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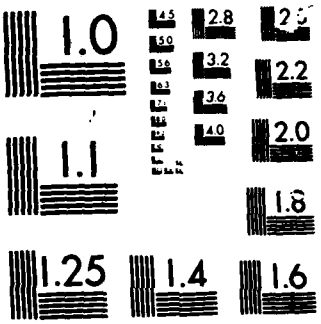

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Volume VI—South Korean Perspectives on Defense, Deterrence and Strategy

Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
Central Plaza Building
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11 April 1984

Technical Report

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This study addresses the international security perspectives of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Particular emphasis has been placed on the way in which American, Soviet, Chinese and Japanese interests intersect on the Korean Peninsula and on their impact upon the military balance between North and South Korea. A major portion of this analysis is devoted as well to an examination of inter-Korean relations, spotlighting the varying security implications of the continued partition, as opposed to the eventual reunification of the two Koreas. The importance to South Korea of the Seoul-Washington-Tokyo relationship is discussed, as well as the effect of the Sino-Soviet dispute on South Korean defense and foreign policies. In order to clarify further the strategic perspectives of key decision-makers in Seoul, the study reviewed and assessed South Korean views on such controversial issues as the expansion of Japan's self-defense forces, the withdrawal of the U.S. ground troops from the Korean peninsula, Sino-Soviet moves toward rapprochement, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Korea realizes its own powerlessness to affect the overall U.S.-Soviet balance, but like many other countries it is concerned over the growth in the absolute and relative military power of the Soviet Union without being certain whether it has progressed to the point of "superiority." To South Koreans, it makes much more sense to worry about things that they may be able to do something about, the most pressing of these being of course their own security from another North Korean attack. In addition to military self-strengthening and the continued cultivation of their alliance with the United States, they perceive domestic stability as vital to their security; virtually no Korean wants a repetition of the disorders of 1980, although the ruling establishment and the opposition disagree over the extent to which an authoritarian political system is conducive to stability.

Although defense-knowledgeable elites in South Korea do not expect any dramatic shifts during the next decade that would grossly tip the military balance in favor of North Korea, they still feel vulnerable to attack from the North and perceive the U.S. commitment, including American ground forces, to be essential to their survival at least for some time to come. Nevertheless, they are uncertain to what extent, and for how long, they can count on the needed American support and protection. Few really believe that the United States would leave South Korea with inadequate

defenses, but they do feel that a more concerted effort should be made to prepare Seoul for what is considered the inevitable -- if perhaps incremental -- withdrawal eventually of American troops. In the final analysis, South Korea's security, it is thought, should be based on greater self-sufficiency, since alliances are not one hundred percent guarantees.

South Koreans are increasingly concerned over the recent growth of Soviet military power in Northeast Asia. While some call for closer ties to China, others argue that the more urgent and necessary policy is the cultivation of more stable relations with the Soviet leadership. From a strategic viewpoint, Moscow has the military ability to protect its interests in East Asia, while China is still vulnerable to Soviet military superiority; Soviet interests in North Korea will continue to grow even after the passing of Kim Il-sung or the present Soviet leadership. Hence, the reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula through a process of incremental ties with the Soviet Union -- coordinated through American and Japanese channels -- is viewed with favor in South Korea.

Opinion in Seoul is divided on the desirability and likelihood of a more active Japanese contribution to regional security. South Koreans tend to consider Japan as politically unreliable from the viewpoint of anti-Communist security interests in Northeast Asia. Many would apparently prefer to see their own country, rather than Japan, considered America's most important ally in

Northeast Asia, this desire being one illustration of a current tendency for Seoul to seek a more active international role. In any case, it remains unlikely that the Ministry of Defense in South Korea would seek an active coordination of military policy with the Self Defense Agency of Japan, although diplomatic exchanges will certainly be used to keep both sides informed on current and long-term strategic issues.

Reservations are also entertained along the same lines with regard to China, and it is hoped that the United States will not go too far in seeking strategic cooperation with the People's Republic, even though Beijing's current interest in international stability in the region appears to be generally appreciated. South Korea hopes that the United States will not allow Taiwan, whose security and prosperity are considered important to regional stability, to be attacked or pressured by the People's Republic of China. These concerns, however, do not stand in the way of growing commercial ties between China and South Korea, and it is an open secret that several hundred million dollars worth of commodities have been exchanged. Official contacts are still limited, but several Chinese officials have visited South Korea at the obvious displeasure of Pyongyang authorities.

Koreans understand that political realities do not permit the creation of a Northeast Asian equivalent of NATO. Even in the absence of such an alliance, however, they appear to assume that the United States, South Korea

and Japan, with China perhaps in a supporting role, hopefully can maintain peace and stability in the region by working within the existing network of bilateral relationships. With such a strategy in place, an attack from the North, it is believed, would remain unlikely, and South Korea would be properly insulated from undue Soviet pressure.

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SECTION 1

PARTITION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA: A MAJOR SOURCE OF TENSION IN NORTHEAST ASIA

The Korean nation, with its national experience of more than 2,000 years and a population of 58 million (North and South combined), is one of the oldest and most populous countries in the world. Its people, moreover, form the world's twelfth largest ethnic group and rank fourth or fifth in population density. As for the territory of Korea, it takes the shape of a peninsula, thrusting from the northeast Asian mainland in a southerly direction for about 600 miles. The Korean peninsula, with its 3,500 offshore islands, has an area of 85,285 square miles, slightly larger than Minnesota and somewhat smaller than Great Britain. Irregular in shape, the peninsula is elongated in a north-south direction and separates the Yellow Sea from the Sea of Japan (or East Sea). The Korean peninsula and all of its offshore islands lie between $124^{\circ}11'$ and $131^{\circ}56'$ east longitude and between $33^{\circ}06'$ and $43^{\circ}01'$ north latitude (see Map 1).

The land boundary to the north is formed largely by two rivers, the Amnok (called Yalu in Chinese) and Tuman (called Tumen in Chinese), which flow between China and Korea.* The last 11 miles of the Tuman also serve as a boundary with the Soviet Union. Traditionally, a peninsula

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* The Amnok River flowing southwest empties into the Yellow Sea, and the Tuman River first flows northeast and then southeast, emptying into the Sea of Japan.

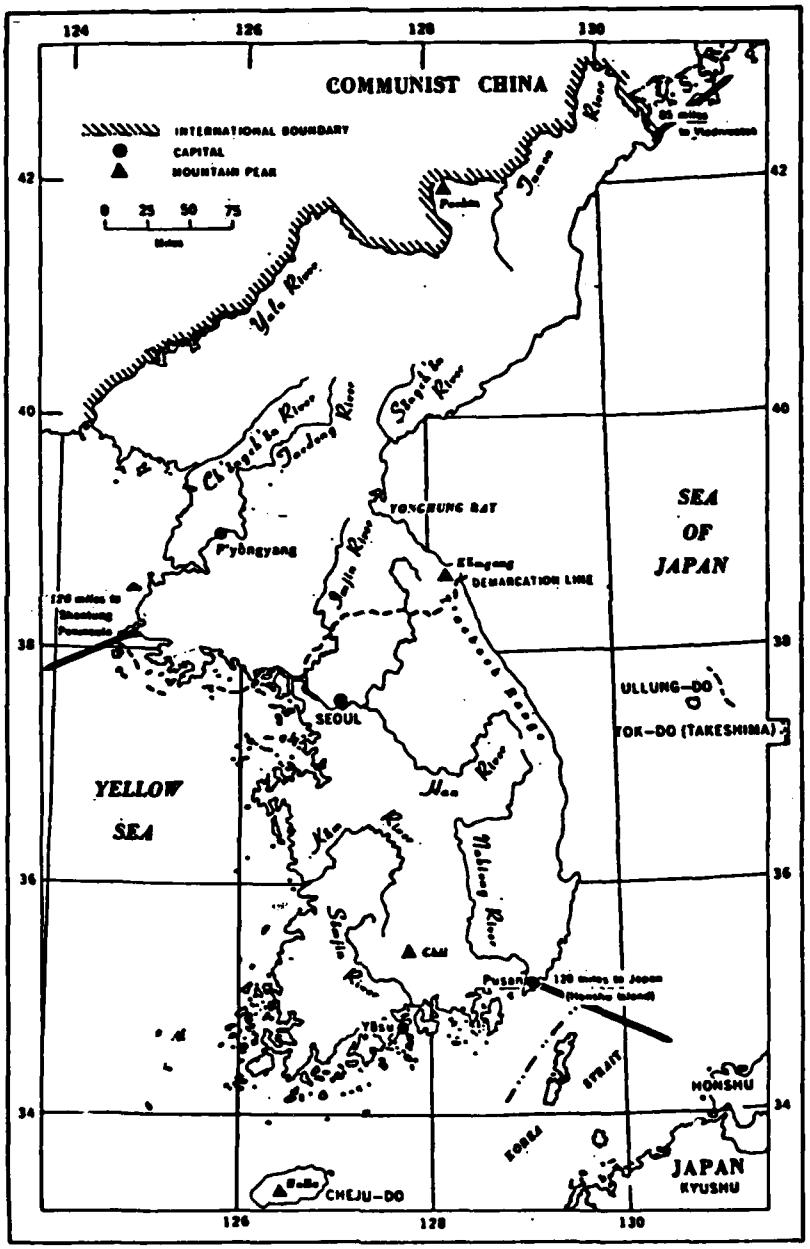

Figure 1. Korea

has offered both the advantage of easy access to adjacent cultures and the disadvantage of becoming the target or victim of powerful and often aggressive neighbors in their rival and expansionist ambitions. The Korean peninsula is no exception. Contiguous to the two continental powers of China and Russia and adjacent to oceanic Japan, it long acted as a land bridge through which Chinese civilization was transmitted to Japan. Due to it pivotal position in Asia, the Korean peninsula has also long been recognized as the focal point for conflicting great power interests in Northeast Asia. A perusal of the past 100 years of Asian history shows that the geopolitical importance of the peninsula has caused or contributed to three major wars -- the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and the Korean War (1950-53) -- which together involved more than twenty countries.[41, pp. 1-386] The Korean peninsula now serves as the nexus for all four major powers who have an interest in Asian affairs: China, Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union.[29, pp. 1-164; 14, pp. 1-250]

Absorbed in 1910 into the Japanese Empire, of which it remained a part until liberation at the end of World War II in 1945, Korea was subsequently partitioned along the 38th parallel, in the midst of the emerging Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.[205, pp. 9-66] Division was further hardened by the establishment of the two antagonistic regimes in 1948, and the Korean peninsula has since remained divided into

two opposing political camps. In the south is the pro-Western Republic of Korea (also known as South Korea) and in the north, the Communist-controlled Democratic People's Republic of Korea (also known as North Korea) -- each claiming to be the only "legitimate" government of the peninsula (see Table 1 for the general characteristics of the two Koreas).

Since the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1945, bitter hostility has dominated relations between the two Koreas. Today the two halves of the peninsula are virtually without direct dialogue or contacts. Between them, there is not even postal service, let alone other forms of social, economic, and political transaction. The North Korean government has been unwilling to accept any form of accommodation with South Korea except on the basis of unification under Communist rule. The enduring hostile confrontation between North and South Korea, which has been a major source of tension in Northeast Asia for the past three decades, will continue in the 1980s.

The 155-mile-long Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) became the de facto boundary between the two Koreas* after the 1953 truce which ended the Korean War. In that war the South Korean armed forces suffered 141,011 dead and 717,083 wounded. More than 36,000 U.N. troops, including American soldiers, died. Civilian casualties totaled more than

---

* Since the Korean armistice agreement of July 1953, about 45 percent of the territory, 38,175 square miles, has been included in South Korea, a gain of about 2,000 square miles over the 1945 division at the 38th parallel. North Korea has about 47,071 square miles of territory.

Table 1. General characteristics of the two Koreas (profiles)

South Korea (Republic of Korea)	Items	North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)
38, 175 square miles	Area	47,071 square miles
37.6 million (1979) (60% urban, 40% rural)	Population	19 million (1979) (38% urban, 62% rural)
Seoul (Pop. 7 million)	Capital City	Pyongyang (Pop. 1.8 million)
9 provinces and 2 special cities with provincial status	Administrative Districts	9 provinces and 4 special cities with provincial status
Chun, Doo-hwan	Head of Government	Kim, Il-sung
August 15	National Day	September 8
White, with a center circle divided equally by an S-curve into blue and red portions; there is a varying combination of 3 sold and 3 broken lines in each center.	National Flag	Two blue stripes on the top and bottom separated by the two thin white stripes from a broad central field of red which contains at left center a white circle with a 5-pointed red star.
Temperate with a short winter; hot and humid in the summer with a rainy monsoon from July to October	Climate	Temperate with a longer and much colder winter than in the South; summer wet season from July to September

Table 1. General characteristics of the two Koreas (profiles) (Continued)

North Korea (North; Japan (East)	Neighboring Countries	Manchuria, China (North); Russia (Northeast)
Korean	Official Language	Korean
Korean, a mixture of Manchurian, Mongol and Caucasian blood which has existed since 3,500 B.C.	Ethnic Background	Korean, a mixture of Manchurian, Mongol and Caucasian blood which has existed since 3,500 B.C.
Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity	Principal Religions	Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. The government discourages religious activity.
2.9%	Annual Birth Rate	3%
US$68 billion (1982)	GNP	US$18 billion (1982)
US$1,160 (1978)	GNP Per Capita	US$759 (1979)
US$1,067 (1980)	Per Capita Income	US$823 (1980)
7.1% annually	Economic Growth Rate	5% annually
Won (W731.13=US$1.00)	Currency	Won (W.94=US$1.00--official exchange rate
Rice, coal, light manufacturing goods	Chief Commerical Products	Coal, iron, other metals, cement, chemical, lumber

Table 1. General characteristics of the two Koreas (profiles) (Continued)

35,000 million kwh (1979)	Electricity	40,000 million kwh (1979)
8.2 million tons (1979) (rice, barley, wheat, beans, grain of all kinds and tobacco)	Grain	5 million tons (1979) (rice, wheat, corn, and barley)
1.5 million cattle, 1.48 million hogs, and 30 million poultry (1978)	Livestock	900,000 cattle, 1.9 million pigs (1978)
Fishing fleet of 833 ships (316,000 gross tons) in 1975	Fisheries	Catch--1.6 million tons (1978); a fishing fleet of about 3,400 motor and sailing craft (1978)
Tungsten, coal, iron ore, copper ore, and lead ore	Minerals	Coal, iron, lead, zinc, copper tungsten, manganese, and graphite
Textile, Portland cement, steel, fertilizer, and petro-chemical	Industrial Output	Coal, iron, copper, fertilizer, cement, steel, and textile
US$15 billion (1979)	Exports	US$1.3 billion (1979)
US$20.3 billion (1979)	Imports	US$900 million (1979)
384,536 (total in 1978), including 161,886 trucks, 30,597 buses, and 184,886 passenger cars	Motor Vehicles	60,000 (total in 1971)

Table 1. General characteristics of the two Koreas (profiles) (Continued)

47,000 kilometers (1979)	Highway	21,000 kilometers (1979)
13.9 million (1978), with 38% in agriculture and and service	Labor Force	7,500,000, with 55% in industry and service; 45% in forestry and agriculture
Pusan, Inchon, Pohang, Masan, Mokpo, Gunsan	Ports	Chongjin, Hamhung, Nampo Wonsan, Unggi
5,788 miles (1979)	Railway	4,350 miles (1979)
2,226 registered vessels of 3,137,206 tons (1976)	Shipping	Not available
2,000,000 (1979); all government owned	Telephone	Not available
12,300,000 (1978)	Radio Receivers	800,000 (1971)
5,870,000 (1979)	Television Receivers	100,000 (1979)
560 theaters with seating capacity of 346,296 (1977)	Cinemas	Not available
36 Daily papers, including 8 national dailies and 2 in English appearing in Seoul (1977)	Newspapers	11 dailies (1979)

Table 1. General characteristics of the two Koreas (profiles) (Concluded)

5,604,365 pupils enrolled in 6,426 elementary schools, 2,298,124 pupils in 2,012 middle schools and 1,454,376 pupils in 1,253 high schools (including 499 vocational schools) in 1979. 347,887 students in 215 universities, colleges and junior colleges in 1979. There were 87 graduate schools granting master's degrees in 2 years and doctor's degrees in 4 years, where 17,220 students attended.	Education	3 million students in 1979 (primary, 1.5 million; secondary, 1.2 million; tertiary, 0.3 million); 10,000 schools of all grades, which included 580 institutes of higher education two-thirds of whom were teaching technical and engineering subjects. There were 3 large universities--Kim Il Sung University, Kim Chaek Technical University, Pyongyang Medical School--and an Academy of Sciences. Education--free and compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16.
21,734 physicians (including herb doctors), 2,899 dentists 4,222 midwives, 70, 504 nurses (including assistant nurses), 4,712 technicians and 21,392 pharmacists in 1979. There were 11,181 hospitals and clinics.	Health	33 inhabitants per hospital bed (1979); there was 1 doctor for for every 650 inhabitants

Sources: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, Republic of Korea, A Handbook of Korea (3rd Edition; Seoul, Korea, 1979), pp. 1-824; Choson Chungang Yongam (Korean Central yearbook), (Pyongyang, North Korea: Choson Chungang T'ongsin Sa, 1976); Foreign Area Studies, American University (Rinn Sup Sninn and others), Area Handbook for North Korea (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969); The Statesman's Yearbook 1980-1981 (edited by John Paxton), (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 770-773; and The Statesman's Yearbook 1981 1982 (edited by John Paxton), (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 765-773.

600,000. More than 360,000 other civilians were missing and nearly 60,000 children became orphans. The North Korean army suffered 294,931 dead. More than 180,000 of the Communist Chinese troops died (including Chairman Mao Zedong's son). More than 2,700,000 North Koreans fled to South Korea. Even when the era of the Cold War yielded to that of detente in the early 1970s, the Cold War in Korea continued between the two competing states. Today the DMZ remains one of the most dangerous borders on the globe, with the increasing risk that renewed armed conflict will be difficult to localize and may escalate into a serious confrontation, even war, among the major powers, whose interests intersect in the Korean peninsula.* The frequency of military incidents along the DMZ has been very high, although it has declined in recent months.** More than a million men are under arms in the divided peninsula, each side possessing highly sophisticated modern weapons short of the nuclear variety. And the arms race between the two sides is intensifying.[114, pp. 648-660] South of the DMZ are the last American combat troops committed to

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* The stakes of the four major powers are reflected in a series of bilateral mutual defense treaties linking South Korea with the United States, and North Korea with both the Soviet Union and Communist China; in the presence of about 40,000 U.S. troops in South Korea; and in the strong economic ties between Seoul on the one hand and Japan and the United States on the other.

** The last major incident along the DMZ occurred in August 1976, when ax-wielding North Korean soldiers killed two American military officers who attempted to cut down a tree within the American sector of the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom.

the Asian mainland. While none of the great powers is encouraging either Pyongyang or Seoul to attempt to unify the peninsula by force,[12; 83] it can be argued that Korea represents a danger area where the potential for explosive crisis might be higher than the Middle East or the Persian Gulf.

