

## **Inter-Korean Relations and the Future of the U.S.–ROK Alliance**

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### **Introduction**

Relations between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) are undergoing dramatic changes. So is the security alliance between the United States and South Korea, which was established to deter a common threat from North Korea. The change in South-North Korean relations has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the United States' North Korea policy. At the same time, progress in inter-Korean relations depends to a significant extent upon Washington's North Korea policy. In addition, the strategic landscape of Northeast Asia and the political environment on the peninsula has changed significantly. The foundation of the U.S.–ROK alliance is being undercut by social and political change in South Korea and by a widening gap in the allies' threat perceptions and security priorities. The question of alliance legitimacy and durability has become more pressing than ever before.

A military alliance is based on a common security threat, and the U.S.–ROK alliance is based on a North Korean threat. Naturally, the alliance is affected by the state of inter-Korean relations. Seoul has adopted an engagement policy toward Pyongyang, which is a radical departure from its traditional stance of national security first. Unfortunately, Seoul's reconciliatory North Korea policy is discordant with Washington's confrontational policy toward North Korea. The different threat perceptions of North Korea and consequent divergent national interests lead to a fundamental question: Can the U.S.–ROK alliance be sustained? Anti-Americanism in South Korea has been on the rise since the end of the Cold War due in part to the perception that the absence of a serious global security threat vitiates the need to tolerate U.S. arrogance and unilateralism. Seoul's engagement policy toward the North has further reduced the perception of threat from North Korea. This

reduced threat perception in South Korea and Washington's hard-line North Korea policy have combined to create a situation that does not augur well for the future of U.S.–ROK relations. U.S.–South Korea watchers on both sides of the Pacific have lamented a crisis in bilateral relations; some even argue that relations are at their lowest point in 50 years.<sup>1</sup>

Trilateral relations between South and North Korea and the United States have important implications for the three countries and for Northeast Asia. How Seoul's North Korea policy evolves is of great interest to its allies and will likely impact South Korea's stature in the regional strategic order. Trilateral relations between South and North Korea and the United States are a key to understanding and resolving the complex Korean issue and to forging a mature alliance relationship. Will the incompatible North Korea policies of Seoul and Washington contribute to or obstruct resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue? What kind of role is Pyongyang playing to influence the US-ROK relationship? How do Seoul's unconventional diplomatic initiatives influence the balance of power in Northeast Asia, especially the future of the U.S.–ROK relationship?

This paper examines the complex trilateral relations between Seoul, Pyongyang, and Washington. It will discuss the change and development in inter-Korean relations, examine the impact of inter-Korean rapprochement on U.S.–ROK relations, and analyze the future of the alliance.

### **The Two Koreas: Partners and Enemies?**

*The Nature of Inter-Korean Relations.* South Koreans have long held two contradicting views of North Korea—as an enemy to be destroyed and as a partner with which to cooperate and be reunified. Since 1945, South Koreans have been sharply divided between the right and left as to whether to compromise with North Korean Communists in order to achieve reunification or to fight against them. Conservatives and progressives were locked in a rivalry to determine the future direction of their country. Until the 1980s, the South Korean government gave priority to national security, a strong alliance with the U.S., and economic growth as a way to win over the North.

Since President Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy, which is a radical departure from South Korea's national strategy, reunification has emerged as a dominating national agenda. The post-Korean War generations, who do not remember the war and have witnessed the end of the Cold War and German reunification, tend to have a "unification first" mentality. Historical revisionism has led them to see their country as a victim of the great powers and the Cold War. Reunification is seen as the true recovery of Korean identity and an utmost goal of the nation. Therefore, inter-Korean reconciliation and unification have become popular slogans for political leaders.

However, managing inter-Korean relations is complex and dangerous. Seoul's engagement policy toward Pyongyang touches not only the complicated dynamics of social and political forces in the South but also the interests of major regional powers, including the United States. In fact, inter-Korean relations include two contradictory factors—reunification and security. The former may be viewed as a domestic issue, while the latter is a domestic as well as an international issue; the former emphasizes peace, cooperation and common prosperity while the latter gives more emphasis to the North Korean military threat and the Korea-U.S. alliance. In addition, unification is a long-term difficult process while security is likely to be an immediate and dangerous concern.<sup>2</sup>

There is thus a danger that the preoccupation with unification may jeopardize security. Peace and stability on the Korean peninsula are volatile and inter-Korean conflict could start at any moment. For half a century priority was given to security in South Korea. In order for Seoul's engagement policy to succeed, therefore, it needs to meet four conditions—have domestic consensus, be based upon a strong economy, enjoy international support, and elicit a positive response from North Korea.<sup>3</sup>

First of all, inter-Korean reconciliation is socially and politically controversial. Millions of South Koreans were victims of the North's invasion and its continuous provocations; therefore, many South Koreans distrust and hate the North. Without an intensive effort to build a strong national consensus, a policy of inter-Korean reconciliation will result in serious

social and political conflicts. South Korea needs to learn a lesson from West Germany which promoted a policy of non-partisan, consensus-based gradual engagement with East Germany.

Second, the engagement policy includes substantial economic assistance to an economically bankrupt North Korea. If South Korea's economy were strong and expanding, South Koreans would likely support at least humanitarian aid to their suffering Northern brethren. However, if the South's economy were in trouble, this might become a further obstacle to the policy. Unfortunately, since late 1997, the South Korean economy has been struggling with its own financial crisis that resulted in millions of unemployed.

Third, as we learned from the German experience, international support, especially that of the United States, is essential. As part of a diplomacy of reunification, West Germany made enormous efforts to mobilize international support for its unification policy.<sup>4</sup> The Korean peninsula is a place where the interests of four major powers in the region—the U.S., Japan, China and Russia—intersect and has remained an area of major power rivalry and conflicts. Therefore, skillful diplomacy is a necessity for the success of Korean rapprochement. Furthermore, Pyongyang's weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat not only to South Korea but also to the major powers.

The September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States renewed its fears of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of rogue regimes such as North Korea. Thus, Washington has changed the way American policymakers looked at their traditional alliances. They put aside most other considerations; each nation was enlisted to fit the interests of Washington's new security paradigm. For Seoul, in contrast, reconciliation and cooperation is not just one of many options; it appears to be the only path toward peaceful reunification.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the ultimate success of the policy is greatly dependent upon the positive response of Seoul's counterpart, Pyongyang. Seoul's engagement policy toward the North was based on the premise that North Korea would change very soon. The Kim Jong Il regime promotes "military-first policy," which

is basically incompatible with Seoul's reconciliation policy. Unless the North embarked on policies of economic reform and opening, the South's reconciliation policy would likely fail or achieve a little. After more than eight years since the beginning of the policy, North Korea has not show any signs of fundamental change. Preoccupied with the survival of its socialist regime, the North has continued to pursue its aggressive "military first" policy.

