

“Rhee-straint”: The Origins of the U.S.-ROK Alliance¹

Victor D. Cha
Georgetown University

ABSTRACT

There is a vast literature that examines the American containment approach to communism throughout the Cold War era. However, few authors focus on the flip side of U.S. Cold War policy: constraint. In addition to their distaste for communism, Americans also feared "rogue" anti-communist allies dragging the U.S. into a larger-scale war with their common communist enemies. This fear especially applied to the South Korean authoritarian state under Syngman Rhee, who harnessed rabid anti-communism both to legitimize his rule and to try to embroil the U.S. in further conflict on the Korean peninsula. In order to exercise greater influence over such "rogue allies" as Syngman Rhee's South Korea, the U.S. opted to pursue strong bilateral alliances in East Asia, where they feared entrapment the most. As a result, solid relationships like the U.S.-ROK alliance came to dominate the East Asian security architecture, leaving little space for East Asian multilateralism to take root.

Keywords: U.S.-ROK alliance, Korean War, hubs and spokes, bilateral security architecture, power play, rogue allies, Syngman Rhee, Asian multilateralism

Introduction

On this 60th anniversary of the Korean War, we remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom against communist aggression. As General Colin Powell stated at a recent event in New York City, the Korean War is neither “forgotten” nor a war that ended in stalemate. All one needs to do is glance at the gleaming skyscrapers of Seoul, the educated youth, the affluent society, and the vibrant civil society to conclude that this war ended in all-out victory for South Korea as it stands today. It is a model of peaceful and prosperous democracy, and a beacon of hope for those in the North who one day hope for a better life.

The 60th anniversary also celebrates the strength of the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Today, this institution stands as one of the most successful examples of what the Cold War was fought over. Starting out as a temporary and pragmatic alliance between two countries that had nothing in common but a common enemy, the U.S.-ROK alliance is today a partnership based on common values and prosperity that operates around the world and contributes to the public goods of the international community.

I have written often on the successes of the U.S.-ROK alliance.² Now, however, I write on the origins of the alliance and the rather unusual circumstances under which it came into being. As noted above, this was not a relationship of deep friends when it was first formed. It was a relationship of convenience, at best. But in addition to fighting a common enemy, I argue in this paper that there was another element to this alliance that is often missed in the scholarly literature. This element was significant because it also impacted the way the United States pursued a network of bilateral alliances in East Asia rather than pursuing alternative means of organizing security.

Multilateral security was pursued in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Australia-New Zealand-United States treaty (ANZUS), but it was not pursued this way in Korea or East Asia. What was different about East Asia was the discrete and exclusive postwar relationships that the United States cultivated with each member of the region. Famously referred to by John Foster Dulles as the “hub and spokes” system, this bilateral method of organizing security still constitutes the most striking and enduring element of the architecture of East Asia to this day.

I argue that the reason bilateralism rather than multilateralism emerged in Asia as the dominant security structure has to do with the alternative restraint rationales behind American postwar planning in Korea and East Asia. The United States created alliances to contain the

Soviet threat, but a congruent rationale for the “hub and spokes” alliance network was to *constrain* anti-communist allies, like Korea, that might engage in aggressive behavior against adversaries that could entrap the United States in an unwanted larger war. The desire to control against such an outcome was amplified by a belief in the domino theory in Asia—that the fall of one small country could trigger a chain of countries falling to communism. Alliances in Europe were also about establishing control, but the extent of this control was limited to shaping the postwar political development and economic recovery of these countries under the U.S. and NATO security umbrella. In Korea and Northeast Asia, however, the United States encountered the additional problem of potential “rogue allies” – that is, rabidly anti-communist dictators who might start wars that could embroil the United States in a larger, unwanted conflict on the Asian mainland as Washington was gearing up for a protracted global struggle against the Soviet Union. As will be explained, the U.S. calculated that restraint of these pro-West dictators was best exercised, sometimes harshly, through direct bilateral contact rather than through some region-wide consensus-based multilateral mechanism. East Asia’s security bilateralism today is therefore a historical artifact of American rationales for constructing alliance networks in Asia at the end of World War II.

