

**“Ready for Action”
Responding to Crisis in North Korea**



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Pacific Forum CSIS

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Introduction

The Pacific Forum CSIS convened a Young Leaders Trilateral Roundtable with representation from the United States, South Korea, and Japan to discuss respective country responses to a leadership transition scenario in North Korea. Our starting point was Kim Jong-il's death and subsequent events unfolding inside North Korea that demanded diplomatic, military, and humanitarian responses. Each team was asked first to identify and prioritize their country's top concerns, to assess expectations of other countries in the region, and develop a short-term action plan to respond to the concerns. After completing their individual action plans, the teams were brought together to discuss their plans and identify areas of convergence and divergence between them and to determine what was needed to ensure effective cooperation in responding the situation.

After the roundtable each team assessed their reactions to the scenario, further examine the areas of agreement and disagreement, and offer lessons learned and policy proposals for ensuring an effective, coordinated response to a crisis on the peninsula. Those assessments are presented in this publication.

Perception gaps among participants led to some initial misunderstandings between the teams. While some were easily resolved through discussion, others remained unresolved even after lengthy explanations. This was most evident in the how each group perceived the threat. For Koreans, the threat of a crisis in the North was seen primarily in terms of political instability and uncertainty about the ability to maintain social control in the context of the transition to new leadership. Japanese participants saw the major threat coming from an attack with WMD on its homeland. The major threat from the US perspective was proliferation of WMD. These fundamentally different perceptions led to very different conclusions about priorities and the key areas requiring coordination. An unintended consequence was that in some cases this led to misinterpretations of the signals individual countries thought they were sending by recommending specific actions. These gaps also created a sense of anger among Japanese who felt their perspective was undervalued and their potential role in multilateral responses ignored.

The discussion led to the realization that different understandings of common terms also led to different assessments of the others' actions. Even though all three teams recognized the need for intervention, the understanding of what that entailed differed significantly. For the US and Japan the need for military intervention prevailed while South Korea focused on political and economic intervention, but not a change in government. Similarly, there were different perceptions about the need for humanitarian intervention and what such intervention would entail. Reassurance was another problematic term. In several cases, it was clear that what one country saw as a signal to reassure was threatening to other parties. The meaning of unification, its modalities, and relative importance to South Korea also led to some misinterpretation. While both Japan and the US worried about South Koreans taking the opportunity presented by instability to forcibly reunify the peninsula, South Korean participants were quite wary of the

prospects of unification and placed much greater priority on maintaining stability in the existing relations. Ironically, our ROK participants worried about how actions of the other two parties could result in unwanted impulses for unification. There also were misperceptions about the importance of the refugee issue to Japan. Although there has been a longstanding assumption that this is a primary concern, the prioritization by Japanese participants suggested that may not be the case.

China's role in a crisis or a leadership transition in the North is a significant source of uncertainty in Korea. While each team expressed a slightly different perspective, the fundamental problem seems to be that China's reluctance to participate in joint planning has led to concerns about how it will respond and how best to coordinate actions with it. Yet, there is a general recognition that China's cooperation would be crucial to managing the political transition in North Korea.

While each team developed key findings and lessons learned as part of these deliberations, the following is a more generalized list of takeaways from the exercise:

Historical animosities between Japan and other countries in Northeast Asia coupled with the historical fears of external involvement on the Korean Peninsula have created serious impediments to effective multilateral planning in anticipation of a crisis in North Korea. This situation has created a great deal of mistrust regarding other parties' likely responses to instability in North Korea. In this context, Japan feels misunderstood and unappreciated.

All parties recognize that multilateral cooperation is important, but, the lack of a coordinating mechanism that defines modes of action makes it difficult to initiate action. Creating a framework and defining leadership roles within it would reduce ambiguity regarding responsibilities and mitigate the tendency to pursue bilateral alliance-based cooperation to the detriment of multilateral action. Since China is a treaty ally of North Korea, this framework should include a mechanism for coordinating actions with China.

A common set of criteria for intervention in North Korea would help reduce uncertainty about individual responses to a crisis or power transition in the country. Specific conditions and thresholds that would trigger intervention could be developed under the UN responsibility to protect framework. This would reduce the likelihood of a unilateral decision to intervene and would provide an agreed upon basis for action. It should be recognized that China's criteria for intervention may be different than US-Japan-South criteria.

Reactions to the Succession Issue in North Korea

Japan Team

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Key Findings

1. Differences on Threat Perception Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

There seem to be serious gaps regarding the threat perception on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) among the three countries. From a Japanese perspective, political uncertainty in the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) not only heightens the possibility of the proliferation of WMD to Asia and beyond, but also increases the possibility of the state-use of WMD so that those who control the weapons can consolidate power in the DPRK or prevent other countries from intervening in DPRK domestic politics. Since the possibility of the state-use of WMD would pose an immediate threat to Japan's security, the Japanese team considered the possibility of the use of WMD by the DPRK as its top concern, followed by the possibility of attacks by the DPRK on important facilities in Japan such as US bases, nuclear power plants, and other critical infrastructure. The United States saw the issue of WMD only from a proliferation perspective while the ROK side did not even touch upon the issue. This gap presumably occurred since the Japanese team regarded proliferation as "mid-term" concern rather than a "short-term" one while the other two teams reversed those priorities.

2. The Notion that Japan's Top Priority would be the Refugee Issue

Although the Japanese team put the refugee issue as its fourth in the list of threats to our nation, other countries expected Japan to make this issue the top concern. This expectation by the United States and the ROK team is a clear reflection of the perception gap among the three countries as well as the relatively optimistic views of both the United States and ROK regarding the impact of a power struggle in the DPRK that the scenario provided. Although refugee outflow would be an important issue and would pose a serious challenge to Japan, the waters between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese archipelago would delay the flow of DPRK refugees to Japan to some extent. This "time gap" would make the refugee issue more of a "mid-term" concern rather than a "short-term" one, providing Japan time to prepare.

3. Low Perspective of the US on the Importance of "Reassurance" for its Allies

The Japanese, and partially the ROK, required reassurance from the United States; but it seemed that the US did not take this issue seriously. In any crisis, Japan expects

“reassurance” from the United States. Japan would be “reassured” by US physical (military) and verbal (declaratory) “reassurance”: in other words, Japan would expect the mobilization and reinforcement of US forces in the theater as well as issuance of statements that the United States would “protect” Japan. By doing so, the United States can expect greater cooperation from Japan, and at the same time, it will send a strong message to the North Korean People’s Army (KPA) generals and the leadership in Beijing.

4. No Country took Unilateral Action

In spite of the many discrepancies in priorities and action plans among the three teams, every country saw the importance of and need for cooperating with other countries to resolve the issue. The mode of cooperation (e.g., what issues need to be discussed in what framework and who would be involved) was, however, never concretely mentioned nor agreed upon among the three countries.

5. Low Expectation of Japan from the United States and ROK

When actual trilateral cooperation was taken into consideration, expectations toward Japan from both the United States and ROK were extremely low, militarily and even politically. The ROK team considered Japan as just a “money provider” in this scenario, which came as a shock to the Japanese team. Since the major mission of US forces in Korea is the defense of the ROK, US forces in Japan would play a large role in an unexpected incident on the Korean Peninsula, such as the collapse of the DPRK or even the death of Kim Jong-Il, by providing rapid response and establishing a bridgehead for reinforcement. According to the 1997 US-Japan Defense Guidelines, Japanese rear-area support will be provided in such operations. In addition, major US bases in Japan are also UN bases and would be automatically used to support the UN Command in Korea. In such a situation, monetary contributions alone cannot simply summarize the roles played by Japan. Moreover, even in peacetime its citizens are impacted by the operations of US forces which are done on a daily basis to maintain operational readiness for a possible contingency as provided in the scenario.

6. Japan’s Role Ignored in a Supposed Trilateral Action

When trilateral actions were considered, not only did the other two countries put Japanese collaboration on the backburner, but they ignored Japan’s ability to cooperate. The US team even excluded Japan from its preferred information sharing group, and the ROK team sought close consultation only with the United States, not with Japan. The two countries were not aware of the need for Japanese cooperation in such a scenario.

7. “Multilateralism” isn’t being Concrete (and Shared among the Three Countries)

Although all three teams showed interest in and the need for a multilateral framework to resolve the DPRK issue, all teams did not have a concrete vision about how

this would work. The US team encouraged Russia to join the process, while the ROK team was reluctant to expand the collaboration framework and excluded Russia. The Japanese team did consider Russia as a potential partner but was unable to reach consensus among the teammates. Thus, although all three countries realized the importance of collaboration, there were unsolved issues, not only among countries but also within each country.

8. Inconsistent US Thinking about Intervention

Since the US team put WMD proliferation (not only the weapon itself but related materials and personnel) as its top concern in the scenario, it should be prepared for a military intervention to secure DPRK's nuclear weapons, related facilities and materials in case of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. However, its action plan for potential intervention in the DPRK demonstrated that the United States would react only if China were to intervene, putting its weight on political consideration rather than actual consequences of WMD proliferation. The US team regarded the strengthening of export control mechanisms as the primary tool for the prevention of WMD proliferation, rather than intervention, which can be acknowledged as a mid-term or long-term measure to tackle such issues; it isn't a short-term one that responded to the scenario. Moreover, in the event of actual WMD proliferation from the DPRK, the United States would need to mobilize troops and Special Forces in Japan, yet its consultation with Japan seems to be limited. This would seem inconsistent given US priorities and thus the criteria for intervention remains vague.

