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Reinvigorating the Partnership**

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FROM COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TO SECURITY CO-MANAGEMENT: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE ROK-U.S. ALLIANCE

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I. MAD on the Korean Peninsula

Once again the South Korea (ROK)-U.S. alliance is at the center of controversy between the two countries. Unlike in the past when the issue largely emerged as part of the U.S. attempt to reshape its global security posture, this time demands for change appear to be coming from both Seoul and Washington. Are these demands genuine? Does the Bush administration wish to restructure the bilateral military relationship with Seoul in order to help consolidate its vision of a new world order? And does the U.S. public support such a vision? Or is the Bush administration using the issue of realignment—while not meaning to cause a structural change—to kill two birds with one stone: one to solve the problem of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation with maximum concessions from South Korea and the other to attain Seoul's participation in the U.S.-led pacification of Iraq?

In its dealings with the Bush administration, does the Roh Moo-hyun government in Seoul want to make use of the popular demand for more independence from the United States? On 14 October 2003, President Roh stated:

[T]he world has changed [compared with the global Cold War era] and now is not the era of confrontation, mistrust, and hatred [between the two Koreas]. Instead the present era has become one of reconciliation and accommodation [of diverse opinions including the purportedly pro-North Korean ones] (*Hankook Ilbo* 2003).¹

By extension, it seems that Roh's attitude would, if anything, heighten the tension of the inter-Korean process of rapprochement and Washington's plan to stop Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. Such tension undoubtedly affects the Roh government's attitude toward the ROK-U.S. alliance and Washington's response.

We begin with an analysis of the reasons why both Washington and Seoul appear to want a change in the bilateral alliance. Because the alliance was forged a half century ago as a form of collective defense—and deterrence—against a possible invasion from North Korea, the point of departure is a look at the current military situation on the Korean peninsula. The decades-long confrontation between the North and South has produced a form of military balance unique to the Korean peninsula—a local (not a regional or global) setup of mutual assured destruction (MAD) has locked the two Koreas in a military stalemate sustained by asymmetric capabilities and conditions.

1. On the surface, this statement sounds innocuous, but the context in which it was made is important. President Roh made the statement to the National Assembly while he addressed the question of Song Doo-yool—a Korean-German scholar who was being investigated by the prosecutor's office about his pro-North Korean activities.

The capabilities of the two Koreas are matched to the extent that neither side could survive a war and afterwards claim anything but a Pyrrhic victory. In conventional forces, North Korea's overwhelming numerical superiority is checked by the qualitative edge held by the South Korean military. Add to the South's forces the U.S. forces stationed in Korea (USFK) and even a prudent assessment of the military balance will have to come out in favor of the South. But Pyongyang's qualitative deficiency in conventional forces is more than made up by its unconventional forces. It is known to have a strong chemical and biological warfare capability along with perhaps a few crude nuclear devices.² Moreover, North Korea has more than 100,000 special forces—the world's largest special forces—trained to stage a guerrilla war behind the lines. North Korea reportedly maintains a large contingent of spies and sympathizers in the South.

In a war, the asymmetry in military capability between the two sides might play out this way: Pyongyang ignites internal turmoil in South Korea with its "sleeper" agents, and the special forces infiltrate by air and through tunnels. As the guerrilla-style agitation builds, Seoul will find it extremely difficult to suppress the turmoil. South Korea's only option will be a full-scale retaliation against the North; this will escalate into an all-out war. Although the ROK-U.S. combined forces will expect to win eventually, the two Koreas will suffer unbearable damage, including the prospect of extinction for the North Korean regime. Faced with this imminent danger, the Pyongyang regime will resort to WMD, including atomic bombs. Pyongyang's use of nuclear weapons will force the United States to respond in kind, resulting in devastation beyond imagination. The war will also see tens of thousands of U.S. casualties.

Consequently, it is natural that neither Pyongyang nor Seoul expects the other side to embark on a course of guaranteed mutual homicide that would take place because of the way asymmetric capabilities are laid out.

Besides the multiple layers of asymmetric balance in capability, three conditions will further enhance the military stalemate. One is Seoul's proximity to the border. Located just 25 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the Seoul metropolitan area is wide open to North Korea's long-range artillery and multiple rocket launchers that can fire a half million shells per hour. Including those who commute to Seoul for work, close to one-third of South Korea's population is held hostage to these archaic weapons: Pyongyang does not need to use even medium-range missiles to hit Seoul. Another factor is the deployment of USFK between Seoul and the DMZ. In case of war, it would be difficult for the North Korean military to skirt the U.S. forces, especially

2. According to conversations the author has had with South Korean military experts, North Korea is capable of producing 4,500 tons of chemical weapons and 1,000 tons of biological weapons per year in addition to its current stockpile.

when the latter are engaged at full force. Once the USFK get used as a trip wire, Washington will have to send in reinforcements, and the above scenario will most likely become a reality.³ Still another factor is the relatively weak defense around Pyongyang. As about 70 percent of North Korean forces are deployed south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, the North Korean capital will become extremely difficult to preserve in a protracted war. Hence, both sides will have to think long and hard before starting a war.

The asymmetric military balance in Korea is expected to last for a long time unless a change is forced from without. The two Koreas have no urgent need to tip the scale. Placing the highest priority on the prevention of war, Seoul is happy to pursue its engagement based on the local MAD. Pyongyang should be equally pleased with the security assurance that will allow it to experiment with economic reforms with little fear of a Trojan horse. Its military can always step in, contain the system, and thus endanger Pyongyang's opening to the outside and reforms.

Ironically, it is the United States that, intentionally or inadvertently, might start a chain of events that could change the status quo on the Korean peninsula. The global war against terrorism might cause Washington to end up disrupting the asymmetric military balance in Korea. Specifically, it is Pyongyang's WMD capability and its delivery vehicles that Washington wants to control if not eliminate. Yet these two are quintessential components of the local MAD in Korea: WMD to assure the destruction of the two Koreas and the USFK and the long-range missiles to deliver the WMD to Japan and possibly the United States. Stripped of its WMD and long-range missiles, Pyongyang will lose not only the extra layer of deterrence but also its negotiating leverage vis-à-vis Washington and Tokyo.

Currently faced with pressure from without, North Korea's Kim Jong-il has once again launched his diplomacy of extortion—albeit spiked with a large dose of meandering. On 17 September 2002, during the first visit to Pyongyang by a Japanese prime minister, Koizumi received Kim's assurance that North Korea would allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency as prescribed in the 1994 Agreed Framework and would extend the moratorium on flight testing of long-range missiles (*Hankook Ilbo* 2002). Kim's gesture, however, was a temporary move aimed at deflecting the hard blows that might come from the Bush administration. Events since October 2002, culminating with the North's declaration of its nuclear ambition

3. Many South Koreans therefore worry that the U.S. plan to relocate the majority of USFK south of the Han River is being contemplated to avoid the trip-wire effect and also to be able to strike, if necessary, targets in the North with minimum casualties to U.S. troops.

as a deterrent while acceding to six-party talks—comprising the two Koreas, the three regional powers, and the United States—clarify that Pyongyang has not abandoned its old way of doing business.

