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THE FUTURE OF THE U.S.-ROK RELATIONSHIP: A KOREAN PROSPECTIVE

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

The Future of the U.S.-ROK Relationship: a Korean Prospective

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ABSTRACT

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Since the U.S. noticed that North Korea had a nuclear program, U.S. interests have shifted from South to North. Therefore a discrepancy in the ROK-U.S. Alliance has occurred regarding the North Korean submarine incursion in September 1996, and the difficulties would be continued in the U.S.-ROK relationship. Nevertheless, each nation's priority could be recognized; the discrepancies in the two nations' priorities might harm the current stability on the Korean Peninsula. Provided that the discrepancies in priorities would bring an unstable situation on the Korean Peninsula and further in Northeast Asia, the U.S. might change its interests in the region. And, however, the U.S. is maintaining bilateral ties and a *forward military presence* in the region to secure U.S. interests. Changing the U.S. policy for the region seems to be happening, which may bring tension in the region in the future. Therefore, to avoid an unstable situation both now and in the future, *a policy to foster the reunification of the Korean Peninsula* would be one of the most desirable alternatives.

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The United States and the Republic of Korea have maintained a strong relationship, especially a close security relationship, for the last four decades based upon common interests and a strategic objective which is a global containment strategy against the Communist threat in the region. The two countries have been pursing more of multidimensional and comprehensive security partnership in response to a new security environment in the wake of the end of the Cold War.[1] The shared and complementary interests of the two countries seem likely to continue well into the next century.[2]

Despite these common strategic objectives and interests, sharing common national goals is not easy in the real situation. Regarding national goals, *U.S. Joint Pub 3-0* points out:

> **No two nations share exactly the same reasons for entering a coalition or alliance. To some degree, participation within an alliance or coalition requires the subordination of national autonomy by member nations. The glue that binds the multinational force is agreement, however tenuous, on common goals, and objectives. However, different national goals, often unstated, cause each nation to measure progress in its own way. Each nation, therefore, can produce differing perceptions of progress.[3]**

Very recently the ROK-U.S. Alliance showed how difficult it is to share common National Goals. When armed North Korean commandos sneaked across the border in a Shark-class submarine in August 1996, the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher called on "all parties" to show restraint.[4] With this caution from the U.S., many ROK people felt betrayed[5] by Washington's measured response to the incursion, citing it as further evidence of a policy of appeasement towards North Korea. The *Chosun Ilbo*, one of the

ROK newspapers accused Washington of "keeping a distance from the ROK" and "moving towards a middle-of-the-road position." On the contrary, an envoy from the U.S. State Department said "There is some frustration in the State Department. They feel South Korea has gone a bit too far."[6] This indicates how each nation's priority or goal is different.

U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula can be said that ending North Korean nuclear program is a *vital interest for the Defense of Homeland,* maintaining the security of the ROK or stability on the Korean Peninsula is a *vital interest for the Favorable World Order.*[7] These two vital interests are in the same intensity of interests but have different core objectives. When two interests are compared for priority, the latter may go later. It can be supposed that the U.S. may pay more attention to North Korea's requests (than to ROK's) to make ending the North Korean nuclear program a priority. It seems that since the U.S. noticed that North Korea had a nuclear program, the U.S. interests have shifted from South to North. Therefore a discrepancy has occurred regarding the North Korean submarine incursion, and the difficulties might be continued in the U.S.-ROK relationship. Furthermore, North Korea seems to have perceived the ROK-U.S. alliance as a center of gravity for the ROK and has tried to weaken the U.S.-ROK relationship to wage war periodically since the end of the Korean War.[8]

China and Japan might review their defense policies with the assumption that the U.S. will withdraw from the ROK and Japan. With their severe memories in the 19th and early 20th centuries, tensions between China

and Japan could be assumed in case of the withdrawal of the U.S. presence from the region.

The purpose of this paper is to recommend the most desirable relationship between the U.S. and ROK regarding the two nation's common interests for the near term and future. To do this, U.S. and ROK interests on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia will be defined through reviewing the U.S. National Security Strategy and the ROK Defense White Paper, and appropriate materials including historical facts, agreements and treaties regarding this topic will be analyzed.

For this purpose, the following conditions are assumed:

1) North Korea will not collapse in this century.

2) Japan will maintain its relationship with the U.S.

3) China can not afford to project its military power externally this century.

4) Russia can not afford to emerge its military power in next a few decades.

U.S. Interests on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia

Identifying U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is an important process to develop a more desirable relationship between the U.S. and the ROK for the future, which guarantees that the U.S. and the ROK will achieve their interests in the region.