9. The United States Didn't Consider Military Action

If we follow the scenario faithfully, the US military would most likely raise its alert to a higher status. Therefore, it was surprising to learn that both the United States and the ROK teams did not consider the possibility of a military intervention by the United States, even though the US team identified WMD proliferation as its most prominent concern. The US team considered the military reluctant to take action including intervention. Yet it is obvious that the US military would take some kind of action (including intelligence activity) in any contingency in the Far East. This is presumably because the role of the ROK-based US military and the role of the Japan-based US military are not understood by the US team. Moreover, the US Marines in Okinawa are, according to US sources, there to take action when such a scenario occurs on the Korean Peninsula. From this perspective, the presumption that the United States would take no military action is not realistic. In any case, assertions by the US team are a reminder that Japan should not assume that the United States will always protect it. At the same time, it is necessary to be aware of possible expectation gaps between the United States and Japan; these gaps need to be addressed and resolved.

10. Unrealistic Assessment by the ROK and United States on the Race for Power in the DPRK

Although the ROK team was concerned about developments within the DPRK, it did not show much concern about consequences of domestic power balancing/sharing after the death of Kim Jong-Il. It would most likely turn out that the Workers Party, the military, and the new leader would divide power, but the balance would be unstable. In the scenario, factions emerged shortly after the death of Kim Jong-Il and were competing to consolidate power within the DPRK. In this context, it is necessary to be prepared for the worst-case scenario, including the possibility that those who control WMD will utilize them to galvanize domestic morale in the DPRK even though diplomatic channels are open to prevent such a scenario. It is too optimistic to consider that a single leader would emerge right after the death of Kim Jong-Il.

Assessment of the Scenario

1. General Assessment of the Scenario:

The leadership transition after the death of Kim Jong-il is not going smoothly. There are conflicting reports over succession and leadership. There are conflicting reports over who controls military facilities. Millions in work units without food supply pose humanitarian challenges to the international community, while thousands of North Korean refugees begin to take all possible routes to the ROK, China, Russia, and Japan for survival. Japan's primary concern is the possibility that the threat of WMD will be used to prevent foreign intervention or to show off superiority in the power struggle within the DPRK. The possibility of civil war, use of WMD, and the outflow of refugees – all indicate that the scenario can lead to a situation in areas surrounding Japan.

2. Reactions to the Scenario and Justification

The top five concerns for Japan were the following: (1) the possibility of use of WMD; (2) attacks on facilities in Japan (e.g., US bases or critical infrastructures); (3) total collapse of the DPRK; (4) refugees to Japan; and (5) humanitarian support.

As mentioned in the previous section, we focused on political confusion and power struggle in DPRK. The Japan team put the possibility of use of WMD as the top national security concern since the possibility of nuclear brinkmanship in such a condition would likely be heightened both in domestic and diplomatic arenas to unify the nation. The Japan team was seriously concerned that DPRK would attack facilities in Japan, such as US bases or critical infrastructures, to prevent foreign intervention. To this end, the DPRK could send agents to Japan or use North Korean nationals residing in Japan.

Total collapse of the DPRK is our third concern. We found no guarantee that a single party or single leader would take control of the entire country and considered that civil war was more likely. If that happened, Japan has to be concerned about refugees and humanitarian support.

Out of these concerns, the Japan team came up with a short-term action plan. In response to the WMD threat from the DPRK, Japan needs to consult and cooperate intensively with the United States. At the same time, Japan has the responsibility of defending its land and people; therefore, Japan will go on alert. We also need to enforce security of critical infrastructure, including nuclear power plants. Although Japan is limited in its ability to respond to a contingency on the Korean Peninsula by military means, that does not mean Japan plays no role. As a US ally and a key player in the region, it is in our interest and obligation to maintain peace and stability of the region. Thus, we pursued close consultations with other countries including the ROK. We even considered the possibility of trilateral operation with the United States and ROK.

With regard to refugees and humanitarian support, the Japan team put emphasis on close consultation and coordination with the international community in the UN framework. It is critical to send the message internationally and domestically that Japan takes humanitarian issues seriously and it remains aligned with the international community.

3. Convergent and Divergent Positions

Worryingly, there are more divergences than convergent points. The Japan team agreed with both the US and ROK teams that the scenario needs to be dealt through a multilateral framework, not unilateral action. Since none of the participating teams dealt with the situation unilaterally, it was necessary for the three countries to establish a new framework for actions. In addition, it is notable that none of the teams utilized the Six-Party Talks.

There were three main perception gaps among the Japan, US, and ROK teams. First, there is the perception gap over the threat posed by WMD that the DPRK possesses. While Japan was concerned about direct physical attacks – the potential use of WMD and attacks on Japan’s nuclear facilities by the DPRK – the United States was more concerned about proliferation, and the ROK did not address the topic. Although Japan is also concerned about the potential proliferation of WMDs from DPRK, in the very short-term, the DPRK’s potential use of WMD is a greater, more imminent threat. Second, the US and ROK teams thought the refugee problem was Japan’s top priority. Although the refugee problem is a Japanese concern, it is not at the top of its list, considering the fact that it will take time for North Korean refugees to reach Japan by sea. The strong assumption that Japan is always concerned about the refugee problem seemed to have created this perception gap. Third, perception gaps were also evident when it came to the worst-case scenario. While the Japan team took into account the potential for physical North Korean attacks on its mainland and expected close consultation with the United States, the United States and ROK did not consider such a case, so the importance of reassurance and the possibility of military action were not taken into account.

4. Issues Resolved and Irresolvable

Unfortunately, the only thing that was resolved, or rather reconfirmed, during the trilateral dialogue was that a contingency on the Korean Peninsula can lead to serious deterioration of the security environment. All three teams desired a peaceful and stable situation on the Korean Peninsula for their own national interest. However, the way in which the three teams defined “threat” revealed a world of difference. While the Japan team was most interested in and worried about how the scenario might influence Japan’s national security and considered WMD threats and/or attacks on Japan the primary threat, the US group viewed the incident from an international perspective and considered the transnational spread of WMD to be the primary threat, while the ROK group focused on DPRK domestic stability. A serious gap in threat perspective was obvious.

Nonetheless, there were some convergences, or at least similarities, in how to deal with the scenario. All three teams contemplated the importance of a multilateral security framework to deal with this matter. Although the membership issue was not agreed upon, this can be resolved by prior consultations among Japan, the United States and the ROK; if divergence persists, it would, for example, be possible to create multiple multilateral frameworks, and slowly assimilate them. Furthermore, United States and ROK assumptions about Japanese priorities and considerations of the worst-case scenario can be mitigated by close communication among the three countries.

Since there is a huge gap in threat perceptions among the three countries some differences would not be overcome. For example, if the United States considers the possibility of DPRK physical attacks or use of military threats against Japan to be low and that military and political pressure on the DPRK would trigger the transfer of WMD to non-state actors, especially to international terrorist groups; it might be difficult for the United States to meet all Japanese expectation.

As the three countries’ ideal situation regarding the Korean Peninsula is the same – even if threat perspectives do not perfectly align – there should be a way in which all three countries can act to reach that goal. Communication among the three countries is indispensable; they must inform each other in concrete terms why they think in particular terms. Each country must keep in mind that all countries have their own way of understanding a situation, criteria, culture, norms and principles, which other countries may not always comprehend.

5. Lessons Learned and Policy Proposals

Since they have their origins in the Korean War, the primary function of both the US-Japan alliance and the US-ROK alliance is to prevent, deter, and defeat a DPRK invasion of the ROK. Despite the lack of trilateral coordination, the gap in mutual expectations in a Korean contingency has been narrowed. However, as an implosion of the DPRK is more likely than an explosion today, there is growing gap in expectations. Overwhelming US military power has prevented large-scale military adventurism by the

DPRK, but military power cannot prevent a collapse of the DPRK. Therefore it is urgent that the three countries jointly prepare for such an implosion.

To this end, the three countries should revitalize and upgrade the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) turning it into a strategic dialogue, while promoting trilateral military cooperation. This new trilateral strategic dialogue should include both Track I and Track II levels that need to be intrinsically linked together, which helps enhance and diversify communication channels and creates a feedback system of research on such issues as contingency plans. This is necessary not only for preparing for a DPRK collapse but for other regional challenges, including the rise of China.

