

# CHAPTER 7

## JAPAN'S GRAND STRATEGY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA: OPTIMISTIC REALISM

Victor D. Cha

The Japanese have always considered the Koreans to be an inferior race. [Wajima] said that a very elaborate study on the racial characteristics of Koreans had been prepared during the war, and that it had concluded that the mental and social capacities of the Koreans were of a very primitive nature. He said that this feeling on the part of the Japanese that Koreans are inferior to a great extent motivates Japanese uncertainty and hostility in regard to the Koreans.

Conversation with Japanese Official,  
1949<sup>1</sup>

An all-out invasion of Japan by Korea is inevitable if Korea is unified . . . [when it comes] it will be a blitz attack like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait . . . therefore it is in Japan's best interests to help North Korea economically so the Korean peninsula remains divided as now.

Kenichi Takemura, 1991<sup>2</sup>

Korea is one of the most complex, critical, and yet understudied of Japan's foreign policy relationships. While much attention in U.S. policy and academic circles has focused on Japan's future relations with China as the key variable for regional stability in the 21st century, an integral part of the security dynamic in East Asia has been driven by the Japan-Korea axis<sup>3</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this relationship was a proximate cause of two major power wars in Asia (i.e., Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese). During the Cold War, the Japan-Republic

of Korea (ROK) axis facilitated the American presence as an Asia-Pacific power and security guarantor. And in the post-Cold War era, outcomes in the Japan-Korea (united or still divided) relationship are critical to the shape of future balance of power dynamics in the region and, with it, the future American security presence. How, then, should we be thinking about future Japanese relations with the Korean peninsula? What are Tokyo's hopes and concerns with regard to Korea? How do they view the prospect of a united Korea? Is there a Japanese "grand strategy" regarding the peninsula?

The conventional wisdom offers a pessimistic response to these questions. As encapsulated in the epigraphs at the head of this chapter, this view posits a combination of historical contempt and geopolitics as auguring poorly for Japan's relations with a united Korea, hence compelling the Japanese in the direction of policies aimed at propping up the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) and keeping the peninsula divided.

The conventional wisdom is wrong. While such a pessimistic-realist view is often accepted at face value by both scholars and practitioners of Asian security, we find upon closer analysis that outcomes on the Japan-Korea axis are not nearly as negative as popularly conceived. Japanese grand strategy thinking, although cognizant of the variables for competition with the Korean peninsula, seeks actively to cultivate the potential for cooperation and preempt possible security dilemmas. This more optimistic-realist assessment derives from a number of larger geostrategic and domestic-political trends as well as from specific policies enacted by Tokyo and Seoul in the last decade that have improved relations considerably. I begin with a discussion of the conventional wisdom, followed by criticisms of this view. I then offer the argument for optimistic realism vis-à-vis Japanese grand strategy on the peninsula and conclude with propositions regarding the policy implications of this strategy.<sup>4</sup>

## Peer Competition.

The conventional wisdom argues that Japanese grand strategy is premised on avoiding peer competition with a united Korea. This anticipated competition derives from several factors.

**Geopolitics.** Proponents of this view cite Japanese concerns about geography and potentially threatening Korean capabilities. Geographic propinquity has always made Japan—as an island nation—somewhat uneasy with its continental Korean neighbor. Should a regime hostile to Japan ever control the peninsula, it would be strategically well-situated to threaten Japan. Indeed, historically when Japan faced external threats to its security, more often than not these emanated from the direction of the continent via the Korean peninsula. For the Japanese, then, Korea has always been the “dagger pointed at the heart” of Japan. This geostrategic fact will never change.<sup>5</sup>

Growing Korean military capabilities also concern the Japanese. The South Korean military through U.S. assistance and indigenous modernization efforts dating back to the Yulgok plans of the 1970s has transformed itself into a highly competent military.<sup>6</sup> What was once a poorly trained and deficient force wholly dependent on the United States at the end of the Korean war has now become one capable of defending against most ground contingencies vis-à-vis the North.<sup>7</sup> Unification would bring an enhancement of these capabilities. A united Korean military, the pessimistic realists argue, would possess a military of nearly 1.8 million with commensurate capabilities and aspirations to be a regional military player.<sup>8</sup>

**Hate.** Realism dictates that a significant increase in relative capabilities between proximate states can give rise to insecurity spirals.<sup>9</sup> In Japan’s case these concerns regarding Korea are exacerbated by two additional factors. The first is the deep historical antagonism between the two

countries stemming from the occupation period (1910-45). Arguments on the Korean side for this anger (in Korean, *han* or unredeemed resentment) are well-known. On the Japanese side, this history manifests itself in a superiority complex toward Korea inherent in the collective mindsets of former colonizers. It is also manifested in an “avoidance phenomenon”—a combination of discomfort and frustration at Korean attempts to hold Japan eternally responsible for its history.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, this negative historical memory has become deeply-ingrained in the two peoples’ mindsets through a variety of formal and informal institutions. Antagonistic images are passed down generationally through family folklore, chauvinist histories taught in secondary schools (on both Korean and Japanese parts), and popular and mass media-perpetuated stereotypes such that the negativism becomes a part of one’s identity. This is especially prevalent on the Korean side, where parts of the Korean self-identity become constructed in linear opposition to Japan. For example, the two national holidays in Korea (March 1 or *samilchol* and August 15 or *kwangbokchol*) celebrate Korean patriotism by specifically resurrecting anti-Japanese images. The 50th anniversary celebrations of Korean independence in 1995 were marked by the razing of the National Museum (the former colonial headquarters of Japan).<sup>11</sup> When the two Korean leaders agreed at the June 2000 North-South summit to hold family reunions, the date chosen for this symbolic affirmation of a united Korean identity was August 15th—the date of liberation from the Japanese occupation.

Because Korean nationalism is anti-Japanism, difficulties in the relationship remain prevalent despite seemingly compelling material forces for less friction.<sup>12</sup> For example, despite the string of Japanese colonial statements of contrition, Koreans remain unsatisfied with Japan’s “haughty” attitude. Despite the benefit to South Korean security of the revised U.S.-Japan defense guidelines, Koreans expressed trepidation at the marginally more

active role Japan could play in a contingency in the region. While Japanese peacekeeping contributions took place under severe self-imposed restrictions and far outside East Asia, Koreans still expressed concerns about renewed Japanese militarism. Although the DPRK August 1998 Taepo-dong launch was provocative and threatening, South Koreans took perverse hidden pleasure in Japanese convulsions over the event. Seen through the lense of identity, this otherwise puzzling behavior makes sense. Remaining even mildly neutral about Japan is in essence to deny a critical part of one's identity as Korean. Advocating security cooperation with Japan becomes synonymous with treason because it would be seen to subjugate Korea to Japanese domination. This ideational barrier to cooperation is manifested on the Korean side as a general state-of-mind as well as domestic-political aversion to discussions about Japan in a positive light. It is seen by many as a more formidable obstacle than any other in promoting cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

Coupled with the history issue is Japanese concern with potential balancing dynamics in Northeast Asia. In a post-unification scenario, the pessimists argue, the likelihood of a Korea-China coalition that alienates Japan is high. The end of the North Korean threat will most likely mean decreased support for U.S. forces in Korea as well as the end of the overarching security imperative for cooperation that characterized the U.S.-Japan-ROK security triangle during the Cold War. As the new united Korean entity seeks to define its place in the region, it will be drawn into a closer alignment with China.<sup>14</sup> This is (as the Chinese are fond of saying) the "natural order of things" in Asia given the pre-20th-century history of Asian international relations when the Chinese tributary system dominated (in this sense, the post-1945 order was the historical aberration rather than the norm). It is also a function of geography (i.e., what some post-Cold War analyses of the region have termed continental power accommodation),<sup>15</sup> and a civilizationally-inherent

bandwagoning dynamic among smaller Asian powers in the region vis-à-vis China.<sup>16</sup> Reinforcing this alignment trend will be a revanchist nationalism in a united Korea that finds a natural ally in China against Japan as the two share similar victimization experiences at the hands of Japanese colonizers.