A study of the two Koreas, moreover, presents a sharply divergent picture in terms of their ideological postures, political structures and styles, economic approaches for development, designs for territorial unification, and foreign policy orientations. North Korea under Kim Il-sung, for three decades the unchallenged ruler of the country, is today a garrison state with all the restrictions and austerity that this term implies. More specifically, North Korea is a highly organized and efficient system, perhaps more regimented and controlled than any other Communist system in history, with its strict adherence to Communist orthodoxy of the Stalinist variety.[32; 35; 23]

North Korea's relentless campaign to deify Kim Il-sung as its supreme leader evokes a cult of personality far more intense than that of Stalin's Russia and Mao's China.[101] Perhaps the most striking feature of North Korean politics today is the bizarre effort being made by Kim Il-sung to establish a family dynasty with his 40-year-old son, Kim Chong-il, as his chosen political heir.[111; 109; 54, pp. 48-66] If he succeeds, the aging dictator will have turned Marxist doctrine upside

down with a vengeance, and will accomplish what no other Communist leader has ever done before, or even attempted to do. This program for the first Communist monarchy has already been well advanced, as Kim Chong-il was officially installed as heir-apparent to his father at the Sixth Congress of the Korean Workers' (Communist) Party held in October 1980.

In its external relations, North Korea is jealously guarding its international position in the name of chuche (self-identity or national identity), which can be translated into more specific programs of political and ideological independence, economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and independent defense capability.* The Pyongyang regime has long sought to steer an independent course between the Soviet Union and China,(13; 110, pp. 68-71; 97, pp. 51-64) while remaining antagonistic toward the "imperialism" of the United States and what it calls the "puppet" South Korean

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* Kim Il-sung seized upon chuche -- first, as a club with which to beat his domestic oppositions, particularly those closely identified with Moscow or Beijing. Subsequently, the philosophy of chuche has been enshrined as national religion more sacred, in many ways, than the canons of Marxism-Leninism. Kim Il-sung explained the North Korean concept of chuche as follows: "Establishing chuche means, in a nutshell, having the attitude of master toward revolution and construction in one's country. This means holding fast to an independent position, refraining from dependence on others and using one's own brain, believing in one's own strength and displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, and thus solving one's problems for oneself on one's own responsibility under all circumstances." (208; 68)

regime. As of the 1980s, North Korea maintains diplomatic relations with 100 countries (45 to 50 of them had extended diplomatic recognition to both Koreas simultaneously).

The Pyongyang leadership wants to cultivate amicable relations with the two major Communist powers, but for its own purposes and in its own way. (North Korea signed a bilateral mutual defense treaty with both Moscow and Beijing on July 6, 1961, and July 11, 1961, respectively.) In dealing with North Korean leaders, the Soviets and the Chinese have experienced the full degree of Pyongyang's ideological-political rigidity and independence, and on occasions they have privately deplored excessive North Korean stubbornness.*

Since the early 1970s, North Korea has been strengthening diplomatic activities in every corner of the earth, especially with nonaligned Third World countries whose bloc has increasingly dominated actions at the United Nations. In so doing, Pyongyang hopes to bolster its own legitimacy while undermining the international position of its rival regime in Seoul, and to develop world support for

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* In mid-1977 Kim Il-sung expressed sympathy for the independent course pursued by several West European Communist parties (Eurocommunism). In an interview with Le Monde's editor-in-chief on June 20, 1977, the North Korean president said: "We [North Koreans] know that for some time the Communist parties of a number of [West] European countries have been stressing independence in the Communist movement. We consider it a very correct attitude, for every Communist should adapt his activities to the concrete realities of his country." (148)

North Korean policies. (A high point in North Korea's worldwide diplomatic campaign was its entry in August 1975 to the nonaligned Third World bloc at the conference of foreign ministers of 80 nonaligned states in Lima, Peru. South Korea's membership application was rejected.) North Korea has also been making efforts to penetrate the diplomatic strongholds of South Korea. Parliamentary, trade, and other goodwill missions have been dispatched abroad and invited to North Korea. In particular, Pyongyang's foreign policy has sought: (a) to prevent recognition of "the two Koreas" concept by the world community; (b) to isolate South Korea from both the Third World and the Communist bloc; and (c) to drum up diplomatic support for the annual United Nations debate on the withdrawal of United Nations (actually United States) troops from South Korea.

Endowed with the greater part of the peninsula's natural resources and inheriting the heavy industries installed by the Japanese before 1945, North Korea has made great strides in economic development, even in the relatively less advanced agricultural sector.[15, pp. 1-212; 53, pp. 67-86; 86, pp. 25-36] This good overall record of economic development has been made possible through the application of the Stalinist autarkic, command system, the extraordinary degree of ideological exhortation, and the receipt of extensive economic

assistance from the Soviet Union and China.* North Korea has developed its economy singlehandedly toward military preparations, although this approach has caused some serious strains and dislocations in the North Korean economy. Naturally, priority in economic development has been given to heavy capital industries rather than consumer (light) industries. During the mid-1970s, meanwhile, the North Koreans found themselves in economic troubles, culminating in their default on international debt payments (about US $2 billion).** The credit rating of North Korea

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* The total amount of foreign economic aid and loans received by North Korea from the Communist-bloc nations during the period from 1949 to 1962 is estimated at about US $1.37 billion. Of this total, US $577 million, or nearly 41 percent, reportedly came from the Soviet Union. China provided approximately US $517 million, or about 38 percent; East European nations contributed US $296 million, or 21 percent of the total.

** Figures on external debts vary, but according to reliable sources North Korea owed a total of US $2 billion to the Communist bloc, Western Europe, and Japan at the end of 1976. Of this, US $400 million was already overdue for repayment to non-Communist creditors alone. Imports from non-Communist countries had dropped sharply because of payment difficulties, and to a lesser extent so had exports to those countries. Trade with the Communist nations was also reported to have shrunk severely. Renegotiations during 1977 apparently resulted in a five-year moratorium on repayment of Pyongyang's long overdue debts to West European creditors, in return for an increase in interest rates.

North Korea's balance of payments, and therefore its ability to pay off its external debts, was in trouble for several reasons. Firstly, Pyongyang made its ambitious decision in late 1970, before the start of the Six-Year Economic Plan, to push economic development too quickly by importing industrial plants and other heavy machinery in greater quantities than the nation could pay for, in an effort to push ahead of South Korea's rapidly growing economy. Secondly, the North Koreans, like everyone else, were hit by a rise in the price of imported oil. Thirdly, Pyongyang suffered from a fall in the price of its main exports, minerals and ores.

remained low during the latter half of the 1970s, complicating any rapid economic modernization program.

North Korea under Kim Il-sung has shown remarkable consistency in pursuing its objective of unifying all of the Korean peninsula under Communist domination. To unify Korea under Communist rule has been Kim Il-sung's supreme goal, the mission in which he has never ceased to believe, the most deeply felt of his purposes.* He has sought to go down in history as the great unifier of Korea, an ambition that chills South Koreans. For one thing, his move to make his son his political heir may reveal a growing realization that his long-held dream of a unified Communist Korea may not be fulfilled in his own lifetime, and that his son will have to be charged with the responsibility for bringing this goal to fruition.

For its part, South Korea has experienced political trial and error in the development of a Western democratic system since the inception of the Republic in 1948. Western democracy has gained a vulnerable toehold in South Korea, although making democracy work has proved as difficult in Asia and other parts of the Third World as has the production of adequate food and energy supplies. The

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* We may be left to speculate by what method, peaceful or otherwise, Kim Il-sung envisages his mission, but the following statement, typical of many, leaves no doubt about the priority of his mission: "Comrades, reunifying our divided country is the greatest national duty and the most important revolutionary task for our government and our people." Kim Il-sung, October 1975, "On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Workers' Party of Korea." (26, p. 209)

South Korean government is authoritarian,[22; 36, pp. 15-175; 40; 102, pp. 7-17] with a good deal of freedom granted to the population, particularly in the economic and social aspects of life. A number of South Korean scholars assert that with all its shortcomings and limitations under a "Koreanized democracy," the South Korean people enjoy more freedom and prosperity than the North Koreans under communism.[92; 108, pp. 3-17; 85]

In the conomic field, South Korea's capitalist system has distinguished itself by a phenomenal economic recovery and development since the end of the Korean War.[30, pp. 1-367; 7, pp. 1-36; 116; 93, pp. 1140-1151] (The South had only a small share of the peninsula's mineral, fuel, and power resources, but held most of the agriculturally productive land.) Under the banner of "guided capitalism" (capitalism with active government direction and participation), South Korea has developed a more balanced economy of consumer and nonconsumer goods than has its northern counterpart. The South is now outstripping the North by a growing margin. According to a recent U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysis, the North's industrial growth rate during the decade from 1965 to 1975 was 14 percent versus the South's rate of 25 percent.[5] More importantly, the CIA projected that the economic gap in South Korea's favor would widen substantially over the next five years,[5] an accurate prediction.

In the field of foreign relations, South Korea maintains a policy of flexibility, while retaining a close alignment with the United States, Western Europe, and Japan. Competition with the North for legitimacy has constituted the principal foreign policy goal of South Korea. As of the 1980s, Seoul maintains diplomatic relations with 105 countries (again almost half of whom had recognized the two rival regimes simultaneously). As exemplified by South Korean president Chun Doo-hwan's visits to the Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries from June 25 to July 9, 1981, South Korea has been making efforts to promote better relations with the Third World, partly to curb the propaganda maneuver by North Korea to gain favor in the nonaligned circle.[121, pp. 1152-63; 65; 117, pp. 1-24] As an integral part of its overall search for more friends and supporters in the Third World, South Korea invited about ten heads of state or government to Seoul for summit talks in 1982, including seven from the nonaligned countries.[163]

In a victory over its Asian arch rival Japan, South Korea's recent successful bid to host the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul appears to have moved the country's leadership a step closer to the goal of enhancing its image internationally.* In 1981, South Korea also was awarded

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* This award also gave the Seoul regime under President Chun Doo-hwan two more additional advantages of consolidating political power at home and of reviving international confidence in South Korea's economy after the stagnation touched off by the assassination of President Park Chung-hee in October 1979.

the 1986 Asian Games, after an Asian Games Federation delegation found the rival facilities offered by North Korea to be "poor" and "outdated."[160] This victory is highly symbolic because, if all goes smoothly, South Korea will become the first developing country to sponsor the Olympics and only the second Asian nation to do so following Japan's lead with the Tokyo summer games in 1964. For South Korea, in short, the awards of both the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Summer Olympics clearly represented a dramatic gesture to bolster its legitimacy internationally against North Korea's tirades against what it brands as the "puppet regime" in Seoul.

The most conspicuous feature of South Korean politics has been its unswerving anti-Communist posture. This is partly the result of bitter memories of North Korean outrages during the Communist occupation of a large sector of the South during the Korean War. South Korea's anti-Communism is also a reaction to the totalitarian regime in the North, which has made no secret of its desire to unify the divided peninsula under its aegis, by force if appropriate and necessary. Although there has been genuine chafing by many South Koreans under some of the authoritarian methods used both by ex-President Park Chung-hee, and by the current regime under President Chun Doo-hwan,* all South Koreans seem to share an abhorrence of

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* Chun Doo-hwan, a soldier-turned-politician, was sworn in as president of the Fifth Republic in South Korea in March 1981. President Park Chung-hee was assassinated by one of his trusted aides in October 1979.

the Communist regime in North Korea. Though there is a deep-seated longing for the eventual reunification of Korea, the inhabitants of the South are not willing to trade their hard-won freedom and prosperity for unity under a Communist banner. Even Kim Il-sung acknowledged that anti-Communism was too deeply rooted in South Korea.[2, p. 384; 27, pp. 594-98]

The near-catastrophic effects of the Korean War on the economic and social fabric of the South produced in the minds of an entire generation of South Koreans an almost pathological commitment to the idea that another armed attack by the North must be deterred at all costs. (A 20 percent defense surtax, for example, was imposed in 1975 without complaint in the South.) There has been very little or no change in recent years in South Korean perceptions of the military threat from the North, and there is no disposition to believe that that threat is likely to dissipate at any time in the near future. Many South Koreans, moreover, are not so sanguine as are Americans, West Europeans and Japanese about the impact of both the Sino-Soviet rift and the Washington-Beijing rapprochement on the perceived expansionist designs of North Korea. South Koreans find it hard to believe that the Soviet Union and China would refuse military aid to North Korea in the event a new war on the Korean peninsula was initiated by Pyongyang.

With regard to domestic political trends, both the South Korean establishment and the opposition (except for

the small extremist element) tend to agree that internal political stability is desirable and in fact essential as a contribution to national security, the security of South Korea in turn being perceived as highly important to the stability of the region and indeed of the world. No one -- again with the exception of extremists -- wants a repetition of the disorders of 1980, of which the celebrated insurrection at Kwangju in May was the climax. The disagreement is mainly over whether stability is best maintained over the long run through a rather tightly controlled political situation, as the establishment -- partly, but only partly, for self-serving reasons -- believes, or through a more relaxed one as the opposition insists.

The current government headed by President Chun Doo-hwan, a former general, did indeed come to power in 1979-1980 through what amounted to a military coup following the assassination of Park Chung Hee. Accordingly, it has tried hard to acquire legitimacy and popular acceptance through the energetic implementation of a program emphasizing elimination of the pervasive corruption that has long plagued Korean public life and recovery from the economic crisis of the late 1970s. For the greater part of the early 1980s, at least some progress was being made in the desired direction, even though the economy has been slow to respond to the government's program, but a series of recent setbacks, arising to some extent simply from bad luck, have threatened the regime's hold on power.

The dramatic assassination of President Anwar Sadat during a parade in October 1981 by disaffected military personnel came as a shock, and security precautions in South Korea were accordingly tightened in what the regime deemed an appropriate manner. The President reviewed the Team Spirit 82 parade (in the spring of 1982) from behind bulletproof glass, and antitank missile crews were in readiness in case any of the armored vehicles should swing out of line. When Vice President Bush visited the Blue House (the presidential mansion) the following May, all approaches to the area were covered by machine guns with interlocking fields of fire.

By that time, a series of economic scandals had begun to erupt, with major political repercussions and a very damaging effect on the government's energetically cultivated image as an austere foe of corruption. The best known and most important of these by far was the so-called curb loan scandal, in which a woman related by marriage to President Chun managed through skillful financial manipulations, obviously facilitated by her connections, to make off with several hundred million dollars; where the money went has not yet been publicly revealed, but the opposition parties and many of the public suspect that it found its way into the treasury of the ruling Democratic Justice Party. For a time there was a feeling in some quarters that the President might be overthrown by the Army and replaced by another military man, but nothing of the sort has happened (as of February 1984) or seems likely to

happen; such a move, on balance, would be contrary to the interests of stability. The government has been trying harder than ever to cultivate public opinion, by a series of limited measures that stop considerably short of the desires of the opposition. The midnight-to-four curfew has been lifted, with little observable result beyond an increase in crime. The elements that are not "working within the system" (i.e., principally, the students and the Christian churches) remain distinctly restless and basically opposed to the regime.

The constitution that President Chun put into effect in 1980 explicitly prohibits him or any other individual from serving as president for more than a single seven-year term and provides that even if this provision is altered through amendment the change shall not benefit the president during whose term it is made (Articles 45, 129). The reason for this self-denial is a profound conviction that the late President Park Chung Hee's main mistake was that he insisted on staying in office too long (1961-1979). Nevertheless, there is continual speculation in Korea, on the basis of no observable evidence, that President Chun may "choose to run" again when the time comes (in 1987). There is evidence, however, that if he should decide to do so there would be opposition, and perhaps action, on the part of at least some of the military. In any case, it would be premature to speculate about a possible successor.

Still, despite recent domestic troubles, it seems fair to conclude that the South Korean people remain widely nationalistic and are tending to become more so -- an obvious illustration being the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and his belief that Korea from a religious viewpoint is the "new Israel." South Koreans see their country, reasonably enough, as important and impressive in many ways and are therefore all the more frustrated at its being sandwiched, with decisively constraining effects on its development and role, among three gigantic neighbors -- China, Japan, and the Soviet Union -- and also under the influence of the other superpower, the United States. Unification with North Korea, which appears impossible in the "foreseeable" future except through a probably disastrous war, is desired, therefore, at least in part because it would increase Korea's weight somewhat on the scales of international politics. It is to the problems of partition and reunification, then, that we now turn.

SECTION 2

INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS: BITTER HOSTILITY WITH TWO SEPARATE DESIGNS FOR TERRITORIAL UNIFICATION

Historically, Korea had existed as a homogeneous, unified nation for two millennia until its partition in 1945. Many Koreans feel that their country was partitioned against their wishes as a result of great power rivalry after World War II. The Korean people living under the two rival regimes are linked by an enduring emotional bond based on their common language, ethnic composition, and cultural heritage. For these reasons, they believe that the territorial division is unnatural, arbitrary, intolerable, and unjustifiable.(69) The unification of the fatherland is, in short, the ultimate goal of the 57 million homogeneous people of Korea, although many do realize that the more divergent the economic, social, and political systems of the two Koreas become with the passage of time, the more difficult reunification.

Since its inception in 1948, the DPRK regime's overriding aim has been to overthrow the anti-Communist government of South Korea and to unify the country under a Communist government. North Korea came close to achieving this goal after the invasion of the South in the summer of 1950, when it nearly defeated the combined South Korean-American forces, but was soon overrun itself, until the Chinese Communists intervened in the late fall of 1950. The armistice of July 1953 re-established the

division of Korea near the original partition line of 1945.

During the past several decades, in point of fact, the issue of Korean unification has been perhaps the most widely discussed topic in the political arenas of the divided Korean peninsula. And it will continue to be so in the future, though without widening the avenue for unification. As the popular aspiration for eventual reunification remains undiminished among the Korean people, the issue of unification also has been a highly emotional issue, as well as a very sensitive political symbol in the Korean peninsula. Since the end of the Korean War, therefore, the political leaders of South and North Korea have repeatedly affirmed their desire for reunification of the divided peninsula, taking various policy positions on this issue.

Politicians on both sides have also found reunification a useful issue to be exploited for their political causes at home and abroad. In North Korea, for example, the Pyongyang regime under Kim Il-sung has always rationalized its programs for austerity, discipline, hard work, intensive political indoctrination, Stalinist-type economic development, and massive military buildup in terms of building a firm base for the eventual reunification of the fatherland. Moreover, the DPRK regime has always been ready and quick to try to exploit any internal turmoil in South Korea, partly to reaffirm its own reunification scheme and partly to divert the attention of its people from domestic problems.

As far as South Korea is concerned, successive regimes in Seoul since 1948 have often used North Korea's aggressive drive for unification as the rationale for cracking down on political opponents and other dissidents and for bolstering their political control. Furthermore, the Seoul regimes under Presidents Park and Chun in recent years have wanted to deal with North Korea from a position of strength in times of both confrontation and dialogue, constantly stressing the need for rapid economic progress, internal cohesion, and full-scale military preparedness as a prelude to reunification.*

Externally, each of the two rival regimes has been engaged in the politics of competitive legitimacy, seeking to enhance its own political legitimacy by displaying its efforts to deal positively with the long-pending national reunification issue.

Since the Korean War, almost every possible forum for peaceful negotiations between South and North Korea on the subject of reunification has been proposed or attempted in vain. One recent effort was the short-lived attempt at a two-channel dialogue initiated in 1971 and 1972, which

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* The publicly proclaimed policy of the Syngman Rhee government in Seoul prior to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 was reunification by any means, including the use of force. After the overthrow of the Syngman Rhee government in April 1960, the successive regimes in Seoul have publicly disassociated themselves from Syngman Rhee's policy of reunification by force, but their policies and rhetoric have been stridently anti-Communist. They have stressed the need to build up the South's national power, with economic muscle as its backbone, as a prelude to reunification.

came to a sudden end in 1973; currently there is the possibility of quadripartite talks with the U.S. and P.R.C. Given the ideological gulfs -- political, economic and social -- and the international stakes involved, a wide variety of negotiating efforts have proved fruitless and left scant cause for optimism about the future. More specifically, the two sides' differences in political and social systems are fundamental and across-the-board, touching on the most basic of all questions: Under what system, under whose control is the Korean peninsula to be governed? As expected, both sides have firmly refused to compromise on this basic issue.