Republic of Korea

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Key Findings

1. South Korea does not necessarily view the leadership transition in the DPRK as a sign of North Korean regime collapse or violent chaos within the North. ROK participants place a great deal of emphasis on collecting intelligence and information on changing internal dynamics of the DPRK to correctly assess the situation first.
2. There is a divergence in how the ROK and the US interpret the scenario in terms of the transition's 'end-state.' While US participants expected the ROK to take advantage of a fluid security environment of the North's transition and to pursue unification as an immediate goal, ROK participants set aside unification as a later question, provided that a new leadership in the DPRK would seek to maintain the status quo on the Korean Peninsula.
3. There is a significant concern within the ROK about the difficulties of coordinating national interests of the surrounding powers of China, the US, and Japan on the Korean Peninsula. (Russia is considered less important.) In particular, South Korea is deeply concerned about Chinese action during the transition period. While acknowledging North Korea's foreign policy goal of emphasizing self-reliance as well as noninterference in internal affairs, there is concern that a new leadership in Pyongyang may grow more dependent on Beijing not only economically but also politically. Furthermore, if China were to dispatch troops to North Korea without invitation the ROK would feel compelled to also dispatch troops.
4. In the event of any use of military forces on the peninsula, including efforts to address a humanitarian crisis in the North, South Korea believes that it needs to take the initiative in close coordination with other players, especially the US. However, South Korea recognizes the challenges and difficulties of managing threat perceptions in such circumstances, especially those of China and Japan.
5. South Korea should enhance intelligence-sharing with the US to prepare for an effective safeguard against proliferation of Pyongyang's WMD materials. However, overall, there was no clear ROK position on how to divide labor amongst the concerned countries over the loose nukes problem in the event of a DPRK contingency.
6. There was concern among ROK participants over the Japan team's reference to the need for tightened surveillance of North Korean residents in Japan in the event of DPRK contingency. Due to the possibility of confusing South Korean and North

Korean citizenships, ROK participants feel that unhealthy diplomatic disputes could develop at this critical time, evoking nationalist sentiment in either/both countries. This leads the ROK team to reaffirm the importance of effective trilateral coordination between Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo.

7. While the US and Japan are more focused on military issues such as Pyongyang's nuclear and missile development programs, the ROK shows more concern over internal political developments both within the North and the South in the event of the leadership transition in the DPRK. ROK participants agree that the South Korean government should strive to maintain internal stability in both Koreas.
8. As allies of the US, both the ROK and Japan sensed US hesitance to exercise its prerogative to extend positive security assurances to the two states in the event of a North Korean contingency. Conversely, the US expressed its own security dilemma of possible entrapment based on the assumption that the ROK would undertake measures to induce reunification, which harks back to the discrepancy in understandings of 'end-state' between the two countries and others.
9. While the ROK identified humanitarian issues, specifically refugee migration, as a major concern, it assumed it would not be able to impede mass migrations and characterized relief efforts as establishing receiving camps in South Korea and China. As for humanitarian needs inside North Korea, the ROK team recognized the challenge of how to incorporate military components in humanitarian operations.
10. There was concern among ROK participants about Japan's desire for a strengthened and visible change in defense posture. ROK participants were concerned that such a preference might be misinterpreted by North Korea, and that demands for such US actions might cause tension in ROK-US-Japan trilateral cooperation. At the same time, ROK participants saw a need to address potential Chinese misperceptions of allied cooperation as a move counter to Chinese national interests.

The DPRK Leadership Transition Scenario

General Assessment

The Pacific Forum CSIS convened a Young Leaders Trilateral Roundtable represented by the United States, South Korea, and Japan to discuss respective country responses to a leadership transition scenario in North Korea. Kim Jong Il's death on April 14, 2010, and subsequent events apparently unfolding inside North Korea demand an international response at the political, military, and humanitarian levels. In our immediate assessment of the situation, the ROK team did not see Kim's death, reportedly from natural causes, as necessarily leading to regime collapse. DPRK leaders have rejected any potential international responses to "North Korea as a failed state," affirming that the legitimate DPRK government has the transition process under control.

The ROK team identified five priority concerns based on which to take action, including: (1) Lack of intelligence, which raises significant uncertainty regarding the real level of instability and corresponding response required; (2) Potential external intervention, including unilateral intervention by China in particular that would counter ROK interests or induce unintended conflict without the prior international diplomatic and military coordination; (3) Command and control of North Korean military forces, considering the potential for internal conflict or a military uprising within North Korea; (4) Humanitarian needs, which would require ROK capacity to handle the potential influx of DPRK refugees into the South and need coordination of international assistance, and; (5) The internal stability of both North and South Korea, which would have ramifications across all four sectors: economic, social, political, and military.

ROK Reactions

When faced with the given scenario, a lack of information and intelligence regarding the unfolding events inside North Korea would be South Korea's foremost concern. While the accuracy of intelligence and information available to the South Korean government would likely determine its action, it is a daunting task to secure reliable intelligence about internal dynamics of North Korea. Not only is the DPRK a notoriously closed society with little exchange or communication with the rest of the world, but its regime also engages in skillful propaganda campaigns, which will make it more challenging to trust any source during a contingency. Any media reports and speculation from North Korean defectors, which would often conflict with one another, will have to be verified with extra caution. Intelligence verification will be critical as any action based on misinformation on South Korea's part might aggravate the already frail inter-Korean relationship and threaten stability on the Korean Peninsula. In that unfortunate scenario, a civil war between the North and the South on the Korean Peninsula is not out of the picture.

Therefore, the first task of the ROK government is to activate all information and intelligence channels to acquire accurate assessments and analyses of the situation before taking any irrevocable steps during a North Korea contingency. South Korea must not only fully utilize its government sources and reach out to close allies and partners. In particular, effective coordination efforts with the US and China hold the key to successful intelligence gathering given that the US has the most advanced electronic intelligence gathering capacity on North Korea while China has more capacity to collect information about the regime's internal political dynamics than any other country. The US-ROK alliance, sometimes called "bonded-in-blood alliance," is expected to be instrumental in this process, while China would be more hesitant and cautious in sharing information about North Korea due to its close ties with Pyongyang.

There are areas that the ROK government should pay attention to confirm and verify the accuracy of information: the power struggle within the three factions of the Worker's Party of Korea, the military faction led by General Park, and the Kim family represented by Jang Song-taek; the original version of the succession plan after Kim Jong Il; the current situation of control and command over the general public in various parts

of the North; the location of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) including nuclear weapons, and so forth. As much as the contingency requires the ROK government to take swift and timely action, it is equally important that Seoul not take any steps based on hasty interpretation of the circumstances.

The ROK's second concern is related to potential external intervention by regional powers, which could counter ROK interests or might induce unintended conflict. Unlike Europe or America, in Northeast Asia, regional powers still foster territorial ambitions, and often publicly raise the disputes. China, as a long-time friend of North Korea and a benefactor ally under the China-North Korea Friendship Treaty, is believed to have expressed territorial interest in the Korean Peninsula (i.e., China's Northeast Project). Given such motivation, China may well execute a unilateral intervention in the name of support promised by the treaty to end instability and disorder in North Korea. Other regional powers such as the US whose primary concern is securing North Korean WMD and nuclear weapons, and Japan which is highly threatened by North Korean WMD attacks on its soil, have motivations as well as capacity to take unilateral action as preemptive measures.

This alarms Seoul because even with its enhanced and growing power in, the ROK is still limited in its influence, physically and legally, to prevent North Korean issues from being addressed without its voice being heard. Due to the Korean War Armistice which was not signed by the ROK, the ROK is in a position where it lacks legal rights to be a *de-jure* concerned party in the event of North Korea collapse. Furthermore, the military and economic strength of all other powers in the region outweigh those of the ROK, which means that it is difficult for the ROK to promote its interest, if not to assume a leadership role, in international countermeasures to respond to the North Korean situation. Therefore, the ROK views coordination with allies and partners as an essential yet highly challenging task.

The third concern is the seemingly fractured command and control (C2) mechanism in Pyongyang, which is needed for the action-plan of establishing lines of communication with the faction in power in the DPRK, upon deeming that such identification is feasible. Intuitively, there are multiple reasons to identify who is at the helm amidst disorder in North Korea and to reach out to them to: guard against unpredictability by understanding what policy may work against which actor, reduce miscalculation by securing a channel for periodic exchange; and even obtain leverage or influence by penetrating the potential leadership.

The need to keep lines of communication open is especially pressing as political power is a way of exerting control over nuclear weapons, as evidenced by the quote by General Park – in charge of the Yongbyon region – that “political power flows on the basis of who holds the nuclear trigger.” Thus, there is a further justification for identifying the faction in power: this is likely to assist in understanding the level of oversight of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and related materials (including delivery vehicles). This also helps to identify the human aspect of the nuclear

development program, which involves scientists and laborers at nuclear industrial complexes, who may be tempted to offer their services to other state or non-state actors. Incomplete intelligence about the location of weapons in the DPRK, as well as a relatively poor sense of how custodial arrangements might shift in the event of a contingency wherein central government is absent or dysfunctional, heightens the urgency in ascertaining and tapping into the volatile power structure within North Korea.

The fourth ROK concern is the possibility of a DPRK contingency creating a humanitarian crisis. The dangers are of two types: 1) direct fatalities from the violence that are more intentional and malicious in nature, such as North Koreans fleeing the country becoming victims of gunfire at border-crossings or targets of politically motivated tools of suppression given the power contestation; 2) mortality attributable to indirect causes of ongoing violence, such as severe malnutrition, health-related illnesses and pandemics, and even technological-disasters (such as hazardous material spills especially at nuclear reactor sites or a Chernobyl-type nuclear accident).