*The Sunshine Policy.* Favorable external and internal environments helped South Korea promote an engagement policy toward the North. With the end of the Cold War, South Korea has improved its relations with Russia and China—North Korea's crucial allies during the Cold War. On the other hand, North Korea has become internationally isolated and economically bankrupt. By contrast, with phenomenal economic growth, successful democratization, and the dominant position of post-Korean War generations in South Korea, there was an overall shift in South Korea's foreign and security policy outlook, national identity, and the manner in which it conducts foreign affairs. The concomitant rise of progressive politics helped longtime dissident and progressive leader Kim Dae Jung become president and promote the Sunshine Policy of engagement toward North Korea.

Although Seoul's engagement evolved both incrementally and over a long period of time, the Sunshine Policy is a radical departure from those of Kim's predecessors and marked an important turning point in inter-Korean relations. Where his predecessors paid more attention to the North's security threats, he saw opportunities for "genuine, long-term improvements in inter-Korean relations through peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation and exchanges."<sup>6</sup> Soon upon his election, he suggested he would use "sunshine" to thaw North Korean hostility and end its international isolation. In his inaugural address, he emphasized that he would make reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea top priorities in his administration.<sup>7</sup>

After a half-century of dangerous face-offs between the South and the North, the June 2000 summit between President Kim Dae Jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il was nothing

short of unprecedented and raised hopes—at least in the South—for national reconciliation and ultimate reunification. The adoption of a 5-points joint statement on promoting mutual reconciliation and cooperation by the summit led to a major breakthrough in inter-Korean relations. Since the summit, a number of bold initiatives were undertaken by Seoul to promote South-North cooperation.<sup>8</sup> These took the form of (a) arranging for the reunions of separated families, (b) promoting an expansion of social and cultural exchanges, (c) making economic exchanges and cooperation more regular, (d) agreeing to reconnect railways between the two Koreas, (e) developing the Kaesong Industrial Zone across the western corridor of the DMZ, and (f) making inter-governmental contacts, like ministerial talks, routine.

*The Policy of Peace and Prosperity.* In the midst of the massive anti-American demonstrations and of the evolving second North Korea nuclear crisis in late 2002, a pro-sunshine candidate, Roh Moo Hyun, was elected president. The conciliatory policy toward the North, dubbed as the Peace and Prosperity Policy, became the main agenda of the new presidency.<sup>9</sup> Roh focused his inaugural address on his North Korea policy; he promised to maintain the general framework of the Sunshine Policy while aiming to establish permanent peace on the Korean peninsula and promote common prosperity in Northeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> In this vision, North Korea no longer poses a major threat to South Korea, but is viewed as a partner in reconciliation and cooperation.

Unfortunately, Roh inherited the evolving second North Korean nuclear crisis—Asia's gravest security crisis in over a decade, and domestic opinion began to swing away from promotion of inter-Korea cooperation. At the time, international tensions were high surrounding the U.S. war in Iraq. It was widely speculated that North Korea would be the next target of Bush's war against terrorism. In addition, the lack of mutual benefit, transparency, and public accountability as well as poor international cooperation raised questions about Kim Dae Jung's North Korea policy. In particular, the pre-summit payoff scandal during the previous administration continued to be a heavy burden for the new president.<sup>11</sup>

The Roh administration defined reunification as one of the most important goals of South Korea's national strategy and set as a priority objective the achievement of virtual (*de facto*) unification—a system of coexistence and cooperation between the two Koreas—prior to legal and institutional (*de jure*) unification. It approaches the issue of Korean unification as part of his Northeast Asian strategy.<sup>12</sup> Like Kim Dae Jung, President Roh has frequently expressed a hope for the two Koreas to sign a peace treaty to ensure stability on the peninsula. For Roh, the equation is simple: Korean reunification is inevitable, likely within the next decade or two, and the faster the South can bring the North's infrastructure and economy out of its third-world status, the easier the technical aspects of reunification will be. Roh once said, "He would not mind the failures of all other policies only if the North Korea policy were successful."

The three-step strategy of the Peace and Prosperity Policy aims to resolve North Korea's nuclear crisis in the short-term, bring lasting peace to the peninsula in the mid-term, and build a Northeast Asian economic hub in the long-term.<sup>13</sup> If he fails to achieve the goal of the first step, his entire strategy would be compromised. In other words, the urgent issue is the North Korean nuclear crisis. The Roh administration believes that improved inter-Korean relations will prevent tensions from escalating on the Korean peninsula. By increasing the North's economic dependence on the South, it believes Seoul could improve its leverage in persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons program. In addition, in order to ease Washington's strong stance against Pyongyang, inter-Korean relations must be improved.<sup>14</sup> Facing two conflicting agenda—resolution of the North Korea nuclear issue and promotion of inter-Korean cooperation, the Roh administration aims to catch two rabbits at the same time: to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue and to develop inter-Korean relations.

Assuming that the two Koreas will eventually reunite, South Korea is seeking to upgrade the North Korean economy so that a united Korea will not face even worse problems of income inequality than West and East Germany did after German reunification. The Roh government believes that internal trade activity based on manufacturing sectors can contribute to

developing the South-North relationship in the business sector and may result in lessening military and political tension.

The construction of the Kaesong industrial complex is South Korea's most important economic cooperation project between the two Koreas. Seoul hopes that the industrial zone will be a "win-win" deal to convince Pyongyang that business is better than bombs. Despite the lingering North Korean nuclear crisis, the industrial park project has been expanded considerably and is moving forward more rapidly than many expected given the tense atmosphere in and around the peninsula. Thus far fifteen South Korean companies are participating in the project that employs six thousand North Korean workers in eleven factories. The industrial zone could create 725,000 jobs and generate \$500 million in annual wage income for the North Korean economy by 2012. Five years later, another \$1.78 billion would tumble in from annual corporate taxes levied on South Korean companies participating in the industrial project.<sup>15</sup> In all, South Korea's government says the industrial zone could be worth \$2.7 billion a year to the North Korean economy, equal to 12% of North Korea's estimated gross national product in 2003.<sup>16</sup>

*The Shadow of the Sunshine.* After a half-century of dangerous face-offs between the South and the North, the June 2000 summit between President Kim Dae Jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il was nothing short of unprecedented and raised hopes—at least in the South—for national reconciliation and ultimate reunification. The adoption of a 5-points joint statement on promoting mutual reconciliation and cooperation by the summit led to a major breakthrough in inter-Korean relations. The summit brought about a wave of nationalism and unification euphoria throughout the country. Kim and his government had created the illusion of early unification. Many Koreans, especially post-Korean War generations, began to see the North Korean people as poor brothers and sisters in need of South Korean help. According to one poll conducted shortly after the summit, only 4.6 percent of the general public viewed North Korea as an enemy. By contrast, nearly half (49.8%) saw North Korea as an equal partner of South Korea and another 44 percent said they considered the North a partner that South Koreans should help.<sup>17</sup> In the past,

North Korea was perceived as a dangerous and distrustful Communist enemy.