The issue of Korean unification has proved to be a matter hardly amenable to mediation by an outside power, whose loyalty is well known and whose one-sided support for one or the other of the two Koreas for more than a generation can hardly be expected to sit well with either Seoul or Pyongyang. Accordingly, the mediator's role for any outside power is realistic only in the context of a multiparty forum as tried, for example, in Geneva in 1954. Even this type of international forum ended in deadlock because of the conflicting interests of the great powers in Korea. No international conference of the Geneva type has since been convened to solve the Korean problem.

The United Nations experience with the issue of Korean unification was an exercise in frustration.[38; 50, pp. 5-44; 66; 74] The United Nations had taken up the Korean item as a major Cold War issue in successive annual

General Assembly sessions for many years. Prior to 1975, a resolution favoring the terms essentially advantageous to South Korea was able to achieve majority support,* but that majority gradually shrank. On November 18, 1975, two resolutions were passed, one supporting the South and the other supporting the North's position.

The Korean issue has been dropped by the General Assembly since 1976, relieving some nations of the need to press for votes and others of the need to make hard choices they wishes to avoid. This event was clearly welcomed, particularly by the nonaligned Third World nations. Any revival of the UN General Assembly debate on the Korean issue seems remote, given its past record and the membership's disinclination to become involved with Cold War issues.

The frustrations resulting from both international negotiating efforts and the bilateral North-South talks, as well as the recent Rangoon assassination incident, have made virtually all negotiating efforts problematic for the moment. Given the slim prospects for meaningful

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* Until the early 1970s, the UN General Assembly supported the position that South Korea was the "sole legitimate" government on the Korean peninsula, refusing to accept the existence of two Koreas. Efforts to admit South Korea alone into the United Nations were frustrated by the Soviet veto, while earlier Soviet efforts to admit the two Koreas simultaneously were frustrated by the United States, under pressure from Seoul. In 1971, however, South Korea switched its position and accepted the temporary existence of two Koreas and dual admission into the United Nations. But by this time, Russia, China, and North Korea refused to accept the admission of both Koreas.

negotiations and the wide gap between the two Koreas, none of the great powers today accords a high priority to Korean negotiations, although both Koreas are apparently willing to revive and sustain bilateral exchanges in order to avoid being accuses of opposing negotiations, and to score propaganda points.

In 1972, when the mood of international detente started, the two Koreas agreed to end their 27 years of bitterly hostile relations by opening a "dialogue of reconciliation" in two forums, the one seeking arrangements to reunite families separated by the division of Korea and the other aimed at eventual political reunification.[37; 58, pp. 17-38; 52] Each side spent considerable time probing the other's negotiating posture, and talks at official levels hardly went further than the discussion of procedural matters. The suspicion between the two governments remained a formidable obstacle. More importantly, it was evident that each had the ultimate objective of reunifying the Korean peninsula under its own political system and domination. That is to say, the strategies of both Pyongyang and Seoul on reunification were the same as before; only the tactics had changed. In other words, the two Koreas in 1972 moved, as one astute South Korean observer said cogently, "from confrontation without dialogue to a new era of confrontation with dialogue."

In the two forums noted above, South Korea took a gradualist approach, favoring step-by-step progress on

nonpolitical or humanitarian issues to build mutual confidence before the political issues at the core were raised. Ever wary of the North's intention, Seoul demanded that Pyongyang would prove its sincerity (or good faith) first by taking a constructive attitude toward nonpolitical or humanitarian issues that were practical and feasible. From there, Seoul suggested, discussions could move into the more fundamental and comprehensive political realm. (A close observer of the talks had commented, perhaps correctly, that "implicit in this strategy was an effort to break the North Korean political will.")

The North argued that the South actually sought a perpetuation of the division of the Korean peninsula on the pretext of an evolutionary approach to unification, and counterproposed a quick revolutionary jump to unification: a speedy political agreement must come first because humanitarian, economic and cultural agreements must ultimately rest on a political solution. Pyongyang was apparently confident that its totalitarian Communist system would eventually give it an edge over a "decadent " South in this radical approach. The North Korean formula was rejected by the South as an infeasible attempt to solve the problem of reunification at one stroke -- in other words, to put the cart before the horse.

Detente talks between the two Koreas broke down in fundamental disagreement over approaches to reunification during 1973. Both sides subsequently attempted to reopen

the North-South dialogue but each side rejected contemptuously the other side's proposals.[175; 146; 164; 115]

The present impasse in North-South relations poses dangers, and a return to negotiations could reduce these. The South Korean government today contends that the principal obstacle to reopening the North-South dialogue is the Kim Il-sung regime's adamant refusal to agree to the South's rational and cautious approach to the reduction of tension in Korea and to the improvement of mutual confidence so as generally to improve the feasibility of unification.[131; 193; 195; 60, pp. 69-71] As long as the Pyongyang regime seeks to interfere in South Korea's domestic politics by attempting to incite divisiveness and "revolution" through espionage and propaganda activities, the South sees little chance for constructive dialogues, let alone substantive relations, between North and South Korea.

The focus of concern among the South Koreans in connection with the forthcoming hereditary political succession in the North is naturally on whether Pyongyang's southward or unification strategy would change at all after the demise of Kim Il-sung. The consensus among many South Koreans is that Kim Chong-il will certainly remain loyal to his father's lifelong goal to unify Korea under Communist control.[144; 134; 54, pp. 63-69] South Koreans usually portray the younger Kim as a dangerous figure who would show less restraint than his father in military adventures,

but their opinions are based largely on guesswork. They believe that the junior Kim might try to prove himself as a worthy successor by attempting to unify the Korean peninsula by force. "The son will have a compulsion to prove himself by achieving something his father did not," they add.

Although willing to pursue dialogues at any time with North Korea on steps leading to a mutually acceptable reunification of the two Koreas, South Korea in the interim favors a two-Korea solution (the application of the German formula into the Korean situation). More specifically, the South is willing to live with the status quo and contribute to its stabilization by reducing tensions on the Korean peninsula through such programs as: (1) the conclusion of a peace treaty and nonaggression pact between North and South Korea; (2) bilateral cross-recognition between each of the four powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan) and the two Koreas;* and (3) the admission of the two Koreas into the United Nations.[59, pp. 209-222; 79, pp. 120-138]

South Korea believes that slowly, unevenly, and without official acknowledgment, a trend toward increasing international accommodation to the day-to-day necessity to deal with separate political and economic entities on the

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* In this formula, the United States and Japan would establish diplomatic relations with North Korea at the same time that the Soviet Union and China established diplomatic relations with South Korea. An exchange of North and South Korean ambassadors would appear to be a step in that direction.

Korean peninsula appears to be under way. Seoul also believes that if the South can maintain the stable status quo with the support of its major ally, the United States, during the 1980s, time is on South Korea's side, because the overall balance of power in Korea during the 1980s will increasingly shift toward the South. (See Section III for the detailed discussion of this point.) The growing and widening economic and technological superiority of the South will eventually present North Korea with even slimmer prospects for achieving reunification of the Korean peninsula on its own terms. Implicit in this belief is that the Korean situation in the 1980s may reach the point where a role reversal, with the South pressing for unification and the North supporting a divided status quo, is, in fact, not entirely inconceivable.

North Korea is the power actively seeking to revise the status quo in Korea. Hence, it welcomes such signs of confrontation with the United States as the current tension between Moscow and Washington, while viewing with a jaundiced eye any emerging signs of the American-Chinese-Japanese entente.[118, pp. 177-202] Pyongyang remains adamant in opposing a two-Korea accommodation, denouncing it as a plot of "splitists" and contrasting the very "different" situations of Germany and Korea.* North Korea

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* North Korea firmly refuses to look to the German formula as a model for Korea. During a visit by East German Prime Minister Honnecker to Pyongyang in early 1978, Kim Il-sung forcefully rejected any parallel between Germany and Korea, calling advocates of two Koreas "splitists."

sees any steps that would stabilize and solidify the status quo as a threat to its ambitions to achieve the destruction of the Seoul regime and the unification of Korea on its own terms. For this reason, Pyongyang has so far rejected all of South Korea's specific proposals: dual representation in the United Nations; the replacement of the 1953 armistice agreement by a peace treaty between the two Koreas, along with a nonaggression pact and guarantees of security by the great powers; and Russian and Chinese recognition of North Korea.

The current unification proposals of North Korea are only slight modifications of ideas long advanced by the Pyongyang regime. The central premise of these proposals is the establishment of a "confederation" of North and South Korea (with the name of the so-called Democratic Confederal Republic of Korea), under which independent government systems on both halves of the peninsula would remain intact, pending the settlement of thorny political issues by a nongovernment body, composed of representatives of political parties and social organizations in both parts of Korea, as well as from those representing overseas Koreans, but excluding delegates from the Seoul government. Apparently, the North is demanding talks between representatives of political parties and social organizations rather than of governments, in an effort to buttress its policy of reunification through a so-called "grassroots" structure -- a policy loading the dice in Pyongyang's favor. This North Korean idea would also have

the effect of legitimizing Pyongyang-sponsored opposition within the South without any reciprocity or hopes of a fair vote in the North. The Seoul government suspects that North Korea proposes the confederate system in order to make an excuse for demanding the withdrawal of the American forces and excluding American "interference" in unification-related issues.

North Korea has long indicated that the withdrawal of the 40,000 American troops stationed in South Korea and the conclusion of a peace treaty between Washington and Pyongyang, excluding Seoul, are prerequisites to any moves toward ultimate reunification. Accordingly, the North has been pushing its own proposal for bilateral U.S.-North Korean talks that would not include South Korea. Pyongyang clearly sees bilateral talks as a propaganda move, according it greater prestige, placing the South at a disadvantage, and adding a significant new divisive element to Seoul-Washington relations. Such talks would, moreover, enhance the North's claims to sole legitimacy and arouse not-too-latent Southern fears of an American sellout.

But the U.S. State Department has reiterated its government's position that it will not establish direct contacts with North Korea unless South Korea is a full and equal participant. Washington has also urged Pyongyang to resume direct discussions with the Seoul government. Furthermore, the United States has repeatedly stated that it would be prepared to improve relations with North Korea, if China and the Soviet Union took similar steps toward South Korea.

SECTION 3

THE MILITARY BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS: A CRITICAL FACTOR FOR STABILITY IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea knows all too well that the Pyongyang regime has been constantly building its military strength with a professed aim of helping to "liberate" the southern half of the Korean peninsula and bring it into the Communist fold. The North, Seoul believes, is willing to pay a heavy price to maintain a credible military threat against the South, partly in order to pressure the United States and South Korea into considering an alternative to the status quo. Accordingly, South Korea's immediate, utmost and constant concern is with the military threat from the North. South Koreans insist that their country should never be unprepared, as in 1950, for North Korea's surprise attack or for Communist-instigated internal insurrection.(135; 130; 202; 196) It is abundantly clear that the South is fully prepared to build up military capabilities to a level sufficient to match North Korea's warfighting potential and to deter the Pyongyang regime from undertaking a new and dangerous military venture.

But South Korea wants to achieve the above objective without making a serious attempt to acquire a nuclear weapon capability.* Seoul seems to be fully aware that an

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* The 1973-1974 oil crisis increased the pressure on South Korea to place greater reliance on nuclear power as an energy source for the future; and the technical competence in nuclear technology has been steadily

effort by either Korea to acquire a nuclear weapon system would have the most destabilizing effect on the North-South military equation in the 1980s. It appears that South Korea has now decided to stop short of actually developing nuclear weapons, for fear of both unfavorable American reaction and adverse countermeasures from the Soviet Union and China. (Paradoxically, a strong American military presence in South Korea constitutes an effective nuclear arms control measure in the Korean peninsula.)

Although there is general agreement among the South Koreans about the aggressive military posture of North Korea, there are valid differences in their judgments as to the circumstances under which Kim Il-sung would actually risk an attack on the South. According to their divergent views, a renewed Korean crisis that threatens resumption of hostilities could arise in the form of a calculated armed attack across the DMZ or from a miscalculation in escalatory responses to incidents along the DMZ or in the coastal waters around Korea, particularly near the small islands held by the South adjacent to the northwest coast of North Korea and within North Korean territorial waters. The greatest risk derives from possible North Korean

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increasing. South Korea has the requisite scientists and engineers for the development of a significant nuclear weaponry program, and its Atomic Energy Research Institute has been conducting nuclear research since it obtained an experimental reactor in 1962. South Korea, with its expanding nuclear energy production, is believed to be capable of producing and testing nuclear weapons as early as the latter part of the 1980s. (122, p. 1141; 34, pp. 146-7; 16, pp. 33-34)

miscalculation regarding the political instability and the depth of domestic political dissent in the South,[200] or from a perception that the United States, weary of involvement in Asian wars (and perhaps increasingly estranged from the regime in Seoul) would not fulfill its commitment to defend South Korea. A heightening of tensions in the Korean peninsula, though not on a 1950 Korean War scale, could arise if North Korea, experiencing severe internal opposition against the first effort at Communist monarchism, were tempted to pursue external military action along or across the DMZ, in an effort to unify the country and the people behind the leadership of the Kim clan. North Korea may also attempt to intensify further its provocative acts against South Korea in an effort to check or possibly nullify the widening gap in national strength in favor of Seoul.

Currently, South Korea is preoccupied with the need for its military preparedness to retaliate against North Korea in case of military provocations from Pyongyang aimed at thwarting the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. The Seoul government believes that the North Koreans are likely to step up their provocations, in one form or another, in the very near future to generate the impression that South Korea is safe for such a global sports festival.[125; 136; 201; 194] The unusually large war game that Pyongyang recently conducted along the DMZ seems indicative of North Korea's strategy for making Korea a trouble spot sooner or later -- but before 1988 and, for that matter, before 1986.

The prospects for Korean peace in the 1980s depend upon the maintenance of deterrence. In evaluating the factors that will provide security for South Korea and deter a renewal of hostilities launched by the North, the Seoul regime believes that the following three factors are particularly important: (1) the military balance between North and South Korea; (2) the U.S. military presence in South Korea, and the degree of American will or intention to use force in the case of aggression from the North; and (3) South Korea's efforts to achieve military self-reliance.

The deterrence equation in the Korean peninsula does not consist only of the warfighting capabilities of the South Korean and American forces. It also involves nonmilitary measures that, though less dependable or crucial than the three key military components mentioned above, could still help to maintain a credible deterrent posture. In this vein, South Korea sees the role of Japan in East Asian politics and the weight and direction of Soviet and Chinese influence over the North as the two most important nonmilitary components.

Seoul believes that even if the military balance between the two Koreas is stabilized, Seoul-Washington security ties remain solid, and the South's more self-reliant defense policy continues to be successfully implemented, the tension and likelihood of a recurrence of armed conflict on the Korean peninsula is not likely to diminish.[48, pp. 1138-39] Given this unrelenting Cold War confrontation between Seoul and Pyongyang, a

nonmilitary solution to the Korean issue must also be sought with the help of such major Pacific powers as Japan, the Soviet Union and China. It is against this background that, as will be seen in Section VI, South Korea has been attempting to develop channels of communication with Russia and China, even though their political ideologies are distinctively antagonistic to that of the Seoul government.

In this connection, South Korea accepts the quadrilateral power balance as the fact of life in East Asia -- the only area of the world where the interests of th United States, Japan, China and the Soviet Union intersect, conflict, and sometimes clash. This four-power balance, which is the product of the Sino-Soviet rift, the reemergence of Japan and the trend toward a reduced American military role in the region, involves complicated and shifting patterns of competition and cooperation (or parallel action), for it tends to defuse some of the automatic hostility characteristic of the bipolar Cold War era, allowing for greater flexibility and even compromise.(44) As a result, the balance may create a complex pattern of uncertainties and mutual constraints that could operate to inhibit and limit active major-power intervention in local military conflicts and encourage the pursuit of interests increasingly through political, diplomatic, and economic competition and maneuver. In Korea, for example, the balance may tend to reduce, rather than increase, the dangers of South-North tensions escalating into direct confrontation between all four major

powers, with the effect of preserving the valuable potential of the status quo. Under these conditions, North Korea is unlikely to feel it can secure reliable outside support for its military adventure against the South and will have to consider seriously the possibility of gentle dissuasion or active opposition from all or some of the major powers,a fact which should exercise a strong inhibiting influence on Pyongyang's external behavior. In short, the four-power balance in East Asia has created new and strong constraints in Korea, enlarging the possible risks and costs that might be involved for North Korea if it were to consider any major military action against South Korea.

Within East Asia itself, the Soviet Union has undertaken an enormous military buildup, while the American military presence in continental Asia has been decreasing in the post-Vietnam era. As perceived by the United States and its allies, the Soviet threat is the primary concern, and in the Asian region it is manifested most conspicuously in the growing strength of the Soviet Pacific Fleet,* which is closely linked to Moscow's conventional and nuclear military deployments in Siberia and the Soviet Far

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* The Soviet Pacific Fleet today includes approximately 35 percent of all Soviet submarines and about 33 to 35 percent of all Soviet surface combat ships, including the antisubmarine warfare aircraft carrier Minsk and the amphibious assault transport dock vessel Ivan Rogov. (100; 84; 31, pp. 324-5)

East near the Sino-Soviet boundary* (see Diagram I). America's defense policy for Asia must therefore increasingly emphasize the need to counter the Soviet naval threat, as was recently suggested by the Pentagon.[1]

The emerging proto-coalition among the United States, China and Japan represents a broad rearrangement of the contours of power in Asia and can be viewed as a prospect for significant reversal in the strategic balance in East Asia at the Kremlin's expense. There are still unsolved differences within this nascent tripartite alignment, not least of which is related to the future of Taiwan and Korea. But there is a broad convergence of strategic and economic interests. Moscow's growing fear of the possibility of the combined American, Chinese and Japanese reactions to any military action it might take should operate to reinforce other constraints against such action. As for China, the Sino-Soviet rift, Beijing's apprehensions about a hostile Soviet Union, and the emerging Washington-Beijing-Tokyo proto-coalition are seen as having effectively removed the People's Republic of China as a threat to U.S. interests in East Asia for the

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* About one-third of the Soviet Union's 250 SS-20 mobile IRBMs are targeted on China and on United States bases in Japan and South Korea. Moscow also deploys 200 SS-4 MRBMs, 1,000 SS-12 tactical nuclear missiles, 2,500 nuclear warheads for tactical uses, and 2,400 combat aircraft, including a dozen Backfire supersonic bombers. Soviet ground troops have been moved in large numbers back onto the three islands off Hokkaido -- Kunashiri, Etoforu, and Shikotan -- occupied by the Soviet Union since the end of World War II but still claimed by Japan.(87; 42)

foreseeable future.*

Militarily, there seems to be general agreement -- and South Korea is painfully aware of this fact -- that the North Korean forces are currently superior to the forces of the South, as indicated in Table 2 on the military balance in the Korean peninsula in 1981-1982.(121, pp. 1152-63; 19, pp. 852-64; 48, pp. 1123-39) A serious military imbalance in the North's favor has been the case for the past three decades and is likely to continue for quite a few more years. It is clear, meanwhile, that North Korea has no intention of going nuclear, as long as South Korea refrains from doing likewise.**

North Korea has been concentrating efforts on modernization and expansion of armaments, in accordance with the four major military guidelines adopted in the

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* The Pentagon's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1979 stated: "The Sino-Soviet dispute and the focusing of PRC forces on the Soviet problem had led to a reassessment on our part of the likelihood of a U.S.-PRC conflict. As a result, we no longer plan forces on the basis of a U.S.-PRC conflict, although a responsive conventional force structure as well as nuclear forces provide hedges against a potentially threatening China."(1)

** South Korea's nuclear energy production capability is believed to be several years ahead of North Korea's, which has only one small-scale nuclear research reactor. In his interview with the editor-in-chief of the Japanese magazine Sekai on March 26, 1976, President Kim Il-sung of North Korea said: "We have no intention of arming ourselves with nuclear weapons. We have not enough money to produce nuclear weapons or adequate place to test them." And he went on to say, "Even if war bursts forth in Korea, they would not be able to use nuclear weapons. How can they use nuclear weapons here in Korea when friend and foe will grapple with each other? Should the enemy use nuclear weapons he will also get killed."(112)

Table 2: The North-South Military Balance in Korea, 1981-1982

KOREA: REPUBLIC OF (SOUTH)

Population: 39,400,000.
Military service: Army and Marines 30 months. Navy and Air Force 3 years.
Total armed forces: 622,000.
GDP 1982: won 50,023 bn ($68.419 bn).
Est def exp 1982: won 3,782 bn ($5.173 bn).*
GNP growth: 7.1% (1982).
Inflation: 20.5% (1981), 6% (1982).
$1 = won 731.13 (1982).

