AIR WAR COLLEGE

RESEARCH REPORT

FUTURE OF NORTH-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS AND DESIRABLE ROLES OF THE UNITED STATES

COLONEL KYUNG UNG PARK

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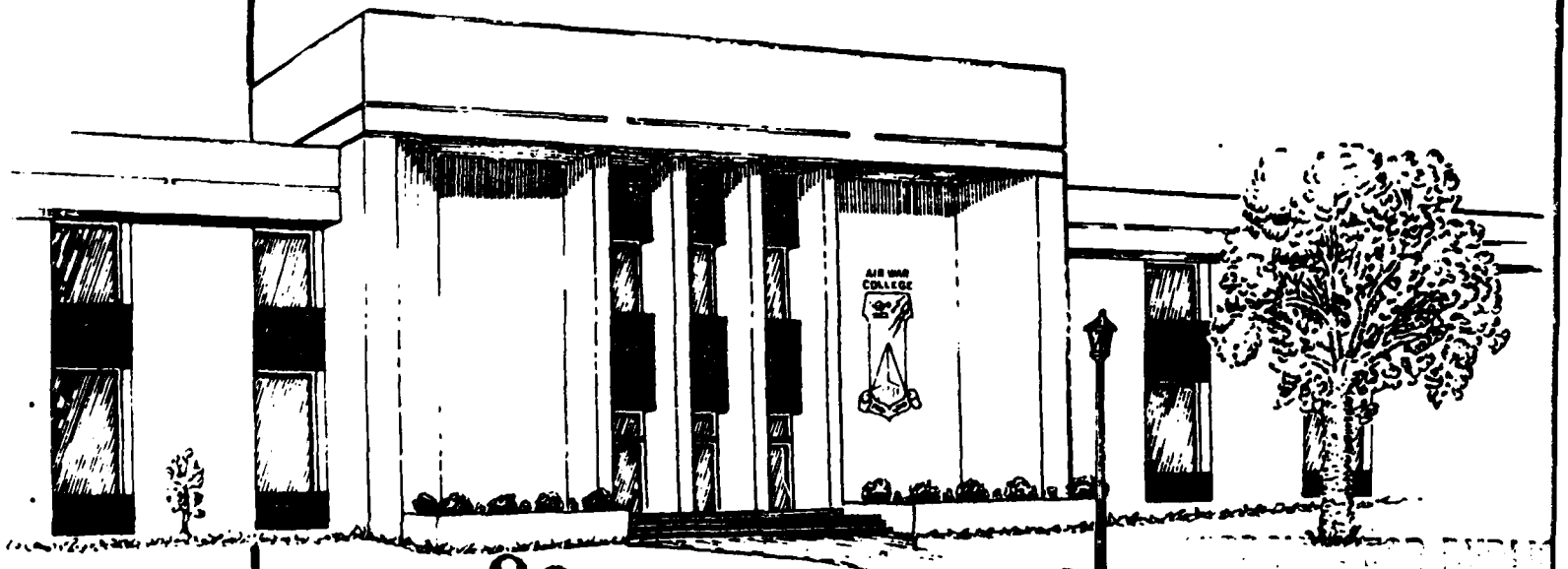

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FUTURE OF NORTH-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS AND DESIRABLE ROLES OF THE UNITED STATES

by

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Future of North-South Korean Relations and Desirable Roles of the United States

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Since the end of the Korean War, both North and South Korea have been building up their military power. The arms race and precarious military balance have increased the risk of a military conflict between the North and South which could result in the major powers' involvement. In recent years, various plans for deescalation and conflict resolution have been attempted to enhance stability on the Korean peninsula without avail.

The geopolitical location of the Korean peninsula and history of the superpower intervention in inter-Korean relations make it impossible to attempt any prognosis of future inter-Korean relations without assessing expected actions of the concerned powers, namely the U.S., Soviet Union, China, and Japan. The U.S. is the only nation among the four that has not shown any territorial interest in the Korean peninsula, and also has diverse and multi-pronged cooperative relations with all concerned powers. The U.S. can initiate an effort to keep peace on the Korean peninsula. This paper reviews present situations between the North and South Korea and discusses the security environment on the Korean peninsula

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and suggests several desirable roles of the United States for sustaining peace on the Korean peninsula.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Park, Kyung Ung (BS, Korean Air Force Academy) entered F-86F flight training upon graduation from the Korean Air Force Academy in 1968. He has flown the F-86, T-33, and F-4, and has been assigned to operations staff positions at all levels of command. He has visited the United States twice. He participated in the Red Flag training at Nellis AFB, Nevada in 1979. His most recent assignment before leaving Korea was commander of an F-4 fighter squadron. He is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1988.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Division was imposed on Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union on August 15, 1945 and two independent Koreas came into existence. The division was neither wished for nor even anticipated by the Koreans. The division line was arbitrarily selected and mechanically drawn along the 38th north parallel. The line simply divided Korea into two distinct spheres of influence of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Since two independent and distinct Koreas have existed in each part of the divided Korea, North Korea has been transformed into a typical totalitarian communist country, while South Korea has maintained a basically liberal democratic political system. Two Koreas have rivaled and competed with each other, exchanging all kinds of hostilities which included agitation of insurgency, guerrilla wars, sabotages, and a war that cost two million Korean lives. No two enemy nations have ever fought each other more fiercely than the two Koreas.