The term *national interest* has long been used by statesmen and scholars to describe the foreign policy goals of nation-states.[9] Interests are usually expressed in terms of physical survival, economic prosperity, and political sovereignty.[10] To identify U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, the *National Security Strategy of the United States* is used as an official document. Statements regarding interests in East Asia and the Pacific region are:

> **a New Pacific Community-which links security requirements with economic realities and our concern for democracy and human rights.... The United States is a Pacific nation.... To deter regional aggression and secure our own interests, We will maintain an active presence, and we will continue to lead. Our deep, bilateral ties with such allies as Japan, South Korea...they contribute to regional stability by deterring aggression and adventurism.... As a key element of our strategic commitment to the region, we are pursuing stronger efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on the Korean Peninsula. In October 1994, we reached an important Agreed Framework committing North Korea to halt and eventually eliminate, its existing, dangerous nuclear program-and an agreement with China, restricting the transfer of ballistic missiles**[11]

U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia can be summarized as *1) economic engagement and enlargement with maintaining*

regional stability including peace on the Korean Peninsula 2) continuing a leading role and preventing the emergence of a new dominant power over the region and 3) pursuing non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. And it can be said that the U.S. employs three measures which are *i) bilateral ties,*[12] *ii) military presence, and iii) the U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework on the North Korean nuclear program* to secure these interests.

Economic Engagement and Enlargement with Maintaining Regional Stability Including Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Unlike in the mid 1980s, when containing the Soviet Union was still a central focus of U.S. foreign policy, Washington today is likely to cite the economic dynamism of Northeast Asia and the increasingly important trade between the U.S. and the region to rationalize and justify U.S. activities there.[13]

One indicator[14] shows how economic engagement and enlargement in the region is important to the U.S. According to this indicator, Japan, ROK, Taiwan, and China were four major consumers of U.S. products among nine major U.S. trading partners[15] in 1995. These four countries spent $120 billion in all to buy U.S. goods while three European countries spent $65 billion in all. The ROK was the fifth largest market for U.S. exports with $25 billion. On average, only the Canadians and Taiwanese consumed more U.S. goods than Korean consumers in 1995. Koreans were the third most active purchasers of U.S. goods on a per capita basis, outpacing the Japanese, Germans, British, and French. This trend is expected to continue as U.S. exports to the ROK grow rapidly. The U.S. recorded a $5 billion trade surplus with the ROK during

the first half of 1996 on a customs clearance basis. This is a 38 percent increase from the same period last year. According to the U.S. *National Trade Estimate Report,* U.S. export growth to the ROK accounted for 10.30 percent of worldwide U.S. export expansion in 1995.[16]

Continuing Leading Role and Preventing the Emergence of a New Dominant Power over the Region

During the Cold War era, the United States concentrated on checking its rival superpowers, but now it has to check all potential threats which are likely to grow as challenging forces. Such potential forces in Northeast Asia may include Russia, China, and Japan.[17] Although Russia has still strong military forces in Far East, it may not be a threat to the U.S. in Northeast Asia in the near future due to its domestic difficulties. Japan has become increasingly concerned about its national security interests after the Cold War with the Japanese archipelago being within the range of North Korean missiles. China has been rising fast, while investing lots of money for its military build-up and its pursuit of hegemonic power in the region.[18] Since December 1978, China has placed a top priority on economic development. To achieve this national goal, China has launched "Four Modernization" on agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense in order to join the rank of advanced nations in the twenty-first century.[19] In this regard U.S. measures such as maintaining *i)bilateral ties and ii) military presence* will help the U.S. to secure its interests in the region. Although some opinions in the U.S. have

opposed a U.S. military presence in foreign countries due to economic concerns, the U.S. presence in Korea and Japan can mitigate public opinion through burden-sharings with host nations.[20] As a bilateral tie, the U.S.-ROK Alliance is, of course, designed to legitimize the U.S. military presence in the region even in the post Cold War era.

Pursuing Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

If North Korea had nuclear weapons, it could bring on a chain reaction in which Pakistan would possess nuclear weapons. Subsequently India and China would improve their nuclear capabilities and Japan would seek nuclear weapons.[21] The U.S. measure number three, *the U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework on the North Korean nuclear program,* has established a fundamental basis to end the North Korean nuclear program though it has many tasks left to implement.

According to the principle of *National Interest as a Basis of Foreign Policy Formulation*[22] U.S. interests in the region, especially in relation to the Korean Peninsula, can be said that ending the North Korean nuclear program is a *vital interest for the Defense of Homeland.* Maintaining the security of the ROK and stability on the Korean Peninsula is a *vital interest for the Favorable World Order;* and economic engagement and enlargement in the region is a *major interest for Economic well-being.* Development of the free market economy and promotion of democracy and respect for human rights especially in North Korea would be some *peripheral interests.*

A Taxonomy for Defining U.S. National Security Interests in the 1990s and Beyond[23] shows the application of a taxonomy of core U.S. national objectives relating threats to interests. According to this taxonomy, in compliance with the Korean Peninsula and its region, *three of the threats to vital interests* are new nuclear weapons states, the rise of hegemonic power in Eurasia and the collapse of the world trading system. *One of the threats to important interests,* therefore is a threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

