



The US-ROK Relationship:
Tomorrow's Movers on Today's Issues

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YOUNG LEADERS

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Based in Honolulu, the Pacific Forum CSIS (www.pacforum.org) operates as the autonomous Asia-Pacific arm of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. The Forum's programs encompass current and emerging political, security, economic, business, and oceans policy issues through analysis and dialogue undertaken with the region's leaders in the academic, government, and corporate arenas. Founded in 1975, it collaborates with a broad network of research institutes from around the Pacific Rim, drawing on Asian perspectives and disseminating project findings and recommendations to opinion leaders, governments, and members of the public throughout the region.

The Young Leaders Program

The Young Leaders Program invites young professionals and graduate students to join Pacific Forum policy dialogues and conferences. The program fosters education in the practical aspects of policy-making, generates an exchange of views between young and seasoned professionals, promotes interaction among younger professionals, and enriches dialogues with generational perspectives for all attendees. Fellows must have a strong background in the area covered by the conference they are attending and an endorsement from respected experts in their field. Supplemental programs in conference host cities and mentoring sessions with senior officials and specialists add to the Young Leader experience. The Young Leaders Program is currently supported by Chevron, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Yuchengco Group, with a growing number of universities, institutes, and organizations also helping to sponsor individual participants. For more details, see the Pacific Forum CSIS website, www.pacforum.org, or contact Brad Glosserman, director of the Young Leaders Program, at brad@pacforum.org.

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Acknowledgements

Honolulu April 20, 2009

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Special thanks to Dr. Rhee Sang Woo of the New Asia Research Institute and Carl Baker of Pacific Forum CSIS for organizing the dialogue. Thanks also to Victoria Hart for coordinating the Young Leader program that was integrated into the dialogue.

Maui July 26-28, 2009

Pacific Forum CSIS thanks Mike Keifer and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) for their continuous support. DTRA's support made possible a full pre-conference day of Young Leader activities that resulted in an innovative project that was presented in subsequent conferences.

Many thanks to Dr. Victor Cha who joined Young Leaders for a breakfast roundtable and provided invaluable insight to US-ROK relations and negotiations with North Korea.

Honolulu October 21-24

Pacific Forum CSIS thanks Jack Pritchard, Nicole Finneman, the Korea Economic Institute (KEI), Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and the East-West Center for providing Young Leaders an opportunity to participate in the US-ROK conference, *Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the US-ROK Alliance*, held in Honolulu from Oct. 21-24, 2009.

Introduction

2009 was an eventful year for the Pacific Forum CSIS Korea program. Through a generous start-up grant from an anonymous Korean-American businessperson, the Pacific Forum, CSIS is proud to have established the “James A. Kelly Korean Studies Fellowship Program.” This fellowship recognizes the exemplary efforts of Jim Kelly, the Pacific Forum’s previous president (and former US assistant secretary of state and primary Six-Party Talks negotiator), to improve US-ROK relations and encourage the DPRK to denuclearize and join the international community of nations. The James A. Kelly Korean Studies Fellowship Program aims to promote academic study, research, and professional career development, with a focus on Korean Peninsula studies. Kelly Fellows will learn about world affairs and diplomacy through active participation in the Pacific Forum’s Young Leaders program, in-residence research at the Pacific Forum, and active participation in the forums that are undertaken by the Pacific Forum CSIS around the world. Thanks to this donor’s generous endowment, including a \$1 million matching pledge, Pacific Forum was able to kick start the Korean studies program in 2009, which resulted in the following four Young Leaders projects.

In April, Pacific Forum CSIS, in conjunction with the New Asia Research Institute, held a US-ROK bilateral dialogue in which three Young Leaders participated with the goal of identifying some of the major assumptions that US and Korean decision makers held regarding the US-ROK alliance. In *Assumptions Underlying the US-ROK Alliance*, the Young Leaders challenge major assumptions regarding relations between Washington and Seoul, and bring to light fundamental yet hardly-disputed discrepancies that could erode the foundation of the alliance if not addressed. These Young Leaders conclude with proposals on how to reconcile these discrepancies and shore up the alliance and the relationship given the evolving regional and international atmosphere.

In July, with the sponsorship of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), Pacific Forum CSIS held the first US-ROK Strategic Dialogue. Young Leaders, including Kelly Fellows, prepared pre-conference essays that identified the biggest challenges facing the US-ROK alliance. They also convened for a pre-conference workshop where they reviewed the 2009 Joint Vision Statement and outlined key issues, goals, and obstacles for ensuring the US-ROK alliance remained relevant. Major themes discussed include US-ROK coordination in dealing with North Korea, Korean civil society’s discontent with the way its government has handled the U.S-ROK alliance, issues surrounding OPCON transfer, and the KORUS FTA. Young Leaders focused on these challenges, discussed differences in threat perception, whether it be regarding North Korea, China, or nontraditional security issues such as yellow dust and pandemic disease, and how the US-ROK alliance could address these issues in a manner that reflects a “comprehensive strategic alliance” that is relevant on a global level. When Young Leaders presented their ideas during the main conference, they voiced disappointment at the narrow scope of the discussion among senior participants. Instead of treating the US-ROK alliance as if it revolves around the threat of nuclear proliferation and North Korea, Young Leaders expected more discussion on broadening the

alliance so that it is prepared for comprehensive security threats that require cooperation on the global-level.

Two different Young Leader projects stemmed from this strategic dialogue and both can be used as pedagogic devices. The first project resulted in a pair of scenarios. Two Young Leader teams devised a crises scenario on the Korean Peninsula, and provided background information, scenario guidelines, and reading material for future Young Leaders to resolve. One scenario depicts an H1N1 outbreak in an uncooperative North Korea with a rising fatality rate and a growing likelihood of a pandemic outbreak that could spread to China, South Korea, and Japan. The second scenario begins with the announcement that USFK will deploy the United States Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR) to Afghanistan for six months. In this scenario, the Lee administration doubts US commitment to the alliance and initiates a hedging strategy with China to deal with North Korea.

The third project is a dynamic visualization of the US-ROK relationship based on the task of conceptualizing the alliance. In an animated power point presentation, three Young Leaders illustrate the pillars of the US-ROK relationship and portray the history, current issues, and future challenges of the relationship from the eyes of the next generation. These Young Leaders were subsequently invited to a Korea Economic Institute (KEI)-sponsored US-ROK conference in October to present this project and write a collaborative paper examining the US-ROK alliance from the next generation perspective.

Thus, the fourth project, *Divergent Consensus: Meeting the Needs of Both Sides: a Young Leaders' Perspective on US-ROK Relations*, is a collaborative paper by two American and two Korean Kelly Fellows that provides a roadmap for the US-ROK alliance and suggests specific areas for cooperation in order to maximize converging interests. This paper will be published in KEI's annual publication, *Joint US Academic Studies Volume 20 Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the US-ROK Alliance*.

South-North Relations and the US-ROK Alliance

April 20, 2009, Honolulu, Hawaii

Pacific Forum CSIS and the New Asia Research Institute have hosted a series of US-ROK bilateral dialogues and workshops for over a decade. The most recent was in the *South-North Relations and the US-ROK Alliance*, a joint workshop held in Honolulu on April 20, 2009 where security experts and officials examined inter-Korean relations and assessed developments in the US-ROK alliance.

A select group of US and Korean Young Leaders joined this workshop and looked at assumptions underlying the US-ROK alliance. They were tasked with identifying the most important assumptions that guide the US-ROK alliance after reading assessments by senior US and Korean policy experts. In the following report, those Young Leaders explore the implications of the assumptions and the possible divergence in expectations.

The assumptions that the Young Leaders' identified include an endgame of war if North Korea openly attacks followed by an assumption that North Korea would be defeated. Young Leaders show concern for gaps in threat perceptions of the US and ROK that may lead to misaligned expectations when dealing with North Korea.

Assumptions Underlying the US-ROK Alliance

By Catherine Boye, Mike Bosack, and Russ Gottwald

The US-ROK alliance plays an important role in maintaining peace and security in East Asia. Differing assumptions among alliance partners can lead to serious problems in an alliance, so an understanding of the assumptions held by members of the alliance can improve trust and reduce the likelihood of serious issues affecting the health of the alliance.

Several assumptions guide the US-Korea relationship. The most fundamental is that the alliance between the US and the ROK is efficient and effective. There is little debate over this; the alliance provides security to the Korean Peninsula and stability to East Asia. North Korea continues to provide reasons for the US-ROK alliance to remain strong and healthy.

Another common assumption is, for Korea, that the alliance is the most cost-effective means of maintaining its security. There is little debate over this assumption; it would be prohibitively expensive for Korea on its own to maintain a military capable of deterring North Korea. Through the alliance, Korea gains US guarantees, such as extended deterrence, as well as the ability to obtain high-grade defensive equipment and training.

There is also the assumption that the US finds the alliance to be beneficial. The US gains bases at which it can forward-deploy troops. These bases and the alliance act as a deterrent to a modernizing China. Through its alliances with the ROK and Japan, the US helps maintain the power balance in Asia. This helps maintain the safety and stability of the region and protects US interests.

One area where assumptions diverge is over the nature of alliances. Some groups hold the traditional view of alliances: that alliances are temporary constructs used to protect against or deter a specific threat. These traditionalists assume that the US-ROK alliance is in a good position. While the threat posed by the USSR is gone, North Korea remains a credible threat to the safety and stability of the Korean Peninsula. Some traditionalists also identify China as a threat to be deterred by the alliance. Many people in this group understand that new threats have appeared but believe that alliances are not the proper structure to deal with them; most recommend a multilateral regional security mechanism to address these problems. This group believes that the alliance is not broken and thus does not need to be fixed.

Another group views alliances as fluid constructs. They assume that the US-ROK alliance needs to be broadened to remain relevant in the post-Cold War world. This group argues that new types of threats including nontraditional threats and terrorism require the US-ROK alliance to move beyond the traditional role of alliances. This group assumes that if the alliance does not change, it will fail, and believes that the alliance must “evolve or die.”

How a group views the nature of alliances will affect how it views the role of the US-ROK alliance in their country’s security strategy. Both groups believe that the alliance is necessary and serves an important function, but disagree about how and in what areas the

alliance can contribute. Traditionalists assume the alliance will maintain the balance of power in the region and deter current and future adversaries. The alliance will be considered successful if it fulfills these narrow goals. The other group assumes the alliance should take a more expansive role in the country's security strategy. This group assumes that the alliance can only be successful if it fulfills its traditional obligations, fights terrorism and pirates, protects sea lanes, and prevents nonproliferation.

Assumptions lead to expectations in both countries, and while it is best if they align, this is not always the case. Some assumptions do align and have established a foundation for bolstering the alliance. The US and the ROK have shared the assumption that the alliance should be strengthened. This has been the foundation for events such as the ROK military deployment in support of the US war on terrorism. In Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' speech during his last visit to the ROK, he stated that the US military would build new housing for its service members to support a stronger foundation for the US military community and to foster better relations between the troops, their families, and the South Korean population. The North Korean threat has increased interaction between the US and ROK military and has forced policy-makers to coordinate efforts to deal with long-term problems.