One immediate effect of the summit was to further reduce the already declining sense of a North Korean threat inside South Korea. President Kim helped foster this effect in his effort to reach a dramatic breakthrough in inter-Korean relations: he de-emphasized the fear of a military threat from the North and the possibility of war. Upon his return to Seoul following the summit, he declared: “We have reached a turning point so that we can put an end to the history of 55 years of territorial division...We must consider North Koreans as our brothers and sisters...Most importantly there will no longer be war. The North will no longer attempt unification by force.”<sup>18</sup>

However, there is a contrast in the priority order of national goals between North and South Korea (Table 1). Pyongyang’s top priority is regime survival. Thus, it concentrates its limited resources on the development of weapons of mass destruction. It is also reluctant to engage with other countries including the South, concerning the destabilizing effect of engagement. On the other hand, Seoul gives top priority to inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation. In order for inter-Korean relations to develop smoothly, the priority order of the two Koreas needs to be similar. Seoul assumes that an engagement policy will change North Korea’s aggressive behavior but it is uncertain whether Pyongyang, which is desperate for survival, will easily change its priorities. In short, the South’s peace-oriented policy does not match the North’s “military first” policy.

Table 1. Priority Order of North and South Korea

North Korea	South Korea
Regime survival	Inter-Korean cooperation
Strong military (development of WMD)	Peaceful resolution of North Korean crisis
Economic recovery	Economic development
Reunification (?)	Regional cooperation

The biggest problem with the engagement policy is that the policy has not been able to reduce the threat of conflict on the peninsula. An unbalanced inter-Korean agenda that ignores

potential sources of tension and instability will likely be ultimately self-defeating. The fundamental problem in Seoul’s North Korea policy is that the policy failed to reduce the North Korean threat and to improve South Korean security. From the beginning, security issues ranked far too low on Seoul’s negotiation agenda. On the other hand, North Korea still possessed one of the world’s largest, most heavily fortified militaries and was suspected of possessing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and its military buildup has continued, as it has given priority to building a “militarily powerful” state. After the summit, North Korean procurement of arms actually increased and the percentage of its forward-deployed forces continued to grow. North Korea also followed up the summit by conducting its most extensive military exercises in a decade.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the success of Seoul’s North Korea policy hinged largely upon Kim Jong Il’s positive response. Although the South Korean government has adopted a more flexible posture of tactical adjustments and forward-looking moves toward the North, Pyongyang’s policy toward Seoul has largely remained consistent. The North has not abandoned its fundamental strategic goals and policy objectives toward Korean reunification.<sup>20</sup> Seoul’s strategy of depending on Kim Jong Il for the success of its North Korea policy seems to be a remarkable political risk, which could prove to be a failure if Pyongyang provides no concrete and positive response.

As matter of fact, Pyongyang appears to be heading in the opposite direction. It did not trust Seoul’s pledge to oppose the collapse-and-absorption formula for unification and strongly criticized the Sunshine Policy as a “sunburn policy.”<sup>21</sup> It thus responded to Seoul’s positive measures with frequent military provocations. The Kim Jong Il regime has set “the building of the *Kangsong Taeguk*” (strong and prosperous great power) and “the military first politics” as its national strategies. In order to undermine South Korea it repeatedly demands the abolition of anticommunist laws in South Korea, the guarantee to protect all political activities by all political organizations, including Communist and pro-North Korean organizations, in the South, the “democratization (meaning social democracy) of South Korean society, and the conclusion of a U.S.-DPRK peace treaty

and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the South. At the same time, North Korea has been poised to launch a preemptive surprise attack on the South in a revolutionary war to unify the country by force, if necessary. Its military strategy has consistently been to create great turmoil in the South by launching simultaneous attacks on the front line and in the rear area. How is Kim Jong Il's strategy of "military first politics" related to his policy toward the South?

There appear to be two survival strategies for Pyongyang – economy first or military first. In order to pursue the first strategy, Pyongyang has to reform its political and economic systems and open up its society. No country can achieve economic viability with a costly military first policy. In other words, it has to cut military spending in order to shift its limited resources to the economy, reduce social and political control, open up society, and give up its weapons of mass destruction. This means a fundamental change in the North Korean regime, which would be unacceptable for Kim Jong Il. Another survival strategy is a nuclear option. Kim Jong Il may believe that self-reliant defense, in particular nuclear weapons, is the only way to guarantee the survival of his regime. Could Pyongyang trade away its weapons of mass destruction programs for security guarantees and economic assistance? Could other countries guarantee the survival of the North Korean regime when Kim Jong Il himself has no viable strategy for regime survival?

Seoul's drastic shift from a security-first North Korea policy to a peace-oriented unification policy has brought confusion, debates and conflicts in South Korea and its relations with the United States. Opponents of the engagement policy believe the North is still the main enemy. Progressives, who believe the North is a partner in cooperation and reunification, want to make the pursuit of Korean reunification and national unity the number one priority in inter-Korean relations. Both Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun, who staked their legacy on the success of the North Korea policy and aimed to achieve a real breakthrough within their limited terms, effectively made themselves into hostages of Kim Jong Il. They could not afford to criticize Kim Jong Il for fear of antagonizing him. Seoul has tried to avoid anything that might offend Kim Jong Il, but in so doing it has

angered many South Koreans. Rather than trying to compromise with the opposition or to persuade a wary public, the government has tried to suppress its critics. The policy has thus become so politicized that one can no longer distinguish between criticisms of the policy and character assassinations of the president. Seoul might now see North Korea as a partner, or it might have decided that, in order to turn the old enemy into a partner, it is necessary to placate the North. In short, North Korea is an enemy as well as a partner for South Korea, and the dual character of inter-Korean relations inevitably provides a serious dilemma for South Korean policymakers.

However, the most serious problem of the engagement policy is its damaging impact on the U.S.–ROK alliance, to which we turn next.

### **The Impact of the Engagement Policy on the US–ROK Alliance**

In contrast to increasingly warming inter-Korea relations, ties between the United States and South Korea have significantly cooled since the June 2000 South-North summit, largely owing to the two countries' different approaches to North Korea. The common perception that North Korea represented a serious security threat was the glue that bound their alliance together, but that has been changing. The post-September–11 strategic priorities of the United States have led to a hardened and hostile policy toward North Korea, further straining the U.S.–ROK alliance. Inter-Korean reconciliation has important implications for the South Korea-United States alliance. Because the alliance is based upon a common perception of a North Korean threat, South Korea's growing sense of common identity with North Korea poses a great challenge to the alliance. The closer together South and North Korea grow, the more difficult it becomes for Washington and Seoul to coordinate their policies toward the North.