ROK INTERESTS

Historically the Korean Peninsula has had a critical geopolitical location in spite of its relatively small size.[24] While playing the role of bridge for cultural transmission from Asia to Japan, the Korean peninsula itself became an object of competition among China, Japan and Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[25] On June 25, 1950, the Korean Peninsula became a brutal battlefield--representing conflict between two ideologies of the world. With extremely bitter experiences since the 19th century, Korean people have expressed their concerns in the ROK Defense White Paper 1995-1996:

The national objectives of the Republic of Korea are to safeguard the nation under free democracy, to preserve permanent independence by attaining the peaceful unification of the fatherland, to achieve a welfare society by guaranteeing the people's freedom and rights and working toward an equitable improvement in their standards of living.... The essence of our defense goals is to defend the nation against external military threats and aggressions, which means that in light of North Korea's continuing strategy of communizing the ROK by force, forward deployment of its offensive element near the DMZ, a high level of military mobilization status, and a series of activities undermining ROK stability, the ROK still considers North Korea as a main enemy...

According to this statement, ROK interests can be described as *1) securing a survival base to deter external aggression including all forms of North Korean military violence, 2) maintaining independence with cultural and social integrity, 3) Continuing economic growth and 4) achieving a peaceful reunification.*

An imminent interest for ROK is securing a survival base. Sometimes ROK responses to North Korean aggression, including physical and oral violence, may seem to be somewhat obsessive,[26] but the North Korean threat to the ROK is clear and real while the U.S. perceives it as a "thing overseas."[27] It is obvious that without ROK interest *1) securing a survival base,* it cannot seek to secure its other interests. To secure that interest, the ROK-U.S. Alliance must be ahead of all other possible measures. ROK interest *2) maintaining independence with cultural and social integrity* is in the same context with *securing a survival base.*

ROK interest *3) Continuing economic growth* seems to be a more practical interest than others, even though it also needs a stable basis. An outstanding economic achievement has made the ROK have confidence over North Korea and be interdependent with other nations. At the same time, continuous economic growth has become a more urgent factor for reunification. Data regarding reunification costs, however, is varying in accordance with sources, one thing that reunification with North Korea requires is clear: a good sum of money.

ROK interest *4) achieving a peaceful reunification* is the most challenging one. Korea was unified under one of the struggled kingdoms in the 7th century, making it a single political entity with a common language and culture. Since that, Korean people have maintained a single nation for more than 1,200 years. Therefore, the current circumstances Koreans confront is indeed a tragedy. The divided country has distorted Koreans' lives in many

ways. Politically North Korea has built an unprecedented totalitarian system; economically two Koreas have spent a sizable sum of their GNP for military expenditures. Given significant impact on their economy, society and culture, even a homogeneity is being threatened seriously.[28] Furthermore, a divided country forced two Koreas to heavily depend on the U.S., the PRC and the former USSR respectively with damage to their dignity and self-determination.[29]

The Characteristics of the U.S.-ROK relationship

The meaningful relationship[30] between the U.S. and the ROK has been started with shaping a trustful alliance which has actually been an institutional device to maintain the relationship between two nation-states since 1950 when the U.S. deployed its troops to repel the North Korean armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.[31] During the Cold-War the ROK-U.S. Alliance had a strong common goal which was to block the North Korean armed attack that would eventually stand for the communist expansionism, and on the basis of the stability supported by the ROK-U.S. Alliance the ROK has developed its economy and national strength.[32] But the U.S.-ROK relationship has not always been free from friction[33] because the U.S. had flexible options which were sometimes unfavorable for the ROK which had few alternatives. As Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister of United Kingdom, had pointed out: "England has neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies; she has permanent interests." In the 19th century, the U.S. seems to have carried out its foreign policy generally in accordance with this maxim, and some assertions--such as views from Charles Beard[34] and Hans Morgenthau[35] who asserted that the difficulties encountered by the U.S. in its international

relations during the twentieth century resulted from the moralism and utopianism of leaders such as Woodrow Wilson-- they subordinated the self-interest of the United States to universal principles that were often unattainable and therefore proved to be deeply frustrating to the nation,[36] even though the U.S. often hangs out a moral rhetoric.[37]

Historical Background

Korea and the U.S. established their first official relationship by concluding the Chosun-U.S. Treaty of Amity, Trade and Navigation in May 1882. The relationship, however, was severed when all U.S. diplomats withdrew from Korea under the Katsura-Taft Agreement of July 1905 when the U.S. Secretary of War William H. Taft met Japanese Prime Minister Katsura Taro in Tokyo and exchanged their views on Korea and the Philippines. Taft expressed his opinion, which was later supported by President Roosevelt, that Japan's control over Korea was desirable.[38]

With the Cold War confrontation between the U.S. and the USSR on the Korean Peninsula, the ROK became the U.S.'s forefront.[39] North Korea also became the USSR's forefront while the U.S. began to administer a military rule in Korea in the wake of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule in August 1945. Contrary to Koreans' expectations, Korea did not become an independent nation. Its Provisional government in exile was not recognized as the legitimate government of Korea.