Some divergences are of great concern. One problematic assumption is the US belief that Northeast Asian security issues can remain on the backburner while it focuses on the Middle East. Though not the official policy, it is indicated by US military and political decisions, and is noticeable to South Korean policy-makers. Unfortunately, the ROK does not possess a strong interest in the Middle East, and has more significant security issues in the form of a saber-rattling North Korea and a rising China. US decision makers, though asserting continued concern for these regional security issues, do not maintain the same threat perceptions as their South Korean counterparts. One example was Secretary Gates' decision not to employ the Sea-Based X-Band radar to track the North Korea's latest Taepodong-2 missile launch. The radar could have provided significant technical data regarding the capabilities and flight path of the rocket, but it remained offline while the missile sailed over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, the most recent US budget recommendations include a decrease in funds for the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) program. The North Korean missile threat is a serious concern for the ROK, and actions that ignore or diminish this threat perception indicate a potentially dangerous divergence between the US and ROK.

A more fundamental concern regarding assumptions is the response to the North Korean threat. The first problem lies in defining what action North Korea must take to provoke war. The second is what the military response will be to such provocation. The baseline assumption is that war will result if the North openly attacks the ROK or US military personnel stationed in-country, or if North Korea attacks the US directly. Still, what type or severity of attack would initiate war? North Korea has a history of provocation, ranging from shows of force to assassinations to destruction of a civilian airliner. None of this has escalated to open warfare. Neither the US nor the ROK have specified what actions would warrant open conflict, nor have they indicated if or when a preemptive strike would be

an option. The lack of details could lead to expectations that the alliance partners fail to meet at the onset of conflict with the DPRK.

Additionally, the assumption remains that if war resumed between the DPRK, ROK, and US, that North Korea would lose. This is the basic assumption regarding the US and ROK policy toward North Korean brinkmanship. It centers on this notion that the DPRK is limited in its options because it cannot escalate to war, lest it risk regime collapse. Much policy is built upon this foundation. Unfortunately, it is a shaky foundation upon which to make key decisions. The possible divergence between assumptions and reality could be extremely costly for the alliance in the event of greater North Korean provocations.

The greatest potential for divergence between expectation and reality is likely if North Korea continues a strategy of brinkmanship. As the goal of an alliance is to protect the security interests of a country, differing assumptions regarding North Korea and the future of the alliance threaten the security of alliance members.

The questions raised by differing assumptions about the future of the alliance must also be addressed. Groups that feel the alliance must be broadened should realize that this assumption is not universally shared. Resistance to broadening the alliance could be viewed as a lack of commitment to the alliance when, in reality, it indicates a belief that the alliance is not the proper forum for dealing with these security issues. The US and the ROK should hold serious and frank discussions about each country's vision of the future of the alliance and the role of multilateral institutions for dealing with new security issues. The two countries should meet with other countries in the region to discuss the best ways to deal with these new security issues.

There will always be differing assumptions and disagreements between alliance partners but the fundamental purpose of the alliance, providing a political-military relationship that supports a country's security needs, will remain. It is important that assumptions align to provide a solid foundation for policy making to allow for greater policy coordination. As long as unrealized expectations do not risk the security of one party, the alliance will likely remain strong.

US-ROK Strategic Dialogue July 26-28, 2009, Maui, Hawaii Crisis Scenarios

Pacific Forum CSIS, with the sponsorship of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), brought together security experts in Maui for the first US-ROK Strategic Dialogue, held July 26-28, 2009. Eleven Korean and US Young Leaders joined the dialogue and presented next-generation views of the alliance. These Young Leaders prepared for the conference through assigned readings, pre-conference assignments that addressed challenges faced by the US-ROK alliance, and a full pre-conference day of discussions and presentations.

Although the nature of the dialogue focused on the military alliance, the Young Leaders focused on how to expand the U.S-ROK relationship based on goals outlined in the 2009 Joint Vision Statement. During the pre-conference session, Young Leaders brainstormed on ways to present a visualization of the US-ROK relationship through the eyes of next generation leaders. This resulted in the Visualization of the US-ROK Relationship, an interactive power point presentation that was presented at a Korea Economic Institute (KEI)-sponsored conference in October, 2009.

As a post-conference assignment, Young Leaders were divided into two teams and tasked with formulating crisis scenarios on the Korean Peninsula identifying key players, i.e., neighboring countries. The teams were not to play out the scenarios, as this project will serve as a group exercise at a future event. The goal is to provide an exercise that will allow Young Leaders to come up with solutions and mechanisms for multilateral cooperation based on specific crisis scenarios. What follows are two scenarios, one that plays off ROK insecurities within the context of the US-ROK military alliance, and another that introduces a transnational threat originating in North Korea with a dangerous possibility of affecting the whole region. We welcome the use of these scenarios in classrooms and lectures to explore what kind of assumptions underlie relationships in Northeast Asia.

Scenario 1: Pandemic Outbreak in North Korea

By See-Won Byun, Paul Choi, Kevin Shepard, Adrian Yi, Yun Yi

In this scenario, the DPRK has shut down diplomatic communication as it begins to heavily restrict travel within the country and close all border crossings. DPRK diplomats abroad reportedly move immediate family members out of the country. South Korea reports an outbreak of the H1N1 virus with a high mortality rate spreading throughout DPRK and within one week, NGOs report as many as 500 casualties and over 5000 infected. How do the US, ROK, Japan and China respond? Although this scenario provides background information on domestic response protocols, Young Leaders must examine each country's national priorities and accommodate them to formulate a mechanism for cooperation. Details of the scenario, including background information, suggestions for further reading, and scenario objectives can be found at:

http://csis.org/files/publication/issuesinsights_v10n02_DPRK_H1N1_Outbreak_North_Korea.pptx

Scenario 2: Crisis of Abandonment: Deployment of USFK to Afghanistan

By Leif-Eric Easley, Anna Kim, and Youngjin Yang

On March 1, 2010, General Walter Sharp, commander of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and the USFK, announced that the USFK will deploy the United States Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR) to Afghanistan for six months. This move is in line with President Obama's decision to send 30,000 US troops to fight in Afghanistan. Various special ops commands will be sent to Afghanistan to fight and end the war within the 18-month time limit that President Obama had designated. SOCKOR has been elected to join other theater operations in Afghanistan to thwart further terrorist aggression in that region. This creates anxiety for ROK foreign-policy makers and causes a reevaluation of their defense strategy.

Actors

US, South Korea, China, and Japan

Task

Phase I:

- Divide group into 4 teams: the US, South Korea, China, and Japan.
- Each team will identify and prioritize the top 5 threats and top 5 priorities of the country represented by their group.
- Teams will develop plans of action, including mechanisms for cooperation with other interested parties and incorporating regional and global political and security environments.

Phase II:

- Groups reconvene, presenting the impetus for and specifics of each plan of action.

Phase III:

- Groups negotiate a collaborative, multilateral policy to negate negative impact on bilateral and regional relations of shifting US-ROK relations.

United States

Because of the volatility of the situation in Afghanistan, the US is left with no alternative but to send SOCKOR and other Special Ops commands in other parts of the world to the war-torn region. On the advent of the 2012 OPCON transfer and the dissolution of the US-ROK Combined Forces Command, the US decision to deploy a significant part of the USFK to Southwest Asia shows its confidence in the security structure in South Korea. In a telephone call, President Obama assured President Lee Myung-bak that the alliance between the two countries will remain strong and expressed hope that President Lee will continue to closely collaborate with Ambassador Katherine Stephens, the US ambassador to Korea, and Gen Walter Sharp, commander of the United Nations Command and US-ROK Combined Forces Command, for a smooth transition in the changes being made. Ambassador Stephens has expressed the strong will to continue working closely with the Korean government to ensure that no rifts will occur due to the recent changes. Gen. Sharp has expressed utmost

confidence that progress is being made in transferring OPCON to the South Korean Defense Ministry and feels that the security of South Korea has not and will not be compromised with the temporary deployment of SOCKOR.

South Korea

While the Lee Myung-bak administration continues to demonstrate its support for the US decision in public, it starts to question the United States' commitment to the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. President Lee is concerned that the immediate withdrawal of United States Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR), regardless of the length of the deployment, could send a wrong signal to North Korea and the neighboring countries. Although the United States Forces Japan (USFJ) are to help maintain peace and security of the Korean Peninsula in the next six months, it is evident in his estimation that the absence of SOCKOR would increase South Korea's vulnerability to North Korean aggression. Most troublesome is how ambiguity in the chain of command could lead to strategic communication problems, let alone the possibility that Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) could assist USFJ missions. The transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) to Seoul is still in progress in 2010 and USFK/ROK forces and USFJ/JSDF have yet to conduct joint operations or exercises for the defense of South Korea. Put simply, there has not been any serious attempt to promote the US-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation on North Korea.

In response to the US decision, President Lee and his national security advisors initially consider reversing the North Korea policy during an emergency meeting. They reason that the United States might reconsider its decision once South Korea expresses willingness to engage North Korea without any conditions (i.e., the demands for CVID). The majority of the participants, however, come to an agreement that such a strategy cannot fundamentally change the course of US policy considering the "urgent" situation in Afghanistan; instead, they decide to engage China in security affairs as a hedge against Japan. The Lee administration fears that the withdrawal of SOCKOR might allow Japan to assume a greater security role in the Korean Peninsula and in the Northeast Asian region. He requests that JSDF be limited to navy corps.

China

Previously, through its military think tanks, the People's Republic of China has had discussions with South Korea's military concerning the US-ROK alliance and the presence of the USFK in deterring possible aggression by North Korea. With China's new multilateralism, China has expressed interest in closely cooperating with the South Korean government and military, especially when with issues concerning North Korea.

Japan

Previously, Japan did not welcome the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea. To Japan, US troop pullout was possible only at the expense of Japan's security. China's growing influence in the region, however, changed Japan's strategic calculus. Tokyo has been looking for a legitimate opportunity to exert greater influence in the region since the

passage of the 2005 contingency laws. With the relocation of SOCKOR to Afghanistan, Japan is not only unrestrained by the United States for at least six months but its Self-Defense Forces can legitimately expand its missions in the Korean Peninsula if not the Northeast Asian region.

Japan now aims at discouraging South Korea from being further integrated into China's sphere of influence and strives to gain South Korea's trust and confidence in Japan's new missions while not provoking North Korea.

Reading List

Background on US-ROK Alliance

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"New Beginnings in the US-ROK Alliance: Recommendations to the Obama Administration," Shorenstein APARC, March 31, 2009;

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Background on the Special Forces of the US Forces in Korea (USFK)

Website of the Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR)

<http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/sockor/>

Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR) entry at GlobalSecurity.org

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/sockor.htm>

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Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, June 16, 2009

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/

China's role

Colonel Kenneth D. Johnson, "China's Strategic Culture: A Perspective for the United States," June 2009; <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/>

Visualization of the US-ROK Relationship

By Yoon Nam, Kevin Shepard, and Adrian Yi

“Visualization of the US-ROK Relationship” is a product of the Young Leader pre-conference assignment from the first Pacific Forum CSIS US-ROK Strategic Dialogue. The authors are all American but took extra care to collaborate with Korean counterparts to create a visualization of the US-ROK through the eyes of the next generation that is reflective of the Korean perspective as well. This project aims to tap into the technological opportunities that are now readily available. While the immediate goal is to provide a fresh perspective on a well-established issue, in the long-term, this project can serve as a pedagogic device and even a template for other alliances

The authors provide an overview of the US-ROK relationship by using the three traditional pillars – the military, economic and social pillars – and how they have shifted over time. The ubiquitous fourth pillar of global cooperation is introduced to cover the changing relationship dynamics, the expanding focus of the US-ROK relations, and the implications thereof through the eyes of the next generation. The authors presented this project at a Korea Economic Institute (KEI)-sponsored conference in Honolulu, October 2009. The presentation can be view at:

<http://csis.org/publication/next-generation-us-rok-visualization-project>

**Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia:
The Future of the US-ROK Alliance
October 21-24, 2009, Honolulu, Hawaii**

The Korea Economic Institute (KEI) and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), in cooperation with the East-West Center, hosted a conference, *Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the US-ROK Alliance*, in Honolulu, Hawaii from Oct. 21-24, 2009. For the first time, KEI worked with Pacific Forum CSIS to incorporate a Young Leader component in which a select group of four YLs, two American and two Korean, were invited to be full participants with the opportunity to publish a collaborative paper in the annual KEI academic series. The following paper will be published in the *Joint US Academic Studies Volume 20 Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the US-ROK Alliance*.

