Union, labeling Moscow's establishment of diplomatic ties with Seoul as "betrayal to Pyongyang" and "a divisive action against the unification of Korea. . . . selling out its ally's interests and mutual trust for \$2.3 billion."⁴ Pyongyang recalled its ambassador to Moscow in May 1990 as an expression of displeasure. But, the greatest impact was felt on the economic front. The Soviet Union, which had accounted for more than 50 percent of North Korea's trade until 1991, ended its barter trade system with North Korea and demanded hard currency for its exported goods at world market prices. Bilateral trade precipitously dropped.⁵ The most significant blow to North Korea was the decrease in petroleum imports. Oil shipments went from 410,000 tons in 1990 to only 30,000 tons a year by 1992.⁶ This dramatic drop in trade caused mass disruption in the economy; Pyongyang attributes its current economic crisis to the USSR abandonment.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of Yeltsin did not bring any change to growing Russian emphasis of South Korea over the North. Igor

Rogachev visited Pyongyang in January 1992 as a special envoy of President Boris Yeltsin. His trip was not to reaffirm Moscow's ties to Pyongyang; the reverse was true. He was there mainly to discuss a reinterpretation of the military clause and weaken Moscow's commitment in the existing Friendship and Mutual Assistance Treaty between the two governments. Although the trip ended with no real consensus, the treaty was essentially dead.⁷ On a number of subsequent occasions, Moscow repeatedly stated that it would not come to Pyongyang's aid in the event of any hostilities initiated by North Korea.⁸

Recently, Moscow has adjusted their Korea policy from a one-sided, South Korea-focused approach toward a more balanced one. Although Russia cannot contribute significantly to Asia-Pacific security, the Russian leadership still sees itself as a Pacific "power" and remains interested in becoming deeply involved in regional issues, particularly in the effort to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. Realizing that cutting ties with Pyongyang would only further decrease Russia's leverage in the Asia-Pacific, Moscow has made a concerted effort to turn around the declining Russia-North Korea relationship. In April 1996, Russian Deputy Premier Vitaly Ignatenko traveled to Pyongyang to discuss the restoration of bilateral trade relations with his counterpart Deputy Premier Hong So Nam. Meetings between the two leaders concluded with the signing of a protocol that the two governments will work to increase trade and promote technological cooperation.⁹ Russian *Itar-Tass* news agency recently reported that Russia and North Korea will soon embark on discussions for a new bilateral treaty to replace the 1961 Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Treaty that expired in September 1996 and to strengthen ties that have been weakened since the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ It is yet unclear if these two governments will restore the trust and cordial relationship that was disrupted during the final days of the Soviet government, but what is clear is that Pyongyang will not receive the unequivocal support that it enjoyed from Moscow during the cold war.

China

The main concern for many Asia-Pacific countries, including the United States, in the near term is how to deal with the rise of China as a major power in Asia. Many analysts and policy-makers in the United States and throughout the Asia-Pacific region are becoming increasingly suspicious of China's long-term military ambitions as it continues to grow as an economic regional superpower and modernize its defense apparatus. China's active duty military, at 2.9 million personnel, is the largest in the world. It also stands as the only nuclear power on the Asia continent, possessing 16 ICBMs that can hit virtually any target in the world, 60 IRBMs, one nuclear-armed submarine and countless tactical nuclear warheads. Though

imposing, China's conventional capability remains 10 to 20 years behind most modern militaries. The air force consists primarily of Korean War-vintage fighters, despite the recent acquisitions of Russian MiG-31s, Su-27s and Su-31s. The naval fleet, though the largest among Asian countries, is a green water navy at best. China lacks military projection capabilities, but it is clear that its cooperation with Russia¹¹ and its booming economy is slowly providing the modern technology and technical base to advance China's military into a force with regional, if not global, power projection capabilities.¹² The question is, once China achieves these potentials, how will Beijing project "power" in its various forms and for what purposes? It is a question on the minds of Asians, as expressed during a Washington trip by the current Japanese Foreign Minister. Noting that China's defense spending has been increasing by about 20 percent annually, he said, "Japan is not defining China as an enemy, a threat or a risk," adding that nevertheless, Beijing's military buildup must be taken into account as "an objective fact."¹³

It is not yet clear if Beijing's intention for its current military modernization is to establish a regional hegemony. For now, however, China's number one priority is economic development, not war. Therefore, peace and stability in the region is critical. Recently, in response to the heightened tensions arising from the North Korean submarine infiltration incident, Chinese officials stated, "China is willing to cooperate with other countries to bring into play positive and constructive action to uphold the peninsula's peace and stability."¹⁴

Although China is the only country that continues to maintain a cordial relationship and bilateral security treaty with the DPRK, Beijing, like other neighboring countries of the Korean peninsula, strongly supports a peaceful solution to resolve the current tensions between the two Koreas. Beijing has made it clear that it will not support any North Korean offensive military campaign.

Pyeongyang has long prided itself on its self-sufficient military, but few believe it would be capable of sustaining military operations against the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC) without considerable outside military support. North Korea can no longer rely on Beijing and Moscow for providing military assistance. The loss of support from these two critical governments clearly serves as a deterrent factor.¹⁵

Japan

Japan's post-cold war security role is undergoing a transformation. Japan's international political and security activities still remain limited by public sentiment and Japan's Peace Constitution, but policy-makers both in Washington and increasingly in Tokyo view the need for Japan to become

more involved in the overall security and stability of the region. The scope of Japanese military activities within the context of the U.S.-Japanese security relationship is gradually broadening—most recently, as a result of the newly signed Agreement Between the Government of the United States and Government of Japan concerning the Reciprocal Provision of Logistic Support, Supplies and Services Between the Armed Forces of the United States of America and the Self-Defense Forces of Japan (in short, Acquisition and Cross Service Agreement) by President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto in April 1996. This agreement opens the opportunity for Japan's Self-Defense Force to provide logistical support, such as refueling of American warships and fighters and transportation of goods, and greater cooperation with U.S. troops in military operations to maintain regional security and stability. One Japanese defense analyst described the new U.S.-Japan security arrangement: "Up until now, the security roles of the two countries were very clear—Japan was the shield only protecting itself and the United States was the sword. But today's declaration means that this clear role-playing is now over and Japan may be pushed to provide some kind of sword."¹⁶

Japan's evolving regional role has clear implications for security on the Korean peninsula, and has made some in Seoul nervous. For decades, American troops stationed in Japan provided additional lines of defense and support for South Korea against North Korea. In the case of a military crisis on Korean soil, American warships, warplanes and soldiers in installations located in Japan would be used to support the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command. However, with the growing call by the U.S. government for Japan to increase its involvement in regional security, Japan's role in a Korean crisis has recently been called into question. At this moment, this issue still remains to be resolved by U.S. and Japan defense officials. Both sides are now reviewing *Japan's 1978 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation* in hopes of advancing the defense planning process toward addressing specific contingencies, such as a Korean conflict.¹⁷ Objectively, increasing involvement of Japan in maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula would only work to strengthen deterrence against North Korea. However, some South Korean analysts and policy-makers fear that, once the United States begins the momentum for Japan to project its power overseas and remilitarize under the pretext of increased responsibility for regional security, it is only a matter of time that Japan would once again establish itself as a military power.¹⁸

The Korean Peninsula

Stability on the Korean peninsula is central to Asia-Pacific security, and to U.S. economic and political interests in the region.¹⁹ For four decades, the

U.S.-South Korean Mutual Security Treaty has assured the United States commitment to the ROK's national defense through the continual presence of American forces in South Korea. Based on this important security relationship, the two countries have broadened and developed political, economic and cultural ties making a bilateral relationship indispensable to each others' national interests.

In 1995, the total value of U.S.-Korea trade reached \$54.5 billion.²⁰ While the United States fell into a deficit with most Asian countries, the United States ran a surplus of \$6 billion with South Korea in 1995, a figure expected to increase to \$10 billion by the end of 1996. The United States ranks as South Korea's largest export market, while the ROK is the fifth largest purchaser of American goods and services.²¹

In the political realm, ties between Seoul and Washington are strengthened by a common democratic form of government. South Korea is an Asian democratic success story. Despite the recent negative publicity that South Korea has attracted over the corruption charges of its business leaders and political leaders as well as the conviction of two former presidents, South Korea, once touted as one of the most authoritarian regimes in Asia, is a remarkable example illustrating that economic development and political-civil development go hand-in-hand.²²

Although ties between Seoul and Washington are strong in the post-cold war era, policy coordination in dealing with the weakening DPRK has created tensions. The two governments agree on a common strategic objective: "to promote a process of stabilization and tension reduction that will maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula and ultimately lead to a peaceful reunification."²³ However, both countries, driven by different priorities, interests and domestic politics, do not always agree upon their approaches towards dealing with an uncooperative North Korea. For example, contention has emerged over the issue of using humanitarian aid as political leverage versus providing it unconditionally.

Both regional and global transformations have had a dramatic effect on the balance of power on the Korean peninsula. Today, North Korea is weakening daily from its economic crisis and is, at best, at arms length from the once loyal allies, China and Russia, that once unequivocally supported Pyongyang. The balance has tilted to South Korea's advantage. From a regional standpoint, South Korea's defense embodied in the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command stands as perhaps the most credible deterrent force against North Korea's military in the last four decades. But, as will be pointed out later, there are chinks in the CFC armor.

North Korea and the Unification Issue

For years, the question of Korean reunification has been based on the idea that two relatively equal states would engage in dialogue and eventually sue for peace, reconciliation and unification. But today, the parameters of reunification have changed drastically. The two Koreas are not equals. The North has staggering economic difficulties²⁴ while the Republic of Korea is an Asian economic "tiger," and the distance between the two has been growing rapidly. If and when the two countries progress toward unification, South Korea will bear huge financial costs. The question is how high the price will be. Recently, experts have predicted that the price tag for unification could range between \$200 billion and \$2 trillion.²⁵ Marcus Noland, an economist with the Institute for International Economics, recently estimated that it would take between \$500-\$750 billion of investment over a 20-25 year period for the DPRK's per capita income to reach 60 percent of the current \$10,000 per capita of South Korea.²⁶ However, like most "facts" about North Korea, no one really knows; we can only speculate. What is clear is that the cost of merging the two Koreas will be significantly influenced by the degree of North Korea's economic deterioration and if North Korea will collapse rapidly or gradually. In the worst scenario, a military conflict preceding reunification, the financial costs—not to mention human costs—will be astronomical. Thus, U.S. and South Korean policy-makers and analysts are pushing for a "soft-landing" policy that would prolong the period of unification and ease the ultimate burden that Seoul must bear for this process.

But, what is a soft-landing? Is it achievable? One analyst ambiguously defined it as "a gradual process of peaceful reunification over an extended period of time."²⁷ In other words, the objective is to avoid an immediate and chaotic change in the North Korean political-economic system that would require South Korea and her allies to intervene quickly to avoid a situation in which the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command would have to defend against a DPRK attack on South Korea as a last-ditch effort for survival. But, given the near disastrous condition of the DPRK economy and heightened North-South tensions in the wake of the September 1996 submarine infiltration, the proper direction to gradual and peaceful unification is unclear.

What is clear is that a soft-landing and a gradual reunification scenario must include certain key elements: 1) dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang; 2) substantial investment in and trade with the DPRK by South Korea and her allies; and 3) the adoption of substantial economic reform by North Korea. Two basic features will determine success or failure: 1) a concerted decision by Seoul, Washington and Japan to assist North Korea

out of its current crisis; and 2) a deliberate decision by Pyongyang to reform its system. Policy coordination between Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo in dealing with Pyongyang has not always been smooth. The three governments agree that it is their policy objective to reduce tensions and pursue peace on the Korean peninsula, but there have been tactical differences over how to engage Pyongyang. For example, the issue of using humanitarian aid as political leverage versus providing it unconditionally has become a point of contention among the three governments. But, the allies have agreed that in order to save North Korea from economic collapse, initiating dialogue with, investing in and trading with the DPRK is important.

In April 1996, Presidents Bill Clinton and Y.S. Kim proposed Four Party Talks (U.S./ROK/PRC/ DPRK) as a forum in which North Korea could be brought to the negotiating table to discuss tension-reduction measures on the Korean peninsula. Both South Korea and the United States agreed to assist North Korea's ailing economy if the DPRK were to accept these talks. On 15 August 1996, to further entice Pyongyang to accept the proposal for Four Party Talks and create a spirit of goodwill, President Y.S. Kim gave a speech commemorating the 51st anniversary of Korea's national liberation, and outlining three principles regarding peaceful unification: 1) South Korea will not take advantage of the North's current economic difficulties; 2) South Korea wants the North to join the international community; 3) peaceful reunification should be achieved without either side imposing its will on the other. Additionally, President Kim announced that South Korea would be prepared to assist in alleviating North Korea's food problem and agricultural depression as well as push for expanded trade and increased investment in the Rajin-Sonbong Special Economic Zone (SEZ).²⁸ North Korea's response to these policy initiatives has been vague and the recent submarine infiltration does not augur well.

Prospect for Change

How likely is it that North Korea will accept the ROK and U.S. proposals now on the table as inducements toward a soft-landing? Unlikely.

The basic notion behind a soft-landing is that, somehow, all parties involved will benefit from it. But, would they? Let us try to view all this through the eyes of Pyongyang's leadership. First, "landing" implies that some entity (i.e., the DPRK) will decline or fall. And, the terms "hard" or "soft" characterize how an entity would go down—with a bang or a sputter. Whichever it is, the conclusion is the same—the eventual termination of the current *juche* system of North Korea. Thus, for the DPRK leadership, whose survival is tied to the current system, the issue of hard- or soft-land-

ing is moot. It is a question of choosing the means of one's own demise. The soft-landing approach serves the self-interest of South Korea, not the DPRK. A soft-landing would make it less costly for South Korea to pick up the pieces after the current DPRK regime has crumbled.

DPRK Power Succession and Unification

Any discussion of unification must consider the question of Kim Jong Il's succession to power and the political and ideological institutions that sustain the current *juche*-based system. Although Kim Jong Il has not officially accepted the titles of President and General Secretary of the KWP, the general opinion among analysts who focus on North Korea is that Kim Jong Il is recognized as the *de facto* leader. Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's meticulous effort to build the foundation for political succession has paid off for the time being. But, does Kim Jong Il have the same unfettered power and control over the country that his father had? His legitimacy as ruler is closely linked to the legacy of his father, and how he sustains this legacy and the *juche* system will have major influence on the support of key constituents.

At the Sixth Congress of the Korean Worker's Party (KWP), when Kim Jong Il was anointed as the successor to his father, the party leadership outlined three reasons why the junior Kim was selected. One, a successor had to be selected to continue the revolutionary struggle that was initiated by Kim Il Sung and the KWP and carry it to its ultimate completion. The understanding was that the *juche* revolution could not be accomplished in one generation, thus a successor who is absolutely loyal to the movement had to be the torchbearer. Kim Jong Il was the most capable person to lead the revolution for the coming generation. Second, the new leader had to embody the characteristics and strengths of the Great Leader, which Kim Jong Il did. And, finally, reflecting on the political turmoil after the death of Stalin and Mao, a successor-designate was to be selected to avoid power struggles that usually emerge after the death of the leader.²⁹

Some analysts believe that the anointment of Kim Jong Il was born out of Kim Il Sung's fear that, after his death, the political and ideological kingdom that he built would meet the same dismal fate of other authoritarian leaders such as Mao, Stalin and Ho Chi Min—the demystification and criticism of the Great Leader and revision of the revolutionary movement. Senior Kim trusted that his “revolutionary cause [would] be pushed forward by his son whose loyalty he trusts above all others.”³⁰

The speeches of senior North Korean leaders and the DPRK media commentaries make it appear that Kim Jong Il will be held to this father-son

trust. He has been touted as the "eminent theorist and ideologist who embodies the *juche* ideology" as well as "a tested revolutionary who embodies perfectly and is realizing brilliantly the distinguished leadership art of the Great Leader."³¹ Therefore, not only does Kim Jong Il possess the "brilliance, wisdom and leadership" exemplified by the "Great Leader," but he is also the only one qualified to carry out the revolutionary struggle and socialist construction instituted by his father "through the generations until its completion."³² Kim Jong Il may be the next living ruler of North Korea, but his dead father sets the parameters for his authority. In brief, Kim Il Sung—embalmed for all to see—"rules from the grave."

In addition to moral obligation, we must consider the institutions that have been created to protect and perpetuate the *juche* ideology since Kim Il Sung's first enunciation of the home-grown, Marxist-Leninist ideology in 1955. Every aspect of North Korean society has been slowly shaped into a monolithic system of authority under the Great Leader's exclusive leadership.³³ Over the years *juche* evolved from a political slogan into a complex ideological system that mobilized the entire country under the rule of one person, Kim Il Sung. In 1986, a significant advancement was made in the *juche* ideology with the institution of the doctrine of "socio-political life." This doctrine captured the anthropocentric nature of *juche* that argues that mass is the primary force of socio-political development but the masses need the party and the Leader for guidance.³⁴ Moreover, it also systematized the idea, contrary to Marxism, that "human behavior is guided not by conditions and relations of production but by the direct guidance of the leader."³⁵ The relationship between the Leader, the party, and the masses was compared to the human body. The Leader is the brain that gives guidance and the masses serve as the various body parts that follow directions as well as give feedback. The party serves as the nervous system that mediates and conveys important information between the brain and the various organs.³⁶

What is important to highlight here is the vital role of the party and the interdependence between the Leader and the party in maintaining control over the country—and the military. The party draws its authority or direction from the leader while the leader cannot exercise his authority and execute policies without the party.³⁷ Kim Jong Il himself explains:

The most important thing to the revolutionary movement is for the party leadership to make a scientific analysis of the situation created at each stage and to forward a correct line and policies, strategy and tactics and thus clarify the road of struggle. . . . Another important thing in party guidance to the revolutionary movement is to

strengthen its kindred ties with the masses and organize them to implement the line and policy set forth by the leader.³⁸

The party and its leadership has just as much at stake in the maintenance of the current political-ideological structure as the Leader to ensure their authority and control over the system—including their lavish life-style and perquisites. I know; I have seen them.

In 1987, the *Juche* Academy of Science was established to protect, develop and promote Kim Il Sung's *juche* system. The *juche* theoreticians of this academy assisted in taking the ideology a step further by developing it into a systematized quasi-theology. As Hwang Jang Yop, one of the architects of *juche* and its leading theoretician, pointed out, "*juche* will not be perfected as a philosophical system without being 'religionized.'"³⁹ Borrowing and distorting Christian doctrines such as eternal life and the Trinity, *juche* ideology attempts to instill absolute loyalty to the system. For example, one can obtain immortal life by relinquishing selfishness and individualism and integrating one's existence into the society. By sacrificing and serving for the betterment of society, one becomes a part of society and will be remembered for his contribution by its people in the present and by the people to come for eternity. Through the deification of the *juche* system, the Leader may pass away, but the loyalty of its followers will be assured.⁴⁰

In this light, we can see the difficulty of introducing liberal economic policies that may change and undermine one or more pillars of the *juche* belief system. True reform within North Korea would have to involve fundamental reforms of the economic planning mechanism and the introduction of market principles in decision-making, production and allocation of resources.

Economists argue that North Korea cannot follow a gradualist reform strategy similar to those implemented in China and Vietnam. The economies of China and Vietnam were primarily agrarian, and the size of their heavy industrial sector were small when the two governments began their reforms. The growth and increased standard of living that resulted from initial agricultural reforms provided a cushion to absorb some of the political shock waves of reform and countered the erosion of political legitimacy.⁴¹ However, for more industrialized, centrally-planned economies, such as those of some Eastern European countries and North Korea, gradual reform is not an option.

Marcus Noland explains the necessity of comprehensive reform for more industrialized, centrally-planned economies rather than a piecemeal

reform strategy: "The more highly interdependent nature of industrial enterprises means that a whole host of reforms (macro-economic stabilization, introduction of rational pricing, liberalization of international trade and introduction of a convertible currency, tax bankruptcy, and social safety net reforms, etc.) are a seamless web and must be done simultaneously for reform to be successful economically, and politically sustainable."⁴² In other words, the complex nature and the inter-connected institutions of an industrial complex requires the implementation of a series of reforms to successfully break the socialist pattern of the economy and to be able to replace the socialist structure with a market-oriented economy. Some analysts argue that fast institutional change in the economy and political structure is important for industrialized, centrally-planned economies if economic transformation is to avoid the danger that reforms will become bogged down and carried out only in part to lessen the social disruption of protracted economic structural crisis.⁴³

Introducing real economic reform in North Korea would require basic changes in the theo-political belief system that shapes and drives the economic system. In the eyes of those who work to protect *juche*, reform may be considered as "treason," "blasphemy," or even a direct attack on the embalmed Kim Il Sung himself. A second problem with reforming the economic system is that it would cost party authorities directly. Economic reforms, such as decentralization of bureaucratic planning or self-management of factories to free industries from unproductive intervention and allow the market to control production, would either weaken or cut the links between the party-government bureaucracy and the masses. In other words, bureaucrats and party cadres who manage and control economic production from the planning level down to the factory floor would have to relinquish their power and authority (and perquisites) to market forces.

As Chalmers Johnson argues, the bureaucracy in a totalitarian society is a rigid, self-preserving institution that will resist any change that would rearrange the patterns of power relationships within the government, particularly efforts to ease the control of party-government control over the functions of state to allow the market to control the economy.⁴⁴ As has been learned from other transition socialist economies, to eliminate economic interference of the bureaucracy, is to dissolve the bureaucratic command structure all together.⁴⁵

Then, one must consider the dependence on *juche* of certain groups in North Korean society for their authority and livelihood. As mentioned above, the unique role of the party gives members a high level of authority as the Great Leader's messengers. With this status, the three million

members of the KWP are given privileges and special treatment. North Korean society is categorized into three general groups: 1) the core, 2) unstable, and 3) hostile class. The core class (about 30 percent of the population) consists of party members and the elite of North Korea. The upper class children are allowed to attend privileged schools such as Mankyongdae. High cadres live in luxurious residences, possess high quality, foreign goods, attend extravagant parties at the "The Dear Leader's Pleasure Palace" (I know; I have been there.) and have telephones and radios capable of receiving foreign broadcasts. Most of them live in Pyongyang or within major cities and are recruited for influential positions in the military, party or the government apparatus.⁴⁶ The weakening or destruction of the *juche* system would threaten the privileges enjoyed by members of this higher caste. Thus, those with the greatest political influence are also those least likely to accept reform.

Beyond protecting the power and perquisites of the elite, the *juche* system is needed to maintain order among the masses. *Juche* provides the justification for the sacrifice the common people must make within an oppressive system. The North Korean masses are told that their sacrifices today will guarantee their independence and the eventual reunification of the Korean people.⁴⁷ As a *Nodong Shinmun* article on the second anniversary of Kim Il Sung's death explains:

Even though our struggle for succession to and perfection of the *juche* revolutionary cause is painful and difficult, we will surely triumph someday and live a happy and rewarding life looking back upon the pain and difficulties of today. If we are to bring the *juche* revolutionary cause to perfection under the respected Comrade Kim Jong Il's leadership, we have to restrengthen the Party, the People's Army and the League of Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth. . . . With a strong Party, a strong army and a strong youth league, there is nothing we cannot achieve and there is no enemy we cannot beat.⁴⁸

Given the above considerations, it is difficult to foresee any deliberate and meaningful reforms by the Kim Jong Il regime.

Economic Reform?

The political and ideological factors which stand in the way of DPRK reform cannot survive; change is imperative. Most, but not all, analysts agree that current economic crises are eroding Kim Jong Il's legitimacy. Lacking the charisma and the revolutionary background of his father, the Old Guard of the father's era and the people will judge Kim Jong Il by his

performance, despite all the efforts to portray Kim Jong Il as the embodiment of Kim Il Sung.⁴⁹ Many analysts of North Korean affairs conclude that economic conditions already are affecting junior Kim's rule. Although he is in power, he cannot elevate himself to fill his father's post of State President and Party General Secretary under current economic conditions.⁵⁰

Kim Jong Il is faced with a "Catch-22" situation in which the two pillars of his legitimacy are mutually destabilizing. *Juche* requires him to maintain a strong, centralized and controlled economic system while economic tensions pressure him to loosen the government's grip over production and to introduce a free market system. Either way, junior Kim will ultimately undermine his own authority and break the link of legacy with his father.

The current plan of the North Korean leadership appears to be three-fold. The first answer to the current economic situation is intensifying campaigns, mobilization and terror. As the *Nodong Shinmun* quotation stated above illustrates, the masses are increasingly called to sacrifice for the *juche* revolutionary movement and invest for tomorrow's happiness. In addition to ideological campaigning, South Korean intelligence reports indicate that security agencies in the DPRK government have been empowered to enforce stability and instill fear among the general public.⁵¹ Recent defectors have testified that growing demoralization of the general populace has led to increased public executions to deal with a surge of crime.⁵² The question is: how long will ideological campaigns and coercion be effective in keeping people in line before it begins to ring hollow in the ears of starving North Korean citizens and an increasingly deprived military? As B.C. Koh argues: "Coercive power alone cannot maintain the regime indefinitely and it is particularly deficient as a means of ensuring a smooth transition in the political arena. Normative power . . . may well have reached the point of diminishing returns. What remains, then, is 'utilitarian power'—the use of material incentives."⁵³

Second, Pyongyang is depending on the anxiety and generosity of the international community to address immediate hunger needs. The September 1996 submarine incident may well lead international actors to conclude that largesse buys nothing but trouble from Pyongyang's leadership, and that there must be an end to the North's brinkmanship.

Third, and most important, Pyongyang is aggressively promoting and developing the Rajin-Sonbong special economic zone (SEZ). Established in 1991, the original plan for the SEZ was to be an extension of the UN Development Program's Tumen Development Program. Seeing the success of China's trade zones, Pyongyang hoped that it, too, could draw foreign

corporations to invest billions of dollars into a sealed-off, 288 square-mile SEZ in an isolated northeast sector of the country. The goal of its planners is to extract technology and capital from foreign enterprises while controlling foreign, infectious, liberal influences within a cordoned-off area and without actually opening society and reforming the system.

For five years, the SEZ failed to draw in any significant investment. Far behind its twenty-year construction schedule which was to begin in 1992, the Rajin-Sonbong project simply has failed to facilitate commercial activities because it has not secured even the \$4 billion that is required to construct an adequate transportation system, expand port facilities and establish basic service facilities. Much of the industrial infrastructure, built during the Japanese colonial period, is undeveloped and inadequate to support a dynamic manufacturing and trade hub that the North Korean government has sought. As of this writing, Pyongyang has secured \$350 million worth of agreements, but only \$34 million are reported to have materialized. So far, only one Swedish investor and a Chinese trading company have invested in the SEZ. And, only a couple of international banks (i.e., Peregrine and ING) have agreed to do business with Pyongyang, which has repeatedly defaulted on loans.⁵⁴

To revitalize the interests of international businesses to invest into the SEZ, Pyongyang drew 450 businessmen, journalists, academics and government representatives from twenty-six countries to the SEZ in mid-September 1996 to participate in a three-day "marketing" conference. Noticeably absent was the South Korean delegation. With great fanfare, North Korea announced that it had signed another \$286 million worth of contracts, including a \$180 million agreement with Hong Kong-based Emperor International to build a five-star hotel and casino.⁵⁵ This is a beginning, but far from adequate. North Korea needs not a handful of investors to channel money into the zone, but a flood of funding for infrastructure and industrial projects to get the SEZ off the ground.

In 1991, many were skeptical whether the zone would ever succeed; five years hence, despite the current DPRK euphoria, almost everyone who pays attention knows that it will not. Within five years, Pyongyang has ruined the two principal components that would have given the zone any possibility of success: 1) confidence of potential investors in the stability of North Korea; and 2) the cooperation of the South Korean government and businesses. In addition, the Rajin-Sonbong SEZ is not the only economic zone. It must compete against other zones located in China, Vietnam, Indonesia and other developing countries that also provide inexpensive labor, tax benefits and market access.

Who might actually take the chance to funnel capital into North Korea's high risk zone? Other Koreans. First, there are about 150,000 Koreans residing in Japan who have close ties to North Korea. They sponsor investments in the DPRK based on their loyalty to the North Korean regime. But, their investments have been primarily in small and low-technology projects, having negligible value for economic development. Second, there are the large South Korean business conglomerates which have developed grandiose plans to construct oil refineries, textile factories, hotels, convention centers and billions of dollars worth of other projects. As Michael Breen aptly stated, "[It is the] South Korean investors who have the incentive—and the nerve—to invest in a politically unstable country. It's going to be South Korea running the show." In other words, South Korea is the key to getting the SEZ off the ground. The success or failure of South Korean business in the zone will be the litmus test for Japanese and Western companies considering whether or not to jump into the action.

But, political tensions have prevented any significant South Korean capital to be channeled into the North Korean economy. Though flexible at times, Seoul has limited investments made by South Korean companies to \$5 million, mainly on a process-on-commission basis. Only if the political environment on the Korean peninsula improves will these limitations be loosened. The political environment, as of this writing, is in a state of crisis.

In any case, opening the SEZ is not enough to have a significant impact on the North's current economic problems. First, building a dynamic SEZ that will significantly benefit the general economy would take years, if not decades. Under its current downward trend, the DPRK does not have the time required. Second, the SEZ may attract capital and technology, but these resources would be squandered within the North's *juche*-based, centrally-planned economy. As noted above, although the DPRK leadership insists that its current economic problems emerged from the dramatic reduction of trade with former communist countries, North Korea's economic decline began before trade relations deteriorated. The SEZ will be a hopeless endeavor for improving economic conditions within North Korea unless internal economic reforms complement external reforms.

Bitter End

With all the roads out of its economic morass heading toward a dead end, it appears that the current regime is in dire straits. Some analysts have argued that North Korea is at the brink of collapse, while others assert that North Korea is more resilient and such a prognosis is premature. No matter who is correct, North Korea is on a linear path toward some type of collapse.

A collapse could potentially produce a wide range of dangerous scenarios for the security of neighboring countries. There are scenarios of massive refugee flows into China and across the DMZ that may precede or accompany an economic collapse. Stanley Roth argues that these mass migrations could produce a very tense situation and potentially instigate a war if North Korean refugee movements were resisted by DPRK security forces, leading South Korea to intervene.⁵⁶

Another, more immediately threatening scenario, would be a massive DPRK military attack south of the DMZ as a last ditch effort to survive. With ever worsening energy and food shortages in North Korea, some have suggested that the DPRK's military readiness has been reduced, but with two-thirds of a 1.2 million, well-armed force forward-deployed near the DMZ, it can destroy Seoul in short order. The recent capture of the North Korean submarine carrying infiltrators is evidence that a violent conflict is still a viable threat.

Why Worry About North Korea?

There have been recent debates about the combat readiness of the Korean People's Army (KPA). Some suggest that the oil shortages in North Korea have reduced the frequency and tempo of KPA training exercises. Others cite evidence from recent KPA defectors that, given the well-known problems of the North's agricultural system and two years of floods, the food rations of the KPA have been reduced, although not as much as those for the general population. But these debates remain without conclusive evidence that the combat capability of the KPA has been significantly reduced.

The last unclassified version of the JCS Joint Military Net Assessment was published in 1991. That assessment concluded that the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC) would win a second Korean War in about four months of mid-to-high intensity conflict. In our own assessment in the Political-Military Studies Program at CSIS, we would now win such a war in two months or less. Why?

Since 1991—the year that the U.S.-led coalition force defeated Saddam Hussein—a great deal has happened to improve the U.S. capability for joint and combined operations in both the Persian Gulf region and around the Korean peninsula. The improvements are across the board, but mainly in technology. The U.S.-ROK CFC can see and hear almost the entire battlefield via satellite, AWACs and JSTARS. What we can see, we can destroy. The KPA lacks such sophisticated assets.

Many analysts talk about the strength of KPA units dug deep underground where we cannot see or strike them. But, dug in and immobile, they are of little threat to South Korea. If and when they come out in the open to attack, we can see and destroy them. Given the rugged mountainous terrain of the Korean peninsula, there are very few valleys (corridors) through which the KPA could attack. The two main ones are the Chorwon and Munsan corridors. Both are near Seoul. If the North were to attack through either or both, the CFC would enjoy a "turkey shoot" reminiscent of the 100-hour war against the Iraqis. In short, after absorbing the brunt of a massive, DPRK short-warning attack, we would win decisively and quickly.

So, why worry about the DPRK military threat? First, even though the CFC wins in two months or less (there are some important considerations here about how much the Japanese would do to help us), the KPA would destroy Seoul in two to four days. Why? How? The three-part answer is simple. First, there is no missile defense of Seoul, and the DPRK has an estimated 85 surface-to-surface missiles which carry both high-explosive and chemical and, perhaps, biological munitions. Second, the adequacy of the air defense system around Seoul is questionable in the event of a very short warning attack. Some KPA aircraft with high-explosive and chemical bombs would get through. No one knows how many, but the fact that Seoul's air defense warning system failed in May 1996 to sound the alarm when a defecting North Korean pilot penetrated the ROK airspace with a MiG fighter is not reassuring. Third, although the number of counter-battery radar units around Seoul, designed to quickly identify incoming artillery rounds, track back to the DPRK firing units and destroy them has increased, there are not enough of these radars. Thus, rapid responses to the massive number of DPRK artillery and rocket launchers deployed near the DMZ within striking range of Seoul is problematic. The bottom line is that Seoul is naked and vulnerable!

How can this be? Seoul is the jewel in the ROK crown. Depending on your definition of "Seoul's boundaries" after years of urban sprawl, about eleven million Koreans live there and Seoul represents about 25 percent of the total ROK economy. Then, there is the fact that roughly 59,000 Americans live/work in South Korea (about 37,000 troops, approximately 10,000 business people and roughly 12,000 dependents of both), mostly in or around Seoul.

How can Seoul and Washington accept such risks from North Korea? It is simple; it is about who will pay for missile defense, upgrading air defense and many other aspects of military capability. With a booming economy,

the ROK government wants Seoul's defense to be paid for by the United States. Washington, on the other hand, thinks that the ROK government should bear the financial burden for the defense of Seoul. In the meantime, little happens.

Inviability of U.S. Security Strategy

None of the U.S. or ROK diplomatic initiatives, including the nuclear Agreed Framework, rice giveaways, or Four Party Talks proposal have moved us closer to peaceful North-South unification. Peaceful unification as a strategic objective is lost in the shuffle, although all parties in Northeast Asia pay lip service to it. *Juche* ideology notwithstanding, the DPRK leadership knows that unification means their own demise and absorption by the South. Signing up for unification means signing their own death warrants. Seoul knows this too, but worries mightily about the costs of a DPRK "implosion."

The North's leaders surely are watching, and probably misreading, the political situation in the South (i.e., recent student riots and arrests, two former presidents in jail, a ruling party with a slim majority, charges and counter-charges of corruption) and are calculating how they can take advantage of the situation. We can be certain too that they are observing the major U.S. military commitments in the Persian Gulf and Bosnia and the potential unraveling of the U.S.-led peace process in the Middle East. If they believe that the U.S. is militarily overstretched, and if their typical pattern of diplomacy holds, we should anticipate some form or other of typical DPRK brinkmanship again soon based on Mao's dictum—"When you meet steel, retreat; when you meet mush, advance."

Peaceful unification and even peaceful coexistence remain elusive. Both Pyongyang and Seoul have domestic problems, though of very different magnitudes, and are focused on priorities other than unification. Seoul is intent on keeping the democratic process working. Pyongyang is intent on maintaining the *juche* dictatorship. In the meantime, given all the uncertainties of the day, Seoul and Washington should redouble their vigilance and look to our common security interests.

New Strategy Required

The United States has vital national interests in regional stability in Northeast Asia, in the security of our ROK ally, in the security of about 59,000 American military and business people and their dependents, and in billions of dollars of U.S. private capital investment and trade.

Given that we know so little about the inner workings of the *juche* government and the motivations of its leaders; considering that the pattern of DPRK brinkmanship creates repeated situations of high tensions along the DMZ; understanding that wars occur more often than not by accident or miscalculation during times of high tension; and recognizing the damage that the DPRK could inflict on Seoul if war were to break out by either accident or miscalculation; there are a number of policy changes which should be made with the concurrence of Seoul and Tokyo.

1. Get an agreement fast with our ROK ally on who pays what share for the systems required to protect/limit damage to Seoul—particularly missile defense, air defense and defense against DPRK long-range artillery and mortars. Production of new systems takes too long, so decide what risks we can take elsewhere in the world by shifting required military systems to the ROK now.
2. Give Pyongyang a definite date for the resumption of North-South dialogue on two existing agreements: Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the Agreement on Non-Aggression, Cooperation, Reconciliation, and Exchanges.
3. Make continuation of funding to the DPRK for light-water reactors and infrastructure development, future supplies of oil and humanitarian food supplies contingent on initiation and continuation of North-South dialogue. The approach should be: the DPRK enters talks; we and our allies supply. They stop talks; we and our allies stop the supply.
4. Stop playing around with representative offices in Pyongyang and Washington and with removal of U.S. sanctions; link progress on both areas to 2) and 3) above.
5. All parties refuse to participate in the SEZ without substantial ROK involvement there.
6. Get our policy straight on human rights; if this is an important interest in East Asia and the Pacific, then apply the same standards across the board.

The bottom line is that, if the United States is to remain the "World's Sole Superpower"—which much of the world expects—then Washington must get back to *realpolitik* in relation to Northeast Asia. International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. This is the one thing that the DPRK leadership understands.

notes for chapter three

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between Russia and China. For example, Moscow is negotiating with Beijing to build a MiG-31 production line in China as well as to purchase the manufacturing and technology rights. China has already recruited many Russian and Ukrainian technicians and scientists for long-term service on developing high-tech armaments and nuclear weapons. The two countries are also embarking on joint ventures, the first to be electro-optical defense items and a reconfigure of the designs. This is the first of what is expected to be numerous future joint ventures. Moreover, there are unconfirmed reports that China has acquired Russian cruise-missile technology (GAO, *National Security: Impact of China's Military Modernization in the Pacific Region*, GAO/NSIAD-95-84, June 1995, pp.19-21; Unattributed, "The Chinese Navy and Regional Security," *Asian Defense Journal*, September 1995, p. 7).

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chapter four

**North
Korea
and
the
United
Nations**

■ *Samuel S. Kim*

Introduction

On 17 September 1991, the first day of its (46th) annual session, the United Nations General Assembly admitted the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) as the 160th and 161st member states.¹ This historical turnabout was made possible by what had already happened in the Security Council five weeks earlier. Indeed, the 3001st meeting of the Security Council on 8 August 1991 may well be remembered as one of the remarkable events or nonevents in the annals of global high politics in the world organization. Since 1947 the Korean question, in a great variety of contentious manifestations, has proved to be one of the most intractable problems constantly intruding upon wider East-West geopolitical and ideological rivalries in and out of the world organization. Yet, on this day the Security Council devoted only five minutes—between 11:30am and 11:35am EST to be exact—to finally crossing the Rubicon on divided Korea. Without any debate, the Council unanimously adopted the report of the Committee on the Admission of New Members concerning the applications of the two Koreas for admission to membership in the United Nations.

Equally revealing is the rather unusual manner of the action. The two separate membership applications were merged into a single draft resolution, and the Council decision—and recommendation to the General Assembly—was adopted without a vote as Resolution 702 (1991).² The brevity of the Security Council action merely underscored the consensus of the Perm Five (P-5) to accept the two separate membership applications as a package deal so as to prevent the intrusion of the zero-sum style of inter-Korean politics even as the decision itself was touted as consonant with the principle of universality and as such as the triumph of both Koreas in their quest for international legitimation. That a collective decision could be made in 1991 to perform diplomatic surgery as delicate as separating the Korean Siamese Twins is another testimonial to the virtuous circle of UN rejuvenation in the early post-cold war years. The end of superpower conflict in the world organization thus disposed of the Korean membership issue as the last festering cold war problem.³ The four major membership problems relating to the divided polities of China (1971), Germany (1973, 1990), Vietnam (1977), and Korea (1991) that have been plaguing the world body over the years were finally cleared off the UN agenda. By accepting and legitimizing the two Koreas as two separate but equal member states, the United Nations has expanded the possibility of both Koreas peacefully coexisting and cooperating in and out of the world organization. It is worth noting that the United Nations as the most important and universal international organization⁴ has been made to order to perform the dual role of physician and priest in the collective legitimation of new states.

UN membership has come to be viewed as the imprimatur of international recognition and legitimation—a national identity badge, as it were—that no self-respecting country, especially divided or breakaway ones, could do without. The collective dispensation of legitimacy resides in the exercise of UN authority. This remains one of the major functions of the so-called UN politics of collective legitimation and delegitimation.

And yet, far from accepting its UN membership as a diplomatic triumph or even as a grand bargain for state security and survival, Pyongyang reacted in a way that was defensive and despondent to a fault. The statement of the DPRK Foreign Ministry dated 27 May 1991 and submitted to the Security Council reversing its long-standing opposition to the simultaneous dual entry formula, acknowledges in a bitter tone Pyongyang's entrapment dilemma:

Taking advantage of the rapid changes in the international situation, the south Korean authorities are committing the never-to-be condoned treason to divide Korea into two parts . . . by trying to force their way into the United Nations As the south Korean authorities insist on their unilateral United Nations membership, if we leave this alone, important issues related to the interests of the entire Korean nation would be dealt with in a biased manner on the United Nations rostrum and this would entail grave consequences. We can never let it go that way. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has *no alternative but to enter the United Nations at the present stage as a step to tide over such temporary difficulties created by the south Korean authorities.*⁵

The objective of this essay is to explore the logic of North Korea's international relations as made manifest in that country's behavior as a member of the United Nations over the past five years (1991-96). Perhaps most suggestive as a point of departure for such a macro-level analysis is the premise that half Korea plus half Korea equals two states with two systems siring two incomplete nation-states; and that such divided nations are primed for a zero-sum and often violent version of the politics of national-identity mobilization to maximize their exclusive security and legitimacy. I propose the notion of competitive legitimation and delegitimation as a promising yet relatively underutilized way of capturing the dynamics of North Korean politics as they have unfolded over the years in three separate but mutually interconnected and interdependent spheres—domestic, external, and inter-Korean. As the first truly global organization in all of human history, the UN provides the most legitimate institutional expression of the idea of global community, helping to facilitate, however imper-

fectly, the establishment of global consciousness-raising, consensus-building, standard-setting, and law-making processes to deal with problems that threaten international peace, human security, human rights or the world's social, economic, and ecological well-being. As for the politics of divided Korea, however, no other global arena matches the importance of the United Nations. It is there that Pyongyang and Seoul, having searched the world over for a forum, can most effectively engage in the global politics of collective legitimation and delegitimation.