Besides enmity between the two Koreas, there are many characteristics that force us to recognize the two as independent states. Both are recognized as independent sovereign states in the international community. For

example, as of the end of 1980, 67 states maintain formal diplomatic relations with both of these countries.[1] Of 41 international organizations, both have membership in 41. Even though North and South Korea do not recognize each other as sovereign states legally, it is difficult to deny sovereignty of the two Koreas.

The presence of the neighboring four big powers--Soviet Union, PRC, Japan, and the U.S.--and the interaction among them have determined the international environment in Northeast Asia, particularly on the Korean peninsula. A series of historical events among the four big powers have demonstrated the importance of the geopolitical location of the Korean peninsula as a "land bridge" or "crossroads" between sea powers and continental powers.

The international environment of Northeast Asia is marked by sharp contrasts in economic and military power as well as domestic politics. The totalitarian communist systems of the Soviet Union and PRC are in sharp contrast to the liberal-democratic systems of the U.S. and Japan, and the level of military power held by the Soviet Union and the U.S. is significantly greater than that held by either PRC or Japan.

Since 1945, the U.S. as the leader of the free world, has vigorously maintained the sovereignty of South Korea, as part of the overall plan of "containment" of communism. The presence of American troops on South Korean soil has been a

significant deterrent to further communistic inspired expansionism. The roles of the U.S. for peace in South Korea have contributed to maintaining the military balance on the Korean peninsula. The U.S. has kept the Korean peninsula within the sphere of American influence to ward off Soviet and Chinese penetration. The U.S. helps South Korea to be a self-reliant nation in regard to her defense against North Korean threats. Finally, the U.S. is the only nation which has sufficient power to promote a conducive international environment and also has diverse and multipronged cooperative relations with all concerned powers.

Taking into consideration the important role of the U.S. on the Korean peninsula, this paper attempts to review the legacies of history and the present situation between North and South Korea. The security environment surrounding the Korean peninsula will be discussed in terms of interactions of the four major powers. In order to keep this study within bounds, I have limited my discussion to desirable roles of the U.S. for peace in Korea.

CHAPTER II

LEGACIES OF HISTORY

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian competition in Northeast Asia led to armed conflict. Having defeated its two competitors, Japan established dominance in Korea, annexing it in 1910. As World War II ended, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed at Yalta that Japanese forces in Korea would surrender to the United States south of the 38th parallel and to the Soviet Union north of that line. This division of Korea was intended as a temporary administrative measure only. However, from 1946-47, the Soviet administration in the North refused to allow free consultations with representatives of all groups of the Korean people for the purpose of establishing a national government. The United States and the Soviet Union subsequently were unable to reach agreement on a unification formula.

In the face of communist refusal to comply with the UN General Assembly resolution of November 1947, calling for UN-supervised elections throughout Korea, elections were carried out under UN observation in the U.S. zone of occupation, and on August 15, 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established. In September 1948, the Soviet Union established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in

the North under Kim Il Sung, a former Soviet Army major, who claimed authority over the entire peninsula. On December 12, 1948, the UN General Assembly declared the ROK the only lawful government in Korea. The U.S. withdrew its military forces from Korea in 1949.[2]

After the victory of the communist forces over the nationalist forces in mainland China in 1949, the Soviet Union was emboldened to expand its sphere of influence in the Pacific. Using North Korea as its surrogate, Stalin encouraged Kim Il Sung of North Korea to launch an all-out invasion against the South in June of 1950. Without the massive military support and direct involvement of the Soviet Union (military advisory groups and air power),[3] North Korea could not have conceived of unification through military means. This violent attempt to reunite the country as a part of a global strategy of the Soviet Union not only ushered in a period of confrontative relations between the superpowers, but also left an indelible mark on inter-Korean relations, thereby virtually precluding a peaceful settlement of the Korean question between the two Koreas. At the same time, without the involvement of the UN in the three years of bloodletting, South Korea could not have survived. Indeed, Korea was the first place where the cold war escalated into a hot war in the post World War II era. After the cessation of hostilities in 1953, the two Koreas chose opposite roads for their economic recovery and nation

building. Today, North Korea is known for its strict adherence to communist orthodox of the Stalinist variety, while South Korea is known for its unswerving anticommunist posture.[4] From a cursory review of the tragedy of the Korean partition and the subsequent fratricidal war, we clearly discern how the fate of a small power has been influenced by the struggle between an expansionistic and a status quo power.

