The Origins and Evolution of the Japanese-American Alliance: A Korean Perspective

Oknim Chung

September 1998

The Origins and Evolution of the Japanese-American Alliance: A Korean Perspective

Oknim Chung

Introduction

From the vantage point of 1998, the triangular security relationship between the United States, Japan, and South Korea is at best an anomaly. There is no multilateral security arrangement that links the three countries together; in World War II, the United States and Japan were archenemies; in the postwar period, Japan and Korea have had a relationship characterized sometimes by cooperation, but mostly by rivalry and suspicion; and South Korea has depended heavily on the United States not only for repelling an all-out invasion by North Korea and deterring a recurrence of war, but also for placing a check on Japan's resurgence as a military and regional power.

Yet, by virtue of the bilateral alliances the United States has with Japan and South Korea, the three countries have cooperated on security matters as if a trilateral security arrangement existed. They collaborated in their response to the North Korean nuclear issue, particularly during the 1992–95 period. Before the end of the Cold War, they shared a common frame of mind in recognizing and dealing with the Soviet threat in the Far East. They are likely to coordinate their collective response to China's growing power in the future. More concretely, in the case of an armed conflict on the Korean peninsula Japan is likely to provide support for war efforts directly to the United States and indirectly to South Korea.

Historically, the Korean people were divided in their response to external powers seeking influence in Northeast Asia. One group would side with one power and another with a second, each in an effort to enhance its domestic position within Korea. This had the deadly effect of abetting and threatening the surrounding powers, causing them to get more deeply

involved. Thus China, Japan, and Russia went to war with each other in a competition for influence on the Korean peninsula in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, and the United States and the Soviet Union, alongside China, were pulled into a superpower rivalry in the Korean War.

As a by-product of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and the consequent Korean War, both Japan and South Korea made bilateral security alliances with the United States, and these alliances contributed to the peace and stability in the Far East during the Cold War period. But there are no direct security ties between them. When we consider the two bilateral legs of United States ties in Northeast Asia, the Japan factor in the trilateral relationship tends to be poorly understood and easily ignored. By the same token, Korea's position in the bilateral alliance between the United States and Japan has usually been neglected and also is poorly understood. Indeed, the Japanese long went out of their way to play down the strategic linkages, even though any large-scale military conflict on the peninsula would involve them, at least indirectly.

With the emergence of the post–Cold War era, no one denies that the future security orientations of China and Japan are certain to remain central factors shaping the Northeast Asia region. Northeast Asia is poised on the verge of major political change and potential strategic realignment. But these considerations may not always guarantee an orderly change or realistic prospects for regional states to engage in an effective dialogue among themselves on pending problems. The fundamental source of political and strategic change within the region is internal, not external. Here lies the relevance of a historical review of the U.S.-Japanese military alliance from the standpoint of Korea. This paper will concentrate on the Korean factors in, perceptions of, and choices toward the U.S.-Japan alliance. "Korean factors" consist of those that have affected the evolution of the U.S.-Japan alliance: South Korea's geopolitical situation; its relationships with the major powers surrounding the peninsula; and its economic needs and capabilities. Perhaps the most salient question is how the relationship between Korea and Japan has affected the evolution of the U.S. alliance with each.

Topics of interest include: How did Korea perceive and react to the evolution of the U.S.-Japan security alliance? What has been Japan's position on the Korean peninsula? What is the Korean perception of the U.S. role in, and policy toward, Japan–Korea relations? How do Koreans perceive the role of the U.S.-Japan alliance with regard to the reunification of the Korean peninsula?

The post–Cold War period, which is witnessing an emerging rivalry between Japan and China as well as between the United States and China, will present Korea with many choices. How South Korea places itself not only between Japan and the United States but perhaps more importantly between China on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other will be extremely important to both Korea and the region as a whole.

The Development of the U.S.-Japan Military Alliance

Origins

The first case of United States–Japan–Korea entanglement took place in 1905, immediately after the Russo-Japanese War. During the war, U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt came to believe that Japanese control of Korea was an appropriate means to prevent the further expansion of Russian power,[1] and that it was necessary to acquiesce to the Japanese domination of Korea as a quid pro quo for Japan's recognition of U.S. hegemony in the Philippines. This understanding between the United States and Japan was contained in the secret Taft-Katsura Agreement of July 1905.[2] The United States and Japan cooperated in a number of areas during the first years of the twentieth century. In addition to the Taft-Katsura memorandum, the Root-Takahira agreement of 1908 reaffirmed the two powers' commitment to upholding the status quo in the Pacific. In 1910, when Japan formally annexed Korea, the United States made no response.[3]

Consequently, Korean memories of American complicity in their country's subjugation were strong. American moral support for the Korean independence cause during the colonial era assuaged those memories somewhat. The United States' post–World War II role as victor over Japan and liberator of Korea took much of the edge off the bitter legacy, but a substantial degree of ambiguity was quickly reintroduced. Although the United States is remembered as a liberator of Korea, it also bears the stigma of being one of the two powers whose Cold War differences produced Korea's division.[4] Virtually all South Koreans appreciate the actions of the United States before, during, and after the Korean War, but simultaneously they also understand that much of the sacrifice the United States made would not have been necessary had Korea not been cut in half by the superpowers.

The U.S. policy toward East Asia underwent substantial revision and adjustment in the immediate postwar era. The honeymoon between the Soviet Union and the United States ended, and differences between the wartime allies appeared irreconcilable. The Cold War began during the Allied occupation of Japan, from 1945 to 1952, when Japanese-American ties deepened further than ever before.[5] During the U.S occupation, the Americans, as good winners, were generous, and the Japanese, as good losers, studied hard.[6] Given the archrivalry between the two countries during World War II, this was an irony of history. Interestingly enough, and contrary to the German case, where the United States acquiesced to the establishment of separate occupational zones, Washington opposed all Soviet maneuvers to institute zonal occupation of Japan.

Between 1947 and the spring of 1950, the United States and Japan drifted toward mutual realization that American bases must remain on Japanese soil after the conclusion of a peace treaty. Spiraling Cold War tensions and a civil war in China rendered the idea of great-power-guaranteed disarmament and neutrality as a solution to the "Japan problem" implausible.[7] The escalation of tensions following the triumph of Mao Zedong's armies in China and Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb late in 1949 made defense and deterrence from a distance, with American forces stationed in small numbers on outlying islands, seem impractical.[8] According to George F. Kennan, by 1947 the United States realized that Japan was more important than China as a potential factor in international political developments, despite the United States' strange fascination with China and traditional exaggeration of China's real importance.[9]

In sharp contrast, however, U.S. postwar policy regarding the Korean peninsula was largely improvised, riddled with misconceptions, and filled with frustrations.[10] The defeat of Japan did not bring about the united, independent Korean state that the Koreans desired, and the creation of two Koreas raised a complicated diplomatic dilemma. On the last day of the Pacific War, the United States hastily proposed, and the Soviet Union agreed to, the use of the 38th parallel as a temporary line for dividing the responsibilities of processing the Japanese surrender in the Korean peninsula.[11] The Occupation Army treated Koreans more as if they had been defeated than liberated. While controversy persists as to whether the U.S. command simply committed policy "blunders" or whether it implemented "conscious planning for counter-revolution,"[12] it was clear that Washington concentrated much of its early postwar attention and resources on Japan and China, and that concern over the future internal evolution of Korea received lower priority.

Basically, the United States thought that Korea would not be ready for independence immediately following Japan's defeat and that a period of multipolar trusteeship over Korea would be required.[13] As Harry S. Truman remarked, other than the Pacific War, Korea was just a strange land in far-off Asia.[14] To the United States, the Korean peninsula was of little "strategic" value as a location for its troops and bases,[15] even if it still had some "political" importance. The United States had no vital stake in Korea. By June 1949, all U.S. troops had completed their withdrawal from South Korea, except for the 500-man Military Advisory Group in Korea (KMAG). It was only after 1949 that the American outlook was modified as a consequence of Red Chinese growth and the North Korean attack on South Korea.

The outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, led Washington to revamp its East Asian policy and accelerate the U.S. effort to build an anti-communist bulwark in Northeast Asia. Since then, the two bilateral military alliances—the U.S.-Japan alliance and the U.S.-Korea alliance—have maintained peace and stability in this region for more than forty years. The three-year Korean War reestablished South Korea as a U.S. client-state par excellence in the areas of military, economic, and diplomatic relations. The United States has had to continuously deploy a large-scale military force to protect South Korea, which previously was of low strategic priority.[16]

The Korean War had far-reaching consequences for the U.S. occupation policy in Japan. As soon as war broke out in Korea, the United States reversed its assumption that Korea was not vital to Japan's defense and affirmed the interdependence of Japanese and South Korean security interests. In response to the transfer of U.S. troops from Japan to Korea in 1950, General MacArthur and Prime Minister Yoshida authorized the formation of a United States–equipped 75,000-man National Police Reserve Force, which became the prototype of Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF).[17]

Economically, Japan emerged as a principal beneficiary of the Korean War because of special procurement arrangements and service contracts it concluded with the United States. This created the so-called "Korean War boom" in Japan, which raised industrial production above its prewar level and set the country on the road to economic recovery. The Korean War prompted the United States to terminate its occupation of Japan in 1952 and to transform its erstwhile enemy into an ally against the communist axis of the Soviet Union and China by signing a security treaty with Japan. On September 8, 1951, Prime Minister Yoshida signed the Peace Treaty with the United States and forty-seven other countries, but not with the Soviet Union, Poland, or Czechoslovakia. That same afternoon, he signed a bilateral, mutual security treaty secretly negotiated with the United States.[18]

The U.S.-Japan security treaty stipulated Japan's unilateral and unconditional dependency upon U.S. military protection. During the Korean War, South Korean president Syngman Rhee insisted that the Japanese security treaty serve as a model for the U.S. security treaty with South Korea, especially its provisions of a continuous U.S. military presence "in and about Japan" (Article 1) and the indefinite duration of the treaty's effectiveness (Article 4). He also wanted to obtain assurances that the United States would take automatic, direct military action for South Korea's defense in the event of external attack. The 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and South Korea was negotiated not only as another integral link in the U.S. regional security chain but also as a prerequisite for Rhee's acceptance of the Korean cease-fire agreement. While the United States denied Rhee's request that the treaty contain a provision of indefinite effectiveness and instead included a clause requiring one-year advance notice for termination, Dulles acceded to Rhee's proposal that the United States exercise the right of deploying military forces "in and about" South Korea (Article 4).[19] President Rhee indicated that the Korean people were worried more about Japan than about the Soviet Union.[20] In the meantime, under the treaty, the South Korean government was prohibited from taking "unlawful means" to unify Korea, and the United States retained freedom of action in determining what to do for South Korea.[21] The American military in this way presented its position that the defense of South Korea was closely related to the defense of Japan.

Contrary to the U.S.-Japan alliance, the U.S.–South Korean alliance, at least at the beginning, was an alliance with lower strategic value and higher costs for the United States.[22] Then what makes Japan so important to the United States? Historically, it was the potential and the reality of Japan's capabilities as a geopolitical rival and an armed adversary. In the postwar period, Japan was too valuable to be allowed to fall under Soviet control. Had that happened, the Cold War probably would have been very different. Japan was one of the key venues of that ideological and economic struggle.[23] And the Sino-Soviet military alliance represented by the Thirty-Year Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance signed in Moscow in February 1950 aroused considerable apprehension among U.S. and Japanese leaders, who wished to restructure the occupation system along lines consistent with the new bipolar regional alignment. There was very little prospect of Japan's diminishing in importance to the United States or of its being eclipsed in American eyes by any other state in Asia. And the U.S. preoccupation with Japan has irritated both Koreas.

In the United States, the Korean War helped transform the public's image of Japan from that of a ruthless enemy into that of a de facto ally. The security "gifts" it bestowed on Japan—a formal treaty with the United States, continuation of American bases, increased numbers of Americans in uniform, and a commitment to rearmament—simultaneously "solved" an immediate security problem and guaranteed that the solution would remain controversial for years to come.[24]

Strategic Intersection

It is an irony of history that Korea helped to cement the U.S.-Japanese alliance in the formative years of the Cold War. It is often said that the United States intervened promptly in the Korean War not only for the defense of Korea but more importantly for the defense of Japan. Many Koreans argue that if the United States had demonstrated before the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 the American resolve that became obvious only after the North Korean attack, the Korean tragedy might have been averted.

Governed by the rigid principle of the Cold War, the United States effectively influenced the diplomatic posture of Japan and South Korea; neither of these Northeast Asian allies was allowed to deviate from the staunch anti-Beijing leadership of the United States. A representative example was that Japan, during the tenure of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, attempted to lay down a good-neighbor policy with China based on Yoshida's prediction that geography and economic laws would in the long run prevail over any ideological differences and artificial barriers. But Yoshida's plan was tempered under U.S. pressure and he established diplomatic relations instead with the Chiang Kai-shek government in Taiwan rather than the government in Beijing.[25]

Locked in a deadly confrontation with the Soviet Union, the United States had a far greater stake in containing communism than did Japan. The year 1960 was a watershed in the United States–Japan military alliance. After long and difficult negotiations, the United States and Japan signed the revised security treaty in Washington. Even though the new treaty accommodated much of Japan's desire for sovereign independence and reciprocal obligations, it aroused the greatest mass movement in Japan's political history.[26] At the core of this emotional explosion was the shared perception that the new treaty violated Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, confirmed Japan's subservience to U.S. regional military interests, and increased the probability of Japan's involvement in a U.S. war in Asia.[27] The clause of "prior consultation" was an important innovation requested by Japan. Yet the new treaty only reaffirmed Japan's intention to permit the use of U.S. facilities in Japan for the United Nations Command in South Korea, and the United States enjoyed the same military-base rights in Japan as before. And the first U.S. assurance to provide Japan with a nuclear umbrella was made by U.S. president Johnson in January 1965, about three months after China carried out its first nuclear explosion.[28] During this period, the United States was willing to pay a disproportionate share of alliance costs while facilitating Japan's economic development and giving Japan access to America's vast markets and technology.

Successive Japanese governments have placed primary reliance on the United States for their foreign policy, allowing Japan to concentrate on social modernization and economic growth. The scant attention Japan paid to foreign policy and national security during the 1950s and 1960s reflected the Japanese preference for *seikei bunri* (the separation of politics and economics) and demonstrated Japan's satisfaction with its relationship with the United States, which deeply reflected Japan's realism in adjusting to a new international environment. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, several issues shook this relationship. U.S. economic policies began increasingly to conflict with Japanese trade policies, and the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine appeared to herald a fundamental change in American foreign policy. The "new economic policy" of the Nixon administration together with the sudden announcement of a thaw in Sino-American relations—the "Nixon shocks"—led growing numbers of Japanese to question the durability of Japanese-American cooperation.[29]

To Japan, the Nixon Doctrine seemed to contain serious flaws and contradictions.[30] Japan expected the United States to maintain close consultation and cooperation. The failure of the United States to inform the Japanese government sufficiently in advance of its initiatives toward the People's Republic of China, together with the Shanghai Communiqué issued on February 27, 1972, at the conclusion of President Nixon's visit to China, heightened Japanese suspicions that the United States had downgraded the Japanese-American relationship. Insufficient communication during the last days of the government of South Vietnam further helped to convince many Japanese that less importance was being attached by the

United States to its alliance relationships, especially in Asia. The energy crisis provided Japan with further incentive to escape from the shadow of the United States.

Herein lies the contradiction of U.S. security policy toward Japan. To the Japanese, the United States has seemed ambivalent and unclear with respect to Japanese security policies, and, more importantly, with respect to the broad course desirable for Japanese foreign policy. Indeed, Japanese leaders believed that Americans must have stressed to the Chinese the importance of a continuing American presence in East Asia in order to oppose any move on the part of Japan toward remilitarization and nuclearization. At the same time, however, American officials encouraged the assumption of greater Japanese responsibility for self-defense, including the acquisition of the most modern conventional weapons.