To Join or Not to Join

It seems useful to step back a little bit to better appreciate the changes and continuities in North Korea's attitudes and policies toward the UN and to better assess the outer possibilities and limitations of Pyongyang's constructive engagement in the world organization. The politics of competitive legitimation and delegitimation was set in motion in 1945 with the two Koreas starting from an identical cultural and historical baseline and taking separate paths in a state-making, identity-forming, and legitimacy-seeking process under the sponsorship of the two competing superpowers. This was the beginning of a legitimation-cum-identity crisis that has played a role in molding the politics of divided Korea. The sources of that crisis have been more or less the same for both countries: (1) leadership and succession problem from within (democratization challenge); (2) clear and present challenge or threat from the other Korea (national-identity challenge); and (3) twin security dilemmas of allied entrapment or abandonment from without (security challenge).

Over the years both Koreas have taken turns in the roles of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in a competitive legitimation and delegitimation game played on multiple chessboards. The establishment of the ROK on 15 August 1948 and its repeated claim to represent the entire Korean peninsula and people as the sole legitimate government on the basis of UN-supervised elections and General Assembly Resolution 195 (III) of 12 December 1948 gave rise to Pyongyang's first identity/legitimacy challenge. In less than a month, Pyongyang reciprocated by establishing the DPRK, claiming to represent all of Korea on the basis of the 1948 election of a "People's Assembly." Taking advantage of the UN's legitimation, the ROK government applied for membership in the world body on 19 January 1949, and the DPRK followed suit on 9 February 1949 with predictable outcomes—the former was accepted by a vote of 9 to 2, though the Soviet veto barred the country from joining, while the latter was voted down by a margin of 2 to 8. Between 1949 and 1975 the ROK applied for UN membership at least four times while the DPRK submitted its application for membership in 1952 and even went

along in 1957 with the Soviet proposal for dual membership for both Koreas. Although the ROK could not force its way into the United Nations because of the Soviet veto, the entire UN system during the heyday of American hegemony (1945-71) had stood on the side of South Korea in the two countries' fight to represent the entire Korean peninsula. Still, it is worth noting in this connection that in the 1950s and 1960s it was Seoul, not Pyongyang, that was advancing a claim for absolute legitimation. No such claim was made in 1949, 1952, or 1957, when Pyongyang's membership was placed on the UN agenda, by the DPRK.

The situation began to change dramatically in the first half of the 1970s with a role reversal. It was now Pyongyang's turn to launch a global diplomatic bid for absolute legitimation while Seoul retreated into a more realistic claim for dual legitimation. Indeed, the 1970s stand out as the *belle époque* of Pyongyang's engagement in the politics of competitive legitimation.

Table 1
Number of Countries Recognizing the DPRK and ROK, 1948-1995

Month/Year	DPRK	ROK	Both Koreas	Only DPRK	Only ROK	UN Membership
12/1948	8	0	---	8	---	58
12/1950	12	6	---	12	6	60
12/1955	12	6	---	12	6	60
12/1959	14	15	---	14	15	82
12/1962	16	54	---	16	54	110
12/1965	23	73	---	23	73	117
12/1970	35	81	---	35	81	127
06/1976	93	96	49	---	---	147
10/1980	102	115	64	38	51	154
10/1985	103	126	69	34	57	159
10/1990	109	146	90	19	56	160
12/1992	127	169	117	10	52	179
10/1995	132	180	126	5	54	185

SOURCES: Adapted from the Research Institute for National Unification, *Nampukhan guk'yok ch'use pigyo yonku* [A Comparative Study of the Trends in the National Power of South and North Korea] (Seoul: Research Institute for National Unification, December 1993); pp. 547-48; The Board of Unification, *Pukhan kaeryo '95* [Synopsis on North Korea '95] (Seoul: Tongilwon, December 1995); pp. 450-57; UN Press Release, ORG/1156 (19 January 1993).

A number of major changes and trends in the international situation (e.g., East-West *détente*; the American defeat in and disengagement from Indochina; the entry of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations; and the rise of the Third World as a collective global actor calling for a New International Economic Order [NIEO]) made Pyongyang's grand entry into world politics possible, where it had many more hits than misses in its quest for international legitimation. Seoul's seemingly insurmountable head start in diplomatic recognition all but vanished in the 1970s, as Pyongyang pursued a more flexible, diversified, and omnidirectional policy. By mid-1976, as shown in table 1, the number of countries recognizing Seoul and Pyongyang stood respectively at 96 and 93. In the frantic international competition for diplomatic recognition both Koreas abandoned the Hallstein Doctrine (or the Beijing Formula), thereby opening the way for dual recognition. Not a single country recognized both Seoul and Pyongyang in 1962; by mid-1976, however, some 49 countries had already done so without incurring diplomatic severance from Pyongyang or Seoul. Moreover, pro-DPRK votes in the General Assembly more than doubled from 17.2 percent in 1966 to 35.9 percent in 1975.⁶

Given the UN's one-sided involvement in the politics of competitive legitimation in divided Korea, Pyongyang's rejection of the world body's authority to deal with the Korean question should come as no surprise. Yet Pyongyang, in an adaptive manner, began to recognize the importance of the UN's normative power worldwide as well as the dominance of the Third World in the UN's politics of collective legitimation, at least in the mid-1970s. In May 1973, the DPRK managed to get itself admitted to the World Health Organization (WHO), one of the specialized agencies of the UN system, as a full-fledged member state. This entitled Pyongyang to follow Seoul's suit in establishing a UN observer mission in New York (29 June 1973). Faced with this challenge, the ROK government announced a new policy on 23 June 1973 including the dual membership proposal (i.e., admission of both Koreas as separate member states), thus signaling a major foreign policy shift away from its quest for absolute legitimation, only to provoke Pyongyang's immediate rejection. Kim Il Sung put forward a counterproposal that the two halves of Korea form a "Confederal State of Koryo" as a transitional step toward reunification and that "if the North and the South want to enter the United Nations before unification, they should enter as one state at least under the name of the Confederal Republic of Korea."⁷ From late June 1973 to late May 1991, North Korea's "principled stand" on UN membership remained firm and unyielding even as the two Koreas participated in all but name and voting in the world organization as two separate but equal observer state members.

The perennial debate on the Korean question came to a strange pass in 1975, when the General Assembly adopted two contradictory resolutions on the same day, one pro-ROK (Resolution 3390A) and the other pro-DPRK (Resolution 3390B). Ignoring the pro-ROK resolution, the DPRK pronounced this to be "an epochal event" and "a great turning point" in the history of UN politics.⁸ Moreover, Pyongyang's single-minded diplomatic offensive managed to produce another diplomatic feat: the decision of the Foreign Ministers' Conference of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), held in Lima, Peru, to accept Pyongyang's membership application while rejecting at the same time Seoul's.

In retrospect, however, the 1975 UN debate and its pro-DPRK resolution proved to be a Pyrrhic victory in Pyongyang's search for absolute legitimization. The 1975 debate and showdown, the last one on the Korean question, merely forced the world organization to dramatize the reality of the two separate governments, two separate systems, and two separate states in divided Korea. It is hardly surprising, then, that Pyongyang rather abruptly dropped its UN card in the wake of this "epochal event" and brought no more pressure to bear on its allies to reopen the Korean question.

In the broader context of the development of the politics of competitive legitimization, Pyongyang since the late 1970s has encountered staggering economic woes at home and serious diplomatic setbacks abroad, with its quest for absolute legitimization becoming ever more elusive and its national identity as a self-reliant socialist paradise ever more doubtful. Until the mid-1970s *juche* (self-reliant) ideology enjoyed considerable credibility as North Korea seemed on the way to becoming an island of autocratic, socialist economy in a sea of world capitalism.⁹ By the 1980s, however, *juche* ideology could no longer perform its multiple national-identity-enhancing functions: to legitimize Kim Il Sung's "magnificent obsession" for national reunification on his terms, to delegitimize South Korea as a dependent U.S. colonial outpost; to minimize allied control and interference without losing allied support; and to establish global solidarity with the Third World in the quest for absolute legitimization.

Even in the Third World, Pyongyang's principal domain for international support by virtue of its membership in the NAM, North Korea in the 1980s suffered a series of diplomatic setbacks. The Third World quest for the NIEO exhausted itself, and American hegemony in the world organization returned by the end of the decade. Greatly buoyed up by a series of triumphs in its Nordpolitik, Seoul, in late 1989, submitted documents to the United Nations explaining its post-1973 position on the Korean UN membership question: that both Koreas should be allowed to enter the world

organization as two separate but equal member states as an interim measure pending reunification of the Korean nation.¹⁰ The rapid Moscow-Seoul *rapprochement* in the wake of the Seoul Olympic Games, leading to full diplomatic relations in September 1990, was a major diplomatic breakthrough in Seoul's bid for UN membership. The Soviet Union made it clear at the third Gorbachev-Roh summit meeting on Cheju Island in April 1991 that it would no longer help Pyongyang's quest for absolute legitimization by vetoing Seoul's application for UN membership. Besides, in the Gorbachev years the veto completely vanished from Soviet voting behavior in the Security Council.

Thus the issue of Korean membership, which had remained dormant, had been reopened in a low-key way only to provoke Pyongyang's vehement opposition. Still, the best Pyongyang could do was to revive Kim Il Sung's "Confederal Republic of Koryo" formula as a transitional step to reunification: to wit, the two parts of Korea should apply for joint UN membership with each side taking turns sharing one revolving seat on a yearly basis.¹¹ For the domestic audience, however, Pyongyang as late as 18 May 1991 remained unyielding, denouncing Seoul's dual membership formula as "a criminally splittist act" and asserting that "it is the United States that has authored the splittist idea about the so-called simultaneous admission of the North and the South into the United Nations...in order to achieve their goal of keeping south Korea forever under their control as an aggressive military base and to strengthen their preparations for a new war by fabricating two Koreas."¹² By late May, however, especially after having failed to receive China's veto assurance, Pyongyang had only two options—to stage a showdown that would end with its certain defeat, thereby possibly missing its last chance to join the world organization, or to jump the gun on Korean UN membership. Against this backdrop came a statement from the DPRK Foreign Ministry on 27 May 1991, reversing its long-standing opposition to the dual entry formula and applying for UN membership.

Legally and practically, Kim Il Sung's proposal for the joint UN membership of the two Koreas as a confederation of states and Pyongyang's assertion that "the admission of our country to the United Nations is a matter of the internal affairs of our nation"¹³ are non-starters. Despite the "We the Peoples of the United Nations" opening line in the Preamble of the Charter, the United Nations, in law and in practice, has remained a state-centric organization affording little space to the representation of nations and peoples. Otherwise, we would have some 800 member nations rather than the present 185 member states. UN membership, as stipulated in Article 4 of the Charter, is open to states, not nations. As a primary juridical person and subject in international law, a state, by evincing several char-

acteristics that it shares with other states, such as territory, population, government, and independence of action (as stipulated in Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States), fulfills the basic requirements for entrance into the international community. A confederation of states, as implied in the DPRK proposal for joint UN membership, is a rather loose association of independent sovereign states based on an international treaty and has nothing to do with the question of state-making (state succession) or state membership in international organizations. It is little wonder then that there are no precedents for admitting a confederation of states as one single member state into any international intergovernmental organization, including the United Nations. As shown in the cases of Germany and Yemen, dual membership in the UN serves in no way to perpetuate national division, as contended by North Korea. The real reason for Pyongyang's long-standing opposition and forced reversal of its position lies elsewhere.

To Cooperate or Not to Cooperate

Generally, UN membership serves as powerful catalyst for expanding a state's membership in the world of international organizations—both international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs)—in addition to expanding a state's diplomatic ties with the members of the international community. Yet Pyongyang's UN membership has had little if any catalyzing effect upon expanding its membership in the world of international organizations. Tellingly, as shown in table 2, IGO membership has actually declined from an all-time high of 22 in 1987 to 18 in 1995, while INGO membership registered a modest increase from 155 in 1987 to 179 in 1995. Even Taiwan, a virtual nonentity or at best an international orphan in the state-centric world of nation-states and international organizations, has managed to join almost half as many IGOs and almost five times as many INGOs as North Korea has.

In the race for diplomatic recognition, as shown in table 1, North Korea's track record is better only in absolute terms, with the number of countries having diplomatic relations increasing from 109 in late 1990 to 132 in late 1995. In contrast, the number of countries having diplomatic relations with South Korea increased from 146 in late 1990 to 180 in late 1995. Even more revealing is the fact that the number of countries recognizing both Koreas—and thus following Seoul's dual membership formula in bilateral relations—has increased from 90 in late 1990 to 126 while the number of countries recognizing only the DPRK dropped from 19 in late 1990 to 5 in late 1995 with little change in the number of countries recognizing only the ROK.

Table 2
North Korea's Participation in International Organizations in
Comparative Perspective, 1960-1995

Country	1960	1977	1984	1986	1987	1989	1994	1995
North Korea	2 <i>22</i>	12 <i>63</i>	17 <i>113</i>	16 <i>137</i>	22 <i>155</i>	20 <i>141</i>	20 <i>175</i>	18 <i>179</i>
South Korea	19 <i>102</i>	39 <i>371</i>	37 <i>642</i>	36 <i>686</i>	39 <i>761</i>	41 <i>820</i>	47 <i>1034</i>	48 <i>1072</i>
China	2(a) <i>30</i>	21 <i>71</i>	29 <i>355</i>	32 <i>403</i>	35 <i>504</i>	37 <i>677</i>	50 <i>955</i>	49 <i>1013</i>
Taiwan	22 <i>108</i>	10 <i>239</i>	6 <i>429</i>	6 <i>419</i>	6 <i>464</i>	6 <i>554</i>	7 <i>775</i>	8 <i>809</i>
Japan	42 <i>412</i>	71 <i>878</i>	60 <i>1296</i>	58 <i>1222</i>	60 <i>1420</i>	58 <i>1583</i>	62 <i>1863</i>	61 <i>1889</i>
France	90 <i>886</i>	104 <i>1457</i>	93 <i>2227</i>	67 <i>1704</i>	81 <i>2264</i>	83 <i>2598</i>	85 <i>3038</i>	88 <i>3127</i>
UK	76 <i>742</i>	91 <i>1380</i>	79 <i>2021</i>	63 <i>1607</i>	72 <i>2091</i>	71 <i>2416</i>	71 <i>2846</i>	74 <i>2918</i>
USA	59 <i>612</i>	78 <i>1106</i>	65 <i>1593</i>	33 <i>804</i>	59 <i>1579</i>	64 <i>1933</i>	62 <i>2273</i>	64 <i>2327</i>
USSR/Russia	29 <i>179</i>	43 <i>433</i>	73 <i>668</i>	69 <i>646</i>	69 <i>714</i>	61 <i>806</i>	48 <i>822</i>	58 <i>1093</i>
Global Total	154 <i>1255</i>	252 <i>2502</i>	365 <i>4615</i>	369 <i>4649</i>	311 <i>4235</i>	300 <i>4621</i>	263 <i>4928</i>	266 <i>5121</i>

Note: IGO figures are in **bold** throughout the table; INGO figures are in *italics*.

SOURCE: Adapted from Union of International Associations, *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1985/86, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1985): pp. 1479, 1481-83; *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1986/87, 4th ed. vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1986): tables 2 and 3; *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1988/89, 6th ed., vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1988): tables 2 and 3; *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1989/90, 7th ed., vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1989): tables 2 and 3; *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1994/1995, 12th ed., vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1994): pp. 1681, 1683-85; and *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1995/1996, 13th ed., vol. 2 (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1995): pp. 1682-87.

What about Pyongyang's national role and global policy as made manifest in the world organization? North Korean participation in select UN organs and specialized agencies in the 1990s has generated a modest but still increasing repository of new empirical and behavioral data. It is now possible to tap into these data to draw up a composite of the style and substance of North Korea's global policy as made behaviorally manifest in its multilateral diplomacy.

Of all the UN-related organs and agencies, the General Assembly is the most suitable arena for such an inquiry. Most member states, especially small developing countries, consider the Assembly to be the most accessible and most highly visible forum in which to debate the global politics of

collective legitimation and delegitimation. It is their parliamentary diplomacy in various committee and plenary sessions that generates voluminous verbal and voting records. "The assembly was created," Woodrow Wilson once remarked about the League of Nations, "in order that anybody that purposed anything wrong should be subjected to the awkward circumstance that everybody could talk about it."¹⁴ In an age of global transparency, the United Nations in general and the General Assembly in particular, operating in global prime time and in the global limelight, generate normative pressure by structuring expectations and restraining the behaviors of its member states. Whether they like it or not, North Korea's international reputation and national identity are inescapably keyed to and conditioned by its deeds, not its words. "Do as I say, not as I do" does not work in UN politics.

Viewed in this light, what is perhaps most revealing about North Korea's UN diplomacy is the abiding primacy of unilateralism in bilateral clothing with little if any Asian regionalism or globalism. Even in the UN setting the dominant and recurring theme in Pyongyang's foreign policy pronouncements is *juche*. We are told repeatedly that *juche*-centered foreign policy remains unchanged and unchangeable. *Juche* is projected as the signature national identity of the DPRK. Moreover, *juche* is what "our style socialism" in the post-cold war era is all about. It is touted as "neither imported from, nor a replica of, that in any foreign country. It is a unique socialism . . . one which continues to grow stronger."¹⁵ What is more, *juche* is and becomes independence-cum-sovereignty, "the life and soul of each country and nation and the common right of mankind. . . . We regard independence as our life and soul. It is the cornerstone of the internal and external policies and approaches of our Republic."¹⁶ If North Korea's foreign policy pronouncements in the United Nations are taken at face value, state independence and sovereignty remain the lingua franca of its international *démarche* and the sine qua non of international order: the United Nations has no business except to better protect the sovereignty of its member states. More broadly, however, the sovereignty-centered image of international order bespeaks a deeply rooted realpolitik outlook that the post-cold war world remains a neo-Darwinian jungle where state interests are best promoted through self-help and unilateral security.

Although the cold war ended—or perhaps because it did—the DPRK still fights a cold war of its own in the name of eliminating the legacies of that same war by launching a flurry of calumnious polemics against its "enemies" within the UN and often against the world organization itself. Indeed, Pyongyang's bill of complaints, issued in a stream of "letters" and "memorandums" addressed to the secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, has become progressively broad and sweeping. When Pyongyang applied in June 1995 to attend the meeting of world leaders to

celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations scheduled to be held in New York, 22-25 October 1995, it was immediately accepted in the international community as a near certainty that Kim Jong Il would become state president on September 9 or no later than October 10 just in time to lead the North Korean delegation to the UN Summit in New York. And yet Kim Jong Il was nowhere to be found in the largest gathering of world leaders in modern times as more than 148 heads of state or government, including South Korean President Kim Young Sam, converged in New York City for a three-day celebration.¹⁷

Instead, Pyongyang "celebrated" the UN at 50 by submitting a long memorandum entitled "Nothing Can Help Justify the Past Aggression and Military Occupation of Korea by the Japanese Imperialists" that was chock full of anti-Japanese calumny.¹⁸ When the General Assembly passed a resolution by a vote of 155-0-3 on 11 December 1995, expressing its intention to initiate the constitutional procedure needed to delete the "enemy State" clauses from Articles 53, 57, and 107 of the UN Charter—the anachronistic remnants of World War II—only North Korea together with Cuba and Libya abstained on the grounds that the resolution placed Japan on the same footing with Germany, which it said had liquidated its past in a comparatively conscientious manner.¹⁹ In other words, in North Korea's eyes, Japan today remains an unrepentant and unmitigated "enemy State." Paradoxically, Pyongyang's mindless one-man crusade against Japan on every issue, including the question of Japan's election to the Security Council, seems to have helped more than hurt Japan's status drive, as made most recently evident in Japan's trouncing India (142 votes to 40) for the Asian seat on the Security Council.

In addition to its verbal assaults on Japan, Pyongyang has composed a bill of complaints that seems made to order for reviving, not eliminating, the remnants of the past. Instead of letting bygones be bygones, Pyongyang in the name of righting historical wrongs is determined to exercise its sovereign power to attack the world organization, asserting that the Korean division was fixed with the connivance of the United Nations; that the United Nations was abused by being called on to help the United States unleash an unjust war of aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1950; that the United Nations Command (UNC) is "a brainchild" of the United States, "which arbitrarily usurped the name of the United Nations in order to cover its real colour of aggression after provoking the Korean War in 1950"; and that even today the United Nations is being abused in sustaining the cold war on the Korean peninsula.²⁰

All the same, unilateral, stand-alone security is the starting point for understanding North Korea's response to the challenges of UN reform. The

United Nations will not be able to fulfill its mission and role, we are told, without first reforming and democratizing itself to meet the requirements of the times. The restructuring of the Security Council is said to be the "most essential [step that must be taken] for the democratization of the United Nations." From this diagnosis follows a list of prescriptive remedies: that "the veto rights of the permanent members of the Security Council should be abrogated"; that "the power and authority of the Security Council should be curtailed"; that "open access to all the work of the Security Council should be available, including to its informal consultations"; that the General Assembly should be given more power"; and that "for a resolution of the Security Council adopted on behalf of the United Nations and calling for sanctions or the use of force against its Member States to come into force, the resolution will have to be approved by more than two thirds of the Member States at the General Assembly."²¹

In short, the DPRK wants to demolish the Security Council as we know it today, that body's structure having been mandated by the UN Charter, and turn it into a paper tiger. That is why the "democratizing reform proposal" that Pyongyang advanced in 1995 at the historic 50th session of the UN General Assembly did not get off first base. A year later at the 1996 session, however, the DPRK modified somewhat its "democratizing reform proposal" as if to seek a better "fit" with the dominant view of the NAM. This time it proposed: (1) that the issues relating to international peace and security should be brought directly to the General Assembly; (2) that "a new system" be established to endorse the Security Council resolutions on the use of force or sanctions and peacekeeping operations; (3) that Security Council restructuring should proceed "gradually on the principle of finding agreeable issues first and achieving consensus on each of them"; (4) that "consensus may be reached on the issues concerning the enlargement of the non-permanent membership of the Security Council and the improvement of its work method"; (5) that it is possible for the member states to agree on such issues as "offsetting the imbalance in regional distribution through the increase of more than 10 seats in the non-permanent membership to be additionally allocated among the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America"; and (6) that all the countries concerned, including the parties to disputes, should have access "to informal consultations of the Security Council."²²

Judging from the recorded roll-call votes in the General Assembly from 1991 to 1995, as shown in table 3, Pyongyang's participation in UN politics is low. Pyongyang's absenteeism rate—a combination of its absence and "not participating in the vote"—is rather high, several times as high as Seoul's. The absenteeism rate was 14 percent in 1991, 11.3 percent in 1992, 7.8 percent in 1993, 12.1 percent in 1994, and a whopping 39.4 percent in

1995. These figures are in part a function of the small size of the DPRK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York (12 as compared to 32 for the ROK as of 1 January 1996), which in turn is a function of the low priority of the world organization in Pyongyang's international relations. Still, the UN's importance for North Korean foreign relations is twofold: the world body provides an arena for struggle or damage-limitation diplomacy and it is the only gateway to the United States, serving as it often does as a kind of a de facto liaison office for Pyongyang-Washington talks on a host of issues pending the establishment of a de jure liaison office and full-fledged embassy in Washington.²³ It is reported that Pyongyang has been using delaying tactics in the U.S.-DPRK negotiations on the establishment of liaison offices in Pyongyang and Washington because it already has the contact channel with the United States through its permanent mission to the United Nations in New York. Given the critical shortage of hard currency, this is a very cost-effective way of establishing its diplomatic presence in the United States.²⁴

Table 3
Voting Record of North and South Korea and P-5 in the UN General Assembly, 1991-1995

	1991 46th Sess. Y/N/A/AB/NP	1992 47th Sess. Y/N/A/AB/NP	1993 48th Sess. Y/N/A/AB/NP	1994 49th Sess. Y/N/A/AB/NP	1995 50th Sess. Y/N/A/AB/NP
China	63/0/4/3/1	59/3/5/3/1	53/3/5/2/1	54/3/7/2/0	52/5/6/3/0
France	31/16/21/1/2	38/13/18/1/1	32/14/15/2/1	39/12/13/2/0	37/10/18/1/0
Russia (1)	40/0/28/1/2	36/5/29/0/1	29/5/29/0/1	36/5/25/0/0	31/7/28/0/0
UK	27/19/23/0/2	32/18/20/0/1	27/16/20/0/1	36/15/14/1/0	34/15/17/0/0
USA	9/45/14/1/2	14/46/10/0/1	13/36/14/0/1	22/33/11/0/0	21/34/11/0/0
ROK	53/0/16/0/2	51/1/18/0/1	46/1/15/1/1	48/2/13/3/0	45/2/14/5
DPRK	59/2/0/9/1	60/2/1/7/1	51/3/5/4/1	48/3/7/8/0	37/3/12/14
Total of Roll-call resolutions	71	71	64	66	66
Total of all resolutions	221	220	232	234	218

(1) Figure for 1991 is for the former Soviet Union.

SOURCES: Adapted from *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of Its Forty-Sixth Session, from 17 September to 20 December 1991* (UN Press Release GA/8307, 21 January 1992); *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of Its Forty-Seventh Session, from 15 September to 23 December 1992* (UN Press Release GA/8470, 1 February 1993); *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of Its Forty-Eighth Session, from 21 September to 23 December 1993* (UN Press Release GA/8637, 20 January 1994); *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of Its Forty-Ninth Session, from 20 September to 23 December 1994* (UN Press Release GA/8860, 31 January 1995); and *Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly During the First Part of Its Fiftieth Session, from 19 September to 23 December 1995* (UN Press Release GA/9049/Part I, 29 February 1996).

Despite the crucial importance of the United States for assuring the security and survival of the Kim Jong Il regime in the post-cold war era, North Korea's voting behavior in the General Assembly in 1991-95 suggests a high degree of incongruence with that country on a wide range of global issues. As shown in table 4, the voting-coincidence figures for all the recorded votes in the General Assembly place North Korea amid the lowest-scoring countries such as Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Syria, Vietnam, and China. Even more revealing is that North Korea's voting-coincidence percentage decreased from 15.5 percent in 1991 to 8.7 percent in 1995 while China's voting-coincidence vote percentage nearly doubled, from 10.95 percent in 1989 to around 22 percent in 1994-95. At 9.0 percent in 1994 and 8.7 percent in 1995, the DPRK had the dubious or glorious distinction of having the lowest voting-coincidence percentage. On what the United States considers "important votes"—15 in 1994 and 15 in 1995—the DPRK's voting-coincidence percentage was 0.0 percent in 1994 and 0.0 percent in 1995, compared to the ROK's 75.0 percent in 1994 and 63.6 percent in 1995.²⁵

Table 4
Select Countries Percentage of Voting Coincidence with the United States in UN General Assembly Plenary Sessions, 1991-1995 (%)

	1991 46th Sess.	1992 47th Sess.	1993 48th Sess.	1994 49th Sess.	1995 50th Sess.
Canada	69.5	60.0	66.7	74.5	73.5
China	16.4	16.4	10.6	22.8	21.5
France	70.5	63.8	71.0	75.8	76.9
Germany	71.3	63.8	74.4	77.8	76.9
Japan	61.7	53.7	65.8	78.4	75.4
Russia (1)	41.9	59.5	68.6	66.6	73.1
UK	79.6	73.5	80.0	84.3	85.1
South Korea	35.3	36.2	44.2	55.9	64.3
North Korea	15.5	12.9	7.8	9.0	8.7
Average (2)	27.8	31.0	36.8	48.6	50.6

(1) Figure for 1991 is for the former Soviet Union

(2) This is an overall average of all the Member States of the United Nations.

SOURCES: Adapted from United States Department of State, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 1994 (Department of State Publication 10245, Released March 1995): pp.33-37; *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 1995 (Department of State Publication 10327, March 1996): pp.31-35.

In actuality, the pattern that emerges with respect to North Korea's voting behavior in the General Assembly is a mixture of negative hyperactivism on select arms control and disarmament and human rights issues and positive aloofness on most other global matters. The end of the cold war gave rise to new voting patterns in the General Assembly, with the North-South split now characterizing voting alignments as much as the East-West split once did and with most member states, especially developing countries, expressing their voting preferences along developmental lines.²⁶ Viewed in terms of the appearance of new voting patterns and alignments along the North-South axis, it is not surprising that Pyongyang's voting-coincidence percentage with the General Assembly majority is so high (84-72 percentile in 1991-94) and Washington's so low (13-33 percentile) over the same period. The real surprise and puzzle is Pyongyang's 1995 voting record, with a positive voting percentile that drops down to 56 percent coupled with a sharp rise in abstention and absenteeism. Although hard evidence is lacking, these changes may suggest a possible leadership or decision-making paralysis at the center in Pyongyang.

What table 3 does not show, table 4 partially suggests, and table 5 fully reveals is how deeply and how often the DPRK and the UN had clashed regarding nuclear and security issues on the Korean peninsula. The proximate cause of the Korean nuclear crisis was Pyongyang's refusal to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors access to two suspicious sites at the controversial nuclear complex at Yongbyon, some 60 miles north of Pyongyang. In a nine-month period between 25 May 1992 and 6 February 1993, the IAEA conducted six ad hoc nuclear inspections in North Korea. Immediately after the sixth ad hoc inspections conducted between 25 January and 6 February 1993, the IAEA made an unusual request for a "special inspection," the first of its kind in the 36-year history of the Agency, only to provoke Pyongyang's declaration of withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on 12 March 1993. This notice of withdrawal caused panic in Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington, as well as in Vienna and New York since, once legally out of the NPT, North Korea would be legally free, after three months had passed (on 12 June 1993), to proceed with its suspected nuclear weapons program. Thanks to the Chinese threat to veto any sanctions resolution, the UN Security Council was able to pass only a mild nonsanctions resolution on 11 May 1993 merely urging North Korea to accept international inspections and to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the NPT. Pyongyang was able to escape from UN sanctions, obtaining instead what it had been seeking from the beginning—direct bilateral confrontation/negotiation with the United States. On 21 October 1994, the protracted U.S.-North Korean nuclear negotiations, after proceeding through three rounds of talks, a series of competing national identity enactments and

several changes in bargaining tactics, reached what seemed to be a breakthrough accord in Geneva, Switzerland—the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework.

The logic of Pyongyang's preference for direct bilateral negotiation with the United States over any multilateral negotiations is informed by national interests, ideology, and experience. Even during the cold war years, Pyongyang pursued an independent and indeterminate strategy in manipulating its relations with China and the Soviet Union in a self-serving and situation-specific way, taking sides if necessary on particular issues, always attempting to extract maximum payoffs in economic, technical, and military aid, but never completely casting its lot with one against the other. Nevertheless, the idea of multilateral cooperative security has remained alien to North Korean foreign policy thinking and behavior. Besides, North Korea feels threatened or turned off by the NPT regime, for it can only bring pressure without any tangible payoffs (except a stamp of approval for international good citizenship). With the demise of the Soviet Union and diminishing aid from China, the United States has become, *faute de mieux*, a functional equivalent of and substitution for China and the Soviet Union combined.

As shown in table 5, North Korea's nuclear issue was "exported" from the IAEA to the Security Council. Because China alone among the Perm Five has threatened to veto any biting resolution, the Security Council first had to delay and then dilute the language of a draft resolution so as to make it more acceptable to China. On 11 May 1993 the Security Council adopted a resolution by a vote of 13 to 0 with only China and Pakistan abstaining, merely calling upon the DPRK to reconsider its announced withdrawal from the NPT. This was only a prodding resolution, not a sanctions-imposing one. Chinese UN Ambassador Li Zhaoxing reiterated the party line—the issue is a matter of concern between the DPRK and the three other parties (i.e., the U.S., IAEA, and the ROK) and made clear that China is opposed to the practice of applying any UN pressure. It was against this backdrop that the issue was taken out of the Security Council to be addressed in bilateral negotiations between the United States and the DPRK in New York between 2 June and 11 June 1993. The nuclear issue started heating up once again in May–June 1994 with the announcement (14 May 1994) that Pyongyang had begun removing nuclear fuel rods from the Yongbyon reactor with no IAEA inspectors present. Once again, China intervened in the Security Council's attempts to draft a sanctions resolution. As a result, the best the Security Council could do was to issue a mild presidential statement. When the United States was preparing for a non-UN-sponsored three-phase multilateral sanctions initiative in early June 1994, Beijing went so far as to say that its 1961 mutual security treaty with Pyongyang would remain in force and that it would be obliged to come to North Korea's defense if its junior socialist ally were attacked.

Table 5
Chronology of Anti-DPRK UN Actions, 1993-1996

Date m/d/y	Organ	Document Symbol	Type of Action
02/25/93	IAEA	GOV/2636	Resolution expressing concern over the implementation of the NPT and safeguard accords and an ultimatum to accept "special inspections"
03/18/93	IAEA	GOV/2639	Ditto
04/01/93	IAEA	GOV/2645	Resolution declaring that the DPRK had violated its obligations to open its suspected nuclear sites by a vote of 28:2:4 with only China and Libya voting against
05/11/93	UNSC	S/RES/825 (1993)	Resolution expressing a grave concern that the DPRK had failed to discharge its safeguards obligations and had widened the area of noncompliance and demanding DPRK to reconsider its NPT withdrawal
09/23/93	IAEA	GOV/2692	Resolution expressing a serious concern that three separate decisions by IAEA Board of Governors and Security Council Resolution 825 of 11 May 1993 had not been implemented
11/01/93	UNGA	Resolution 48/14	Resolution adopted by a vote of 140-1-9 expressing "its grave concern that the DPRK has failed to discharge its safeguards obligations and has recently widened the area of non-compliance"
03/21/94	IAEA	GOV/2711	Resolution urging the DPRK to allow the IAEA to complete all the requested inspection of nuclear facilities
03/31/94	UNSC	S/PRST/ 1994/13	Presidential statement calling upon the DPRK to allow IAEA inspectors to complete the inspection activities agreed between the IAEA and DPRK on 15 February 1994
05/30/94	UNSC	S/PRST/ 1994/28	Presidential statement strongly urging the DPRK to proceed only with discharge operations at the five megawatt reactor . . . in accordance with the IAEA's requirements
06/10/94	IAEA	GOV/2742	Resolution imposing sanctions by suspending the Agency's technical assistance to the DPRK
12/15/94	UNGA	Res 49/65	Resolution adopted by a vote of 161-1-6 expressing "its grave concern that the DPRK has failed to discharge its safeguards obligations"
11/01/95	UNGA	Res 50/9	Resolution adopted by a vote of 144-1-8 expressing "concern over the continuing non-compliance of the DPRK to cooperate fully with the Agency in the implementation of the safeguards agreement"
10/15/96	UNSC	S/PRST/ 1996/42	Presidential statement expressing the Council's "serious concern over this incident" and "urging that the Korean Armistice Agreement should be fully observed"
10/28/96	UNGA	Res 51/10	Resolution adopted by a vote of 142-1-8 expressing "concern over the continuing non-compliance of the DPRK with the safeguards agreement" and urging "the DPRK to cooperate fully with the IAEA"

"Do as I Say, Not as I Do" is also made evident in the discrepancy between Pyongyang's policy pronouncements and its policy performance on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Almost from day one North Korea declared its principled stand: "We consider it necessary for the north and the south of Korea to pledge themselves before the world to a ban on the testing, manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons."²⁷ Given the importance of the Korean peninsula in maintaining the integrity of the NPT regime, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the UN's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in Geneva, admitted both Koreas as new members on 17 June 1996, as it was winding up the three-year protracted negotiations on the CTBT. The General Assembly approved the CTBT on 11 September 1996, by a 158-to-3 vote, which cleared the way for member states to sign on. As of 24 October 1996, the CTBT had been signed by 129 states, including 41 (among them South Korea) of the 44 key states, with only India, Pakistan, and North Korea failing to take part in the agreement. India has vowed never to become a signatory until the nuclear-weapons-states devise a specific timetable for complete nuclear disarmament, while Pakistan would not endorse the treaty until India does. That North Korea refuses to sign on, despite its repeated pledges to support a test ban treaty, the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, the ROK's signature, and its own entry into the CD in mid-1996, speaks directly to the country's preference for a unilateral free-ride strategy over security interdependence. Moreover, North Korea—along with Libya, Iraq, and Syria—has yet to sign the UN-sponsored Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which, after having obtained the requisite 65th ratification from Hungary on 31 October 1996, is now scheduled to enter into force on 29 April 1997.

With particular clarity and consistency Pyongyang has pursued a two-plus-zero formula both inside and outside the United Nations as a way of replacing the Korean Military Armistice Agreement—and the UNC—with a peace treaty with the United States. Even before the protracted U.S.-DPRK nuclear negotiations culminated in the Agreed Framework on 21 October 1994, Pyongyang had put forward in April 1994, to the United States a detailed two-plus-zero proposal for replacing "the outdated armistice system" with "a new peace arrangement system" (i.e., a peace treaty with the United States). That Pyongyang's two-plus-zero formula is as unworkable as Seoul's hypothetical two-plus-zero formula involving only Seoul and Beijing needs no elaboration here. When the two-plus-zero peace formula fell on deaf ears in Washington, however, Pyongyang issued a warning in July 1995 to the United Nations: "If the United States ignores and turns its back on our just proposal, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be forced to take the necessary measures one by one and unilaterally in order to remove completely the remains of the cold war

in Korea."²⁸ Actually, this warning served equally as a post-hoc justification of the necessary unilateral measures: (1) on 28 April 1994 the secretary of the Korean People's Army (KPA) Military Armistice Commission (MAC) delivered a message to the UNC stating that the KPA had already decided to recall all remaining MAC members and MAC staff personnel; (2) on 29 April 1994 the KPA prevented Chinese "People's Volunteers" staff officers from attending a language officers' meeting with UNC staff officers; (3) in May 1994 the KPA forced the Polish delegation to withdraw from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC); and (4) in late August 1994 Pyongyang succeeded in forcing China to withdraw its delegation from the MAC for good.²⁹ As if these steps were necessary but not sufficient, Pyongyang escalated its campaign to replace the 1953 armistice with a peace treaty between the DPRK and the U.S. by sending unauthorized units of heavily armed KPA troops into the highly sensitive Joint Security Area at the Panmunjom border separating the two Koreas in April 1996. Once again North Korea's provocative action was brought to the attention of the Security Council, thanks to the presence of the ROK on the Council as a nonpermanent member. Once again China's opposition blocked Seoul's push for Security Council action. Instead, a presidential press statement of concern was issued rebuking North Korea for its declaration not to adhere to the Korean Armistice Agreement, a disciplinary action of a lesser degree than a formal presidential statement, conveyed by the Council president, Chilean Ambassador Juan Somavia.

The 18 September 1996 submarine incursion incident ignited fireworks on the Security Council. In this particular case, the DPRK seemed to have revealed the true color of its national identity as a guerrilla state fighting guerrilla warfare and using guerrilla language on the Council. In an unprecedented manner, DPRK UN Ambassador Kim Hyong U turned down several official requests from the Council president, Ambassador Alfredo Cabral, for an interview on the subject of the submarine incident. President Cabral reminded reporters of the fact that North Korea's refusal of an interview not only ran counter to customary diplomatic practice but did so in a manner unprecedented in the history of the Security Council.³⁰ Instead, Ambassador Kim Hyong U responded by submitting a letter addressed to the UN secretary-general, not to the president of the Security Council, though it was circulated as an official Security Council document: "Through this incident the world once again witnessed the true colour of their [South Korean] *barbarousness and beastliness* If the enemies do not return our small submarine, survivors and the dead unconditionally while continuing to make ill use of the incident for the sinister political purpose, we will be forced to take strong countermeasures."³¹

In the end, the Security Council was able to adopt an official presidential statement expressing "its serious concern over this incident" and urging that "the Korean Armistice Agreement should be fully observed and that no action should be taken that might increase tension or undermine peace and stability on the Korean peninsula."³² As a compromise result of the behind-the-scenes negotiations between PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and ROK Foreign Minister Gong Ro Myung, the Council action was less than what the ROK had wanted initially but more than what the PRC had been willing to yield. Whether the Security Council's presidential statement will serve as a deterrent to further North Korean provocations remains to be seen. Despite the watered-down terminology (i.e., "concern over" instead of "condemnation of"), however, the Council action is a blow to Pyongyang's stance, since it has confirmed for the first time in written form the legal validity of the armistice agreement pending the establishment of an alternative peace system.

