

The U.S. East Asia Strategy and the Korean Peninsula: Retooling Alliance, Asymmetry, and Balancing¹

Young Whan Kihl, Ph.D.
Iowa State University

A popular Korean saying right after World War II in 1945, as shown below, attests to the Korean people's generally distrustful sentiment toward outside powers. This sentiment of realism also seems to be reflected in both North and South Korea today.

Ssoryon saramege sokchimalko,
Miguk saram mitchimalla,
Ilpon saram ironani,
Choson saram chosimhara!
(Don't be deceived by the Soviets,
Don't count on the Americans,
The Japanese will rise again soon,
So, Koreans, look out for yourselves!)²

The current agenda of the "strained" U.S.-ROK Alliance and U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Standoff typify the status of the United States-Korea relations in 2006 and may share something in common with this deep-rooted nationalistic sentiment of the Korean people. The test-launching of missiles by North Korea on July 5, 2006, together with its underground nuclear testing on October 9, that led to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1695 and 1718 censuring of the North, may also contain an element of the nationalistic protest by the Kim Jong Il regime.³ Quoting a Japanese source C. Kenneth Quinones writes that it was no accident that North Korea chose July 4 (U.S. time) to test-fire its seven missiles, the American Independence Day as well as the 34th anniversary of the signing of the North-South Joint Communiqué in 1972.⁴ Both North and South Korea today are in search of an identity—both individual and collective (i.e., national)—as to who they are and how they, as divided halves of the Korean nation, can relate to each other through promoting.

The timing of nuclear test was also interpreted by some as the DPRK's act of defiance to mounting external pressures as

well as to rally domestic support and nationalist Korea today are in search of an identity --both individual and collective (i.e., national)--as to who they are and how they, as divided halves of the Korean nation, can relate to each other through promoting inter-Korean exchanges. North Korea, as the weaker state in the region, "catapulted itself as a primary driver of Northeast Asian geopolitics through its strategic use of nuclear brinkmanship diplomacy," while South Korea under the Roh Moo-hyun administration has adopted a policy of "peace and prosperity" toward North Korea.⁵

As a stronger and democratic state the South's ambition is to turn itself into a "Northeast Asian business hub" and promoting a "Northeast Asian Cooperative Initiative" thereby playing a "balancer role" in settling regional disputes and conflict in Northeast Asia. This process of searching for its self-identity will continue into the 21st century, and this is why inter-Korean relations and the possible reunification of Korea in the years ahead is regarded as important for the respective Korea and the major powers in the region.

In addressing the dynamics of U.S.-Korea relations in the 21st century, with its emerging challenges and future prospects, this article will proceed in four steps:

- first, clarifying George W. Bush's new security doctrines, in terms of the Bush administration 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) Reports;
- second, exploring U.S. grand strategy in East Asia as articulated by the Bush administration officials;
- third, addressing interactions between the United States and each of the two Koreas, in terms of what I will argue are the basis for triangulation and the asymmetric conflict that account for the security dynamics and dilemma on the Korean peninsula today, and;
- fourth, placing United States-Korea relations in perspective, with my own views on future prospects and likely scenario.

George W. Bush's New Security Doctrines (the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategy Reports)

The George W. Bush administration is required by the U.S. Congress to submit an annual National Security Strategy report, under the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. So far, the Bush Administration has submitted only two such reports, the first on September 17, 2002, and second on March 16, 2006.

President Bush's second term National Security Strategy explains how the U.S. is working to "protect the American people, advance American interests, enhance global security, and expand global liberty and prosperity."⁶ This strategy is said to be founded upon two pillars:

"The first pillar is promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies." The second pillar is "confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies." The more specific areas of concern identified are as follows and require particular attention:⁷

- Champion aspirations for human dignity
- Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends
- Work with others to defuse regional conflicts
- Prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade
- Expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy
- Develop an agenda for cooperative action with the other centers of global power
- Transform America's national security institutions to meet challenges and opportunities of the 21st century
- Engage the opportunities and confront the challenges of globalization.

This document sums up the Bush's second term administration strategy for protecting the United States and managing U.S. relations with other nations. It is an updated version of a report Bush issued in September 2002.

Some anti-Bush critiques find that "while the language in the 2006 version is less belligerent than the 2002 edition, the essence is the same" and that "the 2006 NSS glosses over the real issues, exaggerates successes, emphasizes the wrong priorities."⁸ In so far as the first and the second NSS report share something in common, we will need to turn to the discussion of the first document of September 2002.

The 31-page document of the first NSS report covers a far broader set of issues than the second. At its core, the Strategy calls for the United States to use its "unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" to establish "a balance of power that favors human freedom" and to defeat the threat posed by "terrorists and tyrants." Although the Strategy's overarching goals make sense, according to some analysts, its proposals for achieving them raise several important questions.⁹ First, the Strategy sets as a goal promoting global freedom but gives priority to a counterterrorism policy that relies heavily on the help of countries that in many cases do not share America's basic values. Second, the Strategy fails to recognize the limitations of preemption as a policy tool or to specify when it should be used. Third, the Strategy emphasizes ad-hoc coalitions to address threats to international security but underestimates the contribution that broad-based alliances and institutions make to furthering U.S. interest over the long term. Finally, the Strategy warns that failed states threaten American security, but proposes economic and political assistance programs ill-suited to alleviating the danger.¹⁰

Bush's three-pronged strategy of defending the peace, preserving the peace, and extending the peace, in the context of the post-9/11 terrorist attack one year earlier, was positively evaluated as a timely, laudable, ambitious, and effective countermeasure to defeat terrorism through preemption and coalition-building with like-minded allies. On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of 9/11 in 2006, President Bush told NBC's Today show, that his thinking about the world had changed

dramatically and realized that the United States “was involved in an ideological struggle similar to the Cold War” and “the way to defeat an ideology of hate is with liberty, and with an ideology of hope”. He said “people still want to come and kill us,” but the important thing is that Americans go on with their lives.¹¹

This recent statement is reminiscent of Bush’s 2002 NSS. It echoes the president’s speech at West Point on June 1, 2002, and sets out three tasks: “We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.” These three-fold policy goals are not new because they were also noted by other U.S. presidents at other times. The Clinton administration, for instance, also put forth as objectives in its December 1999 NSS: “To enhance America’s security; to bolster America’s economic prosperity; and to promote democracy and human rights abroad.” The differences are somewhat revealing, according to one perceptive analyst, in that “the Bush objectives speak of defending, preserving, and extending peace; the Clinton statement seems simply to assume peace. Bush calls for cooperation among great powers; Clinton never uses that term. Bush specifies the encouragement of free and open societies on every continent; Clinton contents himself with ‘promoting’ democracy and human rights ‘abroad.’” Bush’s NSS as the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis put it “comes across as more forceful, more carefully crafted, and—unexpectedly—more multilateral than its immediate predecessor.”¹²

Bush’s 2002 NSS is “candid” and “speaks plainly, at times eloquently, with no attempt to be polite or diplomatic or ‘nuanced’ (with the result that) what you hear and what you read is pretty much what you can expect to get.” For these reasons Bush’s “maintaining the moral high ground” and the doctrine of “preemption” in combating terrorism, with American hegemony, are likely to be subject to criticism by both foes and friends.