Army: 540,000.
3 Army, 6 corps HQ.
2 mech inf divs (each 3 bdes: 3 mech inf, 3 mot, 3 tk, 1 recce bns, 1 fd arty bde)
20 inf divs (each 3 inf regts, 1 recce, 1 tk, 1 engr bn, arty gp).
11 indep bdes incl 3 AB (4 AB, 1 recce, 1 hel bns, arty gp), 2 special forces, cdo, inf, 'Capital Command'.
2 AA arty bdes.
2 SSM bns with 12 *Honest John*.
2 SAM bdes: 3 *HAWK*, 2 *Nike Hercules* bns.
1 army aviation bde.
1,200 M-47/-48 (incl A5) MBT; 500 M-113/-577; 350 Fiat 6614 APC; 2,500 M-53 155mm; M-107 175 mm SP guns and M-101 105mm, M-114 155mm towed, M-115 towed, M-110 SP 203mm how; 130mm MRL; 5,300 81mm and 107mm mor; 12 *Honest John* SSM; 8 76mm, 50 90mm ATK guns; *LAW* RL; 57mm, 75mm, 106mm RCL; *TOW* ATGW; 66 *Vulcan* 20mm, 40 40mm AA guns; 110 *HAWK*, 100 *Nike Hercules* SAM; 14 O-2A ac; 100 UH-1B, 100 OH-6A, 25 Hughes 500MD *Defender* with *TOW*, 90 *Scout* hel.
(On order: 37 M-109A2 155mm SP how; *TOW* ATGW; *Stinger*, 56 OH-6A, 25 Hughes 500MD hel with *TOW*).

RESERVES: Regular Army Reserves 1,400,000: 23 inf divs (cadre). Homeland Reserve Defence Force 3,300,000.

Navy: 49,000 incl marines.
11 US destroyers: 7 *Gearing* with 8 *Harpoon* SSM (2 with 1 *Alouette* III hel), 2 *Sumner*, 2 *Fletcher*.
8 frigates: 1 *Ulsan* with 8 *Harpoon*; 7 US (1 *Rudderow*, 6 *Lawrence/Crosley*).
3 US *Auk* corvettes.
11 FAC(M) with SSM: 9 with *Standard* (8 PSMM Mk 5, 1 US *Asheville*), 2 *Kist* with 2 *Exocet*.
8 US *Cape* large patrol craft.

KOREA: DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (NORTH)

Population: 18,800,000.
Military service: Army, Navy 5 years; Air Force 3–4 years.
Total armed forces: 784,500.
Est GNP 1982: won 35.280 bn ($18.766 bn).
Est def exp 1983: won 3.602 bn ($1.916 bn).†
$1 = won 0.94 (1982/3 official), 1.88 (adj).

Army: 700,000.
9 corps HQ.
2 armd divs.
3 mot inf divs.
35 inf divs.
5 armd bdes.
4 inf bdes.
Special forces (100,000): 1 corps HQ: 26 bdes (incl 3 amph cdo), AB element.
2 indep tk, 5 indep inf regts.
250 arty bns.
82 MRL bns.
5 SSM bns with 54 *FROG*.
5 river crossing regts (13 bns).
AFV: 300 T-34, 2,200 T-34/-55/-62, 175 Type-59 MBT; 100 PT-76, 50 Type-62 lt tks; 140 BA-64 armd cars; BMP-1 MICV; 1,000 BTR-40/-50/-60/-152, Ch Type-531 APC.
Arty: 3,300 76mm, 85mm, 100mm, M-30 122mm, M-46 130mm towed, incl 800 SU-76, SU-100 SP guns; 122mm, ML-20 152mm how; 11,000 82mm, 120mm, 160mm and 240mm mor; 2,000 107mm, 122mm, 140mm, 200mm and 240mm MRL; 54 *FROG*-5/-7 SSM.
ATK: 1,500 B-10 82mm, B-11 107mm RCL; 45mm, 57mm, Type-52 75mm ATK guns; AT-3 *Sagger* ATGW.
AD: 8,000 23mm, 37mm, 57mm, 85mm and 100mm towed, ZSU-23-4, ZSU-57-2 SP AA guns; SA-7 SAM.

RESERVES: 230,000, 23 divs (cadre).

Navy: 33,500.
21 subs (4 Sov W-, 4 Ch R-class, 13 local).
4 *Najin* frigates (2 may be in reserve).
18 Sov FAC(M) with *Styx* SSM: 8 *Osa*-I, 10 *Komar*.
32 large patrol craft: 2 Sov *Tral*, 15 SO-1, 3 *Sariwan*, 6 Ch *Hainan*, 6 *Taechong*.
151 FAC(G): 20 Sov MO-IV(C), 23 Ch (15 *Shanghai* II, 8 *Shantou*), 4 *Chodo*, 4 K-48, 64 *Chaho*, 36 *Chong-Jin*.

Table 2. The North-South Military Balance in Korea, 1981-1982

28 coastal patrol craft(: 6 CPIC FAC(P); 13 Sewart (9 65-ft, 4 40-ft), 9 *Schoolboy* I/II.
8 MSC-268/-294 coastal minesweepers, 1 minesweeping boat(.
24 US landing ships (8 LST, 10 LSM, 6 LCU).

Bases: Chinhae, Cheju, Inchon, Mokpo, Pukpyong, Pohang, Pusan.

RESERVES: 25,000.

Marines: (20,000).
2 divs, 1 bde.
M-47 MBT; LVTP-7 APC.
(On order: 1 sub, 7 corvettes, 20 FAC(M) (7 types), 75 *Harpoon* SSM; 40 LVTP-7.)

RESERVES: 60,000.

Air Force: 33,000; some 450 combat ac, 10 combat hel.
7 combat, 2 tpt wings.
18 FGA sqns: 14 with 250 F-5A/B/E/F; 4 with 70 F-86F, 6 A-10.
4 AD sqns with 70 F-4D/E.
1 COIN sqn with 24 OV-10G, some A-37.
1 recce sqn with 10 RF-5A.

2 ASW sqns: 1 with 20 S-2A/F ac; 1 with 10 Hughes 500MD hel.
1 SAR hel sqn with 6 UH-1H, 20 UH-1B/H.
5 tpt sqns with 10 C-54, 16 C-123J/K, 2 HS-748, 6 C-130H, Aero *Commander*.
Trainers incl: 20 T-28D, 40 T-33A, 14 T-37C, 20 T-41D, 35 F-5B, 63 F-5F.
AAM: *Sidewinder*, *Sparrow*.
(On order: 30 F-16A, 6 F-16B, 36 F-5E, 30 F-5F, 6 F-4D ftrs; AIM-9Q *Sidewinder* AAM; *Maverick* ASM.)

RESERVES: 55,000.

Para-Military Forces: Civilian Defence Corps (to age 50) 4,400,000; Student Homeland Defence Corps (Schools) 1,820,000. Coastguard: 25 small craft, 9 Hughes 500D hel.

182 FAC(T): 80 Sov (4 *Shershen*, 64 P-6(, 12 P-4(); 102((9 *Sinpo*, 15 *Iwon*, 6 *An Ju*, 72 *Ku Song/Sin Hung*).
30 coastal patrol craft((10 ex-Sov KM-4, 20 misc gunboats).
9 LCU, 15 LCM, 75 *Nampo* landing craft(.
2 coast defence msl regts with *Samlet* in 6 sites: SM-4-1 130mm guns.

RESERVES: 40,000.

Bases: Wonsan, Nampo.

Air Force: 51,000; some 740 combat aircraft.
3 lt bbr sqns with 70 Il-28.
13 FGA sqns: 1 with 20 Su-7; 9 with some 290 MiG-15/-17; 3 with some 100 MiG-19/Q-5.
12 interceptor sqns with 160 MiG-21, some 100 MiG-19.
Tpts incl 250 An-2, 10 An-24, 5 Il-14, 4 Il-18, 1 Tu-154.
Hel incl 40 Mi-4, 20 Mi-8.
Trainers incl 20 Yak-11, 70 Yak-18, 100 MiG-15UTI/-19UTI/-21U, Il-28, 30 CJ-6.
AAM: AA-2 *Atoll*.
4 SAM bdes (12 bns, 40 btys) with 250 SA-2, some SA-3, in 40 sites.

Forces Abroad: Iran 300; Madagascar 100; Uganda 40; Zimbabwe 130.

Para-Military Forces: security forces and border guards: 38,000. Workers-Farmers Youth Red Guard (civilian militia) 1,760,000: some with small arms, some AA arty.

Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, 1983-84, London pp. 94-95.

early 1960s, which called for, among other things, modernizing the armed forces, arming the entire population and fortifying the entire nation, and, above all, preserving a self-reliant and strong military capability.[70, pp. 65-78] Twelve percent of the North Korean working-age population is in the regular armed forces. The pattern of the North Korean military buildup in recent years indicates a continued strengthening of armored forces, increased artillery and other firepower, greater airborne strength, greater ammunition reserves, and a continued buildup of naval strength, particularly submarines.

According to reliable Western intelligence reports, North Korea has been spending a much larger portion of its Gross National Product (GNP) on military activities than has South Korea. During the 1960s, for example, Pyongyang's military expenditure reached 15 to 20 percent of its GNP as compared with 5.5 percent on the part of South Korea, and it consumed an even higher percentage of GNP during the 1970s.[6]* In point of fact, North Korea's

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* North Korea fixed its government budget for fiscal 1981 at 20,478,900,000 won (in North Korean currency) or an equivalent of US $11,570,000,000 (at the conversion rate of 1.77 won to the American dollar) at the fifth session of the Sixth Supreme People's Assembly held on April 6-8, 1981. The share of military outlay in the total budget was 14.7 percent (3,010,400,000 won or US $1,700,790,000). But some professional observers in South Korea and the West believe that the actual military spending would be considerably higher because the Pyongyang regime makes it a rule to hide defense expenditure in other sectors. For example, the North's military budget for fiscal 1981 excludes spending for the Ministry of Second Machine Industry which is apparently responsible for the production of military equipment.

military spending in percentage of GNP is second in the world, behind the Soviet Union.* Although the North has given absolute priority to its military buildup, it has so far been able to deprive its civilian economy without serious internal problems.

Initially, North Korean forces were mainly supplied with Soviet weaponry. As a result of the nation's advances in industrial technology, however, domestic weapons production capability has been increased to the extent that it is increasingly less dependent on military assistance from its Russian and Chinese allies.[90, p. 59] (Both Pyongyang and Seoul are dependent on external aid for their military forces, but the South is considerably more dependent than the North.) North Korea's defense industry is capable of producing Pyongyang's own military hardware except for combat aircraft and other highly sophisticated equipment. Currently the North produces small arms, recoilless rifles, mortars, rocket launchers, mobile artillery, AAA weapons, APCs, tanks, gunboats, and submarines. It relies on China and the Soviet Union for

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* The Soviet Union, according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency reports, now is devoting between 16 and 20 percent of its GNP to military purposes, with spending rising 4 to 5 percent a year, while China's military costs are only 5 to 20 percent of a much smaller GNP and are growing at 1 or 2 percent a year. By comparison, military spending in major West European countries ranges from Britain's 5.8 percent to Italy's 2.4 percent, and the largest military power in South Asia, India, spends 3.5 percent.

imports of aircraft, missiles, and other technically sophisticated weapons.*

North Korea's military potential centers around a ground force of roughly 600,000 troops in some 40 regular divisions with about 2,600 tanks. (In the event of renewed hostilities in Korea, the ground combat capabilities of both sides would play a decisive role in the conduct of war.) Air power consists of some 740 combat aircraft, including some MIG-19 and MIG-21 fighters; while naval forces included guided missile patrol boats, torpedo boats, amphibious assault craft and submarines. It seems that North Korean ground forces are characterized by armored units emphasizing concentrated strike power (5 armored brigates and 250 artillery battalions). Strategically, guerrilla warfare is emphasized by the Pyongyang regime, explaining their 100,000 strong special forces. North Korea also possesses powerful reserve forces centered around the 1.76 million Militia (Worker-Peasant Red Guards).

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* The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency estimates that during the period from 1967 to 1976 arms transferred to North Korea from China and the Soviet Union amounted to a total of US $771 million. According to U.S. Defense Department figures declassified in August 1977, North Korea had received US $180 million in various forms of military aid from the Chinese and US $145 million from the Soviet Union during 1974-1977.

There is no indication that the Soviet Union has acceded to North Korean requests for more sophisticated military equipment, including MIG-23s, although the North Koreans have received ground weapons, including FROG 7 missiles, air defense systems, and technology for submarine and high-speed attack boats. North Korea has reportedly complained bitterly of Moscow's refusal to provide MIG-23s.

Indications are that North Korea has concentrated superior manpower and firepower near the DMZ by working hard to maximize its geographical advantages and improving its prospects for achieving surprise. Heavy weapons suitable for both offense and defense have been concentrated in hardened forward positions closer to the DMZ. North Korea maintains about 14 or 15 crack army divisions with powerful artillery and air supports deployed near the DMZ, and some North Korean artillery and surface-to-surface missiles are thought to be deployed within striking range of Seoul. These forces are in a position to launch, at a moment's notice from the DPRK's supreme military council and without prior approval from either Moscow or Beijing, an all-out three-dimensional surprise attack against the South.

It is important to note that the North Korean forces are configured largely for blitzkrieg-type offensive operations with mobility and firepower. North Korea has developed highly mobile armed forces, supported by airborne elements, for a surprise attack on the South, aimed first at capturing Seoul promptly and second at making a rapid advance into other areas of the South. (A scenario often advanced by U.S. and South Korean military strategists is that the North Korean forces, taking advantage of the initiative of surprise, will rush to Seoul, seize the capital, control a high percentage of the population and industrial capacity of the South, and then seek negotiations from their new position of strength.) As

happened during the initial stage of the Korean War in June 1950, the element of surprise could give the North a distinct advantage, along with the advantage of geography and terrain. The North's recent emphasis on tunnel-diggings was apparently designed to strengthen its blitzkrieg capabilities for a surprise attack that would neutralize the South's forward defense posture along the DMZ.

Defensively, North Korea has invested heavily both in dispersing industrial targets and in hardening and putting underground not only military but also industrial facilities. Moreover, most of its major military and industrial facilities are heavily protected by SAMs and antiaircraft artillery. With a substantial indigenous arms production and major stockpiling of ammunitions and other war materials, the North could extend an offensive for weeks or even several months without relying on any further external assistance or resupply.[10, p. 31]

Facing North Korea below the 1953 armistice line is a well-armed South Korean military establishment. Currently the South's defense industry can meet only part of the requirements of its ground forces, and Seoul still imports almost all of its heavy equipment. But South Korea has been expanding an indigenous defense industry in an effort to catch up with North Korea in domestic arms production.

South Korea has been strengthening its defense capability by means of high economic growth under the

Washington-Seoul defense cooperation system.[113, pp. 65-79] South Korean ground forces total some 540,000 in some 22 divisions. (The nucleus of Seoul's armed strength is the army, composed mainly of infantry divisions.) Air power includes some 450 combat aircraft, mainly F-5 and F-86 fighters. In addition, South Korea maintains naval forces equipped with destroyers and missile ships, fundamentally charged with coastal defense and amphibious force landings.

Most of the South Korean army is deployed within a few dozen kilometers of the truce line. Because the capital of South Korea, Seoul, is located only about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the nearest segments of the DMZ, various defense facilities have been established to fortify the defense system of the capital, in anticipation of an effort by the North to advance rapidly upon Seoul. For in response to the North's blitzkrieg-type attack, the South Korean army will be unable to trade distance for stronger defensive positions. It must defend, from the commencement of hostilities, all the major corridors of invasion close to the DMZ, a task which requires a dispersal of defense forces.

Comparison of the military capabilities of North and South Korea shows that neither enjoys an overwhelming superiority to subjugate the other in a one-to-one, direct all-out war, in which no outside forces would be involved. However, North Korean military forces outnumber those of the South in almost every significant aspect by enjoying,

as Chang Yoon Choi describes accurately, "definitive advantages in air power and offensive strategic posture, and superiority in mobile assault weapons, shelling capability, naval capabilities, and unconventional warfare forces."[48, p. 1138] Specifically, the Northern ground forces now outnumber the Southern ground forces of 540,000 and Pyongyang's quantitative lead in weaponry is 2 to 1 in total mobile assault weapons (tanks, armored personnel carriers, assault guns), in shelling capability (artillery, rocket launchers, and mortars), and in combat jet aircraft (although this is somewhat offset by qualitative inferiority), and more than 4 to 1 in antiaircraft guns and in small, fast and heavily armed coastal patrol vessels.

North Korea has a strong unconventional or special warfare capability, as its four independent infantry divisions are organized specifically for commando-type infiltration and guerrilla warfare activity in the South. In other words, the North Korean army, the fourth largest in the world, includes the world's largest commando force totaling 100,000 men. In the event of war, these forces would be able to infiltrate the South by land, air and sea to mount diversionary attacks against South Korea in the rear. So too, compared with the South's militia (the Home Defense Reserve Force), the North's militia (the Worker-Peasant Red Guards) is better trained and equipped for rear-area security.

Concerning the logistics support, South Korea is far distant (some 6,000 miles) from its major ally, the United

States, although it can receive immediate assistance from American forces stationed in Korea and Japan. By comparison, North Korea has the advantage of border contiguity with the Soviet Union and China, which would make it easy for them to furnish Pyongyang with supplies and weapons. As noted earlier, another major geographical disadvantage of the South is the location of its capital city, Seoul,* which falls within the range of North Korean surface-to-surface missiles (Soviet Frogs-5/7),** while the capital of North Korea, Pyongyang, is about 150 kilometers (95 miles) north from the DMZ and thus located well north of any direct firepower threat from the South's armed forces. Because Seoul is only 40 kilometers (or 25 miles) from the truce line, the tactic of trading space for time is not available to the South's defenders. Needless to say, North Korea has deployed its superior military forces to maximize the advantage derived from the proximity of Seoul to the DMZ.

By and large, the North Korean military threat to the South is real, ever-present, and certainly growing. It should be emphasized, however, that the Northern forces have a number of potential vulnerabilities that could become more pronounced in the 1980s. First, their air

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* Seoul, whose population now exceeds 8 million, constitutes the political, commercial, industrial and cultural centers of South Korea.