In September 1947, the U.S. JCS recommended the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the ROK based on their strategic evaluation of Korea. In June 1949, U.S. troops in Korea completely withdrew except for some military advisers. One year before the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea, the ROK was founded as the single legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula recognized by the UN, and in the same year North Korea was established.

In 1950, exploiting a vacuum of power, North Korea invaded the ROK in an attempt to extend the sway of Communism throughout the Korean Peninsula.[40] One well-known aspect is that the apparent ebbing of U.S. concern about the ROK set the stage for the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.[41] The Korean War served as a turning point in the U.S.-ROK relationship, *a blood-forged tie.*[42]

After the Armistice agreement was concluded in 1953, the two countries have formed an alliance relationship under the Mutual Defense Treaty which was signed at Washington October 1, 1953 and entered into force November 17, 1954. As a framework for jointly countering the invasion into the ROK, including any North Korean provocation, it has significantly contributed to the ROK security and to the stability of Northeast Asia as a whole.[43] The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty consists of a preamble and six articles. The preamble states the resolve between the two countries for combined defense against armed aggression, and Article III defines that the U.S. would intervene in case of war on the Korean Peninsula according to U.S. constitutional processes:

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the other, would

be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.[44]

After outbreak Korean War in 1950, U.S. decision-makers appreciated Korea's strategic and geopolitical values in case of limited war, and recognized that a communized Korean Peninsula could be a serious threat to U.S. national security and major interests involving the Japanese Archipelago and the entire Pacific area.[45]

According to the Nixon Doctrine, the U.S. withdrew 24,000 U.S. personnel from Korea by 31 December 1973 while $1.5 billion was given to ROK to modernize the Korean Armed Forces from 1971 to 1977.[46] The U.S. government promised that it would intervene in case of an armed attack on the ROK.[47] But Korean leaders concluded that in case of a war on the Korean Peninsula, the intervention of U.S. ground troops would be flexible, reflecting the international environment and the U.S. domestic political situation.[48]

On December 7, 1975, President Gerald Ford proclaimed the *Pacific Doctrine* wherein he clarified that the U.S. would participate in Asian affairs as a Pacific country even after the Indo-China War.[49] The Nixon Doctrine in 1969 had an intent that would gradually decrease U.S. influence and military power in Asia reflecting the international environment. The Ford Doctrine had, on the contrary, proposed a renewed U.S. engagement in the region economically, politically, and militarily and thereby secure national interests in the Pacific area--maintaining the balance of power with the USSR, the PRC, and Japan.[50]

On March 9, 1977, President Carter announced his Administration's intention to withdraw all U.S. ground combat troops from the ROK in four to

five years. The reasons for withdrawal cited by the Administration were ROK's economic progress, wavering congressional support for a continued U.S. presence in Korea, and U.S. détente with North Korea's two principal allies. Because of the predetermined nature of the President's decision, ROK officials believed that they were not consulted but were only "informed."[51] On May 5, 1977, a compromise decision was chosen by the President in Presidential Decision12. Tasking memoranda were sent to the State and Defense Departments to implement the withdrawal and military assistance plans. On May 18,1977, Major General John K. Singlaub, Chief of staff of U.S. Forces in Korea, disagreed with the conclusion of the administration that forces could be withdrawn without the risk of war and was so quoted in the press just days before actual drawdown negotiations began.[52] The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to support the decision, if the Mutual Defense Treaty was reaffirmed, if sufficient military assistance was provided, and if the U.S. Air Force and Navy remained in Korea after withdrawal. Other top U.S. military officers--especially those stationed in Asia--were more reluctant to support the decision as evidenced by the comments of Singlaub.[53] Regarding the withdrawal plan, a wide-ranging group of ROK people were interviewed to gauge their reaction to President Carter's decision by the President's staff during August 1977. No one, including various dissident leaders, agreed with the decision.

The greatest concern was displayed by opposition leaders of the New Democratic (NDP) Party, National Assemblymen from President Park's party, university professors and dissidents. NDP Chairman Lee Chul-Seung, who politically is close to President Park and presides over a diffused party, led in criticizing the withdrawal decision. Lee told the staff: "everyone in South Korea oppose withdrawal...you do not hear Yankee go home for us; we know what Communism is." Similarly, the Speaker of National Assembly, Jung Il Kwon told staff: "I don't understand why President Carter is in such a hurry to withdraw ground forces...it is a small U.S. investment and it is of great benefit to all free Asian countries." Under his guidance the National Assembly passed a resolution (1) requesting

political prisoners under the Emergency Measures; and (2) calling for closer U.S.-ROK ties ; and (3) opposing the "one-sided withdrawal" of U.S. ground forces.[54]

Very interestingly the interview showed how Korean people perceived the withdrawal plan, which was "one-sided policy" and not only because of a strategic evaluation but because of "human -rights issues." In fact, Korea formed one of the Carter Administration's first tests of human-rights based foreign policy.[55] President Carter's withdrawal plan was based on the evaluation of North Korean military capability in 1974-1975. Actually the North Korean military capability in 1976 was evaluated as stronger than ever. Finally the withdrawal plan was frozen officially in September 1979.[56]