In the post-Kim Il Sung era "our style socialism" has suffered steady slippage. In late May 1995, two months before the major summer floods in July and August, the proud and putatively self-reliant North Korea made an unprecedented request to Japanese "reactionaries" and South Korean "puppets" for rice aid and received some 650,000 tons of rice without breathing a word to its own people. The devastating summer floods came as a blessing in disguise by forcing the North Korean government to break with self-reliance and pursue a "beg globally, deny locally" policy. Pyongyang even blamed the United States and Japan for what it said was a \$15 billion flood disaster: "Seventy percent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere come from industrial pollution in the United States and Japan We think this climatic change is the cause of the abnormal weather that has resulted in our floods."³³

All the same, Pyongyang for the first time in its international life launched a global campaign crying out for help from the UN and its related agencies and from foreign governments.³⁴ In issuing an urgent appeal for \$491 million in emergency UN aid, the DPRK government for the first time allowed a "United Nations Assessment Mission"—representing the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/DHA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—into the country, 29 August to 9 September 1995, to assess damages whose actual cost the secretive party-state put at \$15 billion (75 percent of GNP for 1995)! It was against this backdrop of "a revolution of rising expectations" that Vice Foreign Minister Choi Su Hon acknowledged and

expressed at the epochal 50th session of the UN General Assembly in New York "our deep thanks to the United Nations organs, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and to various Governments for the humanitarian steps they have taken in connection with the recent flood damage in our country."³⁵ Tellingly, UN humanitarian help is nowhere to be found in Vice Foreign Minister Choi's 1996 "state of the world" speech, as the politics of everyday life remained habit-driven trumpery touting the omnipotence of "our style socialism advances vigorously along its road regardless of whatever others may say."³⁶ For the domestic audience, the *juche* ideology is touted as the motive force "leading our country toward the strongest position in the world." As ideology decides all things in the course of human history, we are told, North Korea is indeed the one and only "ideological superpower" and "the most powerful country in the world."³⁷

Apparently, Pyongyang's switch to cooperative behavior as a way of plugging into an external life-support system was too little, too late to be able to generate much of an international humanitarian response. After several on-site assessments, the UN and its related agencies, especially the World Food Program (WFP), responded in November 1995 with food relief—an initial shipment of 5,140 tons of rice for distribution among 500,000 people left destitute by the summer floods. By mid-December, however, both North Korea and the WFP found themselves confronting a tragic paradox. On the one hand, the reclusive and sovereignty-bound North Korea was now cooperating more willingly than ever before with multilateral aid officials, taking them to the disaster-stricken hinterlands away from the Potemkin Village (Pyongyang). As a result, WFP aid workers were able to send back to their home offices eyewitness accounts of all the signs of spreading famine and starvation of a kind—known in the UN community as "stealth famine"—with some children in certain areas below 80 percent of their average target weight for their height. On the other hand, Pyongyang's international reputation as a swollen garrison state coupled with the fact that all the foreign television and print media had been denied access to North Korea, generated a tepid international response. By the end of 1995, the WFP's appeal for \$8.8 million yielded only about \$500,000, with the bulk of the money coming from Denmark and Finland. Having already borrowed more than \$2 million from an emergency fund to pay for the initial shipment of rice in November, the WFP warned on 13 December 1995 that it would have no choice but to shut down its unprecedented aid operation in North Korea by early January 1996. The WFP's warning generated more contributions, which brought donations close to the original target amount of \$8.3 million: \$2.5 million from Sweden, \$2 million from the United

States, \$1.7 million from Switzerland, \$504,504 from Denmark, \$375,727 from Australia, \$116,000 from Norway, \$22,727 from Finland, and \$15,000 from a private individual in the United Kingdom.³⁸

That South Korea was able and willing to contribute 150,000 tons of rice gratis (estimated at \$273 million) despite being subject to Pyongyang's unrelenting animus—compared to a modest amount of aid the international community had been able to raise after the WFP's repeated warnings and appeals—spotlighted with particular clarity a kind of catch-22 national identity dilemma for the Kim Jong Il crisis-management regime. On 20 January 1996, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that "our military has been worried about the possibility of insidious forces attempting to misuse the issue of aid for flood damage for their purpose of leading us to reform and opening up" and warned that "if one attempts to use humanitarian aid for one's political purposes, we will go our own way according to our decision and judgment."³⁹ Faced with the imminent possibility that international aid might come to a screeching halt, North Korea revised its "principled stand" in a self-serving and contingent way, demanding and resenting international aid: "We are disappointed that our international appeal . . . has been misused and politicized by some countries in a slanderous campaign challenging our dignity. . . . However we cannot deny that we face a very severe food shortage in the coming months, until this year's harvest, if a large amount of rice is not imported."⁴⁰ In early April 1996, Pyongyang revealed that it was retracting its January statement, as even Pak Tok Hun, spokesman for the DPRK UN Mission in Geneva, told reporters that he had already submitted a letter to the UN Humanitarian Bureau in Geneva requesting more food aid from the world community. North Korea remained in a state of national emergency, according to Pak, and additional food aid from the United Nations and other INGOs was desperately needed.⁴¹ The United Nations responded with a second aid package amounting to \$43 million (\$26.8 million for procuring 70,000 tons of food, \$10.3 million for the restoration of farmland and \$5.9 million for medical expenses). The UN appeal served as a legitimizing justification for the United States, Japan, and South Korea in overcoming the political difficulties associated with providing aid to North Korea at home. Under the pretext that the aid would be provided in the name of the United Nations, the United States first decided to provide \$6.2 million, followed by Japan (\$6 million), and South Korea (\$3 million).

Still, the UN response amounted to little more than a band-aid for a patient who needed a life-support system. In May 1996 a six-page "Special Alert" issued by the WFP and FAO, on the basis of another round of field visits and on-the-spot assessments, stated that the DPRK's "food supply situation has

deteriorated more seriously than had been anticipated" and that "over the next few years, the country is in considerable danger of recurrent food supply difficulties." In appealing for more international response, the WFP/FAO report paints a rather grim picture of the shape of things to come in North Korea:

Even under normal circumstances the domestic production of food in the DPRK is heavily constrained by a shortage of cultivable land. Since the problems of domestic supply have been further compounded by declining productivity due both to natural soil depletion and the inability of the country to manufacture or import sufficient quantities of fertilizer to maintain productivity, due to severe economic problems and the consequent shortage of foreign exchange. . . . The Government presently estimates that 50,000 tons of diesel are needed for agricultural operations, including rehabilitation and operation of the irrigation system. As a result of the fuel shortage, there is clear evidence that farming is reverting back to the use of animal draught power.⁴²

It will take more than UN emergency aid to lift the imploding economy by its *juche* bootstrap. Would North Korea be able or willing to follow Chinese-style reform and open itself to the capitalist world system by seeking membership in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank? It was reported that a North Korean diplomat to the United Nations visited Washington in April 1996 to hold working-level consultations with U.S. Government officials regarding the problems and conditions associated with seeking membership in the IMF (a prerequisite to joining the World Bank). Both parties are said to have agreed in principle that Pyongyang's share of the cost of IMF membership would be covered by North Korea's assets that have been frozen in the United States. The diplomat's visit seemed no more than a preliminary probing of the possibilities and limitations related to obtaining multilateral aid, but there are no indications as yet that the top leadership in Pyongyang has made a final decision to seek membership in the IMF and World Bank.⁴³ A decision to seek IMF and World Bank membership would signal a major shift in North Korean foreign policy, as it would require providing economic data and inviting IMF and World Bank investigation teams to assess the country's economic situation by way of on-the-spot surveys. To date, Pyongyang has pursued Kim Il Sung's "agriculture-first, light industry-first, and foreign trade-first policies" for the three-year adjustment period (1994-96) through a selective, controlled opening without any reform or restructuring. In other words, North Korea wants to have its cake and eat it too—give us as much aid as you can but without any political and economic strings attached and without challenging our *juche*-centered national identity.

Concluding Remarks

Despite all the sweeping changes that have occurred in the domestic, regional, and global situations over the last seven years, continuity, not change, has remained the dominant element of North Korean foreign policy. Pyongyang is still fighting the cold war North Korean style in the post-cold war world organization, putatively in order to eliminate the remnants of the cold war. The theoretical claim of liberal institutionalists that international organizations can alter state preferences, change state behavior, and cause states to turn from conflict to cooperation does not hold up well in the North Korean case.⁴⁴ There is little evidence that the United Nations has exerted any discernible influence on Pyongyang's diplomatic strategy. Whether judged by policy pronouncements, participatory style and behavior, voting record, or IGO memberships, North Korea has engaged in some slight adaptive, situation-specific learning, especially in connection with seeking UN humanitarian aid, but in virtually no cognitive/normative learning to speak of.

On the contrary, Pyongyang's international behavior, once relatively moderate (probably reflecting the burst of inter-Korean *détente* in 1990-92), lapsed back into more familiar patterns of hypernationalist confrontation in 1993 only to invite a series of anti-DPRK actions of varying kinds in the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Security Council, and the General Assembly (see table 5). The so-called UN crisis today can be better understood mainly as a crisis of national policy in the global organization. The North Korean case is a classic but amplified example of the most fundamental challenge that will confront the United Nations in the coming years—how to stay relevant and viable as a global yet statecentric organization in a multicentric and multipolarizing world in which state sovereignty has been subject to the relentless twin pressures of global integration from without and substate fragmentation from within. There is a sense in which North Korea has made good on the claim that independence is "the life and soul of its foreign policy" within the world organization; that independence, however, translates into rampant unilateral norm-defying behavior that only a few friends (Cuba, Libya, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and China) condone.

Paradoxically, whether one considers its place in the UN or not, North Korea is at one and the same time a most assertively independent state with respect to global politics and a decaying, weakened state at home whose survival is becoming increasingly dependent upon some kind of external life-support system. For all its devotion to *juche* ideology and "our style socialism," the multiple and multiplying symptoms of system decay have become progressively manifest everywhere in the UN system for every

member state to see. This chasm between pretense and reality, between *juche*-based national role commitments and actual national role capabilities explains Pyongyang's despondent reaction to the dual entry formula. The government's opposition to the entry of the two Koreas into the United Nations as two separate but equal member states had far more to do with its sense of comparative disadvantage in the global competition for political legitimization than with any fear of perpetuating the Korean division.

What accentuates Pyongyang's national identity-cum-legitimation crisis with particular clarity is the dramatic contrast between the rise of South Korea and the decline of North Korea within the world organization. From the start, North Korea was at a disadvantage in its efforts to join the world body and beat South Korea by the rules of the game the member states play on the multiple chessboards of global politics. Indeed, for North Korea's solipsistic "theocratic" leadership, the remarkable transformation of South Korea's national identity as a newly industrializing country (NIC) and, more recently, after three decades of predominantly authoritarian rule, as a newly democratizing country (NDC) may well have looked like it was made to order for tormenting the DPRK. Kim Il Sung's Manichean world view can hardly be said to have prepared the North Korean leadership to accept that remarkable transformation, either in the 1980s or in the 1990s. The entry of the two Koreas into the United Nations in 1991 has drawn increased international attention to the ineluctable fact that Seoul has won the unification race almost hands down, especially where meeting the leadership/democratization, national identity, and developmental challenges is concerned. The ROK, once inside the world organization, managed to get itself elected as a nonpermanent member of the Security Council in November 1995 (receiving no less than 156 votes, the third largest total after Chile [168] and Egypt [159] in the secret ballot) and also becoming a member of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in October 1996. Even the idea of joining the world's rich man club, the OECD, became reality in late November 1996. In sharp contrast, North Korea's self-image as a socialist paradise on earth has been besmirched beyond redemption.

Within the United Nations the two Koreas have continued to pursue their status drive. Seoul's answer to Pyongyang's *juche* is *seggyehwa*. In late 1994 all five "fundamentals of the New Diplomacy" (i.e., globalism, diversification, multidimensionalism, regional cooperation, and future orientation) were collapsed into an out-and-out campaign for globalization. As if to outperform North Korea with its own national-identity projection, the ROK government announced in March 1995 that it had decided to use the word *seggyehwa*, a transliteration of the Korean phrase meaning "globalization" for international consumption to designate its current status drive.

The stage was thus set for an international duel. Although *segryehwa* means different things to different groups at home and abroad, it may be seen as President Kim Young Sam's way of proclaiming a new national identity and of moving beyond inter-Korean competition toward the center of the action, not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also within the world community. It was also South Korea's passport to the UN Security and the OECD. "To Make Korea a Central Player on the World Stage" has become Kim's standard phrase used in explaining his country's actions to domestic and foreign audiences. As shown in the UN's budgetary assessments for the DPRK (0.0500 percent) and the ROK (0.8175 percent) in 1996—a whopping ratio of 1:16.35—there is no contest between *juche*-based and *segryehwa*-based muscle power. In fact, South Korea's contribution is not only 16 times greater than that of its northern counterpart but also higher than that of China (0.7350 percent).⁴⁵ Moreover, the ROK's GNP in 1995 reached over twenty times that of the DPRK and has already surpassed Russia's.⁴⁶ Pyongyang resumed its "begging diplomacy" even as Seoul pledged to increase its voluntary contribution to the UN's activities by 120 percent during 1996-97.

Revealingly, North Korea's proud "theocratic" state cannot seem to find the right moment to officially enact its father-to-son succession even as the mass media claims that "today, our people and the revolutionary people of the world highly praise and absolutely admire the great leader Comrade Kim Chong-il [Kim Jong Il] as the greatest man of ideas and theory in our times."⁴⁷ The much anticipated debut of Kim Jong Il as a new head of state at the UN-50 Summit in October 1995 failed to materialize; even Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam bowed out at the last minute. Instead, North Korea once again dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Choi Su Hon to New York to "entertain" the world audience with its favorite sport of hero worshipping: "Our great leader [Kim Il Sung] is the saviour of our Korean nation, the Tangun nation, and the founding father of socialist Korea. His great revolutionary exploits will remain immortal, along with his August name. The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung is *always* with us. . . . It is *the greatest fortune and a unique blessing of leadership* for our people to have Comrade Kim Jong Il."⁴⁸ For the United Nations as well as for the North Korean people, however, Kim Jong Il still remains a "president-in-waiting" and a "great leader-in-hiding."

All national identities are contested in a distinct but changing international environment. Every UN member state projects its national identity not only ideologically but behaviorally—by what it "is" as well as by what it "does." Viewed in this light, "our style socialism" exhibits multiple signs of system decay, and North Korea faces a megacrisis in the sense that chal-

lenges to national authority and identity as well as economic woes have all occurred at a time when the domestic supply of governmental legitimacy has all but vanished, especially since the death of Kim Il Sung on 8 July 1994 and the external supply is rapidly dwindling. Indeed, with Pyongyang alternately rattling its saber and tin cup, it is now all too clear that a *juche*-centered national policy can no longer cope with the most pressing issues of legitimacy, national identity, and economic and well-being. North Korea today is a failing state that cannot meet basic human needs without external aid even as it maintains the world's fourth largest military force.

All the same, the quest for national identity and legitimation, when blocked in one domain, seeks to compensate in another. Herein lies the logic of brinkmanship diplomacy designed to demonstrate to the outside world that North Korea is no banana republic apt to quietly collapse without a fight and that even without nuclear weapons its military will and capability to initiate or retaliate military action are much greater than those of Iraq after Israel's attack on the Osirak reactor in 1981. Seoul and its environs, where forty-five percent of South Korean people live, are within easy reach of North Korean jet fighters, armored vehicles, Scud missiles, and chemical weapons, mostly deployed along the so-called Demilitarized Zone less than forty miles from the capital city.⁴⁹ North Korea's enormous military manpower (1.2 millions soldiers) and firepower, coupled with "suicidal bombers" resolved to defend the integrity of "our style socialism" at any cost, compensate for Pyongyang's weaknesses in all other areas and thus even up the aggregate balance of power between the two Koreas.

China's protective role in the Security Council is surely of some help in enhancing Pyongyang's compensatory power. Despite the repeated attack on "the veto power of a few big powers" in Pyongyang's policy pronouncements, it is China's veto threat that has prevented the Security Council from coming down harder on North Korea with regard to the nuclear, UNC, and submarine incursion cases. With the balance of overall national strength having already shifted so decisively in favor of South Korea thus enhancing the prospects of Korean unification by absorption with every day that goes by maintaining a close military relationship with the politically and economically weaker North has become one of Beijing's central security concerns. Apart from maximizing Beijing's leverage as a balancer, the greatest danger would come if the junior socialist ally in the strategic buffer zone felt so cornered that it was prompted to launch an attack that might trigger a second Korean War. In Beijing's view the alternative scenario—economic sanctions work so well as to produce another collapsing socialist regime on its northern border, with all the political, economic, and social conse-

quences for China's own stability that such a collapse would entail—could hardly be any more comforting.

All that said, however, the Kim Jong Il crisis-management regime, whistling in the dark, is in danger of being overwhelmed in its efforts to reconcile the irreconcilable. Despite the habit-driven trumpery regarding the omnipotence of the *juche* ideology as the motive force “leading our country toward the strongest position in the world,” Kim Jong Il's North Korea is a swollen state and spent society with diminishing control over the events that shape its future. There can be very little doubt that what is needed is a radical system reform and restructuring. Lacking his father's charisma, authority, and power, Kim Jong Il has no choice but to shift decisively from charismatic to performance legitimation. Here he encounters a dilemma—to save the *juche* system he will have to destroy important parts of it.⁵⁰ Saving the system also requires that North Korea open up to and seek help from its bitter capitalist rival in the south. And yet, departing from the ideological continuity of the system Kim Il Sung (“the father of the nation”) created, developed, and passed on to his son is viewed not as a necessity for survival but as an ultimate betrayal of the *raison d'état*. Herein lies the logic of a selective, controlled opening to the West without any reform or restructuring—“market Stalinism” with North Korean characteristics—two ways of pursuing a Jekyll and Hyde diplomacy. One final note: without being prematurely pessimistic regarding the future of North Korea, it is worth reminding ourselves of the political implications of what Shakespeare said in *Julius Caesar*:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

notes for chapter four

1. UN General Assembly Resolution 46/1 (17 September 1991).
2. UN Doc. S/PV. 3001 (8 August 1991).
3. Veto has become a rarity in the Council's proceedings in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 1996, only 5 vetoes have been cast with the following distributions: 2 in 1990 (the U.S.); none in 1991 and 1992; 1 in 1993 (Russia); 1 in 1994 (Russia); 1 in 1995 (the U.S.); and none in 1996 (as of 30 August 1996).
4. The United Nations system refers not only to the six principal organs—the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice—that make up the United Nations proper but also to all the specialized agencies affiliated with but independent of the UN. This paper is focused on North Korea's behavior in the UN, especially in the General Assembly and the Security Council.
5. UN Doc. S/22642 (3 June 1991): p. 4; emphasis added.
6. See B. C. Koh, "The Battle without Victors: The Korean Question in the 30th Session of the U.N. General Assembly," *Journal of Korean Affairs* 5:4 (January 1976): p. 59.
7. *People's Korea*, 27 June 1973.
8. "Statement of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," *On the Question of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976): p. 310.
9. After visiting North Korea in 1965, the prominent British economist Joan Robinson asserted that "all the economic miracles of the [post-World War II] world are put in the shade by these achievements" and that "as the North continues to develop and the South degenerate, sooner or later the curtain of lies must surely begin to tear." Quoted in Marcus Noland, "The North Korean Economy" (paper presented at the Korean Economic Institute conference at the University of Chicago, 7-8 September 1995): p. 4.
10. UN Docs. S/20830 (5 September 1989) and S/20956 (9 November 1989).
11. UN Doc. S/21836 (2 October 1990).

12. *Rodong sinmun*, 18 May 1991.
13. See the DPRK's letter dated 1 October 1990 addressed to the President of the Security Council in UN Doc. S/21836 (2 October 1990): p. 2.
14. Quoted in Sydney B. Bailey, *The General Assembly of the United Nations: A Study of Procedure and Practice*, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1964): p. 8.
15. UN Doc. A/46/PV.18 (9 October 1991): p. 68.
16. GAOR, 48th Sess., 17th plenary meeting (5 October 1993): p. 11.
17. The DPRK delegation to the historic 50th session of the General Assembly in 1995 was headed by Vice Foreign Minister Choi Su Hon—as in 1994 and 1996.
18. This memo was circulated as UN Doc. A/50/376 (24 August 1995).
19. General Assembly Resolution 50/52 of 11 December 1995.
20. For elaboration of these points, see the DPRK's "letters" and "memorandums" circulated as UN Docs. S/1995/187 (7 March 1995); S/1995/368 (9 May 1995); S/1995/461 (6 June 1995); S/1995/541 (14 July 1995); A/50/376 (24 August 1995); and A/51/98 and S/1996/270 (11 April 1996).
21. See Vice Foreign Minister Choi Su Hon's major speech at the 50th session of the General Assembly in GAOR, 50th Sess., 29th plenary meeting (11 October 1995): p. 9; and *Rodong sinmun* [Pyongyang], 5 November 1995.
22. "Statement by H. E. Choi Su Hon, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Fifty-First Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 26, 1996," DPRK Permanent Mission to the United Nations Press Release, pp. 7-8.
23. Thanks to Pyongyang's entry into the United Nations, the United States and the DPRK held high-level talks in New York in late 1991 for the first time since the end of the Korean War.
24. See *Chungang Ilbo* [Seoul], 24 October 1996, p. 10.
25. United States Department of State, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*,

1994 (Department of State Publication, 10245, March 1995): pp. 19, 207, 296; and *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 1995 (Department of State Publication, 10327, March 1996): pp. 17, 203, 292.

26. See Soo Yeon Kim and Bruce Russett, "The New Politics of Voting Alignments in the United Nations General Assembly," *International Organization* 50:4 (Autumn 1996): pp. 629-52.

27. UN Doc. A/46/PV.18 (9 October 1991): p. 76.

28. UN Doc. S/1995/541 (14 July 1995): p. 7.

29. For a detailed account, see the 1994 report of the activities of the UNC in UN Doc. S/1995/378 (11 May 1995).

30. When asked by a South Korean journalist why his Ambassador was refusing to comply with the Security Council president's request for clarification, a North Korean UN diplomat replied: "That is for the Ambassador to decide. If you do not understand the situation precisely and do not report correctly, you will be committing a crime." See *Tong-a Ilbo* [Seoul], 4 October 1996, p. 2.

31. UN Doc. S/1996/800 (27 September 1996); emphasis added.

32. UN Doc. S/PRST/1996/42 (15 October 1996).

33. *Reuters on-line*, 27 September 1995.

34. In fact, Pyongyang had asked for UN aid once before, in 1991, but a UN assistance team sent had been treated more as foreign spies and had not been able to make on-the-spot assessments of North Korea's actual needs. As a result, no UN assistance was provided.

35. GAOR, 50th Sess., 29th plenary meeting (11 October 1995): p. 10.

36. Vice Foreign Minister Choi's 1996 UN Speech, p. 3.

37. See Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report—East Asia* [hereafter cited as FBIS-EAS], 3 August 1995, pp. 39-41.

38. I am indebted to Michael Ross of the WFP for providing me with this news update from the WFP/FAO, 11 March 1996.

39. *Choson Ilbo* [Seoul], 10 February 1996, p. 7.
40. On 12 March 1996, Li Jong Hua, a representative of the Flood Damage and Rehabilitation Committee in Pyongyang, sent a letter to Bernard Krisher, chairman of the Internet Appeal for North Korea Flood Victims, Tokyo, Japan, clarifying North Korea's stand on international aid. For the full text of the letter, see Nautilus Institute, *Daily Report*, 22 March 1996.
41. KBS-1 Radio Network [Seoul] in *FBIS-EAS-96-064*, 2 April 1996.
42. WFP News Update, 13 May 1996, which includes FAO's Special Alert No. 267; quote at p. 4 of the Special Alert.
43. *Chosun Ilbo* [Seoul], 22 July 1996, p. 2.
44. For the debate between structural realists and liberal institutionalists, see John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994/95): pp. 5-49; Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *ibid.*, 20:1 (Summer 1995): pp. 39-51; Charles A. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, "The Promise of Collective Security," *ibid.*, pp. 52-61; John Gerald Ruggie, "The False Premise of Realism," *ibid.*, pp. 62-70; Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *ibid.*, pp. 71-81.
45. See General Assembly Resolution 49/19B (23 December 1994).
46. *Korea Herald*, 2 December 1996, p. 8.
47. Pyongyang Korean Central Broadcasting Network in *FBIS-EAS-95-147*, 1 August 1995, p. 29.
48. GAOR, 50th Sess., 29th plenary meeting (11 October 1995), p. 6; emphasis added.
49. A 1995 Rand Corporation study concluded that there existed a "medium likelihood" of North Korea launching an attack against South Korea out of desperation. In such a case, there would be a "high likelihood" of the use of chemical weapons by the North. *New York Times*, 28 January 1996, p. 10.
50. As early as October 1983, Kim Jong Il in private talks with Shin Sang-ok and Choi En-hui acknowledged the existence of catch-22 from which was no easy escape. See *Wolgan Chosen* (October 1995): pp. 115-17.

chapter five

**North
Korea's
Approaches
to the
United States
and Japan***B.C. Koh*

North Korea's approach¹ to the United States is arguably one of the few success stories emanating from Pyongyang. While the story is still unfolding, what has transpired thus far has clearly benefited North Korea in both tangible and intangible ways. By contrast, North Korea's approach to Japan has produced but meager results thus far. Potentially, however, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) stands to profit immensely should its quest for diplomatic normalization with Japan bear fruit.

The DPRK's stakes in its approaches to the U.S. and Japan, therefore, are very high. To understand why the approaches have not been equally productive, one needs to compare their tactical and situational characteristics. To begin with an overview, we may first note several similarities in the two cases.

First, in both cases significant change has occurred during the past six or seven years, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) reassessing the role of both Washington and Tokyo in its strategic framework. Second, more than any other factor, a sharp deterioration in Pyongyang's security environment appears to have contributed to such a reassessment. Third, it was change in the policies of the United States and Japan that enabled the DPRK to make headway in its new approaches to the two. Change in Washington's and Tokyo's policies, however, had been triggered by change in the Republic of Korea (ROK)'s policy. Fourth and last, North Korea needed bargaining chips to score a real breakthrough or, in the case of its approach to Japan, to attempt a breakthrough.

Eclipsing these similarities, however, are a number of crucial differences, which help to explain the divergent outcomes of the two cases. First, whereas North Korea possessed potent bargaining chips during its high-level talks with the U.S., it did not have any when it held normalization talks with Japan. Pyongyang had used its chips in order to induce Tokyo to come to a negotiating table. Second, whereas the DPRK resorted to brinkmanship in its negotiations with the U.S., always making pragmatic adjustment at the last minute, it staked high moral ground in its normalization talks with Japan, displaying a high degree of rigidity and self-righteousness. Third, the negotiating behaviors of the U.S. and Japan vis-à-vis North Korea diverged, with the U.S. displaying more flexibility and perhaps, empathy than Japan. North Korea's confrontational posture and refusal to abide by previous agreements led to a hardline response from Japan.

North Korea's Approach to the United States

The policies of the DPRK, both internal and external, are driven by the regime's need to bolster its legitimacy, enhance its security, and pursue its

economic agenda. These triple needs—legitimacy, security, and development—have been and continue to be pivotal factors in North Korea's policy toward the U.S. as well.

In terms of their relative weight, however, security appears to have been the foremost consideration in Pyongyang's U.S. policy, with legitimacy closely following it and development a distant third. The DPRK's tenacious pursuit of bilateral negotiations with the U.S. since 1974 with the aim of replacing the armistice agreement with a peace treaty was fueled by security and legitimacy needs. A negative security guarantee from the U.S. that a peace treaty would contain and a possible withdrawal of or a substantial reduction in U.S. troops and weapons deployed in the South would, in the North Korean view, go a long way toward allaying its sense of insecurity. Bilateral DPRK-U.S. negotiations per se, moreover, would, in Pyongyang's calculation, symbolically bolster its legitimacy at Seoul's expense.

Ironically, however, it was the ROK, not the U.S., that helped the DPRK achieve its long-sought goal of direct dialogue with the U.S. Had ROK President Roh Tae Woo not given the green light in July 1988, change in U.S. policy toward North Korea might not have materialized in October 1988. The change spawned the first-ever contacts¹ between U.S. and DPRK diplomats, which began in Beijing two months later.

These contacts, which became routinized, occurring six or seven times a year, however, failed to measure up to North Korean expectations. Not only did they occur at a relatively low level—the embassy political counselor level—but they did not go much beyond "contacts," allowing no room for substantive negotiation. North Korea's efforts to have the contacts upgraded, their venue changed, and turn them into something more substantive were in vain due to U.S. insistence that Pyongyang meet a number of preconditions, notably "real progress in the North-South dialogue; conclusion and implementation of an IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] safeguard agreement; credible assurances opposing terrorism; confidence-building measures; and a regular process of returning Korean War remains."²

The signing of two inter-Korean agreements in December 1991—one dealing with "reconciliation, nonaggression, and economic exchanges and cooperation" (known as the North-South basic agreement) and the other dealing with denuclearization of the Korean peninsula—and the conclusion of negotiations between the DPRK and the IAEA for a safeguard agreement helped to set the stage for a temporary upgrading of DPRK-U.S. contacts. On 22 January 1992, a North Korean delegation headed by Kim Yong

Sun, the secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in charge of international affairs, and a U.S. delegation led by Arnold Kanter, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, held talks in New York. According to *Nodong Shinmun* [Labor News], the daily organ of the WPK, "the two sides exchanged views on nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, improvement of [North] Korea-U.S. relations, and other issues of mutual interest." The paper added that "the talks were conducted in a candid and constructive atmosphere and in a satisfactory way."³

North Korea's hope that the Kim-Kanter meeting would lead to a permanent upgrading of DPRK-U.S. contacts, however, was quickly dashed, for Washington showed no interest in such a move, preferring instead to rely on the Beijing contacts as the main channel of communication with Pyongyang. It was only after North Korea precipitated a crisis that high-level talks materialized again. What is more, they would continue intermittently for sixteen months, producing a number of documents to which the DPRK would attach enormous importance.

The crisis in question erupted in March 1993, when the DPRK announced that it would withdraw from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).⁴ Since North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT would compel the IAEA to terminate its monitoring of the North's nuclear activities, thereby facilitating Pyongyang's suspected program to develop nuclear weapons, the U.S., South Korea and Japan had a high stake in preventing such a withdrawal. Thanks to a three-month notice requirement in the NPT, the North's withdrawal would not take effect until June 12. There was still time to persuade Pyongyang to change its mind.

It was against this backdrop that what subsequently became known as the first round of U.S.-DPRK high-level talks occurred in New York in June 1993; the U.S. team was led by Robert L. Gallucci, the assistant secretary of state for political and military affairs, while the DPRK team was headed by Kang Sok Ju, the first vice-minister of foreign affairs. On June 11, nine days after the talks began and one day before North Korean withdrawal from the NPT was to take effect, the two sides reached a dramatic agreement. According to their joint statement: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have agreed to principles of:

- assurances against the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons;
- peace and security in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, including impartial application of full-scope safeguards, mutual respect

for each other's sovereignty, and noninterference in each other's internal affairs; and

- support for the peaceful reunification of Korea.

In this context, the two governments have agreed to continue dialogue on an equal and unprejudiced basis. In this respect, the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has decided unilaterally to suspend as long as it considers necessary the effectuation of its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.⁵

Although all but one of the commitments North Korea obtained from the U.S. merely reiterated the obligations embodied in the United Nations Charter—the sole exception being the mutual commitment to “continue dialogue on an equal and unprejudiced basis,”—Pyongyang nonetheless regarded them as significant gains.⁶

The high-level talks, in and of themselves, represented a diplomatic coup of major proportions for North Korea. In Pyongyang's view, the talks simultaneously elevated the DPRK to a coequal status with the U.S. and relegated the ROK to a disgruntled spectator of a high-stakes negotiating game. Should they bear fruit, moreover, North Korea could reap benefits in the political and economic realm as well. All three strategic goals of the DPRK—security, legitimacy, and development—could receive a boost.

Notwithstanding or because of the high stakes involved, however, North Korea adhered to a hardline and resorted to brinkmanship in its tactical behavior. When its refusal to cooperate fully with an IAEA inspection team drove the U.S.-DPRK high-level talks into an impasse, prompting a move to seek sanctions, North Korea once again precipitated a crisis. In May 1994 it removed all of the 8,000 spent fuel rods from the five-megawatt experimental reactor in Yongbyon. With this bold move, Pyongyang not only undercut the ability of the IAEA to ascertain North Korea's past nuclear activity but also opened the door to a possible extraction of enough weapons-grade plutonium to make four or five atomic bombs.

In one stroke Pyongyang had raised the stakes of the game, leaving Washington little choice but to shift its priority from the past to the present. After former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visited Pyongyang in June 1994 with the approval of the Clinton administration, holding two long sessions with Kim Il Sung, the high-level talks resumed in Geneva, Switzerland. Washington had accepted Kim Il Sung's offer to freeze his government's nuclear program in exchange for the resumption of the talks

and assistance in replacing the North's graphite-moderated reactors with light-water reactors (LWRs).

The third round of the U.S.-DPRK high-level talks, which were briefly suspended due to Kim Il Sung's unexpected death on 8 July 1994, culminated in the publication of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework on 21 October 1994. That, together with the "letter of assurance" U.S. President Clinton sent to Kim Il Sung's eldest son and heir apparent, Kim Jong Il, on October 20 at Pyongyang's request, marked the single most important achievement of the DPRK's diplomacy vis-à-vis the U.S.⁷

While the agreed framework entails costs and benefits for both sides, benefits clearly eclipse costs for North Korea. First, the North will gain two LWRs with a combined generating capacity of 2,000 megawatts. Not only are LWRs safer and technically superior to the graphite reactors they will replace, but the amount of electricity the two new reactors will generate will be eight times that of the three reactors the North will forego. The North, moreover, will pay an exceedingly low price for the LWRs, which will be financed by an interest-free loan with a grace period and a long repayment schedule.

Second, the agreed framework stipulates that the U.S. will provide the North with heavy oil for heating and electricity generation to the tune of 500,000 tons a year. Since this is in compensation for the energy foregone by the North in terminating its current graphite-moderated reactor project, it will not only be free of charge but continue until the first LWR unit becomes operational. The target date for the completion of the LWR project is the year 2003.

Third, the U.S. and the DPRK have pledged in the agreed framework to: 1) "move toward full normalization of political and economic relations" between them, including removal of "restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions;" 2) "Each side will open a liaison office in the other's capital following resolution of consular and other technical issues through expert-level discussions;" and 3) "As progress is made on issues of concern to each side," the two sides "will upgrade bilateral relations to the ambassadorial-level."

Fourth, although the North has agreed to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for the aforementioned benefits, it will not really give up its nuclear card *in toto*. It will, in fact, retain the card for five years or more, since it is not required to release the 8,000 spent fuel rods it removed from a five-megawatt reactor in mid-1994 until key components of the first LWR

unit are ready to be installed. Should things go wrong or should Pyongyang change its mind, it can resume its nuclear weapons program.

Finally, the agreed framework may well increase the chances for the resumption of the stalled DPRK-Japan negotiations for diplomatic normalization. Should that happen and should the negotiations succeed, the North will reap sizable economic benefits.

These benefits, of course, need to be arrayed against the costs incurred by the North. First, the DPRK has abandoned its opposition to special inspection of the two undeclared sites in Yongbyon. Such inspection, however, will be delayed for five years or so and will not be called "special inspection." Second, the North has also withdrawn its previous objection to the removal of the spent fuel rods to a third country. As noted, the rods will remain in the North, albeit under IAEA safeguard, for five years or so. Third, the North has agreed to dismantle its five-megawatt experimental reactor, reprocessing plant (which it calls a "radio-chemical laboratory"), and two reactors under construction. In other words, for all practical purposes, it will give up its ability to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

Finally, the North has grudgingly accepted, albeit not explicitly, the idea that the South will supply the LWRs. This tacit concession by the DPRK was made palatable by a novel procedure: an international consortium, of which the U.S., the ROK, and Japan will be charter members, with the U.S. playing the leading role, will take charge of the LWR project. The North nonetheless tried very hard to minimize the South's role in the LWR project in subsequent negotiations related to the implementation of the agreed framework.

The North's brinkmanship helped to produce a compromise in which substantive concessions by the North were balanced by symbolic gains. The compromise, unveiled in a joint U.S.-DPRK press statement issued in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 13 June 1995, called for a delegation of the right to choose LWRs to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) but described the LWRs to be installed in the North as "the advanced version of U.S. origin, design, and technology currently under production."⁸

The joint press statement also made repeated references to the leading role of the U.S. in KEDO as well as in the LWR project. It noted, for example, that KEDO is "under U.S. leadership," that "the U.S. will serve as the principal point of contact with the DPRK for the LWR project," that "U.S. citizens will lead delegations and teams of KEDO as required to fulfill this

role," and that a U.S. firm will serve as the LWR project's "program coordinator." All this obscures the reality that the charter members of KEDO had already agreed on the South Korean model of LWRs and that the South will bear the bulk of the financial burden of the project and thus play a central role in it.

On 15 December 1995, KEDO and the DPRK signed an agreement on the scope of supply and terms of repayment in the LWR project. Not only was this the first agreement between the two, but for the first time the ROK was a full-fledged participant in negotiations with the DPRK on the LWR project. The North made further concessions in the agreement, withdrawing nearly all of its initial demands, including those for a "reimbursement" of what it had spent on its nuclear power project and for the construction of a power distribution system, a nuclear fuel-processing plant, and port facilities.⁹

KEDO agreed to provide only those facilities that are essential to the project. It will supply a reactor simulator to the North and build an "infrastructure [that is] integral to and exclusive for use in the construction of the reactor plants, which will consist of roads within the site boundary, access roads from the site to off-site roads, barge docking facilities and a road from there to the site, a waterway and water catchment facilities including weirs, and housing and related facilities for KEDO, its contractors and subcontractors."¹⁰

Although the North preferred a long repayment period for the loan it will get from KEDO for the LWRs—thirty years including a ten-year grace period—it settled for twenty years including a three-year grace period. The loan will be interest-free and the repayment clock will begin to tick after the provision of the first LWR unit.¹¹

Following the conclusion of the supply agreement, KEDO and the DPRK signed several protocol agreements covering transportation, communication, privileges and immunities, the project site, labor and other issues related to the LWR project. An obstacle in the path of a smooth implementation of the agreements relating to the project materialized in the fall of 1996 when the submarine incident erupted—an incident in which a 325 ton North Korean submarine carrying 26 crew members and commandos ran aground off South Korea's east coast. Twenty-four North Korean infiltrators were killed, eleven of them apparently at their own hands, and one was captured. Several South Korean soldiers and civilians were killed, some of them by "friendly fire."

This incident served to bolster a hardline in the Kim Young Sam government's policy and antagonize a large proportion of the South Korean populace. The ROK and its allies succeeded in having the United Nations Security Council adopt a unanimous resolution directing its president to issue a statement expressing concern over the situation on the Korean peninsula and calling upon the DPRK to abide by the Korean Armistice Agreement. It is noteworthy that, departing from its previous practice—which would have dictated an abstention—China supported this UN action. The relatively mild language of the statement, of course, played a key role in generating unanimous support in the Security Council.¹²

Perhaps more damaging to North Korea's interests, at least in the short run, was KEDO's decision to postpone a trip to the North by a site survey team. Even though KEDO would not halt the implementation of the LWR project, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord said in Seoul on October 15 that "there would be a pause in the pace of our [KEDO's] activities. The DPRK Foreign Ministry responded to Lord's statement by warning the U.S. against "trying to use the [submarine] incident for its sinister political purpose," saying that there might be serious consequences for the implementation of the Geneva accords.¹³

The North Korean warning is emblematic of its tactic of using and, if necessary, creating bargaining chips vis-à-vis the U.S. It reminded the U.S. that the nuclear deal is by no means irreversible. The arrest of a U.S. citizen, Evan Carl Hunziker, on espionage charge on October 6 may be related to Pyongyang's hope to enhance its bargaining position vis-à-vis Washington. Hunziker, however, was released on November 26 after U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson went to Pyongyang to negotiate his release. The North's abortive plan to test-fire a *Nodong-1* Missile may also have reflected its desire to strengthen its hand in negotiations with Washington and Tokyo alike. The missile is believed to have a range of 600 miles and thus capable of hitting targets in much of Japan, including possibly Tokyo.¹⁴ If, as previously noted, however, the North Korean gains eclipse its costs in the Geneva accords, then the North Korean tactic may no longer be as efficacious as it once was.

Some of what the North has already gained, however, may not be reversible. If the DPRK's overarching objective in its approach to the U.S. has been to ensure its security, what has already transpired cannot be minimized. It is plain that the U.S.-DPRK high-level talks have enhanced Pyongyang's sense of security. The joint statement of 11 June 1993 was particularly reassuring to the DPRK: it contains an explicit commitment by the U.S. to respect the DPRK's sovereignty, not to interfere in internal

affairs, and not to use force, including nuclear weapons. The reiteration of the foregoing in the subsequent documents, including the October 1994 agreed framework may have gone a long way toward allaying, if not totally banishing, North Korean apprehensions about threats to its security.

A major development that preceded the high-level talks but to which North Korean tactical behavior—of delaying the signing of a full-scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA—contributed was the removal of all U.S. nuclear weapons from the South. In a substantive sense, that may well be rated as Pyongyang's most notable gain insofar as its security needs are concerned.

Another goal the DPRK has officially articulated is to persuade the U.S. to end the latter's "hostile policy" toward the former. The developments noted above leave no doubt that this goal has been attained to a striking degree. The conduct of the high-level talks, the increasing frequency with which diplomats and other officials visit each other, the phased removal of "barriers to trade and investment, including restrictions on telecommunications" in accordance with the Geneva accords, the donation by the U.S. of a total of \$8 million to the UN World Food Programme for relief of North Korea's flood victims, and Washington's decision to lift restrictions on humanitarian aid to Pyongyang—all these prove that U.S. policy toward the DPRK can no longer be characterized as "hostile."¹⁵

The DPRK may arguably have made some headway in its pursuit of a latent goal—undermining the legitimacy of the ROK and causing friction between Seoul and Washington. If Pyongyang has not really succeeded in undercutting the Kim Young Sam government's legitimacy, it has clearly caused political problems for the latter at home. Being totally excluded from the U.S.-DPRK high-level talks was a source not only of frustration for the Kim government but also of criticism from opposition politicians and the press alike.

