February 2016

Strategic Forum
National Defense University

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Key Points

- Unification of the Korean Peninsula would remove the primary threat that has animated the U.S.–Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance for over 60 years, but it need not require termination of the alliance.
- An alliance between the United States and a unified Korea would, at a macro level, reinforce the international liberal democratic order. At a micro level, it could help ensure security on the Korean Peninsula during the process of integrating the North, assist in the defense of Korea, and serve as a platform for multilateral security cooperation.
- A future alliance should be a part of planning for Korean unification and should consider the purpose of the alliance, its roles and missions, coordinating structures, and presence (if any) of U.S. troops. It should also include diplomatic efforts to assure China, Russia, and Japan that a future alliance would respect sovereignty and support stability.
- A reconfigured alliance should reflect greater equality between the United States and a unified Korea to ensure its political sustainability in both capitals. Planning for a future alliance must not erode the critical functions of deterrence that the alliance performs today.

Korean Unification and the Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance

by David F. Helvey

Security alliances can take many forms. They can be bilateral or multilateral, symmetric or asymmetric, highly institutionalized or largely unstructured. Regardless of form, security alliances as instruments of statecraft, at their most fundamental level, reflect a deliberate commitment among states to aggregate resources in the pursuit of common interests. For over 60 years, the U.S.–Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance has defended South Korea from external attack and, through the combined efforts of both countries, contributed to peace and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula, but also in Northeast Asia, across the Asia-Pacific, and beyond.

For an alliance to endure, it must adapt to changing circumstances. Such changes may occur in the external security environment or in the domestic dynamics of the states themselves. The U.S.-ROK alliance has undergone significant evolution from its Cold War origins as a narrowly focused, patron-client relationship to today's partnership, which is building a comprehensive strategic alliance for the 21st century. The October 2015 U.S.-ROK Summit reaffirmed the two countries' commitment to strengthening the alliance, with President Barack Obama remarking, "our alliance remains a linchpin of peace and security—not just on the Korean Peninsula, but across the region." For her part, ROK President Park Geun-hye stated that the alliance was "stronger than ever" and "moving beyond a security alliance and an economic alliance, and evolving into a comprehensive global alliance."[1]

The strength of the U.S.-ROK alliance and the confidence it brings have enabled President Park to embark on an ambitious foreign policy, including with China. It has also enabled a reenergized inter-Korean policy based on her concept of "trustpolitik" and elevated Korean unification[2] to the center of her administration's agenda—and of her legacy as South Korea's president.[3] More

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practically, President Park's emphasis on Korean unification is intended to boost waning interest among the younger generations in the South and to mobilize international support not only for the diplomacy necessary to promote unification but also for the significant investments that ultimately will be required for reconstruction, reconciliation, and integration of the two Koreas.

Unification, however it may occur—from conflict, collapse of the regime in the North, or peaceful negotiation—will be an extraordinarily complex undertaking but will offer significant benefits to the Korean people, the region, and the world. First, unification would address the immediate human security issues such as poverty, poor living conditions, and widespread human rights abuse that define the existence of the Korean people living in the North. Second, unification would contribute to an enduring peace on the peninsula by removing a source of potential regional conflict and set the conditions for denuclearization. Third, as President Park noted in her March 2014 Dresden speech, unification would unlock the potential for the Korean people to focus more resources on economic and social development and to make larger contributions to regional and global security and development.[4]

a sustained dialogue is needed on how the American and Korean people can continue their pursuit of common interests by adapting the alliance to the challenges and opportunities in a post-unification security environment

By eliminating the central threat that has animated the U.S.-ROK alliance, unification would also give rise to questions about the future of the alliance itself, with some perhaps calling for its dissolution. The 2009 Joint Vision for the Alliance, reaffirmed in 2013 and again in 2015, charts a path for the future of the alliance, including consideration of a post-unification Korea.[5] This vision represents only the beginning, not an end, of the conversation. A sustained dialogue is needed on how the American and Korean people can continue their pursuit of common interests by adapting the alliance to the challenges and opportunities in a post-unification security environment.

This first section of this paper reviews the evolution of the U.S.-ROK alliance during the Cold War and post–Cold War periods and describes how the alliance has adapted to changing conditions both on and off the peninsula. The second section explores the prospects for unification and its implications for the alliance. The third section examines key factors and planning considerations necessary to prepare the alliance for post-unification roles and missions, including the need to ensure that nothing done in planning for a post-unification alliance undermines the critical functions of deterrence and response that the alliance performs today.

The Evolution of an Alliance

The U.S.-ROK alliance, forged on the battlefields of the Korean War (1950–1953), has demonstrated a resiliency and adaptability that has served the interests of both nations in securing peace and maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. A detailed history of the alliance is beyond the scope of this paper.[6] However, a short review of the historical contours of the alliance—including several of its missteps—will set a useful foundation for the discussion on structuring the alliance for a post-unification future.

Cold War Origins. The U.S.-ROK alliance was created in 1953 following the cessation of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. Explicitly focused on defending the Republic of Korea against external aggression, the alliance was part of the San Francisco system of bilateral alliances in East Asia (the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty [1951], U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty [1953], and U.S.–Republic of China Mutual Defense Treaty [1954]), commonly referred to as the hub-and-spokes system.[7] Its purpose was to serve as a bulwark against communist

expansion and to support U.S. policy objectives in Asia.[8] At the same time, particularly with respect to the ROK and Republic of China, the design of each alliance was informed by a U.S. desire to avoid entrapment by weaker allies in unwanted wars.[9] Such wars would not only risk distraction from the global strategy of containment but also, according to the prevailing "domino theory," require prosecution by the United States for fear that losing one conflict would precipitate a chain reaction of weakened and demoralized friendly nations falling to communist aggression or subversion.

Although both the United States and the Republic of Korea were brought together by a shared interest in opposing communism, each harbored fears and insecurities about the other.[10] For the Republic of Korea, it was the fear that the United States would abandon it. For the United States, it was the fear that then-ROK President Syngman Rhee would resume hostilities with North Korea, potentially leading to a wider conflict. This meant structuring the alliance to provide a security guarantee and assurance of the U.S. commitment to the South. It also meant maximizing U.S. influence by, among other things, ensuring that the U.S.-led United Nations Command, which had been granted operational command of ROK forces in 1950, retained operational control (OPCON) of ROK forces during the armistice. The U.S. intent was made explicit in language that accompanied its ratification of the mutual defense treaty:

> *neither party is obligated . . . to come to the aid of the other except in case of an external armed attack against such party; nor shall anything in the present Treaty be construed as requiring the United Sates to give assistance to Korea except in the event of an armed attack against territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the Republic of Korea.*[11]

Accordingly, the U.S.-ROK alliance took on three basic functions: as part of a network of alliances to "ring the Soviet threat in the Pacific"; to deter a North Korean attack, with U.S. ground forces serving as a "tripwire" guaranteeing U.S. involvement; and as a means to restrain the South from engaging in adventurism.[12]

From the ROK perspective, the presence of U.S. forces not only helped to deter North Korean aggression but also symbolized Washington's commitment to its defense. In this context, President Richard Nixon's call in July 1969 for Asian nations to be primarily responsible for their own defense (what came to be known as the Nixon Doctrine) and subsequent announcement of the withdrawal of 24,000 troops from the Korean Peninsula heightened ROK fears of abandonment.[13] Similarly, President Nixon's pursuit of détente with the Soviet Union, opening to China, and later withdrawal from Vietnam fueled Seoul's concerns about U.S. resolve to defend it against North Korean aggression. Such concerns, in part, prompted Seoul to begin a nuclear weapons program, which was suspended in 1976 only after significant U.S. pressure.[14] South Korean fears of abandonment were magnified by President Jimmy Carter's 1977 call to withdraw all U.S. troops from the peninsula in response to the poor human rights conditions in South Korea under then-President Park Chung-hee.