Pessimists would argue that examples of this dynamic are already evident. When China and South Korea normalized relations in 1992, this rapprochement was celebrated in the language of restoring what was historically a “natural relationship.”<sup>17</sup> Even before the 1992 reconciliation, Seoul and Beijing were natural allies whenever an ill-conceived Japanese statement about history raises problems. The ROK’s decision not to participate in American-led research on theater missile defense (TMD) architectures in East Asia (while Japan has) is in good part a function of Korean desires not to alienate China.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, virtually all of the post-Cold War analyses of the region assume a consolidation of the China-Korea axis against Japan.<sup>19</sup>

### Japan’s Purported Grand Strategy: Predatory.

The upshot of these commonly-held assumptions for Japanese grand strategy is that a united Korea would possess the capabilities and motivations (revanchist nationalism) while lacking the impediments (cooperation based on the U.S.-Japan-Korea triangular alliance) for peer competition with Japan. For this reason, pessimists argue, Japan’s long-term strategy regarding the peninsula is a predatory one—to keep Korea divided and/or not encourage or facilitate a process of unification. This strategy is manifest in practices like Japan’s “comprehensive security” policy. Devised by Masayoshi Ohira, this doctrine maintained that Japan could provide for its security through nonmilitary means, which primarily meant economic assistance for prosperity and stability of the region.<sup>20</sup> Applied to the Korean peninsula, this strategy was

seen by South Koreans as thinly veiled attempts to keep Korea divided by Japan's providing assistance to the North.

Even more directly a reflection of Japan's purported grand strategy was the "equi-distance policy" for the peninsula. Conceived in the early 1970s by then Premier Tanaka Kakuei and Foreign Minister Kimura Toshio, this policy's rationale was that Japanese security was best served not by siding solely with the South but by maintaining equal contacts with both regimes, thereby fostering a balance of power on the peninsula. Similarly high-level dialogue during the Nakasone years in the 1980s was seen as part of the grand plan to keep Korea down.<sup>21</sup> Normalization dialogue at the end of the Cold War (i.e., Kanemaru mission) and current dialogue are seen in similarly negative light. Though couched in the language of economic assistance, humanitarian aid, and comprehensive security, this is all part of an overall predatory grand strategy that seeks to aid the North to keep the peninsula divided and thereby avoid peer competition.

Reassessing the Conventional Wisdom.

*Faulty Assumptions.* The conventional wisdom is wrong (or at least questionable) because many of the basic assumptions informing the view do not stand up well to more discriminating analysis. For example, while historical and geographical arguments for a united Korean security threat to Japan abound, historical precedents for such arguments are absent.<sup>22</sup> While Korea is often referred to as the "dagger" pointed at the heart of Japan, aggression has historically come through Korea (by China) and not from Korea itself. In all likelihood a united Korea would be more preoccupied with securing its new northern border (discussed below) and gaining domestic stability than with entertaining any designs on Japan.<sup>23</sup> In addition, arguments that Japan would be threatened by a joint North-South Korean military are unfounded. The two Korean militaries together might total 1.8 million which

indeed would be intimidating for Japan. However, in a unification scenario a more reasonable merger figure for the two militaries is likely. The appropriate military force would probably number around 650,000, which is comparable to current ROK levels.<sup>24</sup>

Second, while some Japanese hold negative images of Korea, these do not necessarily derive from peer competition. The modern-day origins of these images derive in good part from critical mass news media coverage of authoritarian ROK politics in the 1970s. Japanese looked with disdain on the martial-law brutality, political repression, and human rights abuses, particularly beginning with the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping in 1973. Then an opposition political leader, he was abducted from a Tokyo hotel room by KCIA operatives in what was a clear violation of Japanese sovereignty by the authoritarian Park regime. The repressive regime under Park (Yusin system) also undertook a number of actions against Japanese nationals and press agencies in the 1970s that nearly ruptured diplomatic relations.<sup>25</sup>

Yesterday's negative media coverage contrasts sharply with today's reports praising Korean political liberalization, economic development, the Seoul Olympics (1988), the Taejon World Expo, and the 2002 World Cup. Coupled with this was an almost naive infatuation with North Korea growing out of the 1970s that was rooted in three developments: the regional detente spurred by Sino-American rapprochement; the DPRK's success as a member of the nonaligned movement (and the ROK's failure to win membership); and the poor state of Japanese-ROK relations at the time. Among the Japanese left and intellectuals, there were also views of North Korea as the true representation of Korean nationalism since the South remained under the military "occupation" of the United States.<sup>26</sup> The point here is not to deny that negative history-based images exist, but that there are plausible alternative explanations deriving from politics to explain the contemporary incarnations of these biases. Moreover, as

the origins of these emotions are traced to variables (i.e., authoritarianism versus democracy; underdevelopment versus development) rather than constants (history), then the argument that these images are unmalleable and unchanging (assumed by the pessimistic realists) becomes less credible.

The final point regarding the conventional wisdom relates to agency. Proponents of these viewpoints on Japanese grand strategy, ironically, tend not to be Japanese but Koreans. Hence, these agents are not so much providing a window on Japanese strategic thinking as they are on nationalist thinking in Korea. They assign intentions and preferences to Japan deriving from their own fears and preoccupations regarding Japan. The results are arbitrary (and often logically inconsistent) assertions about Japanese predatory grand strategy that have little empirical validity. In spite of this, because these arguments are dynamic, controversial, and "sexy" (i.e., presaging conflict), they often tend to get published over the more sober, cautionary, and less sensationalist views. From the Korean side, cognitive biases are apparent in that any optimistic or conciliatory views that may emanate from Japan regarding the peninsula are usually not taken at face value but instead are seen at best as aberrant behavior and at worst as duplicitous.<sup>27</sup>

One illustration of the Korea-bias in the scholarship is the conspicuous absence of discussion regarding the two variables most likely to cause peer competition between Japan and Korea: ROK military modernization and nuclear weapons. Some observers argue that the ROK's post-Cold War military modernization and buildup eschews conventional ground war capabilities necessary for a North Korean contingency and instead emphasizes force projection capabilities such as a blue water navy, ballistic missile technology, in-flight refueling, and satellite technology. For example, the ROK Navy recently completed the first stage of the KDX Destroyer Program which entails development of 3,200-ton destroyers (KDX1) to replace old

*Gearing*-class ships acquired from the U.S. Navy in the 1960s and 1970s. There are also plans for construction by 2006 of nine 4,300-ton destroyers (KDX2) with an operating range of 4,000 miles, and eventually acquisition of state-of-the-art *Aegis*-class destroyers (KDX3) starting in 2010. An active submarine program is also underway. The ROK's first submarine program started in 1987 and will produce 12 new 1,200-ton 209-class diesel submarines (a joint venture of Daewoo and Germany HDW) by 2001 (nine completed). The new SSU program plans include acquisition of six 1,500 to 2,000-ton submarines by 2002. This would be followed by indigenous production of 3,000-ton submarines in the future.<sup>28</sup>

This buildup has continued in spite of the acute material constraints imposed by the 1998 financial crisis, and many argue that the ROK military in looking past the North Korean contingency is building to prepare for future regional conflicts, potentially with Japan.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, a united Korean entity based on current capabilities in the two countries would undoubtedly have available to it the options of nuclear weaponization as well as long-range ballistic missiles.<sup>30</sup> These are the variables most likely to cause security dilemmas and peer competition between the two countries, but they are never ones cited by the Koreans (i.e., conventional wisdom).

I do not advocate wholly discarding the conventional wisdom as there is no denying some elements of truth to it. Instead, this short exercise raises legitimate questions about accepting outright this view, because the assumptions which inform it, if not simply incorrect, are certainly susceptible to debate. Some of the most problematic variables that should be talked about by the Korean side are not being talked about. And there is a plethora of plausible alternative explanations for evidence cited by the conventional wisdom as validating the predatory arguments regarding Japanese grand strategy. I now turn to developing an alternate interpretation of this strategy.

*The Fear of Entrapment and Determinants of Japan's Korea Policy.* Since the normalization of relations in 1965, the factors that have driven policy toward Korea are more subtle and complex than simply an overarching desire to keep the peninsula divided. A key factor I have argued that is crucial to understanding Japanese strategic thinking on Korea has been the fear of "entrapment."<sup>31</sup> Deriving from the literature on alliance theory, entrapment generally refers to the expectations and anxieties regarding mutual support that underpin interaction between allied and aligned states.<sup>32</sup> Entrapment occurs when a commitment to an alliance turns detrimental to one's interests. It means being dragged into a conflict over an ally's interests that one does not share or shares only partially.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps more than any other factor, the fear of entrapment has been the most consistent single driver of Japan's Korea policy. Japan and the ROK are not party to a mutual defense treaty, but this does not preclude the existence of alignment patterns between the two states. As a result of their geographic proximity, prominence in the region, common security interests, and triangular alliance arrangements with the United States, the two nations exhibit alignment patterns and de facto security ties that play an important part in their overall relationship.<sup>34</sup> These informal defense links were first publicly enunciated in the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the November 1969 Nixon-Sato summit. Known as the "Korea clause," it stated that the security of the ROK was essential to Japan.<sup>35</sup> Concurrent with the enunciation of the Korea clause was the Okinawan base agreement, which stipulated that in the event of a second North Korea invasion, Japan would permit the United States unconditional access to bases in Okinawa for the defense of South Korea.<sup>36</sup> These two agreements constituted the closest approximation to a defense treaty between Japan and the ROK.