Despite these problems, Gaddis regards the Bush strategy to be “right on target with respect to the new circumstances confronting the United States and its allies in the wake of September 11.” It also has a tint of Wilsonian idealism that “the world must be made safe for democracy, because otherwise

democracy will not be safe in the world.” Bush’s NSS report could be, therefore, “the most important reformulation of U.S. grand strategy in over half a century,” since Harry Truman set America on its course in the Cold War, although admittedly the risks are great for the Bush doctrine to encounter unknowns with no guarantee of success, according to Gaddis.¹³

The Bush NSS, therefore, differs in several ways from its recent predecessors, according to Gaddis. First, it’s proactive, rejecting “the Clinton’s assumption that since the movement toward democracy and market economics had become irreversible in the post-Cold War era, all the United States had to do was ‘engage’ with the rest of the world to ‘enlarge’ those processes.” Second, its parts for the most part interconnect. Third, Bush’s analysis of “how hegemony works and what causes terrorism” is in tune with serious academic thinking. Fourth, the Bush administration “sees no contradiction between power and principle” thereby emerging as thoroughly Wilsonian. Finally, the new strategy is candid, in that this administration “speaks plainly, at times eloquently, with no attempt to be polite or diplomatic or ‘nuanced.’ What you hear and what you read is pretty much what you can expect to get.”¹⁴

This positive and laudatory assessment of the promise of Bush’s 2002 NSS was subject to a harsh criticism recently on the occasion of the publication of Bush’s 2006 NSS report. Bush’s desire “to be remembered as a president who left a lasting mark on U.S. foreign policy ... may have already denied him that legacy,” according to one critic, because of “his management style and policy choices—especially the invasion of Iraq.”¹⁵ Transformation implies a major alteration of U.S. grand strategy, more than ordinary adaptation, according to Joseph Nye. The 2006 NSS report “refers to democracy and freedom more than 200 times (three times as often as the 2002 document), downplays preventive war, and even includes a chapter on globalization... The shift has been more than rhetorical (because) Bush’s diplomacy toward North Korea and Iran has recently been much more multilateral than it was during his first term.”

In the early days of American history, U.S. grand strategy as Nye noted “was simple, and its means were mostly unilateral; avoid entanglement in the European balance of power, dominate

the Western Hemisphere, and keep an open door for trade in Asia.” With the twentieth century dawning, “the industrial power of the United States overtook that of Germany and the United Kingdom,” bringing the New World nearer to the Old through the efficiency of the transportation revolution. Information technology revolution in the twenty-first century will also accelerate the process of socio-economic changes, with an impetus for revamping new foreign policy and security strategy for the United States.

“Successful transformations have been rare in the history of U.S. grand strategy,” as Nye argues, and “George W. Bush began his presidency as a traditional realist with little interest in foreign policy; his ambitions to transform U.S. grand strategy developed only after 9/11.” “To make terrorism obsolete by spreading democracy everywhere” is uncertain because “(O)verall, the similarities between Bush and Wilson are uncanny,” at best. “Both highly religious and moralistic men, they were both elected president initially without a majority of the popular vote. Bush portrays the world in black and white rather than shades of grey; so did Wilson.”

“Bush was successful in Congress at first with his transformational domestic agenda and paid little heed to foreign policy until a crisis struck; it was the same with Wilson. Bush has proposed the promotion of democracy and freedom abroad as the central feature of his foreign policy vision, as did Wilson....Bush defined a vision that failed to balance ideals with national capacities; Wilson made the same miscalculation. Both, moreover, failed to manage information flows in their administration.” In the light of these seeming similarities, “Bush’s legacy now depends largely on the still uncertain outcome of the preventive war he launched in Iraq” and, as Nye concludes, “His case remains open, but the odds are against him and he is running out of time.”¹⁶

U.S. Grand Strategy in East Asia

A grand strategy represents a road map that delineates a nation’s most important foreign policy goals and the most effective instruments and policies for achieving these goals. It should contain a vision for the country’s role in the world based

in part on its domestic needs and in part on the international challenges the country faces. It thus establishes priorities and gives focus to an otherwise volatile foreign policymaking process that can be driven by national mood swings and the media effect. Out of the national trauma of 9/11 has emerged a new grand strategy for American foreign policy, which is comparable in scope and scale to the strategy of containment that guided U.S. foreign policy for much of the Cold War era. This grand strategy is called “muscular dominance” by one observer and considered as heralding an age of American primacy or dominance by others.¹⁷ Championed by neo-conservatives in and around the Bush administration, this grand strategy also won the acceptance of neo-liberal hawks in the Democratic Party as well, at least soon after the 9/11.

The on-going wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the U.S. occupation of Iraq, together with the unfolding drama over the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea, may eventually force a rethinking of the emerging strategy. Yet, there was more than a tentative bipartisan consensus which has now broken down in the aftermath of the November 2006 congressional elections. Schwenninger identified three fundamental tenets of American foreign policy in this regard.¹⁸

First, terrorism and rogue states, especially those seeking weapons of mass destruction, constitute the greatest threat and challenge to American well-being and world order. These unconventional threats require going beyond our traditional reliance on deterrence and containment, and may in some cases warrant preventive military action, as in the case of Iraq. Second, the Middle East has replaced Europe and East Asia as the fulcrum of geopolitics, the zone wherein the shape of world order will be forged. Remaking the Middle East, above all by bringing democracy to the Arab and Islamic nations of the region, therefore, will be America’s overriding mission, because it is only by remaking these societies that the United States can remain secure. Third, the United States must remain the world’s dominant military and economic power, not only to discourage the emergence of other rival powers but to maintain world order. In a unipolar world defined by American supremacy, the United

States will have the flexibility to work through ad hoc coalitions and the freedom to use international institutions as it sees fit.

Despite the occasional excesses carried out in its name, one can argue that the post-WWII grand strategy of containment on balance served America and the world well. It helped build a community of democratic nations, provided a framework for common security, and established the political and diplomatic underpinnings for a world economy that spread middle-class prosperity to North America, Europe, and parts of East Asia. But the same positive attributes are absent from Bush's muscular dominance, for it threatens to divide the U.S. from the rest of the world, insert America more deeply into an Islamic civil war, and exhaust the United States politically and economically, all the while distracting America from ensuring the economic foundation of the world order.