The basic structures of the U.S.-ROK alliance were formed during the Cold War period. For example, in 1968, in part to coordinate responses to the North Korean seizure of the USS *Pueblo*, the United States and ROK created the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and ROK Minister of Defense, which has since become an annual platform for strategic-level consultations on the alliance. Similarly, the Military Committee was established to bring together the U.S. and ROK chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff and other senior officers to coordinate implementation of guidance from the SCM. In 1978, the two sides established the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC) under a U.S. four-star general and ROK four-star deputy with an integrated staff of U.S. and ROK personnel. The CFC commander, who is also designated as the commander of United Nations Command and commander of U.S. Forces Korea, was given OPCON of

select ROK forces under armistice conditions and, subject to national command authority decisions in both capitals, OPCON of designated ROK forces in wartime as well. [15] Each of these steps reduced the early asymmetry between the allies by giving the ROK a greater voice in and influence over alliance decisionmaking and, in acknowledgment of its increased capacities, more responsibility for its own defense—while at the same time binding the United States more closely to the peninsula.

Enabled by the stability and security the alliance provided, the Cold War period also saw the ROK economy begin to take off and the pro-democracy movement in South Korea begin to take hold. In this context, the U.S. pattern of supporting authoritarian—albeit staunchly anti-communist—leaders, such as Rhee, Park Chung-hee, who seized power in a 1961 coup d'état, and Chun Doo-hwan, who took control in a 1980 coup d'état, produced profound anti-alliance leanings within the democracy movement, particularly among the so-called 386 generation, which would rise to political prominence in the 1990s and early 2000s.[16]

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Post–Cold War Transitions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Cold War consensus that had sustained the U.S.-ROK alliance began to fray. The decline of bipolar confrontation created opportunities for U.S. allies, including the ROK, to pursue "soft balancing" to limit Washington's ability to impose its preferences and to increase their own diplomatic flexibility. For example, ROK President Kim Young-sam (1993–1998) promoted ROK participation in multilateral security structures, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, to enhance Seoul's regional influence and reduce its dependence on Washington. [17]

Moreover, the triumph of democracy in the ROK by 1987 expanded the range of politically acceptable views about the North. This energized the inter-Korean diplomacy, which produced the Joint Declaration on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation (December 13, 1991) and the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (December 31, 1991). But continued North Korean nuclear developments in 1992 soon brought progress to a standstill. The Sunshine Policy of the Kim Dae-jung administration (1998–2002) reflected further changes in popular attitudes toward Koreans in the North who, in the aftermath of the catastrophic famines and economic collapse of the early 1990s, came to be seen as objects of sympathy in need of assistance rather than a threat to be confronted or contained. Likewise for the United States, the collapse of the Soviet Union opened additional policy options for dealing with the North and its emergent nuclear programs, ranging from unilateral pressure and confrontation to engagement, including direct bilateral talks, with Pyongyang.[18]

Scott Snyder describes the alliance during this period as being on "auto-pilot"—continuing to function with Cold War premises, structures, and patterns of operation.[19] With the exception of the 1994 transfer to the ROK of peacetime OPCON over all ROK forces, there was no serious or sustained effort to adapt the alliance to the post–Cold War security environment or to ensure its compatibility with the political, economic, and social transformations on the peninsula. An initial effort to evaluate the alliance in the context of a broader regional strategy and posture review, termed the East Asia Strategy Initiative (EASI), was launched in 1990 by the George H.W. Bush administration. However, elements of EASI related to U.S. posture on the Korean Peninsula, including troop reductions, encountered early resistance from Seoul and were ultimately shelved in 1992 as the North Korean nuclear threat emerged. The institutional inertia and growing divergences in threat perceptions within the ROK body politic and between the ROK and

the United States that characterized this early post–Cold War period persisted over the course of the decade, creating the conditions in which a series of events in 2002 and 2003 would generate the most significant crises in the alliance since its inception.

The first crisis emerged in June 2002 following the tragic deaths of two Korean school girls in a highway accident involving a U.S. military vehicle participating in an exercise on the outskirts of Seoul. The "Highway 56 incident" sparked protests across South Korea that continued to build momentum into the fall, featuring the burning of U.S. flags and an effigy of President George W. Bush, calls for the removal of U.S. troops from South Korea, and demands for the U.S. Soldiers involved in the accident to face local prosecution.[20] In keeping with the provisions of the U.S.-ROK Status of Forces Agreement,[21] the United States refused to turn over the Soldiers, who were eventually acquitted by a U.S. military tribunal. The incident caused a fissure in the alliance and exposed a deep resentment over the local impacts of the U.S. military presence—particularly in an increasingly urbanized and congested Seoul metropolitan area—and anger over the perceived injustice that allowed U.S. military personnel to be on South Korean soil but beyond the reach of South Korean law.

The second crisis erupted in fall 2002 following revelations that North Korea had engaged in a covert uranium enrichment program in contravention of its obligations under the 1994 Agreed Framework. Reflecting the prevailing Sunshine Policy of ROK President Kim and the similar Peace and Prosperity policy of his successor, Roh Moo-hyun, Seoul sought mediation and direct engagement with Pyongyang in response to the revelations, in contrast to the U.S. preference for a multilateral framework for denuclearization. Similarly, the Roh administration saw establishment of a peace regime on the peninsula as a step toward denuclearization rather than a potential outcome from it.[22] This divergence sparked criticism within the United States over the credibility of the ROK as an alliance partner in confronting the proliferation threat posed by the North.

A third challenge came in the form of widespread protests in South Korea over U.S. policy in the lead up to Operation *Iraqi Freedom* in 2003. Seoul eventually chose to deploy the Zaytun Division to Iraq (2004–2008) and supported coalition operations in Afghanistan by deploying a field hospital, a provincial reconstruction team, security forces, and financial assistance. However, the protests exposed a rift in an alliance that had not adapted to post-9/11 U.S. priorities, including that for "strategic flexibility," or the use of U.S. military assets based on the Korean Peninsula for off-peninsula contingencies, potentially including those involving China. ROK fears of abandonment became manifest in its opposition to the deployment of U.S. troops from Korea to other contingencies that it feared could erode deterrence of North Korea. At the same time, reflecting South Korea's desire for greater independence in its foreign policy and more influence within the alliance, Seoul sought to avoid entrapment in regional conflicts involving U.S. operations from the peninsula.