In the context of this triangular security relationship, Japan's strategy vis-à-vis the peninsula is informed by anxieties about becoming entrapped in contingencies that

were unwanted or would put Japan in awkward positions. For example, an overcommitment to Japan-ROK defense ties, in the form of strong support for the 1969 Korea clause, could lead to formal acknowledgment of the ROK's indispensable security contribution to Japan's defense. In addition, although the region is relatively stable, an overcommitment to Japan-ROK defense ties could actually have destabilizing second-order effects. Strong backing of the South could create a more volatile situation on the peninsula by increasing North Korean fears of encirclement. It could also embolden the South to become more provocative and intransigent toward the North. The result in either scenario could be a preemptive lashing out by the North, the consequence of which could be direct retaliation against Japan.

Minimizing these entrapment fears serves several Japanese needs. First, by promoting a stable status quo on the peninsula, Japan avoids having to contend with a host of politically difficult domestic issues. North Korean belligerency as a result of strong Japan-ROK ties would force Tokyo to contend with issues of rearmament and reevaluation of Article IX of the constitution. Japan would also have to deal with problematic issues such as internal monitoring of a substantial North Korean (Chosen Soren) resident population, and absorbing the potential outflow of Korean refugees in the event of a second Korean war.<sup>37</sup> Entrapment into relations with the ROK that alienated communist neighbors would close off potential export markets, thus adversely affecting Japanese economic interests, and run contrary to its *seikei bunri* (separation of economics from politics) policies. It also would run counter to the *senjo shori* post-war vision of reestablishing relations with all nations Japan had warred with or victimized in the past.

Second, by refraining from acknowledgment of a direct Japan-ROK security link, Tokyo avoids becoming vulnerable to the "bulwark of defense" argument and ROK demands for "security rent."<sup>38</sup> An additional Japanese

concern regarding such funds is to avoid Seoul's continual use of colonial contrition arguments as leverage to extract monetary forms of "moral repentance." Tokyo must also avoid succumbing to accusations that it withholds economic funds to stifle South Korea's rise as a competitor in Japanese market sectors.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Japan must straddle entrapment anxieties vis-à-vis the ROK with burden-sharing pressures from the United States. This pressure often takes the form of calls for Japanese assistance of South Korean economic development to promote prosperity and stability on the peninsula.<sup>40</sup> In sum, Tokyo's entrapment fears center on striking a balance between providing strong political and economic support for the ROK, and at the same time abstaining from overt security ties that would leave it vulnerable to South Korean demands for security rent or moral repentance.<sup>41</sup>

Understanding the entrapment dynamic is necessary because it sheds light on evidence that pessimists often point to as indicative of predatory Japanese long-term strategies on the peninsula. For example, pessimists point to Japan's renegeing on the Korea clause in the 1970s (Sato in January 1972 and Foreign Minister Ohira in August 1973 made statements backing away from commitments in the Korea clause and Okinawa base agreement<sup>42</sup>), as well as the Tanaka government's attempts at improving relations with North Korea, as validation of the strategy to keep the peninsula divided. However, the alternative explanation is that these actions were motivated by entrapment fears. In particular, detente both offered Tokyo opportunities to capitalize on its *seikei bunri* policies of expanding economic contacts with new countries and heightened its desires not to get entrapped into tight alignments with the ROK. The latter could (1) undercut the former objective by unnecessarily antagonizing potential parties, or (2) incite greater hostility in the region contrary to the new trend toward conciliation at the time.

The equi-distance policy practiced by Japan in the 1970s and part of the 1980s was not so much about keeping the two

Koreas down (as the pessimists argue) as about the more complex considerations the Japanese had about the peninsula. The equi-distance policy showed how Japan's security concerns on the peninsula were of a more multidimensional nature than those of the ROK. While the paramount concern for both was an unprovoked North Korean attack, Japan was also concerned about South Korean intransigence that might provoke the North as well as by a general war arising out of the superpower confrontation in the region. These disparities in what was seen as threatening on the peninsula reinforced Japanese entrapment fears regarding strong ties with the ROK and informed the equi-distance policy.

During the 1980s, Japan adamantly stated that it would not negotiate loan agreements with the ROK if the funds were classified as security-related. Pessimists see this as evidence of Japanese attempts to avoid enhancing ROK military capabilities.<sup>43</sup> But again, this behavior stemmed less from predatory peer competition and more from desires not to become entrapped in "security rent" rationales. And when Tokyo refused to link historical repentance issues with economic negotiations, rather than being evidence of Japan's aversion to resolving lingering historical grievances, this more nearly represented the desire to avoid becoming entrapped into untenable bargaining positions. There are many more examples that could be cited, but the upshot is that entrapment fears offer an alternative explanation of Japanese behavior on the peninsula. Moreover, if one tracks the consistency of the two explanations across time, the entrapment variable can better account for changes in behavior than the predatory pessimist argument (i.e., there are Japanese policies which are not explainable by the latter argument but are explainable with the entrapment variable).<sup>44</sup>

## Components of Japan's Long-Range Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era: Optimistic Realism.

If the pessimists' argument about predatory Japanese strategies does not hold water, then what are the components of a long-range grand strategy? I argue that an optimistic-realist approach better characterizes Japanese thinking. This has four basic tenets:

(1) Japan does *not* oppose unification of the peninsula.

(2) Japan proactively seeks alignment with this entity as a hedge (balance) against China.

(3) Japan does not fear and therefore seeks to preempt Korean revanchist inclinations.

(4) Japan seeks to reconstruct the ideational base of the relationship (i.e. history).

### No Opposition to Unification.

Contrary to the view of the pessimists, Japan does not seek to keep the Korean peninsula divided. Such an assertion raises the prior question of what exactly Tokyo seeks in terms of its own national security from the Korean peninsula. Japan has two key objectives in this regard: (1) stability; and (2) ensuring that alterations to the status quo work in Japan's favor. Regarding the former objective, although the DMZ remains one of the most heavily armed borders in the world, where peace is sustained only by the 1953 armistice, an odd form of stability has emerged, one that on the whole does not disadvantage Japan greatly (or at least no more so than any of the other major powers in the region). In this sense, Japan's needs are met by the known status quo on the peninsula rather than the unknown non-status quo option. Tokyo is therefore not opposed to unification *per se*; it is in favor of stability—which at present is provided by the status quo.

But if the two Koreas chose to reunify tomorrow, Japan would *not oppose* or impede this unification process in any

way, and most likely would proactively support it.<sup>45</sup> This is because any other option would defeat the long-term objective of assuring nonadversarial relations with a united Korea (2 above). Impeding the process of unification once it started (as the predatory argument might predict) would ensure an outcome contrary to Japanese interests (i.e., an adversarial united Korea). This sort of argument is also evident in discussions of Japanese aid to North Korea. The premise of such assistance is not for the explicit purpose of propping up the DPRK and keeping the two Koreas divided, but to prevent a collapse of the North or facilitate a regime transition that would cushion unification's political and economic effects on both Seoul and Tokyo.<sup>46</sup> While the impetus for changing the status quo is not likely to come from Japan, Koreans can be assured that, once they started the process themselves, Tokyo will be obligated to support it. This would not be out of affinity, goodwill, or loyalty (although these factors may be present), but because it is in Japan's national interests to do so. Thus, to say that Tokyo opposes dubious changes to the status quo on the peninsula but still would support unification are not necessarily logically inconsistent statements.

### Balancing against China.

Japan actively seeks close relations with a united Korea as a hedge against China. Again, one of the basic assumptions in the predatory argument for Japanese strategy is that Japan fears Korea bandwagoning with China against it; however, this view runs counter to basic realist logic. South Koreans certainly welcomed normalization with Beijing in 1992. This marked a triumphant crossing of the Cold War divide, and an opening of tremendous economic opportunity. Perhaps more significantly, however, Seoul welcomed normalization because in the South's zero-sum mentality, it amounted to the ultimate diplomatic coup vis-à-vis the North.<sup>47</sup> Along with Soviet normalization in 1990, Seoul succeeded in effectively isolating Pyongyang from its two primary Cold

War patrons. In this sense, the existence of the North Korean state has acted as a sort of buffer facilitating unbridled ROK enthusiasm for relations with Beijing.