Elsewhere, I have argued that the power-play rationale informed American intentions vis à vis the U.S.-Republic of China (ROC) and U.S.-Japan alliances.³ In this article, I focus on Korea. The United States established alliances with the ROK not only to defend against communism, but also to inhibit a highly unpredictable government from provoking conflicts with North Korea and mainland China (respectively) that might embroil the United States in a larger war on the Asian mainland. In order to minimize the risks of entrapment by adventurist allies, Washington chose to exercise direct, sometimes draconian, control by creating economic and political dependency of the smaller state. American planners understood that they could not have exercised similar control in a larger multilateral regional framework that would have diluted U.S. material and political influence. In Europe there were some concerns about states dragging the United States into a larger war with the Soviet Union (e.g., Germany over Berlin), but not nearly of the same intensity as in Asia where authoritarian leaders of questionable legitimacy like Syngman Rhee used rabid anti-communism both to validate their rule and to draw the United States into their parochial conflicts. Thus, Europe posed fewer obstacles to forming a more complex, multilateral security organization, while in Asia the U.S. did not see the need for a larger multilateral security framework in Asia.

Washington best exercised control bilaterally.

The power-play theory makes contributions to the work on multilateralism and the uses of power. It augments the prevailing causal proposition in the literature put forward by liberal institutionalists and foreign policy internationalists that multilateral structures and rules constitute the best way to control power and dampen unilateralist inclinations.⁴ Many have argued, for example, that embedding China in multilateral rules and institutions offers the most prudent path for managing the country's rise and integration in the international system. Others have argued that American power and leadership is most effective when the United States allows itself to be bound by multilateral institutions and rules that it helped to create in the postwar era. Supplementing these views, I show that power asymmetries "select" for the type of structures, bilateral or multilateral, that work best for control. If small powers try to control a larger one, then multilateralism works. But if great powers seek control over smaller ones, multilateralism is highly inefficient. Bilateral control is a more direct and effective means of exercising control.

The Puzzle

The United States pursued multilateralism in the immediate postwar years – albeit less well-defined than NATO – in the formation of SEATO in 1954 and the creation of ANZUS in 1951.⁵ In East Asia by contrast the only security artifice of significance was the network of bilateral alliances, otherwise known as the "San Francisco system" or "hub and spokes" centered on the United States, with no apparent connections between them: the U.S.-Japan mutual defense treaty of September 1951; the U.S.-Republic of Korea defense treaty of October 1953; and the U.S.-Republic of China (Taiwan) security treaty of December 1954.⁶

Power Play

I argue that the reason the United States opted for bilateralism rather than multilateralism in Asia has to do with the "power play" behind U.S. alliance formation. The power play relates to the use of alliances, as Paul Schroeder once described, as *pactum de contrahendo* (pacts of restraint).⁷ It is the creation of an asymmetrical alliance tie--hence security dependency of the lesser state--for the purpose of inhibiting the smaller ally's unilateral actions. I argue that in East Asia, the United States created alliances not just for containment but also as a means of constraining potential "rogue" allies from adventurist behavior that might drag the U.S. into unwanted larger military contingencies in the region or that could trigger a domino effect with Asian countries falling to

communism.⁸ In Europe, the United States had less concern about smaller countries lashing out against the Soviet Union and entrapping the United States in a larger, perhaps nuclear, war. In Asia, there were real concerns about unpredictable authoritarian leaders doing such things for domestic legitimacy and as a means of securing more American support. President Dwight Eisenhower's expressed exasperation with one of his Asian allies in the early 1950s captured the nature of this concern: "...when you say that we should deliberately plunge into war, let me tell you that if war comes, it will be horrible. Atomic war will destroy civilization....The kind of war I am talking about, if carried out, would not save democracy. Civilization would be ruined...That is why we are opposed to war."⁹ Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reiterated the same concerns when asked by an Asian ally for a "small war" to tip the balance in his direction. Dulles explained the dangers inherent in such an idea: "Any 'little war' as proposed by [you] would not only turn world opinion against the U.S. but also would inevitably escalate into a general, full-scale war with the Soviet Union, 'unleashing such terrible weapons'....that it would destroy civilization."¹⁰

Who Controls Whom?