Building an Alliance for the 21st Century. The crises of 2002 and 2003 prompted Seoul and Washington to engage in a long-overdue evaluation that would move the alliance toward a more equal footing and a stronger political foundation. These changes were enabled by a reemerging consensus in both capitals over the North Korean threat. Both sides shared concerns about North Korean nuclear and missile developments and, despite an erosion in conventional military capabilities, North Korea's continued capacity for asymmetric attacks and violent provocations such as the August 2015 landmine incident in the Demilitarized Zone, the 2010 sinking of the ROK navy vessel *Cheonan*, the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, or the cyber attacks against South Korea and Sony Pictures Entertainment in 2014.[23] In addition, at the highest levels in both the ROK and the United States, a new consensus emerged on the value of the alliance as a strategic asset.

The transformation of the alliance began with the 2-year-long bilateral Future of the Alliance Talks. The talks revived some of the earlier EASI recommendations about U.S. force posture on the peninsula, including

relocation of U.S. military units out of Seoul and areas north (that is, the Yongsan Relocation Program and the Land Partnership Plan), as well as an initial agreement in 2007 to transfer wartime OPCON to the ROK.[24] The two sides also agreed to establish the Security Policy Initiative under the SCM in 2004 to discuss future alliance roles both on and off the peninsula. This broader perspective was captured in the Joint Statement released following the November 2005 summit between Presidents George W. Bush and Roh Moo-hyun, which noted the "two leaders agreed that the alliance not only stands against threats, but also for the promotion of the common values of democracy, market economy, freedom, and human rights in Asia and beyond."[25]

the Joint Vision put reunification of the Korean Peninsula explicitly on the alliance agenda for the first time, with the declaration that "we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy"

The summit outcomes included creation of the Strategic Consultations for Allied Partnership (SCAP) between the U.S. Secretary of State and the ROK Foreign Minister, which focused on North Korea and a range of regional and global issues, such as counterterrorism, nonproliferation, peace-keeping, and pandemic disease. Importantly, the inaugural meeting of the SCAP in January 2006 included a bilateral understanding on the role of U.S. military forces based in the ROK in regional contingencies:

> *The ROK, as an ally, fully understands the rationale for the transformation of the U.S. global military strategy, and respects the necessity for strategic flexibility of the U.S. forces in the ROK. In the implementation of strategic flexibility, the U.S. respects the ROK position that it shall not be involved in a regional conflict in Northeast Asia against the will of the Korean people.*[26]

These changes helped rebuild the relationship following the crises of 2002 and signified progress in adjusting the alliance to new domestic and international realities, but did not produce a shared vision of the future to guide further transformation of the alliance.

The 2008 election of President Lee Myung-bak returned conservative leadership in Seoul, with Lee explicitly seeking to strengthen ties with the United States—and with it the U.S.-ROK alliance—as a central element of his foreign policy. During President Lee's first visit to the United States in April 2008, the two sides agreed to transform the alliance into a "Strategic Alliance for the 21st Century" that would continue to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia and that would also "contribute to global peace and security."[27] The articulation of a "strategic alliance" reflected the two sides' desire to expand the alliance agenda beyond security cooperation (although military and security cooperation would remain at the core) to include cooperation in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

This broader framework for alliance cooperation was carried forward into the Obama administration and expanded upon in the 2009 Joint Vision for the Alliance, which called upon the two sides to build a "comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope based on common values and mutual trust."[28] The statement committed the two sides to strengthen and improve the ability of the alliance to provide for combined defense on the Korean Peninsula and to cooperate globally, reflecting enhanced ROK capabilities and ambitions as well as a U.S. desire, in a more resource-constrained environment, to partner with others in support of regional and global stability. The areas marked for deeper alliance cooperation included responses to terrorism, proliferation, piracy,

organized crime, poverty, climate change, infringement of human rights, threats to energy security, and pandemic disease, as well as support for peace-keeping and postconflict stabilization and development.[29] Accordingly the United States and ROK agreed in 2011 to establish the Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue to better coordinate and synthesize alliance initiatives ranging from North Korean threat assessments to base relocation and regional security cooperation to extended deterrence and counterproliferation within a single, coherent framework.[30] The Joint Vision also put reunification of the Korean Peninsula explicitly on the alliance agenda for the first time, with the declaration that "we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy."[31] These changes reflect shared aspirations and a mutual commitment to pursue them, as well as a shared recognition of the growing equality within the U.S.-ROK alliance consistent with South Korea's political evolution, economic development, and military modernization.

The 2009 Joint Vision has continued to guide alliance development under the Park Geun-hye administration. Its goals were reaffirmed in 2013 and again in 2015, which included an agreement to extend U.S.-ROK partnership into "New Frontiers of Cooperation," such as cyber, space, climate change, and global health.[32] The 2015 summit also included a commitment to open high-level bilateral consultations "to create conditions conducive to peaceful reunification," creating a platform for the two sides to assess pathways to unification and, potentially, to conduct detailed planning for a post-unification future.[33] Such planning will be important for the alliance to anticipate and adapt to changes in the domestic and international security environments.

An Alliance Agenda

In January 2014, President Park Geun-hye used the first press conference of her presidency to call for greater emphasis on, and urgency in, planning for unification, elevating Korean unification to the center of her administration's agenda.[34] The priority that President Park attaches to unification is not without precedent; all ROK presidents have sought to cement their legacies by establishing a path to unification. However, she is the first to frame the rationale for unification in terms of enabling the Republic of Korea to realize its potential and highlight the benefits of unification to the Korean people and the world. Park's urgency reflects increasing anxiety over the unpredictability of the North Korean regime and the persistent threat posed by its nuclear and missile developments and capacity for violent provocations.

At the same time, President Park is seeking to bolster waning interest in unification among the younger generations in the South. As 2014 polling data from the South Korean Asan Institute for Policy Studies reveals, support for reunification among South Koreans in their 20s (the youngest cohort in the poll) was nearly 20 percentage points below that of South Koreans in their 60s and older—a gap that had widened from the previous years.[35] Moreover, President Park seeks to mobilize international diplomatic, and particularly economic, support for the unification process, recognizing the role that key stakeholders China, Russia, Japan, and the United States could play in setting the regional conditions for unification and, along with the broader international community, helping to underwrite the costs of reconstruction, reconciliation, and integration of the two Koreas.[36]

Unification of the Korean Peninsula could occur in a number of ways. First, North Korean leaders could realize that their state model has failed and that they have no hope of reunifying the peninsula on their terms, and could seek to unify peacefully with South Korea following a negotiated "soft landing" scenario similar to the unification of East and West Germany. Second, unification could follow a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. For example, one possible alliance goal in response to a North Korean attack could be to repel the offensive and seek regime change during the counteroffensive. Third, unification could occur following instability in North Korea and collapse of the regime in Pyongyang. This paper focuses on a collapse scenario.