In a unification scenario, however, this buffer disappears, and a united Korea faces the prospect of an 800-mile contiguous border with a militarily and economically burgeoning communist China whose intentions are not transparent. Moreover, it faces this situation most likely without the same U.S. security guarantees enjoyed during the Cold War. In addition, renewed Korean nationalism as a result of unification may translate into animosities and suspicions regarding China. The political mood of a post-unified Korea would be distrustful of a Chinese government as it stands today. In particular, once North Koreans realize the extent of their relative deprivation under Kim Il Sungism, any residual affinity for socialism that might be harbored in a united Korea would fall by the wayside. The possibility therefore arises that the new Korean state might view China with concern, and might heavily fortify its northern border.

Similar threat perceptions are not unthinkable on the Chinese side as well. Of all the powers in the region, Beijing has the most direct stake in the status quo on the peninsula. As a recent PLA editorial stated,

The Korean Peninsula is at the heart of northeast Asia and its strategic importance is obvious, to control the peninsula is to tightly grasp hold of northeast Asia.<sup>48</sup>

More specifically, as two Chinese analysts noted, loss of the North would leave China "deprived of an indispensable security buffer proximate to both the nation's capital and to one of its most important industrial regions."<sup>49</sup> A united Korea presents Beijing with the unwanted prospect of another noncompliant power (like Vietnam) on its flank, one with a competing ideological and social system. Moreover, China would not pass lightly over the security implications of such a situation. It has already expressed concerns about

the buildup of South Korean (and Japanese) naval forces, and such concerns are likely to be heightened in the case of a united Korea.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, if relations between Beijing and the United States are tense, then the Chinese perception that the West might utilize Korean unification as a means of containing China is far from remote.

For these reasons, a lengthy 1992 report on future peninsular strategies by the Communist Party Central Committee (CPC) stated that despite Seoul-Beijing normalization, North Korea was still "China's Northeast Asian strategic bulwark." It stated that the North's absorption by the South would have a "devastating psychological impact" on China, and therefore Beijing's priorities center on preventing Korea from becoming "the route for the overthrow of socialism by peaceful means from the West."<sup>51</sup> As one specialist noted, for these and other reasons, the Chinese perception of a united Korea is therefore far from one of unadulterated optimism:

From a longer-term perspective, China is apprehensive about potential threats to its interests from a reunified Korea. In the economic sphere, Beijing is wary of competition from a united Korean economic powerhouse. Politically, the Chinese are uncertain about the role that a united Korea might play in the region and worried that Japan could eventually dominate the peninsula and undermine China's growing influence in Korea. Militarily, the prospect of a reunified Korea with at least a potential if not an actual nuclear capability is also cause for Chinese concern. In addition, some Chinese foresee the possibility that a reunified Korea would seek to reclaim Chinese territory bordering Korea that both North and South view as the birthplace of the Korean nation.<sup>52</sup>

History has shown that states with contiguous borders, whether intentionally or not, often lapse into competition driven by security fears.<sup>53</sup> In this regard, Japan is fully aware that the most proximate threat to a united Korea may emanate from China, not Japan.<sup>54</sup> A united Korea does not have the autonomous capabilities to balance against China; in addition, in the post-Cold War era, it does not have the

luxury of certain U.S. security guarantees. Furthermore, while a united Korea will certainly harbor its share of animosities toward Japan, this relationship (presumably between Tokyo and a united government under Seoul) would still be grounded in the decades of Japanese-South Korean normalized relations that preceded unification.<sup>55</sup> It would also be grounded in a familiarity bred through common security ties with the United States for the entire post-war and Cold War eras.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, the cumulative experiences undergirding a united Seoul-Beijing relationship would not extend further back than 1992. Compelled to balance against the more proximate and unfamiliar threat, Korea could look to Japan with greater fondness.

In addition, the pessimist's argument for Japanese peer competition with Korea fails to acknowledge that Japanese grand strategy is not made in the vacuum of Tokyo-Seoul bilateral relations but must be consistent and conversant with the larger foreign policy picture.<sup>57</sup> For example, Japanese geostrategic thinking in the 21st century faces a number of cross-pressures and imperatives.<sup>58</sup> Japan faces uncertain relationships with Russia and China (the latter is where peer competition is likely); imperatives for a more independent foreign policy and a larger leadership role in the region commensurate with its economic capabilities; and the need to move beyond its one-dimensional security dependence on the United States.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, pursuit of more proactive defense policies must not contradict constitutional principles; must not disregard domestic aversion to rearmament; and must not raise regional concerns about renewed Japanese militarism. A *thriving* relationship—not peer competition—with Korea seems to fit well with these needs. It provides for Japanese security and regional stability, and at the same time strikes a balance between a policy not too strong to raise regional suspicions and incite anti-Japan balancing coalitions, but not too weak to embolden influence-seeking by China.

## Not Concerned with Korean "Revenge."

As noted earlier, the arguments regarding Korean revanchist nationalism are overstated and misfounded on three points. The first is with regard to intentions—while Korea has often been referred to as a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan, aggression has historically come from China (via the peninsula), not by aggressive Koreans themselves. The second is with regard to geography—as alluded to above, a united Korea would be more preoccupied with threats on its contiguous northern land border than with any far-flung designs on Japan across the sea. The third is with regard to capabilities—i.e., arguments that Japan would be threatened by a joint North-South Korean military are misfounded since a combined military force would be greatly rationalized.

One area in which potential security dilemmas do arise for Japan is future Korean force procurement. This breaks down along three lines—the extent to which Korea seeks naval capabilities; the extent to which it deploys ballistic missiles; and whether it becomes a nuclear power. The likelihood of any of these is far from remote. As noted above, naval modernization programs in submarines and destroyers has proceeded in spite of the 1998 financial crisis, with Korean intentions clearly to develop competent regional capabilities. On the Korean peninsula today, between the two regimes, there exists the capabilities to field a wide array of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. Seoul has expressed a clear desire to upgrade its own missile ranges beyond those specified in the 1979 bilateral agreement with the United States. Finally, DPRK interests in nuclear weaponization have been clearly documented. And on the South Korean side, if unification means a retrenchment of the United States, the two times historically that the ROK was interested in nuclear weapons were the two times the U.S. commitment to Korean security was perceived to be deficient.

From the Japanese perspective, the key to averting security dilemmas with Korea over these issues in the future is to create and maintain as much dialogue and transparency as possible in the present.<sup>60</sup> Rather than complain about the ROK's naval modernization plans (as China has done or as the ROK has done vis-à-vis Japanese peacekeeping participation and revision of the U.S.-Japan defense guidelines), Japan has taken the high road, ignoring third party speculation that the ROK buildup is directed against Japan, and actively seeking ways to enhance maritime coordination and dialogue.<sup>61</sup> This has been manifest in an unprecedented increase in bilateral security activity in the past 5 years including exchange visits between working level officers up through Joint Chiefs of Staff chairs and defense ministers, cadet exchanges, the first-ever reciprocal port calls, and search and rescue exercises (SAR).<sup>62</sup> It is also evident in activities at the Track II level aimed at creating familiarity and seeking new avenues of military coordination.<sup>63</sup> With regard to potential Korean nuclear and missile proliferation, Japan would seek to facilitate to the extent possible a united Korea's continued compliance with nonproliferation regimes (as the ROK does now). Again, the key point here is that the Japanese response has not been to complain, accuse, or rally regional support to prevent such scenarios from occurring (as a predatory strategy might suggest, or as South Koreans have done regarding certain Japanese behavior), but a more patient approach seeking to develop a cooperative foundation upon which to manage any potential problems along these lines.