A possible escalation in violence warrants South Korea's plan to establish a special taskforce on humanitarian issues that would include obtaining assistance from international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO). An immediately apparent reason for dealing with humanitarian issues would be the potentially dire spillover effects of a humanitarian crisis for South Korea given the geographic proximity to the North. The less perceptible yet essential rationale is that the international community is typically sensitive to catastrophes that involve a large number of human fatalities (i.e., genocide). In other words, if South Korea does a poor job of dealing with the humanitarian issues regarding the DPRK contingency, future ROK actions regardless of merit or compassion could be viewed as being 'too-little-too-late,' or simply, ineffective. This is particularly crucial regarding intervention. By resorting to an international organization and making efforts along humanitarian lines, South Korea would gain legitimacy, which would bolster the perception by the international community toward the pre-intervention rationale as well as the post-intervention outcome. History has not been kind to interventions, and tackling the humanitarian dimension through an international body may create sympathy for the DPRK and its situation, and potentially undermine any future intervention into the country by another actor such as the ROK.

The fifth ROK concern in the DPRK contingency scenario is internal stability (or instability) within the two Koreas. In a sense, stability here is a comprehensive term that spans the gamut of economic, social, political, and military sectors. According to the scenario, all four sectors in North Korea are either already failing or showing signs of weakness and unpredictability: the state of the economy is evident from the shootout in Pyongsong during a raid on a storage facility; food is not being supplied to work units; there is political infighting, and; control over various facilities are unclear with some forces engaging others for power. For South Korea, economic instability would rise from volatile markets and weary investors, while the costs of dealing with spillover effects such as refugee flows will have an impact on the economy at large. Gaining a unified

consensus on action could be difficult with the lack of intelligence on how the situation is unfolding. Different groups may have dissimilar ideas about the course of action or overarching policy – it will be particularly difficult if any of those groups espouses reunification as the end-state. Soldiers will be placed on alert, especially with the looming necessity for intervention. The contingency is intrastate, but the ramifications are very much inter-state, thus, confounding the problem of internal stability.

As a response, the ROK views the role of a multilateral taskforce as indispensable. Without coordination and adequate consultation, one may run the risk of partitioning North Korea into several sectors, and undermining each other's operations. Hence, the intention behind the taskforce would be to maintain a level of stability on the Korean Peninsula without compromising the sustainability of future missions/operations. In essence, *reactions to* the instability, not just instability itself, may cause added problems, and here, coordination and consultation would help immensely.

Convergent and Divergent Positions: ROK, the United States, Japan

There was a general consensus among the participants of the ROK, the US and Japan that the three countries need to work on effective trilateral coordination, especially on North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs and humanitarian issues. However, there were at least four important divergences that deserve attention.

First, when it comes to an "end-state" of North Korea's leadership transition, the ROK team and the US team had differing assessments with regard to how much the transition may raise the possibility of reunification of the two Koreas. The US team expected that the ROK government would want to take advantage of the opportunity and pursue reunification as an immediate goal. Instead, the ROK team laid aside the issue as a later question, while recognizing the possibility that unfolding events within the North may lead to the unification of the Korean Peninsula. In the minds of South Korean participants, it is more desirable that South Korea take a gradual approach to unification by first further building its economic muscle and political capital to minimize unification costs. This is of course on the condition that a new North Korean regime remains status quo prone, and nonconfrontational. It seemed that this divergence comes from different interpretations and assessments of the situation between the two teams – while the ROK team tended to view the scenario as a continuation of a dangerous, unpredictable neighbor to the North, the US team regarded the situation more as a military contingency that requires immediate corresponding action.

Second, although all three teams acknowledged the centrality of North Korea's nuclear issue, the US team's emphasis and concerns were more focused on military aspects of the threats that the North poses – nuclear and other WMD materials. The ROK team took a more comprehensive outlook on the situation, and was more interested in political aspects and implications of North Korea's leadership transition. Accordingly, the ROK team would want to identify the newly emerging leadership in Pyongyang and its leadership style to establish communication lines with the North. In addition to military

aspects of the situation, South Korean participants tended to pay greater attention to internal political, social, and economic stability within both Koreas. This slight, and yet important divergence on emphases, requires alliance handlers in Seoul and Washington to expand areas of shared knowledge and establish a mutual understanding of North Korea's political, social, and economic systems as well as the DPRK military. Japan was similarly concerned about North Korea's nuclear capabilities above other things, but its concern was more or less limited to protecting Japanese territory and facilities.

Third, there was an important divergence between the ROK and the US with regard to the role that China might play in the North Korea contingency. South Korean participants were most concerned and wary about possible external intervention from China during the chaotic leadership transition in Pyongyang. Accordingly, the ROK team wanted to avoid situations that would lead to China's military intervention in North Korean territory and to prevent a new North Korean regime's political dependence on Beijing. The ROK team considered China a possible threat to the sovereignty of the entire Korean Peninsula. On the contrary, the US tended to think of China as a security partner and the US would ask for Chinese help in dealing with an internal North Korean situation.

Fourth Korean residents living in Japan in the event of the North Korea contingency was a possible source of diplomatic friction between South Korea and Japan. The Japanese concern that North Korean residents living in Japan might engage in activities that could undermine Japanese interests and national security during the contingency led the team to conclude that Japan would need to strengthen surveillance over North Korean residents living in Japan. The ROK team expressed concerns that there could be occasions where South Korean residents might be targeted as a result of confusion between North Korean and South Korean residents, and that that may lead to worsened public sentiment within South Korea against Japan. This is worrisome because the North Korean contingency requires tight Seoul-Washington-Tokyo cooperation, but hostile public sentiment within South Korea or Japan could hinder such cooperation.

Resolved and Irresolvable Issues

Discussion of these converging and diverging positions led to the resolution of several issues. First, ROK fears of being sidelined were addressed by the US and Japan by emphasizing close coordination and consultation on any action taken. This also addressed differences in opinion regarding China's involvement. While South Korea remained suspicious of Chinese intentions, it was reassured that any US cooperation with China would only be pursued after ROK consultation. Despite differing views on specific issues like the "end state" of North Korea, China's role, and the question of residents living in Japan, basic agreement on the principle of close coordination and consultation should provide a good platform for each party to adjust policies without alienating any one party in the process. This will increase the level of confidence among allies and partners, while mitigating uncertainty toward another's intentions.

Second, US concern of a possible ROK desire to hastily intervene and dispatch troops to North Korea was also alleviated. ROK participants are aware of the importance of consultation with the US and the risk that such unilateral intervention will cause to the ROK-US alliance. Given the complicated military structure where US Forces Korea and the ROK Forces are tightly combined in the chain of command, along with military personnel under the UN flag, the unilateral movement of ROK forces is bound to damage the spirit of the ROK-US alliance. South Korea has a desire to handle the affairs of the Korean Peninsula independently in the long run, but this does not mean that South Korea will act unilaterally in the short term. On the contrary, given the complexity of regional geopolitical dynamics, South Korea would need assistance from and close consultation with the US, while acknowledging that Japan's contribution is indispensable in the event of the use of force during the North Korea contingency. The resolution of these fears will create more confidence in the ROK-US alliance.

What remained unresolved was the way each country interpreted the scenario. The differences in the assessments of the scenario, while not necessarily conflicting, led each country to differ in their prioritization of actions. The inability to resolve this difference is significant because even if both sides might agree to certain action-plans, if they cannot agree on what the situation is, they will not agree on which action-plans to endorse. For example, while both Seoul and Washington acknowledged and supported the ROK proposal for increased intelligence collection and sharing, as well as the US proposal for a collective effort to impede weapons proliferation, they could not agree which action should be given a priority.

Another unresolved issue was how the ROK and the US might address Japanese fears of security threats from North Korea. ROK participants were concerned that the enhanced military posture that Japan sought might be misinterpreted by North Korea, escalating tension on the Korean Peninsula. The ROK participants saw a typical security dilemma-type situation where a defensive move by Japan's Self-Defense Forces against a rising North Korean threat might lead to North Korean and Chinese fears of Japanese rearmament, reducing the net security of Japan as well as China and North Korea. The ROK will be put in a difficult position, stuck between fear of Japanese rearmament *and* the need to strengthen security cooperation with Japan in the event of a contingency in North Korea. The US will face a similar problem in terms of how to position itself between its two allies, Seoul and Tokyo. But it is a challenge that the US government will face more acutely during the North Korean contingency as it decides the extent to which Japan should rearm to support any military situation on the Korean Peninsula.

It will be difficult to resolve the Japanese need and South Korean concern over Japan's proposed surveillance of Korean residents in Japan without considerable prior coordination between Seoul and Tokyo. An inability to address the issue could potentially become a source of great concern as trilateral cooperation is critical in this situation. Nationalism in Northeast Asia is a powerful force. Any ethnic friction between Korean residents and the Japanese locals in Japan may not be contained as "local," but could trigger a fierce nationalism movement against the other between the two countries.

This concern is hard to resolve at the diplomatic level because the challenge ultimately raises questions about the willingness of the political leadership in both countries to motivate and move public opinion. Crudely put, can it transcend the Nationalist-Populist impulse?