Security problems today arise from the disorder and violence that accompanies failed states and failed development, and from unsettled nationalist and separatist struggles. U.S. military power is largely irrelevant to most of these problems. The picture in East Asia, however, is more complex in that the American military presence there has added a dimension of security reassurance for China, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea that still gives the United States leverage in that region. But even in East Asia, there is a growing sense that the United States may no longer be the stabilizing force it once was. China has abandoned its previously confrontational posture toward many of its neighbors, particularly over its territorial claims in the South China Sea (except toward Taiwan), and has generally assumed a more responsible role in the region. Yet, America's Asia strategy is increasingly all about China. The United States is fixated on China's emergence as a peer competitor, and seeks to maintain the current balance of power in East Asia in its favor.

As the U.S. will not be able to balance China alone into the future, it will need allies. The visit of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Australia in March 2006, and its trilateral security talks involving Australia, Japan and the U.S., for instance, represents an opportunity for America to press home its claims on its closest allies in the region. U.S. policy has consistently been to try and cement the third side of the triangle

between Australia and Japan, with China's rise adding a new urgency to this approach. Japan has previously been a reluctant party to these three-way arrangements. It will be interesting to see how receptive it will be this time.¹⁹

China's emergence as a regional great power is triggering the old Cold War reflex of containment. Australia and Japan represent the southern and northern anchors of a U.S. containment policy against China. Such a charge is strongly denied by both Australian and U.S. governments. The Americans prefer the rather more euphemistic terminology of "ensuring that China does not become a negative force in the region." Containment explains the gradual net of encirclement being put into place by the Bush administration around China, the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance, the overtures to Mongolia, and President Bush's visit to India with the offer of civilian nuclear technology transfers. The U.S. geo-strategic approach exploits the distinct deterioration in relations between China and Japan, and India's long-standing rivalry with China.

While containment has found fertile ground in India and Japan, it has encountered rather more barren ground in South Korea. It is abundantly clear that there will be no East Asian NATO. South Korea is a "swing" state that is increasingly coming under China's influence. Despite their alliance with Americans, the South Koreans want a neutral stance between the U.S. and China, and are resisting any establishment of their military forces in a possible future conflict with China.²⁰ This explains partly why the Roh Moo Hyun administration's "peace and prosperity" policy toward North Korea is in conflict with the Bush administration's hard-line stance toward North Korea that pursues the acquisition of the WMD capabilities.

Over the longer term, America has no choice but to make room for China, and the biggest challenge for the region will be to ensure that this process is peaceful. This is why the Bush administration is promoting an East Asian strategy under "three basic insights which, according to the White House National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, are maintaining ties with "traditional" allies like Japan and South Korea, working with "partners" to deal with regional and global issues, and

encouraging China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system.²¹

First, “our most important relations in the region are with our traditional allies, nations that share the values of democracy and freedom,” Hadley said, calling them the “cornerstone of our approach to the region.” Against this backdrop, he said the United States has worked to resolve some “longstanding irritants in our relations with Japan and South Korea,” referring to the relocation and realignment of the U.S. military presence there. Washington has also strengthened its ties with “key allies and friends, Mongolia in Northeast Asia, and Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand in Southeast Asia.”

Second, “we are working with our partners in East Asia,” he said, “to develop cooperative and creative approaches to regional and global challenges.” Hadley referred to such cases as cooperation on the global war on terrorism, the 2004 tsunami relief works, and Asia-Pacific partnership on clean development (sic) and climate change. While cementing relations with those allies and partners in the region, Hadley said thirdly the United States is dealing with China under a “policy that reflects the complexity of our relationship.” “We welcome the rise of a China that is responsible stakeholder in the international system, a China that cooperates with us to address common changes and mutual interests,” he said.

On the positive side, Hadley said the United States has supported China’s accession to the World Trade Organization, encouraged it to use its influence through the six-party talks to help denuclearize the Korean peninsula and included it in the U.S. efforts to expand energy sources, such as clean coal, nuclear power and hydrogen fuel cells. But Hadley said, “We have made clear to Chinese leaders . . . that they must change policies that exacerbate tensions in East Asia and the world, such as their nontransparent military expansion, their quest to lock up energy supplies rather than participate in energy markets, and their support of resource-rich countries with poor records of democracy and human rights.”

Hadley said the United States expects China to “move from a half-reformed economy to a more fully marketized system, by opening China’s markets to U.S. goods and respecting

intellectual property rights, and moving toward a flexible, market based currency.” “China should also match its expansion of economic freedom with an expansion of political freedom for the Chinese people,” he said, noting that Chinese leaders “need to see that they cannot let their population increasingly experience the freedom to buy, sell and produce, while denying them the right to assemble, speak and worship.”

Noting that North Korea and Myanmar “have not even begun the journey along freedom’s path,” Hadley noted, “Our approach to this emerging Asia is to promote political and economic freedom in all nations. We have resisted the temptation of crude balance-of-power politics, seeking to play India off against China, for example both these nations need to be constructive players to the international system, and the United States can and should have constructive relations with each.”²²

Finally, as regards to the future options for the United States, the central aim of American grand strategy in foreign policy should be to preserve its current position of American primacy for as long as possible. To achieve this strategic goal, American leaders, first of all, “should “take care not to squander the nation’s power unnecessarily (by fighting unnecessary wars, for example) or mismanage its economy in ways that undermine its long-term vitality.” Second, the United States “should avoid giving other states additional incentives to build up their own power—either by acquiring new capabilities of their own or by joining forces with others—and should encourage them to rely on America’s help when security problems arise in their own regions.” This will mean, according to Stephen M. Walt, that “we want to discourage balancing against the United States, and encouraging regional balancing with us.”²³

This strategy of encouraging regional balancing with the United States, however, does not always work out as well as expected because, as I have written elsewhere, North Korea with its nuclear ambition has worked to promote its own strategy of balancing against the United States, rather than choosing to bandwagon with the United States, as the literature on the International Relations theory has predicted regarding the

foreign policy action and behavior of small powers and weak states vis-à-vis great powers.²⁴

The United States and the Two Koreas

In a recently published book, *A Troubled Peace*, Chae-Jin Lee explains the continuously changing nature of U.S.-Korea relations, by discussing U.S. goals for the two Koreas, the ways in which those goals have been articulated, and the methods used to implement them.²⁵ Quoting from George F. Kennan and others, Lee characterizes U.S.-Korea relations as having gone through and been subjected by the “law of change” and the vagaries of fluidity. “Friendship, enmity, antagonism, injury, intervention, recalcitrance, evil, common interest, and even the ‘soul of goodness’ have all been part of America’s complicated interactions with South Korea and North Korea.”²⁶ The summit talks between U.S. President George W. Bush and South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun in the White House Oval Office, on September 14, 2006, illustrated the difficulties of policy coordination between the two close allies on “Nuclear” North Korea, because of what I would call the security dynamics of the U.S. role in inter-Korean relations. These dynamics can be explained by the logic of triangulation and asymmetric conflict.²⁷