Japan and the United States share a common interest in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, but differ in the specific roles they can play. The United States insisted on inserting the clause in the 1969 Nixon-Sato communiqué noting that South Korea is essential to Japanese security.[31] Japan formally accepted this thesis with its statement in the communiqué that developments regarding the ROK and Taiwan did affect the security of Japan.[32] And yet how essential South Korea is and exactly what role Japan would play in a Korean emergency have remained ambiguous.[33] In the wake of South Vietnam's fall, Japan emphasized that U.S. troops be maintained in South Korea. Tokyo also objected to President Carter's troop withdrawal plan in 1977. But Japan has been unwilling to assume a direct military role in the defense of Korea for fear that it might be dragged into a Korean conflict involving China and the Soviet Union. Besides, Japan has left the door open to North Korea by maintaining nonpolitical relations with it.

Like the United States, Japan in the early 1970s sought to exploit the Sino-Soviet rift by maintaining better relations with both China and the Soviet Union than either could enjoy with the other. The government of Tanaka Kakuei, which succeeded the Sato administration, normalized its relations with China on the terms demanded by the People's Republic of China. The traditional "love–hate relationship" between Japan and China appeared to have entered a new era following the Nixon-Kissinger China initiative.[34]

In the face of growing Soviet forces in the Western Pacific and the East Sea (Sea of Japan), the United States called upon Japan to develop its own naval and air capabilities, enough to protect the sea lanes of communication up to 1,000 miles from the Japanese islands. At the same time, the United States pressed Japan to take unilateral steps to reduce its huge trade surplus with the United States. Until the late 1970s, talk of joint planning was taboo, joint exercises were out of the question, and intelligence exchanges were sparse. Naval cooperation was the furthest advanced, but this was carefully shielded from the public. And although the Japanese relied on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, they preferred to keep it at arm's length.

In preparing the 1982 budget, the Suzuki cabinet approved a 7.7 percent increase in military spending, the first time defense expenditures increased at a higher rate than spending on social programs. And at the 18th U.S.-Japanese Security Consultative Committee meeting, held in January 1982, the Japanese government finally agreed to carry out a joint study on contingency planning for a crisis situation in areas outside Japan, including Korea. Under U.S. urging, the Japanese Defense Agency's White Paper for 1981 came to terms with the reality of growing Soviet and North Korean military strength.[35] The U.S. efforts to secure Northeast Asia and the Western Pacific from the Soviet threats required a new collective defense posture, which apparently included China as a potential security partner, the facilitation of defense sharing with Korea and Japan, and the enhancement of Korea–Japan military relations as a supplement to the already-initiated U.S.–China–Japan trilateral entente.[36]

Japan thus conducted joint military exercises with U.S. forces in its territories, in the Philippines, and in the Pacific, but never with U.S. forces in Korea. The majority of Korean intellectuals were worried by the possibility that the United States, confronted with ever-growing Soviet military threats, would continue to push for an ROK-Japan-U.S. trilateral military connection. Without any direct contacts between Korea and Japan, however, accomplishing tripartite military cooperation in order to handle the Soviet Union as well as North Korea was too difficult a task for the United States. While the United States and Japan pursued regional deterrence under the framework of the bilateral military alliance, Korea was totally committed to its own defense against the North Korean threat. And the differences in interests, capabilities, and responsibilities acted as a constraint on possible trilateral military cooperation or coordination between the United States, Japan, and Korea.

Present and Future Aspects of the Alliance

A New Function for the U.S.-Japan Alliance

With the advent of the post–Cold War era, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Japan, once a single component of a much larger global confrontation with the Soviet Union, is still so important to the security of each country that its health has become a determinant of fundamental security principles and doctrines for both Washington and Tokyo. For the United States, the future of the security relationship will have profound consequences for its ability to stay engaged with forward deployed forces in East Asia and the Pacific. The outcome will have definitive ramifications for the regional and global balance of power. For Japan, the nature of the ties with the United States is the only successful way for Japan to avoid direct military competition with China while providing for its own security.[37]

In the first years of the Clinton presidency, the alliance was subject to new pressures and strains. However, the North Korean nuclear issue, the possibility of regime collapse, and the China factor provided a good justification for the reinforcement of the U.S.-Japan military alliance. The nuclearization of North Korea would be extremely threatening to Japan. Any military conflict resulting from the issue would be destabilizing to the region and to Japan itself. Japan would be seriously affected by the outcome of the negotiation as well.[38] Japan also had to be conscious of a possible breakthrough in U.S.–North Korea relations, as it did not wish to repeat the embarrassment of 1972 when the United States improved its relations with China by bypassing Japan, a series of events that was known in Japan as the "Nixon shock." For all these reasons, and despite the frequent cabinet changes during the period, Japan cooperated closely with the United States, participating actively in policy coordination and pledging financial contributions to the high-cost light-water reactor project. This crisis, together with the Taiwan issue in March 1996, prompted the Joint Defense Declaration between President Clinton and Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Comparatively speaking, the security environment in East Asia is more benign and less threatening than it has been in decades, despite its continued uncertainty and volatility. Thus, the external threats to the U.S.-Japan alliance have paled. The balance of forces among the

major powers—China, Russia, Japan, and the United States—appears reasonably stable. The United States, as the only remaining superpower, is not only maintaining but also expanding its role as "protector" worldwide. It has vowed to maintain 100,000 troops in both Asia and Europe.[39] The prospect of military conflict among the major powers is remote; all are pursuing generally moderate policies in Asia; each is preoccupied with domestic problems; relations among them are more or less amicable; and they have collaborated on occasion to defuse regional conflicts, such as those in Cambodia and Korea. Both a Russo-Japanese and a Sino-Japanese alignment seem extremely unlikely. The reestablishment of a Sino-Russian alliance appears equally implausible. In short, a belligerent China is far from a foregone conclusion and, in any event, China will not pose a credible military threat to the U.S.-Japan alliance for at least a decade.[40]

The April 1996 Tokyo summit meeting between Prime Minister Hashimoto and President Clinton and the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security—Alliance for the 21st Century put the U.S.-Japan security relationship back on track following the tragic Okinawa rape incident and bilateral trade disputes. But the declaration brought about the related concern that the Joint Declaration, by focusing on the revitalization of the alliance, signaled a shift in the U.S.-Japan alliance away from the defense of Japan toward the containment of China, which would be worrisome to Chinese decision makers. The sensitivity shown by the Chinese leadership might be related to domestic politics, and possibly the most worrisome scenario for the Chinese is the prospect of American and Japanese forces cooperating under the umbrella of the U.S.-Japan alliance in response to a use of force by the mainland to prevent Taiwan from becoming independent. Yet the Joint Declaration also stressed the need for close cooperation with China and emphasized China's positive and constructive role in the stability and prosperity of the region. This can be considered a new attempt at establishing a desirable triangle in this region.

The Korea Factor

American officials stressed that the primary intent of the 1996 Joint Declaration was to allay Japan's security concerns and thereby, through promises to maintain U.S. forces in Japan and East Asia, to dissuade it from becoming a military power. The Americans further contended that this would help discourage an arms race among Asian countries, including China and Japan. However, to many Koreans, Japan seems to be seeking a political and even military role commensurate with its economic influence. A deeper cause of Korea's suspicion is the ambiguities in and contradictions between Japan's constitutional position on defense and what happens in reality. South Koreans are generally very sensitive to any regional role that Japan might play. Even though the new summit declaration between Clinton and Hashimoto included many other more important items than the possibility of Japan playing a regional role, such as reaffirmation of the 1960 Security Treaty, the continued presence of U.S. troops, U.S.-Japan cooperation in weapons development, and so on, South Korean media and commentators talked about the United States giving a green light to Japan to augment its military capability and to play a regional role.

Nevertheless, the declaration ultimately encouraged Korea to consider the formulation of a comprehensive and long-term security relationship with the United States while maintaining balanced policies toward China and Japan. South Korea is beginning to recognize the need for a Korean version of the Nye Initiative: an exploration of the medium and long-term future of U.S.–South Korea—and possibly U.S.–South Korea–Japan—security cooperation.