The Sunshine Policy was remarkably successful in altering South Koreans' views of North Korea and fostering perceptions of the U.S. as an obstacle to inter-Korean reconciliation. Public perceptions of the North Korean threat declined dramatically. Polling by *The Hankyoreh* 21 in June 2000 (10 days after the

summit) and March 2002 found 89 and 81 percent respectively said it was very or somewhat impossible that war could break out on the Korean peninsula.<sup>22</sup> In a Gallup Korea survey conducted in February 2003, only 37 percent of respondents believed in the possibility of a North Korean invasion, down significantly from 69 percent in 1992.<sup>23</sup>

One result of the Sunshine Policy is a greater perceived linkage between security and unification. Progressives tend to believe that security and unification are mutually exclusive. When the South and the North are reconciling and cooperating with each other toward the goal of ultimate reunification, why, wonder progressives, should they worry about a North Korean threat? This leads progressives to question the role of U.S. forces in Korea, even perceiving it as an obstacle to Korean reconciliation.<sup>24</sup> Thus, inter-Korean cooperation (*minjok gongjo*, inter-Korean cooperation for reconciliation and unification) is perceived as more important than U.S.–ROK cooperation (*hanmi gongjo*, cooperation for security). Responding to the question: “Cooperation with North Korea and the United States are both important, but which one do you think should come first?” 39.4% answered that inter-Korean cooperation must take precedence, while 24.4% answered in favor of U.S.–ROK cooperation. Another 34.4% answered that cooperation with each party is equally important.<sup>25</sup>

No sooner had George W. Bush been sworn in as president than his hostile attitude toward North Korea surfaced. The Bush administration clearly departed from the policies of its predecessor. Seemingly warming ties between the North and the South lacked substance and could prove to be a mirage without Washington’s involvement in solving military tensions on the peninsula and the thorny issue of Pyongyang’s programs of weapons of mass destruction. Bush’s support for the Sunshine Policy was crucial. In March 2001, Kim Dae Jung rushed to Washington to meet with Bush. Unfortunately, the summit meeting was almost universally portrayed as a diplomatic disaster, dealing a fatal blow to the Sunshine Policy.<sup>26</sup> During a joint press conference, Bush embarrassed Kim by saying, “I do have some skepticism about the leader of North Korea.”<sup>27</sup> Kim’s unification-oriented (and security-neglecting) engagement policy

conflicts squarely with Bush’s security-oriented North Korea policy.

It is important to note one unintended consequence of the Sunshine Policy: generally, the level of support for U.S. forces in South Korea among South Koreans has been inversely proportional to the level of comity between the North and the South; in other words, every time the North takes a positive step, more South Koreans question the need for U.S. forces in their country. Washington’s North Korea policy was widely perceived in South Korea as undercutting inter-Korean reconciliation.<sup>28</sup> Many South Koreans believed that Washington’s hostile policies were driving North Korea into a corner, risking provocation and unnecessary harm to the process of inter-Korean reconciliation. In January 2002 Bush labeled North Korea a member of an “axis of evil,” along with Iran and Iraq. At the same time, Pyongyang’s skillful tactic of freezing South-North relations in 2001, then strongly hinting that the Bush administration’s hard-line North Korea policy was the cause, reinforced anti-American sentiment in the South.

The inter-Korean summit planted two seeds of future tension between Seoul and Washington. These are based on fundamental differences in priorities: Seoul favoring reconciliation and economic cooperation with the North while Washington focusing on the nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea. Even before the summit there was some divergence between Washington and Seoul on this issue, with the U.S. urging South Korea to place threat reduction measures higher on its inter-Korean agenda. The outcome of the summit reinforced this divergence. Not only did the Kim-Kim Joint Declaration fail to address any of the pressing security issues, it did not even mention the word “security” at all. Secondly, Seoul did not demand reciprocity in its dealings with Pyongyang, arguing that South Korea, as the stronger “elder brother,” should be patient. But Washington maintained a clear linkage between concessions on its part and concrete changes in the North Korean nuclear program.<sup>29</sup> The divergent policies of Seoul and Washington are based on different assumptions: While Seoul believes that inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation will induce the desired North Korean behavior and resolve the North

Korean nuclear issue, Washington believes only diplomatic and economic pressure will make Pyongyang give up nuclear weapons programs.

Although Washington supported Seoul's proposal to build railroads and roads across the DMZ, agreements on family reunions, and investment guarantees for South Korean firms investing in North Korea, it had reservations over Kim Dae Jung's proposals on security-related issues. Kim urged Washington to remove North Korea from the U.S. terrorism list, but the United States disagreed. Kim proposed to convene multilateral negotiations for a Korean peace agreement to replace the 1953 Korean armistice agreement, but Washington worried that a peace agreement would create a false sense of security and could undermine South Korean public and political support for the U.S. troop presence in South Korea.<sup>30</sup>

The United States believes that owing to South Korea's economic aid North Korea gained greater financial flexibility to pursue its weapons of mass destruction programs and to make military purchases. In particular, Washington believes that the secret Hyundai payments of \$500 million helped North Korea to accelerate the financing of its secret uranium enrichment program. According to the CIA, in 2001 North Korea purchased large quantities of materials needed to build a facility for the production of highly enriched uranium.<sup>31</sup> On March 27, 2001, in his congressional testimony, General Thomas Schwartz, commander of U.S. Forces in Korea, said that North Korean forces over the past year had grown "bigger, better, closer, and deadlier."<sup>32</sup>

Assailing Bush's remarks about North Korea during his meeting with Kim Dae Jung, Pyongyang broke off all contacts with Seoul. Pyongyang insisted that it would not engage in talks with the new Bush administration unless these talks began with the same position taken by the Clinton administration. Taking advantage of the diverging positions between Seoul and Washington, Pyongyang has tried to drive a wedge between Washington and Seoul.

Declining South Korean fears of a North Korean invasion and hopes for inter-Korean reconciliation have produced a growing debate in South Korea regarding the U.S. military

presence. South Koreans increasingly view the U.S. presence from the standpoint of its impact on prospects for improved North-South relations. Thus, the Bush administration's hawkish attitude toward North Korea became a source of deeper disagreement between pro- and anti-sunshine groups in South Korea. In other words, the failure of the engagement policy led to the search for scapegoats, for which the U.S. presence was a ready target. Pro-sunshine elements believed that the United States was undermining inter-Korean reconciliation. Some radicals even declared: "The greatest obstacle to unification is the United States."<sup>33</sup> They questioned South Korea's need for a U.S. military presence, and sought the closing of U.S. training facilities, and revision of the U.S.-ROK Status of Forces Agreement.

The abrupt revelation in October 2002 that North Korea had an active nuclear program further complicated the management of the U.S.-ROK relationship. The North Korean nuclear program inevitably heightened tension between North Korea and the U.S. government. Given the U.S.'s post-9/11 security strategy, which focuses on weapons of mass destruction, Pyongyang's nuclear program put serious pressure on the alliance.

The relationship with the U.S. became a focal point of the December 2002 presidential elections in South Korea. The pro-sunshine candidate, Roh Moo Hyun, who criticized American domination of the US-ROK relationship and called for a more equal relationship, won the election. Roh provoked a strong reaction in the United States in particular by appearing to advocate a neutral position for Seoul between North Korea and the U.S.<sup>34</sup> Such a stance, coupled with soaring anti-American sentiments in South Korea, heightened concerns in the United States. Some in America advocated a policy of "abandon South Korea," contending that Seoul seriously breached its ties with Washington by entering a "neutral zone" and even siding with the North.<sup>35</sup>

South Korean views of the U.S. role on the Korean peninsula have become markedly polarized under the Roh Moo Hyun administration. Roh's February 2003 inauguration signaled the rise of left-of-center politics. His foreign policy on

key issues, including the U.S.–ROK and inter-Korean relations, has dismayed not only conventional conservative groups in South Korea but also the Bush administration. The two administrations' ideologies have drifted apart, opening a new gap in world views and strategies on the peninsula and East Asia.<sup>36</sup> Roh's Peace and Prosperity Policy resembled Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy except on the key issue of relations with Washington. Roh and his young entourage in the "386 generation" insist on a more equitable relationship with the U.S. As they see much of post-1945 Korea's relationship with the U.S. as humiliating, they demand a more independent diplomacy that recognizes China and Russia as checks to U.S. hegemony in East Asia. Such a policy has ignited debates on South Korea's long-term strategic options, including a potential shift in Washington-Seoul relations.