**Divergent Consensus:
Meeting the Needs of Both Sides of the Coin:
A Young Leaders' Perspective on US-ROK Relations**
By Jiun Bang, Dae-woo Lee, Kevin Shepard, Adrian Yi*

From Alliance to Relationship

The relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea is unique; the challenges it faces are not. Next-generation views of the ties between Seoul and Washington do not challenge the idea that the US-ROK relationship continues to make up one of our most valuable and valued alliances. However, we do realize that, as in any relationship, the United States and the ROK need to continue to keep it fresh – a relationship requires both parties to work continuously at keeping the alliance relevant and beneficial. This is challenging not in spite of the depth and magnitude of our relationship but, rather, because of these qualities.

The US-ROK alliance is defined by the mutual defense treaty. This implies a military bond that, while solid, tends to overshadow broader economic, social, and political ties. The military alliance is in need of realignment while the relationship, as a whole, should be further emphasized in order to bolster ties between Seoul and Washington. In particular, the post-Cold War era requires us to transform the military realm of the alliance from one focused on the defense of South Korea through deterrence of North Korean aggression to one focused more on the comprehensive security of the Korean peninsula and the Asian region. Furthermore, not only has South Korea's role in support of conventional military operations grown, with President Roh Moo-hyun's dispatching of the third-largest contingent of troops to support US operations in Iraq and sending troops to other international operations, including Afghanistan and peacekeeping operations on the African continent, but US forces' increased flexibility and South Korean support for operations off the peninsula will also allow the two to work more closely in response to nontraditional security threats.¹

The goals are ambitious, but at least sights have been set. The challenge to the relationship, too often absent during discussions among experts, is how to get there. In efforts to provide a next-generation perspective of the future of the US-ROK relationship as well as

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¹ This was evidenced in 2009 during the ASEAN Regional Forum Voluntary Demonstration of Response, hosted by the Philippines during 4–8 May, and the Proliferation Security Initiative, in which South Korea announced full participation on 26 May. South Korea's revised Defense Plan 2020, signed on 18 June 2009 by President Lee, reflected the content of Washington's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which articulated the US military's desire to expand its sights in Korea. Seoul has also embarked on a path of increasing joint cooperative capabilities and updating command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) capabilities.

of the issues raised in the Korea Economic Institute's 20th annual academic symposium, "Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the US-ROK Alliance," two American and two South Korean members of the Pacific Forum, CSIS Young Leaders Program, each with extensive experience in, and ties with, both the United States and the ROK, offer a joint perspective addressing the priorities of the relationship.² By examining how the Young Leaders view and envision the US-ROK relationship, one can glimpse what type of ideas and momentum may be in force when this generation takes its place in society. This perspective first provides an assessment of the US-ROK relationship as the American Young Leaders view it, followed by how the Korean Young Leaders view the relationship. Next, this paper examines points of convergence and divergence in the two views in order to highlight opportunities for the US-ROK relationship to achieve and maximize synergetic effects. Last, this paper concludes with an action plan, or "flight plan," to help navigate the relationship through the turbulence discussed in the symposium.

US-ROK Alliance: How the Next Generation Sees it

When President Lee Myung-bak and President Barack Obama met in Washington and agreed to the June 16 joint vision statement, the two ensured the world that "our open societies, our commitment to free democracy and a market economy, and our sustained partnership provide a foundation for the enduring friendship, shared values, and mutual respect that tightly bind the American and Korean peoples. . . . Together, on this solid foundation, we will build a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral regional and global scope."³ The biggest challenge for the alliance is not salvaging a Cold War relic but, rather, living up to the lofty expectations and visions for the future. This has not been lost on those of us, regardless of age or experience, who follow US-ROK relations. Our next-generation perspectives on roles and priorities may, however, separate us from your average conference crowd as we view the relationship less from an ideological standpoint and more in a functionalist manner.

We realize that, although the alliance is not a relic, its foundation is. The 1954 mutual defense treaty was designed to put boots on the ground: to defend against North Korean, Soviet, or Chinese offensives. The US-ROK military alliance still serves as the strongest pillar of the relationship, but the rate of growth of the economic and social realms now outpaces that of the military. Washington and Seoul worked out agreements to make the alliance more mutually beneficial by broadening the relationship and increasing its comprehensiveness. Agreements and timelines on the transfer to South Korea of wartime operational control of its forces, a visa-waiver program for South Koreans visiting the United States, and negotiations regarding the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA, the largest bilateral FTA either country has ever negotiated) all reflect the broadening of the relationship or the creation of a comprehensive alliance.

² For an overview of the Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leaders Program, as well as a list of Young Leader publications, see <http://csis.org/program/young-leaders-program>.

³ "The United States-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty remains the cornerstone of the US-ROK security relationship, which has guaranteed peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia for over fifty years" (White House 2009).

Despite the efforts – and successes – in broadening the relationship to include cultural, social, economic, educational, and other realms, the security threat emanating from North Korea remains a core issue, and differences in policies regarding the North have played a significant role in shaping the post–Cold War alliance. With the end of the Cold War, the democratization and growth of South Korea, and the US shift in scope of focus from North Korean security challenges to broader regional economic influence and trade and political stability, there has arisen the need for the relationship to evolve, yet the US-ROK alliance remains squarely centered on the 1954 mutual defense treaty (White House 2009).

How will the US-ROK relationship evolve? The alliance handlers appear to be aware of the need for change and are working in the right direction; future efforts need to concentrate on increasing public awareness of the benefits as well as the realities of the growing alliance and the continued shift away from defense-centric security toward a broader aim of maintaining regional stability and a platform for growth. An allied approach to China as well as increased ties with Japan, be it trilaterally or only through the channels provided by US bilateral relationships, will be instrumental in ensuring that the US-ROK alliance maximizes benefits for both Washington and Seoul.

The US-ROK alliance has outgrown its original patron-client relationship, and the ROK is especially eager to claim its status in the international community. We see this as an opportunity to take the US-ROK relationship from its old alliance-focused mold to a more comprehensive relationship that takes advantage of synergetic qualities to address issues of global scope. As global leaders recently recognized the limitations of the Group of Eight (G-8) and challenged the Group of 20 (G-20) to play a more dominant role in shaping the world economy,⁴ we see South Korea’s role as host in 2010 to be an opportunity for the US-ROK alliance to project its ambitions on other economic players in the international community.

President Lee Myung-bak has set as a goal for his administration the repair of relations with Washington, and President Barack Obama has acknowledged the need to rebuild US diplomatic influence throughout the world. US interests and foreign policy aims tended to focus, rightly, on a global stage; and, although the alliance with South Korea was – and is – valuable, the question must be answered: Are issues at hand challenges *for* the alliance, or *to* the alliance? Cold War “givens” are gone. South Korea has been calling for more equality; here is its chance to step up.

The US View

We, as American Young Leaders, recognize the potential for continued growth in the US-ROK alliance relationship, but we believe that the prioritization of the following issues (and potential roadblocks) is necessary to prevent the loss of the current momentum. In this section, we touch on concerns we have regarding actions being taken by both Washington and Seoul, and we recognize that both allies need to improve cooperation. To do this, one issue that runs through all other cooperative efforts is the need for greater public diplomacy and the building of public consensus. We are concerned by nationalistic sentiment in Korea

⁴ In his statement, President Obama called the exclusion of emerging but relevant economies “wrong-headed” and called for expansion of the G-8 (Barry and Raum 2009).

that has led to large-scale public outcry over Seoul's role in the relationship on a number of occasions over the past several years and that has kept the two governments from working toward a better relationship largely because of misperceptions.

Although many issues and variables need to be addressed by both the United States and the ROK, the following points stand out as priorities in the efforts of Washington and Seoul to modernize the alliance that has served them both so well:

Fill in the details. Create detailed road maps for projects named in the 16 June 2009 joint vision statement (White House 2009).

In the post-Cold War era, the ups and downs of the alliance tend to follow election cycles. The alliance was born in the fires of the Korean War and founded on the common perception of a North Korean threat. As a result, who was in charge in either Seoul or Washington was of less consequence prior to the end of the Cold War. As the Cold War threats have subsided and the plethora of issues and interests has divested, the alliance has become more susceptible to less-deep public sentiment. Here, tasks are our friend. Broad visions for the future of the alliance are certainly valuable, but, to maintain focus, concrete, measurable plans need to be adopted and publicized. Many potential projects were named in the joint vision statement, including but not limited to environmental protection, research on clean and sustainable energy, coordination on pandemic outbreaks and natural disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and support for peacekeeping operations. While dialogue has been ongoing between Washington and Seoul on most of these issues, political and academic discourse has driven away practical discussion on the particulars of the projects. Developing detailed and transparent goals and strategies, including specific milestones, will help to guide the relationship down a path relevant to the issues of today as well as build support for the alliance not only in our two countries but throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. We urge Washington and Seoul not to delay in creating working groups and exploring public- and private-sector opportunities and assets.

Put the issue of North Korea in perspective. In addressing the future of the alliance, North Korea must be one of the issues, not the only issue.

Deterrence of North Korea can serve as a basis for cooperation both on and off the peninsula, and South Korea's concerns and national interests must be recognized and respected, both in the realm of influence and in the realm of responsibility. The United States needs to remain firm that a solution to the North Korean nuclear issues comes through multilateral diplomacy within the framework of six-party talks and that South Korea's national interests are not the only interests driving negotiations with Pyongyang. Washington understands the threat felt by South Korea, but both countries must keep an eye on how decisions regarding North Korea will affect other denuclearization and nonproliferation efforts throughout the world.

On other regional and global issues, Seoul must not be driven by how North Korea is expected to react. During successive administrations prior to President Lee's election, North Korea perfected the art of manipulating the fears, nationalism, and hopes for unification of

the South Korean public. This has allowed Pyongyang to pressure Seoul indirectly not only on peninsular issues but also on or because of decisions ranging from cooperation in global nonproliferation efforts to the import of US beef. So far, President Lee has been much more firm with North Korea than his predecessors, and to realize his ambitions for a larger regional and global role for South Korea, this needs to continue. It appears that the younger South Korean generation is less inclined to push for unification at any cost, but at the same time it has proven to be very susceptible to Internet rumors and unfounded fear-mongering. This means that North Korea will continue to incite and steer opposition to policies it sees as detrimental. Through increased transparency and public diplomacy, the South Korean government must continue to garner support for its strategy of broadening South Korea's ties with, and impact in, the region and the international community.

Clarify the issue of nuclear power for South Korea. South Korea and the United States need to reach a consensus on the future of the ROK nuclear fuel cycle.