Some efforts were made along these lines in the mid-1990s, but Koreans were apprehensive about this for several reasons. First, South Korea was conscious of its relations with China. Second, South Korea was reluctant to play a regional role when the security situation on the Korean peninsula was critical. Finally, South Korea feared the cost of weapons systems such as the theater missile defense system.

Having seen the positive outcome of this initiative in U.S.-Japan security relations, South Korea is more receptive to considering such a long-term arrangement. So far, a productive debate on this issue has been suppressed, however, because of overwhelming domestic issues and needs. As in other countries, or perhaps even more so, there has been close linkage between domestic politics and security policies in South Korea. Regarding the Joint Declaration and the Clinton-Hashimoto summit, some Koreans think the United States deputized Japan to carry out the U.S. role as policeman in the region.[41] Korean concerns about the Joint Declaration seem ironic since the declaration has as one of its primary objectives improving the U.S. ability to defend Korea, with appropriate Japanese support.[42]

The Joint Declaration emphasized the need for cooperation between the United States and Japan "in dealing with situations that may emerge in the areas surrounding Japan," meaning Korea.[43] In the 1996 summit Japan agreed to review the eighteen-year-old guidelines for military cooperation with the United States during a military crisis. The defense guidelines review established another benchmark in that it redefined Japan's role in the post–Cold War relationship and enabled Japan to make moderate contributions to regional security by enhancing practical rear-area operational, logistical, and material support and base access for U.S. forces.[44] The new guidelines for Japan-U.S. bilateral defense cooperation make Japan better able to cope with regional conflicts in the post–Cold War era.[45] The United States also hopes to make Japan's roles—such as minesweeping, inspecting foreign ships, and transporting arms and ammunition—subject to bilateral cooperation under the new guidelines.[46]

There is little possibility that in the event of a North Korean attack upon the South Japan would not support the U.S. military operation to defend Korea.[47] Nevertheless, both Korea and Japan still seem to hold the view that direct military ties between them are neither possible nor desirable. In addition, neither expects any direct Japanese military contributions in the event of renewed military clashes on the Korean peninsula, even if a phenomenal expansion in Korean-Japanese military contacts occurs. In the meantime, the United States seems to anticipate that Japan will end the interpretation that bans collective self-defense and will expand its definition of legitimate self-defense to include wide support for regional contingencies. By thus reducing asymmetries in both political authority and military responsibility in the alliance, the security relationship between the United States and Japan could be strengthened.

Japanese support is crucial to the defense of Korea in the event of hostilities on the peninsula. The failure of Japan to provide adequate support for any U.S. effort to defend Korea in the face of North Korean aggression could be an alliance-breaker. Conversely, the American presence in Japan is closely linked to support for Korean and other contingencies. Therefore, the peaceful reunification of Korea, desirable by all measures, would nonetheless place considerable strain on the U.S. ability to justify 100,000 troops forward deployed in Asia (primarily in Japan and on the Korean peninsula). Even though this forward presence serves many other useful purposes, "the defense of Korea" clearly represents the "worst-case" scenario and provides the primary (and most politically acceptable and persuasive) justification for U.S. forces remaining forward deployed today. Should the United States desire to main-

tain a sizable forward presence in Northeast Asia after reunification, the rationale for this would be more difficult politically to articulate than the convenient, widely accepted "North Korean threat." Additionally, the removal of troops from Korea would increase pressure—both in the United States and Japan—to reduce or withdraw completely U.S. Japan-based forces as well.

The one wild card in all this is China. It is conceivable that Chinese actions between now and any eventual Korean reunification may convince Japanese and perhaps Korean officials that U.S. forces are required. However, this is certainly not a circumstance to be desired. In fact, China, for its part, shares many of the same objectives as the United States regarding the Korean peninsula. It wants to keep Korea denuclearized. It wants stability. It wants to prevent armed conflict or any other disruption that could involve China. China does not want millions of North Korean refugees pouring across its border. China wants to be able to concentrate on its internal development. As shown during the North Korean nuclear crisis and in its handling of the Hwang Jang-Yop defection case, China seems to want to play a constructive role regarding Korea in a way that it regards as feasible and appropriate. In this regard, China will not be opposed to the improvement of relations between North Korea and the United States.

Nonetheless, China has an ambivalent attitude toward U.S. troops in Korea. It recognizes their positive role in reassuring and restraining Japan. But it does not like the implication that they are part of a U.S. containment policy toward China. China has shown exceptional sensitivity toward the U.S.-Japan joint security declaration. For whatever reason, the Chinese seem to be genuinely concerned with a U.S.–Japan–South Korean alliance against China. Regarding North Korea, China has been providing aid and is watching closely what others are willing to do so that it can take up the slack to keep North Korea afloat. If Korea is unified, there would be stronger pressure on the United States to leave the region because there would be no strategic enemy, and an Asian balance of power would have been established. In this case, Korea would be the smallest power among its larger neighbors. Would China accept a unified Korea allied with the United States and tucked under the U.S. nuclear umbrella? Would the United States and Japan be happy if Korea chooses instead to ally itself with China? Or would Korea take an independent route, seeking to play its neighbors off against each other while acquiring its own nuclear weapons as a guarantee of an independent security capability? This would put direct pressure on Japan to go nuclear and would create serious tensions in Korean-American relations.

Thus, even after reunification the U.S.-Japan alliance would play another crucial role in Korea's security: it would provide Korea with a certain degree of confidence that Japan will not become a threat in the future. Anti-Japanese sentiments are already proving to be a unifying force in Sino-ROK relations and could have significant ramifications for the post-reunification security framework for Northeast Asia. ROK-Japan cooperation is important to long-term stability in Asia, however, and, more immediately, appears crucial to the success of the U.S.-initiated Agreed Framework and Development Organization (KEDO) efforts to denuclearize North Korea.

The Dynamics of Small Triangles

In addition to the large strategic triangle of the United States, Japan, and China, the so-called small triangles composed of the United States, South Korea, and North Korea, on the one hand, and the two Koreas and Japan, on the other, are also significant in that these relations affect the validity of the U.S.-Japan security relationship. While the U.S.-Japan joint security declaration was issued by the United States and Japan for the purpose of creating more favorable security circumstances in this area, the small-triangle subsystems around the Korean peninsula can have some impact on the initiative itself as contextual variables. These two variables are the main anomaly in the security relationship between the United States, Japan, and South Korea. They frequently are influenced by the domestic elements in each country, giving rise to the need for analysis of the political factors involved in security issues. In this section, the historical and political aspects of these two factors will be examined.

The Two Koreas and Japan

Since the beginning of the Cold War, South Koreans have felt that their country was perceived by the United States and Japan as being important not in itself but only insofar as it affected the security of either country. This phenomenon was also reflected in Korean-Japanese relations. U.S. policy toward South Korea, in other words, was considered just a function of U.S.–Japan relations. But with the emergence of the post-Cold War era, the Korean peninsula became a key regional contingency agendum for U.S. security policy, providing a raison d'être for the maintenance of the U.S.-Japan military alliance. South Koreans admit that Japan should play a role supporting Korea-U.S. military actions in the event of a Korean contingency, but a "supplementary" role, which is difficult to define.