### Reconstructing History.

The fourth tenet of Japan's long-term strategy is to construct a new ideational base for the Japan-Korea relationship, one that moves away from the current fixation on the colonial period and historical animosity and gives the relationship a more positive identity.<sup>64</sup> There are interesting parallels here with China. As pessimists argue,

the construction of the Korea-China relationship has been wholly positive, drawing on a common Confucian heritage and the history of the tributary system. But who is to say that such constructions will remain constant over time? As one observer noted, often-cited Korean resentments toward Japan seem equally relevant in the Chinese case:

When Koreans get around to nursing grudges, they might consider which neighbor (Japan or China) saddled them with Kim Il Sung, which gave the go-ahead for the Korean War, and which prevented non-Communist unification in late 1950 by massive, undeclared intervention.<sup>65</sup>

Traces of this sort of problem were already apparent in the negotiations leading up to the 1992 normalization treaty. As a ROK foreign ministry official recalled, China's outright rejection of statements expressing remorse or repentance for the Korean war in the treaty left a sobering subtext to the fanfare of the moment.<sup>66</sup> In addition, nationalist fervor from a united Korea might also raise Beijing's concern about the two million-strong ethnic Korean community in Manchuria (Jilin province), the largest contingent of overseas Koreans in the world. Unification raises a plethora of unpleasant scenarios for Beijing regarding mass migration or ethnic identification of this group with the new Korean state. As early evidence of this, China has already expressed disapproval of former President Roh's advocacy of an international community of Koreans (1989). Sensitivities were also manifest in Beijing's harsh charge in 1995 that seemingly innocuous Korean tour groups to Manchuria might incite secessionist movements among the ethnic minority.<sup>67</sup> In addition, during normalization talks in 1992, Beijing rejected ROK proposals for establishment of consulate offices in Jilin, and remains reluctant to permit ROK heads of state to tour this area during summit visits.<sup>68</sup>

A trend that weighs strongly in favor of a positive reconstruction of the Japan-Korea relations is democracy.<sup>69</sup> In particular, the ROK's democratic consolidation and

economic prosperity transform Japanese images of its neighbor. As noted earlier, a good part of the negativism surrounding Korea in Japan derived from the repressive practices of the authoritarian regimes in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. As Korea developed and liberalized, the change gradually influenced the Japanese government and general public to hold more positive images of Korea and Koreans. One manifestation of this was the *Kankoku boomu* (Korea boom) in which Korean language, food, and music experienced an upsurge in popularity in Japan in the late-1980s.<sup>70</sup> Plans to start Korean language broadcasting in Japan by the end of the century have also been implemented.<sup>71</sup> A study on the Korean minority in Japan noted additional ways in which perceptions are changing:

A new image is emerging for Koreans in Japan. This new image is vibrant, dynamic, and self-confident, backed not only by growing economic power but by changing cultural attitudes.<sup>72</sup>

On the Korean side, as the country embraces democracy and progresses toward economic prosperity, its enhanced international prestige (reflected in such events as the 1988 Seoul Olympics, United Nations membership in 1991, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) membership in 1996, and 2002 World Cup with Japan) fosters a growing self-confidence among Koreans that reduces national insecurities and xenophobia, nurturing a less petty, less emotional attitude in dealings with Japan.

This process of identity change was evident at the October 1998 summit between Kim Dae Jung and Obuchi Keizo. It was not evident in the colonial apology, the fishery zones agreement, the commitment to joint naval exercises, or the joint action plan, all of which the popular press focused on.<sup>73</sup> These were undoubtedly all unprecedented material accomplishments, but what were of significance from an ideational perspective were instead the little things that went largely unnoticed. In speeches before the Diet,

Kim Dae Jung spoke of how Koreans were as responsible as Japanese for putting the history issue to rest and moving forward. The two leaders called "infantile" the fixation on 50 years of negative Japan-ROK interaction at the expense of 1,500 years of positive exchanges and cooperation. Japan trumpeted Korea's successful road to democracy while Korea lauded Japan's peace constitution and commitment to overseas assistance.<sup>74</sup> These attempts to reconstruct history, to emphasize the positive interaction over negative, to express admiration for the other's accomplishments, were not present in past interactions. They represented subtle but important manifestations of Japanese desires to change templates and transform the identity of the relationship.

#### Policy Implications of Japan's Grand Strategy on Korea.

Two questions confront this final section. First, given the chapter's interpretation of Japanese grand strategy, what are the implications for current policy? Second, how plausible are certain suggested scenarios for security outcomes in the region involving Japan given what we know about the strategy?

*Engagement with the DPRK.* The pessimists would see Tokyo's current policy of restarting normalization negotiations in early 2000 with Pyongyang as well as the overall engagement strategy with North Korea as consistent with the predatory grand strategy. In this view, Japan continues to prop up the North indefinitely with assistance, couching this in the benevolent language of engagement and humanitarian aid, but really for the purpose of averting a reunited Korea.<sup>75</sup> I do not believe this is an accurate interpretation. Tokyo's engagement policy with Pyongyang is not informed or motivated by an overarching desire to delay unification but by a variety of other less menacing motives. A degree of entrapment anxieties informs the policy in the sense that Japan still

seeks to avoid situations in which the DPRK feels so encircled and isolated that it might lash out.<sup>76</sup> Economic assistance to the DPRK is provided by Tokyo not so much to prop up the North as to avoid hard landing scenarios that would have destabilizing repercussions for Seoul, Tokyo, and the region as a whole.<sup>77</sup> Engagement is also a function of short-term expediency. Kim Dae Jung's sunshine policy and the Perry review's emphasis on trilateral coordination compelled Tokyo to step in line on the policy in spite of substantial inclinations to the contrary after the *Taepo dong* test flight over the home island in August 1998. In addition, Tokyo had few other alternatives. A hardline position after the launch (encompassing the levying of sanctions and renegeing on financial commitments to KEDO) would have had little effect on North Korea and would have alienated Japan in relations with Seoul and Washington.

The likelihood of a positive result in these negotiations is not good. The DPRK's refusal to acknowledge (let alone investigate) the alleged abductions of Japanese citizens from Japan dating back to the 1970s remains a major impediment. In addition, a normalization settlement that entailed large sums of money in the range of \$5-10 billion that essentially served as a bribe to moderate the DPRK missile threat to Japan would be domestically unacceptable.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the most useful insight that the grand strategy discussion offers here is with regard to the flexibility of Japan's position on engagement. While the predatory argument would see Tokyo as wedded to engagement (i.e., as long as the DPRK is in relatively dire straits, it would prop up the regime to prevent collapse and unification), Japan's grand strategy actually allows for much greater flexibility. Because this strategy does not in fact "fear" unification (and would seek to accommodate and support such a process were it to occur), Tokyo would not be constrained from shifting away from engagement toward more coercive or isolation policies if the consensus among the allies in the region moved in that direction.<sup>79</sup>

*China-South Korea Relations.* Another policy implication that can be deduced from the grand strategy is with regard to how Tokyo views Beijing's actions on the peninsula. China has certainly had a more prominent role than Japan in the post-Cold War on peninsular issues. Beijing participates in the Four Party Talks on the armistice; it has provided the venue for much of the North-South contacts, including the ones that led to the agreement on the June 2000 Pyongyang summit; it played subtle but important roles in defusing the nuclear crisis in 1994 and in the DPRK missile testing moratorium. Tokyo, on the other hand, has been largely relegated to a secondary role, as a financial contributor to KEDO. Japan might therefore be concerned about the degree to which China exercises an inordinate amount of influence on the peninsula.

There is no denying Beijing's enhanced role in shaping events on the peninsula, while China-South Korea relations since 1992 remain on an uptick (as do China-DPRK relations given the recent visit by Kim Jong Il to Beijing).<sup>80</sup> However, while cognizant of this, Japan is not overly worried. As noted above, this is because of a realization that, in the longer term, regime type, geography, economics, and familiarity work in favor of Japan-Korea alignments and to the disadvantage of China-Korea ones, especially if the North Korean buffer is gone. The one exception to this might be economic complementarities on the China-Korea axis; however, even here the outlook is not nearly as sanguine as the popular wisdom predicts.<sup>81</sup>

*Other Security Outcomes.* Finally, what does the strategy tell us about Japanese reactions to other security scenarios in the region? Given the DPRK's unexpected resiliency and the June 2000 Korea summit, increasingly there is discussion of nonzero-sum peace solutions on the peninsula where the two regimes co-exist rather than reunite. Indeed the 2000 joint declaration between the two Koreas expressed explicit agreement between Seoul and Pyongyang that the common denominator of their

respective unification formulas was a long interim period of coexistence under a “one nation, two systems” vision. There is nothing a priori in Japanese strategic thinking that would be averse to such an outcome, but then again it would depend greatly on the circumstances of this end-state on the peninsula. If for example, the “one nation, two systems” solution left two Korean regimes in peace and compliant with arms control and nonproliferation agreements, then Japan might favor such stability. On the other hand, if this end-state came about without substantial moderation of DPRK military capabilities, then Japan would be no better off. In other words, if the inter-Korean peace solution deals only with those things relevant to peninsular security like DMZ troop reductions and artillery, but does not address long-range missiles, then Japan would most likely oppose such an outcome. Tokyo would not oppose the inter-Korean peace per se, but would be very concerned about another form of entrapment—in this case, the ROK incentive to take its newfound peace with the DPRK (i.e., moderation of the threat of invasion and artillery) and decouple its security from Japan with regard to missiles or nuclear weapons.