This should be done before the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review in 2010, but it most definitely needs to be resolved before the expiration of the US-ROK nuclear licensing agreement, which runs out in 2012. As signatories to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership Statement of Principles (GNEP 2007), the United States and South Korea agree to “develop and demonstrate, *inter alia*, advanced technologies for recycling spent nuclear fuel for deployment in facilities that do not separate pure plutonium” and to “take advantage of the best available fuel cycle approaches for the efficient and responsible use of energy and natural resources,” while recognizing that “states participating in this cooperation would not give up any rights.”

South Korea is pushing for what Japan and other partners of the United States have now; nuclear scientists from South Korea have already initiated discussions with Washington explaining their need to compete with other regional states developing exportable nuclear energy and their interest in becoming a supplier state using pyroprocessing techniques that do not separate plutonium from uranium. Yet Washington continues to block Seoul's moves to process spent fuel that originated in the United States (Nikitin, Andrews, and Holt 2009, 35). If Washington insists that Seoul not reprocess, then we need to offer an alternative; if Washington concedes, South Korea needs to offer an explanation as to why it would be more capable than other countries of successfully handling the reprocessing.

Maintain good relations and adequate troop levels. Washington recognizes that it has been successful in fostering a strong, self-determinant democratic ally, but it needs to more effectively and convincingly show its commitment; Seoul needs to clarify its demands.

As Seoul continues to meet expectations regarding its obligations for troop dispatch in support of US campaigns, Washington needs to ensure that the South Korean people do not live under fear of attack from the North. At the same time, Washington and Seoul need to more concretely define what they mean by deterrence and defense and, in particular, issues such as the US prerogative of first response, preemptive strike, or other strategies. Seoul has asked for a more thorough explanation of the deterrent offered by Washington, but, for Washington to provide the answers to Seoul's questions, the Lee administration first needs to

do some soul-searching: At what level and for what threat is what response deemed acceptable by the South Korean people? Concerns over the intent and commitment of China, Japan, or the United States play a decisive factor in the South's ability to aggressively drive reorganization or realignment of the alliance, especially with the scheduled transfer of operational control, but there appears to be no consensus in Seoul on what is needed from Washington to alleviate these anxieties. Washington deserves to know that it can rely on the South Korean government to be clear and unwavering, in both its demands and its commitment to the alliance. In return, Seoul deserves concrete, demonstrable support from the United States.

The Korean View

The key to understanding South Korea's mentality toward the alliance is based on confidence. The first issue is South Korea's wavering confidence in the United States. There is a definite, though clouded, distinction between trust and confidence. While trust is almost an instinctive, unquestioning belief set against values, confidence is a conscious reliance on abilities and capabilities based on past achievements and interaction. Although the younger generation of South Koreans may trust that the United States would fulfill its duties as the South's key ally, its confidence has been shaken because of the perception of a decline in relative US capabilities, which has raised doubts over whether it can fulfill those duties to the extent that it could in the past.

This has become enmeshed with a second phenomenon: South Korea's increasing confidence in its own ability to play a more effective role in the international community. The result for South Korea has been an unrelenting focus on the future, with an unshakeable desire to become a pioneer for framing the agenda and setting an example for issues deemed to become key components in ensuring a nondestructive future. In 2010, the priority for South Korea will center on how to fashion the alliance so that it adds, rather than detracts, from Seoul's ambitions of becoming an early adopter of future-oriented technologies (nuclear power and green growth) and exercising behavior accordant with its economic, political and diplomatic development (overseas development aid). The following represents several examples of such priorities:

Set up future-oriented projects. Use the 16 June 2009 joint vision statement to detail creative, future-oriented projects for bilateral cooperation.

Official development assistance (ODA) in the specific area of poverty reduction may serve domestically as a less politically combustible issue, while globally ODA could be a sine qua non for future global prosperity requiring ROK-US bilateral cooperation. For Seoul, the timing is fortuitous given that South Korea is an emerging donor that has been inducted into the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Seoul also announced at the October 2009 ASEAN Plus Three summit in Thailand that it would double the size of its ODA to ASEAN by 2015. Yet, South Korea has experienced obstacles in overseas development, perhaps owing to the fact that it is still learning to do some of these things. For instance, Daewoo Logistics negotiated in November 2008 for a 99-year lease on approximately 3.2 million acres of farmland in Madagascar, but

eventually the deal fell through after the Populist Malagasy leader ousted the president with the support from the military and scrapped the deal. Similarly, the United States has vested interests in Africa, as evidenced by the United States African Command (AFRICOM) established in 2007.

In a similar vein, ROK-US space cooperation could become a future-oriented project that could serve as an additional pillar for the alliance. In October 2009, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) signed agreements to exchange experts and space-related science and technology. Moreover, the Obama administration is planning to expand space cooperation with its allies, and the ROK has indicated an interest in joining the NASA-led International Lunar Network, a series of space explorations, including lunar missions, in a multilateral dimension.

Bolster the US-ROK bilateral relationship. Appeal to the necessity of future cooperation to gain consensus within each nation on the need to bolster the bilateral relationship, including the military alliance.

For the future to not be hostage to the past, the legitimacy of the alliance must be gained anew from diverse sources, rather than based just on military cooperation. For the younger generation, there is unfortunately an inverse correlation between the lapse in time since the outbreak of the Korean War and the strength of the alliance. In other words, the further we get from the mid-1950s, the weaker the inherent legitimacy of the alliance appears. Meanwhile, the year 2010 marks the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. Although both South Korea and the United States established ad hoc committees in 2008 to initiate various commemorative projects for the occasion, an April 2009 survey conducted by the ROK Ministry of Public Administration and Security targeting 1,000 adults over the age of 19 revealed that 56.6 percent of those in their 20s could not give an answer when asked when the war had occurred (Jung 2009). It is no wonder, then, that appealing to the past in order to legitimize the alliance may not be as convincing for a generation that has an extremely hazy recollection of that history.

The appeal should be on the future, and how the United States can help South Korea achieve its future objectives. Even the military field, which is often regarded as somewhat antiquated in the context of the alliance, could serve to highlight the trajectory of constructive bilateral cooperation. A South Korean company, C.N.O. Tech, was the first to develop environmentally friendly practice grenades made out of dirt. If green growth could be infused into the military realm, there would certainly be a greater motivation for Seoul and Washington to cooperate.

Make more use of the abilities of South Korea. Take advantage of South Korea's capabilities while keeping within the framework and spirit of the larger rubric of nonproliferation.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, which is held every five years, will be held again in 2010. Although it is ambitious for Seoul to declare its intent to export 80 nuclear reactors by 2030 and establish itself as the world's third-largest exporter of

atomic energy technology (Cho 2010), Seoul must carefully balance its need to explore its advantages in nuclear energy with the risks of attempting to ignore the disadvantages involved in testing the boundaries of nonproliferation. For now, Seoul should not aggressively push for autonomous reprocessing capabilities, especially when diplomacy regarding the North Korean nuclear issue has yet to show tangible results. The past has shown that the failure to renegotiate with the United States has not prevented South Korea from engaging in bilateral cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, as is evident from the January 2010 memorandum of understanding forged between state-run Korea East-West Power Co. and India's largest private-sector power utility, Tata Power. Thus, it could be the surge in South Korea's own confidence mixed with nationalism that may be influencing a logic detached from facts for those espousing an autonomous reprocessing capability.

In keeping with the spirit of nonproliferation but also advancing inter-Korean relations, South Korea may want to explore "science diplomacy," an underutilized but valuable tool of statecraft, especially given the focus on future-oriented technologies. Considering that the scientific community in the North is tasked with addressing issues such as famine, malnutrition, and various diseases and illnesses and owing to the lack of ideological baggage carried by science, engaging the scientists in the North can lead to significant alleviation of unhealthy conditions in the North while remaining relatively resistant to charges from the Kim Jong-il regime of cultural infiltration. Moreover, working collaboratively on virus-resistant potatoes or insect-resistant corn and rice may be replicated in other parts of the world, thus allowing the North to become both a consumer and producer-disseminator of a technology – a refreshing change from the one-way giving from South to North (and, at the same time, aiding Seoul in bolstering its position on the front lines of future technologies). Given the track record of the United States also engaging the scientific community in the North, such as Syracuse University or the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the two countries can collaborate to engage the North within the framework of nonproliferation.

Make South Korea indispensable. Forge an indispensable role for South Korea in facilitating regional cooperation, with particular focus on enhancing US-China relations.

Building Seoul into a vital constant, rather than a fickle variable, in the shaping of the Northeast Asia region is another way that could help South Korea lead the future instead of being led by it. It is true that South Korea is often categorized as a middle power, one that may often exercise persuasive influence but rarely exert a deciding force. Seoul will now chair and host the G-20 summit in 2010, the first non-G-8 country to be given such a privilege and responsibility. For South Korea to not become irrelevant or forgettable, Seoul must translate its middle-power complex into middle-power activism. In other words, instead of perennially comparing its capability in relation to neighbors such as China or Japan, South Korea must carve out its own niche and demonstrate "take-chargeism." This also signifies expanding the terrain in which to utilize its niche through a conceptual shift from exclusive to inclusive: embedding the somewhat exclusive alliance that the ROK has with the United States in a more inclusive collaborative architecture. Contingency planning of scenarios from regime or state collapse in North Korea to post-reunification relations requires critical and

continual attention.⁵ South Korea should lead discussions, if not by the virtue of its geohistorical ties, then because South Korea in any given scenario would feel the biggest brunt of any change.

Moreover, the ROK may wish to leverage its potential clout with the United States and relative cordiality with China in playing a facilitating role in reinforcing US-China relations (this may be of particular importance given the cooperation between the two of the BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India, and China] nations – China and Brazil – in naval training in 2009, which could add unnecessary heat to US-China relations). Seoul might focus on, for example, mediation in trade frictions between Washington and Beijing. The Korean Commercial Arbitration Board, a member of the Asia Pacific Regional Arbitration Group, specializes in arbitration and mediation of trade and commercial disputes. If South Korea can provide such positive momentum, it will not only increase the value of South Korea in the eyes of both the United States and China, but eventually create a favorable environment in terms of promoting stability in Northeast Asia.

Convergence, Divergence, and Synergy

The younger generations in both the United States and the ROK understand the need for a newly defined relationship. The June 2009 joint vision statement provides the impetus for this new relationship by demonstrating that the future of US-ROK relations should go beyond issues of North Korea. While the joint statement lays out the broad conceptual framework of a reinvigorated US-ROK alliance, concrete policy action needs to follow in order to ensure its realization. To that end, Young Leaders from the ROK and the United States display different points of view regarding future US-ROK relations.

The younger generations in both countries agree on the importance of the joint vision statement but interpret it in different ways. The ROK insists on clear and action-oriented signals from Washington that the United States will remain committed to denuclearization; however, definitions of, and actions toward, deterrence have not been agreed on by the two countries. As mentioned in the US Young Leaders' view, what action deemed acceptable by the ROK with regard to deterrence is questionable. Expressing US commitment in the way of first response or preemptive strike would not be acceptable in the ROK, particularly among the younger generation. Given their hazy recollection of the Korean War and the downplay of the North Korean threat, such US action would not be considered legitimate by its alliance partner.

In the regional and global architecture, other issues also need to be clarified for a more comprehensive and broader alliance. The United States tries to focus on a global nonproliferation regime, restricting reprocessing, and enrichment technology. This, coupled with increasing ROK demands for the right to peaceful nuclear energy development, already creates tension; the two countries need to reach a consensus before the US-ROK nuclear licensing agreement expires in 2012. Meanwhile, the ROK watches cautiously how the

⁵ South Korea's younger generation perceives even Japan to be an important country with which the ROK should further deepen cooperation in order to enhance regional security (Chae and Kim 2008).