** The flying time between the DMZ and Seoul is only three minutes.

force is equipped with aging jet combat aircraft, the most modern being MIG-21s and SU-7s. Second, North Korea has a distinct advantage in manpower and mobilization base, with are particularly crucial in a protracted war, and the drafting of 16-year-olds is apparently affecting its industrial manpower pool. Third, Pyongyang's economic base for continuing military buildup, modernization and expansion in the future is inferior to that of the South. Fourth, the North may not have enough well-trained scientists and technicians, and this puts Pyongyang at a disadvantage in the utilization of more sophisticated military technology. Fifth and finally, the North has no firm assurance from Moscow and Beijing that they would be eager to back another 1950-type Korean war launched by Pyongyang. Although North Korean forces are capable of capturing Seoul and a good portion of the Southern territory in an initial surprise attack, they would not be able to withstand a U.S.-South Korean counterattack without active and continuing support of its two major Communist allies. In the event of the North's failure to receive such support, it would once again be faced with widespread destruction and devastation.

It is also important to weigh the military advantages enjoyed by South Korea. The North Korean armed forces have only limited corridors of attack to them, affording the Southern forces terrain that is advantageous for defense. In other words, South Korea can focus its military effort on the capability for forward defense

designed to exploit favorable terrains and strong points. Seoul also has superior jet combat aircraft with better trained air force personnel. Moreover, about 300,000 military (mostly infantry) personnel of South Korea have Vietnam combat experience. Finally, the South is backed by American deterrence forces, particularly air and naval forces, which will be discussed in Section IV. The American commitment now appears credible once again, since President Reagan shortly after his inauguration, sought to erase doubts about America's commitment to the security of Korea by a strong show of support for South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan, one of the new President's first official visitors to Washington. Equally important, American patience with limited protracted war seems to have ended with Vietnam.

Weighed against the South Korean forces, in short, North Korea enjoys a clear military superiority which, without external help or resupply, would be most effective in a short war aimed at controlling a limited but critical area of the South, extending down into the Seoul perimeter. In a protracted war, the South may be able to counterbalance this advantage, but probably at the high cost of the destruction of major industrial and urban areas.

South Korea is all too well aware of its military vulnerabilities vis-a-vis North Korea and of the consequent need to augment its defense capabilities. President Carter's initial decision in 1977 to withdraw American

ground forces from Korea by 1981 or 1982* gave a strong impetus to the South for making strenuous efforts to minimize its security dependence on the United States and to maximize its own defense capability.** Needless to say, Seoul is not blind to the fact that the North continues to improve its military capabilities relative to the South. But it confidently believes that there is a reasonable prospect that the South will achieve parity or even a margin of superiority vis-a-vis the North during the late 1980s,(48, pp. 1128-29; 119, pp. 859-60) because the South has by far the stronger economy and thus is better able to bear the extra defense burden.(124; 46, pp. 448-63; 47, pp. 77-106)

In the future, the relative military strength of the two Koreas will be principally determined by the balance of economic power on the peninsula. In recent years, consequently, the leadership of each side has emphasized economic development as the primary form of competition. Ironically, South Korea's rapidly growing economic strength

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* It should be noted that this initial decision by President Carter was preceded by the Nixon Administration's decision in 1970 to withdraw one of the two U.S. infantry divisions from Korea, applying the Nixon Doctrine.

** After former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's visit to Seoul in August 1975, President Park Chung-hee told an American correspondent that in four or five years South Korea's armed forces would be sufficient to defend against a North Korean attack without air, sea or logistical support from the United States. He also acknowledged that U.S. ground forces were needed in 1975 only as a deterrent to Chinese or Soviet intervention. The New York Times, August 21, 1975.

may well be a source of tension on the Korean peninsula, because the South is now outstripping the North by a growing margin.

There has been the major shift in economic capability and development from the North to the South during the past decade. In economic terms, the South enjoys two distinct major advantages: a population twice as large as the North's and a stronger and faster growing economy with a GNP three times as large as the North's. A booklet published in late 1980 by the National Unification Board in Seoul, a South Korean government organization, announced that South Korea was far ahead of North Korea in almost every aspect of economic life (see Table 3). What is more important, the economic gap in the South's favor will widen during the 1980s as South Korea's industrial and technical base -- its steel, heavy machinery, petrochemical, and electronic industries -- expands. Its shipbuilding capacity is also much greater than that of the North and is likely to expand. Furthermore, its high credit rating in the international money market helps to attract sufficient amounts of foreign capital (i.e., from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) and investments to support the development of both its economy and its defense infrastructure.

On the other hand, it is evident that North Korea, with its smaller population and its weaker economy, has strained its resources to the limit in order to support

Table 3. Economic pictures of South and North Korea, as compiled by the National Unification Board in Seoul (as of the end of 1979).

Items	Units	S. Korea	N. Korea
Population	1,000 persons	37,605	17,400
Population Growth Rate	%	1.58	2.5
Territorial Space	Sq. kilometers	98,966	122,370
GNP	US$ billion	61	12.5
Per Capita GNP	US$	1,624	719
Burden for Military Expenses	%	5.3	20.9
Investment Rate	%	35.9	40.2
Economic Growth Rate	%	7.1	5.0
Steel-Making Capacity	1,000 tons	8,385	4,000
Pig Iron-Making Capacity	1,000 tons	5,266	3,220
Copper	1,000 tons	146	50
Chemical Fertilizer	1,000 tons	1,450	589
Agricultural Chemicals	1,000 tons	208	24

Table 3. Economic pictures ... (Continued)

Items	Units	S. Korea	N. Korea
Cement Production Capacity	1,000 tons	20,400	9,250
Cement Production	1,000 tons	16,410	8,000
Car Production	1,000 cars	280	30
Shipping Capacity	1,000 GT	2,800	250
TV Receivers	1,000 units	5,870	100
Power Generation	Million kwh	35,600	24,600
Railroad Track	Kilometers	5,860	4,322
Highway	Kilometers	46,333	20,775
Grain	1,000 tons	8,112	4,797
Exports	US$1 million	15,055	1,150
Imports	US$1 million	20,339	1,160
Per Capita Defense Payment	US$	86.1	150.3
Per Capita Consumption	US$	1,079.9	299.1

Source: National Unification Board, Nampukhan gyongje hyonsang bikyo (Comparison of the Economic Conditions of South and North Korea), Seoul, 1980, pp. 1-85.

short-term development of maximum military power rather than long-term economic growth.[72; 53, p. 80] It now faces a heavy external debt, with very limited resources to invest in economic development. It is also beset with increasingly serious economic problems, including shortages of power, transportation and manpower,* and lack of access to both foreign capital (because of its low credit rating) and advanced technologies.[96, pp. 21-3] In other words, the North may be reaching a point where it will have to reallocate both financial and manpower resources to the civilian sector in order to prevent a serious breakdown in its economy. As a corollary, Pyongyang's capabilities for domestic production of military equipment are likely to be increasingly and adversely affected in the future. In effect, North Korea, which has prided itself on its ability to maintain its independence under the philosophy of chuche, is likely to become more dependent upon its outside supporters, both for economic assistance and for higher levels of military and industrial technology.

South Korea carried out a force modernization program from 1971 to 1977 with a budget of US $5 billion, US $1.5 billion of which was financed through the U.S. military assistance program.[10, p. 44] The main focus of

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* As mentioned previously, the proportion of working-age males in the regular armed forces in North Korea is 12 percent (second only to Israel), compared to 6 percent in the South. The Pyongyang regime has attempted to minimize its disadvantage of a smaller population by lowering the military service age to 16, and all young men are drafted for seven years into the Army.

the program was with both ground force and air defense improvements, such as artillery and Hawk surface-to-surface missiles.

During the past decade, moreover, South Korea has shifted from being a recipient of United States military assistance to increasingly becoming a cash purchaser of American military hardware.* The purchase amounted to US $1.3 billion in fiscal 1973, US $56.4 million in fiscal 1974, and US $159.8 million in fiscal 1975. In the latter year, cash purchases exceeded the value of U.S. military aid.[16, p. 32] Shortly after South Vietnam fell to the Communists in April 1975, South Korea also initiated its own ambitious first five-year (1976-1980) Force Improvement Plan (FIP). (In November 1979 it was revised, making it a six-year plan.) To finance the plan, the Seoul government in July 1975 enacted a US $400 million annual defense surtax for each of the next five years, raising the percentage of South Korea's GNP annually devoted to defense from 5 percent to 7 - 7.5 percent. The FIP I projected a six-year expenditure of nearly US $8 billion, with foreign exchange costs of US $3.5 billion. It included efforts to upgrade South Korean military forces qualitatively in the areas of communications, intelligence, logistics, mobility,

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* The U.S. military assistance program totals continued to decline from about US $297 million in fiscal 1973 to US $60 million in fiscal 1976, and to US $17 million in fiscal 1977. (20, p. 43)

armor, antiarmor, artillery, and air offense and defense.[10, p. 45] Nevertheless, the South was to remain militarily inferior to the North even with the successful completion of the FIP I at the end of 1981.

Under the second five-year (1982-1986) FIP, South Korea is expected to spend about 7 or 8 percent of its GNP on defense, hoping that the South will be on a rough par with the North and develop a self-reliant force structure capable of meeting and defending a North Korean attack by 1986. During the FIP II period, emphasis will be placed on both qualitative and quantitative improvements in such areas as artillery, armor, antitank weapons, war reserve munitions for ground forces, advanced combat aircraft, aircraft storage, antisubmarine warfare equipment and small naval ships.[48, pp. 1137-38]

For military equipment and logistic support, South Korea has been steadily promoting domestic weapons production and improvements in its own supply system. For example, it succeeded in test-firing missiles and rockets in the fall of 1978 and also built a Korea-style destroyer in March 1981. It is reported that during the 1980s South Korea's defense industry will be capable of manufacturing all of its ground force equipment, aircraft, and probably all but the more technologically sophisticated weapons and electronics. More technologically advanced weapons continue to be supplied almost totally from United States sources.

By and large, time is obviously on the side of South Korea in the strategic equation of the Korean peninsula. The prospect of the South achieving a military balance or even a margin of superiority during the late 1980s can only be perceived by the North as threatening, thus intensifying the arms race between the two antagonistic camps. At the same time, Pyongyang may at some point in the not too distant future conclude that unless it moves quickly and decisively against Seoul, the improvement of the South's self-reliant military capabilities, supported by its superior economic and technological bases, may deny the North the possibility of conquest perhaps forever. This situation would provide North Korea with a couple of agonizing choices.

North Korea would probably attempt to reduce the potential South Korean threat and improve its own relative position by seeking far larger support from China and the Soviet Union, particularly in the form of more advanced weapons systems for defense, if not for a preemptive strike against the South. Moscow would have an advantage in such a situation since its resources -- economic, technological and military -- are far greater than those of China. The Kremlin, therefore, could increase its leverage over North Korean policy toward the South in the 1980s. Meanwhile, both Moscow and Beijing, viewing the growing relative strength of the South as an increasing threat to the North, could be motivated to bail North Korea out of the predicament and, what is more important, to move in

parallel with the United States and Japan to stabilize the status quo in Korea.

On the other hand, the Communist regime in Pyongyang would not be inclined to accept the South Korean military expansion, without mounting a major counteroffensive against Seoul sooner or later. Paradoxically, then, the risk of renewed hostilities in Korea during the 1980s could increase, while the opportunity for achieving a reduction of tension could also improve. But the exercise of the military option would certainly not be in North Korea's best interest. Indeed, in the context of South Korea's fast growing national, particularly military, strength in the 1980s, the stabilization of the status quo in Korea could be viewed as more advantageous to the North than to the South. Ironically, such a stabilization might even lead to North Korean overtures to the United States to retain its military forces in the South as a control against latent aggressive tendencies emanating from Seoul.[204, p. 79] If so, U.S. capacity to prod North Korea toward a political accommodation in Korea might very well increase.

To sum up, South Koreans generally perceive North Korea as stronger militarily, especially in offensive weapons and overall offensive capabilities, and of course as far more aggressive than themselves. They are also concerned over what they assert, perhaps at least partly for American consumption, to be a recent growth of Soviet influence on North Korea. On the other hand, they usually

admit that neither Moscow nor Beijing is enthusiastic over the idea of another North Korean attack on the South, at least as long as the American commitment remains credible.

Like Park Chung Hee before him, President Chun has stated that South Korea possesses a retaliatory capability against the North to the point of being able to "destroy" it, even without parallel action on the part of the United States, if there is another attack from the North. No one, except presumably President Chun, seems to know exactly what this means; as already noted, South Korea is not believed to be working seriously toward a nuclear weapons capability, although the idea has a few advocates. By and large, however, South Koreans perceive themselves to be, if not helpless, at any rate exposed and vulnerable, not only to North Korea but to pressures from other quarters; Korea imports 93 percent of its oil from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, for example. In their own eyes, the South Koreans are potential boat people. The most dangerous period (the "window of vulnerability"), in the view of many of them, is from now until the "crossover point," about 1985, by which time they hopefully assume that the superior strength of their economy, as compared with that of the North, will somehow have found its reflection in greater relative military strength; this in spite of the fact that their Force Improvement Program is not perceived as progressing at a very impressive rate. Some in South Korea believe that their armed forces have made a mistake by following American organization and doctrine too closely, for example

by maintaining an air force and navy that are of little practical value in view of the continued existence of the American alliance, and that there should be a reorganization along lines more suited to actual Korean conditions, with more emphasis on the ground forces.

As for the likelihood of another North Korean attack, South Korean civilians tend to consider it not very great, and the results of a war if one should occur, as probably inconclusive. Military men, on the other hand, believe, or claim to believe, that another attack from the North is rather likely. To some extent, no doubt, they find this view convincing because convenient, although of course not comforting, since it tends to perpetuate a "siege mentality" that helps to maintain the existing political order. A more important explanation, however, is probably the natural tendency of soldiers to take a worst case view of such problems, mainly because the responsibility for coping with a war involving their country is inescapably theirs.

The most sophisticated version of the pessimistic view holds that, although the approaching obsolescence of much of North Korea's military equipment creates a strong temptation in Pyongyang to strike soon, Kim Il-sung vividly remembers the devastation inflicted by American retaliation in 1950-1953 and will continue to hold off in the hope that the United States will disengage. On the other hand, he appears to feel contempt for the South's armed forces, again on the basis of the experience of 1950-1953, and

there is certainly no assurance that his successor -- currently scheduled to be his son, Kim Jong-il -- will not make the same kind of strategic misjudgment that the elder Kim made in 1950. Such a turn of events would become especially likely if the United States were distracted by a major crisis somewhere else, in the Middle East, for example, in which case the the Soviet Union, whose leaders clearly dislike Kim Il-sung, might throw its weight behind another North Korean attack, probably in the hope of gaining access to the excellent ice-free ports of the South and enhanced leverage on Japan.

In the event of another North Korean attack, the weight of South Korean opinion favors the hypothesis that its main target would be Seoul -- the intervening presence of the United States Second Division, with its substantial capabilities as a tripwire, notwithstanding. Recent gaming exercises by senior American officers reportedly concluded that it would take 32 hours for the North Koreans to capture Seoul, or, at least, down to the Han River, although at a very heavy cost and a high risk to North Korea itself; a comparable Korean exercise suggested 48 hours. Plans are reportedly being developed for a counterattack into North Korea if war breaks out. There are virtually no South Koreans who seriously consider that it would be possible, even if it were desirable, to conquer the North; it is understood that, as in 1950, the Soviet Union and China would be unlikely to tolerate such a violation of the Marxist-Leninist principle of historic "irreversibility."

SECTION 4

THE WASHINGTON-SEOUL ALLIANCE: THE KEY TO THE STABILITY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Nearly three decades ago the Korean War, America's first major post-World War II combat involvement in Asia, came to an end. It ended in an uneasy truce in July 1953, which perpetuated a divided Korea and established a continuing U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula. Since then, the stationing of American forces in South Korea has been the key to the security and peace of the Korean peninsula, and to the maintenance of regional stability in Northeast Asia. The willingness of the United States to commit its forces to defend South Korea has been a critical element in North Korea's assessment of the risks of aggression.* The presence of American forces on the peninsula has provided a "tripwire,"[141] warning the North Koreans that an attack against South Korea would automatically involve United States military power on the side of South Korean forces. The North Koreans have shown great respect for American deterrent power. Efforts by the United States to maintain a significant and visible deterrent in Korea also provide an incentive for the Soviet Union and China to restrain North Korea from embarking on an aggressive course, for a North Korean attack would have adverse effects on their relations with Washington.

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* It must be stressed in this connection that the U.S. deterrent role in Korea is both military and political, and the political is probably the key ingredient of deterrence.

The United States has consistently refused to participate in direct negotiations with North Korea without the South's presence and has made a troop withdrawal contingent upon a "permanent" peace, although the North is slowly advancing toward unofficial relations with segments of American society.* For the present, it appears that the United States would be satisfied with a divisional solidification predicated upon an informal agreement that each of the major powers will refrain from actions detrimental to the status quo. Washington has not demonstrated an interest in the process which would be necessary to legitimize the division in a de jure sense.

United States interests in Korea are also derived from the treaty commitment to preserve Japan's security and democracy. In fact, the security of South Korea and that of Japan are virtually inseparable; indeed, the strategic interests of the two countries should be viewed from a broader regional East Asian perspective, rather than as separate issues.[137]

By and large, there is a fundamental awareness and recognition among the South Koreans that the presence of

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* During the 1970s North Korea had indicated from time to time an interest in advancing political and cultural ties with the United States. In early March 1977, meanwhile, the Carter Administration lifted travel restrictions on North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and Kampuchea. In recent years, the Pyongyang regime has invited a number of Korean-Americans, American scholars (e.g., Donald S. Zagoria and Gregory Henderson), journalists (e.g., Harrison Salisbury), politicians (e.g., Congressman Stephen Solarz), and ex-government officials (e.g., Thomas Reston) visit North Korea.

the American military forces on the Korean peninsula has constituted the key stabilizing force in the complex politics of Northeast Asia. Thus it is not surprising that the March 9, 1977, announcement of the Carter Administration to withdraw all American ground forces from the peninsula over the next four to five years[169] had stirred wide anxiety and apprehension throughout South Korea (and other parts of Asia). South Koreans of all political persuasions, including political opposition figures who had severely criticized the authoritarian rule of President Park Chung-hee, had characterized the Carter policy as ill-timed and unwise.[152; 121, p. 1160-61]

South Korean criticisms of the Carter plan took many forms. (It should be noted that many Americans were also opposed to the Carter policy on Korea.)[88] First of all, the Carter plan had the potential to disrupt the balance of power in Korea and thus weaken deterrence. North Korea would then intensify its militant policy toward the South. The Carter Administration demonstrated ineptitude by not exacting a reciprocal price from the North for its initial decision to withdraw United States ground forces, given Pyongyang's long-advocated and urgent desire for such action. In other words, President Carter would have thrown away an excellent bargaining chip with which the United States could coax the Pyongyang regime

into an accommodation with South Korea.* South Koreans also feared that the withdrawal of American ground troops would have removed an incentive for the Soviet Union and China to restrain North Korea. Consequently, Sino-Soviet rivalry and tension would be heightened by efforts to enhance their influence over North Korea and fill the "vacuum" left by the United States, thus giving Pyongyang greater leverage to extract maximum support from both.