For four hundred years since the Hideyoshi invasion of Korea, there has been no love lost between these two proud and energetic peoples. Although Japan moved ahead of Korea through early modernization in the nineteenth century, and ruled Korea for thirty-five years in the twentieth century, Korea never accepted nor recognized Japan's "superiority." Historically speaking, a substantial portion of Japan's cultural and ethnic roots are either primitive Korean or derive from Sinified Korean culture.[48] Korea will be the litmus test of Japan's willingness to surmount its past.[49] Anti-Americanism among certain younger Korean intellectuals does not translate into "follow Japan" sentiment. Japan, through its conquest and rule of Korea, awakened and sustained Korean nationalism. It has provided the negative and yet the most powerful symbol for Korean nationalism, a national enemy. It is a handy scapegoat for both Koreas. The leaders of both Koreas have routinely cultivated anti-Japanese sentiments to deflect attention from their own domestic mistakes and excesses. Popular animosities usually interfere with and prevent smooth relations. In South Korea's case, this most frequently translates into criticism of Japan for economic "imperialism." The United States also is criticized by Korean radicals as an imperialist out to colonize Korea, but the allegations against Japan strike a special chord because of the history of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

In contrast, the Japanese have contended that the Koreans are ungrateful for the contributions they have made to Korea's modernization, while asserting that South Korea also benefits from the American-Japanese military relations. The undeniable fact of the matter is that all three parties involved are beneficiaries of these military-security arrangements and all three are therefore obliged to assume responsibility for Northeast Asian stability as well as their own security in the face of security challenges.

Seoul's policy since 1965 has been to prevent or discourage Japan from dealing with North Korea in any way that even indirectly bolsters the legitimacy or other policy goals of

the Pyongyang government. Its policy has been only moderately successful in that Japan has scrupulously avoided any official contacts with the DPRK. Until the early 1980s, Japan had nonetheless implemented its long-standing policy of *seikei bunri* (separation of politics from economics) vis-à-vis North Korea, although the Treaty of Basic Relations between the Republic of Korea and Japan confirmed that the Government of the Republic of Korea is "the only lawful Government in Korea."[50] Seoul and Washington have shown consternation over Tokyo's determination to maintain a veneer of equidistance in its relations with South Korea and North Korea.[51] Whenever Japan has acted in a way that seemed to be interfering in South Korea's domestic politics or seeking an "equidistance" between North and South Korea, diplomatic relations have been strained.

Of course, Japan occasionally recognized Korea's security needs because to do so pleased the United States. The United States has maintained that South Korea's security is more important to Japan than the Japanese themselves think.[52] Until the 1970s, Japanese leaders were not overly concerned with the security of Korea, even if the Vietnam War and the content of the Nixon Doctrine, as Japan interpreted them, made the Japanese somewhat more sensitive to issues related to its security. Even the decisions by the United States in 1970 to reduce troop strength in Korea and to withdraw all combat air units from Japan aroused but mild concern among government officials. Their relatively relaxed attitude about the Korean situation was sustained by the following assessments: neither the Soviet Union nor Communist China desired a war in Korea; North Korea was effectively restrained by these two countries; North Korea could not wage a war on a sustained basis without the assistance of these neighbors; and there was a balance of military power in Korea.[53]

At times, Japan seemed to be acting on South Korea's behalf, as in the case of President Carter's plan for a phased withdrawal of the U.S. ground troops from South Korea. Carter's plan baffled the Japanese government. Carter made the decision without any prior consultation with Tokyo, and the Fukuda cabinet made its opposition to the troop withdrawal plan known to the Carter administration. The Japanese were concerned that Carter's decision might persuade the North Koreans to try again to conquer the South. Under such circumstances, they wondered if they could continue to have faith in the United States as a dependable ally. This protest was the most graphic and successful episode of Japanese proxy lobbying, even if it was not satisfactory to the South Korean government. Japan would never have undertaken any such diplomatic intervention advocating Seoul's cause, however, if that intervention had not also served Japan's national interests in explicit ways. Tokyo has been reluctant to publicly embrace Seoul's policy, mainly for domestic reasons. Signs of Japanese support for Seoul's security policy have become rallying grounds for galvanizing what may only be called the military allergy of the Japanese public, for anything that takes on a military nature is frowned upon as being detrimental to peace and Japanese interests.

Many Japanese and Japanese military leaders, in particular, saw Korea as a "dagger pointed at the heart of Japan." This was one reason or excuse for Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910. Even Japanese moderates pointed out that the Republic of Korea was in a position, both historically and geographically, to determine Japan's fate. As a matter of fact, a divided Korea, with the United States committed to the security of the Republic of Korea, offers Japan concrete advantages compared to those provided by a unified Korea, regardless of how unification might occur. During the Cold War period, Japan was concerned about a unified communist Korea, because it would have been posed strategic dangers. Another concern stems from Japan's economic ties to South Korea.[54]

In the wake of the collapse of the Communist bloc, Japan began to worry about a unified noncommunist Korea, which also could pose security problems for Japan. Therefore, Japan hopes to enjoy considerable political leverage by playing off the needs, hopes, and aspirations of the two Korean states as each tries to use Japan to get an edge on its antagonist. It is better for Japan that the Korean people ferment in their divided state, casting aspersions on each other, rather than shelve their ideological differences and turn their united attention to Japan.

The Japanese government explored the possibility of establishing a formal relationship with North Korea, particularly after the establishment of the U.S.-PRC diplomatic relationship. Japan apparently hoped to initiate a diplomatic breakthrough on the Korean question by making the first move in the major-power "cross-recognition" scheme. In the post–Cold War environment, the Japanese anticipated growing pressures on the United States to scale back its security responsibilities in Asia. This could leave China in a position to exert substantially greater influence on the Korean peninsula. Strategic thinkers in Japan felt this warranted some effort by Tokyo to balance China's influence in Pyongyang as well as in Seoul. Also, the Japanese hoped that improvement in Japan–DPRK relations would moderate Pyongyang's vitriolic propaganda attacks against Japan's growing influence in the Asian region.

The autumn of 1990 saw the beginning of another serious attempt to further Japan–North Korea relations.[55] This phase was initiated by North Korea, which has found itself both economically strapped and increasingly isolated politically. North Korea tried hard to develop contacts with the ruling LDP in a manner reminiscent of the Chinese approaches in the early 1970s, and it took advantage of a visit to Pyongyang in September 1990 by a senior LDP politician, Shin Kanemaru, to secure commitments to normalize relations and pay "compensation" not just for the colonial period but also for the post-1945 period. Commercial benefits also beckoned. But the Japanese foreign ministry watered down these commitments. In addition to the questions of Japan's compensation for its colonial rule of Korea, there were other thorny issues to address, including inspection of North Korea's nuclear facilities,[56] the boundaries of North Korea's jurisdiction,[57] and handling of the Li Unhye issue.[58] Since that time the Japanese government has become more worried about North Korea as a disruptive factor in Northeast Asia.

Today, Japan has an ambivalent attitude toward North Korea and the unification issue. Japan wants to improve relations with Pyongyang. It is an active participant in the KEDO process. But it has been at best passive in providing food aid to North Korea since 1995, when it gave substantial aid. Now it does not want to be seen as toeing the U.S. line and having to assume an excessive burden. Nor does it wish to move ahead of South Korea, which does not want to see Japan move too fast or too far. But it will be difficult to maintain this passive policy for long. Sooner or later, Japan will find a rationale to provide aid and improve relations with North Korea. Japan will want to do this in consultation with the United States and South Korea, but not necessarily following in their footsteps.

The U.S.–South Korea Alliance and North Korea

It is extraordinary that two countries, the United States and South Korea, which are so far apart geographically, so different in culture and ethnic background, and so asymmetrical in power and perceptions, have been able to maintain friendly and cooperative relations for such a long time. Since the bilateral relationship between the two countries was established in the post–World War II period, it has survived the vicissitudes of domestic politics and impor-

tant changes in the international environment.[59] South Korea has shown a greater willingness to become more self-reliant, not only in the economic and political arenas but in national defense as well, while the United States has become too preoccupied with its own domestic and foreign problems to act as a full-fledged protector of South Korea.

The security structure on the Korean peninsula consists of a Mutual Defense Treaty (1953) between South Korea and the United States, defense treaties (1960) between North Korea on the one hand and China and Russia (the USSR) on the other, and the Korean Armistice (1953) that ended the Korean War. Of these arrangements, only the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty maintains its robust existence. The treaty is backed by the presence of more than 37,000 U.S. troops in Korea.