With the test firing of seven missiles, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il seems to have abandoned his soft-balancing strategy of diplomacy in favor of hard-balancing of nuclear deterrence against the U.S. and Japan. For the time being the multilateral diplomacy of the Six-Party Talks will be not only be stalemated but hopelessly deadlocked beyond the benchmark September 19, 2005 agreement on the principles. The North’s act of provocation, which amounted to “a meaningless, attention-grabbing temper tantrum by the North Koreans,” was met by international outcry including the UNSC’s unanimously adopted resolution censoring the North’s act of provocation.²⁸

Whereas the Bush administration is “determined to squeeze North Korea with every financial sanction possible until it gives up its nuclear capacity and other illicit activities,” the Roh government insists that “the only course is to coax the country out of its isolation”²⁹ Each of the two agendas will be singled out for further analysis and illustration here: (1) the U.S.-ROK

“strained” alliance; and (2) the U.S.-DPRK nuclear standoff with the “stalemated” Six Party Talks. The logic of triangulation and asymmetric conflict, this article argues, will better explain the dynamic nature of the security dilemma confronting United States policy toward the two Koreas.³⁰

U.S.-ROK Alliance as “Stabilizer” in East Asia?

Prior to the emergence of the ROK Roh Moo-Hyun administration in 2003, the U.S.-South Korea military alliance and diplomatic relations had been steady and highly acclaimed as one of the most successful and enduring relationships in the Pacific. As such, the alliance had acted as regional “stabilizer” in Northeast Asia over the years, especially during the Cold War and thereafter. However, the rise of Roh as the new president, and a younger generation of leadership in South Korea, led to differing perceptions and perspectives on the Korean Peninsula security issues with regard to the North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and the values of continuously sustaining an alliance relationship with the United States.

Roh’s policies have often been openly critical of the United States, reflecting a “left of center” view of its domestic and foreign policy as epitomized by the National Security Strategy released in March 2004, with two key issues: (1) reconciliation with the North; and, (2) Self-reliance national defense. Roh also revealed in March 2005 what some have called the “Roh Doctrine,” calling for a new role in the geopolitical future of South Korea as a “balancer” in Northeast Asia.

This suggested that Seoul would neither be locked into the “U.S.-Japan” camp or the “northern alliance” of North Korea, Russia, and China. It involved the ROK distancing itself, if necessary, from the security alliance with the United States which had been the basis of its own survival for over five decades.³¹ This prompted US Congress Congressman Henry Hyde, then Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, to comment on March 10, 2005: “If you need our help, please tell us clearly who your enemy is.”

Reassurance and Restoring the “Strained Alliance”: For the purpose of revamping and repairing the alliance ties currently under stress between Seoul and Washington, it is useful to revisit

the literature on the theory of alliances and historical episodes elsewhere on the success and failure of security alliances.

What is an alliance? An alliance is a military, diplomatic and security concept. It attempts to define the nature and status of official relations between two or more sovereign states and is based on a set of treaties entered into by governments of the states. Students of alliances research generally address the purposes, types, and characteristics of military alliances. The primary aim is to provide mutual security and common defense to the alliance partners in case one or more are attacked by an enemy.

The purpose of alliances and their actual performance may differ, of course, as is shown by the ROK-US alliance today. The key to the success of an alliance is “shared interests” and “willingness to share defense burdens.” Alliances can be bilateral or multilateral (like NATO) and need not be between equals. The US-ROK alliance, like the US-Japan alliance, is one between un-equals and, as such, it is for the U.S. to provide asymmetric security like a “nuclear umbrella” as happened during the Cold War era. This is called an “asymmetric” alliance relationship.

“Strategic flexibility” is nothing new. An argument is made by the proponent of revamping the U.S. alliance that the time is now ripe for the Roh Government to recover its wartime operational control of the ROK forces from the U.S. This will amount to abolishing the U.S.-led Combined Forces Command. The Bush Administration’s Global Posture Review is aimed at reorganizing American troops worldwide to better deal with new security threats, such as terrorism, but the Roh administration is afraid that the so-called strategic flexibility doctrine may adversely affect South Korea’s national interest, on the ground that it may become entangled in a future regional conflict, like the Taiwan Strait dispute, against its will.

However, a U.S. plan to grant “strategic flexibility” to its troops in South Korea is not a recently reformulated strategy. Top American officials, for instance, proposed transforming the fixed forces into mobile, expeditionary forces as early as the 1970s, as newly declassified South Korean documents recently showed.³² The U.S. Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger

developed a report in 1975, in which he suggested the U.S. use its troops in South Korea as “mobile reserve forces” for the Asia-Pacific region. He also proposed using its military bases in South Korea as a strategic point in East Asia to help Washington cope with potential regional adversaries and maintain a regional power balance.

The 2nd U.S. Infantry Division, placed within the range of North Korean artillery pieces, has been the backbone of the U.S. security commitment of the Korean Peninsula, as its forward deployment has guaranteed automatic U.S. involvement. This “tripwire” role is no longer the case, as the U.S. announced in 2003 that it would reposition the infantry division to Pyongtaek, south of Seoul, and 3,600 troops were transferred to Iraq in 2004. Some South Koreans have raised concerns recently that the U.S. plan might drag South Korea into an unwanted regional conflict.³³

The U.S.-DPRK Nuclear Standoff with the Stalemated Six Party Talks

The Missile Launching Controversy: The firing of the Taepodong-2 long-range missile was much anticipated after the first launching over Japan of the Taepodong-1 missile on August 31, 1998. The only surprise was the timing. North Korea, in fact, has test-fired a number of short-range Ro-dong missiles as well as anti-ship missiles along with the most recent one tested in March 2006. Moreover, there was no prior agreement on North Korea’s long-range missile firing. The U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks were held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2000, following the then-U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s visit to Pyongyang in September/October 2000, so as to explore the possibilities of a state visit by then-U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In 2001 North Korea announced a self-imposed moratorium, which it has now broken, on the Taepodong-2 test firing, and the DPRK never joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) that the U.S. maintained together with other interested parties. Nevertheless, North Korea’s missile firing generated immediate reactions from abroad. Apart from the UNSC adoption of the Resolution censoring the North’s provocation, Japan’s Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzo (now Prime Minister),

announced, on behalf of Prime Minister Koizumi Jinichiro, plans to put Japan's Self-Defense Forces on alert and stated that Japan might have to resort to force, if necessary, to respond to Pyongyang's provocative act.