Having learned a bitter lesson from the 1994 Agreed Framework that North Korea indeed possesses great tenacity, will Washington pressure Pyongyang to eventually give up its WMD and missile capability? Should that happen, what kinds of compensatory measures would Kim accept in order to maintain the North's asymmetric deterrence?

No definitive answers are yet available. It is doubtful that either Pyongyang or Washington has formed any firm plans yet. Nevertheless, one can speculate on the basis of the previous behavior of Kim Jong-il's regime and the policy orientation of the Bush administration. Kim most likely will keep maneuvering without allowing Washington to strip him of his WMD and missile capability. Both Kim Jong-il and his late father should be blamed for mismanaging the economy but can take credit for skillfully executing the diplomacy of extortion. Kim Jong-il will soon figure out how to handle Bush—if he has not done so already—and will present Washington a new mix of foreign policies for maximum diplomatic leverage. It is also doubtful that the United States will be able to fully “decloak” North Korea—uncover fully Pyongyang's nuclear past and nullify its missile technology. Pyongyang would demand an exorbitant price in return for giving up those two geese that have, to date, laid the golden eggs of food aid, construction of two light-water reactors, heavy fuel oil, and even Prime Minister Koizumi's visit.

Another area in which the United States may be able to pressure North Korea is the control of conventional arms—a critical component in the local MAD. With the world's largest concentration of forces per square mile, the midsection of the Korean peninsula remains extremely vulnerable to accidental wars. A maverick general in the North can start a war by shelling Seoul for 12 minutes. After receiving some 100,000 hits, no South Korean President would be able to resist the order to retaliate.

Despite the centrality of the conventional forces in the military balance, it may not be too difficult for both sides to craft some form of arms control, especially a reduction in manpower. Pyongyang could see that its million-plus forces will find it difficult to stop the smaller but more potent ROK-U.S. combined forces, and its deterrence therefore must continue to depend on the doctrine of kill-and-be-killed. For this, Pyongyang does not need the capacity for overkill; instead, all Pyongyang needs is the capability sufficient for just one kill, and that can be provided by a force much smaller than currently in uniform. The manpower thus freed could be redirected to farming and building up the North's infrastructure.

Arms reduction negotiations would allow South Korea to reciprocate, most probably in equal proportions and not in same absolute numbers. Thus Pyongyang will maintain the quantitative edge—an important psychological factor for domestic political purposes. For Seoul, some reduction in manpower would not dent the qualitative superiority it enjoys over the North. A reduction would also help justify the continued presence of the U.S. forces. Given the rise in anti-U.S. sentiments in South Korea (Hong 2003), the Seoul government needs all the tools it can find to sustain the alliance.

For Washington, however, arms reduction in Korea would be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, U.S. influence over the two Koreas would increase because the USFK would become more important to dual deterrence, further insuring the local MAD. On the other hand, the publics, especially in the South, would ride the mood of military confidence building with the North and demand that U.S. forces shape up or leave. The tension between the Seoul government and the Korean public would become an issue that Washington could not treat lightly.

Although no one can foretell what will happen to the local MAD in the long run, changes appear to be in the offing, but their nature is unclear. Should the local MAD be broken, the effects will be serious. Imagine the Bush administration somehow taking the teeth—the WMD and the long-range missiles—out of the North Korean military. How would Pyongyang respond? How would Washington react to such responses?

Nevertheless, MAD's success in deterring a conventional war on the peninsula has undoubtedly enabled Pyongyang to undertake its nuclear diplomacy. MAD clearly served as a cushion for former President Kim Dae-jung to launch what he called the Sunshine Policy—engagement and support of the North with little or no reciprocation. The situation was like a game of chicken in which both sides played so well they could both enjoy the spillover. Then what is the problem? Is it wrong for the two Koreas to use local MAD as a base from which to build a future the peninsula prefers—as long as peaceful coexistence is guaranteed?

In principle, there is no arguing that the two Koreas should enjoy the fruits of the local MAD. Nevertheless, two critical factors seem to oppose this outcome and should serve as two major sources of change in the ROK-U.S. alliance. One is the Bush administration's world order that may halt—or at least place some stringent conditions on—the extent of inter-Korean rapprochement. The other is the changing attitude of the younger generation in the South. Younger South Koreans will be emboldened by the acceleration of inter-Korean reconciliation; this will manifest itself in a growing sentiment against the United States or, at a minimum, Bush's Korea policy.

II. Sources of Change in the Alliance

A systematic analysis of the changing worldview of the Americans and the Bush administration begins with an examination of the three theaters of U.S. international interaction—the global, the regional, and the peninsular.

The Global Dimension of Forging a New World Order

To many, the end of the global Cold War was supposed to mean the beginning of Pax Americana. Yet during the final decade of the twentieth century the sole remaining military superpower was unable to build a unipolar world order. The first Gulf War did not destroy Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq, military actions in the Balkans failed to end many ethnic conflicts, and the complex engagement of Pyongyang has yet to produce a system of lasting peace in Korea. Instead of moving to an integrated system under U.S. hegemony, the world saw a gradual division into three major blocs: America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific.

In the U.S. bloc, the United States continued to exercise what came close to a hegemonic control. But the other two blocs were quite different. Europeans made giant strides toward the eventual goal of building a "United States of Europe" whose size and capabilities would exceed the United States. In military security affairs, the United States remained a dominant player in Europe, especially with the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Outside the realm of security, however, Washington was not in a superordinate position in Europe. The Atlantic partnership could thus be characterized as one of hegemonic cooperation, in which the Europeans recognized Washington's supremacy but maintained a mostly reciprocal partnership.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the United States was involved in the game of hegemonic competition. The big powers in East Asia needed the U.S. presence to enhance the global stature of their region and to assist in the balancing among them. Despite increasing contacts and exchanges, the Sino-U.S. relationship combined elements of both competition and cooperation. Regardless of the economic recovery—or perhaps to boost one—Japan's leaders seemed to be leaning toward military assertiveness, which would in turn cause more friction than cohesion in the Washington-Tokyo relationship. And it was no secret that Russia's Putin was trying hard to restore the northern triangle of Russia, China, and North Korea with which to expand Russia's sphere of influence and possibly undermine the U.S. sphere.

Then came the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the ensuing war on terrorism. The tragic devastation notwithstanding, the event provided the Bush administration with momentum to push for U.S. hegemony. The Afghan expedition was completed, and Iraq is being pacified—albeit with high casualties to both the military and civilians—

following the U.S. preemptive strike. Although some friends of the United States in Europe and the Middle East were reluctant to support another war against Iraq, it must be noted that the Bush administration went ahead with the attack as part of its global campaign against terror.

How would the U.S. goal of attaining global hegemony affect the Korean peninsula? Despite Pyongyang's attempts to distance itself from international terrorism, it is still a member of the "axis of evil" and a state that sponsors terrorism, according to the U.S. Department of State. As such, North Korea cannot be ruled out as a possible target of a preemptive strike by the United States. Surely Washington would have to think twice before taking action because North Korea is vastly different from Iraq. Unlike Iraq, North Korea has a heavyweight sponsor—China—in its backyard, and South Korea is not an East Asian Israel—an ally to be preserved regardless of cost. A preemptive attack on North Korea would mean an all-out war, destroying both Koreas and igniting a fierce struggle between Washington and Beijing over the Korean peninsula.