But with the emergence of the post–Cold War era, Pyongyang is trying hard to please the United States as a means of surmounting its strapped economy and diplomatic isolation. North Korea has not only frozen its nuclear program, but is also allowing full inspection of the freeze by IAEA inspectors. The United States, for its part, does not want to be left out of the cross-relationship game on the Korean peninsula. China and Russia already have diplomatic relations with both North Korea and South Korea. The United States does not want to be the only power that has an official relationship with only one part of Korea. If not full diplomatic normalization, the United States will want to move to establish some kind of official relationship, such as exchange of liaison offices. In fact, the South Korean government of President Roh Tae-Woo declared that it would welcome improvement in the relationship between the United States and North Korea. Ever since, however, South Korea has been concerned that any improvement in the U.S.–North Korea relationship might weaken the U.S. security commitment to South Korea. South Korea has been particularly concerned that North Korea might improve its relations with either the United States or Japan while the North–South Korea relationship remains stalled. Seoul reasons that, if Pyongyang can improve its relations with Tokyo or Washington without improving relations with Seoul, it will continue to ignore and bypass South Korea.

Thus, the North Korean factor is the most important element in the South Korea–U.S. relationship. It is probably difficult for the United States to understand the emotional side of this issue for South Korea. The United States' alliance with South Korea exists mainly to deter a North Korean attack. For South Korea, however, the alliance is more than a simple security guarantee. It is symbol and substance of the United States siding with and supporting South Korea in a family feud that goes beyond the security dimension. Any act of befriending North Korea by the United States is going to be viewed in South Korea with misgivings, even if a new balance of power between the two Koreas emphatically indicates that both time and luck are on the South Korean side.

South Korea has been concerned that the United States is moving toward a two-Koreas policy. There is debate within both the United States and South Korea regarding such a policy. Those in the United States who favor establishing relations with Pyongyang argue that the United States needs a handle on North Korea; that it is better to have North Korea dependent on the United States than not; that South Korea already has a relationship with China and Russia; and that normalizing relations would ultimately contribute to North–South Korean dialogue. Those who argue against such a relationship point to the continuing transgressions on the part of North Korea regarding its nuclear program, human rights, missiles, biochemical weapons, and forward military deployment as well as to Seoul's objections resulting from Pyongyang's refusal to talk with South Korea.

With the advent of a new administration in South Korea, the United States and Japan have expressed high expectations not only of South Korea's flexibility in inter-Korean relations but also of their respective relations with the North. The new South Korean government is understood to have opted for a so-called "sunshine" policy toward the North—i.e., seeking peaceful coexistence and gradual integration as opposed to conditional engagement or the "taming the North" policies of the past. South Korea's new president, Kim Dae-jung, has said he would like to see the DPRK improve its ties with the United States and Japan in harmony with an improvement in inter-Korean relations. The Kim administration, for its part, has lifted its linkage politics between North–South Korea relations and North Korea's diplomatic ties with either the United States or Japan. He holds that improved ties with the United States and Japan will eventually help bring North Korea out of isolation and that a sudden collapse of North Korea is not desirable. In other words, the South Korean government, rather than pursuing containment of the North, is taking measures to gradually transform the DPRK through active engagement policies. Of course, it still leaves room for contingencies.

Another debate is whether the United States should and can maintain the presence of its troops in Korea after unification or in the absence of a North Korean threat. For reasons of balance of power and the prevention of an arms race in Northeast Asia, the United States seems keen on continuing the presence of its troops on the peninsula. If the U.S. troops are removed from Korea, it will be politically difficult to maintain their presence in Japan since it will be the only country in Asia to have foreign (American) troops on its soil. It is not a foregone conclusion that South Korea will want to have U.S. troops removed from Korea after unification, however. This decision will very much depend on the judgment of the South Korean leadership and how effectively it can persuade the public on this issue. Some American experts seem to argue that drastic measures related to U.S. troops may be a key to reducing military tension. They urge the U.S. administration to take the initiative regarding the U.S. troop presence in South Korea. According to them, economic inducements alone would not by themselves be a catalyst for change but would need to be supplemented by confidence-building measures in the military arena. In order to achieve this, according to this minority view, it is necessary for the United States to take the initiative—by unilaterally reducing the number of U.S. troops stationed in Korea, for example. So far, the official position of the United States, as clarified by Stanley Roth, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, is that the U.S. military presence in Korea is not an issue that is negotiable. He allowed, however, that the structure of U.S. forces might be discussed during the final stages of the conclusion of a peace treaty.

On the whole, in the past half century of Korea's national division there has never before now been a more favorable international environment nor a more complex challenge for a peaceful resolution of the Korean question.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the discussion in the preceding sections, we are in a position to address the questions raised in the introduction.

First was the question of Korean perceptions regarding the origin of the U.S.-Japan alliance. For the most part, Koreans understood this alliance as the U.S. reaction to the Soviet

threat and part of its post–World War II containment policy. As such, Koreans did not regard the alliance as a measure to defend Korea; rather, they saw it the other way around—that is, the U.S. security commitment to and presence in Korea was a way to maintain the U.S.-Japan alliance and to protect Japan from the Soviet or Chinese threat. Even before the formal conclusion of a mutual defense treaty between the United States and Japan, the U.S. involvement in the Korean War was seen as an effort to prevent the Korean domino from falling, lest it would affect Japan's security. Koreans understood that the United States regarded Korea as not much more than a forward base in its policy of protecting Japan.

As the U.S.-Japan alliance evolved, however, Koreans saw its usefulness for their own security. But Koreans had mixed feelings regarding what they considered an excessively close alliance relationship between the United States and Japan. Koreans worried about the possibility of the United States transferring, if slowly and gradually, the responsibility of defending Korea and maintaining regional peace and stability to Japan. Such a concern among the Koreans was especially great in the early 1970s, when the United States appeared to be reducing its military presence in Asia as it pursued the Nixon Doctrine and rapprochement with China.

Korean perceptions of the U.S.-Japan alliance have also been affected by two sets of issues: Japan's position on the Korean peninsula and the U.S. role and policy toward Japan–Korea relations. On the question of Japan's policy toward the Korean peninsula, there is a perception in Korea that Japan does not necessarily favor an early unification of Korea. Regardless of the validity of this perception, frequent mention by some Japanese of a "Korea threat" after Korea is unified tends to reinforce Japan's negative attitude toward Korean unification. Such perceptions on the part of many Koreans translate into Korean ambivalence toward close ties between the United States and Japan. On the one hand, Koreans appreciate the fact that the health and strength of the alliance will help better protect South Korea. For a good part of the 1970s and 1980s, however, Koreans were concerned that the United States was condoning, if not encouraging, what they considered to be a Japanese military buildup. Furthermore, Koreans worry that Japan may try to dissuade the United States from actively supporting early Korean unification.

Regarding the U.S. role and policy toward Japan–Korea relations, Koreans naturally would like to see the United States take a more sympathetic position on a number of issues—whether Japan's apology for the past, territorial disputes, textbooks, attitudes toward Japan–Korea relations, or the treatment of Korean residents in Japan. Understandably, the United States has refrained from taking sides on bilateral issues between Japan and Korea. Furthermore, because of the size of Japan's economy and for strategic reasons, the United States tends to place greater importance on its relationship with Japan than with Korea. When General Douglas MacArthur was the supreme commander of the Allied powers and ruled over Japan, the supply line to Korea was by way of Japan, a fact which rendered Korea to be of secondary importance in the minds of the U.S. military leaders in Japan, including General MacArthur himself. Koreans see U.S. representatives in Japan to be generally prominent people within U.S. political, academic, or diplomatic circles. They also perceive that Japanese leaders are accorded more respect and attention than their Korean counterparts. Although all these manifestations of what Koreans consider to be inequality between Japan and Korea may be the inevitable result of political reality, Koreans are nevertheless unhappy. They often regard Japan as being in the way of South Korean attempts to forge a closer relationship with the United States. Clearly, this is an unfair assessment of the situation.

However, there is also no question that Koreans have mixed feelings about a close U.S.–Japan relationship.