The unprecedented public criticism by Kim Young Sam of the Clinton administration's conduct of negotiations with North Korea on 7 October 1994, two weeks before the publication of the Geneva Accords, showed that Pyongyang's goal was being attained to some degree.¹⁶ In the first few months of 1996 Seoul and Washington were at odds over the issue of providing aid to the North; Seoul's continuing hardline, which included rejection of Pyongyang's overtures for the resumption of talks, also caused dismay in Washington. The latter's hope that Seoul would adopt a more conciliatory posture after the April 11 parliamentary election, however, was dashed by the eruption of the submarine incident.¹⁷

North Korea's Approach to Japan

The same three goals that undergird North Korea's U.S. policy are equally germane to North Korea's approach to Japan, even though economic needs may outweigh the other two considerations. The efficacy of the DPRK's approach, however, hinges on, among other things, Japan's policy toward the North, which remained more or less constant until the late 1980s—namely, separating politics from economics (*seikei bunri*). Change in Seoul's policy toward the North, signaled by President Roh Tae Woo's 7 July 1988 declaration outlining the key components of Nordpolitik (northern policy), however, provided an impetus for change in Tokyo's policy, just as it acted as a catalyst for a new U.S. policy toward the North.

The first clear-cut sign of change in Japanese policy appeared in January 1989. On January 20, the Japanese Foreign Ministry issued a statement outlining Japan's policy toward the Korean peninsula. It stressed that "Japan does not maintain a hostile policy toward North Korea, and we recognize that it will be appropriate . . . for us to move positively toward improved relations between Japan and North Korea, with all due regard for maintaining the international political balance as it affects the Korean Peninsula, if North Korea so desires." The statement also expressed hope that "a solution can be found soon to the Dai-18 Fujisan Maru problem . . . we are prepared to enter into discussions of any type with North Korea on the entire range of pending issues with no preconditions whatever."¹⁸

The Dai-18 Fujisan Maru problem refers to the detention of two Japanese citizens—the captain and the engineer, respectively, of a Japanese cargo ship—by North Korea. They were arrested and charged with espionage by the North after their ship re-entered Chongjin harbor on 15 November 1983 to pick up fresh cargo. Nine days earlier, the ship had inadvertently carried a North Korean soldier to Japan, who, upon arriving in Japan as a stowaway, requested political asylum. Japan subsequently rejected the North's demand for his immediate repatriation on humanitarian grounds. The two Japanese citizens in North Korean captivity would play a pivotal role in the evolution of Tokyo-Pyongyang relations in the 1990s.

Tokyo sent another signal to Pyongyang in March 1989. In a Budget Committee hearing in the House of Representatives of the Japanese Diet on March 30, Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru expressed his "remorse and regret" (*hansei to ikan no i*) to "all the people" of the Korean peninsula for the past Japanese actions inflicting great suffering and damage on them. He voiced the hope that Japan and the DPRK would be able to improve their relations, reiterating Japan's previously expressed desire for unconditional talks with North Korea on all bilateral issues.¹⁹

This was the first time that a Japanese prime minister or any government official had referred to the DPRK by its official name. By using the phrase "all the people" of the Korean peninsula, moreover, Takeshita had left no doubt that his "remorse and regret" were extended to the North Korean people. This set the stage for a new approach by Pyongyang toward Tokyo. After conducting two rounds of secret negotiations with Japan on the Dai-18 Fujisan Maru problem, North Korea indicated an interest in receiving a delegation of Japan's ruling party, the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), headed by a "man of real influence." This paved the way for a visit to the DPRK in September 1990 by two Japanese delegations, an LDP delegation led by Kanemaru Shin, former deputy prime minister and leader of the largest faction in the LDP, and a Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) delegation headed by its vice chairman Tanabe Makoto.²⁰

During preliminary negotiations preceding the Kanemaru-Tanabe visit, the North made plain what it was after: compensation from Japan. When Ishii Hajime, an LDP dietman, told his North Korean counterpart, Kim Yong Sun, the WPK secretary in charge of international affairs, that diplomatic normalization was prerequisite to any compensation, Kim insisted that normalizing relations with a country that had already established diplomatic relations with South Korea would be tantamount to a recognition of "two Koreas," which was unacceptable to the North. An abrupt change in Pyongyang's position on this issue after the two Japanese delegations landed in Pyongyang on September 24 appeared to reflect Pyongyang's need to compensate for the normalization of relations between the Soviet Union, its major ally and principal trading partner, and the ROK, its arch rival, which took effect on 1 September 1990.²¹

One aspect of North Korea's tactical behavior during the visit of the Japanese delegations was the conduct of one-on-one negotiations between Kim Il Sung and Kanemaru. Even though Tanabe, as head of the SDPJ delegation, not only had the same status as Kanemaru but also had been instrumental in bringing Kanemaru to the North, he was not included in the *tête-à-tête* that took place in Kim's villa on the scenic Myohayang Mountain on September 25 and 26. Kim and Kanemaru must have reached an understanding on a *quid pro quo*. In exchange for the release of the two Fujisan Maru crew members, Kanemaru would support the proposal for negotiations for diplomatic normalization.²²

Although the two Japanese citizens were not released until October, Kanemaru nonetheless had achieved his principal objective. Kim Il Sung's reward was a three-party declaration, signed on September 28, that contained not only their commitment to urge their respective governments to

start negotiations for diplomatic normalization but also the clause that Japan owed compensation to the DPRK for colonial rule as well as for forty-five years of hostility to the North during the postwar period. It was Kanemaru who overruled the objections to the latter clause raised by Japanese Foreign Ministry officials who had accompanied the LDP and SDPJ delegations to the North.²³

If this development signaled a breakthrough for the North, it owed primarily to the North's possession of bargaining chips, namely, the two Fujisan Maru crew members in captivity, and Japan's willingness to pay a price for their release and return. Once negotiations for diplomatic normalization began, however, the North lacked any real bargaining chips. During the normalization talks spanning two years—preliminary talks in Beijing in November and December 1990; eight rounds of full-fledged talks in Pyongyang, Tokyo, and Beijing from January 1991 to November 1992—the DPRK adhered to a hardline, displaying little flexibility.

The North's negotiating posture may have reflected its genuine conviction that as an aggressor and wrong-doer, Japan was duty-bound to take measures to atone for its crimes and compensate its victims. The issue of "comfort women"—Korean women and girls who had been forced to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II—gave the North an inexhaustible supply of ammunition with which to condemn Japan. When the North tried to justify its demand for reparations, in addition to compensation, on grounds that Korea had fought a guerrilla war against Japan under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, Japan pointedly reminded the North that Kim's guerrilla force had been but a "unit of the Northeast People's Revolutionary Army under the Chinese Communist party." This was a shocking response, which undermined the basis of Kim Il Sung's legitimacy. All the North could do was to dismiss the Japanese argument as unworthy of discussion on the ground that it was based on flimsy evidence.²⁴

The North repeatedly criticized Japan for introducing issues not directly related to normalization. Japan had linked progress in the talks to progress in inter-Korean relations and the resolution of the nuclear problem. Some of the conditions Japan had set were met while the normalization talks were under way; the North's decision to seek admission to the UN as a separate member, the conclusion of two inter-Korean agreements, and the North's signing of a nuclear safeguards agreement with the IAEA belonged to this category.

The issue that proved to be most divisive was the so-called "Yi Un Hye" issue—an alleged kidnapping by the North of a Japanese woman who was

said to have served as a tutor to Kim Hyon Hui, the former North Korean agent who blew up a Korean Air passenger plane with 115 persons on board in mid-air near Burma in November 1987. After the two sides worked out a compromise under which the issue would be discussed in a separate "working-level" session ahead of regular negotiating sessions, the North refused to honor its commitment. It was this breach that led to the breakdown of the talks in November 1992.²⁵

The signing of the Geneva accords in October 1994, however, raised the hope that both the DPRK and Japan might have fresh incentive to resume negotiations. In March 1995, the three political parties participating in Japan's coalition government—the LDP, the SDPJ, and Shinto Sakigake [the New Party Forerunner]—visited Pyongyang and signed a four-party agreement with the WPK. It pledged that the four parties would strive to achieve a resumption of the DPRK-Japan normalization talks, stressing that the talks must not have any preconditions and must be conducted on a strictly independent and autonomous basis.²⁶

The references to preconditions and independence were concessions made by the North, which wanted to prevent a recurrence of what it regarded as bitter experience during the 1991-1992 negotiations. Japan had attached preconditions that for the most part reflected the policies of the U.S. and the ROK. The North's attempt to include a clause affirming the validity and binding effects of the 1990 three-party declaration, however, failed due to Japanese opposition.

Shortly after the signing of the four-party agreement, the North approached Japan with a request for assistance. Pyongyang asked for substantial amounts of rice in order to deal with a serious food shortage. At Seoul's request, however, Tokyo told Pyongyang that the latter should seek Seoul's help first. An inter-Korean agreement on the issue, under which the South would provide 150,000 tons of rice free of charge to the North, was followed immediately by a Japan-DPRK agreement providing for a supply of 300,000 tons of rice, of which half would be free and the remainder would be on a deferred payment basis. When torrential rains wiped out most of the North's agricultural crops in July and August, the North approached Japan again for further assistance. With Japan's agreement to supply 200,000 additional tons of rice on a deferred payment basis, the total amount of Japan's rice aid to the North reached 500,000 tons, more than three times the South's aid.²⁷ Japan subsequently decided to donate about \$6 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) to alleviate the sufferings of the North's flood victims. The U.S. donated about \$8 million to the WFP on two occasions, and South Korea decided to donate \$2 million to the same organization.

Compared to what it has gained from the U.S., the DPRK's achievements in its approach to Japan thus far are meager. Pyongyang's main objective of diplomatic normalization has proved to be elusive. What Pyongyang hoped to get was an infusion of sizable Japanese funds into its troubled economy in the form of "economic cooperation," a term that is most likely to be used to characterize what the North will consider compensation. As of this writing, the probability that the normalization talks will resume sooner or later appeared high. Whether it will be sooner or later, however, is hard to predict.

Conclusion

Four sets of variables help to explain the divergent outcomes of North Korea's approaches to the U.S. and Japan: (1) North Korea's goals, needs, tactics, and resources; (2) U.S. policy and behavior; (3) Japanese policy and behavior; and (4) South Korea's ability to influence the preceding two.

North Korea's goals and needs can be summed up in three words: security, legitimacy, and development. With a sharp deterioration in its economic situation, coupled with changes in its external environment, the very survival of the DPRK has emerged as the overarching priority. This has compelled Pyongyang to undertake an agonizing reassessment of its strategic orientation, leading to the conclusion that the U.S. needs to be treated not as a threat but a lifeline to the DPRK's security. The principal resource—or "card"—the North would utilize in its approach to the U.S. would be its nuclear weapons program, whether real or imagined. Since Japan, too, could serve as a lifeline, the North would seek diplomatic normalization with it. The "card" the North had vis-à-vis Japan, however, was nowhere as potent as the nuclear card; what is more, once it was used, the North would have very little leverage over Tokyo. Notwithstanding such a pronounced asymmetry in negotiating power, the North failed to display a sufficient degree of pragmatism in the normalization talks.

Had the U.S. not elevated non-proliferation to a top priority foreign policy goal, North Korea's tactics would not have been as productive as they turned out to be. The willingness of the U.S. to make concessions, both large and small and substantive and symbolic, also played a major role in the U.S.-DPRK high-level talks.

Unfortunately for North Korea, diplomatic normalization was not really a high priority goal on Japan's foreign policy agenda. While it would allow Japan to settle one of the two unresolved problems in the postwar period and would contribute to the stabilization of Northeast Asia, it was not

something Japan needed to accomplish at great cost. This does not mean that Japan was, and is, not willing to pay the requisite price; just as it had paid a price, albeit, in the view of the South Korean people, an exceedingly low price, for normalizing relations with the ROK in 1965, Japan is prepared to provide an appropriate amount of "economic cooperation" to the DPRK. Although, contrary to widely held impressions, no specific amount was mentioned during the 1991-1992 normalization talks, the amount is most likely to be in the billions of dollars (or their equivalents in Japanese yen)—most probably in the low single digits. North Korea also displayed its lack of understanding of the Japanese political system by equating the three-party declaration with a binding commitment by the Japanese government. The *de facto* participation of Japanese government officials in the negotiations leading up to the declaration notwithstanding, the signatories to the document were party leaders, not government officials.

Finally, South Korea was and continues to be a major factor in the equation. Even though, to its chagrin, the Kim Young Sam government was excluded from the Geneva negotiations, it was nonetheless consulted continuously. Trilateral consultations among the U.S., the ROK, and Japan, in fact, became routinized during the negotiations and may well prove to be one of the most significant by-products of the nuclear crisis precipitated by the DPRK. To be sure, Seoul sometimes went along with Washington grudgingly, but on key issues Seoul clearly had the power of veto. From a strictly substantive standpoint, the Geneva accords and the manner in which it is being implemented are wholly consistent with Seoul's interests. On balance, Seoul has gained and will gain more than it will lose.

It is plain that the ROK factor was a major element in Japan-DPRK negotiations. Not only did Japan repeatedly raise the preconditions favoring Seoul, but the rock on which the negotiations foundered—the Yi Un Hye issue—was provided by the South. From Japan's perspective, South Korea is far more valuable than anything North Korea will ever offer; hence Japan has taken pains to heed Seoul's requests in dealing with Pyongyang. What is more, close and frequent consultations have occurred and will continue to occur on any notable moves in Japan's North Korea policy.

In sum, whether North Korea's approaches to the U.S. and Japan will prove to be efficacious will hinge, to a striking degree, on the policies and behaviors of the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. Pyongyang's own rhetoric and behavior, however, will be the single most important variable in the equation, for it will help determine whether and to what extent Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul will accommodate Pyongyang's needs and requests.

notes for chapter five

1. The word "approach" can be construed in a dual sense: whereas in its broad meaning it is synonymous with "policy," in a narrow sense it connotes an act of drawing closer to an object. It is with this dual meaning in mind that I use the term in this paper.
2. U.S. Information Service, "House Subcommittee Holds Hearings on Korean Peninsula (Transcript: Excerpts from Solarz Hearing," 26 July 1990): p. 5. Distributed by the USIS in Seoul, Korea.
3. *Nodong sinmun* [Pyongyang], 24 January 1992.
4. North Korea stated that it was taking this action "in order to safeguard our supreme national interest." Recalling that the U.S. had fought North Korea during the Korean War, the North declared that it would never allow the IAEA to "legitimize the reconnaissance activities" of its "belligerent" against itself. This was in reference to the fact that an IAEA demand for "special inspection" of two undeclared sites in Yongbyon nuclear complex, which was the direct impetus for the North's decision, had been based on data obtained by U.S. satellite reconnaissance. *Nodong sinmun*, 13 March 1993.
5. *Korea Times* [Seoul], 14 June 1993.
6. Emblematic of the importance North Korea attached to the U.S.-DPRK joint statement of 11 June 1993 were Kim Il Sung's references to it in his new year's message for 1994 and in his interviews with the foreign press. See *Nodong sinmun*, 1 January 1994; *Washington Times*, 19 April 1994; "Answers of President Kim Il Sung to Questions Put by Director General of Prensa Latina News Agency of Cuba," *The People's Korea* [Tokyo], 28 May 1994, p. 2.
7. In his letter to Kim Jong Il, who, at North Korea's request, was addressed as "Your Excellency Kim Jong Il, the Supreme Leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Clinton assured the DPRK that he would do everything within his power, subject to Congressional approval, to ensure a faithful implementation of the agreed framework. For the text of the Clinton letter, see *Korea Report* [Tokyo] no. 291 (October 1994): p. 5; for the text of the agreed framework, see *ibid.*, pp. 2-5. This is a monthly publication of *Ch'ongnyon* (*Chosen Soren* in Japanese), the federation of Korean residents in Japan who profess allegiance to the DPRK.

8. Ibid., no. 299 (June 1995): p. 2.
9. *Korea Newsreview* [Seoul], 23 December 1995, pp. 11-12.
10. Ibid., p. 11.
11. *Han'guk ilbo* (Korea Daily) [Seoul], 14 December 1995.
12. North Korea brushed aside the UN Security Council action, ridiculing South Korea's claim that it was a diplomatic victory and citing criticisms aired in the ROK National Assembly to the effect that the statement issued by the Council president was "meaningless." Reiterating its long-standing claim that it is the U.S. and South Korea "that have systematically violated [the armistice agreement], introducing a large quantity of military equipment into south Korea and ceaselessly staging the frantic war exercises," Pyongyang called on Washington to agree to the North's proposal for the establishment of a new peace mechanism and on Seoul to stop its "anti-DPRK confrontation campaign," "return the north's dead soldiers and submarine and apologize for [its] atrocities." *Korean Central News Agency* [Pyongyang], 25 October 1996.
13. "N. Korea Issues Veiled Threat Over Nuclear Accord," *C-reuters@clari.net* (Reuters), 15 October 1996.
14. "U.S. Urges North Korea Not to Test Missile," *ibid.*, 18 October 1996.
15. For an articulation of U.S. policy toward the DPRK, see "U.S. Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," (address by Winston Lord, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to the Korea/United States 21st Century Council, Grand Hotel, Washington, D.C., 8 February 1996.)
16. In an interview with James Sterngold of the *New York Times*, Kim Young Sam lashed out against the Clinton administration, accusing the latter not only of an "overeagerness to compromise" but also of ignorance about North Korea. See *New York Times*, 8 October 1994.
17. For signs that Seoul-Washington discord continues, see "[Hanmi] 'tae-buk yogu' sujun igyon...4-ja hoedam yon'gye tung kaltung yesang," [Disagreements Between the ROK and the U.S. Over the Level of Demands from the North...Linkage to the Four-party Talks and Other Cleavage Expected], *The Internet Hankyoreh Shinmun* [Seoul], 11 October 1996.

18. Gaimusho, Ajia-kyoku, Hokuto Ajia-ka, *Chosen hanto to Nihon* [The Korean Peninsula and Japan], 1 August 1988 [Tokyo], pp. 5-1 through 5-4. The quoted passages are from the Japanese Foreign Ministry's own translation on pp. 5-3 and 5-4.

19. Ibid., appendix. Takeshita said: "Based on the basic position that the problems of the Korean Peninsula should be resolved through dialogue between the authorities of South and North, the [Japanese] government hopes to pursue diplomacy toward the Korean Peninsula with a *new determination*." Emphasis added.

20. Kanemaru Shin and Tanabe Makoto, "Taidan: ima issono hakusha o" (Conversation: Now, More Efforts Than Ever), *Sekai* (The World) [Tokyo], temporary, extra issue (April 1992): p. 44.

21. Ishii Hajime, *Chikazuite kita toi kuni* (A Distant Country Getting Closer) (Tokyo: Nihon Seisanhonbu, 1991): pp. 14-37; 103-154. The English translation of the book's title is Ishii's own. During the first negotiating session among the WPK, the LDP, and the SDPJ on September 25, Kim Yong Sun reiterated his previous argument; he asserted that Japan should pay some form of compensation ahead of everything else as a token of its sincerity. Two days later, however, the North reversed its position and proposed government-to-government negotiations on diplomatic normalization.

22. Ibid., pp. 113-133.

23. Ibid., pp. 159-166. For the Korean-language version of the three-party declaration, see *Nodong sinmun*, 29 September 1990.

24. *Nihon keizai shinbun* (Japan Economic News) [Tokyo], 12 March 1991.

25. On the eighth round of the normalization talks, which ended in their breakdown, consult *Asahi shinbun* (Morning Sun News) [Tokyo], 6 November 1992; *Nodong sinmun*, 7 November 1992.

26. *Wolgan pukhan tonghyang* (Monthly Trends in North Korea) (Seoul: Tong'il-won Chongbo Punsoksil, March 1995): pp. 216-217.

27. Oemubu, *Ilbon chongguk kwa Han'il kwan'gye* (Japan's Political Situation and ROK-Japan Relations) [Seoul] (April 1996): pp. 19-20.

chapter six

**Japan's
Policy
Toward the
Two Koreas
in the
Post-Cold War Era**

■ *Hong Nack Kim*

I

During the cold war era, Japan's Korea policy was geared to the preservation of the *status quo* on the Korean peninsula by way of supporting the Republic of Korea (ROK) both politically and economically, while refusing to recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). However, Japan's foreign policy in general and its Korea policy in particular had to make some significant adjustments in the aftermath of the collapse of the Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern European nations, which ended the cold war in Europe, and a train of rapid developments on and around the Korean peninsula in the post-cold war era.

In order to cope with the changing international milieu in the post-cold war era on and around the Korean peninsula, Japan had to modify, first of all, its existing policy toward North Korea as Pyongyang expressed its willingness to normalize ties with Japan. Second, Japan also had to make adjustments to its policy toward South Korea, as many South Koreans began not only to question the terms of the settlement reached between Japan and South Korea in 1965 but also to criticize Japan's unwillingness to apologize and compensate for the victims of Japan's colonial rule over Korea (1910-1945). Third, Japan also had to map out a common strategy with South Korea and the United States to deal effectively with the threats posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine Japan's policy toward the two Koreas in the 1990s with special emphasis on analyzing major issues in Japan's relations with South and North Korea. It is the basic contention of this paper that Japan's Korea policy has been geared to the promotion of peaceful coexistence between South and North Korea and peaceful change on the Korean peninsula, for Japan fears the renewal of conflict on the Korean peninsula that could embroil Japan either directly or indirectly. Within such a framework, Japan wants to increase its influence in Korea by establishing diplomatic ties with not only the Republic of Korea but also the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

II

The security of Korea has long been a matter of substantial importance to Japan, not only for military reasons but for a full-range of political, economic, and cultural considerations. In the famous United States-Japan joint *communiqué* of 1969, Japanese Prime Minister Sato Eisaku declared that the security of the Republic of Korea (ROK) is "essential" to Japan's own security.¹ Although Sato's successors have slightly modified the so-called "Korea clause" of the 1969 joint *communiqué*, such a modification in no way has changed the basic proposition that the security of Korea is

vital to Japan's own security, for the obvious reason that the renewal of conflict in Korea would have a more serious impact on Japan than conflict in any other Asian nation. In view of the existing security arrangements with the United States, Japan would be drawn into the conflict either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, in view of the two Koreas' existing ties with powerful major powers, such a conflict could escalate into a major nuclear confrontation imperiling Japan's security.

No less serious consequences could be expected if the conflict resulted in conquest of the South by the North. The communization of South Korea inevitably would undermine Japanese political and security interests in Korea. Economically, Japan would lose a lucrative market for its manufactured goods. It could also lose public and private credits it had extended to South Korea, plus its equity investment in Korea. Politically, communization of South Korea could mean the loss of a friendly neighbor that has cooperated closely with Japan without posing any threat to Japan's vital national interests. Undoubtedly, a communist conquest of South Korea would affect Japan's security more than its other interests. It would eliminate a valuable buffer zone between Japan and her potential adversaries and bring the nation face to face with an unfriendly neighbor with more than one million men under arms. Frequent and serious friction could develop between Japan and communist Korea in waters near the peninsula where fishing and shipping activities of Koreans and Japanese have generated past tensions.

To be sure, a truly neutral, unified Korea not closely affiliated with any of the major powers would not necessarily constitute a threat to Japan. But this has been regarded as at best a distant goal which could not be realized until relations among the big powers and between the two Koreas change enough to make it possible. During much of the cold-war era, the ruling LDP and other influential opinion makers in Japan believed that peaceful reunification of Korea could not be realized within a short span of time. Under the circumstances, they believed the best policy was to promote "peaceful coexistence" between South and North Korea by encouraging Seoul and Pyongyang to expand the scope of their contact and dialogue. At the same time, Japanese conservative leaders were willing to support simultaneous entry of North and South Korea into the UN as well as the cross recognition of the two Koreas by the four major powers (i.e., the U.S., Soviet Union, China and Japan). As originally proposed by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975, the cross-recognition plan called for simultaneous recognition of North Korea by Japan and the United States and of South Korea by China and the Soviet Union. The proposal, however, was rejected by North Korea which regarded it as a step toward perpetuating the division of Korea.

As a result, Japan was not able to make any significant progress for the realization of the cross-recognition plan, either in its original format or in a modified version. Nevertheless, the LDP government was willing to pave the way for "peaceful coexistence" between the two Koreas by seeking a general improvement in relations between the two Koreas and the four major powers through increased exchanges in economic and cultural fields. Thus, until 1990, Japan's Korea policy was geared to the preservation of the *status quo* on the Korean peninsula by supporting South Korea both politically and economically while refusing to recognize North Korea. Except for a small amount of trade carried out by private firms with North Korea, there were few contacts or exchanges between Japan and North Korea.

By 1990, Japan's foreign policy in general and its Korea policy in particular had to make significant adjustments in the face of the collapse of the Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which brought about the end of the cold war in Europe. Although the residual elements of the cold war still persist on the Korean peninsula, "the last glacier of cold war confrontation" also could not be immune to the tides of change and reconciliation sweeping across the Eurasian continent. South Korea normalized diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union as well as most Eastern European nations by September 1991. In 1992, it also succeeded in establishing diplomatic ties with China. Meanwhile, North Korea declared its intention to normalize diplomatic relations with Japan in 1990, and by May 1991, Pyongyang decided to seek a separate seat in the United Nations, after opposing the simultaneous but separate entry of the two Koreas for nearly three decades. By September 1991, both South and North Korea were admitted to the UN as separate members.² Furthermore, by December 1991, Seoul and Pyongyang signed a joint agreement on reconciliation and nonaggression, which was ratified together with a joint declaration on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in February 1992. These developments clearly indicated that the rigid patterns of inter-Korean relations as well as the two Koreas' relations with four major powers were undergoing transformation.

Against the backdrop of a rapidly changing political situation in and around Korea, Japanese conservative leaders had to map out a new strategy to cope with the changing political situation in Korea. Japan had to modify its existing policy toward North Korea, as the cross-recognition of the two Koreas by the four major powers was becoming a reality. In addition, Japan had to make necessary adjustments to its policy toward South Korea, as Koreans intensified their criticism of Japan's failure to apologize and compensate for the wrongs committed against Koreans in the aftermath of the democratization of South Korea's political system. The suc-

successful handling of these tasks was regarded as essential not only for improving Japan's ties with the two Koreas but also for the realization of Japan's aspirations to become a major political power commensurate with its economic power in the emerging new international political system.

III

In spite of close ties developed at the governmental level, a number of issues have plagued Japanese-South Korean relations in recent years such as: liquidating the legacy of Japan's colonial rule over Korea (1910-1945); the rectification of perennial trade imbalance; and the legal status of Korean residents in Japan.

The legacy of bitterness and enmity left by Japanese colonial rule over Korea from 1910 to 1945 has been reflected in the deep-seated Korean feeling that Japanese have not fully and properly acknowledged their past mistakes and wrongs committed against Koreans. Such feelings were expressed in violent protests in Korea whenever Japanese were perceived to display insensitivity, as was the case with demonstrations against distortions of facts in Japanese textbooks in 1982 and 1986 and intemperate remarks by Japanese government leaders (e.g., Education Minister Fujio Masayuki in 1986 who tended to justify Japan's colonial rule over Korea).³ Furthermore, many Koreans were bitter about the fact that Japanese leaders were not only reluctant but less than candid in acknowledging Japan's past misdeeds and mistakes.

Another difficult issue stemming from the past has been the legal status of about 700,000 Korean residents in Japan. Primarily a legacy of the colonial period, most of these people or their parents were forcibly taken to Japan for hard labor during World War II. These Korean residents in Japan suffered from social discrimination and legal disadvantages. One of the most resented legal provisions has been the requirement for Korean residents to carry identification cards all the time and be fingerprinted every five years. South Korea has consistently called upon Tokyo to do away with these unreasonable requirements. In April 1990, Japan agreed to abolish finger-printing requirements and to improve the legal status of the third-generation Korean residents. Furthermore, in November 1990, at Seoul's request, Tokyo agreed to suspend fingerprinting for first- and second-generation residents as well.⁴ Finally, in January 1991, Japan agreed to replace the alien registration system for Korean residents with a family registration system involving only photographs but no fingerprinting.

Although Japan's concessions have defused tension with South Korea on the thorny issues involving Korean residents in Japan, the controversy sur-

rounding the fingerprinting issue rekindled Korean antipathy and resentment toward Japan. Many Koreans felt that the Japanese had not changed their basic attitudes toward Korea and Koreans. Such feelings became stronger as other issues involving the victims of Japanese colonial rule over Korea began to surface in recent years, such as the compensation for the Korean victims of the nuclear bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (over 20,000) as well as the Koreans forcefully taken to Sakhalin for hard labor during the war but left there (some 43,000 in 1945) after Japan's surrender. In addition, other victims of Japanese colonial rule, such as Koreans drafted into military or war-related services, became also quite vocal. Of these, the demand for apology and compensation for Korean women forced into prostitution for Japanese soldiers during World War II, or the so-called "comfort women," has become the most embarrassing for the Japanese government.⁵

The Japanese government's initial reactions to the "comfort women" issue was that the Japanese government was not involved in recruiting, transporting and employing these women. Rather, private businesses or individual brokers had been responsible for the whole affair. However, during January 1992, Japanese researchers discovered a series of documents in official depositories, including the Defense Agency archives, which substantiated the Japanese government's involvement.⁶ Some Japanese who had been involved in the recruitment of "comfort women" also began to testify openly, detailing the government's role.

Against this background, the South Korean government decided to take up the issue with Japan during Prime Minister Miyazawa's visit to Seoul in January 1992. Miyazawa was greeted by street demonstrations demanding an apology and compensation for the crimes committed against Korean women. In his speech to the Korean National Assembly, Miyazawa expressed his "acute distress" over these past Japanese wrongdoings.⁷ He also promised South Korean leaders to investigate the matter fully, expressing his willingness to take proper action to rectify the situation. Against the backdrop of growing tension on the "comfort women" issue, in early July 1992, the Miyazawa government published its report in which it admitted that the wartime government systematically recruited women for front-line brothels, even though no evidence was found that forced recruitment took place. Subsequently, on 4 August 1993, the Miyazawa government issued a final report on the "comfort women" issue in which it admitted officially that many Korean women were coerced to serve as "comfort women" in brothels for Japanese soldiers during World War II. Although the majority of Korean "comfort women" were recruited by private brothel operators acting on the request of the Japanese military, "In some cases, military offi-

cials were directly involved in recruiting."⁸ Moreover, the report also acknowledged that the Imperial Japanese Army operated and managed some brothels directly, although most were run by private operators. At the same time, it indicated its willingness to adopt certain measures other than compensation to rectify the situation.

Against this background, anti-Japanese feeling became stronger among Koreans. According to a joint Japanese-South Korean opinion polls conducted by *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Asahi Shimbun*, among South Korean respondents, those liking Japan fell from 22 percent in 1984 to 14 percent in 1988 and only 5 percent in 1990.⁹ Those disliking Japan increased from 39 percent to 51 percent to 66 percent over the same period. On the other hand, Japanese responses barely changed between 1984 and 1990: In the 1990 survey, 12 percent of Japanese respondents liked Korea, while 23 percent disliked Korea. In the 1984 survey, 11 percent of the respondents liked Korea, while 19 percent did not. According to another survey conducted by a Korean research firm in February 1992, 67.4 percent of South Koreans disliked Japan, and 26.1 percent said the mere mention of the word Japan upset them.¹⁰

The problem of liquidating the past in Japanese-Korean relations was alleviated with the establishment of the new Korean government headed by President Kim Young Sam in February 1993 and a Japanese coalition government headed by Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro in August 1993. President Kim indicated his willingness to settle thorny issues, including the issue of "comfort women," with Japan if Tokyo would make a candid admission of its past wrongdoings and a sincere apology to South Korea. Provided that Japan would undertake such forthright actions on the "comfort women" issue, Kim indicated that his government would not seek material compensation from Japan.¹¹ He has also indicated his willingness to develop future-oriented relations with Japan rather than one constantly mired and haunted by the unfortunate and painful past. This forward-looking attitude of the new South Korean President was highly appreciated by Japanese leaders. However, it was not until the summer of 1993, when a coalition government headed by Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro put an end to thirty-eight years of unbroken LDP rule in Japan, that a meaningful new beginning in Japanese-South Korean relations began to take shape.

The reform-minded new Japanese Prime Minister projected a fresh image to Koreans by taking a more clear-cut position on Japan's responsibility and guilt for atrocities committed during World War II. For instance, in his first press conference after assuming the premiership, Hosokawa declared

among other things that "the Pacific War was a war of aggression as well as a wrong war committed by Japan."¹² In view of the fact that no former LDP leader had admitted forthrightly Japan's responsibility or guilt for the war, such a candid admission by the new Japanese Prime Minister was highly valued by Koreans. Clearly, such a statement bode well for the new Japanese-Korean relationship pursued by the Kim government.

Prime Minister Hosokawa also impressed his host and numerous other Koreans at Kyongju in November 1993 by making the most explicit apology to Koreans ever made by a Japanese leader. Unlike his predecessors, Hosokawa was not timid in acknowledging atrocities committed by Imperial Japan such as banning the Koreans from using their own language, forcing them to change their names into Japanese, mobilizing Korean women as "sex slaves" for Japanese troops and forcing numerous men into labor camps. He added: "We deeply repent our wrongdoings. We again apologize for the intolerable pains which Koreans suffered."¹³ President Kim highly praised the Japanese Prime Minister's statements, saying that he was "deeply impressed" by Hosokawa's frank attitude. At the same time, the two leaders agreed to seek to turn Korean-Japanese relations into truly neighborly ties from those of geographically-close but psychologically-distant nations. In addition to making important progress in liquidating the past, the Kyongju summit meeting was also important in tackling the thorny issue of trade imbalance and technology transfer between Japan and Korea. The two leaders also agreed to cooperate closely with each other in dealing with the threats posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons development program.

IV

After normalizing relations with South Korea in 1965, Japan virtually ruled out diplomatic relations with North Korea and limited Japan's contacts with the DPRK to the bare minimum. Except for a modest amount of trade carried out by private Japanese firms, there were few contacts between the two countries.¹⁴ In a sense, Japan's Korea policy strongly reflected the influence of the United States, which has guaranteed South Korea's security, while not recognizing North Korea. In view of the U.S.-Japan security treaty, it was natural for Japan to maintain a basically pro-Seoul and anti-Pyongyang policy throughout the cold war period.

Until 1990, Japanese-North Korean relations remained chilly with little change in their "abnormal relations" due to a number of factors, such as Pyongyang's unwillingness to pay its 80 billion *yen* (\$790 million) trade debt to Japan, North Korean terrorist attacks against South Korea in the

1980s, and Pyongyang's refusal to release Japanese seamen seized in 1983.¹⁵ By the summer of 1990, however, there was a growing feeling among Japanese leaders that Japan should explore the possibility of improving relations with North Korea. Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki expressed the desire to "contact North Korea without any precondition attached."¹⁶ He also indicated his willingness to dispatch an LDP delegation to Pyongyang for improving relations with North Korea. The Kaifu government's positive posture toward Pyongyang could be attributed to a number of factors, including the Soviet-South Korean summit meeting held in San Francisco in June 1990 which had indicated the imminent normalization of Moscow-Seoul relations. North Korea responded by extending an invitation to the LDP and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) to send a joint delegation to Pyongyang.

An LDP delegation headed by Kanemaru Shin and a JSP delegation led by Tanabe Makoto visited Pyongyang in September 1990. On the basis of talks held with North Korean officials, including Kim Il-Sung, Japanese leaders worked out a joint declaration with North Korean leaders, which was issued on September 28.¹⁷ In the eight-point declaration, representatives of the LDP, the JSP, and the Korean Workers Party (KWP) agreed that Japan should apologize and compensate North Korea not only for the damage caused during the thirty-six years of colonial rule but also for the "losses" suffered by North Korea in the forty-five years following World War II.¹⁸ In addition, Japan and North Korea agreed to set up satellite links and inaugurate direct air flights to improve bilateral ties. In the declaration, Japanese leaders also endorsed the North Korean position that "there is only one Korea." The declaration stipulated further that signatories "urge" their respective governments to initiate diplomatic talks in November 1990 for the early establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

South Korea and the U.S. voiced concern about the terms and conditions of the proposed normalization between Tokyo and Pyongyang. South Koreans were apprehensive because of the risks normalization could pose for their national security. If Japan provided massive compensation and economic assistance to North Korea, and if the money were used to upgrade North Korea's military capabilities, the existing balance of power on the Korean Peninsula could be adversely affected. The U.S. shared South Korea's apprehension.

Japan agreed to accommodate both South Korean and U.S. requests in dealing with North Korea in the full-dress normalization talks. In January 1991, Japan adopted four basic principles to guide its normalization talks

with North Korea: (1) to conduct negotiations so as to promote peace and stability on the Korean peninsula; (2) to normalize relations with Pyongyang in such a way as not to undermine Japan's existing friendly relations with South Korea; (3) to make compensation for thirty-six years of colonial rule but not for the post-1945 "losses"; and (4) to seek Pyongyang's acceptance of international inspection of its nuclear facilities in view of the importance of the matter to Japan's national security.¹⁹

From the end of January 1991 to 5 November 1992, eight rounds of Tokyo-Pyongyang normalization talks were held. However, little progress was made in resolving a number of issues between Japan and North Korea. First, Japan and North Korea could not narrow the gaps on the compensation issue. North Korea insisted that "normalization of diplomatic relations is out of the question unless Japan admits and apologizes for her past criminal deeds in explicit terms and makes sufficient compensation for them."²⁰ According to Pyongyang, Japan's colonial rule over Korea was illegal and invalid, for the annexation treaty as well as other related agreements were forced on Korea. North Korea also demanded that Japan make "reparations" to North Korea, for Korea and Japan were in a state of war in the pre-1945 period.²¹ Japan maintained, however, that since Japan was not in a state of war with North Korea before and during World War II, Pyongyang's demands should be dealt with in terms of North Korea's claims to Japan for property damages in the pre-1945 period. Japan applied such a principle in settling similar issues with South Korea in 1965. For this purpose, the Japanese requested North Korea to present documentary proof of damage caused by Japan during the colonial days. Rejecting the Japanese viewpoint, North Korea declared that Pyongyang would never accept the settlement formula used by Japan with South Korea in 1965, for it sidestepped the problems of apology and compensation for human and property damages Japan had inflicted on the Korean people from 1910 to 1945. For its part, Japan rejected North Korea's demand for compensation for the losses incurred after 1945, maintaining that there was no legal basis for Japan to compensate for the alleged losses arising from "abnormal relations" between Japan and North Korea in the postwar period.²²

Second, another major obstacle was the inability of both sides to work out an agreement on the question of the international inspection of North Korea's nuclear facilities. Japanese negotiators told North Korea that the current bilateral talks should be aimed not only at normalizing diplomatic relations but also at promoting peace and stability in East Asia, including the Korean peninsula. Japan urged North Korea to open its nuclear facilities for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). North Korea, however, rejected the Japanese demand on the grounds that

the nuclear inspection issue was not a proper topic for normalization talks, and that such an issue should be discussed between North Korea and the U.S., since a similar inspection should be conducted of the nuclear weapons stored in South Korea by the U.S.²³

Third, starting in the third round of normalization talks, Japan's request for information concerning a missing Japanese woman, Yi Un Hye (pseudonym), also became a contentious issue. The identity of the missing Japanese woman was verified by Kim Hyun Hee, a former North Korean agent then living in South Korea, who planted a time bomb that destroyed a Korean Airlines (KAL) plane in November 1987. According to Kim, she was taught Japanese in North Korea by the allegedly abducted Japanese woman in preparation for her assignment in Japan as a special agent. Kim identified the missing Japanese woman (Taguchi Yayeyo) from photographs of missing Japanese provided by the Japanese police to the South Korean authorities.²⁴ North Korea's response was that the Li issue was not only "fabricated" but also irrelevant to the normalization talks. In fact, North Korea became so irritated by Japan's persistent demand for information on the Yi issue that it walked out of the normalization talks twice, including the eighth round of normalization talks in November 1992. The North Korean delegation denounced the Japanese request as a serious "insult" to North Korea and ruled out any possibility of resuming the talks as long as Japan would not drop the issue.²⁵ To be sure, there were other issues, including permission for Japanese wives of North Koreans to visit Japan, and strengthening the legal status of pro-Pyongyang Korean residents in Japan. However, they were not quite as troublesome as the first two issues: the international inspection of North Korea's nuclear facilities and the scope and nature of Japan's compensation to North Korea.

V

In the spring of 1993, as tension increased in the wake of Pyongyang's refusal to comply with international inspection of its nuclear facilities, Japan reaffirmed its intention to cooperate fully with the U.S. and South Korea. Japanese Prime Minister Hosokawa expressed his willingness to cooperate fully with South Korea in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue. Japan was particularly apprehensive about Pyongyang's development of medium range missiles (e.g., *Nodong-1*) which could reach part of Japan.²⁶ It was, therefore, in full agreement with Seoul and Washington that North Korea's attempts to develop nuclear weapons should be prevented through effective international inspection of its nuclear facilities, and that Pyongyang should fulfill its pledge to make the Korean peninsula nuclear free. During President Kim Young Sam's state visit to Japan on

24-26 March 1994, Hosokawa reassured Kim that Japan would undertake responsible measures and actions within the framework of Japanese constitution in the event the UN Security Council imposed economic sanctions against North Korea.²⁷ Hosokawa's successor, Prime Minister Hata Tsutomu, retained Hosokawa's Korea policy until he was replaced by Murayama Tomiichi in June.

The inauguration of the SDPJ-led coalition government headed by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi at the end of June 1994 aroused immediate speculation that Japan's Korea policy might undergo changes under the socialist-led coalition government, despite his professed intention to maintain cooperative relations with South Korea. According to the policy agreement signed among the SDPJ, the LDP, and the New Party Sakigake, in forming the new coalition government, the new government was to develop its policy on the basis of previous policy agreements adopted in conjunction with the establishment of the Hosokawa and Hata coalition governments during 1993-1994.²⁸ However, in the area of foreign policy, the Murayama government proved more "dovish" than its predecessors. Regarding the Korean peninsula, it stressed its intention to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program and to accept international inspection of Pyongyang's nuclear facilities by the IAEA. If North Korea refused international inspection again and if the UN Security Council adopted a sanctions resolution, Japan should adopt whatever measure necessary within constitutional limits. Thus, the Murayama government tended to emphasize the indispensability of the UN endorsement in conjunction with Japan's participation in sanctions against North Korea.