But would the United States give up the option of preemptive attack on North Korea? Probably not. The United States wields a powerful stick with multiple utilities. It can be used against Pyongyang even as bilateral and multilateral talks continue, used as a lever against Seoul, and included as a critical element in its global war on terrorism. Simply put, the Bush administration has no pressing reason to soften its attitude toward Pyongyang.

The Regional Dimension of Hegemonic Competition

Northeast Asia has been undergoing great change in its international relations since the Soviet empire disintegrated more than a decade ago. Northeast Asia saw two main mechanisms of power management during the Cold War. One was part of the worldwide bipolar divide: the northern triangle of Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang was pitted against the southern triangle of Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul. The other was a regional power relationship among the big three—the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. Now that the former Soviet Union/Russia has been eclipsed and the bipolar configuration has faded in Northeast Asia, what has replaced the former power universe?

The southern triangle of the United States, Japan, and South Korea is still active and, if anything, becoming more cohesive—albeit in the context of U.S. unipolar ambition and the containment of China's hegemonic rise. With its diplomacy of extortion, North Korea has successfully made the United States come to its door and has contributed to the creation of the Washington-Pyongyang-Seoul triangle. Yet the most noteworthy development is the rise of the Washington-Beijing-Tokyo triangle. While filling the

void left by Russia's decline, the new big-power arrangement is rapidly becoming the dominant framework of international politics in Northeast Asia.

The Washington-Beijing-Tokyo triangle of the 1990s is different from its predecessor, the United States, the former Soviet Union, and China (Zhang and Montaperto 1999). The Washington-Moscow-Beijing triangle of the 1990s tended to be driven by the two-against-one process that was inherently conflict prone. In contrast, the new United States-Japan-South Korea relationship may have shown a more reciprocal behavioral pattern with potentially less conflict. What is definitely clear is that among these countries the United States exerts the most power and may be able to dictate the triangle's direction.

How would Washington view the relationship between this big-power triangle—the United States, China, and Japan—and the smaller triangle consisting of the United States and the two Koreas? It is a complex question requiring an equally complex answer. The United States would likely use both triangles to advance its interests in Northeast Asia. Being the “manager” of the two triangles, Washington would try to harmonize them for maximum efficacy in foreign policy. It would use one triangle to resolve the issues of the other—especially the U.S. relationship with Beijing and Tokyo to deal with the problems on the Korean peninsula. At the same time, Washington would find that one triangle could constrain its moves in the other. Regarding Korean unification, for example, Washington could allow neither an absorption by the South nor a military takeover by the North. The former would upset the U.S.-China relationship, and the latter would weaken the U.S.-Japan alliance. Washington therefore remains timid as far as the issue of Korean unification is concerned. The Korean peninsula is too important a buffer zone for the big-power triangle in Northeast Asia, and it will continue to be treated like a buffer for a long time to come.

The Peninsular Dimension of Power Management

The United States has been practicing a two-Korea policy ever since the global Cold War ended—notwithstanding Washington's official refusal to admit publicly that this is the policy. Compared with the power configuration during the global Cold War era in which the northern triangle was balanced against its southern counterpart, the newly formed structure resembles an isosceles triangle of the United States and the two Koreas—with Washington at the apex. To South Korea, this configuration represented a sea change.

In contrast with the budding link between the United States and North Korea, the Washington-Seoul relationship has endured more than a half century of intense interactions. Through trial and error, the structural foundation for cooperation has hardened in virtually all issue areas. Politically, the two countries share the same

ideology of liberal democracy—even more so now since Seoul’s democratic maturation. The mutual security pact has provided South Korea with a protective military umbrella, and the United States with a valuable foothold on the Asian continent. The United States has also helped South Korea grow economically within the U.S. global network of hegemonic stability; this was especially true during the Cold War period. Socioculturally, many South Koreans have learned the U.S. way of thinking, resulting in their preference for individualism and liberalism.

Because South Koreans have depended on the United States since their nation building began and the bilateral relationship has been largely amicable, one might assume that there is little animosity between Washington and Seoul. This is correct up to a point: there is hardly any deep hostility undergirding the relationship. As in any bilateral relation, however, both cooperation and conflict coexist. With the phenomenal growth of South Korea’s national capability during the past two decades, the possibility of friction has also grown commensurately. As Seoul grows in strength, domestically and internationally, it seeks more equal treatment from Washington. Being accustomed to the patron-client relationship, Washington could be a little reluctant to accede to Seoul’s demands. Such a structural transition is a potent source of friction between the two countries. The emergence of the new Washington-Pyongyang-Seoul triangle indicates why many South Koreans have begun to feel uncomfortable toward the United States.

From the conclusion of the Agreed Framework in October 1994 until President Bush’s inauguration in January 2001, the United States and North Korea were, with a little exaggeration, in an almost honeymoon relationship. This was not because the Americans and North Koreans had suddenly developed warm feelings toward each other. Instead, it was the cold reality of international politics that brought them close. Fearful of following in the footsteps of East Germany, North Korea had to find a protector from its much richer and stronger neighbor to the south. As the Soviet empire disintegrated and China engaged in a two-Korea policy with ever increasing economic ties with South Korea, Pyongyang was left with no choice but to turn to the last of the big three, the United States, for support. From Washington’s standpoint, it was imperative to maintain stability on the Korean peninsula because, although the Cold War had ended at the global level, it had not ended at the regional level in Northeast Asia. The calculated risk taken by Pyongyang over nuclear weapons development provided a “natural” setting in which it was able to invite Washington to a face-to-face meeting. Having identified Yankee imperialism as the source of all harm done to the North Koreans, Pyongyang could not approach Washington directly for support—hence the nuclear diplomacy in which the United States would come to Pyongyang’s doorstep. This meeting of the minds is best illustrated by the contrast between the U.S. accommodation of North Korea and its punishment of Iraq even though both North Korea and Iraq planned similarly for nuclear weapons development.

The Washington-Pyongyang relationship was not all smooth sailing, however. Pyongyang continued to practice the art of brinkmanship. The gravest concern was mistrust about Pyongyang's pledge to freeze its nuclear activities as well as its continued development, deployment, and foreign sales of medium- to long-range missiles. The utmost foreign policy priority of the United States in the post-Cold War era was to block the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. By skillfully playing the issue—it is doubtful whether Pyongyang would ever give up these ultimate instruments of foreign policy and survival—Pyongyang was able to hook Washington.

Compared with the WMD and the delivery systems, other bilateral issues seemed to pale; some active cooperation even occurred on both sides. Visible progress was made on the return of the remains of U.S. service members who perished in North Korea: several classified as missing in action have been returned, and the search has been sustained with Washington's financial support. North Korea has also been the largest Northeast Asian recipient of U.S. aid, to the tune of over \$200 million per year. Although North Korea is still on Washington's list of states that sponsor international terrorism, Pyongyang has not been accused of committing any such acts in the recent past.⁴

There is no reason to suspect that U.S. foreign policy makers want to alter their attitude toward the two Koreas and their de facto two-Korea policy. If anything, the Bush administration is likely to strengthen such a tendency in order to serve its regional and global foreign policy goals. Why would Washington upset the power balance in Korea—the two Koreas are relatively small players although the Korean peninsula has great strategic value—possibly to the detriment of its management of its relationships with China and Japan?