Koreans do not think there is a direct linkage between any possible contingency on the Korean peninsula and the role of the U.S.-Japan security framework, particularly the role of Japan on the Korean peninsula, except that they see the possibility of the United States persuading Japan to be supportive of peace, stability, and possibly the unification of the Korean peninsula. A case in point is the Japanese participation in KEDO. Japan is not only a core member of the organization but also makes crucial contributions to financing and operating KEDO and the light-water reactor project that it is intended to promote and manage.

Although South Korea has been a staunch ally of the United States and a virtual ally of Japan by virtue of that alliance, practically all security consultations have been conducted bilaterally with the United States as the linchpin rather than through a trilateral mechanism. This situation creates a dilemma for South Korea regarding where it should place itself between the United States and Japan. Clearly, the United States is an ally. With Japan, there are many serious disputes and even more suspicions. Although South Korea does not actively seek a trilateral security mechanism, it is also aware that neither the United States nor Japan is eager for such a mechanism for fear that it might "dilute" the U.S.-Japan alliance. It is thus inevitable that the three-way virtual alliance is conducted through bilateral relationships between the three countries.

The most vexing problem for South Korea is where to place itself in the geopolitical game among the United States, Japan, and China. With the end of the Cold War, South Korea has been able to normalize relations with both the Soviet Union/Russia and China. The expansion of South Korea's relations with China, in particular, has been remarkable. Regarding the issue of the "China threat," Koreans tend to take an eclectic and perhaps a more realistic view than either the Japanese or the Americans. They tend to think it is premature to assume that the future role and policies of China have already been determined. Those holding this view believe that China's future role and policies will depend very much upon the evolution of China's domestic situation—both politically and economically—and on the response and policies of the outside world toward China. In this sense, the outside world may be in danger of bringing about a self-fulfilling prophecy by stressing the future dangers and threats posed by China.

Regarding the Korean peninsula, China's objectives seem to be consistent with peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. China's role is crucial to the process of Korean unification—in its pre-unification, unification, and post-unification stages. China is a signatory of the 1953 Korean Armistice and as such has been invited to participate in the Four-Party Talks on Korean peace together with North and South Korea and the United States. Whether and how China will participate in the unification process will have a critical impact on both the process itself and its outcome. Crucial in this regard is the state and nature of the bilateral relationship between China and South Korea as well as between China on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other.

Thus, South Korea finds itself in the dilemma of having to maintain a strong security relationship with both the United States and Japan while keeping its relations with China amicable and cooperative. This is the reason why South Korea does not regard either the U.S.-Japan alliance or the trilateral U.S.–Japan–South Korea security relationship, both of which appear to be directed against China or aimed at "containing" it, to be in its interest. This is also the reason why South Korea would like to see the United States and Japan maintain friendly relations with China.

Notes

[1] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 41.

[2] Carter Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea: Old and New* (Seoul: *Ilchokak* for Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), p. 238 ; Frank Baldwin, ed., *Without Parallel: The American-Korean Relationship since 1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp. 5–6.

[3] Akira Iriye, "The United States and Japan in Asia: A Historical Perspective," in Gerald L. Curtis, ed., *The United States, Japan, and Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), p. 32.

[4] Edward A. Olsen, "United States–Japan–South Korea Relations," in Ilpyong J. Kim, ed., *Korean Challenges and American Policy* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), pp. 375–398.

[5] Ezra F. Vogel, "Japanese-American Relations after the Cold War," in *Harness the Rising Sun* (An Aspen Strategy Group Report), 1993, pp. 165–194.

[6] Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan and America: Global Partners," *Foreign Policy*, no. 86 (Spring 1992), pp. 24–39.

[7] US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946* (Washington, D.C., 1971), 8:153–155, 158.

[8] *FRUS, 1947, 6:449*, 454–455.

[9] George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), pp. 374–375; Chae-Jin Lee and Hideo Sato, *U.S. Policy Toward Japan and Korea* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 6.

[10] The U.S. policy success in Japan was due in large part to a combination of careful wartime planning, sound judgment, genuine goodwill, and a commitment to reform. In addition, MacArthur's strong personality and charismatic leadership sustained the occupation's authority and vitality.

[11] With Soviet troops well-positioned to sweep the entire peninsula in a few days, Washington decided upon the 38th parallel as a way of checking the probable southward Soviet advance and thus protecting U.S. occupation interests in Japan. This line was chosen to block Soviet access to the capital city of Seoul and to Kaesung. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945*, Vol. 6 (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1969), p. 1039.

[12] Bruce Cumings, "American Policy and Korean Liberation," in Frank Baldwin, ed., *Without Parallel: The American-Korean Relationship Since 1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), pp. 39–108.

[13] George M. McCune, *Korea Today* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 43.

[14] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1956), I, p. 316.

[15] U.S. Department of State, *Policy Statement: Korea*, January 31, 1949, p. 3.

[16] Its original defense perimeter in the Far East was drawn from the Aleutians through Japan to the Philippines. Secretary of State Dean Acheson excluded both Taiwan and South Korea from the U.S. Pacific area "defense perimeter." And he made it clear that there was no intention of any sort of abandoning or weakening the defenses of Japan. Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *Sino-American Relations, 1949–71* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 70–71.

[17] Martin E. Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy, 1947–1968* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 50.

[18] Edwin O. Reischauer, *The United States and Japan* (New York: Viking Press, 1957), pp. 263–280.

[19] Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942–1960: A Personal Narrative* (Seoul: *Panmun* Book Co., 1978), pp. 425–431.

[20] In the meantime, unlike Rhee, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was quite eager to work with Japan in joint economic and diplomatic undertakings despite Japan's long colonial domination of Taiwan.

[21] Thus, deterring future communist aggression and preventing any attempts to settle unsolved (maybe unsolvable) problems by force were America's twin objectives in "bestowing" a mutual treaty on South Korea. Chang-Il Ohn, "The Basic Nature of U.S.-Korean Relations," *Korea and World Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 599–600.

[22] Koji Murata, "The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the U.S.-South Korea Alliance: Their Origins, Dilemmas, and Structure," *Comparative Strategy* 14, no. 2 (April/June 1995): 185–194.

[23] Edward A. Olsen, op. cit., 1994, pp. 378–379.

[24] Roger Dingman, "The Dagger and the Gift: The Impact of the Korean War on Japan," *The Journal of American–East Asian Relations* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 39–41.

[25] Hiroshi Imazu, "Uniting A Divided Korea: Will Japan Help?" *Japan Quarterly* 37 (April/June 1990): 139.

[26] Robert A. Scalapino and Junnosuke Masumi, *Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962), p. 1.

[27] The anger of the Japanese finally led to Kishi's resignation.

[28] "The Joint Communiqué of President Lyndon B. Johnson and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato of Japan, January 13, 1965," in *Department of State Bulletin*, No. 1336 (Feb. 1, 1965).

[29] Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., and Jacquelyn K. Davis, *Japanese-American Relations in a Changing Security Environment* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1975), pp. 1–2.

[30] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Fragile Blossom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Robert Scalapino, *American-Japanese Relations in a Changing Era* (New York: Library Press for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, 1972, Paper No. 2).

Most Japanese rejected as implausible the notion of a five-power world given the existing disparity between the political, economic, and military capabilities of the superpowers, on the one hand, and those of the three potential power centers, on the other.

[31] Indeed, it is a common assumption among many Japanese that the United States would like Japan to take up the American role in Asia, or at least in Northeast Asia.

[32] Robert A. Scalapino, *American-Japanese Relations in a Changing Era* (New York: The Library Press, 1972), pp. 109–110.

[33] Byung-joon Ahn, "The United States and Korean-Japanese Relations," in Gerald L. Curtis and Sung-joo Han, eds., *The U.S.–South Korean Alliance: Evolving Patterns in Security Relations* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1981), p. 131.

[34] After Prime Minister Tanaka reestablished Japan's diplomatic ties with China in 1973, the Miki government moved closer to China with the signing of an agreement in March 1975 that would double Japan's oil purchases from China in the next year.

[35] *Defense White Paper* (Tokyo: Japanese Defense Agency, 1981), p. 91.