Ideology and generational changes in South Korea have exacerbated these trends. The young generation is reform-minded, liberal, and more receptive to North Korea. Young people are the driving force of the Roh government's progressive foreign policies. They are less compromising and tolerant of a U.S. unilateral policy toward the peninsula. They believe that Washington's aggressive pursuit of the "war on terror," particularly its pre-emptive policy and pressure on North Korea, poses even graver risks to peace on the peninsula than North Korea's nuclear weapons program. An opinion survey in Seoul indicates that 39 percent of South Koreans view the United States as the greatest threat to South Korea's security, while 33 percent saw North Korea as the greatest threat.<sup>37</sup> This represents a drastic reversal in perceptions when compared to the results of a similar opinion poll conducted by Gallup Korea in 1993, in which the United States was ranked fourth (1%) as the greatest threat, behind North Korea (44%), Japan (15%), and China (4%).<sup>38</sup>

The Roh administration looks for peace at all costs and there is no room for talk of conflict or war under any circumstances. Roh has opposed any sanctions against the North. He believes that a U.S. military strike against North Korea is an extremely serious matter that could lead to a war on the peninsula, and therefore, he opposes even a review of such a possibility and

expresses strong opposition to a military option regarding the North Korea nuclear issue. Roh also believes that North Korea's collapse would burden South Korea with refugees and economic and political challenges that would dwarf what West Germany faced more than a decade ago.

The Roh administration has thus given priority to peaceful resolution while intentionally downplaying U.S.–South Korean relations and turning a blind eye to signs of North Korean nuclear development. Every time Washington suggests the possibility of sanctions against Pyongyang, the Roh administration opposes them. In the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program, Seoul tends to hold a similar position to China and to criticize the American hard-line position. President Roh gave policy speeches in Los Angeles in November 2004, criticizing the Bush administration, rejecting pressure on North Korea, defending North Korea's assertion that it needs a "nuclear deterrent" in view of its perception of a threat from the United States, and describing North Korea's "reward for freeze" proposal as "a considerably positive proposal."<sup>39</sup>

Despite the nuclear crisis, the Roh administration has speeded up three major inter-Korean economic cooperation projects: the construction of the Kaesong industrial park, the linking of railroads and roads, and the development of the Mt. Kumgang tourism project.<sup>40</sup> Seoul has made little attempt to link economic engagement with the North to progress on the nuclear issue. Burgeoning inter-Korea economic cooperation has become a symbol of the divide between South Korea and the U.S. on how to handle North Korea. To some, it appeared that Seoul was providing a life-support system to Pyongyang, at a time when Pyongyang was developing nuclear weapons and missiles and harboring international terrorists. Washington tends to believe that Seoul's North Korea policy undermines whatever leverage the United States might have had in negotiations with North Korea, as well as the very rationale for the continued stationing of U.S. troops in South Korea.

If the North Korean nuclear crisis had been peacefully resolved and U.S.–North Korea relations improved, Seoul's North Korea policy would have been considered successful and its relations with Washington would have improved. However,

things seemed to be getting worse. On February 10, 2005, Pyongyang announced that it possessed nuclear weapons and would boycott the Six Party Talks until Washington gave up its "hostile" policy. Pyongyang's announcement embarrassed the Roh government, which had advocated the North's causes even at the risk of sacrificing the 50-year-old alliance with the United States. Nevertheless, Seoul has repeatedly played down the North Korean nuclear threat as a "bargaining chip."<sup>41</sup> Roh believes that "the North Korean threat has decreased far more than ever before...Inter-Korean relations will get better, and economic cooperation projects would gradually reduce tension on the Korean peninsula."<sup>42</sup> Roh remains unwilling to come to terms with the fact that the engagement policy has neither made South Korea safer nor led to reform in North Korea.

Washington has urged Seoul to maintain a common front to pressure Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons program. But there is a big gap between the Bush administration's brand of conservatism and the Roh government's very liberal policies toward North Korea. The U.S.-ROK alliance tends to be seen within the context of the so-called "Korean triangle" consisting of the two Koreas and the U.S. The more the U.S. pushes South Korea to join Washington's approach to North Korea, the faster the attitudes of South Koreans veer away from its traditional ally, the U.S., and closer to the North.<sup>43</sup>

Bush's new military strategy of "strategic flexibility" has further complicated Korean-American relations. In order to enhance the strategic flexibility of U.S. forces abroad, the mission of U.S. forces in Korea has changed from a single-minded focus on the peninsula to one that includes regional, or even global, stability. The Roh administration's response to strategic flexibility has been largely negative. In his speech at the Korea Air Force Academy in March 2005, President Roh asserted that the U.S. forces in Korea could not be used in contingencies in Northeast Asia without South Korean consent. He also declared that future South Korean security policy would seek for South Korea the role of a "balancer" among the major powers in Northeast Asia suggesting that support for its traditional allies, the United States and Japan, would not be automatic.<sup>44</sup> Most analysts viewed both pronouncements as

influenced by South Korea's growing ties with China and a desire to keep South Korea out of future disputes between the United States and China or Japan and China.<sup>45</sup>

Defending the president's statement, a high-ranking South Korean official said the East Asian order in which Korea plays one leg of the three-way alliance with the U.S. and Japan was a product of the Cold War and that Korea could not be locked into such a Cold War security structure forever. Another official said that as tensions rise between the U.S. and Japan on one side and China and North Korea on the other, Seoul would not be cornered into an exclusive alliance with Washington.<sup>46</sup> Roh's desire to move his country away from the United States and Japan, and closer to China and Russia is a radical departure from traditional South Korean diplomacy. The notion of balancer further helps to strain South Korea's relations with the U.S. and Japan, seriously weakening the Washington-Seoul-Japan triangle.

When Roh's statement of a balancing role in Northeast Asia goes beyond rhetoric, then the issue becomes more serious. In February 2005, President Roh stated, "Our military should be one with the right to operate independently to serve as a balancer in Northeast Asia." In line with the president's policy, the South Korean defense ministry is considering reducing military exchanges with Japan and strengthening its military ties with China. Owing to strained relations with China and to the growing threat from North Korea, Japan has become very sensitive to Seoul's policies toward North Korea and China.<sup>47</sup> The Roh administration has begun to view a more assertive Japan as posing more of a long-term threat to Seoul's national security than North Korea. Divergent policies toward China and North Korea between Seoul and Tokyo as well as lingering disputes over history issues and Dokdo Island have significantly strained South Korea-Japan relations.