In the 1990s the U.S. and the ROK have initiated some degree of change in the ROK-U.S. Alliance structure to be transformed gradually into a ROK-led strategic cooperative system under the ROK initiative of realizing the "Koreanization of Korean defense," creating a complementary security partnership.[57] On December 1, 1994, the Operational Control held during the Armistice period by the CINC Combined Forces Command over selected ROK Armed Forces was transferred to the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. In November 1995 the U.S. and the ROK concluded multi-year burden sharing agreement which provided the U.S. government $330 million in 1996 with increases of 10 percent per year in 1997 and 1998.[58]

The Characteristics of the U.S.-ROK Relationship

1) The U.S.-ROK relationship has been started with a strong politico-military purpose, which is the ROK-U.S. alliance, then it has expanded into

other fields including economic ties. The ROK national defense has been characterized by an undeniable dependence on the U.S.[59]

2) The U.S.-ROK relationship has not been on the basis of equality. In many cases it can be said that U.S. decided policies unilaterally, based on their strategic evaluation of the international environment, U.S. domestic issues and even the Presidential election pledge. Then the U.S. informed the ROK of its decisions with (they say) some consulting. One of the most severe case could be the first year of the liberation from Japanese colonial rule except for the Katsura-Taft Memorandum. The Koreans' destiny was decided by the Allies, particularly the U.S. And another case would be the withdrawal plan of U.S. ground combat troops during the Carter administration. It seems to be that the U.S. maintained or adjusted the relationship between the U.S. and the ROK in compliance with its purposes including expediency.

3) The U.S.-ROK relationship, especially the ROK-U.S. alliance, has been on a variable basis, though it has been maintained for more than 40 years. Without fail "the firm ROK-U.S. alliance" has been reconfirmed whenever North Korean threats existed or seemed to be increased or key policymakers were replaced. On February, 13, 1997, the U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen said that "The United States is firmly committed to maintaining security in South Korea" and added that the U.S. military will continue to be stationed in Korea to guarantee security on the Korean Peninsula. Secretary Cohen also emphasized, "There is no change in the U.S. policy of maintaining 100,000 U.S. soldiers in Asia-Pacific region including the 37,000 stationed in Korea."[60] Even

the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pledged recently to sustain U.S. troop levels in Asia in a bid to ease fears of a gradual withdrawal of American forces from one of the world's most volatile regions.[61]

The ROK-U.S. Alliance and North Korea

"dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity One must keep the develops, the hub of all power and movement, upon which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed..."

Carl Von Clausewitz

The relationship between the ROK-U.S. Alliance and North Korea consisted of challenges from North Korea and responses from the ROK-U.S. Alliance. Although there was not an institutional relationship between the U.S. and the ROK in 1950, the most highlighted example could be the Korean War. On the first day, North Korean troops opened fire and, spearheaded by Russian-built tanks, went across the 38th Parallel.[62] The U.S. responded immediately, first by sending equipment and ammunition, then by committing air and naval units, and finally by throwing in U.S. troops to stop the North Korean drive.[63] After Korean War, when North Korea initiated aggressive measures such as commando assault on the ROK Presidential Mansion and hijacking the U.S. *Pueblo* in 1968 and the ax murder brutality in Panmunjom in 1976, the ROK-U.S. alliance responded at once. Because these provocation or challenges resulted from the North Korea's aggressive interests, identifying

North Korea's interests is necessary to analyze the relationship between the ROK-U.S. Alliance and North Korea.

North Korea's Interests

North Korea's interests--which have not changed--could be summarized as 1) *realizing the self reliant or self supporting economy of their people,* 2) *completing the leadership succession,* 3) *achieving the victory of socialism based upon Chuche ideology*[64] *and* 4) *reunifying the Korean Peninsula under communism.*[65]

The North Korea's interest 1) *self reliant economy* seems to be challenged seriously--which threatens the North Korean regime. North Korea's economy records a minus growth rate after 1990.[66] The main reasons are known as productivity reduction due to a lack of desire to work, floods and cold-weather damage and, most of all, evils[67] from a self supporting economic system itself. The self supporting economic system minimizes trade and economic cooperation with foreign countries by which North Korea only supplements its shortage. Consequently it brings a lack of foreign currency, which means that North Korea can't afford to buy petroleum and food from foreign countries. It has made its economy worse and worse--especially the food shortage.[68]

Therefore its imminent interest is *regime survival with economic development.*[69] The North Korea's interest 2) *completing the leadership succession* seems to be connected with the North Korean regime survival. Kim Jung-Il was designated as a successor of Kim Il-sung officially in 1980, and he

led ideology strife within the North Korean Workers' Party to build the sole ideology system with *Chuche* which legitimizes the North Korean regime.[70] Therefore Kim Jung-Il's leadership succession directly gives impact on North Korean regime security.