Effective alliance deterrence at the high end, combined with eroding North Korean capabilities to project and sustain the combat power necessary to mount an offensive, render a North Korean aggression scenario, while dangerous, relatively remote. Although peaceful unification would be preferred and, indeed, is President Park's official policy and the alliance objective as defined in the 2009 Joint Vision Statement, North Korea's nuclear developments and the international response to them increasingly suggest a more likely outcome will be unification by absorption following some sort of crisis on the peninsula, such as regime fracture or perhaps conflict erupting from uncontrolled escalation following provocation. Moreover, even if Seoul and Pyongyang are able to negotiate peaceful unification, the process of integration and replacing—or establishing—governance in the North would entail significant instability risks highlighting a need for plans and forces that are ready to perform similar missions as in a collapse scenario, if not on a similar scale.

Collapse could produce four distinct but related types of crises.[37] First, a *humanitarian crisis* may result from the breakdown of central government control and the public distribution system for food and medical supplies to a significant portion of North Korea's 24 million people, many of whom already suffer from malnourishment and disease. Although economic reforms have led to a growing reliance on markets, implementation remains uneven. An increasingly vibrant black market could offset failures in markets or government allocation, but the availability of goods may be spotty and disrupted through poor infrastructure, inflation, and hoarding. Military assets would be needed to provide humanitarian relief, including the provision of supplies and medical services until those functions could be transferred to civilian authorities, and to protect critical infrastructure, lines of communication, and relief convoys.

The inability to meet food and physical security needs in an increasingly chaotic situation could give rise to a second crisis in the form of *mass migration and refugee flows* as North Koreans attempt to flee to the northern and southern borders, or perhaps in boats to the ROK, China, or Japan. China and Russia would likely handle northward flows and might seek to establish camps on the Korean side of the border, with the ROK handling southward flows and coordinating what would likely be a multilateral response to seaborne flows. A refugee crisis could further complicate the third potential crisis in a collapse scenario: loss of control over *stockpiles of nuclear, chemical, and biological materials and weapons* vulnerable to theft and smuggling out to the international black market. Estimates suggest that North Korea today has perhaps 10 to 16 nuclear weapons with the potential for 20 to 125 by 2020.[38] Pyongyang is assessed to have a longstanding chemical weapons program and a potentially robust biological warfare capability.[39] Preventing or controlling the flow of these materials—not to mention the people and records—would require a massive undertaking to shut off possible transit routes, ports, and airfields; monitor and secure known facilities; and conduct a detailed sweep of the country to discover and properly control any facilities that remain as yet unknown.

Fourth, even in the most benign collapse scenario, there would be the potential for *active resistance and insurgency* by elements of the North Korean population, including the Korean People's Army, which, by ROK estimates, numbers 1.2 million in the active force and some 7.7 million in the reserve, or almost 40 percent of the North Korean population.[40] These forces would need to be disarmed, demobilized, and properly reintegrated into society. The U.S. experience in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* reveals that the failure to rapidly disarm and secure weapons from the Iraqi military after the fall of Saddam Hussein fueled the insurgency that followed. In the Korea case, as in the Iraq case, the potential for resistance and insurgency following collapse is path dependent but requires advanced planning and resourcing.

In sum, in addition to planning for long-term political, economic, and social integration, unification following crisis and regime collapse would require planning for stability operations, border control and maritime security, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) elimination,

conventional disarmament, and countering any resistance. Although the ROK armed forces could perform the bulk of the missions, the resourcing requirements, which estimates suggest could range from 260,000 to 400,000 personnel under *optimistic* assumptions, might quickly outstrip ROK capacities.[41] Moreover, the ROK would likely rely on the U.S. military for certain aspects of the WMD elimination mission, particularly securing North Korean nuclear weapons and fissile materials—in keeping with ROK obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—as well as logistics and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. In terms of the broader implications of the unification process on the U.S.-ROK alliance, it is useful to note that ROK attitudes toward the alliance after unification would likely be influenced heavily by the extent to which the United States commits its resources to achieve it and by the timeliness of its contributions.

In addition to alliance planning for post-unification stability, the United States and ROK must consider the interests and perspectives of China, Russia, and Japan on the issue of unification, both in terms of its outcomes and the risks and costs of transition, and on the issue of the alliance in a post-unification environment.

China. China's overarching interests on the Korean Peninsula lie in maintaining stability and security along its northeastern borders. In this context, China views North Korea, with whom it has maintained a treaty-based alliance since 1961, as a "buffer state" ensuring separation between U.S. and allied forces on the peninsula and the Chinese mainland. The concept of a buffer state has retained currency among many strategic thinkers in Beijing even as China has drawn closer to Seoul, particularly in terms of two-way trade and investment, and more distant from Pyongyang due to North Korea's nuclear programs and destabilizing behavior.[42] Despite the damage to China's interests from North Korean nuclear and missile developments—or perhaps put differently, the international responses to the growing North Korean threat—China has chosen to continue to provide aid, energy supplies, and other assistance to prop up the regime. One analyst has even suggested that the security afforded by a North Korean buffer enables Beijing to concentrate its military forces opposite Taiwan.[43]

China officially supports Korean unification based on a process agreed to by both sides and independent from external powers. This position was reaffirmed on the eve of President Park's inauguration in December 2012: "China always supports the South and the North to improve their relations through dialogue, promote reconciliation and cooperation, and eventually achieve the independent and peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula."[44] In practice, China's policy has been to favor the status quo, or at best a gradual unification process that results in the transformation of the two Koreas into a neutral state. China's preference for the status quo in the short run indicates that Beijing fears the risks and costs of alternatives would be worse, leading some analysts to suggest that Beijing might seek to prevent any attempt to achieve unification before arrangements could be made to ensure its interests are adequately protected in a post-unification environment.[45] Others have suggested that in absence of a U.S.-China condominium (thus eliminating North Korea's role as a counterbalance) or actions by North Korea to directly harm China's "core interests," Beijing will continue to provide enough support to enable North Korea to survive as an independent state.[46] In the event that China cannot prevent a collapse, it would likely seek to influence the terms of unification to preserve its overarching interest of security along its borders.

ROK attitudes toward the alliance after unification would likely be influenced heavily by the extent to which the United States commits its resources to achieve it and by the timeliness of its contributions

China, in this context, might see value in Korean unification under the ROK as this would eliminate the security challenges and economic drain imposed on it by North Korea today. Beijing would also see a unified Korean Peninsula as potentially helping the development of its "rust belt" in Northeast China through greater regional economic integration. These potential benefits would be balanced against the loss of the buffer that North Korea has historically provided and the potential for a unified Korea to rekindle territorial disputes over Goguryeo, seen by Koreans as lost territory.[47]

China would likely be suspicious of a unified, democratic, economically successful and military capable Korea and would seek to encourage a restructuring (if not disestablishment) of the U.S.-ROK alliance and a diminished (if not the complete removal) of U.S. troops from the peninsula. Some Chinese analysts have asserted that any U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula following unification would be unacceptable, with others suggesting that China would not oppose such a presence if a unified Korea wanted it, provided that it was limited to the southern half of the peninsula (that is, below the 38th parallel).[48] Beijing is likely to use its leverage over the unification process to pressure the ROK to limit any U.S. troop presence and the role of the post-unification alliance in regional contingencies.[49]

Japan. Japan's historical approach to Korean unification has been "cautious, reactive, [and] adaptive to the process."[50] It recognizes that unification could produce a powerful political and economic rival aligned with Beijing or a close partner and ally, but because of unresolved issues of history, including North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 1980s, and Japan's colonization of Korea and use of Korean women (and others) as "comfort women" (a euphemism for sex slaves) during World War II, it has generally avoided actions to either prevent or encourage unification in order to avoid accusations of interference in Korean internal affairs. Nevertheless, Japan has preferences regarding the outcomes.