President Bush: His Vision and Policymaking Style

Even before the 2000 Presidential race was over, there was much speculation about Bush's foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula (Park 2000, for example). Would Bush seek a radical departure from the Clinton-Gore line? If so, in what direction and to what extent? No definitive answers were available in candidate Bush's briefing notes. Presidential debates did not produce any clues either. The first debate on 3 October 2000 was mainly on domestic issues, and the only foreign policy issue—Yugoslavia—elicited identical promises from both Bush and Gore to not commit U.S. troops. The second debate, on 11 October 2000, provided extensive coverage of foreign affairs but no major deviation from the published platforms of the two camps: Gore

4. The U.S.-North Korea joint statement against terrorism issued on 6 October 2000 should be considered a giant leap forward. It will serve as a stepping stone toward the removal of North Korea from the list and the eventual normalization of diplomatic relations.

showed an internationalist perspective while Bush took a more conservative line on overseas engagement.⁵ Bush actually cited several foreign policy actions taken by the Clinton administration, from the military involvement in the Balkans to the Middle East peace efforts and the financial bailout of Mexico, that he said he strongly supported. At one point Bush even said without elaborating that military force should be used abroad “to help overthrow a dictator. . .when it’s in our best interests.” He also reaffirmed the need to continue the U.S. military presence in Korea not only for stability of the peninsula but also for stability of the region. The third and last debate, on 17 October 2000, saw the candidates spar mainly over such domestic issues as tax cuts, welfare, and education (Bush and Gore 2000b). On foreign policy, Bush said as much:

Our nation needs to be credible and strong. When we say we’re somebody’s friend, everybody’s got to believe it. Israel is our friend, and we will stand by Israel. We need to reach out to modern Arab nations as well, to build coalitions to keep the peace. . . . It must be in our vital interest whether we ever send troops. The mission must be clear. Soldiers must understand why we’re going. The force must be strong enough so that the mission can be accomplished. And the exit strategy needs to be well defined. I’m concerned that we’re overdeployed around the world. You see, I think the mission has somewhat become fuzzy. . . . There may be some moments when we use our troops as peacekeepers, but not often.

To figure out U.S. postelection policy toward Korea, therefore, observers were reduced to the task of guessing—making informed speculations on the basis of what is known about the foreign policy stances and decision-making styles of the two candidates. The foreign policy orientations of the two political parties were also integral to this intellectual process.

One premise seemed certain: no matter who would occupy the Oval Office in January 2001, his policy would be dictated by the twin goal of keeping peace on the Korean peninsula and sustaining Washington’s influence on the peninsula. Turmoil would need to be prevented even if an atmosphere of reconciliation between the two Koreas was not promoted. Promotion of reconciliation would require “playing Godfather” to both Koreas at the risk of appearing to practice a divide-and-rule policy. Within the framework set by these fundamental objectives, there could be differences—some in nuances and others in substance—between the two candidates.

5. As to the U.S. role in the world in the post–Cold War era, Bush said (CNN 2000a), “We can’t be all things to all people in the world. And I think that’s where maybe the vice president and I begin to have some differences. I am worried about overcommitting our military around the world. I want to be judicious in its use.” To this, Gore countered “. . . this is an absolutely unique period in world history . . . we have a fundamental choice to make. Are we going to step up to the plate as a nation, the way we did after World War II?”

The average U.S. voter seemed to know little about the foreign policies of Al Gore and George W. Bush. Campaigns staged over many months had not led to a crystallization of each candidate's position on many foreign policy issues. The most important reason for this was that, during the campaign, no pressing foreign policy issues arose to cause one candidate to differ from the other. Even on a few issues of import, Gore and Bush did not disagree much. Both expressed a generally positive outlook toward U.S. trade with China, they were on the same side of the intervention in Kosovo, and they shared a similar perspective on the Middle East peace process. They had some differences about the dealings with Russia and missile defense, but these issues were not big enough to sway voters.

The second reason why the candidates did not pay much attention to foreign policy issues was that each had different challenges. Bush's challenge was to demonstrate that he had more than an affable personality; he had to prove that he knew what was going on. The test was based more on his command of domestic issues than international problems. Gore faced the opposite challenge: nobody questioned his grasp of policy, but many had lingering reservations about his personality, which at times seemed overbearing. To run a democratic polity that is also the most powerful in the world, a U.S. President needs not only an intellectual capacity to understand the basic issues but also a personality that helps coordinate the activities of the many players in a very complex decision-making structure.

That neither Gore nor Bush was seen to fulfill these two requirements must have been a factor contributing to the tightness of the race. Although foreign policy had been placed in the back burner of the election politics, it was nonetheless critical to be able to tell with some authority how each candidate would apply a foreign policy. Perhaps the most comprehensive public debate on the subject held was that organized by the American Enterprise Institute. It consisted of two panels—one on each contender—such that the “insiders” in each candidate's camp as well as others such as journalists described the foreign policy of that candidate and responded to criticism from observers.⁶

6. The panel, “How Would Al Gore Govern in Foreign Policy?” was presented on 14 June 2000. Panelists were Leon Fuerth (Office of the Vice President), Dale Bumpers (a former senator; in 2000 with the law firm of Arent, Fox, Kinter, Plotkin and Kahn), R. James Woolsey (former Director of Central Intelligence; in 2000 with the law firm of Shea and Gardner), Steven Solarz (a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives; in 2000 with APCO Associates), Doyle McManus (*Los Angeles Times*), and Carla Anne Robbins (*Wall Street Journal*). The panel, “How Would George W. Bush Govern in Foreign Policy?” was presented on 22 June 2000. Panelists were Robert Zoellick (former deputy chief of staff in the George H. W. Bush White House; in 2000 with the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University), Richard Perle (former Assistant Secretary of Defense; in 2000 with American Enterprise Institute), Robert Kagan (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Ivo Daalder (Brookings Institution), Georgie Anne Geyer (a syndicated columnist), and Carla Anne Robbins (*Wall Street Journal*). E. J. Dionne (*Washington Post*) and David Brooks (*Weekly Standard*) moderated both panels.

The panel on Gore's foreign policy described his doctrine as "forward engagement," but the Bush panel did not produce any such slogan. Instead, it attempted to debunk a popularly held view about Bush's three-part foreign policy of strengthening the U.S. military, scaling back military commitments abroad, and focusing on the big powers. Acknowledging the existence of three lines—isolationist, realist, and moralist—of foreign policy thinking in the Republican Party, the panel placed Bush somewhere between the realist and moralist school and asserted that he possessed a Reaganite tendency to invoke U.S. primacy and U.S. principles. At the same time, it was said he inherited a Bushite, more realistic, vision of foreign affairs. The panel declined to identify him with the isolationist school and predicted that the Republican Party would make a return to internationalism should Bush get elected. As to Bush's emphasis on relations with the big powers, the panel cited his Web site to highlight the differences between Bush and the Clinton-Gore administration: China a competitor of the United States, not a strategic partner; Russia important primarily for security reasons, not for its democratizing potential; and India a rising power that must be watched carefully.