The North Korea's interests 3) *achieving the victory of socialism based upon Chuche ideology and* 4) *reunifying the Korean Peninsula by communism* are in same context. These two interests are the main factors to fortify Kim Jung-Il's power base, and the internal and external policies which implement these interests damage ROK national security.[71] A good example is the Korean War. After inaugurating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly called North Korea, with fictitious elections in 1948, it proclaimed itself as the only legitimate government of Korea and made reunifying the country on its terms a legitimate national goal, and attacked the ROK in 1950 in attempted to reunify the Peninsula on its terms.[72]

North Korea's Perception of ROK-U.S. Alliance

Encouraged by the statement made by the U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson on January 1950 in which he excluded the ROK from the U.S. "defense perimeter" in the Far East,[73] North Korea supported by its allies, initiated a military attempt. But right after outbreak of the Korean War North Korea could not help confronting the U.S. intervention which it worried about. Following this stalemated military attempt, North Korea struggled unsuccessfully to isolate the ROK and gain international political recognition

as the sole government of the Korean Peninsula. Then North Korea believed that the political, economic, and military assistance and cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. significantly impeded its goals.[74]

According to this perception, throughout more than 40 years, North Korea seems to have continuously sought to break up the U.S.-ROK tie to weaken ROK's status politically, militarily and economically while it has fortified its rigid sociopolitical system with *Chuche* ideology. A few active defense measures such as the Team Spirit Exercises by the ROK-U.S. Alliance has been severely criticized by North Korea as threats to it, even though North Korea usually has taken many kinds of aggressive measures. The Team Spirit Exercises were conducted every year until 1992.[75] This exercise is basically a combined exercise of a defensive nature between allies. It is not an offensive exercise as North Korea insists.[76] This year also it will not be held[77] according to the ROK Defense Ministry announcement which was "North Korea is at the moment faithfully abiding by the nuclear freeze measures called for in the Geneva Accords. We agreed not to conduct the joint ROK-U.S. military exercise in order to build a positive atmosphere for relieving tensions on the Korean Peninsula."

North Korea seems to perceive the ROK-U.S. alliance as the strategic center of gravity of ROK and to be continuously attacking to eliminate it. The concept of center gravity was introduced by Carl von Clausewitz as the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends...the point which all our energies should be directed."[78] Should a combatant eliminate or influence the

enemy's strategic center of gravity, the enemy would lose control of its power and resources and eventually fall to defeat. Should a combatant fail to adequately protect his own strategic center of gravity, he invites disaster.[79]

North Korea designed "three Communist-revolution forces "[80] which are *the North Korean's revolution force* as the basic force of the revolution of the entire Korean Peninsula, *international revolution force* and *South Korea's revolution force.* To maximize the *international revolution force,* North Korea has tried to alienate the U.S. from the ROK and to normalize the relationship between North Korea and US.[81] Actually it can be said that reinforcing the international revolution force works for eliminating what North Korea may perceive as the enemy's strategic center of gravity. And end-state of eliminating the strategic center of gravity of the ROK for North Korea would be the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula. After that, the new strategic center of gravity of the ROK would be the ROK's social integrity with political stability. Again undermining this new strategic center of gravity of the ROK would work to maximize *the South Korea's revolution force* for North Korea.

A Prospect of the Relationship Between the ROK-U.S. Alliance and North Korea

North Korea seems to have succeeded in making a turning point which is the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations with the U.S. in 1994[82] as leading to its ultimate goal. The effect of the bilateral relations with the U.S.

may have encouraged North Korea to burn with ambition. In September 1996, the response of the U.S. on the North Korean submarine incursion to the ROK east coast was that "U.S.'s North Korean policy will not be changed." said McCurry, the White House spokesman. Nevertheless it has been revealed that North Korea provoked. Dr. Perry, the Secretary of Defense, added "It is important to make the incident not spread."[83] This response from the U.S. has very important meanings for the ROK and North Korea. To achieve a vital interest for the defense of the home land, the U.S. may choose North Korea's position.

With this favorable condition, North Korea may continuously use its nuclear card and the Peace Agreement Proposal[84] attempting to neutralize the Armistice Agreement for many-purposes. One could be to continue U.S.-North Korea contacts to gain political and economical benefits. Another could be to exclude and isolate the ROK to induce the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula. Even though North Korea may not achieve the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula, its attempts may raise a great degree of tension between the U.S. and the ROK, and between the ROK and North Korea. In addition, North Korea could delay the implementation of the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework to get the maximum benefit while it reinforces and maintains the *three Communist-revolution forces*. The problem is that a North Korean armed attack, however, would be an exception, as the worst case, the North Korean regime could last a long time with some support from the U.S. An attritional confrontation on the Korean Peninsula could be continued--

losing an opportunity for reunification by the ROK. Some aspects shows the reason why the North Korean regime could last long,[85] which are:

1) North Korea maintains political stability, because it has the sole public political party with 4-5 million members from about 22 million of the total population. Those numbers are the core of the North Korean society and maintain social integrity. Even though the ordinary people have suffered from food shortages, those favored might have had relatively good food rations.