United States deals with other issues in the nonproliferation domain. Pyongyang's expectation of a deal based on the past process between the United States and India or the possibility of a future deal with Iran would have an impact on North Korea's behavior. If the way the United States deals with the issue is far from North Korea's calculation, the consequences would be negative, affecting peace on the Korean peninsula and challenging the global nonproliferation regime. Hence, how the United States prioritizes the North Korea issue and whether it firmly upholds the objective of denuclearization is important in advancing inter-Korean relations, and the ROK expects the United States to make the right choice; yet the ROK has not clearly or consistently identified what it considers the right choice to be.

In spite of different points of view of Young Leaders from the two countries regarding the US-ROK relationship, opportunities for convergence exist in several areas. First, the Young Leaders from both countries agree that increasing public consensus is an important task to ensure the future of the relationship. In recent years in South Korea, on the basis of political orientation and other issues, the younger generation has shown inconsistent opinions toward the US-ROK partnership. There has been both positive and negative sentiment regarding the United States, yet it should be interpreted as a productive discussion to find a forward-looking trajectory of the relationship. Fostering dialogue can help to build the necessary foundation for the alliance. To cultivate consensus building in new contexts, cooperation in nontraditional and security-related issues – for example, climate change and sustainable energy, pandemic outbreaks, ODA, peacekeeping missions, and space cooperation – have been suggested.

Moreover, new institutional approaches would be helpful for gaining support for future allied cooperation. NATO's parliamentary assembly has fostered a broader base of mutual understanding of the US-NATO relationship. Dialogue among legislative members in each country has contributed to consensus building by facilitating awareness and understanding of key issues. Given that nongovernmental dialogues of the US-ROK relationship have been managed mostly by military, think-tank, or lobbyist groups, a NATO parliament assembly type of legislators' interaction would increase cooperation between the two countries and enhance public awareness of each other.

Second, cooperation in multilateral settings should be maintained and expanded. The ROK is apprehensive about new developments in the Asia-Pacific region and is also privileged to host the G-20 summit in 2010 as the first non-G-8 country to do so. Seoul tries to exert its activism as a middle power in the region, and the younger generation supports the ROK's need to facilitate cooperation with neighboring countries, such as Japan and China, in order to shore up regional security and economic development. The United States also remains committed to resolving North Korean nuclear issues through multilateral and bilateral dialogue, centered on the framework of the six-party talks. In addition, the June 2009 joint vision statement advocates the US role in enhancing security and economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, supporting cooperative regional efforts to promote mutual understanding. Hence, the two countries need to develop a collaborative and favorable framework for Asia-Pacific cooperation that is based on utilizing the US-ROK relationship and expanding partnerships with other countries in the region.

The Road Ahead

Young Leaders agree with mainstream views on the importance of relations, but they see the preferred focus of discussion to be the road to be traveled, rather than the destination. Although both South Korean and American Young Leaders agree that we need more discourse on concrete plans of action, we are not in complete agreement as to which plans of action should be prioritized. Concentrating now on flight plans to help navigate the turbulence that surrounds US-ROK relations is the next step in realizing the ambitious goals set out in the joint vision statement. This should be done in a functionalist manner, ensuring that the issue is the target and the broader alliance is the tool, not the other way around. By immediately tackling those issues that both Seoul and Washington agree can be best approached jointly and at the same time coordinating and discussing the issues on which the two allies have divergent views will create a healthy and productive 21st-century alliance relationship equipped to pursue the interests of both countries on both regional and international stages.

It is also worth reiterating that, while there were different perspectives on the relative importance of some issues, those of us in the United States and in the ROK recognize the need for more transparency as well as the need to build public consensus for the relationship by sufficiently publicizing the benefits to be had and the means through which they can best be achieved. The United States and the ROK have much to gain through cooperation on myriad issues, and the benefits to be gained far outweigh those that the two would be able to achieve on their own. The US-ROK relationship, including but not limited to the military alliance, is worth preserving. The joint vision statement of June 2009 sets lofty goals for the future of the relationship, displaying the confidence our leaders have in us to come up with innovative and cooperative efforts that, when successful, will benefit not only the United States and South Korea but also the international community as a whole. Now we need to step up; live up to the expectations of our presidents; and create concrete, realistic, and pragmatic plans of action to move forward with our cooperative efforts.

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Appendix A



Pacific Forum CSIS
YOUNG LEADERS

U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue
Royal Lahaina Resort, Maui • 26-28 July 2009

Pre-Conference Essays

Identify and explain, in 500 words, the most important challenge to the US-ROK alliance. Why is it the most important challenge?

Catherine Boye

The greatest challenge facing the U.S.-Korea alliance is dealing with North Korean brinksmanship. There is no direct information about the North Korean political system and its decision making process; it is opaque. Yet, North Korea remains the center of gravity in the region, with Northeast Asian politics revolving around this country.

North Korea has used brinksmanship to manipulate other countries in the region. Testing missiles and nuclear weapons while engaging in bellicose rhetoric is an old escalation strategy of North Korea. The other five members of the Six-Party Talks have placated North Korea by offering concessions in return for promises by the Pyongyang to stop development of nuclear weapons and other programs. North Korea has then refused to implement the programs.

It has always been the other five parties that have worked to de-escalate the situation. This has proven to North Korea that threatening other countries is an efficient tactic for gaining what it wants. The concessions North Korea elicited from the other five parties have also damaged the trust and friendship between them. The U.S.-Japan relationship is still haunted by Chris Hill's perceived betrayal.

There are signs that the other five parties have grown wise to North Korea's game. China and Russia have shown greater willingness to punish North Korea for its provocative actions but China is only willing to go so far. China is interested in a safer, more stable North Korean regime, but would like to prevent the mass migrations that would result from a collapse. China also has an interest in maintaining a buffer state between itself and the pro-U.S. South Korea. North Korea understands this and knows that as long as its missile and satellite tests do not cause destruction or human casualties, the other five parties will be unlikely to pursue actions that could cause great harm to the regime.

The U.S. and South Korea need to work closely with each other and their allies to deal with North Korean brinksmanship. This will be a difficult mix of implied threats such as public assurances by the U.S. that its extended deterrent remains credible, and the deployment of missile-detecting ships to the area. These implied threats need to be followed with a commitment by the U.S., South Korea; and their allies to not blink in the face of North Korean provocations.

Nuclear and missile tests should be followed by sanctions and condemnation as opposed to concessions and placating gestures. North Korea will run out of actions capable of escalating the situation that will not result in high costs for the regime. Once this point is reached the U.S., South Korea and their allies will be in a better bargaining position vis-à-vis North Korea, which could result in real progress on the issues.

Expanding the U.S.-ROK alliance with Chinese partnership **See-Won Byun**

The Lee-Obama summit in June reinforced an expanded agenda for the U.S.-ROK alliance. President Lee Myung-bak repeatedly emphasized the role of the alliance in responding to North Korea. But at the Shangri-La Dialogue in May, senior PLA official Ma Xiaotian made clear China's opposition to "the enlargement of the existing bilateral military alliances in Asia Pacific." Any renewed effort to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance needs to consider the potential challenge from China, with which both countries pursue a strategic partnership.

China is the most important partner for policy coordination on North Korea given its unique position as North Korea's ally, facilitator of the Six-Party Talks, and UNSC member. But despite its international commitments, China is unlikely to implement UN-mandated sanctions and has stressed North Korean sovereignty at the UNSC and IAEA. While emphasizing diplomatic means as the "only" way to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, China does not support Five Party Talks as advocated by Seoul. China remains reluctant to participate in contingency planning on North Korean instability, insisting on its core principle of noninterference. Some Chinese analysts argue that a stable China-DPRK relationship is in the international interest since China's role would otherwise change from mediator to enemy of North Korea.

China and South Korea share a clear interest in maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula but diverge fundamentally on a long-term vision for Korea. While South Korea sees unification as the ultimate goal, China fears a reunified Korea might make territorial claims on the Chinese northeast or align with the United States and Japan as part of a regional strategy to contain China, and is especially concerned about the continued role of USFK. At the same time, U.S.-ROK understandings of a "unified, democratic Korea" and the means that each side is willing to take to achieve this objective remains unclear and raises suspicions in Beijing. The immediate task of denuclearization has constrained U.S.-China discussions on vision-setting, reflecting the inherent difficulty of thinking long-term about Korean security without first resolving the nuclear issue.

North Korea is only one among a host of issues on the U.S.-ROK agenda. The U.S.-ROK alliance serves as a key tool for advancing South Korea's broader international role in line with Lee's "Global Korea" initiative, and is part of a U.S. Asia strategy that includes cooperation with emerging Asian powers and regional institutions. South Korean, U.S., and Chinese interests converge on not only denuclearization and sustainable development in North Korea, but also issues beyond the peninsula such as the financial crisis, maritime security, and peacekeeping. China has consistently supported a multilateral approach to North Korean nuclear issues as part of global nonproliferation efforts. Engaging China on such transnational issues will help manage Chinese misperceptions toward an expanded alliance while also reassuring others of China's

peaceful rise. Effective U.S.-ROK coordination with China depends on enforcing its responsible stakeholder role rather than sustaining Chinese views of North Korea as a buffer zone. From this broader perspective, strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance in a way that positively engages China in the international community is the most important opportunity facing the United States and South Korea in the foreseeable future.

The Greatest U.S.-ROK Challenge: Social Capital and Civil-Cooperation **Paul Seukhoon Choi**

“The Republic of Korea is regarded as a shining example of democracy in East Asia. Despite this significant achievement, Korea’s democracy in practice has been plagued by... a lack of social capital and cooperation between civil society and political institutions....”

- Samuel S. Kim⁶

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is considered a model democracy in East Asia. While the ROK’s successful transition to democracy has been an admirable accomplishment, it presents a new challenge to its alliance with the United States. With a free and more powerful voice in democratic Korea, civil society is demanding the attention of governments in both Seoul and Washington. This not only complicates decision-making and policy implementation, but strains relations between the two countries. Ultimately, the health and future of the alliance will be determined by the ability of both governments to build their social capital and a cooperative relationship with the people of Korea.

While civil movements have long been a force in contemporary Korean politics, they now enjoy greater freedom and power. Not only has democratization provided civil society with the ability to freely express its views, but the internet has made it easier to disperse information and organize support. The creation of coalitions and umbrella organizations, bringing together various groups and individuals, as well as providing for the exchange of information and strategies,⁷ has furthermore augmented their power.

The wielding of this power has been credited for significantly affecting, if not determining, the nature of domestic and alliance politics. “Netizens” and civic groups garnered a significant amount of the support that elected former President Roh, Moo-hyun, who appealed at that time to their anti-American/nationalist sentiment. Later, when President Roh pushed a bill that would dispatch non-combat troops to Iraq, these same grassroots organizations succeeded in delaying the National Assembly vote. The Roh administration’s refusal to join the missile defense alliance or the Proliferation Security Initiative, issues of great importance to the alliance, was partly due to the position of civil society.⁸

More recently, and despite the election of conservative President Lee, Myung-bak by the widest margin in Korea’s democratic history, demonstrations organized by civic groups

⁶ Samuel S. Kim, ed. Korea’s Democratization, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2003).

⁷ Katharine H. S. Moon, “Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Consolidation,” in Kim, Samuel S., Korea’s Democratization.