It was also apparent to many South Koreans that the Carter plan would have invited irrevocable damage to United States foreign policy interests in Asia by sending the wrong signal to governments in Northeast Asia. For its part, the Soviet Union, sensing America's continuing post-Vietnam military disengagement in Asia, would have tried to press its advantages in East Asia by engaging in

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* In early 1977, when the Carter decision was formally announced, Pyongyang entertained some lingering hope for an eventual U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea. It sent peace feelers to the Carter Administration, for example, through such intermediaries as Yugoslavia's late President Tito, Romania's Ceausescu, and Cambodia's ex-head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who traveled to both Washington and Pyongyang. North Korea largely dropped the use of such hostile phrases as "U.S. imperialists" and appeared eager to exploit the developing cool relations between Washington and Seoul, caused by the troop withdrawal plan and the South Korean lobby scandal in the U.S. capital. Pyongyang's desire not to strengthen the hand of American opponents of troop withdrawal and also to open a dialogue with Washington was evident in mid-July 1977 when, after shooting down a U.S. helicopter that had strayed into North Korea across the DMZ on July 14, it speedily returned the bodies of three dead crewmen and released a wounded fourth two days later. Absent was the usual propaganda about "imperialist warmongers." In late 1977, however, North Korean attacks on the United States began to escalate by expressing Pyongyang's disappointment over the slow pace of the American military withdrawal.

further adventure in the region more or less with impunity. The Soviets have amply demonstrated their willingness to expand politically and militarily into regions beyond their borders, even at great cost to themselves.

Because the Chinese Communists regard the Soviet Union as the major threat to their national security, they have been interested in forging a strategic relationship with the United States and Japan against Moscow's anti-China containment policy. Notwithstanding public statements to the contrary, they are ready to acquiesce in, if not welcome, the continued military presence of the United States in South Korea. In this context, China's public demands for the removal of American troops from South Korea may be nothing more than a ritualistic or perfunctory exercise to placate North Korea.[95] Therefore, the Carter plan may have induced the Chinese Communists to believe that they could not count on any American help in the event of a Soviet attack. In this situation, Beijing would have concluded that its own best national interest lay in promoting rapprochement with Moscow. The impact of such a massive shift in the balance of global power would be hard to underestimate.

Japan, too, had entertained a good deal of misgiving about the Carter plan,[177] which it viewed from a broader regional East Asian perspective and interpreted as presaging a U.S. disengagement from the Pacific. Such Japanese suspicion, coupled with Tokyo's declining

confidence in America's reliability as an ally, was already prevalent at the time of the formal announcement of the Carter plan in March 1977.* This kind of suspicion or fear had its origin in the collapse of the American position in Southeast Asia in 1975 and in the U.S. policy, first adopted by the Nixon Administration, of shifting from a "two-and-a-half wars" strategy -- the ability to handle simultaneously a major war in Europe, another in the Pacific, and an acute crisis somewhere else in the world -- to the "one-and-a-half wars" posture of being prepared for one major conventional war at a time (probably in Europe), plus minor contingencies elsewhere.[8; 128] To be sure, this shift in America's military strategy fitted nicely with Washington's long-adopted (since the Korean War) "swing strategy" that envisioned the transfer of significant American military strength from the Pacific region to the Atlantic theater in the event of a Warsaw Pact attack on NATO.** Both the "one-and-a-half wars"

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* In a public opinion poll taken by the Japanese daily newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun in Tokyo in early 1978, for example, only 21 percent of Japanese people expressed confidence that the United States would come to the defense of Japan in the event of external aggression.

** The strategy of swinging forces from Asia to Europe in wartime circumstances is known to have been devised in the early 1950s during the Korean War. Probably American military planners feared that Russia might be tempted to attack Western Europe while the United States was occupied in the Far East, particularly the Korean War theater. Still, the origin of this strategy was the traditional American inclination to attach greater importance to Europe than Asia.

The "swing strategy" was used by Presients Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon in the 1960s and early 1970s

posture and the "swing strategy" were perceived as an important sign of a further downgrading of the Pacific region in favor of Europe in the American hierarchy of foreign policy interests. This perception was greatly reinforced by the announcement of the Carter plan in March 1977, for the Japanese saw the U.S. troop pullout from South Korea as symptomatic of America's further declining interest in Asia. In short, the Carter plan helped to resurrect serious doubts in Japan (and other parts of the Pacific region) about Washington's defense commitments in the region in the context of strengthened Soviet forces in Northeast Asia and both Soviet and Vietnamese military activities elsewhere in Asia.

South Korea was afraid that the above-described crisis of confidence in American security commitments to Asia could very likely push Japan into adopting a neutral stance in the face of any Soviet threat, and perhaps to seek some form of accommodation with Moscow. Another form of Japanese reaction could be rapid rearmament, including

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to reassure their West European allies that the United States would come to their aid in a crisis despite its heavy involvement in Vietnam.

But Japan, South Korea and other American allies in Asia were not informed of the existence of the "swing strategy" because American administrations feared adverse reactions from American friends and allies in Asia about the strategy. One must assume, however, that these same nations had long been privately aware of the strategy -- and considerably unsettled by its implications. In late 1979, when the internal governmental debate over the U.S. "swing strategy" broke into print, by way of a Roland Evans and Robert Novak newspaper column, this military strategy became known publicly throughout Asia.(21, pp. 54-59; 61, pp. 26-31)

the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Tokyo's decision to go nuclear would have ominous political and military implications throughout Asia.

On July 20, 1979, after President Carter had visited South Korea, he announced his decision not to make any further troop withdrawals until 1981, at which time the situation on the Korean peninsula was to be reassessed in order to determine whether to proceed with further withdrawals.[170] Now that the Reagan Administration has replaced the Carter Administration, further troop withdrawals are even more unlikely. Two major considerations have been cited against the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces: (1) the alarming new estimates of North Korean military strength; and (2) the need to reverse the process of erosion of Asian confidence in the U.S. defense commitment, given the rapid growth of Soviet military strength in the Asian-Pacific area and "conflict and new uncertainties in Southeast Asia." The Carter announcement suspending the troop withdrawals was significant, therefore, in two respects: first, for recognizing the psychological dimensions of deterrence, especially the need to avoid conveying misleading signals to North Korea and other nations of Asia; and, second, for linking further reduction not only to the military balance, but also to a "reduction of tensions" on the Korean peninsula. South Korea, meanwhile, regarded the abandonment of the Carter policy of troop withdrawal as confirmation of its long-standing position that the

presence of American ground forces had provided an effective deterrent to North Korean aggression.

Another significant development in America's security commitment to the Pacific region was that the United States abandoned its "swing strategy" shortly before President Carter left the White House.[127; 185; 189] In the opinion of military strategists, a Soviet thrust in Asia could occur concurrently with a conflict in Western Europe, rendering the "swing strategy" unpractical or meaningless. The abandonment of the strategy was consistent with the new American determination in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to resist Communist expansionist ventures in Asia as resolutely as in Europe, through a continuous strengthening of its military capabilities.

A total of 41,500 U.S. military personnel (33,400 army, 300 navy, and 7,900 air force) remain in South Korea, including the only American ground forces on the Asian continent.[25; 48, pp. 1130-2] Specifically, the United States military forces stationed in South Korea are composed of: (a) the Second Infantry Division with the two command headquarters (Eighth U.S. Army and the Combined ROK/US Field Army); (b) the 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade with HAWK surface-to-air missiles; (c) the First Signal Brigade handling communications and surveillance networks; (d) the 19th Support Brigade; (e) the Second Transportation Company; (f) the Eighth Tactical Fighter

Wing; and (g) the 51st Composite Tactical Wing.[25; 48, pp. 1130-32] No United States naval ships are based on the Korean peninsula; the American Navy personnel in South Korea play an advisory role to the South Korean Navy and a coordinating role with the United States Seventh Fleet.[25; 48, pp. 1130-32]

The American forces in South Korea make a not insignificant contribution to redressing the current military balance between the forces of the two Koreas. South Korea's Force Improvement Plan is designed to fill the gap now being covered by United States forces, on the ground and in the air, but to a lesser extent at sea. The Forward Defense Concept, in effect since the mid-1970s but modified for increased flexibility, generally anticipates that South Korean forces would defend on the ground and American and South Korean forces would counterattack by air against North Korea. South Korean naval units would do what they can, pending the arrival of the United States Seventh Fleet. In the event of renewed hostilities, the United States Seventh Fleet would aid the South Korean Navy in joint efforts to prevent North Korean submarines from interdicting vital shipping and to ensure the transportation of war materials and other imported supplies into South Korean ports.

South Koreans do not expect the United States military forces now stationed in Korea to remain indefinitely. Therefore, it is a crucial task for Seoul to acquire at a deliberate speed a self-reliant military

capability to defend the country against North Korean expansionism. South Korea desires to grow out of its "client" relationship with Washington into a position as a truly "equal partner"* during the 1980s, when it will emerge as a significant middle-rank power with the largest military forces and the second largest economy in non-Communist East Asia. The more political, military and economic development South Korea manages to achieve, the greater will be the importance of the South to the national interests of the United States.

The 13,000-strong Second Infantry Division, which constitutes the principal American ground forces stationed in South Korea, makes contributions in armor and antiarmor, artillery, mobility, communications and intelligence. This division and twelve South Korean ground divisions compose the Combined South Korean/American Field Army** to defend the main invasion corridor for North Korea between the western segments of the DMZ and Seoul.

Reinforcements for these military units in nearby

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* This settlement became particularly strong after 1965, when South Korea sent combat troops to South Vietnam in support of its American ally.

** The commander of the Combined ROK/US Field Army is a U.S. lieutenant general, who thus exercises considerable control over the organization and operation of South Korean military forces. The Combined ROK/US Forces Command (CFC) was officially activated in November 1978, as an interim mechanism by which the operational control of the South Korean forces would be eventually returned to the South Koreans. Within the CFC structure, the South Korean armed forces play an increasigly autonomous role, as top South Korean military officers participate in operational decision-making.

areas are Marine, ground and air assets, an Air Force tactical fighter wing in Japan, B-52s in Guam, and the Seventh Fleet, which, in addition to the naval defense of South Korea, provides additional airpower. Moreover, United States capabilities to bring military force quickly from the United States provide another important deterrent.

With the inauguration of the Reagan Administration in January 1981, there was virtually no possibility that the United States would move toward direct bilateral negotiations with North Korea or toward an abandonment of American commitments to South Korea. The South Koreans believe that Seoul's alliance and friendship with the United States, which forms the backbone of South Korea's entire external relations, have not only recovered from previous reverses but have even taken a step forward.[80, pp. 5-17; 126] At the Seoul-Washington summit in late January 1981, President Reagan assured South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan that the United States had no plan to withdraw American ground combat forces from South Korea.[129; 172; 183] The two presidents pledged to uphold the mutual obligations embodied in the Seoul-Washington defense treaty of 1954 and to upgrade the alliance between the two countries.[129; 172; 183]

The South Koreans recall that sustained provision of military defense and economic assistance with commensurate moral and political backing from the United States was indispensable to their country in its moments of darkness and adversity. With the observance in 1982 of the centennial of

the opening of Korean-American diplomatic ties, South Korea has experienced repeatedly the wish that the bonds of affection and alliance between the two nations will remain strong. This is not to imply, however, that the relationship is all roses. What this does imply is that, despite many differences in culture, religion, society, political values and institutional frameworks, the enduring, cooperative and reciprocal ties between the peoples of the two countries do not have many parallels in the world.[139; 182; 120] The United States retains considerable influence and prestige among the political circles and public in South Korea.*

After assuming office in January 1981, the Reagan Administration pledged its full cooperation with South Korea's military modernization and expansion program, and in the spring of 1981 it agreed to sell South Korea F-16 fighters as well as to provide a wide range of other

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* In the military field, for example, a preponderant number in the senior South Korean leadership have received training in the United States. The style of military training and organization follows the American pattern. No other government in the world has such a large number of American-trained specialists in such high government positions. Thirty percent of the ministers, vice ministers, and assistant ministers in the Seoul government were educated in the United States. Currently there are more than 18,000 South Koreans studying in America. There are about 1,500 Koreans who have received their Ph.D.s from American universities. There have also been the cooperative relationships between the peoples of South Korea and the United States that have developed over the past three decades. For example, there are currently 12 sister city relationships between South Korean and American cities. Twenty-seven South Korean universities or colleges have exchange relations with thirty-eight American colleges and universities.

support, including sophisticated technology, the sale of equipment and improved FMS (Foreign Military Sales) credits, to strengthen the defense of South Korea.[154; 179] The Reagan Administration also approved an arms sales agreement with South Korea that totalled US $327 million -- to be dispensed in two installments, in 1981 and 1982, with repayment over 12 years.[157; 96, p. 17] Meanwhile, the United States under President Reagan seems to be returning to the "two-and-a-half wars" doctrine to Seoul's obvious delight.

In addition to the mutual security aspect of Seoul-Washington relations, the United States has been indispensable for South Korea's economic stability and growth. The United States has been one of the two leading trading partners for South Korea.[4, pp. 90-94] America has also been the essential source of Seoul's investment capital as well as technological and scientific know-how.

Since the founding of the Republic of Korea in 1948, the United States has been indispensable to South Korea's national security, defense needs and economic development. Hence, the Seoul-Washington ties have been the principal focus of South Korea's entire foreign relations even to such an extent that Seoul could hardly give serious attention to other regions or countries until recently.

Since the early 1970s, however, a reevaluation of South Korea's perennial dependence on the United States and American-centered foreign policy orientation has been gradually undertaken, with Washington's tacit

encouragement, in light of certain important changes in international and national circumstances. Consequently, South Korea has been slowly breaking out of its preoccupation with the United States by moving in the direction of less dependence overall on Washington.

The most important changes effecting this new posture have been a realignment among the major powers in East Asia resulting from the Sino-Soviet rift and the development of rapprochement between China on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other, as well as the growing importance of the nonaligned Third World countries in the international political arena. In point of fact, the evolving four-power balance in East Asia since the early 1970s has stimulated numerous adjustments and responses in relationships among nations, large and small, in the region. The above-mentioned two major international developments gave rise to the consciousness among South Koreans that their country should adjust to the changed circumstances in world affairs. In so doing, Seoul should look out for its interests by broadening its international perspective and arena of activity and involvement.

Another important change responsible for Seoul's new international stance has been South Korea's rapid and spectacular economic growth, which has required it to look far beyond the United States (and Japan) for economic exchange and cooperation. It has now expanded its foreign economic activities to such remote areas as the Middle

East, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

The growth of self-confidence and self-assertiveness among the South Koreans in general and government officials in particular, which has undoubtedly been generated partly by Seoul's rapidly expanding economy, can be listed as a third important change directing South Korea's new flexible, less America-centered orientation. One clear indication of this phenomenon is South Korea's attempt to increase its share of the defense burden and operational decision-making on security matters by nurturing a self-reliant military capability. Since 1948, the Republic of Korea has indeed come a long way as manifested by its growing maturity and sophistication.

In summary, it seems safe to conclude that the South Koreans have a complex, if sometimes schizophrenic, view of their alliance with the United States. On the one hand, they perceive the United States as the only effective ally they have, with the possible exception of the United Kingdom, the latter perception being presumably a reflection of the British role in the Korean War and more recently in the Falklands. Furthermore, South Koreans have a "dependency complex" and an "infinite capacity for absorbing reassurance" and tend to doubt that they can ever safely dispense with the American alliance including the presence of American ground forces, which are perceived to be valuable not only for military reasons but also for their political effect. Many doubt that their country can

ever support unaided the armed forces needed to deter North Korea without serious risk of an economic and political collapse.

On the other hand, as much recent evidence including President Chun's foreign travels attest,, South Korea also aspires to an active and independent external role. South Koreans realize that this must be played, if at all, within the larger framework of their alliance, for they understand that they must pay a price and make concessions, as they did when they sent two divisions to South Vietnam in 1965 at American urging ("More Flags in Vietnam"). They want a "horizontal," or in other words equal, relationship with the United States, yet they would also like the United States to take the lead in arranging a settlement of the Korean question with North Korea and the other powers concerned. In fact, most South Koreans would evidently like to see their country accepted and treated by the United States as its major ally in Northeast Asia instead of Japan, which they suspect is not a reliable ally and is not pulling its weight. South Koreans consider that they are in a position to offer the United States a major asset in connection with the maintenance of regional security in the form of their substantial excess heavy industrial (including shipbuilding) capacity. As yet, they perceive only rather dimly that their plans for future economic expansion are likely to be viewed in the United States as unwelcome competition and to create strains in the Korean-American alliance.

Naturally, there are uncertainties and dissatisfactions in South Korea about the American alliance. For example, the military reportedly do not feel certain that they can count on the United States beyond the next American presidential election, the treaty of alliance notwithstanding, and are therefore anxious to improve their own defensive capabilities as rapidly as possible. South Korean opinion has not yet fully recovered from the shock of President Carter's decision of 1977 to withdraw the Second Division. Korean civilians, however, apparently tend more than their military fellow countrymen to believe that there will be no major change in United States Korean policy.

The South Koreans are concerned over the American policy of "swinging" naval forces, and potentially ground and air forces as well, from the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean and would prefer the United States to create a separate Fifth Fleet, with little if any contribution from the Seventh, for deployment in the Indian Ocean. Seoul perceives the United States as spread thin militarily in the Far East and the Western Pacific, perhaps more so relative to the opposition than in 1950, but as ultimately in control of the ROK's forces through the mechanism of the Combined Forces Command.

The Seoul leadership accepts the new, close relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China, although without much enthusiasm, as a stabilizing influence in the region. Most hope, however,

that this relationship does not lead to some kind of disaster for Taiwan, whose government they still recognize and whose security and prosperity they consider important to the stability of the region. This is in spite of the fact that the Korean government would like to transfer recognition to the People's Republic of China, although it has been prevented from doing so to date by Beijing's unwillingness to reciprocate because of its desire to maintain at least polite relations with North Korea. There is some doubt on the part of South Koreans that the United States would fight China again in defense of South Korea, in the event, perceived as unlikely, that the Chinese took part in another war in the peninsula. South Koreans are reluctant to see the United States transfer arms, even "selected defensive" arms, to the People's Republic of China, on the ground that they might be diverted to North Korea, and even more reluctant to see the United States try in any respect to use the People's Republic of China as its "proxy" in the region.

Koreans interested in military matters tend to be encouraged, however, by the recent Team Spirit joint exercises. The one in 1982, for example, is perceived as showing that the "upward looking triangle" (i.e., American defense of Korea from bases in Japan), as well as the "downward looking triangle" (i.e., American defense of Korea from bases in the Philippines), are working under current conditions. On the reasonable theory that a tripwire in place is vastly preferable to an expeditionary

force after the event, South Koreans also continue to hope very much that the United States will maintain forces, including ground forces, in Korea that will be adequate to deter another North Korean attack. In addition to the obvious reasons for this emphasis on deterrence, there is the important consideration that South Koreans are far from certain about the effectiveness of the American role if another war should actually break out on the peninsula. They perceive American ground forces, in Northeast Asia at any rate, as inadequate for a major war and doubt the ability of the United States to lift sufficient additional ground forces to Korea in time to cope with another attack from the North (i.e., in less than about ten days), especially if the United States were fighting elsewhere at the same time. They doubt as well that the United States would use nuclear weapons, even tactical ones, in response to a conventional attack by North Korea.

But whatever their reservations about American reliability in scenarios of worst cast variety, South Koreans have few, if any, doubts about the importance of their country to the American strategic position in the region. They perceive their own armed forces, as well as the American forces stationed in South Korea, as "tying down" possibly even larger Soviet forces in the region that might otherwise be deployed against Western Europe or the Middle East. In the event of war, regional or otherwise, South Koreans claim to perceive their own armed forces as able and willing to cooperate, as desired by the American

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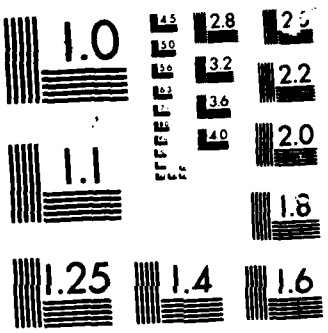

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

and Japanese military, in closing the Korean (or Tsushima) Strait to the Soviet Pacific Fleet.