2) As different from former East Germany where former Soviet Union Troops made the people hate them, no foreign power provokes the people in North Korea.

3) As different from former East Germany where the people could get the Western information, no information from the outside disturbs the North Korean social integrity.

4) As different from former East Germany who had an inferior military capability to former West Germany, North Korea's military capability is not inferior to that of the ROK.

and 5) In the worst case, 3-8.5% of the $ 5,660 million of the North Korean defense budget can solve the food shortage.[86] The lasting attritional confrontation on the Korean Peninsula would make it difficult for the U.S. to choose alternatives between maintaining full presence or a downsizing presence or withdrawing all its troops. North Korea intends to reinforce the international revolution force and to eliminate what it may perceive as the enemy's strategic center of gravity, and will continuously raise problems as it

has done. At the same time public opinion in the U.S. may strongly require a change in the policy on the Korean Peninsula as it has previously existed. A very hopeful proposal, the four way talks,[87] may conclude an ideal agreement with Two Koreas to settle for peace in their home land supported by U.S. policy. But the realization of the ideal agreement may require more time than it is thought. If North Korea does not give up its objective, which is communizing the Korean Peninsula, any ideal agreement or treaty could not work properly such as the ROK and DPRK Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, Exchange and Cooperation.[88]

The ROK-U.S. Alliance and China, Japan, and Russia

It can be generally said that the ROK-U.S. Alliance contributes to the regional stability which China, Japan, and Russia seem to appreciate. But the ROK-U.S. Alliance on the reunified Korean Peninsula may not be always favorable for all these nations.

The Chinese Perception of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

Currently the highest objective in China is economic development which the Chinese government backs up with reformation and open market policies. Therefore China needs a peaceful international environment to implement its domestic policies.[89] China perceives that a divided, stable, friendly Korea is better for China than a unified Korea, and the U.S. military presence is desirable if it buttresses stability and inhibits the rise of Japan.[90] A unified Korea still militarily allied to the U.S. would pose a threat to China, and China would work to prevent such an outcome.[91] If China could achieve enhanced prosperity with strong military power, it may seek a share in Korea as a singer to the Armistice Agreement in 1953.[92]

The Japanese Perception of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

Although the U.S. and Japan have tensions due to trade friction, Japan sees that U.S.-Japan Alliance will endure based on cost-effectiveness and mutual interests, within the same context, Japan sees the ROK-U.S. Alliance which will endure.[93]

The Russian Perception of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

Russia perceives that it made the Russia-North Korea relationship worse with the collapse of the Soviet Union, then lost political and economical interests from North Korea. Based on this perception, Russia may seek as its role to take some advantages from the Korean Peninsula including North Korea.[94] Russia sees that the ROK-U.S. Alliance is presented as a shield and deterrent, but the tension on the Korean Peninsula results from the division of the country. Reunification is the precondition to peace and stability.[95]

CONCLUSION

One of the most favorable conditions for the ROK interests could be a reunified nation-state by the ROK, and maintaining stability with economic development. As for the U.S. interests, one of the most favorable conditions could be maintaining the stability with non-proliferation of WMD and no new dominant power over the region as well as enlarging economic engagement in the region, which means that the U.S. would secure two vital interests and one major interest or important interest according to Nuechterlein's taxonomy. Very interestingly, a vital interest is not defined by the kind of the intensity of the interest.[96] Sometimes the leadership may conclude that an issue is vital (that is, has reached the intolerable point) but that no dramatic action is warranted--or possible.[97] When two interests--one is non-proliferation of WMD and the other is no new dominant power over the region--are compared in order to prioritize, the latter may have a lower priority. In the case of the Korean Peninsula issues, it can be supposed that the U.S. may pay more attention to North Korea's requests than to the ROK's in order to end North Korean nuclear program first of all. In fact, since the U.S. noticed that North Korea had a nuclear program, U.S. interests have shifted from South to North. Therefore a

discrepancy occurred regarding the North Korean submarine incursion, and the difficulties seem to be continued in the U.S.-ROK relationship. Furthermore, North Korea, which intends to reinforce the international revolution force and to eliminate what it may perceives as the enemy's strategic center of gravity, may last a long time and will continuously raise problems as it has done so far. Additionally, China, with a successful modernization effort, would request its share in the region including Korean Peninsula. In that case the ROK-U.S. Alliance may confront complex relationship issues. Therefore one of the most desirable alternatives would be a unified Korea which has the proper capability to defend itself and

1) holds nuclear program within the NPT system
2) helps to maintain a balance of power in Northeast Asia
3) shares economic well-being and common values.

Recommendation

A policy to foster the Reunification of the Korean Peninsula through a strong U.S.-ROK relationship will be the most desirable alternative to secure two nations' interests in the future. The policy may include a ROK initiative to lead Korean Issue--even humanitarian assistance with full U.S. political backing.