⁸ John Feffer, “People Power vs. Military Power in East Asia,” (Silver City, NM and Washington, DC: Foreign Policy In Focus, February 13, 2007).

paralyzed the government. Labor unions implemented work stoppages that cost tens of millions of dollars in lost productivity. These movements were executed to express concern about the safety of U.S. beef imports, and to protest a government that was seemingly out of touch with “common Koreans’ concerns.” Four months of these protests is estimated to have cost the ROK government \$2.5 billion.⁹

Civil movements have directly affected the U.S. The case can be made that force relocation and withdrawal were facilitated by the protests of the Korean people against U.S. Forces in Korea. Furthermore, despite agreements and policy coordination between the two governments regarding the return of U.S. bases and the relocation of troops on the peninsula, policy implementation has been delayed, because of environmental campaigns and movements against the expansion of U.S. military facilities in Pyongtaek. This too has placed strain on the alliance financially and politically.

Civil society has become a force to be recognized. Whatever the issue, and in spite of policy coordination between governments, the political and financial cost of deciding or implementing any alliance agreement is now determined by civil-cooperation. Thus, building social capital and promoting civil-cooperation is the greatest challenge to the U.S.-ROK relationship. Though foreign and security policy may be the issue area least conducive to democratic participation,¹⁰ the need to include the latter is the current reality that will determine the alliance’s future.

A Worthy Partnership: South Korean Identity and the U.S. Alliance **Leif-Eric Easley**

The security alliance between South Korea and the United States is a deep partnership that has well served the national interests of both sides. The alliance remains of great importance, not only because of continued threats and uncertainty emanating from North Korea, but also because there are myriad international problems – from piracy and weapons proliferation to environmental disasters and pandemic diseases – that call for U.S.-ROK cooperation.¹¹ Seoul and Washington have made enormous investments in the bilateral relationship over the decades, and the relationship is expected to yield dividends and be worthy of further investment for the foreseeable future.¹²

Despite this positive outlook, there is a fundamental challenge for the alliance: whether South Korea’s desired international role and relationship with North Korea will continue to agree with American expectations for the security partnership. The reason a congruence of alliance

⁹ Victor D. Cha, “Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance,” in Kurt M. Campbell et al., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance*, (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, February 2009).

¹⁰ Katharine H. S. Moon, “Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Consolidation,” in Kim, Samuel S., *Korea’s Democratization*.

¹¹ Scott Snyder, “Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance,” CSIS Report, April 2009; <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/SnyderPursuingCompVisionApr09.pdf>.

¹² Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, June 16, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea.

visions is at question is not so much because of high American expectations. It is true that Washington envisions a more global U.S.-ROK partnership in which Seoul continues and increases its meaningful contributions toward maintaining international stability and securing free trade. However, the more dynamic variable is how national identity debates underway in South Korea will inform ROK national interests and ultimately policy toward North Korea and the alliance.

The two previous administrations of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun engendered pan-Peninsula nationalism while enshrining democracy at the core of South Korea's national identity.¹³ The current administration of President Lee Myung-bak came to office promising inter-Korean reciprocity and to re-brand South Korea as an innovative economic power. Recent developments seriously challenge these national identity concepts.

North Korea's nuclear and missile tests, the fatal shooting of a South Korean tourist at the Mt. Kungang resort, the detention of a South Korean businessman at the Kaesong industrial complex, and the nullification of various inter-Korean agreements have put pan-Peninsula identity on the defensive.

Meanwhile, the Lee administration's troubled interactions – with opposition legislators, organized protesters, unfriendly media, and private citizens who question the government – have progressives accusing Lee of turning back the clock on South Korea's hard-earned democracy. Such perceptions proliferated in the wake of former president Roh Moo-hyun's suicide following a government investigation into his family's financial dealings. Hundreds of thousands of South Koreans publicly paid their respects to Roh, while criticizing the current leadership for allegedly disrespecting South Korea's democratic identity.

This adds up to a daunting task for a South Korean president already facing a global recession that hinders his economic goals for the country. When progressives mobilized around Roh's death while conservatives demanded a stern response to North Korea's provocations, many South Koreans perceived a battle for their national soul. Without public support, the South Korean government will have difficulty coordinating policies with the United States. The main question for Lee's administration going forward is how well it can bridge the divides within South Korean society.

ROK national identity is of course for South Koreans to determine. But there are three important points American policymakers should effectively convey and reiterate to all Koreans who will shape Seoul's future decisions:

One is that the United States respects South Korea as a partner and values the strong friendship between two democracies. Both sides would benefit from acting on this principle to build the domestic political support necessary for ratifying the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA).

¹³ This section draws from Leif-Eric Easley, "National Identities Complicate Pyongyang Policy," *IHT-JoongAng Daily*, June 15, 2009 and *China Post*, June 16, 2009.

Two is that the U.S. commitment to South Korea's defense is unwavering. While the American approach to North Korea will continue to focus on diplomacy, all necessary capabilities will be available for any contingency on the Korean Peninsula. In the meantime, South Korea is capable of taking the lead on its own defense.

Third is that the world needs a global U.S.-ROK alliance. The alliance not only protects South Korean and U.S. security, it can increasingly offer a brand of cooperation beyond the Peninsula that addresses transnational problems and inspires broader substantive international coordination. Rather than crowd out multilateral mechanisms, the alliance can be a platform for enhancing the regional and global security architecture. Being such an international exemplar is an identity South Koreans can be proud of.

Christopher Gin*

The most important challenge facing the U.S.-ROK relationship is a decrease in the intangible level of U.S. commitment and attention given to the security alliance. The wars in the Middle East and the Global War on Terror occupy center stage in the United States' strategic planning. Even in the Pacific Command, it seems that the focus and measuring stick of active units and their leaders are forged where the wars are fought, not where the potential for conflict has existed for six decades.

North Korea's nuclear missiles are a real danger to all citizens of all nations that fall within their range. The Joint Vision Presidents Obama and Lee shared last month at the Rose Garden committed the United States to the "extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella," as it pertains to adapting to changes in the 21st century relationship. Those changes are the continued threat of a nuclear North Korea, regardless of whether it is in name or capability, as well as a militarily modernized China, which both the U.S. and ROK may see as a medium-term threat. China's seeming inability or unwillingness to take a more leading, and perhaps coercive, role in the Six-Party Talks means the U.S. and the ROK may rely more on themselves and one another than on the multilateral mechanisms to denuclearize the Peninsula. Dealing with the danger from North Korea's nuclear capability while preoccupied is the most tangible challenge facing the U.S.-ROK alliance.

The greatest challenge will be populating the next generation of leadership, following the succession of Kim Jong-Il, past Presidents Obama and Lee. Too few of our efforts and resources are going toward maintaining an interest in one of our longest enduring alliances. Our governments should be investing in furthering the training and education of the next generation to address problems that can be managed by extended deterrence across all levels of service to build a corps that is focused full-time on the U.S.-ROK alliance. This should include: the Departments of Defense, State, Energy, and Commerce. The future will challenge both countries' true commitment to the alliance as other issues vie for attention. Medium-term government policymakers are making their names and learning hard lessons in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while the Koreas receive much lower priority. Trial by fire is not the preferred

** Please note that the views expressed in this piece are the author's own opinions and ideas and in no way reflect the policy or official stance of his employer*

method of on the job training, especially in a situation as nuanced as the Korean Peninsula. Maintaining and developing an interest in the alliance in times of peace will determine its worth in times of crisis.

Strategic Alliance or Strategic Ambiguity **In-Seung Kay**

The U.S.-ROK alliance has been the cornerstone of the U.S.-ROK relationship,¹⁴ and the symbol of a strong U.S. commitment in East Asia. Or at least this is what both sides invoke to manage a relationship that faces fundamental challenges.

It is no secret that the alliance had suffered from different policies and divergent perspectives on North Korea. Since President Lee Myung-bak came into office, he has tried hard to mend the relationship with the United States as well as worked on his vision for a strategic alliance in which South Korea could contribute more to global solutions. However, the alliance still seems unprepared for new security concepts and required capabilities. President Lee's strategic vision appears ambiguous and hardly actionable. As a result, the viability of the strategic alliance is called into question. This is the most serious challenge to the U.S.-ROK alliance in the future – the absence of (real) common strategic goals.

There is plenty of criticism of the alliance related to the North Korean threat and its failure to create a new rationale. Thus, a list of rationales has been created; it includes peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization, or disaster relief as new roles for the alliance. Prominent scholars have suggested a “value-based” alliance that promotes democracy and human rights.

First, we should ask why both sides, particularly South Korea, want to transform the U.S.-ROK alliance into an expanded partnership. One obvious reason is that North Korea's conventional threat (the core reason for the U.S.-ROK alliance) has decreased whereas its nontraditional threats have diversified. Dealing with North Korea is no longer a matter of military balance, but also multilateral diplomacy, nonproliferation initiatives, and humanitarian problems. Unfortunately, Korea's role in those areas has been limited, and it seems to depend on U.S.-China relations in the process of the Six-Party Talks or other regional settings. In this light, there are two logical consequences. Korea could focus more on North Korea's military threats. Or it could try to be a more valuable partner of the United States by seeking active roles elsewhere.

The term ‘strategic alliance’ is tightly connected to South Korea's second option. However, I have a great deal of reservation about an action plan associated with the initiative. Concepts are vague as numerous buzzwords attributed to Korea's role actually describe more serious operations. Post-conflict stabilization requires dispatching troops, who risk being killed in operations. Disaster relief operations require transportation and airlift capabilities that South Korea has not acquired yet. Korean troops have contributed to a number of UN peacekeeping

¹⁴ The White House, *Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea*, June 19, 2009.

operations, but that is not an area the United States is keenly interested in. The often discussed “value-based” alliance sounds most unconvincing. Strategy is commonly defined as linking national goals to means. Values – especially democracy and human rights are by nature ambiguous. There must be a wide range of goals and means. Therefore, what determines a country’s participation in an operation would be interests, not values.

Such initiatives will find it difficult to garner domestic support, because they are not related to immediate domestic concerns. With South Korea’s increased military might, North Korea’s conventional threat may not serve as a rationale for a stronger U.S.-ROK alliance. But South Korea’s more global initiatives may not be supported by the general public.

Another obstacle to reinventing the alliance is a rising China. China is suspicious of U.S. allies in East Asia playing a bigger role in the region. On the contrary, the United States may want its allies to help keep the balance, if not deter China, in East Asia. If China is unhappy about Korea’s increased role within the region, Korea is likely to avoid it. Again, it would focus more on North Korea per se, or create roles outside the region. The United States, on the other hand, would want Korea to play roles within the region vis-à-vis China. Support outside the region could be appreciated by the U.S., but it would hardly be the U.S.’s main concern.

Korea is in a double bind. Creating viable common goals between Korea and the United States is not an easy task. The task itself requires analysts to calibrate regional dynamics, particularly U.S.-China relations.

Anna Yeuna Kim

The June 16, 2009 summit between Presidents Barack Obama and Lee Myung-bak reaffirmed the two countries’ commitment to the U.S.-ROK alliance that has secured the Korean Peninsula for the past 60 years. As written in the “Joint Vision” statement released after the conclusion of the summit, “the United States-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty remains the cornerstone of the U.S.-ROK security relationship, which has guaranteed peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia.” Under the auspices of the Mutual Defense Treaty, the presence of U.S. Forces in Korea and the operation of the Combined Forces Command (CFC) as well as the United Nations Command (UNC) have dissuaded the divided Koreas from escalating the Korean civil war that has been put on hold for quite some time. It is the key assignment of both the U.S. and ROK military to ensure that stability continues on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, maintaining a strong and stable U.S.-ROK alliance in the post-Cold War era is a challenge that both countries must meet to confront other challenges that affect not only the Korean Peninsula but also Northeast Asia as well as the U.S.