CHAPTER III

PRESENT SITUATIONS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA

The two Koreas had fought each other with their supporting foreign powers for three years until a truce agreement was signed between the commanders of the UN Forces, North Korean People's Army, and the Chinese Volunteer Corps on July 27, 1953. Since then, the two have maintained hostility against each other, and so far no peace treaty has been signed between the two Koreas. Resumption of full-scale military combat has been prevented only by precarious military balance between the two Koreas. In a word, present inter-Korean relations can be described as hostile coexistence. The two Koreas are still competing for the sole authority over the entire Korean peninsula. There is no visible sign of compromise or mutual accommodation for peaceful coexistence.

THE MILITARY BALANCE

Since the Korean Armistice of 1953, both Koreas have steadily rebuilt their armed forces with the assistance of their superpower patrons. Table 1 describes the armed forces of the two Koreas to illustrate the balance of indigenous forces on the Korean peninsula. Both Korean regimes maintain a huge military establishment that is undoubtedly beyond their individual means of support. In 1987, North Korea, for

TABLE 1. MILITARY FORCES, NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA

	North Korea	South Korea
Total Armed Forces	838,000	629,000
Army	750,000	542,000
Navy	35,000	29,000
Air Force	53,000	33,000
Reserves	3,738,000	3,500,000
Defense Exp ($)	4.45 bn	5.11 bn
Infantry Divisions	40	28
Special Combat Brigades	25	7
Tank Divisions	7	2
Tanks	2,900	1,300
Artillery	6,000	3,300
Combat Airplanes	840	476
Support Airplanes	526	180
Naval Ships	600	124
Submarines	27	-
Destroyers	2	9
Missile Boats	34	11

(Source: IISS, The Military Balance, 1987-1988, London, pp. 162-165.)

instance, maintained a large military force consisting of a total of 838,000 troops, 840 combat aircraft, and 600 vessels amounting to 80,000 tons, and South Korea had a military force consisting of 629,000 troops, 476 combat aircraft, and 124 vessels amounting to 96,000 tons. North Korea has allocated 25 percent of its GNP to military spending. The North Korean armed force is highly disciplined. The stockpile of North Korean military equipment in major categories--armor, artillery, ships, and aircraft--is also estimated to be more than twice that of the South. The North is judged by military analysts to hold a clear advantage, with offensive capabilities fashioned precisely to the battlefields' tactical contours. North Korea is also believed to maintain a large commando force of approximately 100,000 men (the 8th Special Corps) whose primary mission is to create a second front in the rear area of the South.[5]

South Korea has been expanding its military modernization program since the late 1970s under Force Improvement Plan (FIP) I (1976-1982) and FIP II (1982-1987), in a delayed response to the North's military buildup. South Korea's military budget has been increased substantially and is almost 6 percent of the GNP. South Korean armed force is well trained, and the South might retain a qualitative advantage in military equipment, including aircraft and ground weapons. These are not sufficient, however, according to military analysts, to offset the quantitative disadvantages of South Korea's military establishment.

The arms race and existing military imbalance between the two Korean states will continue, however, as each Korean regime outspends its opponent in defense and also acquires the latest advanced equipment from the respective allies. These include the promised sale of 36 F-16s and 1,000 M55-1 light tanks to the South and the acquisition of MIG-23s and T-72 tanks for the North.[6]

The U.S. command in Korea insists that the military posture of the North is offensive, and cites the forward deployment of troops and the discovery of three "invasion" tunnels as evidence for this offensive war preparedness. South Korea's military posture is described by Washington as defensive, with U.S. troops playing the pivotal role of deterrence or "tripwire" for possible North Korean attack.[7]

NEGOTIATING EFFORTS BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS

Throughout the post war period, both Korean governments have repeatedly affirmed their desire for reunification of the Korean peninsula. Until 1971, though, no direct communications or any other contacts took place between the two governments or their citizens except through the Military Armistice Commission.

In August 1971, the DPRK and the ROK agreed to hold talks through their respective Red Cross societies, with the stated aim of reuniting the many Korean families separated during the Korean War. Following a secret meeting on July 4, 1972, North and South Korea announced an agreement to work

toward national reunification through peaceful means and to end the atmosphere of hostility that had formerly prevailed. Although official visits were exchanged and regular communication was established through a North-South Coordinating Committee and the Red Cross, no substantive progress was made. The contacts quickly broke down and were finally terminated by the North. This breakdown reflected basic differences in approach, with North Korea insisting that immediate steps toward reunification be taken before discussion of specific issues and Seoul maintaining that, given the two sides' history of violence, any realistic approach to reunification must be a gradual, step-by-step process.