All alliances are about shaping the participants' behavior. But power asymmetries between allies determine how control operates within alliances.

Alliances are not just institutions of like-minded, equal parties defending against an external threat, they are also *pactum de contrahendo*. Institutionalists view multilateral alliances today as means by which allies can restrain, curb, and modulate the power of the United States or China. This makes sense, but the obverse of this mantra is also true. Tight, bilateral alliances can be used to amplify and channel power significantly in favor of the patron power over smaller subjects.

US Postwar Visions in Asia

As the United States contemplated its postwar commitments in Asia, the Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower presidencies contended with two problems. The first was the problem of potential "rogue allies" in Asia—those with pro-West inclinations, but with unpredictable authoritarian leaders (Korea and Taiwan) or unreformed domestic institutions (Japan) who could lead to unilateral aggression, entrapping the United States in a larger war. The second was a deeply held belief in the domino theory in Asia—that is, the fall of one unstable Asian country could trigger a chain reaction leading to the collapse of the whole region to China and the Soviet Union. In order to avoid such outcomes,

Washington created deep, tight bilateral alliance ties that fostered material and political dependency of the ally on U.S. patronage. This was the only way to achieve the extraordinary level of control necessary for Washington to overrule another nation's sovereign right to use force. Expanding these alliances to a larger multilateral network in Asia was neither necessary nor desired because it would have diluted the ability to control the allies and would have offered little marginal value in terms of enhanced defense and deterrence.

Korea: Rhee-strait

The Republic of Korea's first president, Syngman Rhee (1948-1960), made no secret of his aspirations for unifying the Korean peninsula. Rhee's official policy was "*pukch'in t'ongil*" ("march north for unification"), which was explicitly a policy of unification by force that did not accept peaceful coexistence with North Korea.

Rhee knew no restraint. He urged U.S. occupation commander General Hodge that the United States should leverage its nuclear monopoly to force the Soviets to withdraw from their half of the peninsula. The fiery Korean leader once proposed a military plan that pooled Taiwanese and South Korean forces for a ground assault on mainland China, backed by U.S. airpower, to roll back communism.¹¹

After the American entry into the Korean War in June 1950, Rhee saw the war as an opportunity to unify the peninsula. In a letter to Truman in July 1950, he called for starting the "victorious march north," arguing that it would be "utter folly to attempt to restore the status quo ante, and then to await the enemy's pleasure for further attack when he had time to regroup, retrain, and reequip. The time has come to cut out once and for all the cancer of imperialist aggression...by the world communists..."¹² When the United States entered into armistice negotiations for a ceasefire, Rhee openly opposed a cessation of hostilities. The ROK leader chided the Americans asking how "you can win from a political conference by persuasion, what you could not win on the battlefield by force?"¹³ In April 1953, Rhee demanded that Eisenhower withdraw U.S. troops from the peninsula if an armistice was to be signed, and blustered that the ROK would rather fight alone against the North Koreans, Chinese, and Soviets than have a ceasefire. Rhee undertook destructive actions purposefully designed to reignite hostilities with the North. The most provocative of these occurred in June 1953 when he unilaterally released 25,000 prisoners of war held in the South. This extraordinary act constituted a deliberate attempt to undermine the armistice talks (of which the repatriation of POWs was a major point of negotiation).

Overthrow or Underwrite?