South Korea's response was much more deliberate and low keyed. The official response was delayed for several days. Even the public response in Seoul was muted with defused protests on several national issues, including a mass demonstration against the U.S.-ROK Free Trade Agreement negotiations under way in Seoul. The immediate casualty was the suspension of inter-Korean dialogue at the government level between Seoul and Pyongyang, with an aborted meeting of the 19th Inter-Korean cabinet level talks to discuss North Korea's request for South Korean delivery of rice and fertilizer to the North, scheduled in Busan on July 12-14, more than a week after the missile launching. The South Korean chief delegate, Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok, was correct in asking for clarification on North Korea's missile test-firing and for Pyongyang's promise to return to the Six-Party Talks as the condition for its delivery of the promised rice and fertilizer. The North Korean chief delegate insisted that these were separate matters and that Seoul was expected to deliver the humanitarian relief to the North. Out of anger, the North Korean delegation left the conference one day earlier than expected.

The Kim Jong Il regime is prepared to wait for the next U.S. Administration to be elected in November 2008, if necessary, before settling issues associated with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), consisting of the nuclear, biological and chemical, as well as missile launching proliferation issues. The record shows that on multilateral diplomatic process of defusing the North Korean nuclear issue, hosted by Beijing and known as the Six-Party Talks, Pyongyang delayed their progress until the fall of 2005, well after the November 2004 congressional and presidential elections and the launching of the second George W. Bush Administration.

It is relevant to underscore the urgency of diplomatic settlement in the unfolding security crisis, as Henry A. Kissinger noted in his article to the *Washington Post*, on May 16, 2006, entitled "A Nuclear Test for Diplomacy." "An indefinite

continuation of the stalemate would amount to a de facto acquiescence by the international community in letting new entrants into the nuclear club." Under this circumstance "(F)ocusing on regime change as the road to denuclearization confuses the issue" and "(D)iplomacy needs a new impetus," as Kissinger insisted.³⁴

The author agrees that "Progress [on Korea] requires agreement regarding the political evaluation of the Korean Peninsula and of Northeast Asia" in general. This may require "A new approach on North Korea" like negotiating "a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula" and on exploring new "ways and means for promoting security cooperation in Northeast Asia."³⁵ Such a policy commitment is already on record in the Six-Party Talks Joint Statement of the Fourth Round, on September 19, 2005, to be noted below. The future challenge lies in moving this policy process into action. However, that will become increasingly difficult and controversial in the absence of mutual trust and confidence-building measures.

Despite a series of diplomatic moves and actions against the North Korean launching of missiles, first by the United Nations Security Council's unanimous adoption of the Japan sponsored resolution on July 15, followed by the Group of Eight (G-8) Economic Summit statement of July 17, and the ASEAN Regional Forum chairman's statement of July 28, Pyongyang has consistently resisted external pressures for returning to the Six-Party Talks forum for peaceful negotiation and settlement of the nuclear and other related issues.

The Six-Party Talks Deadlocked: The Six-Party Talks forum has proven, so far, to be rather limited as a diplomatic means to settle the politically charged and salient issue of the nuclear weapons proliferation in regional and global politics. Like all diplomatic moves, it is a means to an end rather than an end itself. This suggests that there is a limit to diplomacy and to such a multilateral diplomatic forum as the Six-Party Talks as an effective approach to problem solving. A bi-multilateral approach (i.e., 2 + 4) to defusing the North Korean nuclear crisis has proven to be limited as a working peace strategy for defusing the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula.³⁶

What is the proper role of China as a host to the Six Party Talks? Can China play a constructive role for providing not only good offices but also either arbitrating or mediating the disputes, thereby helping to defuse the U.S.-DPRK nuclear standoff? It turned out that China was more than an arbitrator in addressing and mediating the conflict issues. There was a glimpse of hopeful signs, for instance, during the Fourth Round of the Six-Party talks, when China came forward with a compromise plan for breaking the deadlock by producing a draft of the agreement for the solution of the nuclear disputes. Until mid-September 2005, Pyongyang had continuously boycotted and sabotaged the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, but the delegates from North Korea as well as from the U.S., Russia, Japan and South Korea were pressured by the Chinese delegation which came forward with a draft resolution for deliberation in the form of the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six Party Talks on September 19, 2005. This six-point statement was based on the draft prepared by China's chief negotiator and Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei. In view of its importance, the content of this 6-point agreement will need to be spelled out.

The Six Parties agreed to (1) re-affirm the goal of attaining the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner; (2) undertake, in their relations, to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recognized norms of international relations; (3) promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment, bilaterally and/or multilaterally; (4) commit to joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in Northeast Asia; (5) take coordinated steps to implement the afore-mentioned consensus in a phased manner in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action;" and, (6) hold the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks in Beijing in early November 2005, at a date to be determined through consultations.

It is one thing to come to agree on a set of principles. However, unless it is put into effect as a set of meaningful actions, the agreement will remain as empty talk. The Six Party Talks will need to be followed up by holding the subsequent rounds of talks focused on setting up an implementation plan. Except for a brief meeting of the Fifth Round, on November 9-

10, 2005, Pyongyang has refused to attend the talks by setting a prior condition for the U.S. The Bush Administration has, in turn, chosen to impose financial sanctions against North Korea on the charge of an alleged counterfeiting of U.S. dollars (i.e., super notes) and money laundering by the Kim Jong Il regime.³⁷

The Logic of Asymmetric Conflict and Security Dilemma

An ambitious North Korea under Kim Jong Il as its leader has pursued the high-risk and high-stake policy of developing a nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence strategy. It is playing the classic tit-for-tat game of nuclear brinkmanship with the U.S. as the surviving superpower, in order to compensate for its weakness through the dangerous firing of nuclear weapons. It is in order to overcome the security dilemma that North Korea deliberately chose to play the brinkmanship strategy and thereby to raise the security challenge on the Korean peninsula. What are the policy implications and what lessons can be drawn from the unfolding drama of the North Korean nuclear brinkmanship strategy and the "war and peace" issue on the Korea Peninsula?

A Symmetric Conflict Strategy: What makes the North Korean case interesting and important is that Kim's North Korea, as a weak state, confronts the overwhelming power of the United States as a hegemonic state. Kim's North Korea relies on new form of asymmetric strategy vis-à-vis the United States through internal balancing of its military power. As an isolated country, Kim's North Korea is no longer capable of forming alliances with others through external balancing. By mobilizing its own internal resources, however limited they are, Kim's North Korea confronts the United States by employing a strategy of internal balancing.³⁸

The internal balancing strategy of North Korea is based on three broad options. First is the conventional warfare capability of exploiting the "contested zone" of the Korean Peninsula across the DMZ by the threat of launching a conventional military attack. Second is developing and acquiring the WMD capability that, through deterrence, would make it difficult-to-impossible for the United States to use its superior conventional forces against them. Third is the weapons sale or technology

transfer of the WMD capability to other countries or to a terrorist group with no obvious “return address.”³⁹

Depending on how the current nuclear controversy is addressed and managed, there exists a distinct possibility of the worst-case scenario of a nuclear-armed North Korea becoming a reality.⁴⁰ The danger exists for North Korea’s overblown rhetoric of threat and retaliation coming true as a “self-fulfilling prophesy.” Likewise, the new national security strategy of preemption by the Bush administration, proclaimed in order to defeat global terrorism in the post–September 11, 2001 security environment, may be invoked, although the Bush strategy may be ill suited to the Korean security. After Iraq North Korea may be the next target; at least that is what Pyongyang believes.⁴¹

The literal application of the Bush strategy to North Korea, invoking the doctrine of preemptive war, may end up with greater tragedy of leading to another Korean War. The price of the regime change that results from the war may be too high and costly when directed to the belligerent and bellicose North Korean regime of Kim Jong-Il. An outbreak in another Korean War will need to be avoided by all means; it will not only undermine the economic foundation, but also destroy the fragile peace sustaining the burgeoning political and civil societies of South Korea’s new democracy.