Lessons Learned

1. *Criteria for intervention.* The trilateral presentation of respective responses did not include discussion of specific thresholds, conditions, or criteria for intervention. One major trigger for external intervention, including Chinese intervention, is DPRK request, which was absent in this scenario. Similarly, there was little discussion of the mechanisms by which intervention is possible. Only China's military treaty with the DPRK was recognized as a basis for possible Chinese intervention. The status of inter-Korean agreements that would justify ROK intervention, as well as the existing legal framework for foreign intervention, remained unclear. One possible means of international intervention would be through the UN framework under its "responsibility to protect."
2. *The assumption of assurances.* A certain level of insecurity was sensed among all groups regarding understandings of security assurances. The US team did not mention the need to provide strategic assurance to South Korea, and in what form, such as verbally or through specific actions, and instead appeared concerned about potential unilateral ROK intervention or ROK intervention without sufficient consultation with the United States, and thereby being implicated in an unwanted war. There was a strong sense of Japanese insecurity regarding US assurance while South Koreans clearly wanted Chinese assurance of "nonintervention."
3. *Coordinating lead roles.* Despite the consensus that South Korea would need to take the initiative in responding to a DPRK contingency, there was a lack of understanding regarding which country would lead specific military, diplomatic, humanitarian priorities. While the US team expected South Korea would demand a leading military role, ROK participants focused more on coordination with other players. Adding to this discrepancy was the gap in perceived priorities: the US team expected South Korea to pursue unification as an immediate objective while ROK participants laid aside the unification question as a longer-term matter.
4. *The nuclear issue and South Korea's role.* Securing "loose nukes" was discussed but not listed as a priority concern for the ROK despite the immediate and potentially biggest threat to the South. The responsibility of securing WMD was assumed to fall primarily to the United States and China.
5. *US-ROK convergence.* There was a notable convergence in the US and ROK priorities in responding to this scenario (with differences in the specific order or nature of priority as noted above). This general consensus suggests positive practical

implications in implementing a joint response, but also requires coordination with other partners.

6. *Coordinating with China vs. the allies:* There was a strong US-ROK-Japan consensus on the need for trilateral coordination, focusing primarily on the nuclear issue rather than any allied effort to contain China – despite common concerns about Chinese intervention. It was noted that China would be concerned about the need to take immediate action unilaterally (e.g., to prevent a humanitarian crisis, protect Chinese internal security interests) without drawing concern from other parties. These potential misperceptions raise the risk of unintended conflict.
7. *Humanitarian intervention.* While humanitarian issues were identified by all groups as a priority, there was little assessment of specific needs, including the need to consider the “CNN effect” and the international public context of a potential DPRK crisis, the need to distinguish humanitarian operations inside and outside DPRK borders, and the need to integrate military intervention and humanitarian efforts.
8. *DPRK leadership transition.* No team could clearly identify a preferred individual to succeed Kim Jong-Il. This suggests a need to better understand the North’s internal institutional framework. There was a lack of consensus on the preferred end-state of Korea, even among South Koreans, regarding a unification process through absorption by the South or through DPRK collapse.

Recommendations

1. All parties should establish mutually agreed, common criteria for intervention in the event of a sudden crisis in North Korea. This basic framework would reconcile existing bilateral and international mechanisms for intervention, and provide the basis for coordinating an immediate international response.
2. The parties should strengthen intelligence-sharing and develop a common set of indicators or signals of instability inside North Korea (e.g., unusual troop movements, activities of key leaders, policy measures). There is a need to distinguish between military and non military indicators of instability, and to consider policy actions taken to prevent instability vs. actual instability.
3. All parties should establish a common vision for the end-state of Korea, including the process of reaching that end-state. This common objective for Korea’s future should determine respective actions in a DPRK contingency scenario.
4. All parties should establish a clear understanding of respective priorities and roles in responding to DPRK instability. Based on this understanding, a division of labor can be established to develop a coordinated response.

5. There should be a clear understanding by each party of the specific conditions under which it would allow external intervention. For example, China might only accept intervention within a UN framework, but may consider situations in which US-ROK-led intervention could be acceptable, such as the effort to secure WMD. South Korea could consider Chinese interventions to prevent a refugee crisis along the Sino-DPRK border.
6. To coordinate with China, the United States and South Korea should begin with specific common concerns such as the practical issues of humanitarian assistance, to build trust conducive to further consultation.
7. There is a need for inter-agency coordination to integrate diplomatic/political, military, and humanitarian responses, as well as short-term and long-term measures for stabilization.
8. The parties should establish a clear understanding of all leadership transition scenarios in the North including regime continuity through collective leadership, one-party rule, etc. While regime collapse and corresponding responses should be considered, it should not be assumed. In the event of regime collapse, the parties should consider mutually acceptable transition mechanisms, e.g. a DPRK transitional government under UN auspices.

United States

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Key Findings

1. The United States and South Korea need to hammer out criteria for intervention in North Korea, particular in response to Chinese entry there.
2. China's criteria for intervening in North Korea remain a key known unknown. The United States and South Korea should try to draw out China's criteria, particularly if regime collapse in North Korea appears likely.
3. South Korea exhibited less inclination to intervene unilaterally in a destabilized North Korea than the US team initially expected.
4. The US and South Korea should determine under what conditions they would deploy military forces inside North Korea to secure weapons of mass destruction.
5. If North Korea appears heading toward a collapse, the United States will have to make special efforts to reassure South Korea and Japan.
6. If South Korea is uninterested in rapid reunification, what "bridging regime" should replace the current one in North Korea? Group discussions provided no clarity.
7. The US, South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia need to work out a blueprint for providing humanitarian aid before the onset of a North Korea regime crisis.
8. Efforts to provide humanitarian relief through establishing refugee corridors may conflict with US nonproliferation objectives. The United States needs to focus on whether these objectives conflict, and if so, what the appropriate balance should be between humanitarian and security concerns.
9. During the trilateral exercise, Japan's threat perceptions differed markedly from those of the United States and South Korea. This will complicate efforts to coordinate trilaterally and require extra reassurance on the part of the United States.
10. Although China was not represented in the trilateral exercises, its influence was keenly felt. In managing a North Korean regime collapse, China will have superior information to any of the other players and in many ways greater leverage over whatever actors exercise political authority in North Korea.

A US After Action Report

On April 28, 2010, Young Leaders from the United States, Japan, and South Korea convened for an exercise simulating a trilateral response to domestic instability in North Korea. At the outset of the exercise, the US team ranked the top threats emanating from a weakened regime in Pyongyang. These threats, in order of significance, were the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) beyond North Korea's borders; the uncoordinated movement of outside military forces into North Korea; the advent of a new regime in Pyongyang dominated by unstable or confrontational elements; North Korea's loss of internal command and control over its WMD stockpile; and a lack of capacity to feed, house, and process North Korean refugees.

Having identified these threats, the US team developed a set of objectives that would govern its response to a fragmenting North Korea. These objectives included controlling the outflow of goods and people from North Korea, preventing unilateral military intervention in North Korea by any outside power, placing the Worker's Party in control of a stabilized North Korean regime; maximizing real-time intelligence on the location of WMD stockpiles within North Korea, and providing humanitarian relief.

Discussion with the Japanese and South Korean teams revealed a fair amount of convergence in approaches, but some surprising divergences as well. All sides believed that uncoordinated deployment of military forces into North Korea by any outside party would be undesirable. All sides favored restoring stability over a policy of accelerating regime change. And all sides listed WMD proliferation and humanitarian crises as items of concern. These commonalities aside, what struck the US team was a number of glaring differences that emerged during our discussion. While the US team read this scenario as one of impending regime collapse, the South Korean and Japanese teams did not. The three teams also diverged over who should govern North Korea; the US team favored the Worker's Party, whereas the other teams had undefined preferences. Perhaps most striking was that Japan was odd man out when it came to threat perceptions. The Japanese team identified a North Korean attack using missiles or Special Forces as an immediate threat; the US team did not perceive Japan's security situation as so dire; and South Korea, though sharing a land border with the North, dismissed the possibility of a military conflict with its neighbor.

During the discussion, only one area of disagreement was resolved. Due to poor communication at the outset, the South Korean team feared that the United States might intervene militarily in North Korea without prior consultation. This was never the US team's intentions, and easily clarified. Several items of contention were irresolvable. The three teams could not agree on who should govern North Korea. Nor did they come up with criteria for intervening in North Korea, either in response to a Chinese incursion, or in response to a humanitarian crisis. However, this more reflected time constraints and little thought on this issue than a real trilateral disagreement.

This exercise produced a number of lessons learned. One of the most important was that the United States and South Korea need to establish criteria for intervention in North Korea well before an actual contingency arises. Another takeaway was the uncertainty surrounding Chinese intentions if the Kim regime appears likely to collapse. A third lesson learned was the importance of reassuring US allies. During the exercise, devising a system to handle refugee outflows was particularly vexing. The lesson learned: the United States, South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia should begin now to work out a blueprint for carrying out humanitarian relief.