The United States faced a similar entrapment fear with Korea as it had with Taiwan. Washington was hypersensitive to becoming entrapped as a result of its ally's reckless actions. It had no use for a wider conflagration in Asia and also feared that any failed action by Rhee could collapse the government and set off a domino effect in the region. An alliance with South Korea consequently had three functions. First, it was part of a network of alliances and military installations designed to ring the Soviet threat in the Pacific. Second, the alliance deterred a second North Korean attack, with American ground troops serving as the "tripwire" guaranteeing U.S. involvement. And third, the alliance implicitly bound and restrained the South from adventurism.

The restraining rationale became evident immediately in U.S. postwar planning. Both U.S. Ambassador to Korea John Muccio and Secretary of State Dean Acheson were wary of Rhee's constant talk about "march north" and "unification or death." Muccio's cables to Acheson in 1949 framed the dilemma: "We were in a very difficult position, a very subtle position, because if we gave Rhee and his cohorts what they wanted, they could have started to move north the same as the North stated to move south. And the onus would have been on us..."¹⁴

U.S. General Mark Clark was so concerned about ROK unilateralism that he complained about being engaged in a two front diplomatic battle--with the communists at Panmunjom and with Rhee in Seoul--and that the "biggest trouble came from Rhee."¹⁵ Dulles was equally worried about Rhee's constant entreaties for just a "little more war" to liberate the North, and told the ROK leader plainly that his pleas for a so-called "little war" would inevitably escalate to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, potentially unleashing nuclear weapons that could destroy not just the Korean peninsula, but civilization itself."¹⁶ Eisenhower summed up U.S. fears of entrapment regarding the ROK: "[Rhee] wants to get his country unified, but we cannot permit him to start a war to do it. The consequences would be too awful. But he is a stubborn old fellow, and I don't know whether we'll be able to hold him in line indefinitely."¹⁷

Prior to the formation of the mutual defense treaty, the United States government initially contemplated an overthrow of Rhee as an option in dealing with his intransigence.¹⁸ But the Americans soon learned that the only way to restrain the ROK was to threaten the very things that Rhee valued most from the United States. American officials initially did this by threatening to withdraw from the United Nations Command. Robert Bowie, the State Department's Policy Planning director at the time of the armistice talks, observed the dangers of not adopting such a tactic: "[not

to] threaten Rhee with the possibility of UNC withdrawal eliminates the most effective weapon at our disposal for dissuading Rhee from taking unilateral action.”¹⁹ Acheson and Dulles were wary of providing any tanks or other offensive weaponry to Rhee.²⁰ Dulles in particular opposed the transfer of jet aircraft as part of the U.S.-sponsored military modernization program in Korea on the grounds that these “mobile instruments of war” should not be given to a country that “has a vested interest in starting a third world war.”²¹ Dulles wanted Rhee to commit--as Chiang Kai-shek had done--to not using the planes against the North without explicit permission from the United States.

Similarly, as the United States withdrew four divisions from the peninsula at the end of the Korean War, the question arose as to how much equipment would be left behind as part of Korean military modernization. The Koreans, naturally, wanted it all, but defense secretary Charles Wilson stated in blunt terms the prevailing U.S. concern: “Well, we will try to figure out what we think you need, what we think we can let you have, and tell you what it is....Of course, frankly, we don’t want to give you enough equipment so you start the war up again.”²² Once the defense treaty was signed, the United States leveraged the new alliance to restrain Rhee from unilateral acts against the North. In November 1953, Vice-president Richard Nixon went to Seoul to deliver a letter to Rhee from Eisenhower stating that the United States would not resume hostilities and that his administration would not submit the mutual defense treaty to Congress for ratification unless Nixon received Rhee’s “explicit confirmation” that he would not act independently.²³