Nevertheless, the Murayama government's policy toward South Korea remained basically similar to its predecessors. On July 1, Murayama called President Kim Young Sam to assure South Korea that the new government would follow basically the same policy toward South Korea as its predecessors. Furthermore, during his visit to South Korea a few weeks later, Prime Minister Murayama promised to continue working closely with South Korea, the U.S. and China to resolve the nuclear issue and to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula. He also expressed deep remorse and apology for Japan's misdeeds and mistakes committed against Koreans during Japan's colonial rule over Korea.

Despite the Murayama government's commitment to continuity in foreign policy, speculation persisted regarding the possibility of change in the new government's policy toward North Korea. Murayama indicated his interest in the resumption of the Japanese-North Korean normalization talks, as Washington and Seoul began to prepare high-level talks with Pyongyang

following the agreement worked out between Kim Il-Sung and former President Jimmy Carter in Pyongyang in June 1994. With the signing of the U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework on the nuclear issue at Geneva on 21 October 1994, the environment for the resumption of Tokyo-Pyongyang normalization was substantially improved, for it removed a major stumbling block that had stalemated the talks. The Murayama government welcomed the signing of the Geneva accord between Washington and Pyongyang. It also indicated its willingness to share the cost of converting Pyongyang's graphite-moderated nuclear reactors to light-water reactors. Murayama also indicated his willingness to hold normalization talks with Pyongyang without any conditions attached.²⁹

In the spring of 1995, Japan renewed its effort to explore the possibility of resuming normalization talks with North Korea. At the invitation of the North Korean Workers' Party (KWP), a joint delegation of the ruling coalition parties (the SDPJ, the LDP, and the Sakigake party) headed by former Deputy Prime Minister Watanabe Michio (LDP) arrived in Pyongyang on March 28 to discuss the resumption of the Tokyo-Pyongyang normalization talks. On the basis of talks held between Japanese and North Korean leaders, an agreement was signed on 30 March 1995.³⁰ Among other things, it stipulated that no preconditions would be set for resuming normalization talks, and that each party would urge its government to resume negotiations as soon as possible.

Apparently, North Korea decided to resume the normalization talks with Japan, for a number of reasons. First, the Murayama government was the friendliest Japanese regime North Korea had to deal with in the postwar era. It was headed by a Socialist Prime Minister whose party had maintained close ties with North Korea since 1963. Second, North Korea is sorely in need of Japan's capital and technology to reinvigorate its stagnating economy. If North Korea succeeds in normalization talks with Japan, it can expect huge compensation from Japan, possibly as much as \$10 billion.³¹ The infusion of such a huge amount of capital from Japan could clearly strengthen North Korea's economy and enhance the prestige and power of the Kim Jong-Il regime. It could also alleviate growing popular discontent about economic hardship in North Korea. Third, the establishment of diplomatic ties with Japan could also improve the Pyongyang regime's international position vis-à-vis South Korea. It could compensate in part for the diplomatic losses incurred by North Korea as a result of the successful implementation of South Korea's northern policy, which brought about normalization of Seoul's diplomatic relations with Beijing and Moscow.

To be sure, there were a number of factors which prompted the Murayama government to resume negotiations with Pyongyang. First, the breakthrough in U.S.-North Korean relations on the nuclear issue had removed the major stumbling block in the resumption of Japanese-North Korean normalization talks. Second, Japan did not want to be left behind in the evolving situation driven by Washington and Seoul. Rather, it wanted to establish its diplomatic foothold in North Korea and to expand its commercial ties with Pyongyang. Third, Japan could not postpone indefinitely the task of normalizing relations with North Korea, one of the few remaining issues arising from Japan's defeat in World War II. Fourth, Japan believed that the establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea was necessary if Japan was to play a major role in the emerging new international system in the post-cold war era. If Japan wanted to have significant participation in international politics, the logical place to begin would be Northeast Asia, its backyard. Without mending fences with its close neighbor, it would be difficult for Japan to contend for a leadership position in East Asia. Fifth, Japan believed that the establishment of diplomatic ties between Tokyo and Pyongyang would contribute to a reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula and promote peaceful coexistence between North and South Korea. As the possibility for Korean reunification through the South's absorption of the North (or the German model) has decreased in the wake of Washington-Pyongyang rapprochement, Japan believed a period of peaceful coexistence would be necessary for the peaceful reunification of Korea.

In the aftermath of the signing of the new agreement between Japanese and North Korean political leaders in Pyongyang, the Japanese media reported the imminence of the resumption of Pyongyang-Tokyo normalization talks. However, talks did not materialize for several reasons, including the ongoing U.S.-Japanese negotiations on the implementation of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework,³² and South Korea's opposition to any hasty Japanese move to mend fences with North Korea. Seoul advised Tokyo not to make an impetuous move toward Pyongyang until there was significant progress in South-North Korean relations.

VI

In the summer of 1995 the deepening economic crisis in North Korea prompted Pyongyang to dispatch its officials to Japan to secure Japan's help in procuring rice. In his meeting with Watanabe Michio and other coalition leaders, on May 26, Li Song Rok, chairman of North Korea's International Trade Promotion Committee, requested Japan's aid for rice to alleviate a food shortage.

On the basis of consultation carried out among the coalition leaders, the Murayama government decided to provide rice aid to Pyongyang, not unilaterally but in cooperation with South Korea. It was the consensus of the Murayama government that it would be imprudent for Japan to provide unilateral rice aid to North Korea, which had turned down South Korea's earlier offer of similar aid to Pyongyang. Under the circumstances, it was necessary for the Murayama government to secure Seoul's understanding. It also wanted to see the outcome of the U.S.-DPRK negotiations at Kuala Lumpur before acting on Pyongyang's request.

When South and North Korea worked out an agreement on 150,000 tons of rice to be supplied by South Korea following a series of talks carried out in Beijing in June 1995,³³ Japan moved swiftly to finalize its version with North Korea. By then, the U.S. and North Korea had also reached an agreement on implementing the Geneva framework agreement. On June 30, a formal agreement was reached between Tokyo and Pyongyang on Japan's rice aid to North Korea. It was signed in Beijing between Kawashima Yutaka, head of the Asian Affairs Bureau, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Li Chong Hyuk. According to the pact, Japan would provide 300,000 tons of rice to help alleviate North Korea's food shortage. Pyongyang would have thirty years to pay for half of the shipment, starting after a ten-year grace period. The annual interest would be two percent during the grace period and three percent thereafter. The remaining 150,000 tons, forwarded through the Japanese Red Cross, would be free of charge.³⁴ Kawashima reportedly secured a verbal assurance that all rice shipped from Japan would be used exclusively for North Korean citizens' livelihood.³⁵ The Murayama government was apparently hopeful that the signing of the rice aid agreement would facilitate the resumption of normalization talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang.

In early September, as North Korea renewed its request for additional assistance for rice to Japan, citing severe drainage caused by floods in North Korea, the Murayama government decided: (1) to offer \$500,000 in humanitarian aid through the United Nations for North Korean flood victims; and (2) to supply additional rice to Pyongyang.³⁶ On October 3, Japan signed an agreement with North Korea in Beijing to provide an additional 200,000 tons of rice to North Korea. The terms of payment were somewhat similar to the ones stipulated in the previous agreement: two percent interest during the ten-year grace period and three percent interest annually for the next ten years.³⁷

Meanwhile, starting in April 1995, Japan and North Korea carried out a series of informal working level discussions in Beijing in the hope of

paving the way for the resumption of bilateral normalization talks.³⁸ By the end of May, according to Japanese sources, North Korea indicated its willingness to resume such talks.³⁹ However, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to wait for the outcome of the ongoing U.S.-DPRK negotiations at Kuala Lumpur and also to seek South Korea's understanding before taking any decisive move on the normalization issue. Despite Prime Minister Murayama's professed intention to seek the normalization of relations with North Korea in his policy speech delivered before the parliament on 29 September 1995,⁴⁰ there was no resumption of the normalization talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang in the fall of 1995.

VII

Japan's direct contacts with North Korea have always been watched closely by South Korea. Although South Korea indicated its willingness to welcome Japan and other friendly powers' improvement of relations with North Korea after President Roh Tae Woo's special declaration on northern policy on 7 July 1988, South Korea has been wary of Japan's approach to North Korea, lest such a move would undermine South Korea's interests. Due to Tokyo's willingness to accommodate Seoul's request in dealing with North Korea, many South Koreans became seriously concerned with the potential negative impact of Tokyo-Pyongyang rapprochement on North-South Korean dialogue. There has been a widely held perception in South Korea that Japan is attempting to play the North against the South to hamper a real breakthrough in South-North Korean relations, because Japan's offer of economic assistance to North Korea would diminish the incentive for the North to cooperate with the South. Many South Koreans (over 79 percent in the January 1994 *Dong-A Ilbo* poll) believe that Japan does not favor Korean reunification for fear that a united Korea may pose a serious threat to Japan. Insofar as the South Korean government is concerned, Japan's willingness to consult closely with South Korea in conducting normalization talks with North Korea from 1991 to 1992 alleviated its initial misgivings about Japan's intentions.

Following the inauguration of the Kim Young Sam government in February 1993, Seoul placed importance on cultivating close cooperation with Japan in dealing with North Korea. At every summit meeting between South Korea and Japan since 1993, the issue was discussed at length with general agreement on the necessity of continued cooperation between the two nations. Despite the initial apprehension over SDPJ's close ties with North Korea, President Kim was willing to accept Prime Minister Murayama's assurance that the socialist-led coalition government would follow the same basic policy toward South Korea as its predecessors.⁴¹

However, a series of Japanese moves to improve relations with North Korea aroused apprehension among South Korean leaders. In the spring of 1995, South Korea cautioned Japan not to make impetuous moves toward North Korea at a time when the U.S. and North Korea had to work out details on the implementation of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. Again, in the summer of 1995, South Korean leaders advised the Murayama government not to make any unilateral move toward the North in connection with Pyongyang's request for rice, but to wait until a deal on rice could be struck between South and North Korea. Japanese leaders nominally heeded these South Korean requests by holding consultations with Seoul.

However, the Murayama government's obsession with normalizing relations with North Korea clearly undermined South Korea's plan to bring about the resumption of North-South Korean dialogue through economic cooperation. Partly because of Japan's offer of rice aid, North Korea did not take South Korea's offer of rice seriously. Moreover, North Korea acted defiantly toward South Korea in implementing the rice agreement. For example, North Korea forcefully hoisted its flag on a South Korean ship which was to enter a North Korean port to unload rice earmarked under the North-South rice aid agreement,⁴² and furthermore, in August 1995, Pyongyang detained a South Korean ship carrying 5,000 tons of rice for North Korea, charging that the ship's crew was engaged in espionage activities.⁴³

In spite of the fact that North Korea sorely needed additional grain from abroad, the DPRK suspended further talks with South Korea on the economic cooperation issue. Had Japan not offered 500,000 tons of rice to North Korea in the summer of 1995, it is inconceivable that North Korea would have acted in such a defiant and high-handed fashion toward South Korea.

It was against this background that President Kim expressed South Korea's displeasure with Japan's impetuous moves toward North Korea. In his interview with an influential Japanese newspaper, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, on 9 October 1995, Kim stated that "when there is no progress in the South-North Korean dialogue, Japan's attempts to improve relations with North Korea in defiance of South Korea's wishes can be construed by South Koreans as attempts to obstruct Korean reunification." After pointing out that Japan was partly responsible for a divided Korea, Kim emphasized that "it is desirable for Japan to leave the North-South Korean issue to the Koreans, and that Japan's attempts to improve relations with the North by jumping over the head of South Korea will not serve Japan's own interests."⁴⁴

Strained Seoul-Tokyo relations were exacerbated further when South Koreans became infuriated by a series of statements issued by leaders of the Murayama government, including the prime minister, who attempted to justify Japan's colonial rule over Korea or gloss over Japan's guilt and responsibility for acts of aggression committed against its neighbors. Already, in the summer of 1995, many Koreans including President Kim Young Sam were deeply disappointed by the Japanese Diet's handling of the so-called "No War Resolution" in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, for it did not contain an explicit apology nor any promise of compensation to the victims of prewar Japanese imperialism.⁴⁵ According to a public opinion poll jointly conducted by the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Dong-A Ilbo* in the summer of 1995, 69 percent of Koreans disliked Japan, while only 6 percent indicated that they liked Japan. Those results represented a sharp increase in the percentage of Koreans who disliked Japan as compared to results of the same poll conducted for the first time in 1984 (i.e., 39 percent disliked the Japanese).⁴⁶ Regarding the question as to whether Japan had done enough to compensate South Korea for Japan's past wrongdoings, 56 percent replied that it had not. Furthermore, 87 percent of Korean respondents believed that Japan "has not done enough to rectify for its past mistakes," 58 percent of Korean respondents indicated that Japan should compensate the "comfort women" and 97 percent believed that Japan "has not shown its good faith" in dealing with this matter. Insofar as Japanese attitudes toward Korea were concerned, little change was indicated: 11 percent of Japanese respondents liked Korea, while 21 percent disliked it.

In an attempt to ease tensions between Tokyo and Seoul, at the Japanese-South Korean summit meeting in Osaka in November 1995 Prime Minister Murayama assured President Kim that Japan would consult closely with South Korea and that it would try to: (1) conduct normalization talks with Pyongyang without undermining existing Tokyo-Seoul ties; (2) link the pace of normalization talks to the progress of the inter-Korean dialogue; and (3) refrain from providing any further economic assistance to the DPRK prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations.⁴⁷ These policy guidelines would constitute constraints on the new LDP-led coalition government headed by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro, which replaced the Murayama government in January 1996.

VIII

Since the inauguration of the Hashimoto coalition government in January 1996, Japan's foreign policy in general and its Korea policy in particular has tended to reflect the policy orientation of the LDP. Basically, it has main-

tained cordial relations with South Korea, while displaying a more cautious approach to North Korea than its predecessor.

In the spring of 1996, Japanese-South Korean relations were strained as a result of a territorial dispute over a small island, Tokdo in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese. Both countries claim that the island is historically theirs. According to South Korea, the island was claimed by Korea as early as 512 A.D.⁴⁸ Since the early 1950s, the island has been inhabited by South Korean residents, and a coast guard detachment has been stationed since 1956. Japan, on the other hand, maintains that the island was officially incorporated into Japan's Shimane prefecture in 1905.⁴⁹ Although Japan contends that Korea did not raise objections at the time, such a contention is brushed aside by Koreans because the Korean government in 1905 was under Japanese control even if it was not officially annexed until 1910. The dispute flared up in February when both Tokyo and Seoul announced plans to declare 200-nautical mile economic zones off their respective shores as allowed under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The zones would overlap part of the Sea of Japan (the East Sea to Koreans) where the disputed island is located. When Japanese Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko asked Koreans to stop building a wharf on the island, claiming that the island was Japanese, infuriated Koreans in Seoul burned a Japanese flag together with the effigy of Ikeda. President Kim Young Sam was quoted as "indescribably outraged" at the Japanese demand. "This is our territory and we will defend it no matter who says what," said South Korean ambassador to Japan Kim Tai Ji.⁵⁰ To be sure, Japan has decided to resolve the issue through patient dialogue with South Korea.

In an attempt to defuse the crisis, on 2 March 1996, a summit meeting was held in Bangkok between Hashimoto and Kim, both then attending the Asia and Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM). In his meeting with President Kim, Hashimoto maintained that the island belonged to Japan. However, President Kim countered directly by saying that South Korea "cannot recognize Japan's claim to the island."⁵¹ Nevertheless, they agreed to undertake negotiations on setting the exclusive economic zones and dealing with the fisheries around the disputed island, without touching island ownership. With regard to Japan's policy toward North Korea, Hashimoto told Kim that Japan's basic objective is to normalize "abnormal relations" with North Korea and to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula. Hashimoto also promised Kim to maintain close consultation with South Korea in dealing with North Korea.

At a trilateral consultation conference involving assistant foreign ministers of the U.S., South Korea and Japan, held on Cheju island in May 1996, Japan

agreed to press Pyongyang to accept the four-party talks proposed jointly by the U.S. and South Korea.⁵² They also agreed that, although North Korea had a serious food shortage, the situation was not likely to lead to disastrous famine as seen in Africa. In addition, they have agreed to continue consultation among themselves in dealing with North Korea.

Japanese-South Korean relations improved noticeably by the summer of 1996. At the Japanese-South Korean summit meeting held on Cheju island in June 1996, Hashimoto reiterated Japan's unequivocal support for the four-party talks proposed by the U.S. and South Korea to work out a permanent peace treaty to replace the armistice agreement in Korea.⁵³ Hashimoto also reaffirmed his intention to maintain close consultation with South Korea in dealing with North Korea. Both Hashimoto and Kim also agreed to make common efforts to develop "future-oriented relations" and to achieve a "common goal" in jointly hosting the World Cup soccer finals in 2002. In addition, they agreed to expand youth exchange programs and to set up a joint study group to conduct research on historical issues involving Japan and Korea.

In stark contrast to the improvement in Japanese-South Korean relations, there has been little progress in breaking the stalemate in Japanese-North Korean relations. Although the Hashimoto government has indicated its willingness to explore the possibility of resuming normalization talks with North Korea, it has not taken any major initiative to break the impasse so far. Except for holding a few rounds of working level-talks on the resumption of normalization talks with North Korea in Beijing in March and August 1996,⁵⁶ Tokyo has not held any high-level talks with Pyongyang. Furthermore, with the exception of offering \$6 million in humanitarian relief aid through the United Nations in June 1996, the Hashimoto government has not provided any economic assistance to North Korea, despite Pyongyang's persistent request for additional rice. Furthermore, the Hashimoto government has cooperated closely with South Korea in dealing with North Korea. For example, in addition to supporting the four-party talks jointly proposed by the U.S. and South Korea in April, in May LDP leaders indicated their intentions not to meet with the North Korean delegation scheduled to visit Japan at the invitation of the SDPJ unless North Korea would accept the four-party talks.⁵⁵ As a result, the high-level North Korean delegation representing the KWP decided to cancel its scheduled visit to Japan at the last minute. Apparently, several factors have influenced the Hashimoto government's generally cautious policy toward North Korea. First, it is reluctant to resume normalization talks with North Korea as the DPRK has yet to settle the succession problem since the death of Kim Il Sung in July 1994. Furthermore, North Korea's economy remains on the

verge of collapse. These developments in turn have aroused much speculation concerning the imminent collapse of the Communist system in North Korea. Under the circumstances, there is no real incentive for the Hashimoto government to rush into normalization talks with North Korea.

Second, there is a growing reluctance among nationalistic Japanese conservatives to admit Japan's wrongdoings committed before and during World War II or to apologize or compensate for the atrocities committed by Japan against its neighbors. For example, the resolution adopted by the Japanese Diet in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II fell far short of the expectations of many Koreans and Chinese, as it failed to acknowledge that Japan had committed aggression against its neighbors in Asia. Instead, it tried to shift blame to other countries by referring to "many colonial rules and acts of aggression in the modern history of the world." To be sure, it contained a passage which states: "We recognize and express deep remorse for those acts our country carried out in the past and unbearable pains inflicted upon people abroad, particularly those in Asia."⁵⁶ However, the statement was regarded by many Koreans as far from being an adequate apology or atonement for the atrocities and horrors Japanese troops perpetrated in Asia. Unlike the Germans, who have not only apologized but also compensated adequately to the victims of Nazi Germany at the total cost of over 120 billion marks (or \$180 billion),⁵⁷ Japanese conservatives have attempted to evade the responsibility of making proper compensation to the victims of Japanese militarism. Even in the case of compensation for the highly publicized "comfort women" Japan has tried to dodge its responsibility by offering to compensate the victims through a private fund established with contributions from nongovernmental sources. Furthermore, several Japanese cabinet ministers have openly attempted to justify Japan's colonial rule over Korea rather than apologizing to the Koreans. In view of the fact that the more candid apology contained in the original draft of the Japanese Diet's "No War Resolution" of 1995 was watered down largely due to the opposition of the LDP members,⁵⁸ and that most of the Japanese cabinet members who have angered Koreans with "gaffs" have been LDP members, there is no incentive for the Hashimoto government to take a bold initiative toward North Korea, which will require an explicit apology plus substantial compensation to Pyongyang.

Third, there is no incentive for the Hashimoto government to resume normalization talks with North Korea, as it is disturbed by the Kim Jong Il regime's dangerous acts of provocation against South Korea which have heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula in recent months. For example, in early April 1996, a few hundred armed North Korean soldiers on

several occasions entered into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea in clear violation of the armistice agreement of 1953 that ended the Korean War.⁵⁹ At the same time, the official North Korean Central News Agency announced that the North would no longer abide by the terms of the armistice agreement. South Korea expressed outrage at the incursions and put its forces on the highest alert. Against the backdrop of heightening tension on the Korean peninsula, Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto voiced Japan's apprehension about North Korea's actions, saying "such acts were very dangerous."⁶⁰ In September 1996, tensions on the Korean peninsula reached the highest point in years as twenty-six North Korean armed commandos came ashore from their submarine which had run aground near the eastern coastal city of Kangnung. It was the deepest penetration into South Korean territory by North Korean troops in recent years. All but one of the commandos were killed, or found dead, with one captured alive. "This is an armed provocation, not a simple repeat of infiltration of agents of the past," President Kim Young Sam told the officials of his party, adding that North Korean authorities will have to pay a due price for the provocation.⁶¹ North Korea's response angered South Koreans further. Breaking a five-day silence, Pyongyang demanded the return of the submarine and its crew, including those dead, claiming that the craft drifted into South Korean waters because of engine trouble. South Korea rejected the claims as a "deceptive ploy,"⁶² and Japanese Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko "condemned" North Korea's reckless acts of provocation toward South Korea.⁶³ Unless North Korea adopts a more conciliatory policy toward South Korea, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the Hashimoto government to make a bold move to mend fences with Pyongyang.

Last but not least, Japan is disturbed by North Korea's ongoing strategic weapons development program, including medium-range ballistic missiles. In fact, in the 1995 and 1996 editions of *White Paper on Defense* issued by the Japanese Defense Agency, North Korea is listed as the "major destabilizing factor" for the security of the East Asian region.⁶⁴ Japan has been concerned about not only North Korea's nuclear weapons development program but also its strategic missile development. Already in the summer of 1993, then Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa declared that North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons and missiles "will be a matter of grave concern to Japan," as such development "will pose direct threats to Japan."⁶⁵ Although the signing of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework somewhat alleviated Japan's apprehension, it has by no means dissipated such a fear. For these reasons, there are no incentives for the Hashimoto government to resume talks with Pyongyang, unless Pyongyang adopts a policy of rapprochement toward South Korea and demonstrates its commitment to peaceful coexistence with its neighbors.

IX

From the foregoing analysis, a few basic conclusions can be drawn. First, Japan's Korea policy has been geared to the preservation of the *status quo* on the Korean peninsula by promoting peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas and peaceful political change on the Korean peninsula. In view of the geostrategic importance of the Korean peninsula, Japan does not want to see a renewal of conflict.

Second, Japan has cooperated closely with the United States and South Korea in dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Partly because the SDPJ has become more pragmatic in its policy orientation, and partly because the LDP has been its major coalition partner controlling a majority of cabinet portfolios including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, both the Murayama and the Hashimoto coalition governments have basically adhered to the Korea policy they inherited. They have retained friendly policies toward South Korea, while exploring the possibility of normalizing diplomatic relations with North Korea.

Third, Murayama government's North Korea policy was a source of irritation in South Korean-Japanese relations. South Korea is not opposed to Japan's attempts to improve its relations with North Korea, so long as the pace of Japan's move takes into consideration the state of North-South Korean dialogue. However, when Japan's move disrupted South Korea's game plan toward North Korea, Seoul wanted Japan to reconsider its planned action so as not to create unnecessary problems for the South. As was demonstrated in the case of Japan's rice deal with North Korea, Tokyo's offer of economic assistance clearly diminished any incentive for North Korea to become more cooperative toward South Korea. As Japan's move engendered a dampening effect on ongoing inter-Korean negotiations on economic cooperation, Seoul became irritated by the move.

Fourth, Japan does not believe that its plan for the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea will have a detrimental effect on Korean reunification, for it maintains that cross recognition of the two Koreas by four major powers is desirable not only for the reduction of tension between South and North Korea but also for peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas. Since the possibility of reunifying Korea through the German model has drastically diminished in the aftermath of a Pyongyang-Washington rapprochement, peaceful reunification of Korea will require a period of peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas. In order to promote this coexistence and reduce tension on the peninsula, it is necessary to induce North Korea to open its doors and lead it into the main arena of the international community rather than isolating it from that communi-

ty. In this respect, cross recognition by the four major powers can facilitate this process. While such an approach was supported whole-heartedly by South Korea during the cold war days, South Korea does not necessarily subscribe to the same approach at present. Seoul wants Tokyo to take into consideration the pace of South-North Korean relations in dealing with North Korea.

Fifth, although North Korea is eager to resume normalization talks with Japan as soon as possible, even if talks were resumed, they are likely to drag on because of a number of thorny issues. Although the nuclear issue is no longer the major stumbling block, there is still a substantial gap between Tokyo and Pyongyang concerning the scope and nature of compensation to be made by Japan. Pyongyang has not abandoned its demand for compensation for the "45 years of losses" incurred in the postwar period, despite Tokyo's rejection of the demand. To hammer out a mutually acceptable compromise solution on the compensation issue is likely to be difficult.

Finally, it will not be an easy task for the Hashimoto government to undertake any bold initiative toward North Korea in the near future in view of the fact that following the general election for the House of Representatives, held on 20 October 1996, the LDP has formed a minority government under Prime Minister Hashimoto. The LDP has won 239 out of 500 seats in the lower house, while maintaining 109 out of 252 seats in the upper house. After the election, the SDPJ and the New Party Sakigake have refused to join the new government as coalition partners. Although the LDP has secured an agreement on policy cooperation with its long-standing coalition partners (the SDPJ and the Sakigake party), such an agreement is limited in scope and nature because it is not a covenant made among full-fledged coalition partners in the new government. Under the circumstances, unless North Korea either accepts the four-party talks proposed jointly by the U.S. and South Korea, or adopts a policy of rapprochement toward Seoul, it seems doubtful that the Hashimoto government will resume normalization talks with North Korea. It remains to be seen how the Hashimoto government will steer its diplomacy toward the two Koreas in the future.

notes for chapter six

1. *New York Times*, 22 November 1969.
2. For a detailed analysis, see Hong Nack Kim, "The Two Koreas' Entry into the United Nations and the Implications for Inter-Korean Relations," *Korea and World Affairs* (Fall 1991): pp. 397-414.
3. For Fujio's remarks, see "Hogen daijin oini hoeru," *Bengei Shunju* (October 1986): pp. 122-33. See also, *Korea Herald*, 10 September 1986.
4. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 11 January 1991.
5. Brian Bridges, *Japan and Korea in the 1990s: From Antagonism to Adjustment* (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing Co., 1993): pp. 133-134.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
7. *Japan Times*, 18 January 1992.
8. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 5 August 1993.
9. *Asahi Shimbun*, 16 June 1988 and 1 August 1990. See also *Dong-A Ilbo*, 16 June 1988 and 1 August 1990.
10. *Japan Times*, 2 March 1992.
11. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 21 February 1993.
12. *Asahi Shimbun*, 11 August 1993.
13. *Japan Times*, 7 November 1993.
14. Hong Nack Kim, "Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s," *Asian Survey* (May 1987): pp. 497-514.
15. For a detailed analysis, see Hong Nack Kim, "Japan's North Korea Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *Korea and World Affairs* (Winter 1994): pp. 672-73.
16. *Asahi Shimbun*, 16 June 1990.
17. For the text of the joint declaration, see *Asahi Shimbun*, 29 September 1990.

18. Ibid.
19. *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 January 1991.
20. *People's Korea*, 8 February 1992. See also, *Pyongyang Times*, 23 May 1992.
21. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 15 May 1992.
22. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2 March 1992.
23. *Pyongyang Times*, 2 February and 30 March 1991.
24. *Hanguk Ilbo*, 17 May 1991.
25. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 6 November 1992. See also *People's Korea*, 14 November 1992.
26. For the Japanese Defense Agency's assessment of the implications of North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons development programs, see *Boei Hakusho Heisei 5-nen ban* (Tokyo: Boeicho, July 1993): pp. 63-4. According to the agency's annual white paper on defense for 1994, North Korea "constitutes a main destabilizing factor for the international community...including Japan and Northeast Asia." *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 16 July 1994.
27. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 25 March 1994.
28. Ibid., 1 July 1994.
29. Ibid., 26 & 29 October 1994.
30. Ibid., 31 March 1995.
31. Masao Okonogi, *Nihon to Kitachosen: korekara no 5 nen* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyujo, 1991): p. 173.
32. *Mainichi Shimbun*, 14 & 16 April 1995.
33. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 18 June 1995.
34. Ibid., 1 July 1995.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 16 September 1995.

37. *Mainichi Shimbun*, 4 October 1995.
38. *Ibid.*, 8 and 16 April 1995.
39. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 31 May 1995.
40. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1995.
41. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1995.
42. *Hankuk Ilbo*, 1 July 1995.
43. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 12 August 1995.
44. *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 10 October 1995. See also *Hankuk Ilbo*, 12 October 1995.
45. *Asahi Shimbun*, 29 July 1995.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Chosun Ilbo*, 20 November 1995. See also *Mainichi Shimbun*, 27 November 1995; and Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1995," *Asian Survey* (January 1996): p. 67.
48. "Japan and South Korea: Remember the Noses," *The Economist*, 17 February 1996, pp. 35-36.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
50. Sebastian Moffett and Jae Hoon Shim, "Oceans Apart," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 March 1996, p. 16.
51. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 3 March 1996.
52. *Ibid.*, 15 May 1996.
53. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1996.
54. *Ibid.*, 3 April 1996. See also, *Tokyo Shimbun*, 17 August 1996.
55. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 22 May 1996.
56. For the text of the resolution, see *Asahi Shimbun*, 10 June 1995.

57. Masayoshi Shimizu, "Sengo hosho no kokusai hikaku," *Sekai* (February 1994): pp. 133-43, esp. p. 139.
58. "The Japan That Cannot Say Sorry," *The Economist*, 12 August 1995, p. 31.
59. *Facts on File*, 11 April 1996, p. 233.
60. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 28 September 1996.
61. Jae Hoon Shim, "Submarine Shocker," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 October 1996, p. 18. See also, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 25 September 1996.
62. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 28 September 1996.
63. *Ibid.*, 25 September 1996.
64. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1996 and 1 July 1995.
65. Miyazawa's statement as quoted in Tsuyoshi Yamamoto, "Kita Chosen o kataru zentei to wa," *Sekai* (October 1993): p. 260.

chapter seven

**U.S.
Policies
Toward
the
Two
Koreas***Larry Niksch*

The South Korean government has announced that it would affect a delay in the inauguration of construction of light-water reactors in North Korea (DPRK). Seoul acted in response to North Korea's submarine-borne infiltration of military personnel into South Korea (ROK) and what appears to be North Korea's complicity in the assassination of an ROK diplomat in Vladivostok, Russia. The delay probably will be temporary. By the spring of 1997, a formula likely will be found that will allow construction to begin; and implementation of this important part of the October 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework will proceed.

Even if this is only a pause in the implementation of the light-water reactor project, it is the strongest demonstration since the signing of the Agreed Framework that implementation of some clauses of the agreement are going well while others are going nowhere. The nuclear facets of the Agreed Framework related to broad U.S. non-proliferation objectives remain in place; the freeze of North Korea's existing nuclear reactors and plutonium reprocessing plant and the encasing of some 8,000 reactor fuel rods have proceeded satisfactorily. The pace of implementation of the light-water reactor project had been quickening in 1996 before the submarine infiltration. Since the spring of 1996, North Korea and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) had concluded most of the protocol agreements required before construction could begin.

As a number of observers pointed out before the submarine infiltration, there has been little progress in implementing the non-nuclear sections of the Agreed Framework. These clauses and the goals set forth or implied in them relate primarily to the security situation on the Korean peninsula as contrasted to nuclear clauses and objectives. Moreover, the lack of progress towards the non-nuclear objectives after two years makes questionable the credibility of key elements of the Clinton administration's rationale and operating assumptions behind its negotiation of the non-nuclear clauses in 1994.

Non-Nuclear Goals: Security

First, a look at the non-nuclear goals of the Agreed Framework. The clauses on security guarantees and North-South Korea negotiations at least implied that the Agreed Framework would lead to a reduction in tensions on the Korean peninsula. In its own way, even North Korea asserts that the Agreed Framework will improve the security situation. Unfortunately, the trend since October 1994 has been in the opposite direction. The Agreed Framework appears to have emboldened North Korea to escalate step-by-step its campaign against the mechanism of the Korean armistice and its pressure on the United States to replace the armistice agreement with a

peace agreement. The latest stage of Pyongyang's campaign was the limited military incursions into the demilitarized zone in April and May 1996. The submarine infiltration and the suspicious assassination in Vladivostok follow earlier infiltrations and kidnappings of South Koreans.

North Korea's military buildup continues. The latest report is that North Korea recently purchased several MiG-29 fighter aircraft, probably from Russia. Most disturbing are the indicators of North Korea's continued attempt to develop longer-range ballistic missiles that could reach Japan and possibly U.S. territories in the Pacific. Pressure from the Clinton administration in recent days appears to have dissuaded North Korea from conducting a new missile test. Nevertheless, the planned test is evidence that the missile program goes on. It also raises doubts about claims by the administration that it virtually has ended North Korea's nuclear threat. North Korea certainly is not developing these missiles for use with conventional warheads. Pyongyang's desired choice seems to be between nuclear and/or chemical/biological warheads.

North Korea's conventional military threat to South Korea does appear to be weakening, but that is due to Pyongyang's economic difficulties rather than the Agreed Framework. North Korea remains militarily dangerous, however; and Pyongyang continues to use this threat to support the intimidation tactics of its diplomacy.

Non-Nuclear Goals: North-South Talks

North Korea after two years refuses to institute the Agreed Framework's clause promising negotiations between the two Koreas. Instead, it substitutes vile propaganda attacks and threat against the ROK government and the South Korean president. South Korea, however, bears some responsibility for the poor climate for North-South talks even before the submarine infiltration. The failure of the North-South rice talks in 1995 pointed up South Korea's inconsistent approach to negotiations. The talks began in Beijing in June 1995 with Seoul making a series of unilateral concessions to North Korea and obtaining nothing in return for agreeing to ship rice to North Korea. At the end of September, South Korea responded to Pyongyang's harassment of its rice boats with tough demands that future negotiations be designated as official, government-to-government talks and be held on the Korean peninsula.

The failure to realize productive negotiations is not a case of moral equivalency between Seoul and Pyongyang. North Korea bears most of the blame. Kidnappings, infiltrations, and an apparent assassination would

tax the patience of any responsible government. Imagine the American reaction to evidence that the Colombian government was relaxing efforts to block shipments of cocaine to the United States.

Non-Nuclear Goals: Liaison Offices and Economic Exchanges

The non-nuclear provisions of the Agreed Framework related to U.S.-DPRK relations have also progressed unevenly. Diplomatic exchanges have intensified, but provisions related to the establishment of liaison offices in each other's capitals and a relaxation of U.S. economic sanctions have not met expectations. Talks over the operation of liaison offices have bogged down. North Korean leader Kim Jong Il appears to have vacillated on the issue of liaison offices, but recent reports suggest that he has decided he does not want American diplomats in Pyongyang. North Korea appears satisfied with the diplomatic line of communication established between North Korea's United Nations mission and the State Department in Washington. North Korea may change its mind again; but the longer this continues, the more questions arise over North Korea's real objectives toward the United States. It suggests that the peace agreement and U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea remain a higher priority than the mere establishment of diplomatic relations.

The United States has not moved on lessening economic sanctions after announcing small measures in January 1995. The Clinton administration did not go further despite North Korea and KEDO signing a supply contract in December 1995 for the delivery of the light-water reactors to North Korea.

U.S. Assumptions of North Korean Collapse or Reform

A major reason for the lack of progress on the non-nuclear goals of the Agreed Framework has been that key U.S. assumptions of 1994 concerning North Korea's future have not emerged into reality on the eve of 1997. Their future validity appears doubtful. These key assumptions, voiced repeatedly by administration officials at the time of the Agreed Framework, were that the North Korean regime would collapse or that it would reform. In laying out the Administration's rationale for seeking the Agreed Framework, Administration officials related to Jim Mann of the *Los Angeles Times* in September 1994 "the underlying belief . . . that North Korea's communist regime probably will fall apart in the next few years, so the promised economic benefits may not have to be paid."¹ Immediately after the signing of the Agreed Framework, Jeffrey Smith of the *Washington Post*

cited similar sentiments from "two senior U.S. officials" involved in the negotiations. U.S. officials crafted the Agreed Framework, they said, "with the eventual dissolution of the present North Korean regime in mind." The officials dismissed concerns that North Korea could restart its nuclear weapons program and rebuff IAEA inspections after it received the promised light-water reactors; the long implementation period of the Agreed Framework "is almost certainly a sufficient period of time for their regime to have collapsed."²

In answering questions from the U.S. Congress and the press, Ambassador Robert Gallucci and other administration officials stressed the specificity of North Korea's long-term obligations under the Agreed Framework to allow special inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, allow removal from North Korea of the 8,000 nuclear reactor fuel rods that the North Koreans had removed from their operation reactor in May 1994, and dismantle their existing installations. Nevertheless, the administration in 1995 continued to base policy on the assumption that North Korea would collapse. Nearly a year after negotiation of the Agreed Framework, Jim Hoagland, columnist for the *Washington Post* heard the collapse rationale. Describing "the undisclosed bet at the heart of the deal Washington struck with Pyongyang last October," Hoagland asserted: "Although they do not say it publicly, Clinton foreign policy aides assume that the isolated, destitute regime of North Korea will collapse before the promised reactors are built, taking the United States off the hook."³

However, during this period, administration officials never laid out a detailed scenario of how a collapse would come about. They did indicate a vague scenario based on the assumption that the North Korean government, with American encouragement, would open itself to normal dealings with the rest of the world and reform. Ambassador Gallucci asserted that the Administration sought through the nuclear negotiation to offer benefits to North Korea that would constitute "confidence-building" measures intended to bring North Korea "into the family of nations." Some State Department officials asserted that the North Korean government had begun or soon would begin "Chinese-style" economic reforms. Gallucci later told a congressional committee that the economic provisions of the Agreed Framework "will open the North Korean system and make it a lot less likely that a totalitarian regime would be able to sustain itself than would be the case if it remained isolated."⁴

The reality in 1997 is that North Korea neither has reformed nor collapsed. Despite North Korea's economic strains, the regime shows no inclination to make a fundamental decision for economic reform of the kind China made in 1978 and Vietnam made in 1986 (albeit in a more limited way).

U.S. demonstrations of good will have had no impact on the regime's economic policy, except perhaps to influence decisions to move ahead with hoped for money-making schemes like the isolated Najin-Sobong economic zone. The collapse theory continues to have many adherents in Washington; but in this writer's view, it is of doubtful credibility over the next five years and perhaps longer.⁵

The U.S. Administration's Response

Clinton administration officials have described their policy in 1996 as stepped-up "engagement." There have been more U.S.-DPRK meetings and diplomatic exchanges. Negotiations have ensued on issues in which the United States has distinct interests: North Korean missile exports and U.S. missing-in-action personnel from the Korean War. Two other initiatives are especially important. First, the Clinton administration endorsed what in reality was South Korea's proposal of a four-party negotiation of a Korean peace agreement. The second initiative encompasses an attempt to secure unconditional, large scale food aid and economic aid to North Korea—amounts of food aid well beyond the modest amounts of food currently donated through the United Nations World Food Programme. In a speech to an Asia Society audience in Seoul on 11 May 1996, James Laney, then U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, listed "economic assistance to the North" first among proposals for a new strategy towards North Korea "beyond deterrence." In an earlier August 1995 interview, Ambassador Laney stressed the unconditionality of the initiative—"no one should forcibly demand North Korea's opening up" and that "we should create conditions comfortable for North Korea."⁶

In launching this initiative, the administration has revised the operational assumptions of 1994. They now are three-fold: (1) a North Korean collapse now is bad. It is dangerous and a threat to peace because (2) the North Korean leadership is "irrational" and "desperate," showing "signs of incoherence in their decision-making." Such a regime, facing collapse might ignite the Korean peninsula into war as a final "desperate" act. (3) Such a regime (ironically) still is capable of embarking on economic reform if the United States embarks on a new round of "confidence building" measures.⁷

So far, the Administration's responses and initiatives have produced only limited results. North Korea has stalled in replying definitively to the four-party talks proposal. Pyongyang appears to oppose four-party talks, but its reluctance to reply indicates that the proposal has put it on the diplomatic defensive on the armistice-peace agreement issue. This may be temporary,

however. The North Korean leadership is portrayed by one close, sympathetic observer as believing that consideration by the U.S. Military Command of North Korea's proposal of bilateral military contacts at Panmunjom is evidence that North Korean intimidation tactics will give the Clinton Administration "no alternative other than to seek direct talks with the North Korean forces and consent to an interim agreement on forming a North Korean-U.S. general-level military commission."⁸

The North Korean leadership undoubtedly is aware of the tendency among some U.S. officials to give up on North-South talks, despite the Administration's official line. ROK officials are aware of it, which ignites some of the positive effects of U.S.-ROK joint sponsorship of the four-party talks proposal; and explains the sharp South Korean reaction to initial U.S. statements after the submarine infiltration, which suggested a U.S. even-handed approach rather than a condemnation of North Korea. Administration sentiments towards North-South talks comes in the form of criticism of the admittedly contradictory and inflexible diplomatic tactics employed by Seoul toward Pyongyang. Even more visible have been periodic statements by U.S. officials that portray North Korea as motivated by fears of domination by South Korea. Ambassador Laney in April 1995 reportedly portrayed the United States "in a difficult position because South Korea has consistently assumed a patronizing attitude toward North Korea." North Korea, he added, "is dissatisfied with South Korea's attitude of seemingly providing North Korea favors."⁹ In reporting on President Clinton's visit to South Korea in April 1996, the *New York Times* (April 17) quoted one U.S. official in the presidential delegation as expediting "the wish" that South Korea "would be more forward-looking" in dealing with North Korea.