At least some in Seoul would like the United States to change its policy toward South Korea by selling it more arms on better terms, engaging in more arms coproduction arrangements in Korea, allowing it to sell arms produced under American licenses to third countries, promoting Korean participation in the RIMPAC exercises, encouraging more bilateral consultation in lieu of unilateral policy pronouncements on both sides, cooperating with Seoul in countering North Korean support for terrorism in the Third World, and in general placing more emphasis on cultivating its alliances and less on negotiating with the Communist powers.

For these and other reasons, the past decade was a period of transition in Seoul-Washington relations. The ongoing transition in the Korean-American alliance does not mean, however, that the continued viability of the alliance is being called into question or slowly eroded. On the contrary, the United States still plays a central role in South Korea's national security and defense, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. South Korea, possibly the world's most pro-American nation, is making every effort to remain a truly dependable ally of the United States. For America, the Korean peninsula will remain a strategically important area in its overall military posture in Asia and the Pacific. A substantial volume of trade will continue to be carried out between the

two countries. Culturally, the American influence in South Korean life has been truly remarkable, and it is difficult to anticipate that this situation will be reversed in the near future. In short, whatever transition has been taking place, and is likely to take place in Korean-American relations, it would be nothing more than flexible adjustments intended to make the alliance more suitable to the changed world situation as well as to the domestic conditions of each of the partners.

SECTION 5

SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN: THE DISCORDANT AND RELUCTANT PARTNERS

Relations between the governments of South Korea (and also North Korea) and Japan have never been cordial. The anti-Japanese sentiment is still strong and widespread in South Korea, because of Japan's colonial domination of the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945. To be sure, close ties with Japan, as well as the United States, have been the two main pillars of South Korean diplomacy since the downfall of the extremely anti-Japanese Syngman Rhee in 1960.[33, pp. 468-69] But political and other relations between Seoul and Tokyo have continued to be fragile after the restoration of their postwar diplomatic ties in 1965.*

Japan is perceived as very important to the Korean economy and potentially to its security as well, but also as basically unreliable. It is seen as having enjoyed its "free ride" from the United States in defense matters and as being reluctant to take steps necessary for a larger military role such as amending Article Nine of the constitution and removing the one percent of GNP limit on the defense budget. The South Korean military would like to see Japan make a larger contribution to regional

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* The Seoul-Tokyo Basic Treaty of 1965 set a framework of economic, political and other cooperation for the two countries. Under this agreement, Japan paid South Korea US $500 million in outright reparations and low-interest loans.

security. (There have been several recent visits to Japan by South Korean military representatives, and the current Republic of Korea Ambassador to Japan, Choi Kyung Nok, is a retired general.) South Korean civilians, however, are divided on this issue. Some believe that it is counterproductive for the United States to press Japan to rearm and tend to agree with the Japanese view that once Japan really started to rearm it might not want to stop short of becoming a major military power, something that Koreans, at any rate, do not want. There is some concern that Japan, rearmed or not, might go neutral and accommodate with the Soviet Union.

Since 1965, South Korea's foreign policy toward Japan has been guided by three essential interests. First, Japan's economic cooperation and assistance are regarded as crucial for the economic stability and development of South Korea. The flow of Japanese capital to South Korea, either as loans or investments, has been enormous: its cumulative total, as of June 1974, amounted to US$1,497 million.[75; 56, p. 65; 210] Japanese investments during 1975 alone totaled US $700 million.[151] (Japanese investment in South Korea exceeded that of the United States for the first time in 1969.)[3, pp. 118-19] In the 1965-1975 period, Japanese trade with South Korea grew from US $210.6 million to US $3,669 million, over 17 times, whereas the total Japanese trade with North Korea increased from US $31.2 million to US $245.4 million.[43, p. 1089; 206, p. 35] In 1974, South Korea was Japan's second largest trading partner and also second largest export

market -- with the trade balance strongly in Japan's favor. (Since 1967, Japan has bypassed the United States as the primary trading partner of South Korea. America's share in South Korea's total trade dropped from 49 percent in 1962 to 29 percent in 1979.)[4, pp. 90-94] In 1980, Seoul-Tokyo trade totaled US $7 billion, in contrast to US $500 million trade between Japan and North Korea.[62, pp. 1-2] South Korea has piled up nearly US $22 billion in trade deficits with Japan since 1965.[181]

The second major element in Seoul's policy toward Tokyo has evolved around Japan's role in the security of South Korea, particularly with respect to the use of American military bases in Japan proper and in Okinawa. Japan's role in the deterrence equation of the Korean peninsula is far less direct than that of either the United States or South Korea, but not much less vital because Japan's willingness to provide all support short of military forces to the defense of South Korea is regarded as crucial. The Japanese cannot contribute military forces to the defense of South Korea and should not be expected to do so in the foreseeable future, because of the constitutional provision (Article 9) that forbids deployment of Japan's forces abroad. Moreover, the memories of the pre-1945 colonial past are still too vivid for South Korea to welcome a direct Japanese military role or help, even if Japan were prepared to undertake such a mission. On the other hand, Japan has several positive roles to play in

support of South Korea's strategic interests. First and foremost, it provides a base structure (for army, air, naval, and logistic forces) that is essential to the support of United States military forces in South Korea in the event of renewed hostilities on the peninsula. Recognizing that the peace and stability of South Korea are closely linked to the peace and stability of Japan,[150] the succeeding Japanese governments in Tokyo seem to be prepared to provide for this support, immediately following mutual consultation between Japan and the United States. Second, Tokyo has sought to control the anti-Seoul activities of North Korea in Japan through Pyongyang's front organization, Chochongyon or Chosen Soren (the General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan).* Third, Japan's economic support for and ties with South Korea help positively to strengthen Seoul's economic infrastructure for national security.

Japan not only has an important stake in the continuing peace and stability of the Korean peninsula, but it also has by its policies the means to undermine the deterrent equation in the area. Accordingly, the third major element of Seoul's policy toward Japan has been its

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* A significant number of the 600,000 Koreans in Japan are either members or supporters of Chochongyon or Chosen Soren, which North Korea set up as a propaganda front. It publishes its own newspaper, operates a university in Tokyo, and even runs a radio station to promote North Korea's political interests.

desire to sustain Japan's continuing political support for South Korea in the future, particularly to keep Japan from succumbing to North Korean lures. After South Korea and Japan fully restored diplomatic relations in 1965, Japan continued to maintain a sizeable trade with North Korea under its policy of Seikei Bunri (separation of politics from economics).* But Japan's relations with North Korea were confined primarily to trade and occasional visits by Japanese leftist leaders.

While highly critical of the growing Japanese stakes in South Korea, the Pyongyang regime has been openly bidding for Japanese diplomatic recognition and close economic ties since the early 1970s. Anti-Japanese feeling is still strong and widespread in North Korea, due to the Japanese colonial occupation from 1910 to 1945. Since the fall of 1971, however, North Korea has softened its approach to Japan by sending friendly diplomatic overtures and by signaling the opening of a Chinese-style, people-to-people diplomacy.** Since 1972, when the new era of

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* It must be noted that in its relation with the two Chinas, Japan applied the Seikei Bunri policy until Japan normalized relations with mainland China in September 1972. Japan maintained political ties with the Nationalist government on Taiwan while maintaining economic ties with the People's Republic of China based on a series of private trade accords. Japan-North Korea trade started as early as 1955.

** On January 10, 1972, for example, Kim Il-sung of North Korea modified his usual reference to Japan as being bent on militaristic expansion by asserting that he did not think the Japanese people would allow militarism to be revived in their country. One day after this, he brushed aside another traditional North Korean stipulation which

international detente was gradually emerging, countless visits to North Korea have been made by Japanese editors, newspapermen, broadcasters, public figures, and a few businessmen.

The motives in North Korea's softening attitude toward Japan in the early 1970s seemed to be (1) to cause the conservative-controlled Japanese government to change its existing exclusive involvement with South Korea and enter active relations with Pyongyang; (2) to ease Japan's tight restrictions on travel to and from North Korea by Korean residents in Japan; (3) to promote expanded trade and gain access to Japanese industrial machinery and technology needed to develop the North Korean economy rapidly; and (4) to sow seeds of dissent between, as well as within, Japan and South Korea to prevent a Japanese return to the peninsula (Pyongyang is concerned that a defense treaty might grow out of closer South Korean-Japanese ties).* While Japan's interest in North Korea has been primarily economic, at least up to now, North Korea has been seeking commercial and cultural ties as a first step toward eventual political recognition of Pyongyang

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held that the 1965 friendship treaty between South Korea and Japan, in which Tokyo recognized the Seoul regime as the only legitimate Korean government, had to be abrogated before Pyongyang-Tokyo relations could be normalized.

* The first visit to Seoul by a top Japanese defense officer, Ganri Yamashita, in July 1979 was harshly denounced by the Pyongyang regime, which saw a new military alliance being formed against North Korea.

and the ultimate diplomatic isolation of South Korea.

Along with the pursuit of rapprochement with mainland China in 1972, Japan was also inching toward strengthened contacts with North Korea. Tokyo realized that as Japan normalized relations with China, it became burdensome for the Tokyo government to be closely linked to South Korea. Japan in the early 1970s was also under pressure at home (from pro-Pyongyang Korean elements and such pro-North Korea Japanese groups as the "League of Diet Members to Promote Friendly Relations with North Korea" under the leadership of Chuki Kuno, a member of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party)* to take a more evenhanded posture toward the rival Korean states. But the conservative-minded government in Tokyo was proceeding cautiously, partly because each seemingly friendly move to Pyongyang had drawn sharp protests from Seoul and partly because North Korea was well down on the priority list of Japan's foreign policy. Partly because of its close ties with the United States and partly under pressure from South Korea, Japan in the 1970s exercised fairly tight control over its trade with North Korea as well as the exchange of personnel between Tokyo and Pyongyang.

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* *The "League of Diet Members to Promote Friendly Relations with North Korea," which was established in November 1971, has grown to include 240 members of both chambers of the Japanese Diet (Parliament), including some leading members of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party.

Japan's principal foreign policy objective toward Korea today is to keep the Korean peninsula neutralized as a direct threat to Japanese security. Korea-centered threats to Japanese security are of two types. The worst case would be a major war in which Japan was inadvertently involved because of the presence of U.S. forces and base facilities on its home islands. This might result either from an all-out attack by North Korea against South Korea (which is extremely unlikely) or as a result of the uncontrolled escalation of some minor military conflict around the DMZ, which is also unlikely, but cannot be ruled out. A second type of threat would be any form of reunification. The dangers inherent in increased Soviet-Chinese competition on the Korean peninsula or its actual domination by one state are evident. Even an independent reunified Korea, whether under Pyongyang or Seoul, or a neutral government, would probably be perceived by Tokyo as a potentially serious security threat. The new unified state would be a nation of 57 million inhabitants and eventually would have very high levels of technological sophistication and industrial output. It would also have a nuclear weapons potential and the capability to maintain a large, modern army.

Under such circumstances, Japan's policy is to maintain a state of peace in Korea by stabilizing, or even legitimizing, the division, given the risks of renewed hostilities and Tokyo's probable indirect involvement in them. Second, Japan seeks to prevent the North Korean

Communist conquest of the entire peninsula, which would represent a major threat to its own democratic form of government, national security and economic interests. A Communist-reunified Korea would likely have far stronger military forces than Japan now has and would force a reassessment of Japan's existing defense posture as well as raise serious internal security problems with its pro-Communist Korean minority. Moreover, a Communist triumph in Korea would cast grave doubts upon the credibility of the American security commitment to Japan, forcing a reassessment of Japan's existing military posture and increasing the likelihood of a radical rearmament, including the acquisition of nuclear weapons. (The prospect of radical rearmament is anathema to most of the Japanese and might possibly tear Japan's social fabric apart. Even ongoing pressure on Japan by the United States to build up its modest defense forces has touched off a sharp debate on the wisdom of a stronger military among the Japanese.) It is to be presumed that Japan would prefer a unified non-Communist Korea to the North Korean domination of the entire peninsula, provided there would be no risk of arousing strong Soviet-Chinese countermeasures. Even so, Japan would most likely have qualms about a unified and much stronger Korea under the Seoul government, given the traditional animosity between the two countries.

From the perspective of Japan's national interests, in short, it would be best to maintain the status quo on the Korean peninsula based on a permanent and stable

territorial division and on the Machiavellian device of playing the South against the North. The Japanese government, in effect, has openly stated its preference for a de jure division of the Korean peninsula, as it has supported, for example, the idea of the simultaneous admission of South and North Korea into the United Nations. Tokyo has also attempted to lead Moscow and Beijing in stabilizing the Korean peninsula by legitimizing the division. For example, Japan's Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ito in early 1981 acted as a bridge for exchanges between Seoul and Beijing, tapping Chinese leaders' intentions concerning the improvement of relations with South Korea.[156] But neither of the two major Communist powers wishes to be the first to formalize relations with its erstwhile antagonists because they are sensitive to the reaction from Pyongyang, which has been playing China and the Soviet Union off against each other. Thus, by tying their detente with the North Koreans to the prospects of both the Seoul-Beijing detente and the Seoul-Moscow rapprochement, the Japanese hope that the Soviet Union and China will eventually agree to simultaneous or reciprocal recognition.

By and large, there is a high degree of congruence in the interests of the South Korean, Japanese and American governments regarding the preservation of a stable status quo on the Korean peninsula. What is equally important, there is at least some congruence in the interests of the United States, Japan and South Korea with those of China in

such selected areas as the maintenance of a stable power balance in Northeast Asia, the strengthening of the Washington-Tokyo alliance* (and the NATO alliance),[147] the continued presence of American military forces in the Pacific region, and the containment of the growing power of the Soviet Union in Asia.

Under such conditions of the mutuality of interests, South Korea would now welcome a stronger expression of official Japanese government support of the non-Communist regime in Seoul, the development of closer security cooperation between the two nations, and a greater security role for Japan in Northeast Asia. For a variety of reasons, however, the conservative-ruled government in Tokyo has shown a good deal of cautious reluctance for assuming a larger Japanese role in security arrangements in Northeast Asia generally. For one thing, there is no sign

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* *In recent months, China has invited a number of senior Japanese government and military officials to Beijing and has openly urged them to assume a more active role in security arrangements in Northeast Asia by strengthening their defense ties with the United States. For example, the Chinese leaders recently informed visiting Japanese government and military officials that they consider the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces as essential to containing Soviet expansion. At the time of the former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's visit to Beijing in September 1972, the late Premier Zhou En-lai (Chou En-lai) was even willing to suggest that China could conceive of a situation in which its forces would assist Japan, and even the United States, if the Soviet Pacific Fleet were permanently deployed in the East China Sea or if it engaged in direct operations against the Japanese home islands. Meanwhile, China's most powerful man in the post-Mao era, Deng Xiaoping, on his visit to Tokyo in the fall of 1978, criticized leftist forces in Japan for their objection to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. He termed their denunciation of the treaty "irrelevant."

of a broad consensus within Japan on the need for such a new role. As far as the security issue of South Korea is concerned, Japan's policy has been to rely upon the United States to maintain peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

In contrast to improved Seoul-Washington relations, Seoul-Tokyo relations have been marked by periodic strains in recent months, especially over Japan's unsubtle interference in the domestic affairs of South Korea in relation to the trial of Kim Dae-jung, a former presidential candidate against Park Chung-hee. Korean-Japanese ties have also been strained by Japan's inadequate contribution to the defense of Northeast-Asia, as well as by the initial Japanese rebuff to South Korean requests for US $6 billion in economic assistance, a request tied to Seoul's insistence that its heavy burden of military spending is, in effect, helping to enhance the security of Japan, thus entitling South Korea to nonmilitary compensation in the form of aid. So, too, Japan's broadening contacts with North Korea are viewed from Seoul with disapproval.

The Seoul government has resented that in recent months there have been utterances and movements among Japanese, including some government officials, which appear to be in disregard of the national sovereignty of South Korea. This tendency has been particularly noticeable in connection with the case of the aforementioned Kim Dae-jung, a South Korean political opposition figure who

was sentenced to death for sedition and other charges by a lower courtmartial and a higher civilian court.* (In January 1981, Kim's death sentence was reduced to a lighter term of imprisonment by President Chun Doo-hwan.) It is highly deplorable, Seoul says, that Japanese critics of South Korea are generally biased or mistaken in their perception of the political and social realities in the southern half of the peninsula, including the real threat of aggression from ever-militant North Korea.(191; 186; 156) Moreover, these critics, according to Seoul, deliberately ignored the total suppression of human rights in the Communist North, while taking issue with judicial practices of the South.(191; 186; 156) Furthermore, Seoul seems annoyed by the fact that a great number of Japanese fail to realize that South Korea is serving the role of bulwark to stem the tide of Communist expansionism in Northeast Asia and that should South Korea fall into Communist hands, Japan's security would be in great peril.

South Korean opinion is strongly opposed to Japan's major rearmament. Even allowing for its no-war constitution, however, the need for greater Japanese contributions to the maintenance of stability in Northeast Asia is indisputable and cannot be insulated from broad

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* *The first serious tension in Seoul-Tokyo relations in the 1970s developed over the abduction of Kim Dae-jung (the opposition party's presidential candidate in the 1971 presidential election) from Tokyo in August 1973. The Japanese government considered the affair an outright violation of the sovereignty of Japan by South Korea.

security considerations.[197; 192] Such considerations do not require Japan to establish direct security ties with another country (i.e., South Korea) against its constitutional provisions. But as Japan has pronounced time and again, its economy can play a remarkable role in helping to keep the Pacific region secure and stable.

Tokyo and Washington have carried on a tug of war, intangible in the beginning but increasingly tangible in recent years, over the need for Japan to assume a greater defense responsibility in Asia. While Japan has been reluctant to increase its defense burden, it concurs with its security ally, the United States, in the necessity of coping with the rising threat of the Soviet military buildup in Northeast Asia. In other words, Japan is quite sensitive to the "northern threat." *If this is the case,* Japan can no longer enjoy a "free ride" on defense but must make a fair share contribution to regional security cooperation with the United States and South Korea. South Koreans believe, in short, that Japan's failure or reluctance to assume a larger security role in Northeast Asia will further impair the triangular link of South Korea, the United States and Japan -- a link which is based on the bilateral alliances between Seoul and Washington and between Washington and Tokyo, in their joint pursuit of a stable Northeast Asia, to which the security of South Korea remains the key.

Quite recently, Seoul asked Tokyo for US $6 billion in low-interest loans for economic development during the

five years ending in 1986, calling Japanese attention to the fact that in spite of economic difficulties, South Korea is spending six percent of its GNP on national defense, compared with less than one percent in Japan.[173] South Koreans have asserted that if the Japanese properly appreciated the vital role of South Korea in the security of Northeast Asia, they would naturally see the need for improved economic cooperation with Seoul as an essential nonmilitary avenue to pursue joint security interests.[191; 190; 192] In connection with the request for Japanese loans, Seoul keeps reminding Tokyo that profits from providing goods to United Nations forces in Korea during and after the Korean War helped rebuild Japan's devastated industries and that Japan is the one country which has benefited the most, especially in the field of economic growth, from South Korea's large spending on defense and security. In support of this argument, Seoul points out that since the normalization of relations in 1965, South Korea-Japan trade has been lopsidedly unbalanced with an aggregate of US $22 billion in Seoul's deficit. (This huge trade gap is another sore issue between Japan and South Korea.)