Japan would support a unified, nonnuclear Korea aligned with the United States and Japan and would see a Korea that shared Japan's political values and economic system as fundamentally advancing its interests.[51] Likewise, Japan would support a continuation of the U.S.-ROK alliance and the presence of U.S. forces on the peninsula as a means to support regional stability and limit the potential for a unified Korea to align with China or act independently against Japanese regional interests and influence. Indeed, Japan likely fears that unification could usher in intensified anti-Japan Korean nationalism and a deterioration of Korea-Japan relations, which could complicate resolution of the territorial dispute over Liancourt Rocks, also known as Dokdo (Korea)/Takeshima (Japan). Tokyo would be particularly concerned over the development or retention by a unified Korea of offensive strike systems, such as long-range ballistic and cruise missiles, or expanded naval capabilities in the absence of a U.S. presence, and might seek to address these insecurities through countervailing investments of its own, which could lead to a destabilizing arms race.

Russia. Russian interests on the Korean Peninsula include averting another major war, preventing proliferation of nuclear and missile technology, maintaining Moscow's status as a regional player, and eventually the peaceful elimination of nuclear weapons.[52] Despite these interests, however, Moscow has relatively limited diplomatic and economic resources to influence dynamics on the Korean Peninsula.

Moscow supports, in principle, Korean unification based on a process agreed to by the two sides. Before his November 2013 visit to Seoul, Vladimir Putin told the Russian press that "we unconditionally support the Koreans' yearning for the unification of their nation. It is a natural process. But I proceed from the certitude that it must be absolutely peaceful and the interests of both the northern and southern parts of the peninsula must be taken into consideration."[53] Russia would likely see primarily economic benefits through Korean unification, particularly in terms of energy trade and infrastructure investment (for example, the Trans-Siberian Railway and Trans-Korean Railway Link).

However, Russia would also be concerned that a North Korean collapse leading to sudden unification under the ROK would produce a shift in the regional balance of power, a concern that has grown following Russia's seizure of Crimea and the geopolitical divide that has reemerged between Russia and the West.[54] In this context, Moscow would seek to avoid domination of a unified Korean Peninsula by any great power and likely oppose any outcome that increases U.S. influence on the peninsula or a continuation of the U.S. presence after unification. Furthermore, Moscow might be wary that unification could diminish Sino-Russian alignment and give rise to greater suspicion or rivalry between Beijing and Moscow. As a cautionary note, Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, aggression in Ukraine in 2014, and launch of military operations in Syria in 2015 suggest that unification planning cannot rule out the potential, however remote, for Russian intervention to protect its interests.[55]

The obstacles and suspicions identified herein reinforce preferences for the status quo among these stakeholders—despite each having an official policy that supports Korean unification—and will need to be addressed through a process of sustained diplomatic engagement in both bilateral and multilateral constructs, ideally before a crisis unfolds. While challenging, the objections and concerns are not insurmountable.

China will need to be convinced, for example, that a unified Korea—and a restructured U.S.-Korea alliance—would not pose a threat to its interests. A China that does not seek conflict with the United States or its allies, or to dominate the region, has no reason to fear a U.S.-Korea alliance or a U.S. military presence on a unified Korean Peninsula. Moreover, continuation of the U.S.-Korea alliance would help maintain stability during and after unification, help address a unified Korea's security needs, thereby limiting the potential for it to pursue nuclear weapons of its own, and help manage Sino-Japanese competition, all of which would be of interest to Beijing. For its part, a unified Korea might also assure China through robust bilateral diplomatic and economic engagement as well as by championing the establishment of an inclusive regional security architecture, while maintaining its alliance with the United States. Moreover, China should be confident that a unified Korea would have significant need for resources and technical assistance in managing reconstruction in the North—and throughout the integration process—which would naturally provide Beijing with considerable sources of influence. The extent to which China chooses to use (or develop) such cooperative tools to exercise its influence or chooses to rely on more familiar competitive and coercive approaches would go a long way in defining the nature of China's relationship with a unified Korea and the region.

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In terms of Japan's concerns, realizing historical reconciliation between Tokyo and Seoul prior to unification could help limit the potential for Korean nationalism on a unified Korean Peninsula to turn sharply anti-Japanese. The December 28, 2015, announcement by Japan and the ROK of an agreement regarding "comfort women" is a good start.[56] A continued U.S. military presence on the peninsula could help to lessen Tokyo's fears that a unified Korea would align with China; it could also limit the potential for anti-alliance pressure to build *in Japan* as the last U.S. military outpost in Asia. Maintaining engagement with Russia on Korean Peninsula futures will be important to ensure that its interests will not be damaged and to limit its potential to act as a spoiler in the process.

Building an Alliance Vision

Unification of the Korean Peninsula would bring substantial benefit to the Korean people, especially those

living in the North, remove a source of potential regional conflict, and enable a global Korea to contribute more to international security and development. Unification, however, would also remove the principal threat that has animated the U.S.-ROK alliance since its inception, which leads to a natural question of whether an alliance can survive in the absence of a clear threat.

Alliance literature suggests there are three key factors to consider: if there is an asymmetry of power between the two allies, if the allies share similar political values, and if the relationship is highly institutionalized.[57] Moreover, there is value in retaining capabilities that an alliance has already built as a hedge against uncertainty in the future, particularly if such capabilities are adaptable to new circumstances and if the cost of maintaining them is less than the cost to reacquire them.[58] A continued U.S. alliance with a unified Korea based on the principles of democracy and a market economy, adapted to the regional security environment of a post-unification Korea, meets those criteria.

The prior question, however, is whether the parties will choose to preserve the alliance in the first place. A recent Center for a New American Security study postulates three alternative foreign policy orientations for a unified Korea: a continental, China-leaning approach; a maritime, Western-oriented approach; or inward-focused and neutral.[59] For its part, in the aftermath of Korean unification, the United States may choose to reduce its commitments on the peninsula in the face of budgetary pressures at home and assume the role of offshore balancer in competition with a rising China. For the purpose of this exercise, I assume that both Washington and Seoul would have the desire and intent to maintain the alliance. There would be ample reason for them to do so.