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[4] Deja News, <Opolitics-koreaUR6tU_609@sample.clari.net>, "U.S. Ties Strained with S. Korea," 9 October 1996, <C-reuters@clari.net (Reuters)>, 9 October 1996.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] This view is going to be discussed on page 7 of the paper.
[8] This view is going to be discussed on page 23of the paper.
[9] Donald E. Nuechterlein, "National Interest as a Basis of Foreign Policy Formulation," in USAWC Course 2 Readings: Vol. 1, ed. DNSS (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, 1996), 72.
[10] Michael G. Roskin, National Interest: From Abstraction to Strategy (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC,1994), iii.
[11] The White House, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington: U.S. White House, 1996), 39-41.
[12] Five Mutual Defense Treaties in the Asia-Pacific Region: U.S.-ROK tie; U.S.-Japan tie; U.S.-Philippines tie; U.S.-Thailand tie; and U.S.-Australia tie.
[13] Thomas L. Wilborn, "U.S. Security Policy for Northeast Asia: Handmaiden for Export Promotion?" in Northeast Asia in a Changing World, ed. by Tae-Hwan Kwak and Edward A. Olsen, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, recited from Thomas L. Wilborn, International Politics in Northeast Asia: The China-Japan-United States Strategic Triangle (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, 1996), 30.
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[17] Sung-Han Kim, "The Future of Korea-U.S. Alliance," Korea and World Affairs (Summer 1996), 188.
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[20] Kyung-Min Kim, 78.
[21] Gee Tak Lee, "A Special Symposium: A Dismantling Process of North Korea and A War Possibility on the Korean Peninsula," Korean Purple Report 13 (April 1996), 41.
[22] Nuechterlein, 79-84.

[23] Robert D. Blackwill,"A Taxonomy for Defining U.S. National Security Interests in the 1990s and Beyond," in Europe in Global Change, ed. Verner Veidenfeld and Josef Janning (Gutersloh: Berpelsnenn, 1993), 100-119.
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[28] Young Lok Koo et al., Political Integration of South and North Korea and International Relationship (Seoul: The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, 1995), i.
[29] Ibid.
[30] The relationship between the U.S. and the ROK during the Chosun Dynasty and before the Korean War can be said to be limited by the U.S.'s unilateral policies.
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[33] Ibid.
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[39] The Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, 108.
[40] Korean Overseas Information Service, 296.
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[43] Ibid.
[44] Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, 1717.
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[52] John A. Valersky, The Singlaub Affair: Major General John K. Singlaub, The Carter Administration - Showdown on Drawdown (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, 1991), ii.
[53] Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relation, 20.
[54] Ibid., 23.
[55] Valersky, ii.
[56] Tak Goo Song, "John Singlaub who Stopped the Withdrawal Plan of U.S. Troops from Korea," Korean Purple Report 13 (April 1996), 59-60.

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[58] Gary E. Luck, CINC Combined Forces Command, 1996 CINC's Congressional Testimony, March 1996, 7.
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[60] "U.S. Defense Secretary confirms continued presence of the U.S. Army in South Korea," linked from The Joong-ang Ilbo at "Enews," <http://www.joongang.co.kr/enews/enews.html/>, 13 February 1997.
[61] Madeleine Albright, "U.S. Will Maintain Current Force Levels," Washington Times, 24 February 1997, sec. 1, p. 11.
[62] Andrew C. Nahm, 247.
[63] Jay Luvaas, "The Korean War - An Overview," in USAWC Course 2 Readings: Vol. IV (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, 1996), 138.
[64] Depending on the context, the political term *Chuche* is used by North Koreans to mean national identity, self-reliance, national pride, or national assertiveness. Introduced in December 1995, *Chuche* is used to justify major policy initiatives, including eliminating factional enemies, wedding diplomatic activities, neutralizing attempts by China or Russia to exert influence over Korea, questioning the legitimacy of the ROK government, and relentlessly attacking U.S. imperialism.
[65] Youn Chul Kim, "New North Korean Military Authority and Hard Line," The Republic of Korea Army No. 222 (March 1996): 43.
[66] Oh Ki Kwon eds, Kim Jung-Il The Encyclopedia of North Korea (Seoul: Shin Dong-A, 1995), 158.
[67] Ibid., 382-383.
[68] Basic rations according to the North Korean Administrative Decision on March 1952 are: 1) 700g per day for general workers, 2) 800g per day for heavy workers and soldiers, 3) 100-500g per day for children and senior citizens. Basic rations have been reduced due to the aggravation of the food situation and stockpiling for war-reserve since 1987--such as 1) 22% reduction from general workers, 2) 12% reduction from heavy workers and soldiers. Total food products of North Korea can feed people for nine months in maximum.
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[81] Ibid., 28.
[82] The U.S. and North Korea concluded "the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework" on the North Korean nuclear program in Geneva in 1994.
[83] Kun Gae Lee, 38-47.

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[86] The Editorial Board, "Kim Jung-Il, who Made Food Shortage Worse," Korean Purple Report 12 (March 1996), 73.
[87] In April 1996 President Clinton and President Kim Young Sam proposed to hold the 4 way talks in order to respond to the North Korea's proposal regarding a peace agreement between the U.S. and North Korea.
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