Lastly, the trilateral exercise raised several unanswered questions. Can the United States simultaneously prevent proliferation of WMD beyond North Korea's borders yet allow for outflows of refugees? And should the United States and South Korea utilize Special Forces to secure WMD inside North Korea even if this risks triggering a military conflict or drawing Chinese forces across the Yalu River?

Ranking Threats

At the beginning of the exercise, participants from South Korea, Japan, and the US were tasked with ranking the threats posed by a crumbling North Korean regime.

The US team deemed WMD proliferation beyond North Korea's border as the most serious threat. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review established preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism as a key US objective. Considering the North's proliferation record, and some of its unsavory trading partners, leakage of WMD and related materials from North Korea would have a deeply detrimental impact on US security interests.

Uncoordinated movement of outside military into North Korea was a close second among US security concerns. US participants believed that without close coordination and communication among the United States, South Korea, and China, unilateral military intervention in North Korea could lead to inadvertent confrontation and unintended escalation of the situation.

The emergence of a new regime in Pyongyang led by confrontational or unstable elements was also judged a serious threat to US security interests. US participants did not see a real opportunity or likelihood of a "friendly" or pro-US regime gaining traction within North Korea. However, there was hope that stability on the Korean Peninsula could be restored through a legitimate transition of power and, ideally, a comparatively moderate government in Pyongyang.

North Korea's loss of command and control over its WMD stockpile elicited sharp concern among US participants. Unusual troop movements, General Park's military command forming a defensive perimeter around the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center, and reports of gunfire exchanges between different elements of the

North Korean military, all appeared to signal the potential for a breakdown of command and control over the regime's WMD.

North Korea's loss of command and control over its WMD would deprive the United States of whatever intelligence it possesses and complicate efforts to restore stability.

While it was lowest on the list of threats, a lack of collective capacity to feed, house, and process North Korean refugees was a key concern for US participants. The scenario presented a rapidly growing number of refugees fleeing the North via the Chinese and South Korean borders as well as by sea. Providing humanitarian aid outside North Korea would require not only extensive coordination among the United States, South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia, but also a significant amount of human and financial resources to properly address the situation. Also, because of proliferation concerns, there would be an additional need to process refugees to ensure they were not transporting WMD or related materials.

Objectives and Action Plans

The US team's first objective in this scenario was to control all outflows from North Korea. To meet this objective, we proposed working with South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia by dividing the area around North Korea into geographic sectors of responsibility. Each of these countries would aid refugees coming through their sectors and capture WMD and related material as it departed North Korea. The United States would provide technical support to these countries, including radiation detectors which would help to prevent the smuggling of nuclear material. Lastly, the United States would monitor all air traffic leaving North Korea and coordinate a response.

Our second objective was to prevent the uncoordinated movement of outside military forces into North Korea. The US team planned to establish a military coordination mechanism encompassing the United States, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United Nations. This would occur in stages, with the United States first establishing bilateral lines of communication with South Korea, Japan, and China. Next, South Korea would take the lead in setting up a trilateral coordination mechanism with the United States and Japan. Once this was functioning effectively, China would be invited to participate in a four-way dialogue designed to coordinate military planning. Lastly, the dialogue would expand to include Russia and a representative from the UN.

The US team's third objective was to ensure that the Worker's Party of Korea emerged as the ruling force in Pyongyang. This objective was premised on the US team's belief that of the various elements inside North Korea, the Worker's Party would view the United States with the least degree of hostility. To promote an outcome whereby the Worker's Party succeeded in taking the reins of power in Pyongyang, the United States would confidentially convey to China, South Korea, and Russia that it would not oppose

actions short of military intervention that would support the Worker's Party in the ensuing struggle for power inside North Korea.

Our fourth objective was to optimize US intelligence on WMD materials and personnel within North Korea. This would offset the loss of current intelligence on North Korea's WMD stockpile that would occur as the regime's command and control broke down. To obtain additional intelligence on the location of North Korea's WMD, the US would approach China and Russia, and step up intelligence sharing with South Korea and Japan.

The US team's final objective was to provide humanitarian relief to North Korean refugees. Working with South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia, the United States would support the creation of refugee processing centers in each of their sectors. This would enable the international community to feed and house North Korean refugees while also preventing outflows of WMD.

Trilateral Discussion: Convergence and Divergence

The trilateral discussion that followed the initial stage of the scenario exercise revealed notable commonalities among the teams in their response to the crisis. These convergences reflected each country's interest in containing the crisis, preventing an escalation of tensions and potential military conflict, and restoring a stable regime in Pyongyang

First, there was a unanimous consensus that a unilateral intervention in North Korea by any outside power would be undesirable, and that the intervention, if inevitable or necessary, would have to be coordinated by all concerned parties. Under the scenario, North Korea was a contested environment where any unilateral military intervention would be perceived as a serious concern by other actors, who might enter North Korea in response. All three teams thus agreed to refrain from entering North Korea without coordination. Moreover, they concurred on one factor that would compel intervention: the unilateral movement of the People's Liberation Army into North Korea. Beyond this, criteria for intervention in North Korea were not discussed in detail.

Second, all three countries identified North Korea's WMD as a grave threat to their security and listed it as one of their top five threats. For geographical reasons, direct WMD attacks were more of an immediate concern to Japanese and Koreans than WMD proliferation, which was the top US concern. All countries concurred that their broader security interests depended on securing and safeguarding North Korean nuclear weapons and materials from falling into the wrong hands. Since even a minor incident involving North Korea's WMD could jeopardize regional and global security, all teams believed that a concerted effort was necessary to address this common security challenge.

Third, a humanitarian crisis including refugee outflows was a shared concern of discussants. Although the issue was given relatively less weight than others, lack of

capacity to feed, house, and process refugees was viewed as a common dilemma. Discussants recognized the need to coordinate a humanitarian response with China.

Fourth, every team gave priority to restoring stability in North Korea vs. accelerating regime collapse. Military intervention to topple the already tottering regime in Pyongyang was ruled out because of the anticipated negative reaction from China. For South Korea and Japan in particular, regime collapse threatened massive refugee inflows and considerable financial costs. Consequently, the United States, South Korea, and Japan were inclined to manage the situation in North Korea rather than to exert more pressure in order to bring about full-blown regime collapse.

These commonalities aside, a number of differences in threat perceptions and priorities emerged during the course of discussion.

First, the potential advent of a new regime in Pyongyang exposed divergence among the three teams. The US and South Korean teams disagreed over whether North Korea was on the verge of collapse. The US team saw a regime hurtling toward complete disintegration, while the South Korean regime considered this development unlikely in the near term. Nor did the two teams fully agree on how to influence the political direction of North Korea. The South Korean team criticized such efforts as unwarranted, saying that the scenario as outlined offered no evidence for the necessity or possibility of shaping the regime. The US team thought otherwise.

Second, differences were apparent in how the three parties perceived the threat posed by North Korean WMD. Preventing outflows of WMD and related materials from North Korea was the foremost US concern. Yet the South Korean team perceived this as a mid-level threat. Furthermore, the South Korean team packaged the WMD threat in terms more broadly related to command and control of the Korean People's Army. Proliferation, averred the South Korean team, was not an immediate threat, but rather a concern only in the long term.

The Japanese team ranked the threat posed by North Korea's WMD as their foremost concern. But the danger emanating from North Korea's WMD was in Japanese eyes, not immediately related to proliferation: their primary threat was the potential use of WMD against Japanese territory in a North Korean effort to deter foreign intervention. The US and South Korean teams regarded a deliberate WMD attack as unlikely.

A third area of trilateral divergence stemmed from the coordination, planning, and implementation of a military response to the scenario. Both the South Korean and Japanese teams expressed that within the context of the scenario, they would like the United States to reassure them of its extended deterrence. Some Japanese participants expressed the need for deployment of US troops to the region. This was challenged by some South Korean participants, who worried that US military maneuvers would unnerve China and escalate the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The US team had not emphasized reassurance of allies when formulating a response to the scenario. Instead, we were primarily focused on escalation control. US participants unanimously agreed on the importance of dialogue with China. Such dialogue would arouse sensitivities in Japan and South Korea. For that reason, some US participants argued that Japan in particular would have to be notified of US-China conversations only where necessary.

Trilateral Discussion: Outcomes

The discussion highlighted the difference and the lack of coordination between the United States, South Korea, and Japan. Some issues were resolved, but others persisted. Both the US and South Korean teams were concerned that the other would favor unilateral military intervention in North Korea. The South Korean team worried the United States would act without prior consultation. The US team was anxious that South Korea would disregard US requests and enter North Korea risking another war on the peninsula. Such concerns ultimately reflected miscommunication. In fact, the South Korean team was not interested in reunifying the peninsula. They recognized that reunification would require tremendous resources to reconstruct North Korea and assimilate its economy and population. At this stage, the South Korean team was more concerned about maintaining stability. This paved the way for agreement between the US and South Korean teams on the need to avoid unilateral intervention in North Korea. The two teams also concurred that South Korea should lead any multilateral group tasked with restoring stability on the peninsula.

Although the US and South Korean teams were able to resolve some points of friction, other trilateral differences remained unresolved. While the US team preferred an outcome whereby the Korean Worker's Party and Kim Yong Nam took power in Pyongyang, our South Korean and Japanese counterparts initially lacked clear preferences for a future North Korean regime.