What about the possibility of Japan shedding its nonproliferation identity as a response to continued DPRK threats? Or, conversely, what about Japan bandwagoning with China and the DPRK to mitigate its external threats? Either proposition is certainly plausible. In the former case, Japan clearly possesses the capabilities, technology, and infrastructure to proliferate. In the latter, if one is a fan of cultural arguments for security, there exist precedents for a bandwagoning with China in the region.<sup>82</sup> The answers to such questions lie less in Japanese grand strategy on the peninsula and more in Japanese confidence in the U.S. alliance. As long as U.S. commitments remain firm, the likelihood of Japan seeking alternative internal or external balancing options is low. In other words, the causal arrow is more likely to run in the direction from a weakened U.S. alliance to alternative balancing options, rather than from

alternative balancing options to a weakened U.S. alliance. As one longtime Japan expert observed,

So long as the United States sustains its existing presence in the region, Tokyo will undoubtedly maintain its cooperation with Washington as a core element of its foreign policy. Under current circumstances, it is highly unlikely that Japan will try to establish a cooperative system with its regional neighbors in an effort to free itself from the sphere of U.S. influence.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion.

Since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the common assumption has been that Japan's predatory grand strategy has been premised on a fear of unification and a desire to prevent it. At times this has been explicit through the equi-distance policy of the 1970s or more subtle through post-Cold War humanitarian aid and economic assistance policies to prop up the DPRK regime. But a true understanding of the relevant grand strategy must look for the continuities in Japanese attitudes toward the peninsula, not just since 1945 but over the past centuries. What emerges from this longer-term view are two constants. First, Japan has always sought a relationship with Korea that works to Japan's security advantage in the region; and second, Japan has always seen Korea policy embedded in the larger context of the region's balance of power. What has changed in the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is the mode by which Japan has sought these objectives. In the past, this was based on unilateral military domination of the peninsula; today, it is based on alignment and cooperation within the context of U.S.-Japan-Korea relations. The point to be made here is that neither of these objectives logically dictates Japanese opposition to a unified peninsula in the 21st century.

As this chapter has shown, arguments suggesting such predatory motives have done so based less on a reading of the continuities in strategy and more on historical biases

and enmity. What emerges in the former case is a grand strategy for Japan not prejudiced against unification, but actively in pursuit of unification outcomes that work to Japan's advantage in the regional distribution of power. This translates to support for the DPRK not because Tokyo wants to keep the peninsula divided, but because it wants to cushion and shape unification in stable directions that benefit Japan. Moreover, Japan seeks more political and military cooperation with South Korea not because it is carefully planning its opportunity to repeat history. Rather, it is because in the longer term there is a realization that confidence, trust, and transparency on this axis can only benefit Japan's security under virtually all balance of power configurations one could imagine in the region's future. This indeed is a very realist perspective but also an optimistic one.

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 7

1. "Memorandum of Conversation on February 3, 1949, Between Richard B. Finn and Wajima Eiji, Director of the Control Bureau of the Foreign Office," from POLAD to the Secretary of State, 894.4016/2-1849, RG 59, Internal Affairs of Japan, in Sung-Hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1991, p. 72.

2. Kenichi Takemura, quoted in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 31, 1991, p. 31, in Young-Sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, "Introduction," in *Japan and Korean Unification*, Seoul: Yonsei University, 1999, p. 10, note 2.

3. Until the 1990s, there were only a handful of scholarly monographs on Japan's Korea policy (Chae-Jin Lee and Hideo Sato, *U.S. Policy Toward Japan and Korea*, New York: Praeger, 1982; Chong-Sik Lee, *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension*, Stanford: Hoover Press, 1985; Chin-Wee Chung, ed., *Korea and Japan in World Politics*, Seoul: Korean Association of International Relations, 1985; and Brian Bridges, *Japan and Korea in the 1990s*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993). Since the end of the Cold War, interest in the topic has grown, largely due to DPRK agitation and concern about contingency planning (Ralph Cossa ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a Virtual Alliance*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999; Young-Sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean*

*Unification*, Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999; Sang-Woo Rhee and Tae-Hyo Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations: Prescriptive Studies*, Seoul: Oreum Publishing, 2000; *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Japan-U.S.-Korea—Workshop II Report* by the Center for Naval Analyses, Korea Institute of Defense Analyses, and the Okazaki Institute, May 1998; Japan National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)/U.S. Center for Naval Analyses and KIDA, *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Japan, U.S., Korea*, February 1997; *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Korea-US-Japan Workshop III*, October 1999). This later generation of literature focuses on specific issues regarding trilateral coordination and DPRK contingencies; it does not directly address the question of Japanese grand strategy. Many of these works make implicit assumptions about such a strategy, but relatively few works really spell out or try to rigorously infer what such a strategy might entail (see Michael Green, "State of the Field Report: Research on Japanese Security Policy," *National Bureau of Asian Research Access Asia Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 1998, pp. 37-39).

4. In this chapter, I do not employ the term "realism" in strict international relations theory terms (i.e., structural or classical realism). Instead, I utilize the term loosely in that both the pessimistic and optimistic assessments of Japan-Korea relations discussed in this chapter employ capabilities-based variables to explain outcomes. This does not deny that other factors of a nonrealist nature (domestic politics, historical enmity, etc.) are employed to embellish the analysis. For other different realist interpretations of Japanese foreign policy, see Eric Heginbotham and Richard Samuels, "Mercantile Realism and Japanese Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Spring 1998, pp. 171-203; Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, New York: St. Martins, 1996; Kenneth Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, Washington, DC: AEI, 1996; and Michael Green and Benjamin Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism," *Survival*, Vol. 38, No.2, Summer 1996, pp. 35-58.

5. For the classic statement, see James W. Morley, "The Dynamics of the Korean Connection," in Gerald Curtis and Sung-joo Han, eds., *The U.S.-South Korean Alliance*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983. Also see Hisahiko Okazaki, "Japan-South Korea Security Cooperation: A View Towards the Future," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Cooperation*, pp. 89-90.

6. For the most recent modernization plans for the ROK military, see *Defense White Paper 1999*, Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2000.

7. Michael O'Hanlon, "Stopping a North Korean Invasion: Why Defending South Korea is Easier than the Pentagon Thinks," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Spring 1998, pp. 135-170.

8. This is based on a simple aggregation of current DPRK and ROK capabilities. The militaries are respectively 1.1 million and 670,000. For further details, see *Defense White Paper 1999*, Parts I and II; also see Bruce Bennett, "Conventional Arms Control in Korea: A Lever for Peace?" conference paper, NPEC/INSS/AWC Competitive Strategies Workshop Series: Planning for a Peaceful Korea, Arlington, VA, June 12-14, 2000. As will be discussed below, estimates based on a simple aggregation like this are flawed.

9. Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No.2, January 1978, pp. 167-214.

10. Akira Tanaka, "Japan and Korea—Relations Between Two Peripheral Cultures," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No.1, March 1981, pp. 30-38.

11. Although Kim Dae Jung has gone to great lengths to improve relations with Japan, the degree to which even he lapsed into invoking images of "imperialist Japan" and blaming Tokyo in conjunction with the other major powers for Korea's division at the 80th anniversary celebrations of *samilchol* is a reminder of how deeply negative and anti-Japan are Korean conceptions of nationalism (see Kim's speech in "A Nation Recalls a Bold Bid for Freedom," *Newsreview*, March 6, 1999). Negatively-constructed nationalisms and nationalist myths are not unique to Korea; however, the degree to which this identity is so viscerally framed against a past aggressor may marginally distinguish the Korean case.

12. For identity-based arguments in this vein, see Tom Berger, "Tangled Visions: Culture, Historical Memory and Japan's External Relations," conference paper, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Boston, MA, September 8, 1998; and Gerrit Gong, ed., *Remembering and Forgetting: The Legacy of War and Peace in East Asia*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1996.

13. In social science terms, systematic biases of a cognitive or affective nature stemming from this history on the part of the government and general public give rise to an atmosphere of distrust and contempt which makes compromise or concession in negotiations extremely difficult. This in turn prevents the possibility of amiable or rationally-based negotiation.

14. Jae-Ho Chung, "The Korean-American Alliance and the 'Rise of China,'" Discussion Paper on America's Alliances with Japan and Korea, Stanford: A/PARC, 1999.

15. Robert Ross, "The Geography of Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No.4, Spring 1999, pp. 81-118.

16. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996, pp. 229-238.