During his tenure (1981-1988), President Chun Doo Hwan repeatedly suggested a summit meeting with President Kim of North Korea to discuss any and all proposals, an agreement to normalize inter-Korean relations pending reunification, and other specific measures to reduce tensions and promote humanitarian and cultural exchanges. In January 1982, President Chun, for the first time, addressed the central political issue, proposing that the North and South organize a conference to draft a constitution for a unified democratic republic of Korea. South Korea intended to present its draft constitution and urged the North to do so. South Korea maintained that a dialogue should be based on de facto recognition of each other's existing political, social, and economic systems. Seoul supported the recognition

of both Koreas by the major powers in the region (the U.S., USSR, China, and Japan), and the admission of both Koreas to the United Nations prior to peaceful reunification. North Korea rejected these ideas on the grounds that they would perpetuate the peninsula's division.[8]

Tension between North and South Korea increased dramatically in the aftermath of the October 9, 1983 North Korean assassination attempt on President Chun in Burma. North-South sports talks the following spring became acrimonious after the Rangoon bombing. South Korea's suspicions of the North's motives were not diminished by Pyongyang's proposal for "tripartite" talks on the future of the Korean peninsula. This initiative, made public on January 10, 1984, called for talks with the U.S., in which "South Korean authorities" would be permitted to participate. The tripartite talks would replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty, which would provide for withdrawal of all U.S. troops and a declaration of nonaggression between North and South.[9]

North Korea's offer to provide relief goods to victims of severe flooding in South Korea in September 1984, and South Korean acceptance, signaled the beginning of renewed dialogue between the two parties. Both sides began discussion on a variety of fronts: Red Cross talks that addressed the plight of family members separated by the division of Korea, economic/trade talks, and parliamentary talks. However, citing the U.S.-ROK Team Spirit joint military exercise, the

North suspended these talks in January 1986. In addition, both sides have met under International Olympic Committee auspices to discuss cooperative ways of approaching the 1988 Summer Olympics to be held in Seoul. However, the North has consistently attempted the impossible, namely, that the South agree to more sports events to be held in the North.[10]

MEASURES FOR DEESCALATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

What are the specific measures, if any, for bringing about reduced tensions and conflict settlement on the Korean peninsula? Some of these measures, to be discussed at the three separate levels, may be grouped under military, inter-Korean dialogue, and regional diplomatic considerations.[11]

First, on military security, both sides in the Korean conflict must:

- Initiate a series of confidence-building measures to reduce the level of tension between the two sides, such as prior notification of the scheduled military exercises, sending an observer team to watch the exercise in progress, etc.
- Stop or reduce the frequent military exercises, such as the annual joint U.S.-ROK military exercise as a symbolic gesture of tension reduction.
- Agree to demilitarize the joint security area in Panmunjom and to an eventual re-demilitarization of the DMZ.

Second, on inter-Korean dialogue, the two regimes must:

- Sustain the current momentum of the North-South Korea dialogue (interrupted momentarily) at three levels: Red Cross talks, economic talks, and parliamentarian talks, so as to reach an agreement on substantive issues pertaining to tension reduction.
- Take bold initiatives to resolve the current deadlock on sports talks to enable the holding of the 1988 Seoul Olympics as scheduled.
- Hold a summit meeting between the two Presidents aimed at a breakthrough in overcoming the current deadlock in relations.

Third, on the diplomatic level, both states must engage the major powers surrounding the Korean peninsula to assist in the resolution of the Korean conflict by taking any or all of the following measures:

- Hold an international conference on the future of Korea.
- Encourage diplomatic cross-contacts and recognition by the major powers.
- Assist both Koreas in agreeing on measures of arms control and disarmament.

As a divided Korea was the microcosm reflecting a world divided in the past, so the search for peaceful resolution

of the Korean conflict may provide an opportunity, or an inspiration in the future, for a lasting world peace "without war and conflict." This dream may sound idealistic. Yet, without it, no creative action is possible in the search for such a noble cause as institutionalizing the peace process on the Korean peninsula.

CHAPTER IV

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Geopolitically, the Korean peninsula is the strategic fulcrum of East Asia where the interests of four major powers--the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the U.S.--converge and crisscross. Therefore, in the 100 years prior to 1985, three major international wars have been waged over the control of the Korean peninsula: the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, and the Korean War of 1950-1953, the last one involving the U.S. and China, among others, as major belligerents.

The Korean peninsula is poor in natural resources, its economic well-being depends on world trade; its import and export activities depend on the supply line from the sea. The fact that South Korea controls one side of the important Strait of Korea (Tsushima), which is one of the four main chokepoints for entrance into the Sea of Japan from the Pacific, also enhances South Korea's strategic value.

In the 1980s, the strategic environment in Northeast Asia surrounding the Korean peninsula is fluid and uncertain due to the heightened tension in U.S.-Soviet relations, the continued Sino-Soviet conflict, and the improvement in Sino-American and Sino-Japanese relations. More specifically, the security environment on the Korean peninsula is rapidly

changing because of increased Soviet military activities in the region, a heightened Soviet concern about developments in North Korea, and an evolving de facto triple entente between the U.S., China, and Japan (to the extent that such major power relationships produce a negative impact on Korea).[12]

SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Soviet policies toward the Korean peninsula were governed less by its bilateral relationship with North Korea than by its concern about Sino-Soviet conflict and Soviet rivalry with the U.S. and Japan. The Soviet Union's strategic-military offensive in the Asian-Pacific since the Vietnam War, however, seems to have led to the reversal of its usual posture from one of limited logistic and military support to a more active and aggressive military assistance to North Korea. As a result of this changed Soviet posture toward North Korea under Gorbachev, in May and June 1985 the Soviet Union modified its hitherto restraining posture by supplying North Korea with its latest weaponry system, including MIG-23s.[13]

Moscow, at some point, may also encourage and support a Pyongyang hardline policy toward the South, in the hope that a major military confrontation in Korea could split the Sino-American detente and the implicit Sino-U.S.-Japanese coalition. Furthermore, as some analysts point out, if strategic circumstances seem favorable, as was the case in Vietnam in the 1970s, the Soviets may attempt to help create one large Korea dominated by pro-Soviet communists in order

to reinforce dramatically its position in the Western Pacific. Strategic considerations may, therefore, be more important in the Soviet calculus of its Korea policy. Conflict in Korea fostered by Soviet military and economic support, however, would accelerate pressures for Japanese remilitarization, cause anti-Soviet collaboration among the U.S., Japan, and China, and thereby exacerbating Sino-Soviet relations. In fact, Soviet perception of such an eventuality may underlie the Soviet (and North Korean) criticism of an evolving "Asian NATO" or U.S.-Japan-ROK triangular military alliance.[14]

CHINA'S POLICIES TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA

China's policies toward the Korean peninsula have been aimed at three basic objectives.[15] First, to maintain regional stability and the existing balance. Any development in and around the Korean peninsula that will lead to instability will be regarded as adverse to Chinese interests. Considering the peninsula as an area of tension and military buildup, China hopes that tension will be relaxed and peaceful reunification gradually realized. Second, given the strategic importance of, and the unique set of, cultural, historical, geographical, and political ties with North Korea, maintaining good relations with Pyongyang is crucial. Third, it is in China's interest that the bilateral relationship between North Korea and China be maintained in a way that will not adversely affect Beijing's relations with Washington and Tokyo.

China's reasons for desiring stability in Korea are obvious. Bound by explicit treaty obligation to North Korea and repeated security commitments, and influenced by Soviet factor, China might find it extremely difficult to refuse to assist the North Koreans if a conflict were to occur. This would inevitably damage China's cooperative ties with the U.S. and Japan and could compromise China's economic modernization program. Soviet influence in North Korea would increase substantially as only the Soviets could supply sophisticated weapons for a military confrontation with a U.S.-backed South Korea. Therefore, the primary objective of China's regional policy is to maintain stability and reduce tension on the peninsula.[16]

China has taken every opportunity to assure the U.S. and Japan that Kim Il Sung has neither the intention nor the capability to invade the South and that the North Koreans are genuinely interested in easing tension on the peninsula. At the same time, Beijing's leadership has tried to persuade Pyongyang that another Korean War would be a disaster for North Korea. China will continue to encourage Pyongyang's independent policy and its efforts to open its economy to the West, as China has done, in order to reduce Pyongyang's dependence on Moscow and to reduce tension on the peninsula.

China will continue to encourage inter-Korean contacts. The inter-Korean talks appear to have at least three beneficial implications for China's interest. First, they should

serve to reduce tension in the region and thus the possibility of military conflict. Second, they should enable the Chinese to more openly explore unofficial relations with South Korea. Third, Beijing should be able to use North Korea's proposal of a confederation arrangement with South Korea to link its own calls for a "one country, two systems" approach to reunification with Taiwan.[17]

China's pragmatic open-door economic policy and its effort to separate politics and economics in its foreign policy has led to a rapid growth in indirect trade between China and South Korea through Hong Kong. The total value of this indirect trade was estimated to be about one billion dollars in 1985, and it increased, in spite of North Korea discontent. Besides indirect trade relations, the airplane hijacking incident of 1983 and the torpedo boat incident of 1985 provided occasions for Beijing to directly contact an unrecognized regime. At the 10th Asian Games in Seoul in 1986, China sent a team of 389 athletes even though North Korea boycotted the games.[18]

Although until very recently China has lagged behind the Soviet Union in semi-official dealing with South Korea, it is clear that Pyongyang is extremely sensitive to Chinese opening toward South Korea. This sensitivity in Pyongyang reveals the importance of China in the North Korean policy calculations, which China should appreciate and value. China's economic contacts with Seoul should not be expanded

to the extent that North Korea-China relations might be compromised. North Korea should always be a higher priority. China should not change its opposition to all "two-Koreas" formulas--such as "cross recognition" and the simultaneous admission to the United Nations.[19]

Finally, China should concentrate its effort on domestic economic development to try to ensure that its modernization program succeeds. Economic considerations are expected to loom larger than ever before in China's policy toward the Korean peninsula.