“Avoiding the apocalypse” in the Korea Peninsula will require the United States and its allies to take deliberations on the Korean security head on with renewed seriousness.⁴² This will require upgrading their policy debate over “nuclear North Korea” to a higher level of scholarship and practical strategies that confront the “war and peace” issues head on. The U.S. policy toward North and South Korea, for instance, has suffered from the past practice of treating Korea as “ad hoc, reactive, and derivative of the alliance with Japan.”⁴³ But the U.S. policy to confront “nuclear North Korea” must go beyond this practice of treating Korea policy as an appendage.

Korea’s Security Dilemma: The security dynamics of the Korea Peninsula are a classic case of a security dilemma arising from the situation of an “anarchic” structure of international politics. Under anarchy, independent action taken by one state (in this case the DPRK) to increase its security is taken by the

United States and its allies of South Korea and Japan feel less secure. The nuclear standoff as a security dilemma is a specific type of Prisoner’s Dilemma game, where cooperation between North Korea and the United States—with its allies—is difficult because of the possibility of defection and cheating in the absence of mutual trust. Does this mean that there is no hope and possibility of achieving cooperation under anarchy?

According to Robert M. Axelrod’s 1984 study, there are three ways of overcoming the security dilemma. The first is by promoting “the mutuality of interests,” that is, the extent to which each actor (in a Prisoner’s Dilemma situation) can achieve its own interest by acting cooperatively rather than competitively. The second is by lengthening “the shadow of the future,” that is, the extent to which actors value future payoffs from further interactions. The third is by limiting “the number of players,” that is, cooperation becoming more difficult as the number of players increases.⁴⁴ That the United States chose to involve other actors in the nuclear talks, under the umbrella of the six-party Beijing talks, may make the situation more complex and complicated rather than confronting North Korea face to face.

Does this mean that future war is unavoidable and inevitable on the Korea Peninsula? The answer is “not quite,” because it all depends on what the United States and its allies are prepared to do next. The only way to avoid war and conflict on the nuclear standoff, again as Axelrod argues, seems to be by “lengthening the shadow of the future.” A U.S.–North Korean dialogue and negotiations over the nuclear issue, or lack of them, reflect what may be called a “tit-for-tat” game, which is usually played by states that are perceived as distrustful: “If you cheat, I will do likewise” and “I will do to you what you did to me.” This strategy works, however, only if there is a long shadow of the future.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, with the continued stalemate and brinkmanship, this shadow is rapidly dwindling and, with it, the narrowing funnel of choices and the loss of the degree of freedom in foreign policy decision making.⁴⁶

The U.S.–South Korean alliance cannot be taken for granted any more but will require constant vigilance and nurturing. The sequence of unfortunate developments, starting with a fatal traffic accident involving a U.S. military vehicle running over

two school girls in 2002, led to “anti-American” sentiment and subsequent street demonstrations getting out of hand, with the burning of the American flags. These were heavily covered by the media. This episode, combined with U.S.-ROK divided opinion on the best policy toward North Korea, helped an unconventional politician, Roh Moo-Hyun, win his presidential bid over a “pro-American” candidate in the 2002 December presidential election.

Perspectives and Future Prospects

Current policy disputes and the agenda of the U.S.-ROK “strained” alliances, and the U.S.-DPRK nuclear standoff with the Six Party talks deadlocked, may be placed in their proper perspectives. United States policy options for the 21st century will reflect the possible scenarios of unfolding global and regional security environments that will come to shape and constrain the future directions of American primacy, with a more refined and reconfigured vision of the U.S. national interests.

Historical Context: In charting the future course of U.S.-Korea relations in the 21st century, it makes sense to acquire a historical perspective on the origin of the relationship, of which the U.S.-ROK alliance today is part and parcel. The 1882 Treaty of Amity, Navigation, and Commerce, signed between the United States and the Kingdom of Korea, preceded the 1954 signing of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Security Pact. The latter followed the conclusion of the unfortunate Korean War (1950-53) triggered by the Northern invasion of the South on June 25, 1950, and the US-led UN police action to repel North Korean aggression.

Academic symposia were held in Washington, D.C. to commemorate not only the centennial of the opening of the U.S.-Korea relations, in 1982, but also the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, in 2000. The bilateral relationship between the U.S. and the ROK has not always been smooth nor successful, but in this age of global commerce and complex interdependence, both countries have decided to remain as reasonably close allies rather than as sworn enemies, as in the case of North Korea with its isolationist and xenophobic impulse.

The on-going U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement talks seem to be right on target for both alliance partners to become engaged economically for the sake of future relationship.

This writer remembers visiting, back in June 1981, the DPRK Museum of the Korean Revolution in Pyongyang (together with some of academic colleagues elsewhere in the U.S.). At that time the North Korean propaganda displays and claims caught our eyes in that the “Great Leader” Kim Il Sung’s great grand father was alleged somehow to have been involved in the “patriotic act of setting *The General Sherman* (a U.S. trading vessel) on fire” in 1866 on the Taedong River. This site was not too far away from the village where Kim Il Sung was born. This episode led to American expeditions in 1871 to occupy briefly a fort of the Kangwha Island. Eventually, the 1876 Kangwha Treaty, which led to an open door policy, was dictated by Imperial Japan’s gunboat diplomacy. The foreign relations of old Korea were placed on an even keel, however, by the signing of the U.S. Korea Treaty of Amity, Navigation, and Commerce in 1882.