As the discussion progressed, the South Korean team submitted that in the event of a collapse, a successor regime would ideally be non-confrontational. The US and South Korean teams eventually agreed that a regime dominated by the Worker's Party would be the most accommodating. However, the South Korean team remained concerned that such a regime would be overly influenced by China, a concern the American team did not entirely share.

The Japanese team never explicitly identified what regime in Pyongyang it favored. Rather than focusing on regime succession, Japanese counterparts were more concerned by the prospect of a North Korean WMD attack on their soil. They wanted more security assurances from the United States, and mentioned additional deployments of US troops and BMD assets as one potential measure.

No agreement was achieved on criteria for intervening in North Korea. None of the teams came to the discussion with specific criteria hammered out. The US team was

probably more inclined to intervene than South Korean and Japanese counterparts, particularly if China unilaterally entered North Korea. When and how China might intervene in North Korea was unknown.

The degree to which the United States, South Korea, and Japan should intervene to prevent a humanitarian crisis was also ill-defined. The three teams discussed humanitarian assistance for refugees, but during a crisis, the most effective avenue for delivering food supplies would be to directly supply the population inside North Korea. Whether such assistance would be provided, and under what framework, was never specified.

Lessons Learned

This exercised produced a number of lessons learned:

- *Establish US and South Korean criteria for intervention.* The United States needs to work closely with South Korea, as well as our other allies and partners in the region, to establish detailed contingency plans for a wide range of possible incidents in North Korea that could lead to instability and the possibility of military intervention. While both the United States and South Korea agree in principle that military intervention is not a desirable option, we recognize a divergence in priorities and perspectives in the event of instability on the peninsula. To ease concerns and prevent misunderstandings, Seoul and Washington need to clearly define what events could trigger military intervention into North Korea, as well as reach a consensus on the expected roles of South Korean and American forces were a crisis to develop. This action plan needs to be shared with Japan and China, with discussion on what role US Forces Japan would play were such a situation to arise as well as if and how coordination with China is possible.
- *Determine Chinese criteria for intervention.* While joint contingency planning with China is preferable, Beijing is unlikely to share its criteria for intervention. The Chinese position is that any such dialogue is premature, as there is no indication of abnormal conditions in Pyongyang. However, if North Korea appeared headed toward a collapse, China might be more amenable to doing so. The United States and South Korea should press China on the need for functional cooperation in the event of regime instability, and mil-mil discussions with China should focus on determining common criteria for intervention in North Korea. A detailed US-ROK contingency plan should be jointly presented to China, clearly indicating the reaction of the United States and South Korea to PLA intervention, and mil-to-mil dialog should be pursued with Beijing to persuade all parties of the need to avoid intervention and escalation in the event of a crisis. While Beijing refuses to jointly discuss contingency planning, there are indications that China has considered its role in a crisis, and is wary that Washington and Seoul would misunderstand its intentions if PLA troops were used to restore order in North

Korea. While the Koreans have given no specific criteria for ROK intervention, we are concerned that Chinese troops crossing into North Korea could set in motion ROK military intervention that could, at best, create an atmosphere of competition that would be unproductive for securing peninsular stability and, at worst, could lead to unintended escalation of ROK and USFK clashes with the PLA.

- *Reassure US allies.* When responding to a regime crisis in North Korea, the United States will need to focus on reassuring its allies. Alliance managers from the State and Defense Departments should be included in the interagency task force responsible for managing events unfolding on the Korean Peninsula.
- *Develop a blueprint for humanitarian relief.* In the event of a weakened North Korean regime, humanitarian assistance was a top concern for the United States. North Korean refugees would try to seek shelter through Chinese and South Korean borders and the region would be overwhelmed with media attention. The United States, South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia need to develop an aid plan to address a possible humanitarian crisis. Aid should be coordinated among the five countries through agreed sectors of responsibility, both geographically and operationally. Each country would be committed to providing aid and assistance, as they are financially and logistically capable. Verification measures would have to be set in place so that the possibility of money laundering, human trafficking, and other human rights violations are not overlooked in the process of providing support. An oversight committee with representatives from each of the five countries would be required to maintain a transparent aid and assistance plan. A media plan would also need to be strategically executed so that efforts to provide humanitarian relief to North Korea would not undermine US nonproliferation objectives.
- *Whither reunification.* The ROK team did not consider the idea of reunification to be a pressing issue in the event of an unraveling North Korean regime. Our South Korean counterparts expressed the view that reunification would be premature given the vast economic disparities between the two countries. For the US team, reunification was viewed as a positive policy, as US security interests in the region would benefit from a single country on the Korean Peninsula governed from Seoul. The exercise revealed a more cautious ROK on the issue of reunification which begs the question of when would be the appropriate time and circumstance to address reunification.
- *Securing WMD inside North Korea.* While both South Korea and China appear (initially) unwilling to intervene militarily to establish stability in the event of a crisis in North Korea, the discussion shied away from whether any parties were planning to utilize Special Forces to secure WMD inside North Korea. As a key issue in US foreign and security policy, the prevention of proliferation merits greater attention. During the 2010 annual joint ROK-USFK training exercises, US

and South Korean troops practiced just such a contingency plan, with a joint Special Forces unit under USFK control simulating an incursion into the North to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials. Understanding that other countries in the region share concerns over possible proliferation, the criteria warranting such military action need to be identified separately from those issues that would be cause for intervention for the sake of stability, and these, too, should be presented to China in an attempt to coordinate efforts and avoid unnecessary conflict. The United States needs to clearly present to South Korea and Japan the conditions under which we feel militant forces should be used to secure WMD, and specifically what forces we would employ. As a part of the nonproliferation efforts in the event of instability, we should also recognize the potential threat emanating from a loss of positive intelligence regarding the location or management of weapons and material, even if there is no intelligence indicating an attempt to move materials outside the country. To best manage tracking of these weapons and materials, the United States, Japan, and South Korea should bolster intelligence-sharing and, to whatever extent possible, engage China, Russia and the rest of the international intelligence community to share intelligence and practices.

Appendix A

About the Authors

Mr. Joshua Archer is a MA candidate in international policy studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Joshua's concentration is international security and nonproliferation. His research interests include Japan security policy, US-Japan alliance, and Northeast Asia political and military relations. Joshua also works as a graduate research assistant at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, focusing on Taiwan military capabilities and contributing to the maintenance of the Nuclear Threat Initiative website. Joshua will receive his MA in international policy studies in May 2010, in addition to a Certificate in Japanese Language Studies and the Institute's prestigious Certificate of Nonproliferation Studies. He holds a BA with distinction in Asian studies, and in Japanese languages and literatures from Purdue University.

Ms. Brittany Billingsley is a 2010 visiting Monterey Fellow at the Pacific Forum CSIS. She is pursuing an MA in international policy studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, specializing in Asia studies and focusing on Chinese security. She spent a semester abroad at the Beijing Foreign Studies University and received a BA in East Asian studies from the Pennsylvania State University with a minor in political science and Chinese language. Brittany has interned twice with the US Department of State: at the Foreign Service Institute in 2006, and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation in the Regional Affairs office in 2009. Her research interests include Chinese domestic policy, Chinese security issues and US-China relations, in addition to China-India-Pakistan relations, nonproliferation and nuclear issues.

Ms. Jiun Bang is an associate at the Center for Security and Strategy at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA), a government-affiliated defense think tank based in Seoul. She is also the assistant editor of the Korean Journal of Defense Analysis (KJDA), a SSCI-registered journal on security issues. She is also juggling her part-time research position at the Institute for Development and Human Security (IDHS) at her alma mater, Ewha Womans University in Seoul. She received her MA degree from the Security Studies Program (SSP) at Georgetown University, where she took most of her courses on non/counter-proliferation of NBC weapons. Her current passion lies in the security issues enveloping Northeast Asia, as well as those pertaining to nuclear weapons.

Ms. See-Won Byun is a research associate with the Center for US-Korea Policy at The Asia Foundation in Washington. Previously, she did research for the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic & International Studies and provided program support to the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at The Brookings Institution. She was a Brent Scowcroft Award Fellow of the Aspen Institute's Aspen Strategy Group foreign policy program in spring 2007. In Korea, Ms. Byun was a Program Officer for UN-university exchanges and served as Editorial Assistant at the Institute of East & West

Studies. She co-writes the China-Korea section of *Comparative Connections*, a quarterly publication of Pacific Forum CSIS. Ms. Byun received a BA in economics from Brown University, an MA in Chinese area studies from Yonsei University, and an MA in international affairs from The George Washington University. She studied international politics at Peking University in Beijing and is proficient in Chinese and Korean.

Mr. Sungmin Cho is studying toward an MA degree in international relations at Peking University. He received his BA in political science and international relations at Korea University. He spent one year as an exchange student at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada in 2003-2004. Upon graduating in 2005, Mr. Cho joined the Republic of Korea Army in the position of intelligence officer. Serving three years, including a seven-month tour to Iraq in 2006, he finished his military duty in 2008. Currently, he is an intern at the Beijing office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and is working on his dissertation with a focus on the North Korean nuclear issue and its impact on Sino-US relations.