With regard to Bush's personality and decision-making style, panelists agreed that he would provide the big picture and then delegate the details to his staff à la Ronald Reagan. But, unlike Reagan, Bush would check the results. In his relationship with advisers, it was noted that Bush could be quite impatient. But again, he would test new ideas before implementing them—a typical CEO-style of management. Because of Bush's penchant for drawing big pictures and delegating details to staff, his lack of knowledge in world affairs would not hamper him in conducting international relations.

In general, President Bush's foreign policy behavior toward Korea was consistent with the AEI panel's observations—until the 11 September attacks on the United States. Very early in his administration, he announced he would not automatically follow Clinton-Gore policies in dealing with the Pyongyang regime. His national security team's review of U.S. posture toward Korea was not urgent. Bush, with little subtlety, was busy championing the U.S.-first-ism. Then came 11 September 2001, and Bush clearly became more Reaganite than Bushite. On the Korean peninsula, Bush's change has been making a forceful impact that may not be coterminous with the intentions of either Korea. President Bush, driven by a Reaganite ideology, has not been bashful in mobilizing the mighty foreign policy resources of the United States to handle the two Koreas. That should be good reason for both Pyongyang and Seoul to raise their alert status, if not shudder with the fear of power politics combined with a moralistic bent.

President Roh Moo-hyun: Foreign Policy Ambiguity for Survival

Further complicating the foreign relations of the United States and the two Koreas was the election of a new President—a maverick politician, Roh Moo-hyun—in South Korea. He took office on 25 February 2003. South Korea's December 2002 Presidential

election marked the end of the Kim Dae-jung era. Kim was able to visit Pyongyang for the historic inter-Korean summit, but his presidency will also be remembered for graft and a multitude of scandals involving his family and confidants as well as diplomatic friction with the Bush administration regarding his policy toward North Korea.⁷ Kim's Sunshine Policy of engaging North Korea resulted in the historic 15 June 2000 joint communiqué, but the policy of wholesale engagement has been under attack in South Korea for the amount of aid given to the North and the Pyongyang regime's reluctance to reciprocate.

There are many reasons why the 2000 summit has not led the way to a full-fledged rapprochement between the two Koreas. Two stand out: one can be attributed to the unique structure of the inter-Korean relationship, and the other to the timing of the meeting. It would be a mistake to treat the North-South relationship as one between two "normal" states. For a considerable time to come, North Korea will remain preoccupied with its survival—of the regime and the system. Without such an obsession, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would have disappeared long ago. By maintaining a local Cold War on the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang has been able to sustain its viability as a state. Its threat of a nuclear weapons development program led to diplomatic brinkmanship with Washington and the 1994 Agreed Framework that Pyongyang boasted was a diplomatic coup. The election of George W. Bush put a damper on Pyongyang's attempt at a repeat performance—this time with long-range missiles and proliferation of its technology.

Until it can feel secure, the Pyongyang regime will refrain from making any moves that might jeopardize its viability. North Korean leaders demand and receive aid from the South but are reluctant to promise lasting peace, reform, or an opening that might dent the North Korean system. Therefore Seoul's assistance to Pyongyang is a form of peace insurance. Should the North Korean threat dissipate, Seoul would cancel the insurance. Pyongyang therefore has to maintain a certain level of tension, if for no other purpose than to collect the insurance premium. The problem is that many South Koreans tend to forget such structural peculiarities in the inter-Korean relationship. In 2003 no consensus exists about whether the Kim Dae-jung administration paid too much for the insurance.

The timing of the summit was also a factor in its failure to produce a marked improvement in inter-Korean relations. In South Korea, the midpoint of the five-year, single-term presidency signals the beginning of the lame-duck phenomenon. The best

7. Kim's obsession with the Sunshine Policy, his success in policy coordination with the Clinton-Gore administration, and personal achievements—the summitry and the Nobel Peace prize—seemed to have clouded his judgment when the Bush administration took over. It took two meetings before he was able to restore a more normal relationship with George W. Bush.

a President can do in the second half of the term is complete the projects begun during the first half. Unfortunately, Kim Dae-jung received his invitation to Pyongyang at the midpoint. Kim Jong-il, well versed in Seoul's electoral cycle and its implications, might have used this political calculus to choose the timing. It is certain, however, that Kim's approval rating nosedived from the time of the summit and never recovered. His decreasing popularity made Kim unable to mobilize the level of political support required to follow through with agreements contained in the 15 June 2000 declaration.

Will North-South contacts and exchanges lead to rapprochement or will tension continue?⁸ Or will one side have to take over the other? It is difficult to tell. The difficulty is magnified by the unfortunate fact that the two Koreas cannot solve by themselves the problems lying between them. Instead, all four major powers in Northeast Asia—including the nonresidential player, the United States—have stakes in the Korean peninsula, and they would not shy from meddling in Korean affairs. Changes in the global system will also impact the two Koreas in political, economic, security, and even human rights–related areas.

Roh Moo-hyun, defying the earlier prediction that Rhee In-je would win, emerged victorious from the first serial primary elections ever held in the Korea. Roh's rise is credited to the younger generations' burning desire for new politics; Roh's fan club, *Nosamo*, and its active participation, especially over the Internet, in the primary process; regional sentiment (people from the southeastern and southwestern areas have monopolized the presidency since Park Chung-hee's military coup in 1961);⁹ and the tacit agreement with this sentiment by Kim Dae-jung (with his roots in Honam) and Kim Young-sam, another former President who still is considered to have strong influence in Youngnam. Simply put, Roh Moo-hyun owes his election to the combined support of younger generations that constitute about 72 percent of the electorate and to the people of the southwestern and southeastern areas.¹⁰

Because Roh did not have a strong local political base (usually measured by the number of National Assembly members under patronage), he depended not on local political bosses but on his cyber campaign to mobilize voters, especially the younger generations. What would young netizens prefer in the way of foreign policy? Members of *Nosamo* probably do not include any Cold Warriors; in fact, the majority of its

8. For a discussion of the possibility of North Korea muddling through, see Noland 2000.

9. The people of Honam realized that they did not have a regional candidate with any realistic chance of winning; therefore they adopted Roh from Youngnam.

10. The information is from the Central Election Management Commission on the 2000 National Assembly election.

members were born after the Vietnam War. In their attitude toward the United States and U.S. troops in Korea, for instance, they cannot but differ from their parents' generation. They tend to differentiate U.S. foreign policy from America as a nation. They may characterize the former as being hegemonic, unilateral, and even bullying, but they see the United States as a land of opportunity with a cutting-edge civilization. Hence it is perfectly acceptable for them to absorb the U.S. way of life but also denounce the behavior of the U.S. government. The dual image of the United States held by younger generations is a serious matter, not to be taken lightly.

Younger Koreans therefore probably seek a break from the past—not necessarily a total abandonment of the traditional line of foreign policy but a departure significant enough to merit a major overhaul. The underlying force of such a break is a dualism embedded in the cognitive makeup of younger people: those in their twenties, thirties, and forties are nationalistic in group orientation but global-internationalistic in personal orientation. Because they have been socialized in the age of McDonald's, Nintendo, and the World Wide Web, they value globalization as a basic tool of survival. They would not hesitate to spend a large amount of money for their (or their children's) overseas education—from language training to the honing of golf skills. As individuals, they aspire to be global citizens. Placed in a group setting and asked to make political statements, however, they do an about-face and often turn into xenophobic nationalists.