Operational Command – Eisenhower’s Contingency Plan for Rhee

American archives reveal the extent to which the preoccupation with controlling the ally went beyond routine alliance management. Washington’s desire to restrain ROK leaders from acting on their ambitions was so intense that the U.S. opted to retain operational command authority of all forces on the peninsula within the alliance.²⁴

The rationale for the United States holding operational command authority was not just for war-fighting efficiency, but also to keep a leash on unilateral aggressive acts by the South Koreans.²⁵ It became standing policy that any unilateral ROK military actions would prompt Washington to the severest of actions including the immediate cessation of economic and military aid, disassociation of the UN Command from support of ROK actions, and even the use of American military forces to impose martial law. NSC 5817, entitled “Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Korea” (August 11, 1958), stated that if the ROK unilaterally

initiated military operations against Chinese or North Korean forces in or north of the Demilitarized Zone, then: 1) UN Command ground, sea, and air forces would not support such operations directly or indirectly; 2) the United States would not furnish any military or logistic support for such operations; 3) all U.S. economic aid to Korea would cease immediately; and 4) the UN Commander would take any action necessary to prevent his forces from becoming involved in the renewal of hostilities and to provide for their security.²⁶

In White House deliberations in the late 1950s, President Eisenhower went so far as to say that the United States would covertly support new leadership, forcibly remove Rhee, or even abrogate the alliance.²⁷ Eisenhower argued:

...if we became aware that President Rhee was moving north to attack North Korea, we would simply have to remove Rhee and his government...Such a move would simply have to be stopped. Again Secretary Herter agreed with the President but asked how we proposed to keep the Communists from counter-attacking and seizing South Korea. The President stated with emphasis that everything possible must be done to stop a unilateral South Korean move on North Korea before it started, including deposing Rhee. Thereafter, if South Korea wanted to go on to commit suicide, we would say go ahead and do it...If ever this attack on North Korea occurred, the President said that the military alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea would be broken at that moment.²⁸

Retaining operational control of ROK forces therefore was as much a tool of alliance restraint as it was a tool of deterrence and war-fighting. This sort of command arrangement could not have been put into place in a multilateral alliance system. It was unique to Korea and to the bilateral alliance institution.

Missed Opportunities for Asian Multilateralism?

A “hard test” for the power-play theory requires looking not merely for evidence of U.S. efforts to consolidate bilateral alliances, but for the *absence* of American efforts to achieve multilateralism in Asia with pro-West allies like the ROK. There is clear evidence that despite incentives to pursue multilateralism in Asia, Washington opted against this because doing so would be detrimental to power-play objectives.

After the formation of NATO, Asian leaders sought to craft a “Pacific Pact.” In the spring of 1949, the ROK and Philippines raised the issue with the State Department, arguing that such a pact would enhance

security, economic growth, and development in Asia.²⁹ In July 1949, Philippines president Quirino hosted a summit with Chiang Kai-shek endorsing the Pacific Pact proposal; the following month, Syngman Rhee hosted a summit with Chiang, and called for a conference of Asian leaders in the Philippines to advance the idea.³⁰

Given the multilateralism model followed in Europe, one would have expected the United States to embrace an anti-communist bloc in the region confronting communism. But the United States showed decided apathy at these proposals. Secretary of State Acheson tried to preempt the discussion as early as March and May 1949, stating unambiguously that the United States was not interested.³¹ He argued that NATO was the result of a long deliberative process; that Western European powers had carefully developed their plan for collective defense before asking for US help; and (most revealingly) the U.S. viewed NATO as a two-way street, but the Pacific Pact would amount to a unilateral security commitment that could only entrap the United States.³² Acheson saw Chiang's inclusion as especially dangerous.³³ The day prior to Rhee's hosting Chiang in the port city of Chinhae, American officials met secretly with the ROK president, counseling him to abstain from committing to any collective defense pacts with China or the Philippines.³⁴ In Washington (at the same time as the Chiang-Rhee summit), Quirino was told by State Department officials in bilateral consultations not to even raise the pact during his visit.³⁵ As Calder observed, "[M]ultilateral institutions only undermined the leverage of the United States, which lay precisely in the absence of alternative mediators....It was convenient that Asians could not talk with one another very deeply."³⁶