In this connection, a Korean newspaper reported that a U.S. official threatened to withdraw U.S. troops unless Seoul accepts Washington's request for more strategic flexibility. During his visit to Seoul, Richard Lawless, U.S. Deputy Undersecretary of Defense, said that "South Korea's strategic value was finished, and if it fails to accept American demands, the U.S. forces in

Korea could be withdrawn.”<sup>48</sup> A week earlier, Mr. Lawless told the Korean ambassador in Washington, “Korea’s Northeast Asian balancer role is a concept that cannot coexist with the Korea-U.S. alliance. If you would like to change the alliance, say so anytime. We will do as you like.”<sup>49</sup>

North Korea’s missile launches in July 2006 have further strained U.S.–ROK relations. The UN Security Council condemned the missile tests and adopted a resolution imposing sanctions on Pyongyang. The United States and Japan spearheaded sanctions against the North. The U.S. Congress is introducing the North Korea Nonproliferation Act of 2006, which would authorize U.S. sanctions on foreign persons or companies that transfer missile and WMD-related items to North Korea or that buy such items from North Korea. Japan is strengthening its military alliance with the U.S., including building missile defense systems. Even China, a long-term ally of North Korea, agreed with the UN Security Council resolution. Roh, however, seemed to underestimate the security implications of the missile launches and is more interested in criticizing Japanese reactions to the launches than the North Korean provocation. He indicated that he would oppose attempts by the U.S. and Japan to impose additional sanctions on North Korea and that his government would maintain its fundamental approach to North Korea.

Amid the North Korean missile crisis and mounting tensions on the peninsula, a transfer of wartime control of South Korean forces back to the Korean government has become a hotly debated issue in South Korea and between the U.S. and South Korea. The Roh administration, which pursues an independent-oriented foreign policy and self-reliant defense, has linked the issue of Korea’s sole wartime operation control to national pride and sovereignty. From the beginning, Roh has shown strong interest in a more self-reliant defense. During a television interview before his inauguration, Roh complained that he, not a U.S. general, should control South Korean troops in combat. He has continued to keep the matter before the public.

In September 2005, Seoul proposed officially at a regular security meeting that the two nations address the issue of operation control—a move that would split command of forces

between Seoul and Washington and give the North Koreans a distinct edge in case of conflict. In an address on Armed Forces Day in October 2005, Roh raised the issue: “If our military reforms are successful, the armed forces will be reborn as independent forces, especially through the exercise of wartime operational control.” In March 2006, he again emphasized that the transfer would be agreed within the year, and in June he said that Seoul would have wartime control within five years.<sup>50</sup> On October 20, 2006, Washington and Seoul agreed that South Korea would take wartime control of its military. The change is scheduled to take place between late 2009 and early 2012. Initially, Washington was doubtful about South Korea’s readiness to take on wartime responsibilities, but it suddenly changed its position.

The landmark change in the half-century-old military alliance is taking place in a particularly strained period in which Seoul and Washington see little in common, particularly toward North Korea, which Seoul wants to engage and Washington wants to isolate. Conservatives in South Korea argue that the timing for a turnover is wrong, given North Korea’s missile tests and an atomic bomb test. Many South Koreans are concerned that the issue itself is a sign of a weakening alliance that might eventually lead to a further reduction of U.S. forces in Korea.<sup>51</sup> Some observers interpret the U.S. timetable as a sign that Washington is washing its hands of Korea as a result of strains in the alliance.<sup>52</sup>

Fortunately, partly owing to North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and increasing uncertainty in the security environment of Northeast Asia, anti-Americanism in Korea has waned substantially: survey results indicate that public opinion on the U.S.–ROK alliance and U.S. forces in Korea reversed from negative to positive.<sup>53</sup> When asked which of five countries South Korea should most cooperate with, 53% of South Koreans said the United States, followed by China (24%), the European Union (10%), Japan (4%), and Russia (1%).<sup>54</sup> South Koreans are largely concerned about the strained U.S.–ROK relationship. According to a July 2005 survey by *Monthly JoongAng*, 57.4% of the respondents believe that current Korea–U.S. alliance relations are weak while only 16.8% believe they are strong.

Two-thirds of them (67.2%) perceive the current Korea-U.S. relationship as having weakened compared to the relationship during the previous administration.<sup>55</sup> A large majority (72.3%) blames the Roh administration for the weakened alliance. An amateurish performance by Roh's foreign policy team (46.6%) and the anti-American or "independent" policy of the Roh administration (45.2%) are seen as responsible for the troubled relationship. An absolute majority of South Koreans (85.1%) believe that Korea-U.S. relations should be given a priority, while only 11.9 percent and 2.0 percent believe inter-Korean and Korea-China relations should be given priority.<sup>56</sup>

As long as Korean people are supportive of the alliance, the prospects for the future of bilateral relations are positive.

### **The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance**

Although Seoul's engagement policy toward the North has important strategic implications, it has not implemented it with careful deliberation and thorough planning. Lacking was the sober policy-appraisal that needed to address the obvious limitations and risks involved in engaging North Korea. As a result, the disjuncture between engagement consensus in Seoul and hawkish elements in Washington has become a source of continued friction amid the search for a solution to the nuclear crisis in the North. Growing differences in perspective and policy toward North Korea not only struck at the heart of the U.S.-ROK alliance but also created mutual resentments. If the U.S.-ROK alliance is predicated on a threat from North Korea, and if South Korea continues to insist that North Korea is no longer a threat, then it is hard for many to conclude that the alliance can remain strong.<sup>57</sup>

The failure to forge a common approach on North Korea between Washington and Seoul is a major stumbling block to ending the North's nuclear threat. According to one expert, "The biggest problem in six-party talks has been the problem between South Korea and the United States. The alliance is in trouble. There is a great deal of resentment and misunderstanding, and a great deal of suspicion and mistrust on both sides."<sup>58</sup> The situation has recently gone from bad to worse as North Korea test-fired missiles on July 4, 2006 and tested a nuclear weapon

on October 9, 2006. On October 14, 2006, the UN Security Council passed unanimously two resolutions condemning North Korea and imposing stiff sanctions on the country. North Korea declared that it would regard sanctions as the declaration of war. When UN sanctions set in, North Korea will be resentful all the more and consequently, various kinds of dangerous clashes are expected. It will also proclaim their entry into the nuclear club, using sanctions to tighten control and rally domestic support. Further negotiations will have to take place under this new reality—a nuclear-armed North Korea.

The Kim Jong Il regime has pursued a "military first" policy with a goal of becoming a nuclear state. A North Korea with nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities means incalculable costs, both direct and indirect, for South Korea and Northeast Asia. These include capital flight and a faltering stock market in South Korea and perhaps other countries in the region, not to mention the price of rolling back an extant North Korean nuclear weapons program and the costs associated with an arms race and nuclear proliferation ripple effect to Japan, Taiwan and even Southeast Asia, all resulting in a tension-filled region created by North Korea.<sup>59</sup>

With the nuclear weapon test of North Korea and weakening relations with the United States, South Korea faces a security crisis, which is one of the most critical ones since the Korean War. It cannot counterbalance a nuclear-armed North Korea. It needs the protection of American nuclear umbrella than ever before. It is clear that Seoul's North Korea policy failed. Nevertheless, Seoul seems to continue its North Korea policy and is reluctant to implement United Nations Resolution 1718, which sanctions North Korea. In the near future, a nuclear-armed Pyongyang will be likely threatening Seoul. Continued appeasement toward the North will endanger South Korea's security. It is time for South Korea to adopt a new tough North Korea policy and to strengthen its military alliance with the United States. South Korea's participation in sanctions against North Korea will be decisive factor in maintaining the US-ROK alliance and ROK-Japan relations. The only feasible approach to North Korea appears to be one that effectively integrates a range of threats and incentives and involves all the countries in

the region. The United States simply cannot expect to maintain a good relationship with one Korea while remaining a mortal enemy of the other.