Consequently, their foreign policy outlook would emphasize autonomy from external influence and the demand that other countries respect Korea's national integrity. Younger generations do not like the U.S. government meddling in Korea's internal affairs. But anti-U.S. sentiments voiced by young people are triggered by events of the day with few long-term side effects. In other words, their anti-Americanism seems to be symptomatic rather than structural. They view the Japanese government through a similar lens and show disdain for Tokyo when it appears to insult the history and national character of Korea. It is therefore not surprising that China has come to enjoy the "reflectional benefit" that in a recent poll gives it a 10 percent edge over the United States as a country toward which the Koreans felt affinity (*Korea Times* 2002b).

Regarding Korea's unification, younger people are different from their elders and may be divided along two dimensions. One dimension is pragmatism versus idealism. Pragmatists prefer to conduct a cost-benefit analysis before taking a stance, but idealists would push for unification first and later work out the details. There is also the simple yet powerful divide of whether a person likes or hates North Korea. Anti-North Korean idealists probably constitute the smallest group, followed by the pro-North Korean idealists. The majority of younger people most likely fall into one of two categories: anti-North Korean pragmatists or pro-North Korean pragmatists. As long as pragmatists dominate the younger generations, young people would probably not

support any radical shift in Seoul's North Korea policy. Roh's challenge is, therefore, how to deal with the cognitive duality of younger generations so that he can forge a consensual policy toward North Korea.

Another source of tension in Roh's decision making toward North Korea could be Roh Moo-hyun himself. Roh's behavior has been characterized as "antiestablishment," "radical," and even "left leaning;"¹¹ and some people bring up the issue of the pro-North Korean activities allegedly undertaken by his father-in-law during the Korean War. Because two-thirds of the South Korean population place themselves in the middle or to the right of middle, Roh's ability to change North Korea policy is limited. Thus far Roh has not veered much from the Sunshine Policy he inherited from Kim Dae-jung; he has simply renamed it the policy of peace and prosperity—ambiguous enough to embrace a wide spectrum of policies. It is difficult to predict whether Roh will present his own North Korea policy that departs from the principles of inter-Korean reconciliation.

Once his presidency is firmly established, Roh may adopt the policies favored by his supporters with their dual attitude to the North—help the residents of North Korea but not to the extent that the financial burden becomes unbearable. Given Roh's somewhat antiestablishment attitude, it is also possible that he may lean more toward the nationalistic side of the duality. Alternatively, Roh may opt for somewhat hard-line policies toward Pyongyang in order to offset his image of a left-leaning radical, especially if he wants to win the confidence of the conservatives in South Korea and avoid alienating the Bush administration. The third and most likely choice is for Roh to test the domestic and international waters before speaking in his own voice about North Korea.

The absence of a clear-cut policy toward North Korea may make Roh look like an opportunist although it could become an asset for Roh because his ambiguity might alert Pyongyang, Washington, and other surrounding powers. Their first reaction could be an attempt to influence Roh to choose the policy direction they prefer. In the best possible scenario, they may offer Roh a supportive environment that he can exploit in building his North Korea policy. The reverse can also happen: Roh may be ignored and hated by both Pyongyang and Washington.

11. These ideological labels may hinder Roh's efforts to coordinate his North Korea policy with the Bush administration. An incident involving an aide illustrates Roh's caution in approaching Washington. Roh Moo-hyun fired Lee Choong-yul, his special assistant for international affairs, after Lee revealed to an Internet news outlet, Oh My News, on 30 April 2002 that during his recent trip to Washington he had told U.S. congressional and Department of Defense staff to stay out of the Presidential race in Korea although the Republican Party in the United States may not favor Roh (*Korea Times* 2002a).

III. Impact on U.S. Forces in Korea

How will the USFK be influenced by the pressure for change coming from both the United States and South Korea? Will there be a radical relocation south of the Han river? Will there be a sizable reduction in the number of troops stationed in Korea? How will the costs of realignment be shared? Will emotional flare-ups—like those caused by the death in 2002 of two middle-school girls by a U.S. military vehicle—recur among the South Koreans? If so, how will they affect the process of realignment? An analysis of the current situation surrounding the stationing of U.S. troops in Korea best begins with a practical assessment of the costs and benefits for each alliance partner.

Absolute and Relative Costs of Maintaining the USFK¹²

The goals and needs of the alliance partners set the parameters within which costs can be assessed. Especially at the level of subjective appraisal, numbers may not mean much. Should one partner need the alliance to guard its vital interest, the objective calculus of costs could become irrelevant. Once general parameters are set and the pattern is established in managing the alliance, however, it is critical to undertake a periodic review of the costs. By so doing, the partners can fine-tune the alliance so that a radical and disruptive correction may be prevented.

The U.S.-Korea alliance has gone through such adjustments via close bilateral consultations; the main mechanism for that process has been the annual security consultative meetings held since 1968. Since the establishment of the Combined Forces Command in 1978, the two allies have paid special attention to the issue of cost sharing for the maintenance of USFK. Over time, South Korea has increased its cash and noncash contributions. Based on what is called the Special Measures Agreement (SMA), in particular, Seoul has increased its commitment in the areas of labor, logistics, ROK-funded construction, and the Combined Defense Improvement Project. The burden sharing has been managed in a manner quite satisfactory to the U.S. side, as expressed in the following assessment:

The congressional goal for all cost sharing (SMA is one subset) was for the ROK to pay 62.5% of U.S. non-personnel stationing costs in Korea in 1999. The ROK actually paid \$692 million out of \$1.84 billion non-personnel stationing costs, or 38%. However, Korea still provided a substantial contribution compared to other nations when factoring in differences in gross domestic product. . . . The SMA is an important milestone in the alliance and serves the interest of both the ROK and the United States. It

12. This section is based on Park 2003, 59–62.

demonstrates the commitment of a strong combined posture in which the ROK cost sharing contributions directly finance a significant portion of USFK's non-personnel stationing costs (USFK 2000, 39).¹³

The United States appears satisfied with the current formula of burden sharing, and South Korea seems willing to accommodate the wishes of its alliance partner. But is everything fine in the area of cost sharing? While the arrangement meets the goals and needs of the allies in actual costs disbursed, today's division of labor is the result of a long series of negotiations and is subject to change in the future.

A modest framework for change is proposed here; it suggests that the allies look beyond the absolute figures of a typical budgetary decision-making process. The horizon could be expanded in two directions. One direction would widen the concept of costs beyond the U.S. dollar and the Korean *won*. In addition to the economic costs of the alliance and USFK, it is important to examine the military, political, and sociocultural costs. The other direction is an attempt to evaluate the costs in the relative sense—compared with the absence of the alliance, other comparable arrangements, and the alliance partner (*Table 1*).

Table 1 supports a broadly positive assessment of cost sharing. The alliance and USFK are a good deal for South Korea and an even better bargain for the United States. No one can foretell how long the current arrangement will last. As the internal and external conditions of the alliance change, the framework shown here could serve as a guide in future negotiations between the two countries. Most observations included in Table 1 have been dealt with in previous bilateral talks, but Table 1 offers a system to aid the United States and South Korea in reaching a better informed and more balanced compromise in defense cost sharing.