After the dismissal of the Quirino-Rhee-Chiang Pacific Pact idea, Washington discouraged another opportunity for Asian multilateralism with the outbreak of the Korean War. During the war, Chiang offered General MacArthur 33,000 of his best equipped troops for dispatch to the peninsula within five days to fight communist aggression, which MacArthur reported back to Washington that he was more than willing to accept after the Chinese intervention in late 1950 shifted the tide of the war. December 1951 intelligence and military planning assessments concurred favorably with the idea of rotating two divisions of Nationalist forces through Korea.³⁷ After MacArthur, Generals Matthew Ridgway and Mark Clark also supported the idea, as did U.S. military officials in charge of operations in Taiwan.³⁸ Chiang's offer was effectively a realization of the U.S. postwar vision--an ally in the region that was willing to contribute to a multilateral security effort and share the burden of beating back communism.

The United States consistently rejected every proposal for bringing Nationalist troops into the Korean War. Truman, Acheson, and Secretary of Defense George Marshall expressed clear concerns that Chiang's motive was to extend the peninsular war to Taiwan and China, bringing the U.S. into full scale combat on the Asian mainland. Truman explicitly rejected the idea and sent Averell Harriman to the region in August 1950 to clamp down on both Chiang and MacArthur.³⁹ A memo from the top Asia diplomat in the State Department in 1952 to Secretary-designate John Foster Dulles laid out U.S. entrapment anxieties: "The introduction of Chinese Nationalist troops into Korea would immediately throw Korea into the Chinese civil war and would make it much more difficult, if not impossible, for us to maintain the position that we have so far maintained that in any political talks on Korea after an armistice there would be no discussions of any matters outside of Korea."⁴⁰ The United States rejected this opportunity for security multilateralism in Asia, and instead sought through bilateral channels to exercise even tighter control over its allies.

Conclusion

More work needs to be done on the legacies of the American preference for bilateralism in East Asia. As noted above, this led to Japan's recovery but also its isolation and absence of reconciliation with the region. The history of bilateralism continues to hamper Japanese foreign policy as it unsuccessfully seeks broader initiatives (e.g., a permanent UN Security Council membership) because it cannot acquire the support of its Asian neighbors.

Power-play control rationales clearly are less relevant for U.S. relationships with Taiwan and the ROK today, but the bilateralism that emerged from these ties remains deeply ingrained in the thinking of successive postwar generations in all countries, which naturally weakens the enthusiasm for new multilateral structures. The bilateral architecture continues to work and is buttressed by a level of comfort that makes these institutions difficult to uproot. The fact that many of the new "pluralateral" structures developing in the region, such as U.S.-Japan-ROK, U.S.-Japan-Australia, the "Quad" (U.S.-Japan-India-Australia), and the Six Party Talks (U.S.-Japan-ROK-China-Russia-DPRK), are largely built off the underlying alliance structure attests to how old ways of thinking die hard. The legacy of these initial American choices are significant and deserving of more study. These choices created certain mentalities--domestic notions of legitimacy and normalcy about how security was best maintained--that continue to be unique to East Asia.

Notes:

¹ Thanks to Mike Brown for coining the term, “Rhee-straint.”

² Victor Cha, “Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance,” in Kurt Campbell et al., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: CNAS, February 2009).

³ See “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security* Winter 2010. For an interesting study of Taiwan-U.S. relations, see Steven Goldstein, “The United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978: Suspicious Allies,” APARC Working Paper, February 2000, Stanford University.