[36] As a part of these efforts, Japan's Air Self-Defense Force units participated in joint military maneuvers in June 1985 over the East Sea (Sea of Japan) along with the U.S. jet fighters stationed in South Korea, and some U.S. A-10 ground attack aircraft based in South Korea participated in a U.S.-Japan joint combined services exercise conducted in October–November 1986 over wide areas of the Pacific.

[37] Paul S. Giarra, "Point of Choice, Point of Departure," *Japan Quarterly*, January–March 1997, p. 18.

[38] If negotiations failed and sanctions were imposed, Japan would carry the major burden of implementing them. If they succeeded and deals were to be made, Japan would bear a significant part of the financial burden.

[39] As a matter of fact, the current figure of 100,000 troops has become an unhelpful proxy for U.S. security strategy in Asia. If troops are added, this is taken as a signal of U.S. aggressiveness. If troops are reduced, this is taken as a signal of U.S. retreat.

[40] Harold Brown, Richard Armitage, Bruce Stokes, and James Shinn, "The Tests of War and the Strains of Peace: The U.S.-Japan Security Relationship," A Report of an Independent Study Group sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, 1997.

[41] *The Korea Times*, April 23, 1996.

[42] Ralph A. Cossa, "Security Goals and Military Strategy of the U.S. and Japan and Their Impact on Korean Peninsula Security," *Korea and World Affairs*, Winter 1996, pp. 602–605.

[43] *New York Times*, April 21, 1996.

[44] The present defense guidelines review was prompted by the shocks and the lessons of the Persian Gulf War. The shock was on Japan's part, with many concluding that distant Japanese financial contributions would not suffice were there to be a serious crisis in Northeast Asia.

[45] The 1978 guidelines were aimed mainly at defending Japan from the threat of the former Soviet Union.

[46] *Asahi Shimbun*, June 6, 1997.

[47] This is clear from the following points: the Far East Clause (Article 6) of the U.S.-Japan security treaty legally authorizes the United States to use facilities and areas in Japan in such a way as to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East; and the Japanese government has firmly and repeatedly spoken

of the vital importance of Korea to Japan's security, while affirming its preparedness to respond promptly and positively when consulted on use of bases in defense of Korea.

[48] Except among some scholars and very liberal Japanese, however, acceptance of these views is cultural heresy in Japan. For a clear statement of this Korea-centric viewpoint, see Jon Carter Covell, *Japan's Hidden History* (Seoul: Hollym Publishers, 1984).

[49] Unprocessed rage at Japan's colonial attempt to eradicate Korean cultural identity continues to break out, as evidenced by the decision in the mid-1990s to tear down the massive former Japanese capitol in Seoul, in the only recently lifted ban on performing Japanese popular music, and in vandalizing of a Japanese art exhibit.

[50] Se-Jin Kim, ed., *Korean Unification: Source Materials With an Introduction* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), p. 281.

[51] Edward A. Olsen, op. cit., p. 385.

[52] James W. Morley, "How Essential Is the Republic of Korea to Japan?" in Young C. Kim and Abraham M. Halperin, eds., *The Future of the Korean Peninsula* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 159.

[53] Young C. Kim, "Japanese Policy toward Korea," in Young C. Kim, ed., *Major Powers and Korea* (Maryland: Research Institute on Korean Affairs, 1973), pp. 53–84.

[54] Should unification occur through communization of the Korean peninsula, Japan might lose its economic influence in South Korea and have to confront the prospect of countless anticommunist Korean refugees fleeing to the nearest reasonably hospitable shore, thereby aggravating Japan's already tense relations with its Korean ethnic minority and complicating Tokyo's ties with the new Korean regime. Japan might also be at risk of being drawn directly into the war as a combatant. That could happen as a by-product of the presence of American bases.

[55] The two previous, unsuccessful, efforts, in the late 1950s and the early 1970s, were initiated by North Korea. Both came at times of relative East–West détente and coincided with periods of sour Japan–South Korean relations.

[56] Throughout the negotiations, Washington and Seoul urged Japan to press North Korea to place its nuclear energy programs under full IAEA inspection.

[57] North Korea was unwilling to admit that its jurisdiction is limited to territory north of the armistice line on the Korean peninsula.

[58] The identity of this kidnapped woman was verified from photographs provided to the Japanese police by Kim Hyon-hi, a former North Korean agent who planted a bomb that destroyed a Korean Air jetliner in November 1987, who identified her as her Japanese-language instructor in North Korea.

[59] Sungjoo Han, "South Korea and the United States: Past, Present, and Future," in Gerald L. Curtis and Sung-joo Han, eds., *The U.S.–South Korean Alliance: Evolving Patterns in Security Relations* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), p. 201.

About the Author

Oknim Chung is research professor at Korea University's Ilmin International Relations Institute. She was an honorable Anam Scholarship Student at Korea University, from which she graduated summa cum laude and received a Ph.D. in political science. She was a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University from 1995 to 1996, and a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution at Stanford from 1996 to 1997. Her Korean language publication, *Five Hundred and Eighty-Eight Days of North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, was summarized in English in the *IRI Review* (Fall 1996). Articles forthcoming in 1998 include "South Korea: Economic Management and Democratization," in J.W. Morley, ed., *Driven by Growth* (New York: M.E. Sharpe) and "Values, Governance and International Relations: The Case of South Korea" (Japan Center for International Exchange).

America's Alliances with Japan and Korea in a Changing Northeast Asia

Project Discussion Papers

Hideo Sato. *Japan's China Perceptions and Its Policies in the Alliance with the United States*. September 1998.

Michael Swaine. *Chinese Military Modernization and Asian Security*. August 1998.

Koji Murata. *The Origins and Evolution of the Korean-American Alliance: A Japanese Perspective*. August 1998.

Byung-joon Ahn. *The Origins and Evolution of the Korean-American Alliance: A Korean Perspective*. July 1998.

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker. *The Origins and Evolution of the Korean-American Alliance: An American Perspective*. June 1998.

Mike M. Mochizuki. *Security and Economic Interdependence in Northeast Asia*. May 1998.

Yoshihide Soeya. *Japan's Dual Identity and the U.S.-Japan Alliance*. May 1998.

Jianwei Wang and Xinbo Wu. *Against Us or with Us? The Chinese Perspective of America's Alliances with Japan and Korea*. May 1998.

Jörn Dosch. *The United States and the New Security Architecture of the Asia Pacific—A European View*. April 1998.

Charles Wolf, Jr., and Michele Zanini. *Benefits and Burdens: The Politically Dominated Economics of U.S. Alliances with Japan and Korea*. April 1998.

Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Li-gang Liu. *The Costs and Benefits of Korean Unification*. March 1998.

Wu Xinbo. *Integration on the Basis of Strength: China's Impact on East Asian Security*. February 1998.

Richard Danzig. *Asian Futures, Naval Futures: How Do They Intersect?* William J. Perry. *Asian-Pacific Security Issues in the Post-Deng Era*. November 1997.

Bonnie Glaser and Banning Garrett. *China and the U.S.-Japan Alliance at a Time of Strategic Change and Shifts in the Balance of Power*. October 1997.

Bates Gill. *Proliferation and the U.S. Alliances in Northeast Asia*. 1997.

Paul Giarra. *U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines: Toward a New Accommodation of Mutual Responsibility*. 1997.

Yu Bin. East Asia: Geopolitique into the Twenty-first Century—A Chinese View. 1997.

Ralph Cossa. Korea: *The Achilles' Heel of the U.S.-Japan Alliance*. 1997.

Andrew F. Krepinevich. *Future Prospects for the U.S. Defense Budget and Their Implications for Our Asian Alliance Commitments*. 1997.

Discussion Papers may be ordered at $5.00 per copy (including postage and handling) through the Asia/Pacific Research Center. To order, or for a complete list of the publications of the Asia/Pacific Research Center, contact A/PARC:

The Asia/Pacific Research Center
Encina Hall, Room E301
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-6055
tel (650) 723-9741
fax (650) 723-6530
Asia-Pacific-Research-Center@stanford.edu

Complete texts of many of the Center's publications are also available at A/PARC's Web site:
www.stanford.edu/group/APARC