U.S.-Korea Relations: Continuity and Change

The United States and Korea have come a long way through various tribulations, since an official relationship was established in 1882 to the present, when the current “strained” U.S.-ROK alliance can be placed in its proper historical context. The first encounter of rescuing the crew of an American whaling ship, *The Two Brothers*, in July 1855, and an American schooner *The Surprise*, in June 1866, was a happy one of rescuing foreigners in distress with humanitarian assistance, but this was followed by unfortunate skirmishes in 1866 and 1871 on Kangwha Island over the misfortune of an American merchant ship, *The General Sherman* in 1866, which was set on fire by the locals as it sailed down Taedong River near Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea today.⁴⁷

Following WWII in 1945, as Korea was liberated by the Allied Forces from Japan’s 35 years colonial rule, the relationship has gone through ups and downs, with the initial division of the land, military occupation, the founding of two separate Korean regimes, the Korean War years, and the postwar

reconstruction period. Over six decades, U.S.-ROK relations have moved from a patron-client relationship into a “normal” and “mature” interdependent partnership, although U.S.-DPRK relations remain locked in a state of “rhetorical hostility and diplomatic stalemate,” with the current nuclear standoff in their mutual relationship.⁴⁸ America’s two Korea policy has continued and is expected to remain as such for a while into the 21st century unless and until the two Koreas are reunified as a result of the regime change in either one or more particularly in the northern half of divided Korea.

Under these circumstance the recently-concluded U.S.-ROK summit talks between U.S. President George W. Bush and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun, the sixth since 2003, may suggest some important benchmarks that, if realized, would shape the contours of U.S.-Korea relations in the immediate future. The main agreements between the two leaders in their policy consultation, made on September 14, 2006, boil down to the following three points.

First is the agreement, in principle, on the U.S. handover of wartime operational control of Korean troops to South Korea, as requested by Seoul, subject to the details to be worked out by the scheduled U.S. ROK Security Consultative Meeting in October. Nonetheless, this was the “death knell” for Combined Forces Command, which has played a central role in deterring war on the Korean Peninsula. Second is the agreement to seek “joint measures” to resume Six-Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear program, which have been stalled for almost a year. Senior officials will discuss measures to be taken, with additional coordination efforts and necessary steps, although no details were revealed. Third is the pledge made by both presidents to work harder to conclude the on-going U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement negotiations before the end of 2006. The signing of this historical FTA between Seoul and Washington, sometime in 2007, is expected to strengthen bilateral ties and economic relations between the two Pacific alliance partners. Washington has been working on possible sanctions against North Korea, to implement the UN Security Council Resolution on North Korea’s July 5 missile launching, but agreed to delay announcing any such measures against the North until after the U.S.-ROK

summit which turned out to be a one-hour business meeting in President Bush’s office on September 14, 2006.

U.S. Offshore Balancing beyond the Iraq War?

The central aim of the American grand strategy in foreign policy is likely to be preserving the current position of America’s primacy for as long as possible. To do so, America, as an astute observer has recently noted, must not “squander the nation’s power unnecessarily” by fighting unnecessary wars, or mismanaging its economy, discouraging other countries from balancing against the United States, and encouraging regional balancing with the United States.⁴⁹ One way to achieve this aim of America’s primacy is the strategy of “off shore balancing.” By setting clear priorities and emphasizing reliance on regional allies, this strategy reduces the danger of America’s being drawn into unnecessary conflicts and encourages other states to do more for America. This strategy also takes advantage of America’s favorable geopolitical position and exploits the tendency for regional powers to worry more about each other than about the United States.⁵⁰

Implementing this strategy requires two sets of recommended measures for U.S. foreign policy makers, according to Stephan Walt. First, the United States should use military force with forbearance, asking questions first and shooting later. This may mean that the United States would do well to abandon the doctrine of “preemption” which is based on the notion that “preventive war might be needed to keep ‘rogue states’ from obtaining WMDs.” This is based on the fear that such regimes would give them to anti-American terrorists and thus expose the United States to the threat of surprise attack. Yet, the danger that rogue regimes will give WMDs away, according to Walt, is extremely remote. And this has implications for the on-going U.S.-DPRK nuclear standoff.

Second, the United States should strive to reassure its allies that it will use force with wisdom and restraint. In particular, the U.S. can reduce the fears created by its overwhelming power by giving other states a voice in the circumstances in which it will use force. For the foreseeable future, the United States must think of this sort of “reassurance” as a continuous policy

problem and process, as the Bush-Roh summit talks and the agreement of September 14, 2006, seems to have demonstrated. The United States would maintain a significant military presence in Asia, primarily air and naval forces, and continue to build cooperative security partnerships with its current allies.

As regards the security dilemmas of the U.S.-North Korea and U.S.-Iran nuclear controversies, the U.S. off-shore balancing strategy will demand that the United States give strong incentives to these rogue regimes to abandon their nuclear weapons programs, by taking concrete steps to improve the the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) as a global regime against the spread of nuclear arms. These will entail, in particular, the United States (1) pressing for the revision of Article IV of the NPT, which currently gives all signatories access to the full nuclear fuel cycle; (2) supporting an even more ambitious “proliferation-security initiative” to intercept illegal shipments of nuclear materials and missile technology; and, (3) making a coordinated, multilateral effort by persuading proliferators to abandon their nuclear ambitions.

This proposal is not a form of appeasement but a measure of protecting America’s national interests, according to the off-shore balancing strategy. It will enable the United States to return to a balance-of-power policy toward the rest of the world (other than East Asia), particularly toward the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf states. All the United States should do, according to the proponent of the off-shore balancing strategy, is to declare that it will oppose any acts of aggression and the policies that may threaten to result in any one state exercising regional hegemony over others. This, according to Walt, is the rule of the classic balance of power theory.⁵¹

Conclusion

While the process of retooling the U.S.-ROK alliance is underway, Korea’s search for self-identity and its place in the sun will continue in the 21st century. South Korea, as an OECD member country, is expected to continue to thrive as a dynamic and advancing industrial democracy in East Asia, next only to Japan as the other OECD member country in Asia. On that basis, the next generation of South Korean business leaders is likely to

continue replenishing its newly acquired national image of self-confidence at home and abroad. The problem, however, is the other half of Korea, the North with its nuclear ambitions.

As North Korea continues its strategy against the United States, with its asymmetric conflict strategies of “internal,” “soft,” and “omni-directional” balancing, the great powers in the region will come to acknowledge and accept North Korea as a sovereign country into the midst of a regional order and peace building process, thereby turning Kim Jong Il’s North Korea in a normal country and a responsive member of the international community.

The hope is that U.S.-DPRK relations will also improve in the years ahead, as the United States will come to redefine its role and involvement in the Iraqi War in the Middle East, through charting a new grand strategy of off-shore balancing, as alluded to in this article. The time may also come for the Six-Party Talks member countries to bear intended fruit, by implementing successfully the terms of the September 19, 2005, agreement on principles.⁵² This will keep the Korean Peninsula nuclear free by turning the agreement into action by North Korea, with the help of South Korea’s engagement policy toward the North, as well as by both Japan and the United States. This will be the time, also, when the triangulation of Seoul-Pyongyang-Washington relations will be placed on an even keel, so that both the asymmetric conflict strategy as well as the balancing strategy by the weak and small states against the strong and great powers will be written off as an exception rather than the rule of international diplomacy and regional politics in Northeast Asia, as elsewhere in the world.