JAPAN POLICIES TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA

James Reston stated the animosity between the Koreans and the Japanese: "The Koreans hate their former masters, the Japanese, and the Japanese have contempt for Koreans."[20] Nonetheless, since World War II, the Koreans and the Japanese have made considerable progress toward establishing amicable relations and reducing hatred between the two peoples. However, any new proposals and arrangements must take account of the historic and still present degree of mistrust between the two nations. Because of this mistrust, diplomatic normalization between the two countries was not established until 1965, and even then, the two governments had to contend with demonstrations against establishing relations. But the resumption of diplomatic ties between ROK and Japan enabled Korea to receive a massive input of Japanese capital as well as goods

and services.[21] Thereafter, Japanese investment and interests in South Korea continued to increase.

Japan shares a common interest with the U.S. in preserving regional stability and reducing tension on the Korean peninsula as a means of promoting Japanese security and economic interests. Because of its constitutional restrictions, and the absence of defense arrangements with either of the two Korean states, however, Japan depends heavily on the U.S. to preserve security and stability on the Korean peninsula. In fact, the Japanese leadership was quite reluctant to see the withdrawal of U.S. troops under Carter from South Korea.[22]

All in all, relations between the ROK and Japan must be enhanced in terms of the broader security perspectives, and intensive efforts need to be made by both sides to create a new relationship, burying the historic memory of the past. If political and economic relations become strained, it would threaten Japan's immediate security and might well affect Japan-U.S. security relations.

UNITED STATES POLICIES TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The U.S. is a Pacific power with vital security and economic interests in East Asia and the Pacific region. U.S. objectives in the region include the defense of U.S. territory and the lines of communications that connect the U.S. to its Pacific allies and friends, and the fulfillment of its treaty commitments to assist its allies. The regional

balance between North and South Korea is of great concern to the U.S., and is a key factor in U.S. military planning for the Asia/Pacific region. America's determination to stand with South Korea in preserving the common defense has maintained the peace on this strategic peninsula for nearly 35 years.[23]

The U.S. agreed in the 1954 Mutual Security Treaty[24] to help the ROK defend itself from external aggression. In support of that commitment, the U.S. maintains 40,000 troops in South Korea, including the Second Infantry Division and several Air Force tactical squadrons. To coordinate operations between these units and the strong Korean Armed Forces, a Combined Forces Command (CFC) has been established, headed by a U.S. four-star general who serves concurrently as Commander in Chief of the UN Command (CINCUNC). These U.S. forces effectively supplement the Korean people's ongoing and successful effort to deter aggression.

The U.S. government supports the principle of peaceful reunification of Korea. It has long been the position of the U.S. government that the future of the Korean peninsula is primarily a matter for the people of Korea to decide. The U.S., therefore, believes that a constructive and serious dialogue between the authorities of South and North Korea is necessary to resolve the issues on the Korean peninsula, and that concrete steps to promote greater understanding and reduce tension are needed to pave the way for reunifying the

Korean nation. The U.S. is prepared to participate in any discussions between the representatives of North and South Korea, if so desired by both Korean governments and provided that both are full and equal participants in any such talks.[25]

U.S. policy toward Korea focuses on maintaining a stable strategic and political environment through the prevention of armed conflict between the two hostile Korean states and the avoidance of hegemony on the peninsula by any outside power. Renewal of armed conflict in Korea would pose a potentially grave threat to the security of Japan, to regional stability, and to U.S. interests. The presence of U.S. combat forces in South Korea is thus an important means of preserving stability on the Korean peninsula.

In the wake of rapid change in the Asian strategic environment following Sino-American rapprochement in the early 1970s, the U.S. has not always followed a consistent policy toward Korea, as the reversal of the ill-fated Carter administration policy on ground troops withdrawal from Korea illustrates.[26] Nevertheless, the basic U.S. policy goal of maintaining a security alliance with South Korea has remained consistent, and the Reagan administration stresses the continuing importance of close U.S.-ROK cooperation for regional stability and for bilateral trade.[27]

Viewed from this point, a revitalized and strengthened alliance between South Korea and the U.S. is not only an absolute requirement for the national security of the ROK

but also a gigantic step towards a stable power relationship in Asia which would protect the interests of the liberal, noncommunist societies. The new era in Korean-American relations must be envisioned not merely in strategic and military terms but in the larger context of political and economic dimensions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: DESIRABLE ROLES OF THE U.S. FOR PEACE IN KOREA

In the last few years the U.S. has forcefully reaffirmed its defense commitment to Korea, including its nuclear umbrella; cancelled plans to withdraw U.S. ground forces and moved to strengthen the American military presence both quantitatively and qualitatively; maintained a forward deployment strategy to underline its commitment to Seoul's defense; increased support for South Korea's military modernization programs through expanded military assistance, including appropriate sophisticated technology, advanced equipment sales, and improved Foreign Military Sales credits; and broadened the range of security-related economic concessions. At the same time, the U.S. has promised to rule out any bilateral discussions with North Korea unless South Korea is a full participant. These measures have been designed to show an unequivocal U.S. commitment to treaty allies and imply a heightened role for the U.S. in the region.[28]

Considering relations between the U.S. and South Korea as well as those between the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea, involvement of the powers in the conflict will be inevitable and once they are involved in a war on opposite sides, it will be very difficult to retain detente relations

among the powers anymore. To avoid this dangerous situation in advance, another Korean war should be prevented at any cost. The American military presence in Korea is a relatively cheap insurance policy against any resumption of hostilities. What are then the desirable roles that the U.S. could play for deterring outbreak of a war between two Koreas?