U.S.-North Korean bilateral talks have produced little: some progress on the MIA issue (the least important issue affecting Korean security) but no progress on North Korean missile exports and liaison offices.

The administration also faces stalemate on its initiative to secure large scale, unconditional food aid and economic aid to North Korea. The administration does not have the money to finance the initiative and faces skepticism towards its policy assumptions of collapse and reform from those who have the money: the U.S. Congress and the South Korean government. The administration so far has decided not to appeal to the Republican-run U.S. Congress for funds, and the Republicans won the congressional elections in November 1996. The Administration has tried to make the case to South Korean audiences in the form of a series of speeches and interviews given by Ambassador Laney since May 1996. South Korea was skeptical before the

submarine infiltration. The Administration's prospects of securing South Korean money now appear bleak in the wake of the infiltration. Without an ROK commitment, Japan is unlikely to respond. Modest food assistance through the UN World Food Programme probably will continue, but the larger initiative appears dead.

Three Future Dangers

The combination of non-fulfillment of the non-nuclear provisions of the Agreed Framework and the shortcomings of U.S. policy assumptions present the United States with three future, interrelated dangers. First, tensions may rise on the Korean peninsula if North Korea further escalates the confrontational elements of its strategy. This would be especially true if North Korea further escalates its campaign of "controlled violence" specifically against South Korean forces. Pyongyang's incursions into the DMZ of April and May 1996 likely will not be the last of the campaign against the armistice. There is no clear deterrent to a future North Korean decision to escalate. North Korea's attempt to secure food unconditionally appears to have affected the timing of its decisions related to the armistice, but this hardly constitutes an adequate deterrence.

North Korean provocations could bring forth a second danger of divisions between the United States and South Korea. South Korea's body politic would come under heavy pressure if U.S. responses to confrontational North Korean actions stressed "business as usual": advancing the Agreed Framework and further "engagement." A Washington-based view that President Kim Young Sam has a free hand regarding North Korean policy may have been largely true, but the situation is changing as the next presidential election draws closer. Moreover, South Korea's next president will face more diverse centers of political power and will likely have to deal with a more independent National Assembly. Today's strains could be tomorrow's division if South Korea should draw a "line in the sand" against specific American policies. South Korea's decision to delay the light-water reactor project in response to the submarine infiltration is a warning.

U.S.-ROK divisions would be only one element of a longer term danger to the light-water reactor project and the other nuclear provisions of the Agreed Framework. The growing financial cost of the Agreed Framework already is controversial. If there is no improvement in fulfilling the non-nuclear provisions or if there is a worsening, the willingness of Seoul, Tokyo, and the U.S. Congress to provide money will likely erode. Congressional approval of a U.S.-North Korean bilateral nuclear agreement could be in danger. (A bilateral nuclear agreement will be required under

the U.S. Atomic Energy Act if U.S. nuclear technology is used in the light-water reactors.)

An even greater danger will arise if a continuation of North Korea's negative action towards non-nuclear provisions should lead to a new North Korean rejection of special inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) when implementation of the light-water reactor project reaches the point at which time, North Korea (according to the Clinton administration) is supposed to accept special inspections. The administration hopes that North Korea will "do a South Africa": allow special inspections and disclose to the world its past nuclear weapons program. There is no evidence, however, that North Korea has altered its earlier rejection of special inspections. The available evidence suggests a rigid DPRK position. If North Korea continues to thwart implementation of the Agreed Framework's non-nuclear provisions, there will be a high percentage likelihood that Pyongyang would extend this into a new campaign, using intimidation tactics to pressure the United States into another bypassing of special inspections.

The re-emergence of the special inspections issue probably lies three or four years in the future, perhaps in the last year of the Clinton administration. Special inspections remain important as a way of learning about North Korea's apparent nuclear weapons program prior to 1994. Special inspections, however, will present a crucial test for another reason. It will be an indicator of North Korea's intention in that final stage of the light-water reactor project. In that final stage, construction of the two reactors will be completed and they will be fueled. North Korea at that juncture is supposed to dismantle its current nuclear installations and permit the removal from North Korea of the 8,000 encased fuel rods. North Korea's willingness to carry out this crucial obligation will be highly doubtful if it previously rejected IAEA special inspections and the U.S. administration again concocts a plan to bypass the IAEA.

In congressional hearings after the signing of the Agreed Framework, several witnesses warned of a worst case outcome: North Korea would receive the two light water reactors, refuse to dismantle its existing facilities and, instead, restart them, and then use its old and new reactors to produce plutonium for over one hundred atomic weapons per year. Pyongyang also would remove the casings enclosing the 8,000 fuel rods and utilize them for plutonium production. The prospect of this worst case outcome seemed remote at the time of these testimonies. Nevertheless, if North Korea's negative policies toward the non-nuclear clauses of the Agreed Framework feed into a rejection of special inspections four years hence,

coinciding with continued development of longer range ballistic missiles, the outlook for a worst case outcome will become less remote.

One could argue legitimately in 1994 that the United States and its allies would be in a stronger position in a confrontation with North Korea over special inspections if it occurred several years into the future rather than in 1994. North Korea's weakened economy strengthens that argument. This rationale depends, however, on the will of the Clinton administration or its successor to insist on special inspections when the time comes. Whether the necessary firmness will exist will not be known until the test arises, not only for the United States but also for South Korea and Japan, the chief financiers of the light-water reactors.

Four Suggestions for U.S. Policy

The impasse over the non-nuclear clauses of the Agreed Framework and the resultant future dangers present several challenges to U.S. policy: (1) prevent the strains in U.S.-ROK relations from widening; (2) deter North Korea from launching new provocations; and (3) find a strategy with a greater prospect of encouraging positive change in North Korea. None of this will be easy. The following suggestions are directed at these challenges:

(1) Discuss with South Korea the initiating of a new proposal for North-South talks that contains greater flexibility, especially on venue issues. South Korea's insistence on a rigid venue for talks—designation of talks as official government-to-government negotiations and the holding of talks on the Korean peninsula—does appear to be an obstacle to attaining talks and an obstacle to real achievement in negotiations. The effect in past negotiations has been to encourage North Korea to use talks for propaganda due to the heavy media exposure of meetings in Seoul and Pyongyang. North Korea currently does not appear willing to agree to designated government-to-government negotiations while it has bilateral diplomatic exchanges with the United States. The re-elected Clinton administration will not give up these exchanges to support South Korea's venue preconditions. This is a formula for South Korea's continued diplomatic isolation. A more flexible, sophisticated formula is needed that will put pressure on North Korea to accept negotiations with Seoul and regain U.S. support for North-South talks.

A new proposal should be flexible on how negotiations are designated. It should offer to hold talks far away from the Korean peninsula. It should set a limited, beginning agenda such as President Kim Young Sam's offer of 15 August 1996, of technical assistance for North Korean agriculture. Once

South Korea issues such a proposal, the Clinton administration should endorse it and tailor the frequency and level of U.S. diplomatic contacts with North Korea in accord with North Korea's response to the proposal. This kind of proposal does not guarantee a North Korean acceptance, but it would enhance the odds of achieving North-South talks. Presently, those odds appear to be zero. At a minimum, it would draw the United States and South Korea closer together.

(2) The United States and South Korea should advance the four-party talks proposal to a higher stage by developing a comprehensive agenda of issues to be settled before they would sign a Korean peace treaty. The agenda should be comprehensive: reductions in military forces and weaponry, including missiles and chemical-biological weapons; tough on-site verification force and weapons reduction; normalization of North-South relations; and settlement of the nuclear issue, including special inspections and dismantlement. Development of a comprehensive peace agreement agenda would promote U.S.-ROK unity and would signal North Korea that its campaign to draw the United States into a bilateral peace agreement is futile. It also would signal other concerned governments that Seoul and Washington have made a serious proposal.

(3) Offer North Korea large-scale food aid and technical assistance for agriculture but only as part of a negotiation in which North Korea would be required to commit itself to a detailed plan and timetable for reform of its agricultural system along the lines of the Chinese and Vietnamese reforms of the 1980s, which ended collectivization. A negotiation could be held through a KEDO-like organization. Food and agriculture could be included in the proposed four-party talks. Alternatively, the United States could advise North Korea to request a dialogue on its economic policies with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The administration is correct in trying to utilize North Korea's food shortages to encourage reform. However, its strategy of providing large-scale, unconditional food aid has little prospect of persuading North Korea's leaders to reform. North Korea under Kim Jong Il continually seeks money and other economic benefits without offering any reciprocity on its policies. It is unlikely to change if it receives several hundred thousand tons of free food grain. A negotiation of food aid based on a reciprocal North Korean commitment to agricultural reform has a better prospect to produce real change north of the DMZ. A negotiation would be difficult, but it could re-ignite the internal North Korean debate over agricultural reform that occurred in the late 1980s. (That debate was suppressed, and proponents of reform reportedly were penalized.) A negotiation strategy, rather

than an "engagement" strategy, has a better prospect of bringing forth any seeds of internal policy debate within the North Korean elite.

(4) The United States and South Korea should realize restrictions on their private sector firms' exploring of business opportunities in North Korea. This would open another forum of negotiation that North Korea would have to undertake if it wanted outside economic benefits. That, too, might stimulate a policy debate in Pyongyang. The U.S. and ROK governments should advise private companies that they should negotiate profitable, market-based deals and that they should expect no government subsidies or bailouts if they fail to realize profitable arrangements. The South Korean government especially should adopt a "no bailout" policy, since ROK firms likely would expect such a bailout and thus negotiate less than realistically with the North Koreans.

The fundamental element of these four proposals is that a hard-headed negotiating strategy, based on firm requirement of North Korean reciprocity, is crucial to success, regardless of the issue and regardless of who negotiates with Pyongyang.

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5. For a detailed examination of the collapse theory, see the author's paper, "U.S. Policy Towards North Korea: The Collapse Theory and Its Influence," delivered at South Korea's National Defense University on 22 August 1996.
6. Exclusive interview with U.S. Ambassador to the ROK, James Laney, *Chungang Ilbo* [Seoul], 24 August 1995: p. 4.
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8. *Asia Times* [Bangkok], 22 May 1996. Kim Myong-chol, a leading official of the pro-North Korean *Chosen Soren* organization of ethnic Koreans in Japan, wrote this interesting description of the DPRK leadership's attitude toward U.S.-North Korean relations.
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chapter eight

**Chinese
and U.S.
Relations
with
South Korea:
Compatibilities
and Conflicts**

Robert Sutter

Chinese-American Rivalry in Korea—A New “Great Game”?

There has been considerable discussion in Washington, Beijing and Seoul in recent years about an emerging competition between the United States and China for influence in the Korean peninsula in general and in South Korea in particular. Some in China have voiced concern over alleged U.S. efforts to hold back and “contain” China’s rising power and influence in East Asia. They have been impressed by the recent “gains” in U.S. influence with North Korea. Indeed, from their perspectives, the North Koreans have moved away from their traditionally antagonistic stance toward the United States to a foreign policy approach that appears to give top priority to reaching an arrangement with Washington that would allow for the continued survival of the North Korean regime, or at least a so-called “soft landing” for the increasingly troubled government. A possible scenario contrary to these Chinese analysts’ interests would see the end of the North Korean regime and the reunification of the peninsula by South Korea under arrangements carried out under the guidance and overall influence of the United States, with the support of Japan. In the view of such Chinese officials, such an arrangement would confront China with a major security problem in a crucial area of Chinese concern for the foreseeable future, greatly weakening China’s ability to exert power and influence in Asian and world affairs. It would give Americans interested in “containing” China a much more advantageous strategic position in East Asia than they now possess.¹

Well aware of deeply rooted Chinese suspicions of alleged U.S. containment plans for Asia, American specialists have watched with growing interest Beijing’s burgeoning relationship with South Korea. Though acknowledging the economic compatibilities between China and South Korea, U.S. analysts sometimes give pride of place to suspected Chinese strategic ambitions. From this perspective, Beijing is seen as boosting ties with South Korea as a way to insure that whenever South Korea succeeds in reunifying the peninsula, it will remain independent of U.S. and Japanese influence and responsive to PRC concerns. In effect, these American analysts are like their Chinese counterparts in seeing a strategic “great game” emerging in the Korean peninsula between the U.S. and PRC at the end of the twentieth century, roughly parallel to the competition between British and Russian officials for strategic advantage in Central and South Asia one hundred years earlier.

The implication for such competition would be especially important for Northeast Asian peace and stability if the North Korean regime were to end in the next few years. The chance that Beijing, Washington or Seoul might miscalculate in a time of crisis brought on by collapse or a power vacuum in North Korea is good. The result could be confrontation or conflict.

This paper endeavors to put the concerns noted in Beijing and Washington in broader perspective. It examines recent trends and issues in both U.S. relations and PRC relations with South Korea. Against this backdrop, it endeavors to come up with an assessment as to how compatible or incompatible are U.S. and Chinese policies toward South Korea.

U.S.-South Korean Relations²

The United States and South Korea maintain a strong, multifaceted alliance relationship that supports their mutual security, economic and political interests. Trends in the U.S. and South Korea nonetheless have prompted questioning and reassessment of important aspects of the alliance relationship, especially by South Koreans. In the post-cold war environment, U.S. officials are looking for ways to adjust the costs and benefits of U.S. foreign policy. Specifically, they expect South Korea to bear more of the cost of U.S. forces in Korea, and to open its market more to U.S. enterprises.

South Koreans often press for adjustments in what they see as the continuing asymmetrical U.S.-South Korean relationship. In addition to seeking more U.S. recognition of South Korean accomplishments and sensitivity to ROK concerns, South Korean leaders focus on several issues, including:

- Concerns that the United States may reach agreements or take initiatives toward North Korea that would jeopardize South Korean interests;
- Perceived inequities in the Status of Forces Agreement governing U.S. forces in Korea, and over the large U.S. military base structure in several South Korean localities;
- Complaints that U.S. trade officials are unrelenting in their pressure against restrictions in the South Korean market and fail to give due recognition to what South Korea has accomplished and South Korean constraints. Some U.S. policymakers in Congress and elsewhere support an approach that emphasizes the need for South Koreans to bear more of the costs of their defense and remove obstacles and restrictions to free trade and market access. Others are more cautious in applying U.S. pressure on such issues, judging that South Korean sensitivities and economic, political, and security challenges warrant a more discreet U.S. policy approach, with U.S. pressure for more burden-sharing and market opening applied in private, if at all possible. There are also policy approaches that highlight what the United States can do to help remedy strains in U.S.-South Korean relations without applying direct pressure on South Korea leaders.

U.S. Interests in South Korea

U.S. interests in South Korea date back to before the Korean War and involve a wide range of security, economic, and political concerns. The United States has remained committed since the 1950-1953 Korean War to maintaining peace on the Korean peninsula. This commitment is widely seen as vital to the peace and stability of northeast Asia. In particular, the U.S. security guarantee directly supports its ability to manage complex relationships with Russia, China, and Japan—whose interests converge on the peninsula.

The United States agreed in the 1954 Mutual Security Treaty to defend South Korea from external aggression. The United States no longer provides direct military assistance to South Korea, but maintains about 37,500 troops there to supplement the 650,000-strong South Korean armed forces. This force deters North Korea's 1.2 million-man army, which has remained in a high state of readiness and is deployed in forward positions near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing North and South Korea.

In the 1990s, attention has focused on the implications of North Korea's drive to develop nuclear weapons. A bilateral framework agreement designed to ease concerns over North Korea's nuclear program was signed between North Korea and the United States on 21 October 1994, and is being implemented. Military tensions on the peninsula remain high. They are exacerbated by signs of instability in North Korea following the sudden death of Kim Il Sung in July 1994. There have been reports of widespread food shortages and strong military control. While remaining militarily vigilant against North Korean aggression, the United States also strives to create circumstances to reduce the possibility of chaos or civil-military conflict emerging in North Korea that could spill over to South Korea and seriously disrupt regional stability.

The United States has played a major role in fostering South Korea's remarkable economic growth. The Bank of Korea estimated that U.S. economic assistance to South Korea, from 1945 to 1971, totaled \$3.8 billion. The Korean Embassy in the United States notes that South Korea has a per capita income of over \$10,000 per year. South Korea has tried to diversify its foreign markets but still relies on the U.S. market to absorb about 20 percent of its exports. (Major exports to the United States include electronics and electrical equipment, textiles, footwear, machinery, automobiles, iron and steel, toys, luggage, and tires.) The United States is South Korea's largest trading partner and largest export market. South Korea is the United States' fifth largest export market and is the fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural products. (Other U.S. exports to South Korea are machinery, electronics and electrical equipment, chemicals, iron and steel, and aircraft.)

Table 1
U.S.-South Korea Trade (in U.S.\$ billions)

Year	Total Trade	U.S. Trade Deficit
1985	15.7	4.3
1986	18.6	6.8
1987	24.7	9.3
1988	31.8	9.6
1989	33.1	6.3
1990	32.8	4.1
1991	32.5	1.5
1992	31.3	2.1
1993	31.9	2.3
1994	37.3	1.7
1995	49.6	(-)1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce

The United States has long viewed South Korean political stability as crucial to the nation's economic development, to maintaining the security balance on the peninsula, and to preserving peace in northeast Asia. However, U.S. officials have pressed the South Korean administration with varying degrees of intensity to gradually liberalize its political process, broaden the popular base of its government, and release political prisoners. A political crisis in Seoul during 1987 saw mass demonstrations calling for greater freedom and democracy; at the same time, U.S. congressional resolutions and Reagan administration actions backed further democratization. In recent years South Korea has conducted numerous elections widely seen as fully democratic and has recently taken steps to rectify injustices done by past authoritarian regimes.

Recent Developments in U.S.-South Korean Relations

Highlights of the continued close, multifaceted U.S.-South Korean relationship include five summit meetings between President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young Sam. Reflecting a broad compatibility of views and interests, President Kim has spent more time with President Clinton than any other Asian leader has. Consultations have included:

- A wide range of regular extraordinary sessions at senior policymaking levels dealing with pertinent security, trade, and other issues between the two governments;

- Mutual agreement on increased host-nation support for U.S. forces in Korea. South Korea has boosted its costs sharing from \$150 million in 1991 to \$300 million in 1995, and will increase that amount by 10 percent over each of the next three years;
- Ongoing bilateral negotiations to deal with pertinent trade issues. U.S. access to the South Korean market has improved. Numerous issues remain and are dealt with through negotiations between the two governments. Meanwhile, in 1995 the U.S. began running a modest trade surplus with South Korea;
- Close bilateral cooperation over the North Korean nuclear issue (South Korea notably is bearing most of the over \$4.5 billion cost for light-water nuclear reactors being provided to North Korea under the 21 October 1994 accord) and over a wide range of foreign policy concerns ranging from Asian-Pacific economic cooperation to international human rights and peacekeeping. The United States strongly supported South Korea's entry into the UN in 1992 and its selection in 1995 as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Recent Issues

A variety of specific issues complicate U.S.-South Korean relations. They have developed against a backdrop of trends in the United States and South Korea that prompt Americans and South Koreans to question or reassess some aspects of the alliance relationship. In the United States, the perceived threat from North Korea has allowed for continued strong support for the U.S. force deployment in South Korea at a time when U.S. forces in other world areas are being cut back. Nonetheless, American officials in the post-cold war period are looking for ways to adjust the costs and benefits of alliance relationships and other aspects of U.S. foreign policy. They expect South Korea to bear more of the cost of U.S. forces in Korea even at a time when the United States also expects South Korea to pay for the large cost associated with the light-water nuclear power plants to be provided to North Korea under the terms of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. In the trade area, U.S. negotiations seek greater South Korean efforts to open its market to U.S. goods and services and to end long-standing practices that impede prospects for U.S. companies in areas where they are competitive.

In South Korea, questioning of the alliance relationship has been more widespread, reflecting often broad popular feelings regarding the past asymmetrical South Korean-U.S. relationship. In general terms, opinion leaders in South Korea are proud of the many economic, political, and for-

eign policy accomplishments of South Korea in recent years. These include continued strong economic growth, South Korea's position as one of the top world economies and trading nations, the rapid democratization of South Korean politics, and South Korea's more prominent diplomatic role in Asian and world affairs. They judge that such accomplishments, along with the realignment of the world order following the end of the cold war, warrant adjustments in the traditionally asymmetrical U.S.-South Korean alliance relationship. In particular, South Koreans often chafe under what they see as insensitive and overbearing U.S. pressures on defense, trade, or other questions. They want to see adjustments in the alliance relationship that would more prominently feature South Korea's rising influence and accomplishments. This perspective on U.S.-South Korean relations is more prominent among younger, better educated South Koreans who are increasingly taking leadership positions as the Korean War generation retires.

Relations with North Korea

South Koreans remain troubled by their secondary position in the allied effort to deal with North Korea under terms of the framework agreement of October 1994. Due to North Korean insistence, South Korea has not played a direct role in negotiations, and North Korea has dragged its feet on meeting allied demands that it conduct concurrent talks with South Korea. North Korea seems determined to avoid steps that would give legitimacy and recognition to the South Korean government, a rival for power that it repeatedly denigrates as illegitimate and a tool of the United States.

The United States has tried to deal with South Korean concerns through extensive and repeated consultations at each step of the negotiations process with North Korea. South Korean diplomats regularly express satisfaction with the U.S. efforts, but senior leaders, including President Kim Young Sam, have publicly complained about the U.S. negotiating positions, while other opinion leaders and popular opinion reflect some skepticism or sensitivity on U.S. negotiations with the North. In general, South Koreans fear that North Korea and the United States may reach agreements that will adversely affect South Korean interests. (Some knowledgeable U.S. experts strongly emphasize the sensitivity in South Korea to any third country's involvement with North Korea or North-South Korea relations; they also cite privately-voiced U.S. government criticism of South Korea's handling of recent policy toward North Korea, and what they see as gaps in U.S.-South Korean policy coordination toward North Korea. Officially, U.S. diplomats, like their South Korean counterparts, express satisfaction with bilateral coordination over policy toward North Korea.) Specific recent concerns include:

- South Korean officials' opposition to broadening U.S. diplomatic ties with North Korea (even though they support the planned establishment of a U.S. liaison office in Pyongyang) until the North Korean government begins meaningful political talks with South Korea;
- South Korean concern that the United States (as well as Japan and others in the international community) is providing food aid or other assistance to the failing North Korean economy without eliciting a more positive North Korean policy toward South Korea. The Seoul government agrees with a U.S. desire to avoid chaos and major civil strife in North Korea, but it asserts that the United States and others should avoid aid efforts that merely strengthen the hands of the repressive authorities in North Korea and allow them to continue their isolation and denigration of South Korea;
- Concern of South Korean officials and opinion leaders that the United States may respond positively to repeated North Korean proposals to end armistice arrangements on the Korean peninsula in favor of a bilateral peace accord that would exclude South Korea. U.S. officials repeatedly reassure South Korean officials on this issue. On 16 April 1996, Presidents Clinton and Kim issued a proposal for four-party talks (including North Korea and China) to formally end the state of war on the Korean peninsula.

U.S. Military Presence

The large and prominent U.S. military presence in South Korea is often resented by South Koreans. While many appreciate the role U.S. forces play in defense of their country, South Koreans also focus heavily on some negative aspects of the U.S. presence. South Korea's fear of military danger from North Korea has declined somewhat since reaching a high point at the time of crisis in U.S.-North Korean relations over the nuclear issue in mid-1994. This has exposed more sharply local discontent over the American presence. Specifically:

- South Koreans often criticize the presence of U.S. bases in several locations, including Seoul. The base in downtown Seoul is of particular interest. Many Koreans believe this area should be put to profitable and productive use by Koreans, instead of replicating typical, low-density American base life for U.S. service people. The South Korean government has not been willing to assume the cost of relocating the base to a less densely populated area.

- South Koreans have shown strong sensitivity in recent criminal cases involving U.S. servicemen, arguing that the U.S.-Korean Status-of-Forces agreement needs wording to make it consistent with the U.S. agreement with Japan which gives Japan more rights. At minimum, South Koreans want the same jurisdictional rights as Japan in dealing with U.S. suspects.

Economic Relations

To many South Koreans, U.S. demands on economic issues appear unrelenting. No sooner does South Korea meet a set of U.S. demands on trade or other issues than a new set of American requests or demands seems to emerge. Some South Korean opinion leaders judge that the United States has not given enough recognition to the progress made by U.S. enterprises in South Korea. They argue in particular that South Korea's trade deficit with the United States in 1995 illustrates how much things have changed from the situation of even a few years before when the U.S. had a substantial trade deficit with South Korea.

U.S. business representatives often agree that South Korea has made changes in areas where the United States has pressed for change in recent years. They judge that the South Korean market remains a difficult one to penetrate due to opposition from commercially patriotic consumers, domestic conglomerates anxious to preserve their advantage in the domestic Korean market, and a bureaucracy seen as having a vested and perhaps illicit interest in the status quo. The policies of the administration of President Kim Young Sam and a rising awareness among economic leaders in South Korea that South Korea must deregulate and open its economy in order to prosper among the world's developed economies are duly acknowledged, although concrete results are often lacking. Perhaps reflecting the continued difficulty in doing business with South Korea, relative to other more open economies in East Asia, American business leaders in South Korea claim that there have been signs that U.S. companies are relocating investment from South Korea to other locations in the region. Particularly notable have been South Korea's support for the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum along with its commitment to join and adhere to the open market practices of the OECD by 1996.

U.S. business people sometimes advise that U.S. pressure was an essential ingredient in prompting South Korean changes. They judge that there are considerable opportunities for U.S. firms in such areas as financial services, insurance, and other areas that remain blocked by South Korean regulators backed by South Korean conglomerates unwilling to share the domestic

market. Meanwhile, complaints continue regarding the mixed record of South Korean enforcement of intellectual property rights cases. Business people in the United States believe that pressure needs to be continued if the United States hopes to make gains in these important economic areas.

In short, some American business people argue that the United States would be more effective in promoting U.S. economic interests by facilitating and encouraging efforts of South Korean leaders who want to open and deregulate the South Korean economy in order to join the OECD or gain benefits from economic globalization. At the same time, many U.S. business people also continue to support strong U.S. bilateral pressure on South Korea. As a result, Korean opinion tends to see the United States behind whatever international pressures South Koreans feel to adjust their economy to international norms practiced by the developed countries, and they tend to resent this pressure.

Political Issues

From one perspective, U.S. support for democratization in South Korea has been a great success for U.S. policy. Unlike the authoritarian leaders of the past, Roh Tae Woo was popularly elected president in late 1987.

For the presidential election in December 1992, the ruling Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) nominated Kim Young Sam, who won with 42 percent of the vote. Kim Dae Jung of the opposition Democratic Party gained less than 34 percent and resigned from politics after the vote. Hyundai industrialist Chong Ju Yong received 16 percent. He resigned from politics in February 1993.

Kim Young Sam took office on 25 February 1993, and began major staff changes, economic reforms, and anti-corruption efforts in government. Actions included requiring financial disclosure by public officials, which resulted in several resignations by prominent politicians and government officials. In May, Kim fired four prominent generals involved in a 1979 coup. By July, over 1,000 people were fired or reprimanded and several former senior military and political leaders were under arrest for corruption. Kim's efforts won broad public approval, although they added to the list of groups in South Korean society unhappy with the recent direction of government economic and other policies. President Kim's reform efforts were not enough to sustain strong political support. In important local elections in June 1995, Kim's ruling party suffered what some party leaders called a "devastating defeat" at the hands of opposition parties led by President Kim's major political rivals, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Pil. In July, Kim Dae Jung reversed his 1992 promise to withdraw formally from politics

and resumed formal political activities. The move split the opposition Democratic Party, adding to the fluid and uncertain domestic political situation surrounding President Kim and South Korean politics.

A political scandal of major proportions emerged in late 1995 as two former presidents and senior military leaders, Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, were arrested and indicted on charges of corruption and illegal usurpation of power.

In the National Assembly elections on 11 April 1996, President Kim's New Korea Party did better than expected, winning 139 seats in the 299 seat parliament. Kim Dae Jung's party, National Congress for New Politics, won 79 seats, and Kim Jong Pil's United Liberal Democrats won 50 seats.

The United States welcomes the politically more democratic and fluid situation in South Korea even though it poses several important considerations for U.S. policymakers:

- It complicates the ability of the South Korean government to accommodate U.S. demands on the trade, defense, or other issues that are politically unpopular in South Korea, because opponents may well exploit the issues;
- It makes it difficult for the South Korean government to successfully counter anti-American charges made by vocal critics, especially in the South Korean universities and the press, regarding the alleged U.S. role in the division of Korea after World War II; the alleged U.S. complicity in the bloody crackdown by South Korean forces on Korean dissidents in the city of Kwangju in May 1980; and the alleged long-standing U.S. policy of supporting "repressive rule" in South Korea;
- It prompts the South Korean government to make politically popular and perhaps expedient initiatives toward neighbors, including North Korea, that may run the risk of promoting an imprudent sense of relaxation on the peninsula; or conversely an inflexible South Korean stance toward North Korea that would complicate U.S.-South Korean policy coordination; or the lack of a consistent policy by South Korea toward North Korea or other countries;
- It raises the possibility of more serious political and economic instability in South Korea. Labor strife over the past few years

has been unprecedented; demands for wage increases have outstripped productivity gains in many sectors; declining economic competitiveness could lead to an economic downturn, which—when combined with a new government, vocal opposition politicians, and a large anti-establishment press and intellectual community—could result in instability detrimental to South Korea's security and continued prosperity.

"Slush Fund" and Kwangju Incident

Several South Korean and U.S. observers also warn that recent political changes in South Korea could deepen negative feelings toward the United States on the part of some Koreans. Thus far, there has been little attention to any potential positive impact of the changes for U.S.-South Korean relations. Since November 1995, the South Korean government has arrested, tried, and convicted two former presidents on corruption charges and/or, of carrying out an illegal coup in 1979 and violently suppressing pro-democracy demonstrations, killing hundreds in the city of Kwangju. Some Korean press reports have tried to involve the United States with some aspects of the slush fund scandal, notably a decision by South Korea's president in the 1980s to switch a large South Korean order for fighter planes from one U.S. company to another, allegedly because bribes were paid. (South Korean President Noh Tae Woo switched the order from the McDonnell-Douglas F-18 fighter to the General Dynamics F-16 fighter.) Some segments of Korean opinion also judge that the United States did not do enough to halt the illegal coup and the subsequently bloody suppression in Kwangju fifteen years ago. On 26 August 1996, a South Korean court handed down sentences of death, and twenty-two years in prison, for former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, respectively.

U.S. Policy Approaches

While maintaining a close "united front" with South Korea in dealing with the North, the United States wants to foster an appropriate balance in economic and military ties with South Korea. This presumably would take into account South Korea's new prosperity and economic competitiveness, while sustaining American interest in South Korea's stability and prosperity. The United States will continue to support progress toward democracy and political pluralism in South Korea, even though such progress may complicate South Korean decision making on a number of issues important to the United States. U.S. policymakers also will likely continue efforts at consultation and negotiations with South Korean counterparts to build a greater consensus on both sides of the Pacific as to the value of the U.S.-South Korean relationship.

Continued political turmoil in South Korea could lead to problems in U.S. relations with North Korea, and in U.S. relations with South Korea. In particular, it could diminish South Korea's already limited flexibility in dealing with a recalcitrant North Korea, making prospects for progress in North-South Korean relations even more difficult than they already are. Nonetheless, U.S. interests and commitments under the October 1994 accord with North Korea could be seen to require further forward movement in U.S. relations with North Korea, even if North-South Korean relations remain frozen. The choice for U.S. policy could be either to sacrifice those interests and commitments for the sake of U.S. relations with South Korea, or to go forward with North Korea, despite South Korean concerns.

Differences among U.S. policymakers also arise over how fast and in what ways the United States should work for changes in U.S.-South Korean relations. Among the varied policy approaches available to U.S. leaders, there are those that emphasize greater U.S. pressure to convince the Koreans to reform practices seen as detrimental to U.S. interests. Koreans are said to be unlikely to change without strong pressure. Specific tactics include: private U.S. pressure applied in negotiations such as those associated with trade issues; public U.S. criticism of Korea's restricted market access for certain U.S. goods and services; advocacy of greater South Korean financial support for the U.S. troop presence in South Korea; gradual reduction of the U.S. troop presence and/or expansion of South Korean military capabilities to fill some of the roles now performed by U.S. forces in South Korea; private and public U.S. efforts to encourage South Korea to buy U.S. jet fighters and other sophisticated military equipment "off the shelf," rather than require elaborate co-production and offset arrangements that could add to foreign competition for U.S. exporters and could reduce the positive impact of such sales on the U.S. trade balance.

Other policy approaches are more cautious in applying U.S. pressure on individual issues. Advocates of such approaches are particularly concerned that the cumulative effect of U.S. prodding on economic, defense burden-sharing, and other questions might prove to be too much for the South Korean government to handle without friction or conflict. The result could be growing anti-American feeling or resentment in South Korea that could fuel a mutual desire for withdrawal of U.S. forces; or the result could be political instability among the competing political factions in South Korea. Such outcomes are seen as potentially dangerous in the face of North Korea's threat and as contrary to the long-standing U.S. interest in stability on the peninsula.

Meanwhile, there are policy approaches that highlight what the United States can do to help moderate strains in U.S.-Korean relations, apart from

applying varying degrees of pressure on Korean leaders for economic, security, or other changes. Some stress that the U.S. trade difficulties with Korea would be lessened following serious U.S. efforts to cut the U.S. government's spending deficit and to promote policies that effectively encourage greater savings, technological development, productivity, and educational competence in the United States. It is also suggested that U.S.-South Korea trade relations could be effectively treated within multilateral arrangements like the Generalized Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) or its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), where South Korea and the United States could adjust their policies without appearing to yield to outside pressure.

Some urge U.S. policy adjustments to foster a more collaborative relationship that remains sensitive to South Korean feelings. This might be pursued by raising further the stature of the Korean commander in the Combined Forces Command, by highlighting South Korea's economic role in various economic forums being proposed for the Pacific Rim countries, or by other measures. Some also believe U.S. officials could work harder than in the past to consult with South Korean counterparts and to engage the South Korean press and intellectuals to create a more positive image for U.S.-Korean relations than at present.

Improved South Korean-Chinese Relations³

Chinese and South Korean leaders have markedly improved their bilateral relations over the past few years. There have been repeated summit meetings and China is now South Korea's third largest trading partner and the main recipient of South Korean foreign investment. Consultations in Seoul and Beijing indicate that Chinese and South Korean motives center on seeking economic benefit, enhancing their respective interests and influence on the Korean peninsula, and broadening foreign policy options that relate to the United States. In general, the recent improvement is compatible with important U.S. policy concerns about stability on the Korean peninsula. Potential complications for U.S. relations with South Korea could arise if Sino-U.S. tensions in Asia rose markedly or if South Korean leaders endeavored to use burgeoning relations with China as an indirect source of leverage in the sometimes difficult South Korean interaction with the United States over trade, burdensharing and other issues.

Chinese and South Korean leaders have taken a series of initiatives since 1995 to markedly improve their bilateral relations. The three top Chinese leaders have visited Seoul in succession, while South Korean President Kim Young Sam visited Beijing. Trade has grown markedly, as has South Korean investment in China. In addition, more than 500,000 South Koreans traveled to China last year and 700,000 are expected in 1996.

Consultations with South Korean and Chinese specialists during visits to Seoul and Beijing over the past year have helped to clarify three sets of reasons for the increased bilateral contacts and suggested current and potential implications for U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asian Security.

Motives

China and South Korea have increased their bilateral contacts for economic reasons, to enhance their interests on the Korean peninsula, and to broaden foreign policy options.

Trade and Investment

Both sides are anxious to facilitate rapidly growing trade and investment. Bilateral trade in 1994 was worth \$10 billion. It was \$16.5 billion in 1995, and is expected to rise to \$21 billion in 1996. A senior Chinese trade official predicted it would reach \$33.6 billion by 2000; China now accounts for over seven percent of South Korea's foreign trade. China is now South Korea's third largest trading partner, after the United States and Japan.

South Korea invests more in China than any other foreign country. At first the investment was in mostly small scale enterprises centered in the nearby Chinese provinces of Shantung, Tianjin and Liaoning. More recently, the larger Korean conglomerates have become involved. Approved South Korean investment in China was worth \$4 billion for 1995 and \$2.3 billion for the first four months of 1996.

Korean Peninsula

Closer relations with China help to ease South Korea concerns about Beijing's possible support for North Korean aggression against the South. They also provide Seoul with an indirect channel of information and communication, via Beijing, regarding North Korean leaders, who consistently refuse to interact directly with South Korean counterparts. Such channels of communication and information about North Korea can help to reassure South Koreans about trends on the Korean peninsula, including North Korea's repeated efforts to seek progress in relations with the United States at the expense of South Korea. Meanwhile, South Korean enterprises anxious to enter the North Korean market can sidestep restrictions on bilateral trade and investments by working with North Korea through South Korean enterprises based in China.

Chinese officials view improved relations with South Korea as broadening China's influence on the peninsula. Some Chinese officials assert that

Beijing's improvement of relations sets "a good example" which should be reciprocated by the United States and Japan in moving ahead with their respective relations with North Korea. Beijing officials judge that such "cross-recognition" would markedly ease North Korea's isolation and fears, and thereby open the way to eased tensions on the peninsula. South Korean officials emphasize that they oppose such U.S. and Japanese measures unless they are accompanied by improved North Korean relations with South Korea. Although Chinese officials deny it, some Chinese analysts and South Korean specialists privately assert that one of Beijing's motives in improved ties with the South is to preclude a rise of U.S. prominence on the peninsula. According to this view, Chinese officials have become concerned by North Korea's seeming focus recently on relations with the United States as the central element of Pyongyang's foreign policy. The Chinese are determined to avoid a situation whereby the United States would become the dominant outside influence in both South and North Korea, and view improved relations with Seoul as a useful hedge against such an outcome.

Foreign Policy Concerns

South Korean officials view better relations with China as a useful way to preclude possible Chinese expansion or pressure against South Korea as China grows in wealth and power during the twenty-first century. They also see good relations with China as providing protection against possible pressure from Japan against South Korea in the future. Officials in Seoul are careful to add that relations with China also broaden South Korean foreign policy options, allowing South Korea to appear to break out of the constraints imposed by what they see as a U.S.-centered foreign policy since the 1950s. Some South Korean opinion leaders judge that with better relations with China, Seoul can afford to be more assertive and less accommodating in relations with the United States, although South Korean officials and knowledgeable scholars are often quick to assert that China or other foreign policy options provide no substitute for the essential South Korean alliance relationship with the United States.

Meanwhile, given the ongoing difficulties in U.S.-China relations, ROK officials sometimes express interest in boosting South Korea's international stature as a "mediator" between these two powers, both of which have friendly ties with Seoul. South Korean officials also assert that Seoul wants to avoid a situation where it might have to choose between Washington and Beijing if U.S.-Chinese tensions in Asia were to rise sharply.

According to South Korean experts, China also views good relations with Seoul as a possible hedge against Japanese power, although Chinese offi-

cials emphasize that their interests focus on regional peace and stability and on setting a good example in relations with a smaller neighbor, South Korea, in order to reassure China's other neighbors of Beijing's foreign policy intentions. More broadly, Chinese intentions are said by some South Korean experts to reflect a desire to use better relations with South Korea against perceived U.S. efforts to "contain" or hold back China's growing power and influence in Asian and world affairs. In particular, Chinese specialists and officials have voiced concern that the United States might use its alliance relationships with Japan and South Korea in order to check or build a barrier against the allegedly expanding "China threat" in Northeast Asia. Closer China-South Korean relations complicate any such U.S. strategic scheme.

Implications

The Korean peninsula remains a very important area of U.S. policy concern in Asia. Developments affecting sensitive U.S. negotiations with North Korea and the U.S. alliance relationship with South Korea are of great interest to U.S. policymakers.

For the most part, the recent improvement in China-South Korean relations assists U.S. interests on the peninsula. It underlines China's unwillingness to support any North Korean aggression toward South Korea, and reassures South Korea about security trends on the peninsula. It also increases China's economic interaction and interdependence with an important U.S. ally. China-South Korea economic advances add to regional prosperity which enhances overall U.S. economic opportunities in the region. Potential drawbacks for U.S. interests could include:

- Chinese pressure on the U.S. to follow its example and rapidly improve U.S. relations with North Korea. Such a U.S. action could alienate the U.S. from South Korea if not accompanied by improvements in North-South Korean relations.
- Assertiveness by South Korea against United States policy as part of a South Korean effort to broaden foreign policy options.
- Chinese efforts to divide South Korea from the United States and Japan, especially in the event of a serious downtrend in U.S.-China relations.

When viewed against the backdrop of the converging interests and difficulties in U.S.-ROK relations noted above, it appears that whatever PRC-

U.S. competition for influence exists in South Korea is of secondary importance to the United States. For the foreseeable future, the drawbacks for the U.S. of greater cooperation in Chinese interaction with South Korea are small, while the benefits for regional peace and development are large. In effect, just as Chinese analysts should examine more closely the actual implications of U.S. actions before jumping to the conclusion that the U.S. is determined to "contain" China, so should U.S. analysts avoid jumping to conclusions about negative implications of China's rapidly improving relations with South Korea. China has a long way to go before it can compete with the strong multifaceted U.S. relationship with South Korea, and at this point it is decidedly unclear whether Beijing is actually giving much priority to competing with Washington in this area.

notes for chapter eight

1. Sources for this paper include consultations with experts in Seoul, Beijing and Washington during late 1995-1996. For background see *Korea: U.S.-South Korean Relations—A Trip Report*, CRS Report 96-61F (16 January 1996); *Korea: Improved South Korean-Chinese Relations—Motives and Implications*, CRS Report 96-37F (17 January 1996); and *Korea: U.S.-South Korean Issues*, CRS Issue Brief 96005 (updated 17 October 1996).
2. This section is taken from CRS Issue Brief 96005, op. cit.
3. This section is taken from CRS Report 96-37F, op. cit.

chapter nine

**China's
Post-Cold War
Policy
Toward the
Korean
Peninsula**

Thomas W. Robinson

Domestic and International Determinants of Chinese Foreign Policy

The period beginning with the Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 initiated the third period of Chinese foreign policy. The first coincided with the rule of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976, and the second extended, after a brief interregnum, from Deng Xiaoping's return to power in 1978 to the Beijing disturbances on 1989. While each period naturally exhibited its own special characteristics, all shared a set of three domestic and three international categories of determinants. To understand those of the post-Tiananmen period, one must inspect, for comparative purposes, those of the first two eras as well. In each era, it is clear that domestic determinants predominated, configuring not only the general direction of foreign policy but much of the specific content. The six determinants influenced Chinese policy toward the Korean peninsula as well, and it is therefore useful to provide a brief sketch in each instance.