To maintain a stable alliance, realigning it is essential. The 2012 transfer of operational control (OPCON) to the Korean military and the transfer of the U.S. military base in Yongsan to an area outside Seoul are two measures that show efforts by the U.S. and Korea to realign and build a stronger and more effective military alliance. Moreover, other areas of U.S.-ROK relations will further strengthen the military alliance. The conclusion of the KORUS FTA will strengthen economic relations between the U.S. and Korea, which will enhance cooperation that will contribute to maintaining security in the region. An alliance built upon bloodshed by both

Korean and U.S. soldiers will be strengthened by enhanced economic cooperation through trade and investment.

Given the threat of North Korea's nuclear program, it is all the more significant that the U.S.-ROK military alliance maintains its threat posture. Therefore, the problems associated with restructuring the alliance must be resolved. The negotiations over the costs of moving the Yongsan base to Pyongtaek, the Korean insecurity about the OPCON transfer and ratifying the KORUS FTA must be resolved to move the alliance forward. If they are not resolved, the U.S.-ROK alliance will retain habits and traditions that will damage a weakened relationship.

Further enhancing the U.S.-ROK alliance also means restructuring it in ways that are future-oriented. Situations that occur on the Korean Peninsula affect not only Korea and the U.S. but also China and Japan. Therefore, enhancing an alliance that contributes to the security of Northeast Asia will benefit all parties.

Defense vs. Security **Kevin Shepard**

The alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea is unique; the challenges it faces are not. A relationship requires both parties to work at keeping the alliance relevant and beneficial.

While analysts in both capitols cried wolf over the 'crumbling alliance' during the Bush-Roh era, the changes Washington and Seoul were calling for were, in fact, long overdue and in the interest of both parties. Despite the end of the Cold War, the democratization and growth of South Korea, and the United States' shift in interest from North Korea to regional economic influence and trade and political stability, the U.S.-ROK alliance remains centered on the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty.¹⁵ That South Koreans would want the return of wartime operational control while Americans would want to use U.S. troops in South Korea in support of operations not focused merely on North Korea is a win-win situation. At a time when many believed the alliance was at its weakest, level heads in Washington and Seoul worked out agreements to not only salvage but to strengthen ties and make the alliance more mutually beneficial.

Now, with President Lee Myung Bak and President Barack Obama recently meeting in Washington, the two assured their respective constituencies that "our open societies, our commitment to free democracy and a market economy, and our sustained partnership provide a foundation for the enduring friendship, shared values, and mutual respect that tightly bind the American and Korean peoples. Together, on this solid foundation, we will build a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral regional and global scope."¹⁶ The biggest challenge facing the alliance today is not salvaging a Cold War relic, but living up to the lofty expectations

¹⁵ "The United States-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty remains the cornerstone of the U.S.-ROK security relationship, which has guaranteed peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia for over fifty years." "Joint Vision For the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, June 16, 2009.

¹⁶ Ibid.

for the future. Washington and Seoul are challenged with not squandering a valuable opportunity.

In the post-Cold War era, it is necessary to transform the alliance from one of defense to one focused on security. U.S. forces' increased flexibility and South Korean support for operations off the peninsula will allow the two to work more closely in response to non-traditional security threats, such as the 2009 ARF Voluntary Demonstration of Response, hosted by the Philippines from May 4-8, and the Proliferation Security Initiative, in which South Korea announced full participation on May 26. In addition, for Washington to maintain a presence in, and influence over, economics in the region, its alliance with South Korea is vital. As global leaders including President Obama recently recognized the limitations of the G8 and challenged the G20 to play a more dominant role in shaping the world economy, South Korea's role as host in 2010 is an opportunity for the U.S.-ROK alliance to project its ambitions on other economic players in the international community. The alliance appears to be aware of the need for change and working in the right direction; future efforts need to concentrate on increasing public awareness of the benefits as well as the realities of the growing alliance, and continued shift away from defense-centric security toward maintaining regional stability and a platform for growth.

Young Jin Yang

The United States and South Korea have lacked a shared strategic vision that can guide their alliance into the 21st century. Whereas other Asian alliances – the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Australia alliances – redefined roles and values in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 world, the U.S.-ROK alliance did not. Given the military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, it might have seemed reasonable (especially from the South Korean side) that the alliance between the US and South Korea continued to focus on deterring the North Korean threat. The absence of serious debate over the rationale of the U.S.-ROK alliance, however, made it easier for the security partners to grow apart after the Cold War and drift in the past decade.

On June 16, 2009, Presidents Barack Obama and Lee Myung-bak laid out a joint strategic vision to reinvigorate and adapt the alliance to the changing security environment. The new responsibility of the U.S.-ROK alliance is to “ensure a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Korean Peninsula, the Asia-Pacific region, and the world.” Washington and Seoul will address security concerns as they arise at the national, regional, and global level.

Much as the reassessment and redefinition of the U.S.-ROK alliance relationship is desirable, it is questionable whether the United States and South Korea can restructure and strengthen their alliance without an effective consultation committee. The two countries need to work closely together on contingency plans for sudden change in North Korea, transfer of war-time operational control from the United States to South Korea by 2012, coordination with China vis-à-vis North Korea, and the deployment of South Korean troops to Afghanistan – to name a few issues. Considering the close consultation and coordination these tasks require between government agencies in both countries, it is imperative that the United States and South Korea consolidate the separate consultative structure – Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) and Strategic Consultation for Allied Partnership (SCAP) – into a “2+2 Meeting.” Absent high-level,

regular dialogues, the consultation and coordination process is likely to be delayed. Worse, the United States and South Korea may fail to converge on strategic thinking, thereby sending the U.S.-ROK alliance into disarray. Drawing on the experiences of the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Australia alliances, one can see how vital the “2+2” meetings were in maintaining and realizing shared strategic objectives of alliance partners. If history is any guide, whether Obama-Lee’s 2009 Joint Vision follows the precedent of the 1996 Sydney Declaration or the 1996 Tokyo Declaration will depend on the creation of regular, ministerial-level meetings.

Adrian Yi

Ratification of the U.S.-ROK Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) is both an opportunity for as well as a challenge to the U.S.-ROK alliance. The U.S. is South Korea’s second largest trading partner and South Korea is America’s eleventh; ratifying the KORUS FTA will provide an opportunity to strengthen both economies while deepening economic and political ties. Because the auto industry in the U.S. and the farming industry in the ROK have revisited the agreement, KORUS has yet to be ratified even though it was signed on June 30, 2007. Thus, passage of the KORUS is the most important challenge facing the US-ROK alliance.

KORUS FTA is the largest bilateral trade agreement and is the second largest FTA after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The KORUS FTA will increase U.S. GDP by more than \$10 billion while alleviating ROK tariffs on 64 percent of \$1.9 billion worth of U.S. farm exports. The KORUS FTA will also provide a legal framework and protection for \$19 billion of foreign direct investment that enters the Korean market. Symbolically, it will signal an unprecedented economic commitment that will elevate the alliance to a higher level.

Ratification of the KORUS FTA is critical to the U.S.-ROK alliance because it will signify the maturing of the alliance while securing U.S. economic interests in Northeast Asia by serving as a counterbalance to China’s growing economic influence in the region. Protectionist measures that were tolerated when Korea was a weak and developing economy are no longer pertinent for the 13th largest economy in the world. Both the U.S. and Korea are ready for fair competition in the form of a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

The core of the challenge lies in getting the U.S. and Korea to expose the U.S. auto industry and Korea’s farming industry to free trade. Korea can alleviate resistance from the farming industry by institutionalizing a more stable market via a futures market. Korean farmers have been exposed to a volatile and exploitive market that facilitates fear and resistance to additional competition from the U.S. The U.S. can alleviate fears of the auto industry by aggressively developing compact and fuel efficient cars that are more competitive in Asian markets. By providing financial safety measures such as futures while adjusting products to fit market demands (smaller fuel efficient cars), major obstacles preventing the U.S. and Korea from ratifying the KORUS FTA can be addressed.

Furthermore, the U.S. became Korea’s second largest trading partner in 2003 when China surpassed the U.S. as Korea’s largest market. China also surpassed the U.S. and became the “largest trading partner” of Japan in 2005, and Australia in 2007. China is now the largest

trading partner of America's three major allies in Asia. The KORUS FTA can help the US regain its competitive presence in Asia.

OPCON Transfer – the Biggest Wedge

Yun Yi

The most important challenge to the US–Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance stems from the transfer of operational control (OPCON) of South Korean forces back to Seoul, scheduled for April 2012. Seoul with its very impressionable public and a relatively new democracy must balance public sentiment and liberalism in politics and keep on even keel with U.S. interests. The evolution in military relations is changing the very definition of the U.S.-ROK alliance and even with an intimate history, differences in languages and culture still cause misunderstandings that can demonize the U.S. as it did in the summer of 2008 after Seoul attempted to reopen its markets to U.S. beef. The OPCON transfer has created a budgetary burden for the government and an additional requirement for its military to retrofit, newly acquire or make up for losses in military capability as U.S. forces pass the baton. In a weak global economy, increasing a defense budget to take on these capabilities by the 2012 deadline as other government sectors are cut, South Korea's military modernization plan "Defense Reform 2020" may create a wedge in U.S.-ROK relations and damage the alliance.

During the Roh administration, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) started spending more on "quality of life improvements," the politically correct term for Operations and Maintenance (O&M), and less on Force Investment Plans (FIP) needed for the rapid assumption of military responsibilities by the ROK. The MND delayed further major force development projects and a slowdown in effective militarization of the ROK military occurred. In 2006 the defense budget was redirected to concentrate on reinforcement of self-reliant defense capabilities and improvement of soldiers' morale and welfare in line with the promotion of the "Defense Reform 2020" at 2.6 percent of GDP and 15 percent of the government's budget. "Defense Reform 2020" originally required roughly an 11 percent per year military budget increase, so the additional budget demands has caused a rift between ROK politicians and the ROK military as the military has stressed the need to delay the OPCON transfer past 2012.¹⁷

Adding complications is the relocation of U.S. bases and forces and return of land used by the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK). Relocation was planned to be completed by the end of the year but there have been many delays as the economic and political changes in both countries forced renegotiations. At the most recent talks on April 29 at the Combined Forces Command, South Korean Vice Defense Minister Chang Soo-man and U.S. Gen. Walter Sharp narrowed their differences. The U.S. wants the relocation to be delayed, as modernizing Pyongtaek base to accommodate relocation by 2015 would cost them twice than originally planned.¹⁸ Seoul has paid a price for mishandling and mistreating relocated landowners of the Pyongtaek parcels set aside for the new base.

¹⁷ Bruce W. Bennett, A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defense Reform Plan (RAND Corporation, 2006) 1.

¹⁸ S Korea, U.S. yet to reach conclusion on U.S. military base relocation (Xinhua, 29 Apr 09)

Appendix B



South-North Relations and the U.S.-ROK Alliance Hilton Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel * April 20, 2009

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United States – Republic of Korea Strategic Dialogue **Royal Lahaina Resort, Maui ♦ 26-28 July 2009**

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program officer for UN University exchanges and an editorial assistant at the Institute of East & West Studies while completing an MA in Chinese area studies at Yonsei University. She received an MA in international affairs from The George Washington University and a BA in economics from Brown University, and studied international politics at Peking University.