Support for the alliance in South Korea remains high, with the most recent South Korean Asan Institute polling data (from March 2014) returning an overall 93 percent favorability rating, with 66 percent of those surveyed favoring keeping the alliance after unification.[60] Retaining the alliance with the United States would support Korea's interests in protecting its fundamental political and economic system while reducing its own security costs through burdensharing. It would also serve as an "insurance policy" to secure unification, maintain stability, and as described above, assist Korea as it deals with a range of challenges through an extended unification process. The alliance would provide Korea with leverage to deal with its neighbors, both as a foundation for security and a hedge with respect to the rise of China and Russia—and as a buffer in rising Sino-Japanese competition—thereby enhancing its status as a "middle power." It would also provide a platform to mobilize resources to facilitate Korea's participation in the delivery of international public goods, such as disaster relief, search and rescue, and maritime security. As President Park has stated, the alliance, "which will be upgraded through unification, will continue to evolve into an alliance which stands for humanity."[61] Finally, an alliance would be in keeping with the traditional basis for Korea's relationship with the United States in which it has sought to align itself with "greater power that would offer security but not be so close geographically that it would threaten Korean sovereignty."[62]

For the United States, retaining the alliance with a unified Korea would help ensure that a united Korea remains free under a democratic political system and market economy, which is a strong U.S. interest. The alliance would also play a role in helping to manage shifting power dynamics with a rising China and advance U.S. nuclear nonproliferation goals. By providing security to the ROK, the United States could help ensure that Korea, as well as Japan, remain nuclear free. A post-unification alliance would also provide a second anchor, the other being Japan, for a U.S. forward presence in Asia to support regional stability and security.

Finally, both Washington and Seoul have already taken steps to preserve the alliance well into a post-unification future. For example, the goal established in 2009 of building a "comprehensive strategic alliance" based on common values and shared interests is intended to define the terms of the alliance in ways that do not require

a common enemy.[63] The introduction of "New Frontiers" for the alliance in 2015 is similarly intended to broaden cooperation beyond the immediate challenges posed by North Korea.[64] However, the articulation of a vision represents only the start of the discussion; detailed planning and preparation are required to operationalize it.

Four Principles in Considering a Post-Unification Alliance. Any effort to define and operationalize a comprehensive strategic alliance needs to begin with a solid grounding in common values and ideals and a clear sense of shared interests between the United States and Korea. Some common values include a shared commitment to democracy, open societies, and free market economics; respect for human rights and the rule of law; and support for peaceful resolution of disputes. Likewise, the United States and Korea have a shared interest in preserving the security of a unified Korea and its political and economic systems, as well as an interest in maintaining regional peace and stability, including free and open access to the global commons in the maritime, air, space, and cyber domains, and in supporting international efforts to respond to disasters and to combat terrorism, proliferation, organized crime, and infectious disease.

Second, do no harm. Efforts to plan for the alliance of the future should avoid doing anything that undermines deterrence today. North Korea remains, in the words of Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, "an up close, dangerous, and continuing threat to the security of the Peninsula and the region."[65] In this context, continued alliance investments in interoperable intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems; air and missile defense capabilities; and command, control, communications, and computers enhance alliance readiness to "fight tonight," if necessary, and strengthen the foundation for combined, coalition-style operations in the future. Continued rotation of U.S. Army units up to and including brigade-level units to the Korean Peninsula, similar to a practice long maintained by the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy, not only would help improve the readiness and flexibility of current forces assigned to Korea, but also could create a pattern for a future presence on a unified peninsula that might rely more heavily on rotational forces. Likewise, U.S. force realignment under the Yongsan Relocation Program and Land Partnership Plan should continue[66] not only to ensure the long-term political sustainability of the U.S. force presence but also to realize the flexibility in force employment that such relocation provides. Strengthening the U.S. Navy presence, including through forward (or rotational) deployment of advanced surface combatants such as the DDG-1000, would enhance deterrence while providing a stronger platform for alliance contributions to regional maritime security. Continued trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the ROK or the United States, Australia, and the ROK would be useful to build and sustain habits of cooperation, as well as to better integrate the bilateral components of the alliance relationships that the United States has with each into a larger multilateral construct reinforcing international rules, norms, and standards. In developing exercises to practice off-peninsula operations such as counterpiracy or disaster relief, the alliance should avoid diluting or repurposing the critical combined forces exercises for the defense of Korea, such as the annual Key Resolve/Foal Eagle series or Ulchi Freedom Guardian.

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Third, a future U.S.-Korea alliance should emphasize the principle of respect for and protection of sovereignty. This is important not only for the defense of Korea; it also assures other regional states, including China, that a unified Korea would respect and maintain current territorial boundaries. In addition, the principle of respect for sovereignty would signal that the alliance would not become a platform for territorial expansion or an interventionist foreign policy. This does not mean, however, the alliance should not respond to regional aggression or coercion that disrupts the regional order.

Finally, leaders on both sides need to ensure that the framework and function of a comprehensive strategic alliance is politically sustainable in both capitals. This would require a foundation of equality and a mutual commitment to sharing the responsibilities and resourcing the military capabilities needed for security on the peninsula, in the region, and across the globe. In this context, the United States and Korea need to "find—and articulate together—the linkages between shared strategic goals and the operational manifestations of the alliance" and define action, particularly Korean participation in out-of-area operations, in terms responding to common challenges *as an alliance*, rather than something done *for the alliance*.[67] In addition, the institutional mechanisms of the alliance should evolve from being predominantly defense-focused to a broad-based, whole-of-government approach that reflects a more comprehensive alliance agenda.

Four Questions to Guide Post-Unification Alliance Planning. The following four questions may serve as useful reference points in planning for a post-unification U.S.-Korea alliance.

First, *what is the nature of the security environment, and what role will a united Korea play within it?* Korean unification, however it comes about, could precipitate a rise in tension and increased rivalry among the major regional stakeholders. As described above, a united Korea in this environment might follow one of three basic orientations—continental and China-leaning, maritime and oriented on the West, or neutral—or it might resist the choice and pursue a more balanced approach incorporating elements of all three. Although ROK values of democracy and market economics, posited to carry through in this scenario, suggest a preference for a maritime orientation, the nature of the U.S.-China relationship and the power dynamics between them could be the most important external factor influencing Korea's post-unification foreign policy. Korea's traditional role as a middle power might lead it to attempt to calibrate relations with Beijing and Washington to maximize its strategic independence, similar to the soft balancing under the Kim Young-sam administration.

Korea's relations with Japan would also be a factor and suggest that a united Korea could play a role in balancing Sino-Japanese rivalry for regional leadership. In this context, if effective multilateral security architectures in Northeast Asia are developed (something that South Korea has advocated in the past), they may enable Seoul to accumulate and exercise influence through promoting cooperation and confidence-building in the region, although it would likely still seek alignment with a larger power to ensure its sovereignty and security.