On the basis of the assessment here, the forces of change coming from the both sides of the alliance are not likely to cause a radical restructuring in the alliance—at least in the area of troop deployment. Surely there will be some trimming in the number of troops accompanied with a commensurate increase in equipment. The relocation of U.S. troops will proceed according to plans negotiated over a decade. Nevertheless, the USFK will remain a central component of deterrence and defense against North Korea.

13. In addition to SMA, the cost sharing category included such direct costs as rents, Korean military augmentee (KATUSA) labor, and relocation construction as well as the indirect costs of revenues and taxes plus forgone rent.

Table 1: U.S. Analysis of Costs of U.S. Forces Korea

Costs	Compared with the absence of an alliance	Compared with a comparable alliance (with Japan, for example)	Relative to the alliance partner, South Korea
Military costs	Low costs; massive rapid deployment is difficult in case of major contingency. North Korea must have taken over the South	Extremely low costs; Japan is the hub of America's extended deterrence in Northeast Asia	Extremely low; Korean armed forces are the main instrument of combined defense
Economic costs	Cumulative costs may be high, but are still acceptable compared with the costs of massive rapid deployment; loss of the South cannot be measured in monetary terms	Far less than the costs of maintaining U.S. forces in Japan	Incalculably low when measured against gross domestic product
Political costs	Unthinkable; political value of South Korea as an ally is priceless	Less than the Washington-Tokyo alliance; South Korean government has been far more dependent on the U.S. for legitimacy and support	Low beyond comparison; South Korea has owed its survival to the alliance
Sociocultural costs	Somewhat low; if North Korea had taken over, a unified Korea may have followed Vietnam's path of eventually accommodating the United States	Somewhat low; lower level of anti-Americanism in South Korea	Low; but costs for Koreans absorbing the U.S. way of life have been higher than if Koreans had not done so

IV. Toward a Gradual Reform of the Alliance

The absence of a radical restructuring in the USFK should by no means suggest that the alliance remain unchanged in its nature and form. The alliance may undergo a shift in its philosophy with the help of a leaner and more potent USFK. The local MAD will remain intact for quite some time, and both Seoul and Washington may wish to exploit it in reshaping the alliance. In other words, they can prepare the alliance to serve a purpose larger than the deterrence and defense of South Korea. And forces of change can be expected to help propel the alliance to a different plateau.

The Bush administration's swing to the concept of big power and its pursuit of unilateral hegemony should affect its relationship with Seoul in two opposing ways. South Koreans who are conservative and anti-Pyongyang see the Bush presidency is a true godsend, presenting the opportunity to undo all the wrongs that Kim Dae-jung committed in inter-Korean relations. Even though this group is small and mostly elderly, its powerful voice will rise to echo the Bush line. However, the majority of Koreans, from their 20s to their 40s who are both nationalistic as a group and internationalistic as individuals, may well feel that the Korean nation comes ahead of the Seoul-Washington relationship.

Unfortunately, many pending bilateral issues between the United States and South Korea provide them with outlets for their group-level frustration vis-à-vis Washington.

Many South Korean civic groups have argued that the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) is a vastly unequal treaty when compared with similar arrangements the United States maintains with Germany and Japan—especially regarding legal jurisdiction over U.S. forces stationed in Korea. A revelation in 2000 that the U.S. military secretly released toxic substances such as formaldehyde and waste oil into sources of local drinking water greatly angered South Korean citizens. Despite a first-ever apology made by the commander in chief of USFK, civic groups demanded a structural change in how these matters are handled. Further fueling the military-related conflict between Seoul and Washington have been issues of the Nokeun-ri massacre of South Korean civilians by U.S. troops during the Korean War and the live-fire practice at the Maehyang-ri range, which sparked protests from nearby residents for disturbing their normal patterns of life. Many South Koreans who believed these issues epitomized the unequal relationship between the two countries were angry not only with the United States for a lack of sensitivity but also with the Korean government for not standing up more forcefully to the United States.

Such a perception of Uncle Sam, the whale, bullying a small Korean shrimp has not been limited to military activities. Although they acknowledged the need to open South Korean markets in the era of globalization, many South Koreans tend to resent pressures coming from the U.S. government, seeing them as a thinly veiled attempt to allow U.S. firms an increased penetration into their struggling economy. Even in the area of energy supply, the most vital commodity for a resource-poor country, a view has prevailed in South Korea that Washington was responsible for undermining Seoul's effort to reduce its dependence on other countries for its nuclear fuel supply for electricity generation. Some South Koreans compared their country with Japan, another erstwhile client of the United States, which was allowed to become a first-rate nuclear energy power with Washington's blessing. These South Koreans argue: Why not give similar treatment to South Korea in, for example, plutonium reprocessing?

The Bush administration will continue to face increasing challenges from South Korea—especially from its ever-growing civic movements—in all areas of interaction about the ROK-U.S. relationship. South Koreans are of firm conviction that Washington will have to accommodate their demands because the United States cannot ignore the extent of economic and political maturation South Korea has achieved during the past decade.

How will the Bush administration fare against the self-assertive voices of South Korean civic groups? The structural transition demanded by a rising power is too forceful for any U.S. President to ignore, but the Republican administration in Washington may be

able to manage the Washington-Seoul relationship without major frictions. During the Cold War, it was Republican administrations more than Democratic administrations that upheld the grand strategy of containment with greater vigor and provided U.S. allies with a firmer commitment of protection. In the post-Cold War era, however, the Democrats have been more internationalistic in overseas involvement through peaceful means. Because the 9/11 attacks ushered in a post-post-Cold War era—theoretically at least—the Republicans can turn the clock back. But the changed reality in the global system makes it difficult for a Republican administration to carry out a policy of strict neocontainment.

South Koreans too will have to do their part if their country is to become a more equal partner of the United States. A heightened status does not come with demands only—it must be backed by structural change. A heightened status is achievable only when a country and its people become willing to share the burden associated with that higher status. Washington, fully cognizant of this, will not fail to ask Seoul for increased burden sharing in the bilateral relationship.

U.S. Role Change in Korea

The U.S. role in Korea during the Cold War was that of a deterrer. During the 1990s the United States played the conductor in charge of orchestrating Korean affairs. What is its future role on the Korean peninsula, a role fit for the post-Cold War world? The U.S. global war on terrorism has complicated the task. As there does not exist in the United States a grand strategy with which to shape Korea policy, Washington's role in Korea will most likely emerge through trial and error, and it may well begin with the United States helping to sustain the momentum for inter-Korean peace until a permanent peace regime takes root on the peninsula. The United States may well be called on to play the role of broker between the two Koreas. This would mark a departure from the role of conductor that the United States played in the 1990s when it was the dominant influence in inter-Korean relations. As a broker, it would be expected to dominate less and mediate more.