While inter-Korean relations can be thought of as an internal issue, the divided Korean peninsula is part of the political order of Northeast Asia. Accordingly, without the support and cooperation of major regional players, especially the United States and Japan, South Korea will be unable to succeed in solving North Korean nuclear crisis or advancing inter-Korean reconciliation, both of which are key objectives of the South's engagement policy. Moreover, the economic rebuilding of North Korea will be inevitable once the nuclear issue is resolved and it opens its doors to the outside world. South Korea cannot afford to finance this massive reconstruction effort on its own. Without the cooperation and support of the United States and Japan, the mobilization of international capital will be very difficult, if not impossible.

For Seoul, maintaining the alliance conforms to old Asian wisdom on strategic behavior: cooperate with a country that is big and strong, but is located far away. South Korea has thus far enjoyed not only American security protection but also political, economic, technological, and social benefits. South Korea's current and emerging strategic interests would be best served by maintaining the U.S.–ROK alliance to better meet a spectrum of future challenges. No alternative strategic option is better for South Korea than remaining committed to an alliance with the U.S., at least in some form. This is the reality that most South Koreans understand to be in the best interests of their nation. Breaking off relations with the United States would not only be very costly for South Korea in the short run; but in the long run, it would only shift dependency from one strong partner to another.<sup>60</sup>

Neither Seoul nor Washington can escape blame for the deteriorating bilateral relationship. Leadership changes in Seoul and Washington in 2007 and 2008 respectively will provide opportunities to develop a future-oriented and comprehensive alliance. The landslide victories for the opposition party in the May 2006 local elections reflect a strong dissatisfaction among South Koreans with the policies of the Roh administration.

President Roh is currently extremely unpopular: in fact he is the most unpopular president in Korean history.<sup>61</sup> Whoever becomes president in the election of late 2007, will have to readjust Seoul's North Korea policy as well as the management of the U.S.–ROK alliance.

The United States and the Republic of Korea need each other, but the latter needs the former more, especially after North Korea's nuclear test. With their divergent approaches toward North Korea, the two countries tend to focus on the burdens rather than the benefits of the alliance. The U.S.–ROK alliance has been a cornerstone of peace and security on the Korean peninsula, and it will continue to play a central role in the peaceful unification process. A robust U.S.–ROK alliance not only contributes to deter North Korean military adventurism, but it also restrains potential regional power competition among China, Japan, and Russia.

Since the inauguration of the Sunshine Policy in 1998, Seoul's approach has been characterized as a bold effort to build inter-Korean trust. The logic of appeasement may call for bribing North Korea and prevent it from becoming even more of a problem rather than confront Pyongyang militarily or diplomatically hold it accountable for its behavior. But is the policy working? Have more than eight years of "sunshine" built trust with the North? South-North contacts and exchanges have markedly increased, and South Korean aid to the North has grown unabated. But North Korea's missile and nuclear tests clearly indicate the limitations or failure of Seoul's reconciliatory North Korea policy.

Despite South Korea's deteriorating security situation, the U.S.–ROK alliance is fast approaching a major turning point in its history. Washington and Seoul recognize this fact and are trying to address the situation in bilateral talks, but current dialogue appears to be making little progress in remaking the alliance. To date, adjustments to the alliance have not opened up new roles and missions or allowed the alliance to shift from its current focus on deterring a North Korean threat. In 2006 in the throes of uncertainty over the future of the U.S.–ROK alliance, two bold initiatives were launched: negotiations on a rush schedule to establish a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), and

a strategic dialogue at the foreign minister level. How successful Washington and Seoul will be in these crucial initiatives may have a lasting impact on the bilateral relations.

While the U.S.–ROK relationship is certainly not at a breaking point, significant challenges lie ahead in managing the alliance during a period of unprecedented fluctuations on the Korean peninsula and in East Asia. In many ways, the future of the U.S.–ROK alliance begins with successfully handling the North Korean WMD challenge in a coordinated fashion. In this sense, it is not a contradiction to explore the long-term future of the alliance while at the same time discussing the immediate policy choices vis-à-vis North Korea. The degree to which Washington and Seoul can ameliorate the relationship depends on the extent to which they can forge a new security consensus above and beyond the existing North Korean threat.

Northeast Asia is changing rapidly. However, the singular focus on the North has left the U.S.–ROK alliance unprepared to cope with the many possible future scenarios in Northeast Asia. Conditions in Northeast Asia are growing more opaque and uncertain: the region right now is in the middle of a restructuring regional order. The adjustment of the alliance needs to be closely connected to the bigger picture of changing regional order in the region. As China and Japan attempt to expand their influence in the region, a new, more competitive strategic triangle—the U.S., Japan and China—is emerging. Therefore, it is not only U.S.–ROK bilateral issues but also regional strategic and economic matters that affect the U.S.–ROK alliance. Washington has to consider Japan and China in its Korea policy and South Korea also must take China and Japan—two powerful neighbors and major economic partners—into consideration in its relations with the U.S. How will changes on the Korean peninsula influence triangular relations among the U.S., China, and Japan, and vice versa? When the North Korea “problem” ceases to exist, will it take with it the U.S.–ROK alliance?

South Korea is running out of time to prepare a long-term national strategy and readjust its alliance with the U.S. Relations with the North have dominated South Korean geostrategy for more than half a century, and it does not have a national security strategy beyond the peninsula. Post-unification paths, including

possible security arrangements, must be given serious consideration by the broader security community in South Korea. The elimination of the North Korean threat could undercut virtually overnight the *raison d'être* of the U.S.–ROK alliance. It would compel Washington to further readjust its alliance with Seoul and its forward-deployed forces in Korea. It would also compel Seoul to reformulate its national security strategy. Such changes in security environment in the Korean peninsula would have a very immediate effect on the ability of the U.S. to maintain a sizeable military presence in Japan. It is time for Seoul and Washington to seriously discuss and formulate broader, long-term strategies regarding the alliance.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> “Scholar Assesses Korea-U.S. Alliance [Interview with Bruce Cumings],” *DongA Ilbo*, August 31, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Unification is also an emotional issue. Koreans are generally emotional and become very passionate facing unification issue.