17. For a thorough and insightful analysis, see Chae-Jin Lee, *China and Korea: Dynamic Relations*, Stanford: Hoover Press, 1997.

18. Victor Cha, "Engaging North Korea Credibly," *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 151-152.

19. Examples include Richard Betts, "Wealth, Power and Instability," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993/94, pp. 34-77; Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993/94, pp. 5-33; Ross, "The Geography of Peace"; and Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East*, NY: HarperCollins, 1999.

20. Seizaburo Sato, Kenichi Koyama, and Shunpei Kumon, *Postwar Politician*, New York: Kodansha, 1990, pp. 450-456.

21. Gerald Curtis, ed., *Japan's Foreign Relations After the Cold War*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993, pp. 263-272.

22. Morley, "Dynamics of the Korean Connection," p. 8.

23. For one of the early and eloquent expositions of this contrarian argument, see Mark Fitzpatrick, "Why Japan and the United States Will Welcome Korean Unification," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Fall 1991. Arguments against the Chinese bandwagon dynamic are addressed below.

24. This figure is based on the traditional benchmark of military forces as approximately 1 percent of total population.

25. See Hideshi Takesada, "Korea-Japan Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Issues," in Rhee and Kim, *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p. 125; Lee, *Japan and Korea*, chap. 4; and Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997, pp. 41-56.

26. Hideya Kurata, "Historical Perspectives on Japan-Korea Relations," conference paper, SSRC/CGP Workshop on Japan's North Korea Policy, Washington, DC, March 1, 2000.

27. For examples, see Choon-Kun Lee, "War and Peace on the Korean Peninsula," *Korea Military Review* (in Korean), Vol. 10, January 2000; Hong-nak Kim, "Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 2, May 1987, pp. 497-514; Dal-joong Chang, "Integration and Conflict in Japan's Corporate Expansion into South Korea," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1983, pp. 114-36; and Byong-man Ahn, "The Internal Political Change in Japan and its Foreign Policy Toward Korea," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer 1978, pp. 179-97. For an exception to this view, see Ro-Myung Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 7, No. 6, November-December 1999, pp. 18-24.

28. On these points, see MND, *Defense White Paper 1997-98*; "Defense Ministry pushes Destroyer Plan," *Korea Herald*, June 8, 1998; Myung-ho Moon, "Debate on a Blue Water Navy," *Munhwa Ilbo*, April 8, 1997; "Military Concerned about Defense Budget Cuts," *Korea Herald*, February 7, 1998; Charles Morrison, ed., *Asia-Pacific Security Outlook*, Honolulu: East-West Center, 1997; "Major Military Procurement Projects to be Delayed or Canceled," *Korea Times*, January 8, 1998; "South Korea to Buy Eight CN-235 Indonesian Military Aircraft," *Korea Herald*, November 20, 1997; *Korea's Seapower and National Development in the Era of Globalization*, Seoul: Sejong Institute, 1995; Yong-sup Han, "Korea's Security Strategy for 21st Century: Cooperation and Conflict," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No.4, July-August 1997; Joon-ho Do, "Security Strategy for 21st Century," *Wolgan Choson*, November 25 1993; Seo-Hang Lee, "Naval Power as an Instrument of Foreign Policy," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 2, March-April 1997.

29. See "ROK Navy Pursues Blue Water Ambition," *Korea Times*, November 12, 1995; Seo-Hang Lee, "Naval Power as an Instrument of Foreign Policy," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 2, March-April 1997, pp. 26-36; *Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 1995; *Joongang Ilbo*, January 23, 1995; Kent Calder, *Pacific Defense*, New York: William Morrow, 1996; Aidan Foster-Carter, *Korea's Coming Reunification: Another East Asian Superpower?* Economist Intelligence Unit, Special Report No. M212, London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1992.

30. Given current trends in both Koreas, it is difficult to imagine a future Korea without some form of substantial ballistic missile capability. The DPRK ballistic missile program since the early 1980s has produced a range of missile systems, either deployed or tested, demonstrating progress beyond most expectations. Despite its dire

material constraints, the North accomplished this largely through reverse-engineering of SCUD-B missile technology acquired from the Soviet Union. The August 1998 test flight of the *Taepodong-1* over Japan demonstrated an unexpected leap in IRBM technology (albeit a failed 3-stage payload launch). The ROK has sought to move away from a 1979 agreement with the United States that restricts South Korean missile ranges to 180 km. Seoul wants greater independence from the United States in terms of an indigenous missile program capability and membership in the MTCR which would enable the ROK to develop missiles to 300 km. To the surprise and unease of the U.S. government, the ROK test fired a surface-to-surface missile some eight months after the *Taepodong* test, demonstrating both the capabilities and determination to develop a more advanced and independent missile deterrent (analysts maintain that the South Korean missile already violates the 1979 limits but was deliberately under-fueled to deflect accusations by the United States). U.S. intelligence reports cite evidence of clandestine ROK activities in rocket motors indicative of an effort to develop longer-range missiles (*New York Times*, November 14, 1999). In addition, the ROK has renewed strong interest from the 1970s in a civilian space launch vehicle program (see Calvin Sims, "South Korea Plans to Begin Rocket Program," *New York Times*, January 15, 2000).

31. Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

32. Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4, July 1984, pp. 461-496; and *Alliance Politics*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

33. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 467.

34. For example, throughout post-war and Cold War eras, the two states essentially comprised an integrated unit in U.S. defense planning in the region. The presence of American ground troops in South Korea was as much an extending frontline of defense for Tokyo as it was for Seoul. Similarly, the U.S. Seventh fleet and Marine units in Japan provided rearguard support for the ROK. Joint U.S.-Korea military exercises regularly employed bases in Japan for logistic support; U.S. tactical air wing deployments rotated frequently between Japan and Korea; and air and naval surveillance of North Korea was operated out of bases in Japan. In addition, Seoul and Tokyo conducted periodic exchanges of defense officials, developed bilateral forums for discussion of security policies, and engaged in some sharing of military intelligence and technology.

35. "Joint Communique Between President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato," November 21, 1969, sec. 4.

36. This commitment was originally made in Sato's National Press Club address in Washington after release of the Nixon-Sato joint communiqué. Also see Eisaku Sato, "New Pacific Age," *Pacific Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1970, pp. 333-340.

37. Monitoring of the *Chosen Soren* was a constant source of friction between Tokyo and Seoul during the 1960s and 1970s as North Korean infiltration of the South was largely conducted through Japan. The refugee issue, though less openly stated by Japanese, is nevertheless a very salient concern. These numbered between 200,000-500,000 during the Korean War.

38. This essentially states that Japan should provide economic aid as a form of "security rent" to the ROK as the latter bears the burden of undergirding stability in the Japanese defense perimeter.

39. This is termed the "boomerang effect." For example, South Korean authorities accused Tokyo of denying funding of the Kwangyang Steel works complex because Japan's earlier support of the P'ohang steel complex in 1969 made the ROK a rival supplier of steel. More recently, the ROK has used this argument in connection with Japanese reluctance to provide technology. Japan does not want to give in to South Korean complaints and become locked into investment projects in the ROK when cheaper sources of labor exist elsewhere (e.g., Southeast Asia). In addition, Tokyo sees technology transfer issues as a private sector decision beyond the realm of direct government influence (see Akira Kubota, "Transferring Technology in Asia," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 1986; Hy-sang Lee, "Japanese-South Korean Economic Relations on Troubled Economic Waters," *Korea Observer*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Summer 1985; and Soon Cho, "A Korean View of Korean-Japan Economic Relations," in Chin-wee Chung et al., eds., *Korea and Japan in World Politics*, Seoul: KAIR, 1985).

40. One manner of contending with these forces was, as noted earlier, the "comprehensive security strategy" (CSS). First conceptualized by Ohira in 1973 and later formalized by Suzuki in 1981, this states that Japan will promote regional peace and stability through nonmilitary means.

41. For elaboration of the argument, see Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 2.

42. *Korea Herald*, January 9-11, 1972, and August 4, 1973.

43. Lee, *Japan and Korea*, p. 118.

44. An in-depth discussion of the empirical tests is beyond the scope of this chapter. See Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 7.

45. For arguments in a similar vein, see Young-sun Lee and Masao Okonogi, "Introduction," in Lee and Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean Unification*, pp. 9-10.

46. See Masao Okonogi, "The North Korean Crisis and Japan's Political and Diplomatic Responses"; Tetsuo Murooka, "North Korean Economic Policy and Implications for Japan's Economic Assistance"; and Yukiko Fukagawa, "Japan's Economic Assistance to North Korea," all in Lee and Okonogi, eds., *Japan and Korean Unification*.