CONSISTENT SECURITY POLICY TOWARD KOREA

Future development on the Korean peninsula will also influence the major powers' policies and attitudes toward the respective Korean states. Because the U.S. is an architect and active participant in the current system of a divided Korea, the future direction of U.S.-Korean relations will affect the situation on the Korean peninsula. From a broader historical perspective, U.S.-Korean relations have had many ups and downs characterized by both initial aloof contact and subsequent intimacy. The current active phase of U.S.-Korean policy, one of "involvement and intervention," is motivated largely by U.S. perception of Korea's geopolitical role and importance as part of the post-World War II "internationalist policy" of the cold war era. During the post-World War II era "no Asian nation has been in more intense, sustained, and conflictual relations with the U.S. than Korea."[29]

No nation's policies, including the U.S.-Korean policy, may be considered "enduring," in the sense that diplomatic policies are never permanent but are more likely a reflection and interpretation of particular sets of interests.

From this realistic perspective, then, U.S.-Korean policy is bound to change as it has in the past. In fact, Korea has never mattered much to Americans for its intrinsic interest or characteristics, but only as it relates to some broader concern. Indeed, one can question whether it is proper to speak of mutuality in this relationship at all, since the influence has been so strongly one-way. How long the United States will continue as the single most influential global power, especially in the face of U.S. response to Soviet expansion in the Pacific, remains to be seen. As long as the U.S. remains the principal global power, however, the intrinsic value of the Korean peninsula will continue to be obvious and so Korea will continue to be "an important piece on the chessboard of U.S. geopolitical strategy."[30]

What is needed for the future is to close the gap between action and perception and to articulate a coherent and consistent security policy toward Korea. The policy must leave no room for doubt as to the fundamental American commitment to the defense of the South, and to the strategy of deterrence against a North Korean effort to achieve "re-unification" by force. It should be made clear that this policy serves U.S. interests.

COUNTERBALANCING SINO-SOVIET INFLUENCE

If the Soviet Union or the PRC decides to wage war against South Korea to expand her sphere of influence, whether jointly with North Korea or by themselves, South

Korea cannot defend herself. No matter how well South Korea may prepare herself, she cannot be a match for the Soviet Union or the PRC. The enormous power of the two communist giants can be deterred only by the strength and determination of the United States. Thus, first and most important, the role of the United States is to keep the Korean peninsula within the sphere of American influence and to ward off Soviet and Chinese penetration.

The Soviet Union has adopted a kind of "detour" strategy in the power competition with the U.S. She avoids direct confrontation with the U.S. She also does not push hard toward Japan and the West European countries, since she knows that these nations are regarded by the U.S. as essential partners in the power competition vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and that Soviet threat on these sensitive areas will provoke American retaliation. The Soviet Union concentrates the aggressive efforts in the periphery area where the U.S. has little interest and influence. Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, Cambodia, Laos, and Afghanistan are such areas.

South Korea has never been the target of the Soviet aggression simply because the Soviet Union has regarded that it belongs to the group of nations the U.S. determined to keep under her influence. Once the U.S. reclassifies South Korea as a periphery nation, then the Soviet Union will put it on her target list. What actually is needed for the U.S. to ward off Soviet aggression in the Korean peninsula is to

emphasize her commitment to South Korea defense and to keep a token troop strength to ensure credibility of her commitment.

HELPING SOUTH KOREAN EFFORTS FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Promising to help South Korea in war is good enough to deter North Korean war attempts for the time being, but it is not quite sufficient to stabilize inter-Korean relations. So far as the South has to rely on the American help to maintain military balance between the two Koreas, North Korea will not regard South Korea as a sovereign entity and will refuse to negotiate a peace with South Korea. De facto recognition by North Korea of the authority of the South Korean government is a preliminary condition to make a viable agreement for peace on the Korean peninsula. Thus, we have to induce North Korea to accept the South Korean government as a sole partner in peace negotiations.

In order to start any significant peace talks with North Korea, it is necessary to make South Korea a self-reliant nation in regard to her defense against North Korean threats. Pertaining to this, the U.S. can help South Korea in many ways. For instance, the U.S. can provide South Korea with advanced weapons including badly needed modern tanks and sophisticated airplanes, and help South Korea's defense industries with new technology, so that South Korea by herself can deter North Korean threats without American troops.