The U.S. brokering will be appreciated by the two Koreas, especially if and when diplomatic relations are established between Pyongyang and Washington. Kim Jong-il will see normalization with the United States as the culmination of his diplomatic maneuvers, and he will use it as a launching pad for further expansion of international contacts. South Koreans will also interpret it as the beginning of a new era in Northeast Asia in which the two Koreas and the four surrounding powers would interact in a businesslike manner. Despite the position of strength it would continue to enjoy, the United States would nevertheless be considered not as a dictatorial hegemon but as a facilitator for the system's smooth operation.

The presence of U.S. forces will be a manifestation of the facilitating role the United States will play not only for the two Koreas but also for the region as a whole. The concept of dual deterrence—preventing either side from launching an attack—seems to be gaining regional acceptance; even North Korean leaders seem to view U.S. troops as a peacekeeping force.¹⁴ To South Korea, U.S. ground troops are a concrete testament to the U.S. security commitment. To the United States, they are proof that it wishes to remain an Asian power. With the convergence of interests among the three players, USFK will become a valued asset for all. This is one reason why the Bush administration has emphatically endorsed the continued stationing of the U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula.

The United States can also facilitate the provision of economic aid to North Korea. Up until now, most assistance to Pyongyang has been given on a bilateral basis—the major exception being the now-halted construction of two light-water reactors in Shinpo under the auspices of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. Even the food aid supplied by the UN World Food Program is in essence bilateral because it provides the donor with an international organizational channel. When Pyongyang establishes diplomatic ties with Washington and Tokyo, it would be desirable to put more focus on multilateral arrangements. By coordinating their contributions, donors can avoid a duplication of efforts and prescribe the course of economic reconstruction best suited to Pyongyang. They can also minimize the costs of competing against each other for the concessions that North Korea would offer in return for assistance.

Initially North Korea would prefer bilateral deals over a multilateral framework for the obvious advantage of being able to play one donor off against another. As Pyongyang learns that donors will not continue to fall prey to its tactics of divide and rule, it will accept an international consortium in which the United States is involved either directly or indirectly. Pyongyang understands that the United States harbors no territorial ambitions in Northeast Asia, and it would check any potentially threatening inroads by

14. Since the late 1960s, Pyongyang has tended to acknowledge the role of dual deterrence played by the U.S. troops in Korea. Especially at times of crises instigated by North Korea—the 1968 attack on Seoul’s Presidential palace, the 1974 assassination of South Korea’s First Lady, and the 1983 Rangoon massacre of the Presidential staff—Pyongyang appeared to look to the United States to prevent South Korean retaliation. This tendency became more pronounced in the early 1990s following German unification, when North Korean officials began to make public statements cautiously implying the utility of U.S. troops in serving Pyongyang’s security interests. It was Kim Yong-sun who, in his 1992 talk with State Department officials, showed the first official sign of Pyongyang’s softening attitude toward U.S. troops. Kang Suk-ju made direct reference to “dual deterrence” in his negotiations over the nuclear freeze. In 1994 Kim Il-sung himself showed a willingness to tolerate the presence of U.S. forces until both Koreas reduced their respective forces to the level of 100,000. In the same vein, Rhee Jong-hyuck made a statement in 1996 that U.S. forces might serve as temporary peacekeeping forces on the Korean peninsula. And in 2000 Kim Jong-il was said to have told Kim Dae-jung at the summit that “U.S. forces in Korea are necessary and help maintain the stability of Northeast Asia.” (*Hankook Ilbo* 2000)

South Korea, Japan, and even China. The six-party talks begun in August 2003 are likely to continue.

The Security Co-management Initiative

What emerges from our discussion so far is the picture of an alliance that has gone beyond the level of collective deterrence and defense. First and foremost, the local MAD is firmly set and is likely to continue as all the surrounding powers seem favorably disposed to the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. At a minimum, they are not prepared to see any party upsetting the half century of stability. U.S. troops stationed in Korea play an integral part in sustaining the local MAD, and their restructuring will not reach the point of endangering the military balance. USFK have been a good deal for South Korea and an even better deal for the United States from the political, military, and economic standpoints. There appears to be no reason to fix the ROK-U.S. alliance when it well serves both countries' national interests.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the demands for change originating from both the United States and South Korea. Washington would like to see Seoul contribute more toward supporting the U.S. forces in Korea. Moreover, Washington would like Seoul to contribute to its global war against terrorism. The Bush administration's reasoning seems to be that if the alliance has been a good deal for South Korea, it is time for the Seoul government to pay the United States back. In contrast, some in Seoul may argue that it is the United States that has benefited more from the alliance and, therefore, it is time for the United States to help South Korea build a permanent peace regime on the peninsula. The ongoing negotiation about the deployment of Korea's combat troops to Iraq will test how the two sides will play out their conflicting perspectives.

Washington wants Seoul's contribution as an alliance partner in Iraq. Seoul, however, apparently wishes to link deployment in Iraq with the resolution of North Korea's nuclear crisis. As Korea's minister of foreign affairs and trade, Yoon Young-kwan reportedly stated such a quid pro quo to his counterpart, Secretary of State Colin Powell, when he asked for Washington's commitment to grant Pyongyang's request for a security guarantee. An angry Powell reportedly rebuked Yoon that such an attitude was unbecoming of an alliance partner (Sanger 2003). Yoon is typical of South Korea's younger generation in that he shows a posture quite independent of the United States.

Through trial and error, Seoul and Washington will learn how far each can push the other. As neither side is in a position to abandon the other, this may be a default solution and, in fact, is what the two sides have apparently been doing for decades in their annual negotiations. As such, they must have accumulated sufficient know-how about the diplomatic tug of war. There is no question, however, that this bureaucratic

solution has its limitations and will become more wasteful as time goes by. The pressure for change will grow exponentially while the bureaucratic adjustment can proceed only arithmetically.

Consequently, it becomes imperative for the two allies to shift their mental gears and come up with newer thinking. The concept of security co-management is one type of newer thinking. Because the minimal conditions of the alliance will continue to be met by the local MAD, why not let the alliance grow into a security system managed jointly by Seoul and Washington? Put differently, why not develop a NATO-like arrangement that goes beyond a mechanism of collective defense? In such an arrangement, the United States and South Korea would be able to cooperate in all three theaters—peninsular, regional, and global. Although it would take much effort and a long time to work out the details, the nature of a security co-management regime would be more variable-sum than zero-sum for both Washington and Seoul. It would produce more win-win solutions.

There will surely be problems. The young generation of Koreans will object to the idea of their country becoming like Blair's England. The Bush administration will also show reluctance in security co-management because of its lack of trust in the Roh government. Washington has been careful thus far to not share fully its military know-how and technology with Seoul. Will the United States feel comfortable in a system of co-management in which it will have to share more?

While these are some of the obstacles both sides would have to overcome, the future of the alliance would hinge on the allies' willingness to go beyond the level of collective defense. With a move toward security co-management, the two sides would learn to think and act together. Using the issue of the Iraq deployment, for example, a co-management mechanism would have prevented unnecessary frictions between the two countries. With such an arrangement, Seoul would have found it unnecessary to demand a linkage between deployment and the North Korean issue. It would know beforehand that if it aided in U.S. global goals, it could expect that Washington would do whatever was necessary to solve Korean crises. This may be too rosy a forecast, but it is not an improbable vision. Seoul and Washington agree on what security is. They can move together in a mutually beneficial direction with a system of security co-management. The time to act is now.

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