In the Maoist era, domestic determinants were three: politics, reducible to Mao's own personal style and proclivities; the influence of the 1921-1949 period of revolutionary struggle for power; and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology. As regards the first, whenever Mao decided to move "left" domestically (as during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution), foreign policy was also radicalized (as, for instance, the Taiwan Straits crisis and the Sino-Soviet border incidents), and when he settled back somewhat, Chinese foreign policy could be conducted more nearly along "national interest" lines. The revolutionary past influenced many aspects of foreign policy: the tendency to see the world as an external extension of the processes of those times and the Party's propensity to seek safety in a three-sided balance of power. Ideology was commanding, as Mao saw both the United States and the Soviet Union in their turn as ideological opponents against whom only a united front strategy would suffice.

International determinants were also important, if not commanding. Chief among them were the China-related policies of the two superpowers, since between them most of the power resources of the global bipolar conflict were organized. China had to choose between them and could never afford—much as it would have liked and sometimes tried—to stand outside the strategic triangle. The second was the nature of post-World War II international relations. China had no choice but to live with such facts as the initial fall and later restoration of Europe and Japan as power centers, the dominance of the nuclear weapon over military affairs, and the emerging importance of rapid modernization among formerly backward economies and polities (especially in Asia, where the "four tigers" plus Japan pointed the way toward a bright future). Finally, China was no

exception to the "Iron Law of International Relations," which relates change in national power to change in national interest, and hence in foreign policy goals and means. As nations grow in power, their catalogue of interests vary accordingly, and China, like all others experiencing such change, found it could, and hence did, carry out a more active policy whenever its relative power growth permitted. While China under Mao suffered many power-related setbacks (both because of his many domestic mistakes and because of the nature of superpower policies toward Beijing)—the growth in Chinese power was sufficiently great that China could pursue a very active policy toward all its neighbors, including the two on the Korean peninsula.¹

Under Deng, the specific content of domestic and international determinants, if not the six categories themselves, changed, and Chinese foreign policy varied accordingly. At home, the absolute primacy of politics was dropped and that of economic development substituted. Consequently, China had to establish and maintain good relations with the sources of capital, markets, and technology, which meant the capitalist nations of North America, West Europe, and Northeast Asia. The Party also dropped its emphasis on the revolutionary past and substituted a more watery restoration of the glories of China's traditional dynasties. That allowed Beijing to emphasize shared Confucian virtues and reasonably good relations with its Asian neighbors. Finally, Marxism and Maoism were deemphasized (but not Leninism, still the basis for one-party rule from above), and pragmatism substituted. That enabled China to move gradually from a totalitarian to an authoritarian state, which in turn caused foreign nations to relax somewhat their worries about the extremes of Chinese policy. It was these internal changes that were at base of Beijing's distancing itself from North Korea and its gradual approach to the South.

Changes also occurred in the external world, thus affecting the manner and direction of Chinese foreign relations. As for the states whose policies affected China the most, and to whom, therefore, Beijing had to pay the most attention, these remained the United States and the Soviet Union. But now the endgame of superpower rivalry was being played out, as Washington and Moscow competed in various spots around the globe—Angola and Afghanistan being obvious examples—and in terms of arms buildup, but also cooperated as regards strategic arms control. Of equal importance, the Soviet Union entered an increasingly steep decline that, despite Gorbachev's attempt to effectuate reforms, resulted in the destruction of its economy and, finally, in the breakdown of communist party rule and the sundering of the state itself. International relations changed its nature as well, as the trends toward democracy, marketization, interdepen-

dence, and emergence of global issues all made their influence felt. To conduct a viable policy, China had to bend to each of these, and that in turn further separated it from Pyongyang and set the stage for final rapprochement with Seoul. Finally, the interest-power relationship continued, but now economic power became the driving force and not military prowess. Once again, Chinese policy was influenced, but now Beijing found itself solidly in step with this important international trend.²

The Tiananmen Incident suddenly and decisively ended this phase of Chinese foreign policy. That event also was one of the precipitating factors leading to the opening of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the East German regime, and thence to the end of the cold war. Along with the three other major international developments during the 1989-1991 period—the collapse of communism in Europe and the Soviet Union, the Gulf War, and the breakup of the Soviet Union—a new era of international relations, and thus of Chinese policy, opened. But Beijing could do little but recoil from these assaults against its internal and external position. Internally, the economy went into a tailspin while the Party's rule was shaky at best. From without, near-universal criticism of, and sanctions against, the regime for its excesses reinforced the fluid nature of now-systemless international relations. The consequence for Chinese policy was a period, lasting until early 1991, of retrenchment, circle-the-wagons, and hope that the various storms would blow over without excessive damage. Under such circumstances, no new initiatives could be taken in general, and surely no changes in policy toward the two Koreas.³

Beginning with Deng's visit to Shenzhen in early 1991, however, the regime began to regain its confidence. As before, domestic determinants were commanding. Now, the Party promulgated a dual economic-political policy: renewed, rapid economic modernization together with "political stability," i.e., no change in the absolute power of the Party and no outward compromise with the many new groups emerging in Chinese society. The weight given to the Chinese past also varied: instead of the glories of the distant past, now emphasis was placed on the unfairness of the post-1842 era of Western imperialist derogation of Chinese sovereignty. And since all the European/Russian imperialists had left the scene, that left only the United States and Japan as the focus of Chinese ire (despite the patently unhistorical nature of such charges against America and the obvious inability and disinterest of Japan in renewing any such policy toward China). That was important by itself, but when teamed with the switch in ideology from pragmatism to a combination of anti-foreign nationalism and emphasis on the presumed virtues of Confucianism, the resultant was a foreign policy strongly anti-American and increasingly anti-Japanese.

The post-cold war era brought fundamental changes in the international environment as well. With bipolarity and the Soviet Union no more, the United States became the "sole remaining superpower" (in Chinese eyes if not American; the latter exhibited a strong tendency to pull back from many advanced cold war positions). Such a unipolar world could not be said to be a system. Rather, it was a combination of Pax Americana and Group of Seven Concert of Powers-like condominium. China was clearly left on the outside and thus became a classic case of a dissatisfied power, all the more dangerous as its gross power was once again rapidly growing. The nature of international relations, aside from being fluid, was inchoate. No one knew where it was leading, with differential tendencies—regionalism, interdependence, marketization, democratization, and ethnicity, to name several—pulling in sometimes mutually contradictory directions. Beijing could only be confused by the "New World Order" (or lack thereof), and thus chose to emphasize what it knew best: bilateral-based foreign relations, the search for new strategic triangles (America, China, and Japan was the favorite), emphasis on state policy as opposed to cooperation along multilateral lines and formation of new international "regimes," and the need for peace and security as conditions for continued economic development. The interest-power relationship continued in full force, to be sure—perhaps more an obvious verity than ever in China's case—as Beijing began to feel the desire to test the outer limits of its new power through involvement in ever more distant places or participation and intervention in existing situations or disputes. Now, however, it was not just economic power that China increasingly disposed, and projected, but military power. The consequence was both a tendency to stand up more firmly against allegedly suppressive and interventionist American policies but also to use the military instrument to extend the nation's practical policy reach to geographic areas where mainland Chinese had not firmly trod before (or for a long time). Hence its forward policies toward Taiwan, the Spratlys, arms export to Pakistan and the Middle East, and its growing resistance against America in various negotiations and areas of contact, turning what should have been areas of cooperation and compromise into arenas of competition and conflict.⁴

It was against the backdrop of these domestic and international changes, as well as their legacy during the first two periods of post-1949 Chinese foreign policy, that Beijing approached the Korean peninsula from the early 1990s forward.

The First Period, 1991 to Early 1994

Through the joint operation of the six determinants, Korea became an opportunity as well as remained an issue for China in the early 1990s. The

opportunity was provided by South Korea's desire to formally establish diplomatic relations with China; to further its economic well-being through trade with Beijing, and to reinforce its position vis-à-vis North Korea as concerned both defense and the reunification process. With the exception of reunification, these goals dovetailed with those of China. Beijing also perceived an opportunity to further isolate Taiwan through Seoul's switching its formal recognition from Taipei to Beijing and saw the South as a nearby, large, and untapped source of capital, technology, and markets. But China—like all other states—was having increasing trouble with Pyongyang's isolation and belligerence. The major issue was North Korea's nuclear weapons production program, but Beijing also found disconcerting the North's *juche* ideology, Kim Il Sung's monarchist pretensions, Pyongyang's highly threatening military position and policy toward the South, and its faltering economy. The questions for China were: how to achieve a diplomatic and economic breakthrough with Seoul, how to prevent a collapse of the Kim family regime while encouraging it to change both its basic structure and its fundamental policies, and how to decrease the probability of conflict on the peninsula and stop the North's nuclear program while still providing residual security guarantees to Pyongyang.

The Northeast Asian international situation also provided, for the first time, room for China to maneuver. With the improvement of Sino-Soviet (Russian) relations, China no longer had to compete with Moscow for Pyongyang's favor. Further, with the decline in Russian-North Korean relations, which antedated the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Pyongyang depended increasingly on Beijing and thus gave the latter room to maneuver in its approach to Seoul. Another factor was Moscow's own success in gaining diplomatic relations with South Korea; this also impelled Beijing more rapidly in the same direction. Finally, the deterioration in American-Chinese relations, importantly, did not drive Beijing and Pyongyang too close (although that could have occurred, given the fright both took at the collapse of communism most everywhere else). Rather, Washington and Beijing realized that the North Korean problem was one that had to be dealt with, and that only America and China—if they cooperated in keeping Kim Il Sung within bounds—could provide the incentives, positive and negative, to maintain peace on the peninsula, face the North Korean nuclear threat, and secure as high a probability of peaceful succession in the North and eventual reunification as possible.⁵

Moving from opposition to accommodation with Seoul was relatively easy. Once the nadir of China's post-Tiananmen isolation was past, and the various internal and international motivations began to take hold in Beijing, China approached South Korea directly. (Seoul and Beijing had been in

informal contact since the late 1970s, through trade, tourists, exchanges, sports, and diplomatic contacts. Hong Kong served as the meeting grounds for the vetting of issues and settlement of trade questions. Trade, only \$40,000 in 1978, surged to \$5.8 billion by 1991.) Trade offices were established in the two capitals in late 1990, the South assisted China's (and Taiwan's and Hong Kong's) entrance into APEC, and in late 1991 trade councils set up that year in the two countries signed a joint trade pact. This extended South Korean most-favored-nation treatment to China and was soon followed by an investment treaty. It was perhaps fortuitous that, following the breakdown of communist rule in East Germany, a general movement took place in the United Nations to permit both Seoul and Pyongyang to join simultaneously. That took place in September 1991. It was significant that Beijing did not object to such a change, as well as a kind of measure of the distance China had traveled—or been constrained to travel—away from its erstwhile communist ally and toward the siren of the capitalist South.⁶

So it was not surprising that supposedly secret talks took place thereafter concerning diplomatic ties, with formal relations announced in August 1992. A flurry of high-level state visits, hitherto suppressed, then took place, most occasioned by the North Korean problem. The South Korean President, Roh Tae Woo, went to Beijing in September 1992; the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, went to Seoul in May 1993; consulates were opened in Shanghai and Pusan in July; the South Korean Foreign Minister, Han Sung Joo, went to Beijing in October 1993 to sign agreements on military attachés, aviation, fisheries, and environment, and to open more consulates; the new South Korean President, Kim Young Sam, and the Chinese Party head, Jiang Zemin, met at the Seattle APEC summit in November 1993; and in March 1994 Kim Young Sam, accompanied by several cabinet ministers, visited Beijing to exchange views on North Korea and to sign trade, industrial cooperation, cultural exchange, and aviation agreements. Meanwhile, trade exceeded the \$10 billion mark by 1993 (South Korea becoming China's seventh largest trading partner) and South Korean investment in China exceeded \$600 million, mostly in the nearby Chinese provinces of Shangdong and Liaoning and in the centrally-governed city of Tianjin.⁷

Taiwan was a short-term loser in this process. It elected to sever all diplomatic, trade, and transport ties with Seoul in response to the latter's switch of Chinese diplomatic partners, even though trade, tourism, and diplomatic contacts were important to both sides. Before the cutoff, trade totaled \$3 billion per year, while afterwards trade declined about \$700 million annually. But Taipei chose to eat bitterness and, after surprisingly pro-

longed negotiations, the two sides in July 1993 agreed to establish informal ties similar to those in place between Taiwan and most other political entities, with diplomatic embassies replaced with unofficial but quasi-diplomatic missions. Thereupon, airline and shipping links were restored, tourism recovered, and cultural exchanges were renewed. With the loss of South Korean diplomatic ties, Taiwan was totally isolated in Asia in the formal sense, since by then Indonesia had also restored formal ties with Beijing. But in real terms, nothing had changed, except that Chinese and South Korean diplomats could see each other openly and Taiwan and South Korean diplomats had to take care as to what formal names each used for the other.⁸

For China, maintaining reasonably close ties with Pyongyang and assuring the security, political, and economic future of North Korea were more challenging tasks. Beijing had a falling out with Kim Il Sung flowing not only from the international changes mentioned above but from the vastly different domestic directions the two nations took in the 1980s and beyond. China marketized, the North remained frozen in socialist planning; China internationalized its economy, the North stressed economic autarchy; China rejected most elements of Mao-style Marxism-Leninism, the North proceeded even further into the Stalinist dead end; China stressed pragmatism, the North underlined *juche* formalism; China "came alive" societally, the North remained in the deep slumber of stultified and artificial social distinctions. On the other hand, Beijing had to take care that the multiplying problems in the North did not cascade into regime collapse à la East Europe. The parallels were arresting: a stagnant polity centered around artificial adulation of one man (or one family, in the Kims' case); a meaningless ideology; an economy sliding backward to the edge of toppling over; a foreign policy that caused increasing regional and global opposition; and a society totalitarianized to the point where individual and state faced only zero sum choices as to their respective futures.

Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues cajoled and counseled Kim to follow their own lead, but to no avail. They threatened, then began, to withdraw economic ties by insisting on payment in hard currency. Beijing diplomats tried hard to keep a straight face when representatives of other countries made fun of Kim and did not hide their dismay with their lack of influence in the northern capital. The Chinese leadership made plain that their country would in no manner cooperate with, or countenance, Northern aggression against the South. And when, in the early 1990s, Pyongyang even engendered fire fights along the China border, resulting in loss of life on both sides, Beijing made firm what had theretofore been a drifting apart: it recast the security tie into a residual guarantorship oper-

ationalized only if the North were about to be overcome in a South Korean-American invasion.⁹

The consequent decline in Chinese-North Korean relations could be seen in the international economic arena. Chinese aid to Pyongyang, once large, diminished to nothing. Trade, large for Pyongyang if not for Beijing, diminished to the several hundred million dollar mark, most of which was in barter. Military assistance, once a mainstay of the relationship, declined to near zero, as China refused Kim's request for advanced equipment and as training teams were gradually withdrawn. Only in the case of oil and grain exports did China maintain supplies—about a million tons of oil and ca. 800,000 tons of grain per annum. Even here, however, China demanded a mixture of hard currency and hard goods in exchange. North Korea made a pass at opening free trade zones and encouraging foreign investment, at strong Chinese suggestion and through Deng's showing Kim what could come from such places as Shen Zhen. But this effort was stillborn, as Pyongyang surrounded such offers with self-defeating restrictions and as foreign businesses assessed the Northern economic situation as not inviting.¹⁰

The third problem was the nuclear issue and the attendant Northern military threat to the South, the impending Kim Il Sung succession, and eventual Korean reunification. Beijing was no less concerned than any other nation about Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. It neither wished to see such weapons in the hands of such an unstable regime, nor to deal with the consequences of follow-on proliferation in Northeast Asia, nor to face the implications of North Korean export of nuclear technology and weaponry to pariah regimes elsewhere. Deng, like South Korean, Japanese, and American leaders, feared the North would kindle another Korean war by using its very large and aggressively-positioned army to suddenly attack the South, possibly in connection with the succession struggle or as part of Kim's promise to reunify the country by 1995. China realized that a conflict would, in all probability, eventually involve its own forces, thereby causing another several decades of separation from the United States, to say nothing of the very high levels of casualties and destruction involved. The immediate question, however, was how to stop Kim from acquiring nuclear weapons.

That posed a critical problem, since Kim would listen to nobody's advice, was no longer dependent—as he had been previously—on Russian nuclear assistance, and was proceeding strictly on the basis of domestic efforts and what technology and equipment could be purloined internationally. China could only gradually distance itself from Kim, offer to carry mes-

sages to the Great Leader from the Americans and the rest of the international community, and try to maximize its own influence in Pyongyang by appearing to hold back the American-led effort to open North Korea's nuclear facilities at Yongbyon to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But that was increasingly a losing game, as inspection deadlines came and went, during the 1992 to early 1994 period, and as the United States, at last perceiving the reality of the North Korean threat, began a concerted (although belated and rather tame) effort at bringing Kim to heel. China could be forced to choose between vetoing a Security Council sanctions resolution, thus precipitating a further major crisis with the United States and, concomitantly, with the rest of the international community, or going along with the United Nations, putting Kim in a corner out of which he could emerge only by starting a war or being overthrown himself. If Beijing had a "strategy", it was one of delay in hopes that Kim would die soon, his son, Kim Jong Il, would be ousted in a palace coup, and the follow-on government (probably a military administration) would come to their senses, give up the nuclear option, start down China's own road of marketization and internationalization, and negotiate with Seoul for long term, step-by-step reunification.¹¹

The Second Period: Mid-1994 to Late 1996

The problem was that history usually does not proceed in such a rational manner, even though Kim did, obligingly, "go to see Marx" on 8 July 1994. Beijing was the first to receive Pyongyang's notification, and the next day sent a high-level delegation to the North. There, the Chinese took the occasion to spell out their country's continuing policy toward the peninsula: residual support of the North; Chinese-style economic reform as the way to national salvation; the requirement of peace, stability, and absence of military confrontation on the peninsula, especially no possession of nuclear weapons by the North; continued Chinese economic assistance to the North but dependent on progress toward economic reforms; support for Kim Jong Il as his father's successor but conditioned on a program of reforms and peninsular peace; and appropriate amendment of the Chinese-North Korean treaty before it expires (i.e., formal withdrawal of broad Chinese support for the North and replacement with carefully circumscribed security guarantorship only in closely defined situations. To list these concerns was to indicate how far Beijing and Pyongyang had already moved apart from the "lips and teeth" relationship of the cold war.¹²

Kim's demise came in the midst of the crisis over the nuclear weapons production facilities at Yongbyon and elsewhere in North Korea. That was largely driven by the fact that the Americans had tired of Kim Il Sung's obvi-

ous delaying tactics and decided to bring matters to a head. China did play a role, subsidiary to be sure but important in certain particulars. For one, China consistently advised the North not to go nuclear, to adhere to the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the details of the IAEA's detailed rules concerning inspection of nuclear facilities. Both of these agreements the North had signed (in 1985 and 1992, respectively). Moreover, Beijing was relieved by, and supported, the December 1991 South-North Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchange and Cooperation, together with the joint declaration of the two Koreas on denuclearization of the peninsula. Beijing also helped arrange American-North Korean talks in the Chinese capital prior to direct negotiations between the two, and constantly approved of the bilateral meetings once they had begun.

But China had its own problems concerning the nuclear issue. Its influence in Pyongyang, throughout the crisis period, indeed before, was declining fast. Economic relations were a bellwether, as noted below, as was Chinese recognition of the South and the rapid melioration of economic and political ties with Seoul. Of perhaps equal importance was the decline in direct security ties, symbolized by persistent if faint reports of actual North Korean initiated military confrontation along the Yalu and more clearly signaled by various Chinese statements from the mid-1980s that China would back the North only under increasingly restricted circumstances. So when the American negotiator, Robert Gallucci, came to Beijing in April 1994 and asked for Chinese assistance in bringing Pyongyang to heel, China could only reply that its actual influence over North Korea was limited. That was probably a true statement as far as it went. It was also true that China lobbied hard in Pyongyang for settlement along the lines of the American/IAEA proposal. It did send a number of missions to the North as the crisis escalated, did invite several North Korean military delegations to Beijing, and did convey its desires for peaceful resolution through several other channels (statements by Jiang Zemin and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and consultations with both the South and Japan).¹³

China's dilemma was that it could not side with the allied coalition completely, lest its influence in Pyongyang fall away totally and the Pandora's Box of peninsular war or Northern collapse be opened. So it had to tergiversate, turning back American proposals for strong United Nations Security Council resolutions on Pyongyang's obvious violation of IAEA rules and imposition of sanctions against the North. The fact remained that Beijing had to play an increasingly small role as the crisis mounted to its final resolution, seeing matters more and more taken directly into American hands. It therefore mostly watched as Washington and

Pyongyang wrestled throughout the summer and fall of 1994, in various locales and personages to arrive, at the last minute, at the August Joint Statement of Principles and the October Agreed Framework, signed in Geneva. It is surely possible that Beijing put pressure on Pyongyang from behind the scenes, but it was not at the negotiating table, while the North continued to resist such pressure as best it could.

The accord did, of course, satisfy Chinese objectives concerning peace on the peninsula and other Korea-related goals. It also helped preserve the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the spread of nuclear weapons to the South, Japan, and Taiwan, and lessened the likelihood of Northern nuclear threat to China itself. So China greeted the announcement of the agreement and continually supported its implementation (hard as that would be, with five stages, each veto-able by either party, over nine years, with significant Japanese, South Korean, and possibly other nations' monetary, material, and technical support). Beijing also saw the agreement as another step in the direction of full cross-recognition (e.g., by the United States and Japan of North Korea), a means to encourage Pyongyang to open up and reform economically, improve South-North relations, and facilitate a general relaxation of tensions throughout Northeast Asia. Beijing's problems with Pyongyang over the nuclear question were hardly at an end, however. During the next two years, the North deliberately and consistently threw up further obstacles to implementation (Seoul's supply, and funding, of the two light-water reactors; demanding more oil and possibly diverting some of it to military use; the stillborn nature of supposed-to-be-resumed South-North talks; undermining peninsular security by withdrawal from the Armistice Commission, by sending soldiers into the Demilitarized Zone, and inducing spy-soldiers from submarines directly into the South; escalation of economically costly conditions for implementing construction of the reactors; threatening the safety of South Korean and American personnel at Panmunjon, etc.). Resolution of these, and other, issues, was not in Chinese hands, and the Chinese constantly feared that both Northern military excesses plus the rapidly deteriorating internal economic situation would precipitate conflict. It is true that China also withdrew from the Armistice Commission (which saw the Polish and Czech members now representing non/anti-communist regimes), but the North initiated that action and thus forced Beijing's hand. Indeed, China could only keep its fingers crossed that the Kim Jong Il successor regime (if that was what it was) would not act so entirely foolishly as to bring down the whole house of cards.

China had still less influence over the internal situation in the North, both as concerned the economy and the polity. Beijing was outwardly support-

ive of the younger Kim in his bid for full succession, opined that Kim Jong Il was fully in charge, and stated that the North would neither collapse or be overthrown by popular uprising or palace coup. Privately, China was much less sanguine, worrying that Kim Jong Il was unpredictable and irresponsible, with a small support base constantly threatened by both reformers and hardliners, that his reported physical maladies could catch up with him, and that his supposedly mercurial personality and unattractive appearance may cause him to lose power. China had every reason, to be sure, to whistle in the dark about Kim's future, for the last thing Beijing wished to see was a North Korea in internal turmoil or one that (as the outcome of several equally likely scenarios) would attack the South. Best, in Chinese eyes, for the Pyongyang regime to survive, then change (if slowly) in the direction of economic reforms and opening the world, and to negotiate in good faith for eventual, staged reunification with the South. The problem, once again, was that China could do little to affect North Korea internally until Pyongyang itself saw the need to change.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the northern economy continued to plunge through the floor (with gross national product declining yearly by three to four percent, the economy having contracted by nearly thirty percent by 1996, and massive malnutrition and incipient starvation evident in 1995 and 1996), the succession continued to be unsettled even after the second anniversary of the elder Kim's death, and the *juche* system of totalitarianism was still firmly in place. China could, and did to some extent, participate (indirectly) in the United Nations-centered international effort to make up for the North's major shortfall in food production and could, and did, supply oil to keep the industrial economy from collapsing entirely. In the offing, it was Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington that came up with at least a modicum of rice, in 1995 if not 1996 (despite Pyongyang's foolish foot-shooting actions—detaining a South Korean rice supply boat and other silly activities to the contrary) and not Beijing. Perhaps China assessed the North Korean situation as less dire than did others, perhaps it did not want to be treated as Pyongyang acted toward the others, perhaps it felt that, in order to maximize what little influence it had left it would come in with food aid at the last minute, or perhaps it did not have enough food of its own to spare. Whatever the case, China was little to be noted in alleviating the 1995-1996 presumed food crisis. As for oil, the North has for several years been almost totally dependent on Chinese supplies, especially since the Soviet Union/Russia gradually backed out. (The Russians wanted hard currency, which Pyongyang did not have, and in any case, after 1990, ceased to have an interest in keeping afloat a totalitarian, war-threatening communist state.) Thus, China did, and continues, to have a say in North Korean economic production (perhaps still sending the above-mentioned one million

barrels per annum, representing about half of all Chinese exports). Even here, however, the situation was deteriorating, as Beijing became even more fed up with Pyongyang's excesses and as China gradually changed from an oil exporting to an oil importing nation.¹⁵

Trade, as always, was a measure of the relative degree of China's policy success, as well an indicator of the direction of that policy. This is true in the case of both North and South Korea. As concerned the North, trade declined steadily both before and after Tiananmen. The reasons were clear: as China marketized and became increasingly dependent on trade with, and investment from, the capitalist nations, it lost interest in non-hard currency, largely barter trade with a North Korea whose economy was, comparatively as well as absolutely, shrinking. So long as Pyongyang remained a hermit kingdom economically, and so long as there was no non-state sector, the North had relatively little to offer China. Beijing could thus well afford to ignore North Korea. It did not proceed quite that far, as we have seen above, as trade and economic assistance possessed at least the residual value of exerting some degree of influence. But by and large, China chose to extrapolate from trade/aid as a tool of policy vis-à-vis the North and also found that Pyongyang was relatively impervious to Chinese economic enticements. Figures bear this out: two-way trade declined by the early 1990s to less than \$1 billion, compared with a constantly increasing trade with the South, reaching \$17 billion in 1994. There was essentially no North Korean investment in China, nor Chinese in the North, whereas in 1994 the South had invested more than \$2 billion in China. The North was greatly dependent on China in trade (upwards of forty percent) despite the very small totals, and while the South also counted China as a major trading partner (third largest in 1993), its total trade volume was so large and so dispersed around the globe as to make it much less dependent on China than the North. South Korea rose, in the 1990s, to become an important trading partner of China (seventh), while the North nearly disappeared in a total Chinese trade volume in 1996 of over \$300 billion.¹⁶

China's policy toward North Korea could be summed up by several descriptors: cautious, minimally supportive, barely tolerant, and hopeful that things would not get worse. Pyongyang could involve China, against Beijing's will, in a new Korean war; the North could break down, sending droves of refugees into China; the country could collapse economically, requiring massive Chinese assistance; the North could collapse politically, begetting a unified Korea under Southern rule and subtracting one more communist state from the small number remaining. Any of these outcomes could bring great woes upon Beijing, if not total disaster. It is not surprising, therefore, that Chinese foreign policy toward North Korea was

not one of its successes. It shared interests, in fact, with the United States, South Korea, Russia, and Japan in trying to manage relations with the North, keeping Pyongyang within bounds, and hoping it would not make a bad situation very much worse.¹⁷

All the more reason, then, why China was pleased with the rapid and positive development of its ties with the South during the middle 1990s. Much of the new relationship came to be centered in the continuation of high-level contacts and visits initiated in the first period and noted above. Thus, the South Korean foreign minister, Han Sung Joo, went to Beijing in June 1994 in connection with the North Korean nuclear crisis; Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, visited Seoul in November, followed by Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng; Kim Young Sam sat down with Chinese Party head Jiang Zemin at the Jakarta APEC meeting the same month; Kim Young Sam saw Li Peng again in Copenhagen; Qiao Shi, the Chinese head of the National People's Congress, went to Seoul in March 1995; the next South Korean Prime Minister, Lee Hong Koo, journeyed to Beijing in April to see Li Peng; Jiang Zemin made a historic, and lengthy (five day) visit to Seoul in November 1995, where he not only talked with Kim Young Sam but addressed the National Assembly and announced that China would "ignore" the automatic involvement clause of the Chinese-North Korean security treaty; Kim and Jiang met again at the APEC Jakarta summit that same month; Kim met Li Peng once again, this time in Bangkok, during the Taiwan crisis in March 1996; the next South Korean Foreign Minister, Gong Ro Myong, went to Beijing in April to see Qian Qichen and Jiang Zemin to ask China to help "mediate" the South-North dialogue; and Qian and other Chinese spokesmen issued several statements concerning the South-Korean-American (Kim Young Sam-Clinton) proposal for four-party talks concerning peace on the Peninsula and replacing the 1953 Armistice agreement. Most of these visits and talks took place during the two-year crisis concerning the North Korean nuclear weapons question and served to buttress Seoul's (and Washington's) position in opposition to that of Pyongyang. China also offered Shanghai and Beijing as locales for South-North rice aid talks, three rounds of which occurred in 1995 and 1996.¹⁸

There is no doubt the South Koreans were pleased with this level of Chinese attention. And in terms of personal relations, always of considerable importance in Confucian cultures, such continuing and intense contacts were essential. But the Koreans eventually became disappointed in China. Their purpose, and original intent, was to draw Beijing away from its exclusive relationship with the North and, more importantly, to use Chinese pressure on Pyongyang to drop plans to attack the South. The presumption was that, by canceling the security treaty with the North, by turn-

ing the screws tight economically, and by using what was thought to be enormous and exclusive influence over Kim Il Sung and his son, China could pull Seoul's chestnuts out of the fire for it. The South Koreans discovered that Beijing neither would nor could do that. It was true that South Korea, along with Vietnam, drew special attention from Beijing in China's post-cold war approach to its Asian neighbors. But in Korea's case, the Chinese interest was perhaps equally divided between obtaining the South's economic goodies, assuring that no war would break out on the peninsula, and continuing to support the existence—despite all—of the North. China did not have the power to require Pyongyang to do its bidding. Nor was Beijing willing to push the northern regime too far, even in the nuclear crisis. And even in the economic sphere, South Korean business people began to sour on the China market and Chinese, regionally and nationally, reacted negatively to the harsh conditions imposed on their workers by South Korean factory managers in China. Thus, while there was a smoothing out of Chinese-South Korean relations in the first years after recognition, a plateau was soon reached that, in terms of prior Korean and Chinese expectations, was much lower than anticipated.¹⁹

Conclusion

Minimal Chinese aims regarding the Korean peninsula were surely achieved. The northern government remained in power and was still communist (in some sense, at least); no war occurred; the North did not go nuclear; good ties with the South were restored and developed; and southern money, goods, and technology flowed in large volumes into China. That was all well and good. But Beijing could not attain a more advanced position. It did not become the arbiter of inter-Korean relations; it did not weaken the American position on the peninsula; it did not separate the South from the United States (any movement in that direction was a consequence of strictly bilateral differences and in any case remained marginal); reunification on Chinese terms was not even on the agenda; in the continuing (if gradual) decline of Chinese-Japanese relations, neither Korea—but particularly the South—signed up as a Chinese partner; and its influence in Pyongyang actually declined and in Seoul did not increase to the degree expected.

Indeed, during the first years of the post-cold war era, China found the Koreans increasingly in charge of their own affairs, whatever dangers these entailed, discovered the Americans still to be the more important outside power, and themselves to be relegated increasingly to the sidelines, as was the case during the nuclear crisis. Moreover, the Kim family succession outcome still could precipitate civil war in the North with the probability of peninsular conflict rising to a peak; the northern economy could still col-

lapse, inducing the prospect of a East Europe-like society-versus-state confrontation that could be resolved only by replacing the Kim dynasty, and North Korean communism, by a strong anti-communist regime and instantaneous Korean reunification under the South's leadership; and a post-reunification Korea could still retain the range of foreign policy choices it desired, only one of which involved a close, traditional tribute-like relationship with Beijing. The fact was, Beijing still had no more a concerted winning policy toward Korea than did any other state. It could only hope and play for time, which was about all the other interested parties could do.²⁰

notes for chapter nine

1. For an expansion of these ideas, see Thomas W. Robinson, "Chinese Foreign Policy: From the Forties to the Nineties," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994): pp. 554-567.
2. This period is covered, in greater detail, in Robinson, op. cit., pp. 567-587.
3. See, for details, Robinson, op. cit., pp. 587-600.
4. The present author explicates these factors and developments in Chapter III, "Chinese Foreign Policy From 1992 to the End of the Deng Era: General Political/Diplomatic Orientation," in his *Chinese Foreign Policy Post-Tiananmen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
5. For details and references, see Thomas W. Robinson, "Relations with Northeast Asia: Korea," Chapter IVC of his forthcoming *Chinese Foreign Policy Post-Tiananmen*.
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9. Tao Bingwei, "The Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia: Moving Toward a New Era," *Korea and World Affairs* (Winter 1992): pp. 685-694; "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," in *U.S. Policy Dialogue and China* (The Asia Society, 1993): pp. 15-20; and Ilpyong J. Kim, "North Korea's Relations with China" and Harish Kapur, "China and North Korea," in Kim Doug Joong, ed., *Foreign Relations of North Korea During Kim Il-sung's Last Days* (Seoul: The Sejong Institute, 1994): pp. 247-268 and 293-304, respectively.

10. Nicholas Eberstadt, "China's Trade with the DPRK, 1990-1994: Pyongyang's Thrifty New Patron," *Korea and World Affairs* (Winter 1995): pp. 695-729.

11. James Cotton, "The Unravelling of 'China' and the Chinese-Korean Relationship," *Korea and World Affairs* (Spring 1994): pp. 67-82; Han Yong-sup, "China's Leverage Over North Korea," *Korea and World Affairs* (Summer 1994): pp. 233-249; and Ahn Yin-hay, "PRC-DPRK Relations and the Nuclear Issue," *Korea and World Affairs* (Winter 1995): pp. 665-685.

12. Chu Sung-po, "Peking-Pyongyang Relations in the Wake of Kim Il-sung's Sudden Death," *Issues and Studies* (August 1994): pp. 121-123.

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chapter ten

**Soviet
and
Russian
Relations
with the
Two
Koreas**

■ *Jane Shapiro Zacek*

This essay considers Soviet and then Russian relations with North and South Korea since 1988, which was a watershed year for Soviet policy toward northeast Asia. By that time, the Soviet leadership had reassessed basic ideological and security interests as well as the country's growing domestic economic needs. While the Communist Party was still in power and Mikhail Gorbachev was still General Secretary of the Central Committee (a position he had assumed upon the death of Konstantin Chernenko in March 1985), Marxist-Leninist ideology was playing an ever-decreasing role in Party politics and policymaking. By 1987, Gorbachev began to stress the critical need to shift primary political power and the policymaking process from the Party to state institutions. He also emphasized the necessity of revamping the Soviet economy, which would be costly and would need foreign assistance. By 1988, the international communist movement, with the Soviet Union at its head, no longer was of interest to the Soviet leader. Rather, he was looking to reconfirm his country's role as a great power in the international arena, a power that could not be ignored in any regional political turmoil and subsequent settlement, whether in Africa, the Middle East, or Northeast Asia.

According to one scholar, Soviet policymakers began to review the situation on the Korean peninsula during 1987 and early 1988 and concluded that South Korea did not have any plans to attack the North. In fact, the South might even be looking for possible ways to seek rapprochement with the North. The Soviets also recognized that North Korean activities vis-à-vis the South were not productive and it was not in the USSR's national interests to continue to permit North Korea to take the initiative in determining how and when a settlement on the peninsula might occur.¹ This reassessment appears to have been conducted without North Korean input or consultation.

Gorbachev, in contrast to his immediate predecessors, also sought to establish the USSR as a major player in East Asia and the Pacific, a position initially made clear in a major foreign policy speech in Vladivostok in July 1986, in which he declared the importance of Asia and the Pacific to Soviet security. He worked to improve relations with the People's Republic of China, culminating with a visit to that country in May 1989, in response to a Chinese invitation that neither Khrushchev nor any of his successors was able to get.

Soviet support for North Korea after 1986 became entangled with perceived security interests, relations with the Chinese, and a growing interest in exploring economic collaboration with the Republic of Korea. In a major speech in Krasnoyarsk (in eastern Siberia) in September 1988,

Gorbachev stated more specifically than at any time earlier the USSR's need to develop economic relations with the ROK.² Although unspoken, it was clear that this need superseded any continuing need to maintain good relations with another communist-ruled country, i.e., the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Indeed, by that time, some Soviet specialists had come to identify the ROK "as the most promising partner in the Far East."³

DPRK leader Kim Il Sung visited the USSR in October 1986 for the first time after Gorbachev had been elected General Secretary of the CPSU. The North Korean was seeking clear reassurances for continued Soviet support. During this visit, Gorbachev remarked publicly that there were "ominous plans to create a Washington-Tokyo-Seoul military bloc, a kind of Eastern NATO. This is a real threat to the USSR, the DPRK, to many other countries, and to peace in the world."⁴

In 1988, the Soviets decided not only to participate in the summer Olympics held in Seoul that year, but to send a large number of athletes to that event as well as to send the Bolshoi ballet to perform in the South Korean capital during the festivities. North Korea boycotted the Olympics and excoriated the Soviets for their attendance. Soviet trade officials met with their South Korean counterparts on several occasions in the fall of 1988, and in December, Seoul announced that it would consider Moscow's request for a \$300 million loan as well as a separate \$40 million loan to construct a trade center in Nakhodka.⁵ Trade between the two countries increased substantially, while Soviet diplomats continued to assure the North Korean leadership that Soviet interests in developing relations with the South extended only to trade and economic collaboration. In spring 1989, the Soviets formally opened a trade office in Seoul. And in December, a Soviet consulate was opened in Seoul and a South Korean consulate opened in Moscow. In May 1990, a direct air link between the two capitals was established for the first time.

Within two years, Moscow and Seoul had agreed upon establishing formal diplomatic relations. Gorbachev and South Korean President Roh Tae Woo met for the first time in San Francisco in June 1990; three months later the normalization of relations between their two countries was announced. The joint Soviet-ROK communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries stressed that it "would not in any way influence relations with third countries, and will promote stability . . . on the Korean peninsula."⁶ The North Korean press labeled the establishment of diplomatic relations as nothing less than "an act of betrayal."⁷

South Korea had undertaken a serious effort toward establishment of diplomatic, economic, and trade relations both with the USSR and the countries of eastern Europe, beginning in 1983. Roh had spoken a number of times of his country's interest in "northward diplomacy [Nordpolitik]." He envisaged great trade, especially export, opportunities for the ROK with the decline of communist control in most of eastern Europe by mid-1988 and the rapid collapse of communist rule throughout the region the following year. Hungary was the first to establish diplomatic relations with the ROK, in February 1989; the other east European countries quickly followed suit during that same year.

Soviet Interests in South Korea

Simply stated, Soviet and then Russian interests in South Korea have been mainly economic, although both Gorbachev and Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin made it clear that East Asia was high on their foreign policy agendas. Accordingly, diplomatic relations with both Koreas would further their policy objectives. With the collapse and formal disintegration of the USSR in late 1991, the Russian Federation took over Soviet foreign policy directions. Yeltsin has continued and sought to expand Soviet policy interests vis-à-vis South Korea. His state visit to Seoul in November 1992 culminated with the signing of a Treaty on Principles of Relations between Russia and the ROK. Yeltsin and President Roh also signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Military Exchanges at the same time, which has resulted in exchanges of military information and personnel and, as noted below, in Russian sales of military technology to South Korea.

Yeltsin has also made it clear that Russia wants to play a key role in any Korean peace/reunification process and Russian leaders and diplomats have reiterated this position on numerous occasions. The Russian position is that, as successor to the USSR, it has had and continues to have strong security, political, and economic interests in Korea at least since World War II. The United States and China, on the other hand, have not agreed that Russia should be part of any peace or reunification talks. Nor has either the South or the North. Indeed, the latter has sought unsuccessfully to negotiate bilaterally with the United States, leaving out the South altogether.

South Korea, with its booming economy and continuing search for export markets, has sought to expand trade relations with the USSR (and, since 1992, with Russia and other post-Soviet new states). In late December 1990, after diplomatic relations between the two countries were formalized, Roh met with Gorbachev in Moscow and agreed to provide a \$3 bil-

lion loan over a three-year period: \$2 billion would be made available to the Soviets for purchase of South Korean goods at attractive prices, and \$1 billion would be available for Soviet industrial development. The Soviets would repay the loan partially in raw materials, particularly coal and natural gas, resources that the USSR/Russia has in abundance and South Korea sorely lacks. By 1993, there had been considerable discussion between the two countries about the construction of a pipeline from the natural gas fields of Yakutia in northeastern Siberia through North Korea to the South, a project estimated to cost some \$20-\$30 billion.⁸ The South would provide part of the financing.