⁴ On alliances, multilateralism, and hegemonic controls of power, see Paul Schroeder, “Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management,” in Klaus Knorr ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 227-62; Joseph Grieco, “Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation: The Limits of Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of Realist Theory,” in Robert Baldwin ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 301-338; G. John Ikenberry, “Is American Multilateralism in Decline?” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 1, No. 3 (September 2003); Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Ethan Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); William Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security*, vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), pp. 5-41; Steve Weber, *Multilateralism in NATO: Shaping the Postwar Balance, 1945-1961* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991); Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, No. 5 (September-October, 2002); Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *National Interest*, No. 70 (Winter, 2002-03), pp. 5-17; and other works cited below.

⁵ Ralph Braibanti, “The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty,” *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 30, No. 4 (December, 1957), pp. 321-41, 327-8. SEATO was less well-developed as a multilateral institution than NATO because there was some resistance from Southeast Asian countries to superpower-led alliances linked to anti-colonial norms, nationalism and non-alignment. Still, the multilateral structure in this subregion was distinct from the bilateral one to the north. See Amitav Archarya, “Why is there no NATO in Asia: The Normative Origins of Asian Multilateralism,” Working Paper, Harvard Center for International Affairs.

⁶ John Duffield, “Why is there No APTO?” *Contemporary Security Policy*, No. 22 (August 2001), p. 70.

⁷ Schroeder first used this term in 1976 to describe how alliances serve as tools of management in addition to deterrence (“Alliances, 1815-1914,” p. 230).

⁸ Thanks to Mike Brown for the term “rogue allies.”

⁹ Minutes of Discussion, President Eisenhower and President Rhee, July 27, 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-54, Korea*, vol. XV, Part 2, pp. 1839-1847. Hereafter cited as *FRUS*.

¹⁰ Stephen Jin-Woo Kim, *Master of Manipulation: Syngman Rhee and the Seoul-Washington Alliance 1953-1960* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), p. 177.

¹¹ Robert Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960* (Seoul: Panmun, 1978), p. 48.

¹² President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to President Truman. Restricted. 19 July 1950 in *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, vol. VII, pp. 429-30.

¹³ *Syngman Rhee Through Western Eyes* (Seoul: Office of Public Information, 1954), p. 2.

¹⁴ State Department 895.00 file, box 946, Muccio to Butterworth, November 1, 1949; Truman Library, Muccio oral history interview no. 177, December 27, 1973, cited in Bruce Cumings, “The Structural Basis of ‘Anti-Americanism’ in the Republic of Korea,” paper presented at the Conference on Korean Attitudes toward the United States, Georgetown University, January 30, 2003, n. 33.

¹⁵ Chang-jin Park, “The Influence of Small States Upon the Superpowers,” *World Politics*, vol. 28, No. 1 (October, 1975), p. 97.

¹⁶ Kim, *Master of Manipulation*, p. 177.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-76.

¹⁸ Plan EVERREADY was devised in 1952 and called for the arrest of Rhee and declaration of martial law in the name of the United Nations. See *ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²⁰ Cumings, “Structural Basis,” n. 33.

²¹ Kim, *Master of Manipulation*, p. 181.

²² Meeting of the Military Subcommittee, 28 July 1954. Folder: Minutes of Meetings, July 1954, United States and Republic of Korea, Box 11 Correspondence File, 1953-54. Far East Command, cited *ibid.*, p. 179.

²³ Dulles to Nixon, November 4, 1953. Folder John Foster Dulles, Chronological, November 1953 (5), Box 5 JFD Chronological Series, Dulles Papers; Eisenhower to Rhee, November 4, 1953. Folder: Rhee, Syngman 1953-57 (4), Box 37 International Series Anne Whitman Files/Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library.

²⁴ I believe this is the first analysis of the “restraint” aspect of the U.S.-ROK

alliance that utilizes longstanding declassified documents from the Eisenhower administration about U.S. contingency plans on South Korean governments.