Lt. Seukhoon Paul Choi is a lecturer at the Korea Military Academy. He received his MA in international cooperation from Seoul National University, and was commissioned an officer in the ROK Army. He received his BA in philosophy, politics and economics from the University of Pennsylvania. His research interests include alliances, the role of non-state actors in domestic and international policy, as well as technology in politics.

Mr. Mark Garnick is a Monterey Fellow at the Pacific Forum CSIS. He is pursuing his MA in international policy studies with a concentration in East Asia studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He is also apart of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, East Asia Nonproliferation Department where he researched China's Aerospace industry, and China's military modernizations. He holds a BA in International Relations from California State University Sacramento.

Ms. Ellen Kim is a research associate for the Korea Chair at CSIS. Prior to joining CSIS, she worked at Kim & Chang law firm and Edelman Public Relations in South Korea. She holds a BA in international relations and Japanese studies from Wellesley College and an MPP from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She spent less than a year in Japan for her summer language program at International Christian University and study abroad program at Waseda University. Upon graduation from Wellesley College, she was selected the winner of Japanese essay prize.

Mr. Daniel Kliman is a PhD candidate in politics at Princeton University writing a dissertation on how democracies cope with rising powers. He is the author of *Japan's Security Strategy in the Post-9/11 World: Embracing a New Realpolitik*. Before entering Princeton, Daniel was a Fulbright Fellow at Kyoto University. He has worked as an adjunct researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses, and has held positions at the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the US Embassy in Tokyo, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. Kei Koga from Japan, is a 2009 Vasey fellow and a PhD candidate in international relations at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. His research interests include international relations theory, international security, terrorism, East Asian regionalism, US-Japan relations and ASEAN. Before attending Fletcher, he served as a research fellow at the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) and as assistant executive secretary at the Council on East Asian Community (CEAC). He teaches international relations and East Asian security at the Open University of Japan. He received an MA in international affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, and a BA in international affairs at Lewis & Clark College.

Ms. Makiko Kohatsu is a senior staff at the Military Base Affairs Division of Okinawa Prefectural Government. Currently, she serves as a liaison between the Government of Japan and local Okinawan municipalities relating to port calls by US nuclear submarines, as well as training and exercises conducted by the US Forces within the Prefecture. Before assuming this position, Makiko worked at the Reversion Affairs Division of the Government and was in charge of translating relevant documents and similar tasks. She received her BS from the International Christian University.

Mr. Tetsuo Kotani is a PhD candidate at Doshisha University and research fellow at the Ocean Policy Research Foundation. His dissertation focus is on the strategic implications of homeporting US carriers in Japan. His other research interests include US-Japan relations, international relations in the Asia-Pacific region and maritime security. He is a member of the International Advisory Council, Project 2049 Institute, and the Book Review Editor of the Journal of Indian Ocean Region. He was a visiting fellow at the US-Japan Center at Vanderbilt University. He received a security studies fellowship at Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS), 2006-2008. He won the 2003 Japanese Defense Minister Prize.

Dr. Ji-Young Lee is a visiting assistant professor of politics and East Asian studies and Mellon postdoctoral fellow at Oberlin College. She received her MA in Security Studies (2004) and PhD in international relations (2009) at Georgetown University. Her research and teaching interests include East Asian security, International Political Economy, and International Relations theory. She previously worked for the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, Seoul, Korea while she was completing her MA at Seoul National University, and was an East-West Center POSCO Visiting Fellow.

Mr. Ross Matzkin-Bridger is a graduate student at Georgetown University and a Program Assistant for the Office of the Korea Chair at CSIS. At Georgetown, he is entering his final semester in the Master of Science in Foreign Service program. He has a BA in Asian studies from George Washington University. Ross first lived in Wakayama, Japan for a year in high school. As an undergraduate, he studied at Kyoto University. Additionally, Ross spent a year abroad in Mongolia on a grant from the Freeman Asia Foundation. Upon graduating from GWU, he took a job as a translator and international relations coordinator for a mid-sized municipality outside Kyoto. Ross worked as an

intern at the US Embassy in Tokyo and participated in a 10-day policy oriented fellowship sponsored by the Japan Foundation. After graduating, he will work at the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration in the Office of Asian Threat Reduction.

Ms. Aki Mori is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Doshisha University, and concurrently a research fellow at the Ocean Policy Research Foundation. Her research interest is China's security policy which has two approaches: international cooperation and building military capability to support self-help in China, the US-China relations and its strategic implication for Japan, and maritime security. Her latest work is on Chinese realpolitik with law enforcement in maritime domain and its over flight, which was published by the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA). Ms. Mori studied US-China relations from a Chinese perspective at the School of International Studies in Renmin University of China during 2007-2008. She received a BA from Waseda University and an MA from Doshisha University.

Ms. Wakana Mukai is a PhD candidate in International Politics at the University of Tokyo in Japan and is also a research fellow at the Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Nonproliferation, Japan Institute of International Affairs. She specializes in nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation issues as well as South Asian issues, especially views from Pakistan. She received her BA in Language and Area Studies from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and her MPP from the School of Public Policy at the University of Tokyo.

Ms. Naoko Noro is a research fellow at the Research Institute of Science and Technology for Society, Japan Science and Technology Agency (RISTEX/JST), Tokyo. Her research interests include East Asian security, counter-terrorism, US-Japan security relationship, science and technology, and foreign policies. Before joining RISTEX, Ms. Noro was an associate research fellow at Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc. She was responsible for coordinating international conferences, such as the Network of East Asian Think-Tank (NEAT) and US-Japan Dialogue on Asian Security. She managed research projects, such as Japan-European Cooperation on Security Issues and Japan-China Relationship on Energy, Environmental Issues. Ms. Noro earned a BA in political science at Hunter College of the City University of New York, and an MA in security policy studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. In Washington, Ms. Noro worked as an intern at the Japan Chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and as a Program Assistant at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA.

Ms. Yeun Kyung Park is a foreign affairs coordinator at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, and a MA candidate studying international peace and security at Korea University Graduate School of International Studies. Previously, she studied at Boston University where she earned her BA in international relations specializing in international systems and world order. Her minor was in French language and literature. She completed Boston University's intensive French program at Université Stendhal in 2003

and a summer internship program at the US House of Representatives in Washington in 2003. Her major fields of interest are East Asian studies, especially East Asian multilateralism, North East Asian security with a focus on the role of US alliances, and ROK-US relations.

Mr. Junbeom Pyon is the founder and a consultant at INP Consulting Group. He was an analyst at SEC Research Institute under the Ministry of National Defense in Korea. He has a MA in Government and BA in international studies from Johns Hopkins University and did graduate studies at Waseda University. Mr. Pyon was the 2006-2007 Vasey Fellow at the Pacific Forum CSIS and has worked at the UN Headquarters, the Brookings Institution, and KIDA.

Dr. Kevin Shepard is a Kelly Fellow at the Pacific Forum CSIS. He is also a research fellow with the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University and recently earned his PhD in North Korean Politics and Unification Policies from Kyungnam University, Graduate School of North Korean Studies. He holds an MA in International Policy Studies from Sydney University and an MA in Korean from the University of Hawaii. He has published in *The Dynamics of Change in North Korea* (Kyungnam University: 2009), and contributed to the upcoming publication based on the projects “Roadmap for Expanding US-ROK Alliance Cooperation” (Center for US-Korea Policy/The Asia Foundation) and the upcoming Academic Paper Series published by the Korea Economic Institute.

Ms. Jennifer Shin works as a Strategic/Nuclear Security Analyst with Defense Solutions Group-Strategic Missions, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). She provides analytical support to the Office of the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters regarding the national strategic deterrent and related issues. She has also worked with the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation to support the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue program, focusing on security stability within Northeast Asia. Her research interests include Northeast Asian security, nonproliferation, disarmament, and nuclear policy regarding the DPRK.

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 studied 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 in Japan through the Rotary Program. She also worked for the Department of State at the American Institute in Taiwan.

Appendix B



US-Japan and US-ROK Strategic Dialogue

Royal Lahaina Resort ♦ Maui
April 28, 2010

Agenda

April 28, 2010 – Wednesday

Oahu Room

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 12:00-12:45 PM | Working Lunch: Welcome and Introductions: Explanation of Programs/Scenario |
| 12:45-2:20 PM | Individual teams develop responses to scenario |
| 2:20-2:30 PM | Break |
| 2:30-3:15 PM | Plenary session: teams present reactions |
| 3:15-4:30 PM | Roundtable discussion regarding convergent and divergent positions |
| 4:30-5:00 PM | Each team reconvenes to discuss lessons learned from the plenary session, and to clarify tasks for the post-conference assignment |
| 6:30 PM | Welcome reception and dinner for the US-ROK Strategic Dialogue – <i>Oceanfront Lawn</i> |
| 8:30 PM | Visualization presentation and wrap-up |

Appendix C

PACIFIC FORUM CSIS
YOUNG LEADERS

US-Japan and US-ROK Strategic Dialogue

Royal Lahaina Resort ♦ Maui
April 28, 2010

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