Mr. Seukhoon Paul CHOI was born in South Korea and emigrated to the US with his family when he was one year old. After growing up in New York, he received his BA in Philosophy, Politics & Economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 2004. He then moved to Seoul where he worked numerous jobs, received his MA in International Cooperation from Seoul National University in 2007 and was commissioned as an officer in the ROK Army the same year. He now teaches cadets at the Korea Military Academy.

Mr. Leif-Eric EASLEY is a Ph.D. candidate specializing in East Asia international relations at Harvard University's Department of Government. Mr. Easley's research on national identity, trust and security cooperation includes extensive fieldwork in Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing. He is a Visiting Scholar at the University of Southern California's Korean Studies Institute, and a Kelly Fellow with the Pacific Forum CSIS. Mr. Easley was Japan area editor for the Harvard Asia Quarterly and served as a teaching fellow at Harvard in the subjects of Asian International Relations and American Foreign Policy.

Captain Christopher M. GIN is a 2005 West Point graduate and holds a BA in English, and a Field of Study in Chinese. From 2005-2007, he was a Graduate Degree Fellow at the East-West Center and earned an MA in Chinese Studies from the University of Hawaii. Previously, he served as an Assistant China Desk Officer at US Pacific Command, Camp Smith, Hawaii in the Strategic Plans and Policy Division. Currently, he is stationed in Hawaii with a Stryker Brigade and returned in February 2009 with his unit from a deployment to Iraq. He is a graduate of the Army's Airborne, Air Assault, Ranger, and Tank Commander's courses and remains on active duty as a Captain.

Mr. In-Seung KAY, from South Korea, is a Ph.D. student in political science at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He has a broad range of research interests from defense procurement policy and alliance politics to democratization and its impact on security policy in Asia. Prior to his doctoral studies, he supported research for various organizations including the East-West Center Washington office (2006-7), The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation at Washington, DC (summer 2005), Ilimin International Relations Institute at Korea University(2003), and The Korean Institute of International Studies (2002). Mr. Kay received his BA in History in political science at Korea University in Seoul and obtained his Masters in Security Studies at Georgetown University at Washington, DC. He is currently working for the Republic of Korea National Assemblywoman Ok-Nim Chung as a policy advisor and senior legislative assistant.

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Ms. Young Jin YANG was the Spring 2009 Vasey Fellow and the first Kelly Fellow with Pacific Forum CSIS. She received her BA in international relations from Mount Holyoke College and her MA in international studies from the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University. Ms. Yang interned with the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, South Korea. Her research interests include the U.S.-R.O.K.-Japan trilateral cooperation, South Korea-Japan relations, and Japanese politics. She will start a Ph.D. program in political science this fall at the University of Washington.

Ms. Adrian YI is a Kelly Fellow at the Pacific Forum CSIS. She received her MA in Korean Language at the University of Hawaii as a part of the National Security Education Program (NSEP). She has studied abroad at Korea University for a year and interned as a research assistant at the Center for Security and Strategy at the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis (KIDA). She received a BA in International Relations and Foreign Languages (Chinese and Japanese) from the University of Puget Sound. She studied Chinese at Middlebury College and has studied abroad in Japan through the Rotary Program. She has also worked with the Department of State at the American Institute in Taiwan.

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The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance
Honolulu, Hawaii ♦ 21-24 October 2009

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Mr. Daewoo LEE is a research assistant at the U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS. His research interests are: political economy of Northeast Asia, public finance in developing countries, and U.S.-Korea & inter-Korean relations. He is also a vice president for the Sejong Society of Washington D.C., a non-government and volunteer organization dedicated to help young professionals to learn Korean peninsula and U.S. policy toward Northeast Asia. He holds a B.A. in political science from Hanyang University at Seoul, and a Master of International Relations and Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

Dr. Kevin SHEPARD is a resident James A. Kelly Korean Studies Fellow at Pacific Forum CSIS, and is affiliated with the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University. Dr. Shepard earned his Ph.D. in North Korean Politics and Unification Policies from Kyungnam University, Graduate School of North Korean Studies, and holds an M.A. in International Policy Studies from Sydney University and an MA in Korean for Professionals from the University of Hawaii. He has recently co-authored a chapter on North Korean corporate governance that was published in the book, “The Dynamics of Change in North Korea: An Institutionalist Perspective,” contributed a chapter on U.S.-ROK counter-terrorism cooperation opportunities for an upcoming publication by the Asia Foundation, and collaborated on a Young Leader perspective on U.S.-ROK relations to be published by the Korea Economic Institute

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Appendix C



Pacific Forum CSIS
YOUNG LEADERS

Pacific Forum CSIS ~ New Asia Research Institute
Joint Workshop
South-North Relations and the U.S.-ROK Alliance
Hilton Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel * April 20, 2009

AGENDA

Monday, April 20

- 9:00-9:15 **Welcoming Remarks**
Korea: RHEE Sang Woo (New Asia Research Institute)
U.S.: Brad Glosserman (Pacific Forum)
- 9:15-12:00 **Session 1: North-South Relations**
Korea: LEE Dong-bok
U.S.: Steven KIM
- 12:00-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-16:30 **Session 2: Developments in the U.S.-ROK Alliance**
Korea: KIM Sung-han
U.S.: Carl BAKER
- 16:30-16:45 **Session 3: Wrap-up**
- 18:30 Dinner at Waikiki Resort Hotel



Hosted by Pacific Forum CSIS
Sponsored by The U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency

U.S.-ROK Strategic Dialogue

Royal Lahaina Resort ♦ Lahaina, Maui
July 26-28, 2009

AGENDA

July 26, 2009 – SUNDAY

- 8:30 AM** **Continental Breakfast** – *Boardroom*
- 9:00 AM** **Young Leaders program introduction** – *Boardroom*
Brad Glosserman, Executive Director, Pacific Forum CSIS
- 9:30 AM** **Young Leaders group discussion**
Challenges to the U.S.-ROK alliance and relationship
- 11:30 AM** **Breakout sessions, initial discussions**
Small groups address main challenges to bilateral relations
Group A: See-Won Byun, Seukhoon Paul Choi, Kevin Shepard, Adrian Yi, Yun Yi
Group B: Catherine Boye, Leif-Eric Easley, Christopher Gin, Anna Yeun Kim, Young Jin Yang
- 1:30 PM** **Young Leaders breakout sessions, continued**
- 2:45 PM** **Presentation of group findings and roundtable discussion**
- 6:30 PM** **Welcome Reception and Dinner** – *Villas Lawn*

July 27, 2009 - MONDAY

- 9:00 AM** **Opening Remarks (Introductions, dialogue background, expectations)**
[This is the first meeting of (hopefully) many U.S.-ROK dialogues. The objective is to establish a baseline of perceptions and to connect with people in the ROK who can conduct meaningful discussions about bilateral nuclear-related issues. Expectations are modest, but optimistic.]

9:30 AM Session 1: Perceptions of the Asian Security Environment

U.S. presenter: Evans Revere

ROK presenter: Hwang Jae-ho

This session explores each country's view of the regional security environment, to identify issues, and highlight shared and divergent concerns. What are the principle strategic threats to each country and to regional security and stability? How have the threat perceptions and concerns changed in recent years?

11:15 AM Session 2: Perspectives on the NPT, the PSI, and other Counter-Proliferation Regimes

ROK presenter: Hong Kyudok

U.S. presenter: Katy Oh-Hassig

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular the spread of nuclear weapons, has been identified as one of the top security threats by President Obama and in numerous U.S. national security documents. How effective is the NPT and other unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral countering proliferation regimes? What could be done to make them more effective? How do documents like the American NPR and QDR influence ROK decision-makers?

1:30 PM Session 3: Perspectives on Asian Nuclear Dynamics

U.S. presenter: Bruce Bennett

ROK presenter: Lee Chung-min

This session explores the role of nuclear weapons and strategic systems (such as missile defense and other defense technologies) in the region. How are American nuclear forces best postured in the region? What are the prospects for improved U.S.-ROK-Japan AND U.S.-ROK-China trilateral cooperation? What are ROK concerns about U.S.-Japan-China trilateral cooperation?

3:15 PM Session 4: Korean Peninsula Dynamics

ROK presenter: Rhee Sang-woo

U.S. presenter: Gordon Flake

This session focuses on security relations on the Korean Peninsula. What influence do North-South relations and unification policies have on the U.S.-ROK alliance? How do U.S.-DPRK relations and Six-Party negotiations impact the alliance? What role should multilateral institutions such as the Six-Party Talks have in defining security relations on the Peninsula? How should the U.S. and ROK deal with a potential collapse in North Korea? What role should China, Japan and/or the U.N. play in security relations on the peninsula?

July 28, 2009 – TUESDAY

9:00 AM Session 5: Understanding Deterrence and the Roles of Strategic Systems

ROK presenter: Hahm Chaibong

U.S. presenter: Mike Finnegan

How does the ROK rate the credibility and effectiveness of American extended deterrence and other strategic systems such as BMD? Is this view changing? Is the ROK contemplating more self-reliant or ‘hedging’ strategies?

10:45 AM Session 6: The Alliance

ROK presenter: Kim Tae-woo

U.S. presenter: Victor Cha

How do Koreans and Americans rate the health and mutual respect of the alliance? What are the two countries’ respective roles and responsibilities within the alliance? What would cause the collapse of the Alliance?

2:00 PM Session 7: U.S.-ROK Strategic Nuclear Dialogues – Future Topics and Participants

How can future strategic dialogues help the U.S. and the ROK improve mutual understanding of perceived strategic threats and increase allied capabilities to deter or defeat them? What non-military strategic threats (demographic, economic, resources) most challenge each nation and the alliance, and how have these threats evolved? How can each nation help the other prepare for future strategic challenges?

3:30 PM Session 8: Conclusions and Wrap Up

4:15 PM Young Leaders post-conference roundtable discussion



Pacific Forum CSIS
YOUNG LEADERS

Korea Economic Institute (KEI)
Navigating Turbulence in Northeast Asia: The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance
East-West Center, Imin Conference Hall, 1777 East-West Road
Honolulu, Hawaii ♦ 22-24 October 2009

Agenda

Thursday, October 22, 2009

5:30 pm **Young Leaders Program Introduction**
Pacific Forum CSIS, 1003 Bishop St., Pauahi Tower, Suite 1150 (11th floor)

6:30 – 9:00 **Reception and Dinner**
Plaza Club, 900 Fort Street Mall # 2000 (20th floor) – walk together from Pacific Forum
Keynote Speaker: Ambassador Han Sung-Joo
Chairman, Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Friday, October 23, 2009

Keoni Auditorium, Imin Conference Hall, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road

8:50 am Welcome remarks

9:00 **Panel I:** The Financial Crisis in Northeast Asia & Sustainable Recovery

10:45 **Panel II:** The U.S.-ROK Economic Relationship: Free Trade & the Future

2:15 **Panel III:** The North Korea Challenge

4:00 **Panel IV:** The Rise of China & its Impact on the North Pacific Security Environment

Saturday, October 24, 2009

Keoni Auditorium, Imin Conference Hall, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road

9:00 am **Panel V:** Future Directions for NE Asian Regionalism: New Security & Trade

10:30 Architectures

12:45pm **Roundtable:** Priorities in Navigating Turbulence
Young Leaders Lunch and Group Discussion (sandwiches to be provided)
Makana Lunch Room on Garden level (ground floor of Imin Conference Hall)

2:45 **Young Leaders adjourn**