²⁵ Operational command authority dates back to the Korean War when Rhee (July 14, 1950) gave authority over Korean forces to the commander in chief of UN Forces. After the mutual defense treaty (October 1953), the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding confirming this arrangement (November 1954). In 1961, this understanding was delimited to UN control over ROK forces only to defend against an external communist invasion.

²⁶ NSC 5817, "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Korea," August 11, 1958 in *FRUS, 1958-1960; Japan, Korea*, vol. XVIII, Document 237, p. 485.

²⁷ The provision regarding covert support of alternative leadership to Rhee was first contained in a president-approved revision of a 1953 NSC policy document on Korea (NSC 170/1 Annex A). See NSC 170/1, "US Objectives and Courses of Action in Korea," November 20, 1953, in *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, vol. XV, Part 2, pp. 1620-1624. The revision stated: "To select and encourage covertly the development of new South Korean leadership prepared to cooperate in maintaining the armistice, and if Rhee initiates or is about to initiate unilateral action, assist such new leadership to assume power, by means not involving overt U.S. participation until and unless U.S. overt support is necessary and promises to be decisive in firmly establishing such new leadership." This provision was considered extremely sensitive and circulated only to the secretaries of State and Defense, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and director of Central Intelligence. Subsequent National Security Council policy reviews on Korea made reference to the annex (later known as annex F) as regular practice, but the actual contents were kept separate. The provision about U.S. unilateral abrogation of the treaty came about in deliberations a couple of years later on revising NSC 5817, which was then standing policy on Korea (revised as NSC 5907).

²⁸ Memorandum of Discussion at the 411th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington June 25, 1959 Document 277, *ibid.*, p. 569.

²⁹ Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State. Confidential. 22 March 1949; and Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State. Confidential. 24 March 1949 in *FRUS, 1949, The Far East and Australiasia*, vol. VII, Part 2, pp. 1125-27. Memorandum of Conversation, Director of the office for Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) with Dr. John M. Chang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Niles W. Bond, Assistant Chief, Division of Northeast Asian Affairs. Secret. 8 April 1949; Memorandum of Conversation, Counselor of the Embassy in Korea (Drumright). Confidential. 28 May 1949. *Ibid.*, pp. 1141-42; 1145-46.

³⁰ Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to Secretary of State. 12 July 1949, *ibid.*, pp.1152-55; Telegram, Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to Secretary of State. Priority. 8 August 1949, *ibid.*, p. 1184.

³¹ For the formal public statement to this effect, see *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 20 (January-June, 1949), p. 696.

³² David Mabon, "Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951," *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 57, No. 2 (May, 1988), pp. 147-78, p. 151.

³³ For more on the U.S.-Taiwan dynamic, see Cha, "Powerplay," and Goldstein, "The United States and the Republic of China."

³⁴ Telegram, Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State. Top Secret. Priority. 3 August 1949, in *FRUS, 1949, The Far East and Australia*, vol. VII, Part 2, pp. 1181-82.

³⁵ Charles Dobbs, "The Pact that Never Was: The Pacific Pact of 1949," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter, 1984), pp. 29-42 and p. 34.

³⁶ Calder, *Pacific Defense*, p. 194.

³⁷ U.S. intelligence assessments at the time judged that China could not capitalize on Taiwan's military position if these proffered forces were diverted to Korea. See Memorandum of Conversation by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) and Chinese Ambassador (Koo). Confidential. 3 July 1950 in *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, vol. VII, pp. 285-86.

³⁸ John Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1977), pp. 47-48.

³⁹ Extracts of Memorandum of Conversations, Mr. W. Averell Harriman, Special Assistant to the President with General MacArthur, Tokyo, 6 and 8 August 1950. Top Secret. *FRUS, 1950, East Asia and the Pacific*, vol. VI, pp. 427-30.

⁴⁰ Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison) to John Foster Dulles. Secret. 24 December 1952 in *FRUS, 1952-1954, China and Japan*, vol. XIV, p. 119.