<sup>3</sup> Choong Nam Kim, “The Sunshine Policy and Its Impact on South Korea’s Relations with Major Powers,” *Korea Observer*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (winter 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen F. Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Kongdan Oh, “Terrorism Eclipses the Sunshine Policy: Inter-Korean Relations and the United States,” *Asia Society*, June 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Chung-in Moon, “Sunshine Policy Bearing Fruit,” *Korea Times*, February 24, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> The Presidential Secretariat, *Government of the People: Selected Speeches of President Kim Dae-Jung*, Vol. I (1999), pp. 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Chung-in Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” *East Asian Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (winter 2000) and Jae Kyu Park, “Achievements and Pending Issues of the Sunshine Policy,” *The Korea Society Quarterly* (Winter 2001-2002), pp. 6-8.

<sup>9</sup> For details, see Choong Nam Kim, “The Roh Moo Hyun Government’s Policy toward North Korea,” *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005), pp. 1-33.

- <sup>10</sup> The address is available at <http://english.president.go.kr/>
- <sup>11</sup> The Kim Dae Jung government made secret payment of \$500 million to the regime in Pyongyang through Hyundai companies. Kim's key advisers were indicted later.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ministry of Unification, *The Participatory Government's Policy of Peace and Prosperity* (in Korean) (Seoul, March 2003), p. 14.
- <sup>14</sup> Kim Keun-sik, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Inter-Korean Relations," *East Asian Review*, Vol. 16, No.1 (spring 2004).
- <sup>15</sup> See <http://unikorea.go.kr>
- <sup>16</sup> "Koreas Partner in Building Industrial Park, Advances Reunification," *US Today*, August 12, 2004.
- <sup>17</sup> *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 3-6, 2000.
- <sup>18</sup> The Presidential Secretariat, *Government of the People: Selected Speeches of President Kim Dae-Jung*, Vol. III (2001), pp. 161-168.
- <sup>19</sup> Taewoo Kim, "Sunshine Policy and ROK-U.S. Alliance," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, XXVIII: 1 (fall/winter 2001), p. 140.
- <sup>20</sup> Young Whan Kihl, "The Kim Jong-Il Government's Policy Toward South Korea," *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. LX, No. 1 (fall/winter 2005).
- <sup>21</sup> Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 2000," *Asian Survey*, 41:1 (January 2001): 14.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Hankyoreh 21*, July 18, 2000 and *The Hankyoreh*, March 12, 2002.
- <sup>23</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, March 2, 2003.
- <sup>24</sup> Norman D. Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind: The U.S.-ROK Security Relationship after 9/11* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004), pp. 28-29.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 45.
- <sup>26</sup> Norman D. Levin and Yong-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2002), pp. 107-112.
- <sup>27</sup> *Washington Post*, March 8, 2001.

- <sup>28</sup> Victor Cha and Michael O'Hanlon, "A Clumsy U.S. Risks Ties to Seoul," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 2002.
- <sup>29</sup> Eric V. Larson, Norman D. Levin, Seonhae Baik, Bogdan Savych, *Ambivalent Allies: A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004), pp. 29-30.
- <sup>30</sup> Larry A. Niksch, "Korea: U.S.-South Korean Relations," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, March 5, 2002, p. 9.
- <sup>31</sup> "Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions," Central Intelligence Agency, January 1-June 20, 2002 ([www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721\\_reports/jan\\_jun2002.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721_reports/jan_jun2002.html))
- <sup>32</sup> *Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 27, 2001.*
- <sup>33</sup> Kim Dae-joong, "A Leftist Hegemony," *Digital Chosun Ilbo*, July 28, 2001.
- <sup>34</sup> Norman D. Levin (2004), p. 21.
- <sup>35</sup> Howard Kurtz, "Should We Abandon South Korea?" *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2003.
- <sup>36</sup> Among the top twelve Roh administration policy goals shown on the internet homepage of Cheong Wa Dae (ROK Office of President), first priority goes to building a solid foundation for peace on the Korean peninsula through peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem, reshaping national defense policy, maintaining multi-dimensional inter-Korean dialogue, and establishing a Northeast Asian consultative process. The scheme stresses self-reliance, independent of the U.S.
- <sup>37</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, January 11, 2004. The respondents were asked to pick the following countries as the source of the most serious threat to South Korea's national security: (1) U.S. -39%, (2) North Korea - 33%, (3) China - 12%, (4) Japan - 8%. A recent survey by *JoongAng Ilbo* on April 13, 2005 shows different perceptions: Japan (37%) as the greatest threat, followed by North Korea (29%), U.S. (19%), China (12%).
- <sup>38</sup> Quoted from Yun Duk-min, "Major Challenges and Tasks Ahead for ROK-US Alliance," *Korea Focus*, May-June 2004, p. 86.
- <sup>39</sup> *JoongAng Ilbo*, November 13, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> In 2003, the total number of inter-Korean exchanges of people reached 16,000 and the total volume of inter-Korean trade stood at \$720 million. See Se-Hyun Jeong, "Inter-Korean Relations under Policy for Peace and Prosperity," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (spring 2004), p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Victor Cha, "Korea: A Peninsula in Crisis and Flux," in *Strategic Asia 2004-2005: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills (Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004), p. 152.

<sup>42</sup> "Roh Opposes Sanctions on N. Korea," *Chosun Ilbo*, April 14, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Jeong-Woo Kil, "Multifaceted Challenges in the Korean Peninsula," <http://www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/FR/NIKKEI/inasia/future/200...>

<sup>44</sup> "President Opposes Role for USFK in Regional Conflict," *Korea Times*, March 8, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Reudiger Frank, "A New Foreign Policy Paradigm: Perspectives on the Role of South Korea as a Balancer," *Policy Forum Online* (Nautilus Institute), April 25, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> "Roh Hints at New East Asian Order," *Digital Chosun Ilbo*, March 22, 2005.

<sup>47</sup> "Seoul's 'Balancing' Role," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> "U.S. Keeps Grumbling as Summit Looms," *Chosun Ilbo*, June 9, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> "Wartime Debate: Security, Cost, Pride," *JoongAng Daily*, August 14, 2006.

<sup>51</sup> "Military Experts Rally Against Forces Control Plans," *Digital Chosun Ilbo*, August 11, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> "U.S. 'Wants Shot of Wartime Command Sooner,'" *Digital Chosun Ilbo*, July 18, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> *Global Review 2004: South Korean Survey* (Seoul: East Asian Institute, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> Jim Lobe, "Korea, US world views converge, diverge," <http://www.atimes.com> October 1, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> According to a August 2006 survey of 395 opinion leaders in Korea, 74% believe that "the alliance has been deteriorated since the beginning of the Roh administration." See <http://feature.media.daum.net/politics/article02417.shtm>

<sup>56</sup> "Monthly JoonAng Survey Research on US-Korea Alliance," <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-5.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Eric V. Larson et al. (2004), pp. 60-61.

<sup>58</sup> Choe Sang-Hun, "Roh Warns U.S. over N. Korea," *International Herald Tribune*, January 25, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Victor D. Cha, Regional Implications of the Changing Nuclear Equation on the Korean Peninsula, a testimony at Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Congress, March 12, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Ruediger Frank (2005).

<sup>61</sup> Roh's approval rating hovered around 20 percent and dropped below 20 percent after the defeat in the May 2006 local elections (see *The Pressian News*, June 15, 2006).