Second, *what is the purpose of the alliance?* Should it focus narrowly on the defense of Korea or have an outward orientation for regional stability and global security cooperation? The answer will be shaped to a large degree by the answer to the first question regarding the nature of the security environment and the role Korea plays in regional power dynamics. At its most basic, the alliance could assist Korea in preserving its sovereignty and defending against threats to its territory and serve as a hedge against negative outcomes in the rise of China or Russia. However, the alliance could also perform a more expansive function of enabling security cooperation in support of shared interests consistent with the transformation of the alliance into a fully equal partnership. The two roles need not be mutually exclusive. A broadly defined alliance agenda might also help ameliorate the security concerns of Korea's neighbors, including China and Russia, who may be suspicious of a unified Korea's ties to the United States.

Third, *what structures and mechanisms are needed for alliance coordination and cooperation?* The U.S.-ROK alliance enjoys a high degree of institutionalization through the CFC and SCM constructs, supported by a wide variety of bilateral dialogues and coordination mechanisms. However, this structure would need to be modified post-unification. Unification and the elimination of the North Korea threat would certainly meet the conditions to complete the transfer of wartime OPCON to the ROK (if it had not already been transferred) and, eventually, the

disestablishment of the United Nations Command and related structures. Would the alliance, however, retain its unique character of having a CFC-like system for combined operations for the defense of Korea—as is currently envisioned for the post-OPCON transfer "future command structure"—or certain regional contingency responses? Or would it adopt a "supported/supporting" relationship in which the United States provides supporting forces under a unified Korea's leadership? Apart from the question of alliance command and control, there might be value in retaining a platform for strategic dialogue and coordination at the ministerial level, such as the SCM with its supporting Military Committee (albeit reconfigured) and policy- and working-level venues to perform day-to-day alliance management. A broader alliance agenda would also place a premium on establishing an interagency or whole-of-government dialogue, fusing together defense, diplomacy, development, and trade/economic agencies. In this context, institutionalizing "2+2" meetings between the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense and their Korean counterparts, with participation by other agencies as necessary, would be an option.[68]

Fourth, *what is the nature of the U.S. military presence?* Any U.S. presence on the Korean Peninsula following unification would need to be aligned with the mission and focus of whatever relationship is established between the countries. As noted, some military presence would likely be required to support stability operations as part of the unification process as well as to assist a unified Korea in maintaining external security as it focuses on reconstruction and integration. Beyond the immediate requirements for stability, a U.S. military presence could be useful in managing the shifting regional power dynamics that will follow unification. However, given the role that China could play in supporting (or not preventing) unification, the United States and ROK will need to balance China's concerns about a U.S. force presence on a unified Korean Peninsula against a united Korea's sovereign decisions in providing for its own defense and how it wishes to position itself relative to U.S.-China competition. As part of this process, consideration would need to be given to the size, location, composition, and purpose of U.S. forces, as well as the related arrangements concerning access, status of forces, and if applicable, deployments in support of contingencies off the peninsula.

For example, would the alliance seek to maintain a robust, long-term military presence of forward-based forces similar to the current construct—or perhaps a more expeditionary, air- and maritime-heavy presence similar to that which supports the U.S.-Japan alliance? Or would the alliance shift to nonpermanent, rotational deployments with prepositioned equipment sets to enable training and exercises and, if necessary, contingency responses similar to the emerging posture in support of the U.S.-Australia alliance featuring U.S. Marine Corps unit rotations to Darwin and periodic U.S. Air Force rotations to Tindal? Another model could feature an even lighter footprint, with the alliance characterized primarily by regular military-to-military relations and security cooperation, contingency access, and periodic exercises similar to arrangements under the U.S. alliance with Thailand, where the United States was able to use U-Tapao Air Base as a regional hub during the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami and where the annual Cobra Gold exercise has evolved into a

given the role that China could play in supporting (or not preventing) unification, the United States and ROK will need to balance China's concerns about a U.S. force presence on a unified Korean Peninsula against a united Korea's sovereign decisions in providing for its own defense and how it wishes to position itself relative to U.S.-China competition

platform for building multinational cooperation and interoperability with an emphasis on humanitarian assistance and disaster response. Any of these arrangements would involve a considerable restructuring of, and likely reduction from, the current 28,500 U.S. forces assigned to the Korean Peninsula.

Conclusion

For over 60 years, the U.S-ROK alliance has defended South Korea against external attack and supported the shared interests of both allies in regional stability and, increasingly, global security. Over the course of its history, the alliance has proved itself resilient and

as the lessons of the immediate post–Cold War era show, if change is unanticipated or adaptation delayed such that inertia becomes confused with progress, the alliance might weaken and wither

able to adapt to changes in the external security environment and to the domestic political, economic, and social changes within the United States and ROK, particularly as South Korea emerged from the devastation of the Korean War to become the vibrant democracy and global economic leader it is today. However, as the lessons of the immediate post–Cold War era show, if change is unanticipated or adaptation delayed such that inertia becomes confused with progress, the alliance might weaken and wither. Unification of the Korean Peninsula and the elimination of the North Korean threat in this context could precipitate an existential crisis in the alliance. But it does not have to.

In recent years, the United States and Republic of Korea have taken steps to strengthen the alliance by redoubling efforts to counter the immediate threats posed by North Korea and by setting an affirmative agenda for security cooperation in the region and globally based on common values and shared interests. This vision enables the two sides to imagine a future of alliance cooperation between the United States and a unified, global Korea in the absence of a clearly defined threat and in support of a safer and more secure regional and international order.

Simply having the vision, however, is insufficient. To endure, the alliance needs to be an integral part of the detailed planning and preparation for Korean unification. This vision also needs to be operationalized and put into practice through exercises and contingency response operations with the caveat that efforts to prepare for a post-unification future must not detract from the deterrence that is required today. In this context, in addition to adding planning for a post-unification alliance to the agenda for high-level, bilateral consultations on unification, the United States and ROK may also consider reenergizing the work called for by the 44th SCM in October 2012 to "initiate long-term strategic planning, including a joint study on the long-term defense vision of the alliance," and include within it a discussion of the alliance post-unification.[69]

A common vision for a post-unification alliance could help guide both countries through the uncertainties of the unification process. Although the answers to the questions about a unified Korea's regional roles and orientation are fundamentally political and will take time to be debated and resolved, it would be a mistake for either country to abandon the alliance or wait until those questions are answered before analyzing the post-unification options for the alliance and the pathways to achieve them.

The U.S.-ROK alliance, and the stability and security that it provides, has enabled the Korean people in the South to realize the remarkable political, economic, social, and cultural achievements that give new meaning to the idea of "the Miracle on the Han River." There is no reason that an alliance between the United States and a unified Korea—properly structured and supported—cannot bring the same benefits to the Korean people across the peninsula.

The author thanks Dr. Phillip C. Saunders and Dr. James J. Przystup, as well as two anonymous reviewers, for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

Notes

[1] The White House, "Remarks by President Obama and President Park of the Republic of Korea in Joint Press Conference," October 16, 2015, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/16/remarks-president-obama-and-president-park-republic-korea-joint-press>.

[2] The terms *unification* and *reunification* appear interchangeably in the literature. As such, both terms appear in this paper.