By 1993, Russia had also agreed to sell military equipment to the South in partial loan repayment. Two years later, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, while on an official visit to Seoul, initialed a memo on "mutual cooperation in military industry." Grachev reiterated publicly that Moscow was interested in selling weapons and equipment to the South.⁹ Later, in 1995, Russia was reported to have sold South Korea old warships and tanks from the Russian Pacific Fleet's arsenal, to be used for scrap metal. Income realized from these sales are scheduled to be used to pay some of Russia's accumulated \$1.4 billion debt, but much of it will in fact be used by the Pacific Fleet for civilian purposes. Reportedly, two major Russian aircraft carrier cruisers, the Minsk and the Novorossiisk, were to be sold to South Korea also, at a price of over \$4 billion each.¹⁰

Russia is also selling the South military equipment and material not designed to be turned into scrap metal. By the fall of 1996, the Russians were beginning to send armored combat vehicles and T-80U tanks, and they were scheduled to deliver anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles to Seoul as well.¹¹ Because of the huge defense industry inherited from the Soviet period and the difficulty (and cost) of transforming industrial defense factories into civilian factories, military equipment continues to be a major Russian export and a significant source of income. The South Koreans have put a limit on how much military equipment they will accept as debt payment, preferring cash or specifically non-military goods.¹²

Bilateral trade between the two countries has grown substantially over the past several years, and by the end of 1995 had reached more than \$3 billion, up from \$2.2 billion the year before (which in turn was almost forty percent higher than in 1993). After some delay in the early 1990s, major South Korean companies have now begun to invest in the Russian Far East. Daewoo and others are setting up retail and service stores. Goldstar, Samsung, and Hyundai are also investing in the area, and the latter is scheduled to build a \$50 million office building in Vladivostok.¹³ These

major Korean companies now seem willing to invest substantially in Russia despite the continuing unsettled and often tumultuous political and economic climate, lack of a legal code and process that would serve to protect foreign investments and assets against criminal seizures, a tax system that does not work and does not particularly encourage foreign investment, and other major difficulties. It is likely that these and other companies will be willing to invest more extensively when Russia's internal situation becomes more "investor-friendly." Additionally, a South Korean light industrial and electronic goods "technopark" has been opened in the free economic zone in Nakhodka, near Vladivostok.

Some observers have suggested that enhanced South Korean-Russian trade is a "natural." South Korea manufactures items that Russia lacks, especially consumer goods, and Russia has resources, especially fuels, that South Korea sorely needs for its expanding manufacturing sector. The South reportedly is one of the world's major manufacturers and exporters of consumer fur and forestry goods, for example, but lacks these resources, which Siberian Russia has in abundance. The South also has an important shipbuilding capability, which could be utilized conveniently by the Russian Pacific Fleet headquartered in Vladivostok. The fleet does not have major repair and maintenance facilities located locally; rather, ships have to be sent all the way to the Baltic when major maintenance or overhaul is needed.

Russia also sees continued good relations with South Korea as an important way to enhance its influence in northeast Asia. After the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and (at least temporarily) the end of the Russian-dominated multinational empire, Russia began to search for ways to establish its status as a major power in the international community. In the near term, given its continued domestic political and economic uncertainties, Russia is unlikely to have the authority to undertake an international role with the global clout assumed by the Soviet Union during the cold war. Still, Russia maintains a large nuclear arsenal. Now that the other post-Soviet states that inherited nuclear installations and equipment on their territory after 1991 (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus) have agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons within their national borders, Russia's nuclear capability accordingly assumes greater international significance.

Soviet-North Korean Relations

By the mid-1980s, Soviet-North Korean relations had improved substantially, after a period of continued decline. By 1985, the North had granted the Soviets overflight rights for military aircraft headed for Vietnam and

access for Soviet military ships headed to Wonsan and Nampo harbors. In return, the Soviets provided increased technical, military, and economic assistance to the North. It is estimated that the Soviets provided \$900 million between 1981 and 1985 in arms transfers alone, including MiG-23 and MiG-29 combat fighter aircraft and SAM missiles.¹⁴

After his fall 1986 visit to the Soviet Union, Kim Il Sung pressed Gorbachev to pay a return visit to Pyongyang, but the Soviet leader never managed to take him up on this or subsequent repeated invitations. The North Koreans were especially distressed when Gorbachev refused to stop off in Pyongyang after his official visit to China in May 1989. Pyongyang watched with alarm as communist parties in eastern Europe lost political control and collapsed during 1989. The North believed the democratization efforts under way in the USSR were a direct threat to Marxist-Leninist ideology (as indeed they were). In the fall of 1989, as communist control evaporated without bloodshed in one east European country after another and the Soviet Union sat quietly by on the sidelines, a CPSU Central Committee document declared that "North Korea refuses to recognize new realities and sticks to obsolete notions of class and ideological struggle."¹⁵ The following year, then heir-apparent Kim Jong Il declared that the North Korean Workers Party "has been able to uphold the revolutionary banner without the slightest vacillation,"¹⁶ while communism around the world was in a state of decline and collapse. Less than a year later, the CPSU had been outlawed and the Soviet Union was in the throes of collapse.

In late 1988, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze declared that "the Soviet Union has no intention of recognizing South Korea nor of establishing political and diplomatic relations with that country." The following spring, the Soviets formally opened a trade office in Seoul. In May, while visiting Beijing, Gorbachev declared that "Kim Il Sung and the North Korean leadership are probably afraid that we can go from trade contacts to political ties with South Korea. This, however, is out of the question. We are not going to agree on cross-recognition. At least for today, this is not our policy."¹⁷ Soviet military leaders in particular emphasized the need to maintain a strong Soviet-North Korean security alliance in order to maintain Soviet security in the Far East.

When Shevardnadze flew to Pyongyang in September 1990 to personally inform the North Koreans that Soviet-ROK diplomatic relations would be established imminently, Kim Il Sung flatly refused to meet with him. The North Koreans vehemently opposed Soviet diplomatic recognition of the South, they said, for a number of reasons: it would legitimate and perpetuate the two Koreas; North Korea would be isolated internationally; and a

tripartite "conspiracy" of the USSR, the US and South Korea would be created, which would "subvert the North Korean socialist system." "The USSR, by its actions, joins the conspiracy of the United States and South Korea aiming at the destruction of the socialist system in the north," declared the North Korean foreign ministry. Further, the North Korean-Soviet Security Treaty of 1961 had lost all "real meaning" and North Korea would have to "seek independent measures to procure weapons by itself."¹⁸ During meetings with Shevardnadze, North Korean foreign ministry officials reportedly announced that "without continued Soviet assistance" they would have to "develop their own 'modern' weapons program, turn to others for support, and cease to trust the USSR." The Soviet Foreign Minister is reported to have responded that "the DPRK would of course have to determine what was in its own best interests," although he did warn the North Koreans against trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

After 1990, it became unclear whether the Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, signed in 1961, actually remained in force. Annual joint naval exercises ended in 1990 and have not resumed. In January 1992, Igor Rogachev (a former Soviet deputy foreign minister) flew to Pyongyang at Yeltsin's request to discuss with the North Koreans a revision of the treaty that would provide for Russian military support only in the event North Korea was attacked without provocation. The North Koreans accepted this revision, undoubtedly without enthusiasm. At the same time, Rogachev reportedly assured DPRK leaders that the Russian (formerly Soviet) nuclear umbrella still covered them. The North responded that Russia need not concern itself about the North's security.¹⁹

The terms of the 1961 security treaty are that, if either party does not raise objections, the treaty is automatically renewed for another five years. According to a recent South Korean report, the North and Russia are continuing to negotiate a modified version of the treaty. In the latest version, Russia reportedly will no longer automatically provide military support to the DPRK even in the case of an unprovoked attack.²⁰

In late January 1993, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgii Kunadze traveled to Pyongyang as a special representative of the Russian president. Kunadze's mission was to assist in the establishment of state to state relations, which were to replace communist party relations, the main avenue of collaboration between the two countries since the 1940s, which had broken down by the end of the 1980s. Kunadze met with Kim Young Nam (Vice Premier of the Administrative Council) and Kang Seok Choo (First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs). The Russian succeeded in getting North Korean agreement to strengthen contacts at the foreign ministerial level, and to

reestablish the bilateral intergovernmental commission on economic and scientific-technical issues. But DPRK officials made it clear that Russia had no right to interfere in the North's nuclear development efforts and, particularly, to insist that they permit International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections. Kang Seok Choo made it clear that his country was willing "to look for partners elsewhere, for example in the United States."

While Russian-ROK bilateral trade has continued to grow rather substantially in recent years, trade between the Russia and the DPRK has declined drastically since 1990 (with slight increases in 1992 and 1993). Beginning in 1991, North Korea, as were all other communist-ruled states, was obliged to pay for Soviet (later Russian) goods in hard currency only. Of particular relevance for Soviet oil and natural gas deliveries, upon which the North depended heavily, these commodities would be sold at prevailing world prices, no longer at the discounted prices for Soviet bloc countries. The Soviet-DPRK trade agreement for 1991 was signed in 1990, but between January and April of 1991 trade deliveries were suspended altogether.

As is well known, the North Korean economy depended heavily on Soviet support for four decades or more. The USSR was the North's main trading partner and the Soviets had provided half of the North's total foreign economic assistance. According to one source, in 1989, the North received 63 percent of its electric power, 50 percent of its coal and refined oil, 33 percent of its steel, and important amounts of chemical fertilizers, pig iron, and other materials from the Soviets.²¹ In 1989 and 1990, 55 percent of the North's total bilateral trade had been with the Soviets, including substantial imports of heavily subsidized Soviet oil.

Bilateral trade between the two countries had reached an all-time high in 1989 of \$2.5 billion. In 1990, it dropped to less than half of that amount (\$1.1 billion). And the following year, trade turnover dipped further to just \$364 million.²² In 1990, the Soviets delivered 410,000 metric tons of oil to North Korea; in 1991, 100,000 metric tons, less than 25 percent of the previous year, were delivered, even though the Soviets agreed to postpone payment receipt in hard currency only for this commodity.

By 1995, Russia had dropped to fifth place in a listing of North Korea's main trading partners, behind Japan, China, the ROK, and India (in that order) and only slightly ahead of Hong Kong and Germany. Russia accounted for only four percent of North Korea's total trade turnover. Beginning in 1991, China replaced the USSR as the North's primary trading partner, and by mid-1994, China was responsible for more than two-

thirds of North Korea's foreign trade and 75 percent of its oil and food imports.²³ By 1995, Japan had replaced China as the DPRK's number one trading partner. In response to the Soviet-South Korean rapprochement, the North had moved quickly to establish diplomatic relations with Japan (in September 1990) and sought to improve trade relations with that country as a way of counterbalancing Soviet-ROK collaboration.

Within the past year there have been some signals that Russia has renewed its interest in the North. Valery Denisov, a North Korean specialist, was appointed ambassador to the DPRK. Russia has indicated a willingness to invest in the Rajin-Sonbong free economic and trade zone, which is situated in a remote area almost on the border of the DPRK, Russia, and China. The zone sponsored its first industrial conference in September 1996 and gained a good deal of international publicity.

North Korea has suffered severe flooding and other agricultural setbacks over the past several years and its food supplies both for civilians and the military have dwindled to dangerously low levels. Russia has not, however, sent emergency food supplies to the North as have other bordering or neighboring countries, particularly China. Japan has also sent supplies. (The ROK has provided support, although the North's initially hostile response discouraged larger or more frequent shipments.) Even the U.S., in a lesser way, has supported the relief effort, largely through the UN-sponsored World Food Programme.

The North Korean Nuclear Issue

In 1992, Russia withdrew a number of scientists who were working in North Korea, assisting with military development. Moscow continued to put pressure on the North to adhere to the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The North had finally become a signatory to that treaty in 1985. (The NPT, jointly supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union, had gone into force after the UN General Assembly had approved it in 1970.) The North only signed the safeguard accord required of all NPT members in January 1992, although this accord should have been signed within eighteen months of becoming a treaty signatory, i.e., by mid-1987. Regarding nuclear power for civilian uses, North Korea joined the IAEA in September 1974, and first permitted that agency to inspect its main atomic reactor at Yongbyon (built with Soviet technological and economic assistance) in late 1977.

In 1993, the DPRK announced that it was formally withdrawing from the NPT, thereby causing an international furor. Russia joined the interna-

tional effort, spearheaded by the US, to convince the North to drop its apparent plans to develop a nuclear military capability. Reportedly, the Russian KGB knew in March of 1992 that the North had "completed the development of an atomic explosive device," although the Russian government denied any such knowledge. Indeed, as late as mid-1994, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev claimed that North Korea was three to seven years away from developing any nuclear weapons.²⁴ Pressured by the South Koreans, Yeltsin indicated that he might be willing to support international sanctions against North Korea if the latter persisted in its nuclear military efforts. During his visit to Moscow in June 1994, ROK President Kim Young Sam agreed to postpone Russia's debt repayment if the Russians would put pressure on the North to end its nuclear weapons development program. In response, Yeltsin declared publicly that Russia would in fact support international sanctions against North Korea if the latter persisted in acquiring a nuclear capability. Russia had already withdrawn its nuclear scientists from the North who had been provided to assist in the civilian development of nuclear energy; they may actually have assisted in paving the way for nuclear military development. By this time, however, Russia's influence on the North had declined significantly and there is no evidence that Russian support for international sanctions had any impact on the North's determination to continue to try to develop a military nuclear capability. The North was much more interested in negotiating directly with United States if it were to agree to halt nuclear development than it was with Russia.

After protracted negotiations during 1994, in which the United States took the lead, the North agreed to freeze its nuclear development activities in exchange for U.S. economic assistance and substantial U.S. diplomatic attention. Part of the Agreed Framework signed in Geneva in October of that year by the North and the U.S. established a special organization that would assist North Korea in the near term with its fuel requirements and subsequently supply two light-water reactor power plants. KEDO, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, sponsored by the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, has been given responsibility for ensuring fuel deliveries as agreed upon and for facilitating the development and delivery of the light-water reactor plants. While Russia sent representatives to the initial KEDO meeting in August 1995, it has not become a party to the organization because, it complained, it was not adequately consulted before KEDO was established. Russia has repeatedly expressed great interest in building and supplying the light-water reactors, but KEDO officials have firmly rejected these offers. Rather, the ROK is slated to provide the reactors and bear a significant part of the cost, although the North has not yet agreed to accept ROK-manufactured reactors.

Conclusions

For the past decade, first the Soviet Union and then Russia has looked to play a larger role in the Asian Pacific and in northeast Asia as well. For example, it applied for membership in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum several years ago, but has not yet been admitted because of a continuing moratorium on new membership. It has made concerted efforts to improve relations with China. Yeltsin has undertaken several official visits to China, amplifying the initial groundwork laid by the 1989 Gorbachev visit. Almost all of the long-standing border disputes have been resolved and both Russia and China have withdrawn massive numbers of troops from their respective sides of the long common border. Bilateral trade has grown substantially and in late 1993, a joint Russian-Chinese military cooperation agreement was signed. The next year, Chinese president Jiang Zemin made a state visit to Moscow, the first visit by a Chinese leader since 1957. Jiang and Yeltsin signed a formal agreement not to use military force against one another's country.²⁵ Sporadic discussions with Japan still have not resolved the Kurile islands controversy, which in turn has continued to block signing of a formal peace treaty ending World War II hostilities between the two countries. More importantly, failure to resolve the islands dispute has limited Japanese willingness to underwrite economic investment and other support to Russia, particularly in eastern Siberia.

It is important to note that Asian specialist Evgenii Primakov replaced western-oriented Andrei Kozyrev as Russian foreign minister in January 1996. Kozyrev had worked to focus Russian foreign policy much more on relations with Europe and the U.S. than on Asia, although as noted, significant breakthroughs regarding Russian interests in Asia had been made during his tenure. Primakov has both an academic and a national security background and has been in and out of official government service for many years. He is regarded as less of a "reformer" than Kozyrev, and his appointment appears at least partly to have been related to Yeltsin's 1996 presidential reelection bid, when the latter deemed it necessary to emphasize his more "centrist" rather than "reformist" position to the electorate. Yeltsin's March 1997 restructuring of his cabinet and appointment of several key economic and administrative "reformers" to high level positions has not impacted on Primakov, who remains in his post.

Within this general context of seeking to play a greater role in east Asia, Russia has tried to fashion a two-Koreas policy that best serves its security and economic interests. It has also continuously sought to play a direct and important role in any final peace process and reunification of the two Koreas. Thus far, it has been quite firmly rebuffed by each of the major par-

ties and this seems unlikely to change unless Russia can make a compelling case for its inclusion. Russia continues to work for a reduced American presence in South Korea, but in fact, over the past several years, there has been increased U.S. involvement on the Korean peninsula altogether because of the North Korean nuclear efforts, a situation the Russians do not welcome but seem unable to counteract. Because so much of the Russian leadership's focus has been on internal matters related to the protracted transition from a centrally planned economy toward a market-oriented one and from an authoritarian communist party-ruled political system toward one more democratically-oriented, it has understood the need to reduce international tensions on its borders. It has done well in this regard at least with respect to China. Insofar as security concerns on the Korean peninsula are concerned, Russia is not anxious to see a regional power emerge on its border from reunification in the near term. Nor is it anxious to witness a collapse of the North, which could include desperate international military actions before such a collapse. However, any willingness to provide support to the North is surely limited by Russia's simultaneous interest in maintaining and expanding economic investment and trade relations with the South.

Russia's economic interests are clear: expanded trade and expanded investment to assist in development of the vast resources in eastern Siberia, in particular. Regional "reformist" leaders have established free economic zones to encourage foreign investment, which they believe will lay the groundwork for jump-starting local economic growth. Investment has been slow in coming because of the lack of legal safeguards and processes, conflicting taxation restrictions, political and economic uncertainties, and bureaucratic entanglements, among other reasons. While significant advances in Russian-South Korean trade relations have been achieved and Moscow is working intently to reduce its debt to the ROK in order to encourage additional support, ROK investment is still in its early stages. The South in part has sought to tie its economic relations with Russia to that country's ability to influence events or policies in North Korea. As noted earlier, Russia for the past half decade has had little impact on North Korean policies and does not appear yet to be taking concrete steps to try to enhance its influence except to reduce the rhetoric directed against Pyongyang, to provide very limited economic assistance, to strive to improve bilateral trade relations, and to postpone insistence on North Korea's debt repayments in light of the latter's dire economic circumstances.

Russia continue to seek a major role in northeast Asia in order to maximize its own security and economic interests and to try to ensure that none of the other regional powers (China or Japan) accedes to a paramount position in the area. Thus far, Russia's role has been limited by its own pressing domestic priorities

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chapter eleven

**Unification
Policies and
Strategies of
North
and
South Korea**

■ *Young Whan Kihl*

The unification policies of North and South Korea have changed little from the days of the cold war era in both official lines and basic premise. The "new détente" between the two Koreas, which was to follow from the planned summitry between South Korean President Kim Young Sam and North Korean President Kim Il Sung, was the casualty of the latter's sudden death in July 1994. Since then, instead of working toward peace, the frigid cold war atmosphere has returned to the Korean peninsula. Implementation of the historic Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North, signed 13 December 1991 and promulgated on 19 February 1992, has also proven to be more difficult than anticipated.¹ Not surprisingly, the strategic goals of Seoul and Pyongyang remain far apart and irreconcilable despite official posturing and rhetoric.

In discussing the unification policies of North and South Korea, it is useful to differentiate between the official government policies and plans on the one hand and the underlying strategy on the other.² Whereas the official policy deals with the formal unification plans and programs put forward by the governments of North and South Korea, as articulated and presented to the public, the underlying premise reflects the strategic thinking regarding what the government leadership intends to do in achieving the stated policy goals of Korean reunification.

North Korean Unification Policy and Strategy

Pyongyang's unification policy, under the Kim Jong Il regime in 1996, has not changed from that formulated before the death of his father in 1994. Since no statement on the reunification issue is personally attributed to Kim Jong Il, there is no way of ascertaining what the current leader thinks about Pyongyang's unification stance and policies. The New Year's address, which served the useful purpose of deciphering the DPRK's official policy under Kim Il Sung has now been abandoned and replaced by an impersonal joint editorial to mark the new year by several newspapers including the Korean Workers' Party organ. Kim's North Korea is currently preoccupied with the question of assuring the regime's survival, rather than with charting a new unification policy to suit the post-cold war security environment of the new era. The underlying strategy of North Korean unification policy continues to include fostering revolution in the South. Instead of opening inter-Korean dialogue with the Kim Young Sam government, to make headway on the reunification issue, Pyongyang refuses to talk with Seoul and appears to be more interested in destabilizing the South's democratic society. The incidence involving the North Korean submarine incursion into South Korean waters and grounding in the east coast in

September 1996, and accompanying infiltration of armed agents to the South, is the latest manifestation of this policy of fostering revolution in South Korea.

The ways to achieve this policy objective are two-fold: to continue direct talks with the United States on bilateral issues, without involving South Korea in the process, thereby acquiring the claim of legitimacy for the DPRK; and to drive a wedge between the United States and the ROK, thereby accomplishing the strategic objective of forcing the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from the South. Short of accomplishing these aims, Pyongyang appears to offer concessions on peripheral matters, such as agreeing to attend the briefing session of the four-party peace talks proposed by U.S. President Clinton and ROK President Kim at the April 1996 Cheju Island summit.

That Pyongyang's unification policy remains intact under Kim Jong Il is clear from reading the joint editorial of three newspapers on 1 January 1996 which states that "(T)he historic cause of national reunification will surely be accomplished because we have the most just reunification programme indicated by Comrade Kim Il Sung, the eternal sun and father of the nation, and our party guides the nation-wide struggle for the country's reunification."³ The editorial also asserts that "(T)he three principles of independence, peaceful reunification, and the great national unity, the Ten-Point Programme of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation, and the proposal for founding the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo, which were advanced by him (i.e., Kim Il Sung), are the banner of genuine patriotism and a just and reasonable reunification programme common to the nation."⁴ Referring more specifically to Pyongyang's unification policy, the joint editorial continues that "(O)ur party's stand for reunifying the country in a peaceful way remains unchanged" which, put in capsule summary, reflects the strategy of forging the united front campaign.

"Reunifying the country in line with the three principles is possible only by the confederation formula," continues the editorial, "(A)ll the compatriots in the north, south and overseas must unite closely as the same nation, regardless of ideology, idea and system, and join in the struggle to establish a confederal state independent, peaceful and neutral, that is a reunified state involving the whole nation."⁵ Pyongyang is fostering a united front campaign strategy to build its support base in the south and among the overseas Koreans. In this sense North Korea in the post Kim Il Sung era continues to adhere to the policy of reunification on its own terms, i.e., the strategy of "hegemonic" reunification of Korea.

For the failed policy on reunification, Pyongyang blames the Seoul government's policy and the absence of what it calls "a new peace mechanism" between itself and the United States. "(W)e must maintain the stand of national independence, reject the separatism forces' dependence on outside forces, flunkeyism and treachery and defend the dignity and independence of the nation" thereby pointing its finger at the Seoul government for doing all of these evil deeds. Then, also pointing its finger at the United States, it claims that "(W)hat should be resolved first in ensuring peace and security in the Korean Peninsula and realizing its reunification is to establish a new peace mechanism between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. If such a peace-keeping system is set up, the situation of the Korean Peninsula will be relaxed and the north-south agreement implemented smoothly. And it will favorably affect the reunification of Korea."⁶

Pyongyang's "Ten Point Platform" on Korean Unification

Since North Korea under Kim Jong Il refuses to deviate from the established policy line, as laid down by his father, we need to know exactly what the senior Kim had to say about the reunification issue.

Pyongyang's new unification strategy was unveiled by Kim Il Sung in his ten-point proclamation on Korean unification in 1993. This statement has become a kind of Kim Il Sung's political will for Kim Jong Il and his followers to carry out Korean reunification in the post-Kim Il Sung era. Although the strategic calculus and premise underlying this "new" policy remains the same, this policy pronouncement contains an element of realism and flexibility. A moderate and reasoning tone and self-righteous and self-defensive rhetoric are combined, for instance, in the pronouncement. The latter used to be the prevailing tone that characterizes earlier pronouncement on Korean reunification in the cold war era. The tone of moderation, however, may reflect Kim's apprehension that North Korea may not successfully withstand the external shocks emanating from the collapse of the Soviet Union. In his 1992 New Year's address, Kim Il Sung condemned as nonsensical the "unification by absorption" or "prevailing over communism" policies attributed to South Korea.

Included in the ten-point platform of Pyongyang's unification policy stance are the following:

1. A unified state, independent, peaceful and neutral, should be founded through the great unity of the whole nation.

2. Unity should be based on patriotism and the spirit of national independence.
3. Unity should be achieved on the principle of promoting co-existence, co-prosperity and common interests and subordinating everything to the cause of national reunification.
4. All manner of political disputes that foment division and confrontation between fellow countrymen should be stopped and unity be achieved.
5. They should dispel fears of invasion from the South and from the North, prevailing over communism and communization altogether and believe in and (have) unity with each other.
6. They should set store by democracy and join hands on the road to national reunification, not rejecting each other for the difference in isms and principles.
7. They should protect material and spiritual wealth of individual persons and organizations and encourage them to be used favorably for the promotion of great national unity.
8. The whole nation should understand, trust and unite with one another through contacts, travels and dialogues.
9. The whole nation in the North and the South and overseas should strengthen solidarity with one another on the way to national reunification.
10. Those who have contributed to the great unity of the nation and to the cause of national reunification should be highly esteemed.

Some of the old themes Pyongyang repeated in its 1993 proclamation include "the unity of the whole nation," "the spirit of national independence," practicing "democracy," and strengthening "solidarity" among Koreans in the North, South, and abroad. Appearing afresh are such eye-catching themes as to promote "co-existence, co-prosperity, and common interests" (point 3), to "dispel fears of invasion from the South and from the North" (point 5), and to "trust and unite with one another through contacts, travels and dialogue" (point 8) in that order, instead of "dialogue, contacts and travels".⁷

Conspicuously lacking in the 1993 proclamation—an absence that might signify a new approach and new thinking on Korea's future by the DPRK leadership—are the accent on “urgency” and the counsel on “immediate” steps toward reunification of the country.⁸ In his 1991 New Year's address, Kim Il Sung defended the confederation plan as both “fair” and “the only and quickest way . . . to reunify the country peacefully.”

Pyongyang's Strategy on Korean Reunification

This platform was subsequently adopted by its legislative body during the fifth session of the ninth Supreme People's Assembly on 7 April 1993.⁹ What has been included in Kim Il Sung's “Ten-Point Platform” is the official policy line (*kongsik ipjang* or *myongbun*) of the DPRK on Korean reunification, which references only surface phenomenon and masks the underlying strategic calculus and consideration (*naebu jonryak* or *jinsim*). This dualistic mindset became clear when Kim Il Sung's ten-point program was presented to the parliament by DPRK Premier Kang Song San who opened his remarks by mentioning ROK President Kim Young Sam's “alleged” reference in his inaugural address that “no ally is better than the nation.”¹⁰ Yet, he also presented four preconditions for resuming inter-Korean dialogue, which clearly were politically almost impossible for the Seoul government to accept:

1. The south must give up its policy of reliance on foreign powers. It must not rely on the United States and Japan politically, militarily and economically; instead, it must regard solidarity between the same ethnic group as more important.
2. The south must express its determination to oust U.S. troops from the south.
3. The south must suspend forever joint military exercises with foreign (U.S.) troops.
4. The south must pull itself out from under the U.S. nuclear umbrella.¹¹

The overall impression one gets from reading Pyongyang's ten-point proclamation on Korean reunification is thus mixed: flexibility in official platform but consistency in its strategic calculation.

The strategic goal of North Korea's “hegemonic” reunification policy remains unchanged. The means through which to achieve North Korea's unification policy objectives, as already noted, is to engage in a dialogue

with the United States rather than with the South Korean government of Kim Young Sam. Pyongyang's strategic goal, not surprisingly, is to create a wedge between Washington and Seoul, so as to undermine the U.S.-ROK alliance, and to force the U.S. troop withdrawal from the South. After successfully negotiating with the United States on the nuclear deal-making, by using its nuclear card with skill and tact, Pyongyang now relies on such bilateral issues of negotiation as the MIAs and missile technology control regime. Pyongyang's foremost strategic goal is to acquire bargaining leverage vis-à-vis the United States on a host of other important issues including the peace treaty and normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States.

South Korean Unification Policy and Strategy

Seoul's unification policy and strategy, as articulated by President Kim Young Sam's address and statement, has also remained the same as in the cold war era. Because South Korea successfully attained a democratic transition from an authoritarian rule, the newly elected civilian government of Kim Young Sam initially enjoyed popular support and legitimacy. However, in the absence of new ideas and vision on the reunification issue, other than what it inherited from the previous regimes, the Kim Young Sam government may suffer from the stigma of failed policies on unification and inter-Korean relations. During the first four years of President Kim's five-year term, his administration's North Korea policy has been plagued by what one newspaper critique calls "dauntless initiatives and subsequent disenchantment."¹²

Seoul's Unification Policy Initiatives

In his inaugural address on 25 February 1993, President Kim Young Sam stated that "(N)o ideology or political belief can bring greater happiness than national kinship." After proposing a summit with his counterpart in North Korea, President Kim urged "(L)et us open our hearts and discuss the future of the Korean people" (because) "I truly believe that we, as one people, will be able to resolve the issues that divide us."¹³

Despite being preoccupied with the domestic policy of launching a reform agenda, President Kim used the occasion of addressing the PBEC (Pacific Basin Economic Conference) meeting in Seoul, on 24 May 1993, to announce a "new diplomacy" that was to be more future-oriented in so far as the reunification issue was concerned. His government, to achieve the goal of unification, "will pursue the policy of peaceful coexistence, joint prosperity and common welfare with North Korea" and "will move from the initial step of reconciliation and cooperation to the next phase of

Korean commonwealth, and to a final stage of a unified nation of one people and one state."¹⁴ The Kim Young Sam government was preoccupied with the task of how to strengthen and build upon the existing unification measures that he inherited from the Roh Tae Woo government but changing it in the direction of adjusting to the new and changing post-cold war environment surrounding the Korean peninsula.

The Kim Young Sam government promised to work hard in realizing its ambitious master plan to form a Korean commonwealth within his five-year tenure. A new unification policy team, led by Han Wan-sang who was appointed deputy prime minister in charge of unification policy administration, was appointed. However, its mishandling of delicate matters of inter-Korean negotiation, such as the return of a convicted North Korean agent on humanitarian grounds without quid-pro-quo, led to a heightening of public criticism and ended up as a short-lived tenure of the reformist team.

The possible opening for President Kim Young Sam on the reunification issue came from an unexpected source via the mediation of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter who visited Pyongyang in June 1994. The new President came close to the realization of his ambitious goal on a new policy initiative when he reached an agreement with North Korean president Kim Il Sung in June 1994 to hold a historic inter-Korean summit to discuss a wide range of pending issues. However, anticipated inter-Korean rapprochement proved short-lived with Kim's sudden death in July 1994. Because of the Seoul government's insensitivity toward the mourning of Kim's death, subsequent inter-Korean relations have taken an irreversible downturn.

President Kim Young Sam's own unification policy, apart from the Korean commonwealth plan that he inherited from the previous regimes, did not become known until after the death of the North Korean leader in 1994. On 15 August 1994, during his address to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Korea's liberation, President Kim Young Sam presented his new "Unification Formula for the Korean National Community."¹⁵ In his address, President Kim proposed "a three-stage unification formula for building a single national community" that "calls first for reconciliation and cooperation between the South and the North, next for forming a Korean commonwealth and lastly for completing a single unified nation-state." This formula, in short, "is designed to ultimately build a single nation-state after going through interim stages of integration," as he put it, and "(T)he path to unification must also be the path to democracy and prosperity." In unveiling this "Three-Stage Unification Formula for

Building a Korean National Community," President Kim also articulated his political philosophy on leadership and unification policy.

"The basic philosophy behind our quest for unification," according to President Kim, "is centered on the values of freedom and democracy" and "(T)he unification process should be focused not on how to distribute power but on how to enable our people to live together." As he sees it, "(E)fforts toward unification should be concerned not so much with developing a hypothetical structure of a unified state as with building a national community within which all Koreans can live together" and "(U)nification should be grounded on the values of freedom, democracy and well-being for all, rather than on any ideology focused narrowly on a specific class or group." By articulating his philosophy of liberal democracy that underlies his unification proposal, the Seoul government has it known to the world and the post-Kim Il Sung North Korea that the ultimate purpose of achieving reunification via its unification formula is to realize the united Korea that upholds the ideology of liberal democracy.

Since the address, telecast live, was the first major occasion to publicize the Seoul government's policy on unification, it is possible that many of the same points could have appeared in the scheduled summitry with the North Korean leader. "It will not be possible to unify the South and the North overnight," says Kim, "because the two parts of Korea have been locked into mutual hostility and distrust for as long as they have consistently pursued distinctly different ideologies and markedly different political and social systems." But, as Kim emphasizes, "(U)nification should be a gradual and phased process of building a single national community."

Five specific measures are undertaken by the Kim Young Sam government to promote the causes of Korean reunification. These include, according to the ROK publication: building the foundation for an autonomous civilian unification movement; energizing a nation-wide educational program on unification; strengthening the public education on unification; promoting research activities on the unification issue; and fostering the public consensus on the unification issues.¹⁶

Seoul's Strategic Moves on Inter-Korean Relations

The North-South Korean summit that never materialized, though brokered by Jimmy Carter, could have brought about far-reaching consequences for North-South Korean relations. With the failed opportunity to realize rapprochement and peace through a North-South summit, the Seoul government has undertaken several policy initiatives of engaging North Korea in working toward improved inter-Korean relations. One was the commit-

ment to underwrite the bulk of expenses for the project of constructing two light-water reactors in North Korea, as part of the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, in exchange for North Korea's freezing of its nuclear weapons project.¹⁷ The other was Seoul's decision to offer 150,000 tons of rice (worth \$200 million) to help alleviate North Korea's food shortage following the 1995 floods that severely damaged crop land. This followed an agreement reached in Beijing, in June 1995, between two representatives of North and South Korea over rice aid to the North.

President Kim's strategy to bring about a breakthrough in inter-Korean relations, by offering rice to the North, unfortunately did not succeed. A South Korean ship transporting the rice was forced to hoist a North Korean national flag, which enraged the Seoul government. After the North apologized for its action, Seoul resumed the rice shipment. However, the inter-Korean exchange hit another snag after Pyongyang detained a South Korean sailor on spying charges, resulting in an indefinite postponement of inter-Korean dialogue. The dream of buying off North Korean policymakers with rice proved to be unrealistic.

In 1996 Pyongyang started raising tensions on the Korean peninsula by ordering its soldiers into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in an effort to nullify the Korean Armistice Agreement. North Korea's provocation in the DMZ made Seoul and Washington work out a new initiative which was aimed at establishing a peace regime on the Korean peninsula. The policy on four-party talks was unveiled during the Cheju Island summit on April 16 between President Clinton and President Kim. The plan calls for the involvement of North Korea, South Korea, the United States and China in the discussion regarding replacing the Korean Armistice Agreement. This joint proposal is meant to be a long-term initiative for the establishment of a peace structure on the Korean peninsula, not a short-lived overture even if Washington hinted that they can offer additional measures and the economic aid that Pyongyang will need.

The September 1996 North Korean submarine incursion into South Korea's east coast, however, dampened the progress of resuming inter-Korean dialogue and negotiation. Even the implementation activities of KEDO regarding the reactor construction were temporarily halted, although Seoul was considered unlikely to back away from its commitment to honor the terms of U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. Seoul insisted that Pyongyang should first apologize for sending a submarine into the South in flagrant violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement. When the crisis atmosphere died down, with the passage of time, there was hope that the unfortunate incident could somehow provide a useful occasion for resuming inter-Korean dialogue on the unification issue.¹⁸

South Korea's unification policy and strategy has been geared more toward accommodating crises and events rather than consistently upholding its set policy objectives and guidelines. With the remainder of his five-year term, President Kim's administration needs to implement its North Korea policy in a prudent and consistent manner, without succumbing to political temptation, such as responding to hardliner's pressures and manipulating it for domestic political purposes.

Conclusion

Since the end of the cold war in global politics, with the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the external environment surrounding the Korean peninsula has changed drastically but no measurable improvement has been registered to bring about the reunification of North and South Korea. That this potential and possibility for realizing Korean reunification are unmet is unfortunate from the standpoint of promoting peace and security on the Korean peninsula. This failure has less to do with the lack of desire and willingness on the part of the Korean people to reunify their divided country than with the failure by the political leaderships of the two Koreas to work out a specific and workable political settlement based on a compromise formula of give and take. The reality is that whereas the situation is favorable to the South, with the collapse of the communist bloc, it is unfavorable to the North. The South is more active and anxious in its desire to resume dialogue with the North while the latter is less secure and confident to do so psychologically, unless the situation improves politically in the days ahead.

The timing for resuming inter-Korean dialogue and negotiation, from the strategic point of view, has not been right for the North. The South must learn to be patient and more discrete with its policy toward the North. In diplomacy, there is time to act and there is time to wait. It will be a matter of time before the reunification issue is taken up as the mainstay of inter-Korean relations. Pyongyang considers that it is not the right time to resume dialogue and negotiation with Seoul. So long as the Pyongyang regime refuses to interact with the Seoul government, the South should not go out of its way to try to impress and appease the North. Instead, Seoul should learn to be more patient by making its intention and readiness to help the North clear.

So long as inter-Korean relations remain one of rivalry and confrontation, rather than of genuine rapprochement and cooperation, no prospect of restoring peace is likely to come about. The North Korean submarine intrusion into South Korea indicates a serious security problem and danger of renewed armed clashes. If war comes to Korea, it will be so because of inci-

dents like this getting out of hand. The unification policies of North and South Korea should be developed, in reaction not to crisis events but in accordance with upholding the basic principles of interest, philosophy, and values. Korea remains frozen in the cold war glacier, as it were, but the time will come when the climate changes. When the new season arrives, reunited Korea will come to play a constructive role so as to make contributions toward the larger community of nations, regionally and globally, instead of the two halves wrestling with each other on ideological grounds. For reunification to succeed, both halves must be convinced of strategic and direct advantages rather than domestic political benefits.

notes for chapter eleven

1. For the text of this agreement, see Young Whan Kihl, ed., *Korea and the World: Beyond the Cold War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994): pp. 343-346. Also, Kihl, "The Politics of Inter-Korean Relations: Coexistence or Reunification?" *Ibid.*, pp. 133-152.
2. Whereas the official policy line represents *kongsikjok ipjang* or *myongbun* in Korean, the strategy is the domain of *naebu jonryak* or *jinsim*. The former is the official and formal line, the latter is an unofficial and informal position. These are the Korean equivalency to the Japanese usage of the terms *tatema* and *honne*.
3. "Let Us Advance Vigorously in the New Year, Flying the Red Flag," the joint editorial of *Rodong Shinmun* (the organ of the ruling Workers' Party), *Choson Inmingun* (the People's Army), and *Rodong Chongnyon* (the Socialist Working Youth League), as reprinted in *Korea and World Affairs* vol. 20, no. 1 (Spring 1996): pp. 107-111.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
7. Whereas Seoul typically advocates dialogue first, followed by travels and contacts, Pyongyang has accentuated contact first, followed by travel or dialogue.
8. This analysis and interpretation of the 10-point platform is taken from Kihl, *Korea and the World*, pp. 148-149.
9. "DPRK President Proposes 10-Point Platform for Great Unity of Korean Nation," *Korean Report* [Tokyo], no. 272 (April 1993): pp. 1-6; also see *North Korea News* [Seoul], no. 679 (19 April 1993): pp. 1-2.
10. This reference does not appear in the English-language text of Kim Young Sam's inaugural address. See the text in *Korea Times*, 26 February 1993, p. 2, as reprinted in *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 1 (April 1992): pp. 141-145.
11. *Vantage Point* [Seoul], vol. 16, no. 4 (April 1993): p. 13.

12. Son Key-young, "Seoul's North Korea Policy in Disarray Amid Rosy Dream, Disenchantment," *Korea Times*, 29 October 1996, pp. 19, 22, 38.
13. Inaugural address of President Kim Young Sam. The text of his address appears in *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1993): pp. 141-145.
14. Kim Young Sam, "A New Diplomacy," (address before the Leaders Forum of the 26th PBEC International General Meeting, Seoul, 24 May 1993) appears in *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 2 (Summer 1993): pp. 343-347.
15. The text of President Kim Young Sam's address, on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of national liberation day, appears in *Korea and World Affairs* vol. 18, no. 3 (Fall 1994): pp. 568-572.
16. *T'ongil Paekso* 1994 (Unification White Paper 1994) (Seoul: ROK Ministry of National Unification, 1994): pp. 87-138.
17. Young Whan Kihl and Peter Hayes, eds., *Peace and Security in Northeast Asia: The Nuclear Issue and the Korean Peninsula* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).
18. The assumption here is that Pyongyang will acknowledge its error and give assurance that no armed provocation against the South will occur. On 29 December 1996, Pyongyang eventually issued a statement of regret over the submarine incident, thereby reducing tension on the Korean peninsula.

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With the guidance of a distinguished Editorial Advisory Board, we have selected eleven thoughtful and insightful papers for the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Korean Studies*. Papers were presented at the conference "The Two Koreas in World Affairs," sponsored by The Korea Society and the International Council on Korean Studies, in Washington, D.C. in November 1996.

It is our hope that the *Journal* will help readers to better understand Korean issues and broaden their knowledge base about the Korean peninsula. We expect scholars and specialists on Korean affairs will contribute articles and essays to future issues. We hope that the *International Journal of Korean Studies* can play a leading and valuable role in broadening insights and understanding of Korean affairs.

Ilpyong J. Kim
Donald P. Gregg

Editors-in-Chief

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