47. On the ROK's zero-sum mentality and classically realist conceptions of security, see Patrick Morgan, "The U.S.-ROK Strategic Relationship," in Donald Clark et al., eds., *U.S.-Korean Relations*, Claremont, CA: Keck Center, 1995, pp. 81-106.

48. *PLA Daily*, July 10, 2000 (editorial).

49. Jia Hao and Shuang Qubing, "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 1992, p. 1137.

50. "Chinese Military Wary of Naval Buildup of Japan, Korea," *Korea Herald*, November 10, 1992.

51. See Korean coverage of the CPC report in *Mal* ([Free] Speech), October 1994 in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-EAS* (henceforth *FBIS-EAS*)-94-245, December 21, 1994, pp. 38-46.

52. Bonnie Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions: Interests and Ambitions," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 3, March 1993, pp. 261-262.

53. John Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993, p. 54.

54. It is interesting to note that in a 1993 trip to Beijing, ROK Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo explicitly stated that while Japan once administered Korea as a colony, it was no longer seen as threatening (see Frank Ching, "Securing Northeast Asia," *FEER*, November 11, 1993, p. 42).

55. For arguments regarding Japan-South Korea cooperation implicitly as a hedge against China, see Takesada, "Korea-Japan Defence Cooperation: Prospects and Issues," in Rhee and Kim, eds.,

*Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 131-133; Hiroyasu Akutsu, "Strengthening the U.S.-Centered Hub-and-Spokes System in Northeast Asia," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 146-151; Narushige Michishita, "Alliances After Peace in Korea," *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Autumn 1999, pp. 68-83; and Okazaki, "Japan-South Korea Security Cooperation."

56. While these relations do not constitute "institutions" in the formal sense of a European NATO or EC, they do breed a familiarity between Japanese and Korean leaders. For a related point on how such institutions engendered a familiarity among European leaders that mollified anxieties about German reunification, see Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," p. 13. On the need for building on this baseline of familiarity, see Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 24; and Kang Choi, "Korea-Japan Security Cooperation in the Post-Unification Era," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p. 293.

57. Shinobu Miyachi, "Korea-Japan Cooperation Can Stabilize and Balance Their Alliances with the U.S.," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 262-265; Francis Fukuyama and Kongdan Oh, *The U.S.-Japan Security Relationship After the Cold War*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1993, pp. 7-48.

58. For background, see "The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: A Report of the Prime Minister's Advisory Group on Defense Issues," August 12, 1994; Mike Mochizuki and Michael O'Hanlon, "A Liberal Vision for the U.S.-Japanese Alliance," *Survival*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Summer 1998, pp. 127-134; and *Reshaping the U.S.-Japan Alliance: From Containment to Regional Security*, New York: Ralph Bunche Institute on the UN and the Research Institute for Peace and Security (Japan), May 1998.

59. Nakashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 174-75; Green and Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy," pp. 35-58; and Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," pp. 21-22.

60. Nagashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p.171; and Umio Otsuka, "Prospects of Japan-Korea Defense Cooperation: Partners or Rivals," conference paper, Hudson Institute Conference on Japan and Korea's Future, Tokyo, December 5-6, 1997.

61. Interviews with Maritime Self-Defense Forces officers. Also see Akutsu, "Strengthening the U.S.-Centered Hub-and-Spokes System in Northeast Asia," pp. 155-158.

62. Akihisa Nagashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 165-166; Sumihiko Kawamura, "SLOC Protection and Korea-Japan Cooperation," in *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, Rhee and Kim, eds.; and Hahnkyu Park, "Between Caution and Cooperation: The ROK-Japan Security Relationship in the Post Cold War Period," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Summer 1998.

63. See Akira Ogawa, "K-J Shuttle 1997-1999," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 325-356; and Ralph Cossa, ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Security Relations: Toward a Virtual Alliance*, Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999. With regard to the exchanges and minor joint exercises documented in these works, these might objectively appear like small accomplishments; however, it was only within one generation's lifetime that the notion of Japanese military personnel setting foot again on Korean soil provoked wrenching reactions. The stigma was so acute that Syngman Rhee during the Korean war threatened to surrender the entire country to the communists rather than enlist Japanese support in 1950; Korea threatened to sink Japanese boats in violation of territorial fishing waters; and ceremonial defense exchanges in the 1960s were downplayed publicly. In this light, security cooperation represents a major transformation of relations.

64. For example, see Shinobu Miyachi, "Korea-Japan Cooperation can Stabilize and Balance Their Alliance with the U.S.," in Rhee and Kim, eds., *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, pp. 270-271.

65. Fitzpatrick, "Why Japan and the United States Will Welcome Korean Unification," p. 430.

66. Kim Won-soo (then director, Treaties Division, MOFA), interview by author, Stanford, CA, October 26, 1994. The only reference agreeable to China was to the "abnormal" state of past relations (*bijôngsang kwan'gye*) (see the Roh-Yang Shangkun communiqué in MOFA, *Woegyo yônpy'o: 1992*, Diplomatic Documents Annual, pp. 560-561).

67. See "After 1300 Years, White Collar Armies Target Manchuria," *Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 1995; and "Beijing Asks Seoul to Curb Activities of Korean Civilian Body in Manchuria," *Korea Herald*, October 11, 1995.

68. By contrast, meetings with expatriate communities are a standard itinerary item in ROK summits to Japan, the United States, South America, and Europe (Kim Won-soo [former Director, Treaties Division, MOFA], personal interview by author, Stanford, CA, October 26, 1994).

69. See Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, chap. 7; and Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 25. For a contrasting argument that questions the degree to which the two perceive each other as democracies, see John Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

70. See Kil Soong-hoom et al., "Han-II kwan'gye chiha sumaek chindan," (Examining the Hidden Pulse), *Chongyong Munhwa*, September 1984, pp. 149-150; and "Japan's Korea Boom," *Korea Herald*, September 8, 1988.

71. Jong-suk Lee, "Measures on the Import of Japanese Pop Culture," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January-February 1997, p. 92.

72. Dianne Hoffman, "Changing Faces, Changing Places," *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4, October-December 1992, p. 489.

73. See Nakashima, "Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership," pp. 167-168; *Choson Ilbo*, October 11, 1998; *Washington Post*, October 8, 1998; *New York Times*, October 8, 1998.

74. See transcripts of Kim Dae Jung's address to the National Diet, October 8, 1998, and the Joint Declaration, October 9, 1998 (unofficial translations), at <http://www.kocis.go.kr>.

75. For a statement of this view (although the author disagrees with it), see Dong-man Suh, "Outlook for North Korea-Japan Ties," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 8, No. 2, March-April 2000, pp. 27-43.

76. This became less of a factor for Japan after the transition from the YS to DJ governments in Korea and the concomitant shift to an open-ended engagement policy by Seoul that did not seek to isolate Pyongyang.

77. See Murooka, "North Korean Economic Policy and Implications for Japan's Economic Assistance"; and Fukugawa, "Japan's Economic Assistance to North Korea."

78. For discussion of the sums of money involved and the relationship of such an agreement with the 1965 Japan-ROK treaty, see

Mark Manyin, "North Korea-Japan Relations: The Normalization Talks and the Compensation/Reparations Issue," *CRS Report*, April 21, 2000.

79. An interesting contrast here is with China. Unlike Tokyo, Beijing's grand strategy for the peninsula is explicitly premised on maintaining the division and hence the DPRK buffer on its southern flank. This strategy thus compels China to engage and prop up the North. Moreover, the more the regional consensus shifts in favor of containment, the more wedded Beijing becomes to engagement with the DPRK. Japan faces no such constraints.

80. On the former, see Victor Cha, "Engaging China: Seoul-Beijing Detente," *Survival*, Spring 1999.

81. In particular, China's growth may change its trade needs in ways that increase competition with Korea. Already, a combination of high growth and fixed resource endowments have made China a net importer of food products and raw materials, and a net exporter of labor-intensive manufactured goods. Given China's comparative advantage in labor costs, this leads to fierce competition with Korean industries for international markets. Competition also grows as Korea faces pressures from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to liberalize, making the country more vulnerable to a flood of Chinese imports (see David Dollar, "South Korea-China Trade Relations," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, No. 12, December 1989, pp. 1167-1168; and Cha, "Engaging China," pp. 91-93.

82. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*; Ross, "Geography of Peace"; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1997, pp. 50-64.

83. Gong, "Japan's Northeast Asia Policy in the 21st Century," p. 20; also see Thomas Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-Militarism," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993; and Pyle, *The Japanese Question*.