[3] Park Geun-hye, "A New Kind of Korea: Building Trust Between Seoul and Pyongyang," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 5 (September/October 2011), available at <www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/northeast-asia/2011-09-01/new-kind-korea>.

[4] Park Geun-hye, "An Initiative for Peaceful Unification on the Korean Peninsula," speech delivered at Dresden University of Technology, Dresden, Germany, March 28, 2014, available at <http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/speeches.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=24&srh%5Bpage%5D=3&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=5304&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=27>.

[5] *Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 16, 2009), available at <www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/joint-vision-allaince-united-states-america-and-republic-korea>. Hereafter referred to as the 2009 Joint Vision Statement.

[6] See, for example, Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance," in Kurt M. Campbell et al., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2009), 9–32; Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (Winter 2009–2010), 158–196; Scott A. Snyder, "The U.S.-ROK Alliance and the U.S. Rebalance to Asia," in *U.S. Alliances and Partnerships at the Center of Global Power*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis, Abraham M. Denmark, and Greg Chaffin (Washington, DC: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2014), 60–85.

[7] Cha, "Powerplay," 158.

[8] National Security Council (NSC) 48/2, December 30, 1949, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia," in *Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS], *1949*, Volume VII, Part 2, *The Far East and Australasia* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), Document 386.

[9] NSC 48/5, May 17, 1951, "United States Objectives, Policies and Courses of Action in Asia," in *FRUS, 1951*, Volume VI, Part 1, *East Asia and the Pacific* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 49.

[10] For a deeper, theoretical discussion of alliance formation and management, see Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[11] U.S. Department of State, "Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea," October 1, 1953, 5 *U.S. Treaties* 2368, available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kor001.asp>.

[12] Cha, "Powerplay," 174.

[13] Richard M. Nixon, "Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen," July 25, 1969, available at <www.presidency/ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2140>. See also Richard M. Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam," November 3, 1969, available at <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2303>.

[14] See, for example, Rebecca K.C. Hersman and Robert Peters "Nuclear U-Turns: Learning from South Korean and Taiwanese Rollback," *Nonproliferation Review* 13, no 3. (November 2006), 539–553. In addition, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars hosts a digital archive with declassified U.S. Government assessments and diplomatic reporting cables detailing U.S. concerns and responses to South Korean nuclear developments. It is available at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/128/south-korean-nuclear-history/2>.

[15] Michael Finnegan, *Benchmarking America's Military Alliances: NATO, Japan, and the Republic of Korea* (Washington, DC: The Asia Foundation, 2009), 16, available at <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FinneganBenchmarkingFeb09.pdf>.

[16] The "386 generation" refers to those who in the 1990s were in their 30s, educated in the 1980s, and born in the 1960s. See, for example, L. Gordon Flake, "The Rise, Fall and Transformation of the '386': Generational Change in Korea," in J. Patrick Boyd et al., *Emerging Leaders in Asia: The Next Generation of Political Leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan* (Seattle: National Bureau for Asian Research, 2008).

[17] Sung-han Kim, "From Blood Alliance to Strategic Alliance: Korea's Evolving Strategic Thought Toward the United States," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 22, no. 3 (September 2010), 267, available at <http://dx/doi.org/10.1080/10163271.2010.500001>.

[18] Cha, "Outperforming Expectations," 21–22.

[19] Scott A. Snyder, *The U.S.-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2012), 6.

[20] Barbara Demick, "Anti-Americanism Sweeps South Korea," *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 2002, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/nov/27/world/fg-uskorea27>.

[21] U.S. Department of State, "Agreement Under Article IV of the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in the Republic of Korea, July 9, 1966, as amended," 17 *U.S. Treaties* 1677. Of note, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) was revised in the late 1990s to allow the Republic of Korea greater autonomy in dealing with off-duty crimes committed by U.S. military personnel. The United States retained the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over offenses committed by U.S. personnel under the SOFA in the performance of official duty.

[22] Kim, "From Blood Alliance," 274.

[23] A detailed review of North Korea's military capabilities is beyond the scope of this paper. For more, see Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Military and Security Developments Involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2015* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), available at <www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Military_and_Security_Developments_Involving_the_Democratic_Peoples_Republic_of_Korea_2015.PDF>; or Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., "The North Korean Military Threat in 2015: The Threat to the ROK-U.S. Alliance and Peninsula Unification," *International Journal of Korean Studies* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 1–35.

[24] Snyder, "Expanding," 8.

[25] *Joint Declaration on the ROK-U.S. Alliance and Peace on the Korean Peninsula* (Washington, DC: The White House, November 17, 2005), available at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/ot/57075.htm>.

[26] U.S. Department of State, "United States and the Republic of Korea Launch Strategic Consultations for Allied Partnership," January

19, 2006, Washington, DC, available at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59447.htm>.

[27] The White House, "President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea," April 19, 2008, available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/04/20080419-1.html>.

[28] 2009 Joint Vision Statement.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "Joint Communique of the 43rd U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting," Yonhap News Agency, October 28, 2011, available at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/10/28/60/0301000000AEN20111028002000315F.HTML>.

[31] 2009 Joint Vision Statement.

[32] The White House, "Joint Fact Sheet: The United States–Republic of Korea Alliance: Shared Values, New Frontiers," October 16, 2015, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/16/joint-fact-sheet-united-states-republic-korea-alliance-shared-values-new>.

[33] The White House, "Remarks by President Obama and President Park of the Republic of Korea in Joint Press Conference," October 16, 2015, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/16/remarks-president-obama-and-president-park-republic-korea-joint-press>.

[34] The Republic of Korea *Cheong Wa Dae* (Blue House), "Opening Remarks by President Park Geun-hye at the New Year Press Conference," January 6, 2014, available at <http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/speeches.php?srh%5Bboard_no%5D=24&srh%5Bpage%5D=4&srh%5Bview_mode%5D=detail&srh%5Bseq%5D=4024&srh%5Bdetail_no%5D=22>.

[35] Jiyoon Kim et. al., *South Korean Attitudes Towards North Korea and Reunification* (Seoul: Asan Institute for Policy Studies, January 26, 2015), 30, available at <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/south-korean-attitudes-toward-north-korea-and-reunification/>.

[36] The costs of unification are difficult to estimate with a variety of variables that depend on the scenario. For example, South Korea's Ministry of Finance in 2013 placed the figure at "up to" 7 percent of the Republic of Korea's annualized gross domestic product (GDP). See Christine Kim, "Korean Unification May Cost South 7 Percent of GDP: Ministry," Reuters, January 1, 2013, available at <www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north-unification-idUSBRE90004F20130101>. More pessimistic estimates place it at 100 percent of ROK GDP. See for example Petersen Institute for International Economics researcher Marcus Noland's presentation to "Panel A: The Economic Synergy Effect of Unification on the Korean Peninsula," in *Korean Unification in a New Era*, ed. Victor D. Cha (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies/Rowman & Littlefield, December 1, 2014), 7, available at <http://csis.org/files/publication/141121_Cha_KoreanUnificationNewEra_Web.pdf>.

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