Endnotes:

¹ Prepared for Presentation at the ICKS-KAUPA-Sigur Center jointly sponsored Annual Conference 2006 on “The U.S.-Korea Relations in the 21st Century: Challenges and Prospects,” The George Washington University, Conference Hall, October 6-8, 2006.

² As quoted in K. Hwang, *The Neutralized Unification of Korea*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1980), see also: Young Whan Kihl, *Politics and Policies in Divided Korea: Regimes in Contest*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 28-29.

³ *North Korea's Nuclear Test: The Fallout*. International Crisis Group Policy Briefing, Asia Briefing No. 56. Seoul/Brussels, 13 November 2006, 2-4.

⁴ As cited by C. Kenneth Quinones, U.S.-DPRK Relations in the 21st Century: Ramifications of North Korea's Declaration of Independence from the International Community," prepared for the ICKS-KAUPA-Sigur Center jointly sponsored Annual Conference 2006 for this volume.

⁵ Samuel S. Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5-6.

⁶ *The National Security of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 21, 2006. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Lawrence Korb and Caroline Wadhams, "A Critique of the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy." *Policy Analysis Brief*, (Muscatine, IA: The Stanley Foundation, 2006), <http://stanleyfoundation.org>

⁹ Ivo H. Daalder, James M. Lindsay, and James B. Steinberg. "The Bush National Security Strategy: An Evaluation." *Policy Brief #109*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2002).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ NBC Today's Show, aired on September 11, 2006. An Interview with President George W. Bush by Matt Louer, September 8, 2006, in Washington, D.C.

¹² John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation." *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 81, No. 6, (November/December, 2002).

¹³ John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation." *Foreign Policy*, No. 133 (November/December 2002), 50-57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Joseph Nye, Jr., "Transformational Leadership and U.S. Grand Strategy." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4, (July/August 2006), 139-148.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

¹⁷ Sherle R. Schwenninger, "Revamping American Grand Strategy," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 3, (Fall 2003), 25-44; see also: Stephen Walt.

¹⁸ Schwenninger, 25.

¹⁹ Aurelia George Mulgan, "Hegemonic Angst Driving America's Containment Policy in Asia." *Canberra Times*, March 16, 2006.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "Top White House aide outlines 3-pronged East Asia Strategy." *Japan Economic Newswire*, April 6, 2006. Also see: "Remarks by National Security Advisor Steve Handley to the National Bureau of Asian Research Strategic Forum," The White House, April 5, 2006.

²² *Ibid.* Hadley moves next to address U.S. policies toward South and Southeast Asia in his comprehensive address to the Seattle-based think tank.

²³ Stephan M. Walt, "In the National Interest: A New Grand Strategy for American Foreign Policy." *Boston Review* 30, no. 1 (February/March 2005): 1.

²⁴ Young Whan Kihl, "A Plea for Greater Realism toward a Nuclear North Korea," Prepared for a Conference on North South Korea Relations, Yonsei University, July 6, 2006. *Korean Unification Studies* (Seoul), Vol. 10, No. 1, 2006: 25-41.

²⁵ Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

²⁶ Lee, 275.

²⁷ For a detailed analysis of the new challenges facing the Washington-Seoul-Pyongyang triangle, in terms of complex political, security and economic issues, see: S. Kim, *The Two Koreas*, Op. Cit., 142-195.

²⁸ David E. Sanger, "U.S. to Roll Out Tepid Welcome for President of South Korea," *The New York Times*, September 14, 2006, A9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ This is not a place for me to articulate the conceptual and theoretical framework for the politics of triangulation that I argue seems to apply best for examining the dynamics of the U.S.-ROK-DPRK relations. For an example of an earlier attempt to develop such a conceptual framework, see: Sung-han Kim, "Brothers versus Friends: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Emerging Anti-Americanism in South Korea," in David I. Steinberg, ed., *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 180-195.

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- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ See Henry A. Kissinger, "Nuclear Test for Diplomacy," *Washington Post* column, May 16, 2006, A17. Also see: Ashton Carter and William Perry, "If Necessary, Strike and Destroy," *The Washington Post* column, June 22, 2006. Also see: Stannard (2006).
- ³⁵ Kissinger, Ibid.
- ³⁶ For my analysis of the 2+4 process of the Six Party Talks, see: Young Whan Kihl, "Bi-Multilateral Approaches to Defusing Nuclear Crisis: Beyond the Six-Party Talks as Peace Strategy." In Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim, eds., *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), 245-267.
- ³⁷ The Bush Administration imposed economic sanctions on several international financial institutions, including the Macao based Banco Delta Asia, charging North Korean counterfeiting of the U.S. dollars (the so-called super notes) and money laundering practices by the North Korean regime.
- ³⁸ Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*, (NY: W.W. Norton, 2005), 16.
- ³⁹ Walt, 132-141.
- ⁴⁰ Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).
- ⁴¹ The subsequent analysis is derived from Young Whan Kihl, *Transforming Korean Politics: Democracy, Reform, and Culture*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 337-339.
- ⁴² Marcus Noland, *Avoiding Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas*, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 2000); Noland, Marcus, *North Korea After Kim Jong-il*. Policy Analyses in International Economics, 2004: 71.
- ⁴³ Cha and Kang, 10.

- ⁴⁴ Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, (NY: Basic Books, 1984).
- ⁴⁵ Robert M. Axelrod, "Conflict of Interest: An Axiomatic Approach." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 11 (1967): 87-99.
- ⁴⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Understanding International Conflict: An Introduction to Theory and History*. 4th ed., (NY: Longman, 2003), 78-79.
- ⁴⁷ Chae Jin Lee, 2006: 10.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 280-81.
- ⁴⁹ Walt, *In the National Interest*, Op. Cit.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid. For an exposition of this classic strategy, see: John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). No state is likely to dominate the entire globe, according to Mearsheimer, because of the difficulty of projecting power over large bodies of water. That is the reason an offshore balancing becomes relevant, as shown by the United Kingdom, 1800-1900, and the United States, 1900-1990 (234-236).
- ⁵¹ Walt, *In the National Interest*, Op. Cit.
- ⁵² Beijing announced that it had hosted a meeting where both the U.S. and the DPRK chief delegates have agreed to a resumption of the Six Party Talks sometime in November or December 2006. This was followed by the U.S President dangling "a new set of incentives for North Korea" during the APEC Summit meeting in Hanoi on November 18. See: Helene Cooper and David Sanger, "U.S. Signals New Incentives for North Korea," *The New York Times*, November 19, 2006. Surprisingly, North Korea's Foreign Ministry said, on January 17, 2007, that its nuclear negotiator Kim Kye-Kwan had held a direct talk with U.S. Chief Negotiator Christopher Hill in Berlin "in a positive and sincere atmosphere and a certain agreement was reached there." "North Korea upbeat on nuclear talks." *CNN.com*, January 18, 2007.