Also the U.S. can ease South Korea's economic burden by importing more products from Korea, and by weakening

pressure on South Korea to open her market and revalue her currencies until South Korea becomes competitive against Japan and European countries in foreign trade. Through November last year, U.S. imports from the four countries (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) hit $56 billion--more than two-thirds of $80 billion worth from Japan. Therefore, the four countries' trade practices have recently become an issue in the U.S. presidential campaign. But, as I stated above, South Korea has been under a precarious security environment, and her economic development has contributed to enhance defense capabilities against the North Korean threat and Soviet expansionism, by allowing 6 percent of her GNP to be spent on defense.[31]

Ironically, U.S. companies helped the four countries build up their export strength by investing in them and ordering from Asian manufacturers to cut costs. Many U.S. companies were able to keep offering numerous products only because of inexpensive offshore production. The four countries ship most of their exports under American labels, with profits going to U.S. corporations. If Washington retaliates against the four countries's exports or forces them to revalue their currencies further, U.S. multinationals in these countries may feel the pain as much as the four countries' own companies.[32]

PROMOTING A CONDUCIVE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Unless all the powers agree to accept peace in the Korean peninsula, no durable peace can be settled by the two Koreas, because just one power's willful intervention is sufficient to disturb peace in Korea. Korea, even if it were unified, cannot match any of her neighbors in military strength. Any one of them can easily break down inter-Korean power balance with relatively small military aid to one Korea. Thus, without unanimous consents by all of the concerned powers, no peace can be introduced on the Korean peninsula.

Which of the four powers can initiate an international effort to bring about such an arrangement for Korean peace? I think the U.S. is the only qualified nation for the role. The Soviet Union and the PRC are antagonistic to each other and neither side can initiate such an effort. Japan is not an adequate choice since she cannot exert sufficient influence on either Korea, because of the past memory of Japanese rule and her constitutional restraints. The U.S. is the only nation which has sufficient power to promote regional peace, and also has diverse and multi-pronged cooperative relations with all concerned powers. Furthermore, the U.S. is the only nation among the four that has not shown any territorial interest in the Korean peninsula, and also is the only one which has been entrusted by the United Nations to keep peace in Korea. Promotion of an international arrangement conducive to Korean peace is then another contribution the United States can render.

APPENDIX A

MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Parties to this Treaty,

Reaffirming their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments, and desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific area,

Desiring to declare publicly and formally their common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the Pacific area,

Desiring further to strengthen their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive and effective system of retional security in the Pacific area.

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Parties undertake to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, or obligations assumed by any Party toward the United Nations.

ARTICLE II

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of either of them, the political independence or security of either of the Parties is threatened by external armed attack. Separately and jointly, by self help and mutual aid, the Parties will maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this Treaty and to further its purposes.

ARTICLE III

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on 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.

ARTICLE IV

The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE V

This Treaty shall be ratified by the United States of America and the Republic of Korea in accordance with their respective constitutional processes and will come into force when instruments of ratification thereof have been exchanged by them at Washington.

ARTICLE VI

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.

NOTES

1. "South Korea," Background Notes, U.S. Department of State, April 1987, p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, Soviet Foreign Policy (New York: Pergamon Press, 1986), pp. 92-93.

4. Thomas P. Bernstein and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Soviet Union, China and Korea," The Journal of Asiatic Studies, 1982, pp. 71-78.

5. Young Whan Kihl, "The Two Koreas," in Kihl and Lawrence E. Grinter, Eds., Asian-Pacific Security (Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1986), pp. 157-159.

6. Ibid.

7. Young Whan Kihl, "The Korean Peninsula Conflict: Equilibrium or Deescalation?" in Lawrence E. Grinter and Kihl, Eds., East Asian Conflict Zones (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), p. 108.

8. "South Korea," Background Notes, pp. 6-7.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Kihl, "The Korean Peninsula Conflict," pp. 116-118.

12. Kihl, "The Two Koreas," p. 152.

13. Ibid., p. 156.

14. Ibid.

15. Hao Yufan, "China and the Korean Peninsula," Asian Survey, Vol. XXVII, August 1987, pp. 866-868.

16. Ibid., p. 874.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., pp. 877-879.

19. Ibid., p. 883.

20. James Reston, "America in Asia," The Korean War (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 218.

21. T. C. Rhee, "South Korea's Economic Developments and Its Socio-Political Impact," Asian Survey, Vol. VIII, July 1973, p. 679.

22. Kihl, "The Two Koreas," pp. 155-156.

23. Frank C. Carlucci, Secretary of Defense, Annual Report to the Congress, FY 1989, p. 35.

24. See Appendix A.

25. "North Korea," Background Notes, U.S. Department of State, April 1987, pp. 6-7.

26. Larry Nitsch, "U.S. Troops Withdrawal from South Korea," Asian Survey, Vol. XXI, March 1981, pp. 325-341.

27. Kihl, "The Two Koreas," p. 155.

28. Norman D. Levin, The Strategic Environment in East Asia and U.S.-Korean Security Relations in the 1980s (Santa Monica: Ford Foundation, March 1983), pp. 22-23.

29. Kihl, "The Two Koreas," p. 170.

30. Ibid.

31. Warren Gebert, "Can Asia's Four Tigers Be Tamed?" Business Week, February 1988, pp. 2-3.

32. Ibid.

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