Despite these arguments, Seoul-Tokyo talks in August and again in mid-September 1981 on South Korea's request for US $6 billion in economic aid over the next five years ended in impasse.[174; 180] South Korea's argument raised an uproar in Japan, where government officials asserted that the antiwar provisions of Japan's

constitution ruled out economic assistance on the basis of military security considerations. Under strong pressure from the Reagan Administration to boost defense spending, the Japanese widely suspected Washington's hand in prompting Seoul to press its claim. Japanese business leaders have questioned the wisdom of providing large amounts of economic aid to South Korea as the country had mounted increasingly successful efforts to cut into key Japanese export markets in steel, shipbuilding, heavy construction and machinery.

During the 1970s, Japan's policy toward the rival states of the Korean peninsula remained ambiguous and even ambivalent, to the extent that it did not fit neatly into the formula of a one-Korea policy or a two-Korea policy. It contained elements of both. During the 1980s, however, indications are that Japan would like to see a two-Korea solution evolve, so that its economic, cultural and other "private" contacts with North Korea could be upgraded alongside its much greater interaction with South Korea. The Japanese government has never conducted political or diplomatic exchanges with the Pyongyang regime, limiting itself to cultural, sports, and economic exchanges. This policy of Seikei Bunri has reaped some limited dividends. For example, Pyongyang-Tokyo trade grew to approximately US $500 million in 1980,[62, pp. 1-12] notwithstanding the North Korea debt problem.

As a result of the combined pressures from Japan's business interests and left-wing political and labor

groups, contacts at the nongovernmental level between North Korea and Japan during the 1980s are expected to continue to increase, although official exchanges between them do not appear a likelihood in the foreseeable future. In other words, Japan is likely to steer its diplomatic and security postures away from the relatively firm commitment to South Korea which the Tokyo government had once made in the past. In so doing, Japan would appear to prefer to place more emphasis on the preservation of the status quo by leaning toward a diplomacy of equidistance based on a two-Korea policy. During 1981, for instance, a group of North Korean parliamentarians and Kim Pong-chu, head of the North Korean General Federation of Trade Unions, had visited Japan to improve and expand private-level bilateral relations between the two countries. In addition, a pro-Pyongyang Japanese group, headed by Chuki Kuno, a Diet member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, is believed to be exploring the possibility of opening a civil airline route between North Korea and Japan, as well as joint exploitation of offshore oil.

There is no denying, South Korea says, that Japan values its friendship with Seoul and has endeavored to maintain cooperative ties between the two nations. Japan also recognizes the inseparable link between the maintenance of peace and stability in Korea and that of all of East Asia. Regrettably, however, Tokyo's "private" relationships with North Korea often confuse the South Koreans and, at times, even make them skeptical of the

veracity of its professed policy of friendship and cooperation toward South Korea. This is so, inasmuch as a nation's nongovernmental or "private" diplomacy toward another country cannot be totally insulated from its official policy.[187; 190]

Tokyo often claims that its policy of promoting nonpolitical exchanges with Pyongyang is conducive to the revival of a South-North dialogue and to the reduction of tensions in the divided Korean peninsula. The basis of this claim, South Korea is quick to point out, has been badly shaken by North Korea's constantly and consistently negative response to the Seoul government's proposals for peaceful negotiation in recent months.

South Korea asserts that Japan's promotion of relations with North Korea, "private" or otherwise, cannot contribute to maintaining an equilibrium of power on the Korean peninsula, let alone to reviving dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang. As one of the four major powers whose interests intersect in Korea, Japan should pay greater heed to the continuing requirement that its and, for that matter, the West's approach to North Korea be parallel to that of the Communist powers, especially the Soviet Union and China, to South Korea.[187; 190] Japan's neglect of this requirement, whether at a "private" level or not, cannot but cause the South Koreans to question the validity of Japan's good-neighbor policy toward South Korea.

In short, Seoul insists that, given the close political, economic and security links existing between

South Korea and Japan, the South Koreans deserve Japan's unqualified pledge of support and cooperation. Accordingly, Japan must abandon its so-called equidistant diplomacy toward both parts of divided Korea, which at times appeared intended as a "North Korea card" in dealing with South Korea.

By and large, the Seoul-Tokyo relationship has not been smooth. In a way, South Korea and Japan are the odd couple of Northeast Asia. Despite the problems -- and the deep traditional prejudices that exist on both sides -- the two countries are too important to each other to permit any full-scale breach. They are so interdependent economically and strategically that they could not cut the relationship without tremendous damage to both sides. They may not like each other very much from time to time, but they have now passed the point of no return. They will have to learn how to manage their mutual problems more effectively.

SECTION 6

THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND THE TWO MAJOR COMMUNIST POWERS: EXPEDIENCY OR AMBIVALENCE?

The United States, Japan, the Soviet Union and China share a common recognition of the importance of the Korean peninsula to their interests and tacitly support the common, minimum objective of maintaining the status quo of "two states in one nation" on the peninsula and of preventing a recurrence of hostilities in Korea. They consider any effort to unify Korea, particularly by military force, as highly risky, for any conflict in Korea would carry the implicit risk of a broader confrontation involving them, particularly if the hostilities would appear to be leading to a significant change in the status quo in Korea and the Asian power balance.

As a consequence, both the Soviet Union and China can hardly afford openly and directly to encourage and help military adventurism by North Korea.[28, pp. 119-29; 91, pp. 43-50; 24, pp. 66-81] Over the years, in point of fact, both Moscow and Beijing have exercised a degree of restraint over North Korea's aggressive tendencies for reasons of their own national interests. Their willingness to cooperate and support North Korea in a future conflict would be at most minimal. The growth of South Korea's national power has enhanced their uneasiness, but it has also strengthened their preference for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

The preservation of the Korean status quo is actually more important to China than to the Soviet Union because Beijing's overriding concern is "Soviet hegemony" abroad and economic modernization at home. Particularly at the present time, renewed armed conflict in Korea would greatly disrupt China's ongoing "Four-Modernization" plans. Chinese relations with the West and the United States have priority over support for North Korean goals, and stability in Northeast Asia generally serves Chinese interests.(38 (1979), p. 260; 19, p. 239)

Just as a low level of regional tension is congruent with Soviet interests, a divided Korea best serves the Soviet Union. It has long been evident that the Soviet Union considers North Korea's goal of reunification to be less important than regional stability and believes that the benefits available from a closer relationship with North Korea are outweighed by those from improved relations with the United States and Japan.* These perceptions are apparent in Soviet statements, in many aspects of Soviet-North Korean relations and in the burgeoning Soviet contacts with South Korea, which will be discussed later in this section.

Despite their mutual animosity, neither major Communist state would allow the unification of Korea by

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* For example, North Korean requests for advanced military equipment of the sort (i.e., MIG-23s) given to the Soviet Union's East European allies and other client states in the Third World have been turned down, although the Soviets apparently continue to provide spare parts for previously supplied equipment.

anti Communists using force. Both the Soviet Union and China would consider control over the northern half of Korea by a unified non-Communist Korea allied to the United States to be inimical to their interests.

The two major Communist powers might support reunification of Korea under Communist control only in the extremely unlikely circumstance that such a policy involved no serious risks of arousing strong American and Japanes countermeasures. (The United States and Japan, conversely, would share the goal of a unified non-Communist Korea, but they too would support this development only if it could be achieved without risk or other costs.)

Even if the North Korean Communist conquest of the entire Korean peninsula is just hypothetically assumed to be feasible, both Moscow and Beijing would almost certainly be concerned about the potential for independent action which a unified, highly nationalistic Communist regime in Korea might exert in Northeast Asia as a regional power in its own right. Or worse, each would be threatened by a Korea unified under a Communist regime allied to the other (Neither China nor the Soviet Union has been willing to accept a North Korean state solidly aligned with the other.)

By and large, a reduction of tension on the Korean peninsula, coupled with a two-Korea accommodation, is one critical interest which all of the four major powers have in common. If any agreement (or arrangement) effecting a reduction of tension in Korea is feasible through direct or

indirect participation of the outside major powers, a whole range of issues -- cross-recognition, admission of the two Koreas to the United Nations, and new arrangements replacing the 1953 Armistice Agreement -- will be taken care of with ease.

The two major Communist powers, however, as a result of the Sino-Soviet rift, have been unwilling to translate this congruence of interests into joint action to reduce tension.(107, pp. 197-208; 49, pp. 280-300; 83, pp. 372-90) Both the Soviet Union and China have long acknowledged the fact that their influence over North Korea is limited. While they have been prepared to restrain Pyongyang from military efforts to change the status quo in its favor, they have been reluctant to pressure Kim Il-sung to adopt measures that would reduce tensions and stabilize Seoul-Pyongyang relations. The North Korean chieftain would undoubtedly resist such pressures to the point of turning his back on whichever of his allies exercised them. Neither Moscow nor Beijing has seemed willing to risk such alienation, if only because of their competitive and conflicting interests in North Korea.

Under these circumstances, the Soviet Union and China would probably not be adverse, in principle, to a reduction of Korean tensions in the short term, but both are willing to give perfunctory support to a policy dictated by North Korea opposing any step that might stabilize the division of Korea. Thus, one should not expect in the near future that

the Soviet and Chinese leaders will publicly advocate the "German formula" for the divided Korean peninsula,[106, pp. 57-81; 105, pp. 295-322] although they would continue to take steps that connote a movement toward a de facto two-Korea policy. Moreover, neither of the two major Communist powers is likely to take any initiative on the application of the German formula to the Korean peninsula, at least until it is clear that the other is willing to take the same step.

While the United States can exercise a large measure of positive control over both its own and South Korean actions, it has no such control over the roles of the Soviet Union and China. For the present, in short, deterrence of hostilities is the only option available to the United States and South Korea. Seoul's strategic and economic superiority over North Korea and its growing international position as a regional power in the 1980s will certainly increase chances for Pyongyang's acceptance of a two-Korea policy.

Since the early 1960s when the Sino-Soviet rift became public, Moscow and Beijing have been highly competitive in wooing North Korean favor. If it is true that the Soviet-Chinese split serves the interests of the United States and its allies, it is also true that it is advantageous to North Korea. Kim Il-sung has demonstrated his adroit ability to play upon the rivalry of the two Communist allies for North Korea's own advantage. Pyongyang has received economic and military assistance along with political support from both China and the Soviet Union,

while simultaneously attempting to maintain an equidistant position toward them. Both Moscow and Beijing have supported the following North Korean positions: a demand for the prompt withdrawal of United States forces from South Korea, reunification of the Korean peninsula via the Kim Il-sung formula, nonrecognition of the anti-Communist regime in Seoul, a refusal to accept the admission of the two Koreas into the United Nations, and direct Washington-Pyongyang negotiations to settle the problems of the divided peninsula.

The Soviet Union and China, which have had similar experiences, must have been aware of the extravagance and absurdity of the Kim Il-sung personality cult. They must also view Kim Chong-il's hereditary succession to his father's power as ideologically repugnant. They have refrained from open criticisms of Kim Il-sung and his leadership, however, apparently for fear of antagonizing him.

Pyongyang will likely continue to pursue an equidistant policy toward both allies. The two Communist giants' vying for influence in North Korea will likewise continue in the near future, and may even intensify, particularly in the context of their ongoing, fierce competition in the broader arena of Asia.

The Chinese are clearly concerned about the growing strength of the Soviet military in Northeast Asia and the Soviet-sponsored collective security proposal, which is perceived as an attempt to encircle China with a group of

pro-Soviet states. They apparently take their official stance on an American troop withdrawal from South Korea tongue-in-cheek, realizing that their protests will not alter American policy and, hence, that they can have the best of two political-strategic positions by keeping in step with Pyongyang on the one hand and by relying upon a continued American presence on the other.

In recent years of the post-Mao era, the relationship between China and North Korea has shown discernable signs of strain. The injection of pragmatism and materialism into Chinese economic programs, the rapid turning outward to the advanced industrial world for assistance, the decline of ideology and the continuous attack on the cult of personality surrounding Mao Zedong, all represent trends that stand in considerable contrast to Kim Il-sung's leadership style and policy line. China's increasing identification with the United States and Japan on critical strategic issues also must be worrisome, despite Beijing's constant reassurance that it will stand fast with respect to North Korean interests.

A smouldering border dispute was reportedly continuing between North Korea and China in 1979 because the latter had long urged Pyongyang to give up 250 square kilometers of land near Mt. Paiktu, located on the border of the two countries, in return for military aid given during the Korean War.[149; 167; 153] The Pyongyang regime, wary of Beijing's anti-Mao leaders and its invasion of Vietnam in February 1979, was said to have fortified its

border with China.[149; 167; 153] There is also the suggestion in some quarters that Pyongyang is disappointed with the failure of China's economic support in the recent past to measure up to earlier promises.

The Soviets, confronted with what they regard as a growing two-front threat, with a Sino-American-Japanese entente emerging in Northeast Asia in company with NATO in the West, seem to be accelerating efforts to bolster their buffer state system and surround China with a ring of steel. As part of this effort, the Soviet Union in the last several years has sought to improve its relations with North Korea by taking advantage of certain strains that have developed between Pyongyang and Beijing. Nevertheless, the Moscow-Pyongyang relationship is still lukewarm, for both sides have some near insurmountable obstacles to overcome before they reach the point of rejuvenating their mutual friendship and camaraderie. The Soviet leaders neither like nor trust Kim Il-sung, and the North Korean chieftain reciprocates this feeling in kind. Moscow finds the extravagant cult of Kim Il-sung in North Korea distasteful and even appalling, North Korean society too reminiscent of the Soviet Union's Stalinist past, and North Korean behavior in world affairs unpredictable.

North Korea does not wish to move too closely to the Soviet Union at the expense of its ties with China. Furthermore, indications are that North Korea has been upset about the Soviet refusal to comply with its request for the delivery of more sophisticated military equipment

(such as MIG-23s), in face of the growing military strength of South Korea. The motivations for Soviet restraint are not entirely clear, but it appears that North Korea's tilt toward the Soviet Union in the Moscow-Beijing rivalry may be as the price of MIG-23s and other advanced military equipment, as evidenced by the North Korean presence in Grenada.

As regards the impact of the Sino-Soviet split on peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, some South Koreans agree that there are at present reasons for cautious optimism. To be sure, few South Korean scholars and commentators on world affairs are very sanguine about the impact of the Moscow-Beijing rift on stability in Northeast Asia. Most South Koreans believe that the dynamics of the rift cut both ways, on the one hand leading both the Soviet Union and China to prefer the status quo in Korea by restraining Kim Il-sung from any aggression against the South, but on the other hand severely limiting the options available to both allies should war actually occur for one reason or another, thus leaving them no choice but to support Pyongyang even grudgingly.[197; 199; 203] If a serious crisis situation arises in Korea as a result of an escalation of incidents along the DMZ or North Korea's deliberate all-out attack on South Korea, the two major Communist powers could not afford to leave their North Korean ally in the lurch. To abandon Pyongyang in the midst of the war would do serious damage to the credibility of their security commitments to other allies. Moreover,

neither Communist power could afford to let the other unilaterally or overtly assist Pyongyang in the conflict, given their rivalry for influence over North Korea. Hence, the Pyongyang regime could count on at least noninterference in its gambit, and almost certainly help from both Moscow and Beijing just after the commencement of hostilities.

It is partly in this context that South Korea has made it an official policy to open some form of official or unofficial relations with "nonhostile" Communist nations, especially the Soviet Union and China, which have high stakes in maintaining the stable status quo in Korea. Seoul's policy of opening its door to these Communist states is the natural counterpart to Pyongyang's efforts to establish ties with the United States, Japan, and other friends of South Korea. North and South Korea, in fact, have been actively pursuing a two-Korea policy, even as the Pyongyang regime vigorously denounces the idea. In so doing, as Robert A. Scalapino states cogently, "each is seeking to protect its economic-strategic strongholds from the other side."(96, p. 30) Seoul believes that its self-reliant defense effort, though important in itself, must be supplemented by repeated diplomatic overtures to countries whose political ideologies and systems may not be congenial to those of South Korea.* In particular, South

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* It is important to note that in addition to making efforts to improve relations with Communist countries, especially the Soviet Union and China, South Korea has

Korea's development of many channels of communication with the Soviet Union and China -- the two guarantors of North Korea's security -- would probably pay off in the long run, in the form of an insurance policy for a firmer ground for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula,[132; 155] although the KAL-007 factor militates against this option in the short term.

Because of the continuing Cold War conflict between the two Koreas, South Korea has had no official relations with any Communist state that instead has established diplomatic ties with North Korea. But the deterioration of Soviet-Chinese relations and the advent of detente have made it possible for South Korea to seek a rapprochement with "nonhostile" Communist nations. Exploring trade possibilities with some of these countries has also made economic sense for South Korea's expanding economy and export industry.

South Korea realizes that their intense competition for influence over North Korea prevents either Moscow or Beijing from taking any overt steps toward formal diplomatic recognition of the Seoul regime. But it is hoping that this basic position may be gradually eroded through the

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sought to befriend the nonaligned Third World countries politically and economically. Seoul's expectation in this effort is that the expansion of ties with those Third World countries would probably improve over time its relations with Moscow and Beijing. On the other hand, improvement of relations with the two major Communist powers would promote political, diplomatic and other relations between South Korea and the nonaligned countries.

cumulative effects of any small steps toward improved relations between Seoul and the two major Communist powers. South Koreans seem to calculate that should the Soviet Union and China choose to move into broader contact with South Korea or accept a process of cross-recognition, in which they would recognize the South, and the United States and Japan would establish formal relations with North Korea, there is very little Pyongyang could do to inhibit them.

On June 23, 1973, the South Korean government under President Park Chung-hee announced formally a new policy "to open its door" to "nonhostile" Communist countries on the basis of reciprocity and equality.[45, pp. 1101-2] (This policy has been reaffirmed by Park's successor, President Chun Doo-hwan.[159]) By responding rather cautiously to South Korea diplomatic overtures for improved relations, the Soviet Union, China and the Communist nations of East Europe* have since moved to the point of developing limited unofficial contacts with South Korea even over the violent protests of the North Koreans.

The Soviet Union had no relationship with South Korea at any level before September 1971, when a Soviet

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* *South Korea and a few East European nations have been carrying out limited trade, mail and cultural exchanges through third parties. The volume of South Korea's trade with Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania was over US $100 million in 1979. Up to the summer of 1979, South Korea had established telephone communications with Yugoslavia, Cuba, Rumania, Outer Mongolia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. (45, p. 1106; 142)

citizen, Ogor A. Neto, entered Seoul. Since then, Moscow has cautiously and slowly responded to Seoul's desire to establish meaningful contacts in cultural exchange, sports, and trade at nongovernmental levels. The Pyongyang regime has issued a warning to Moscow not to engage in contacts of any kind with the Seoul government. However, despite the North Korean protest, the Soviet government issued a travel certificate to South Korean producer Yu Dok-hyong, who participated in the Congress of the International Theater Association in Moscow from May 27 to June 1, 1973. Mr. Yu was the first South Korean to enter the Soviet Union with a South Korean passport.

Beginning in 1973, unofficial contacts between Seoul and Moscow began to expand gradually, as shown below.[107, pp. 197-208; 83, pp. 372-90; 98, p. 350; 38 (1979), p. 260, (1980) p. 271)

1973

August - A South Korean team of 38 athletes was invited to participate in the Universiad (World University Games) in Moscow, despite a North Korean boycott.

November - The then-South Korean ambassador to the United States, Kim Tong-cho, met with his Soviet counterpart, Anatoly Dobrynin, prior to the United Nations First Committee debates, to discuss the Korean question.

December - An official Soviet representative attended a meeting of the Korean Affairs Research Institute in Tokyo, at which he lectured on the Soviet attitude toward Seoul-Tokyo relations.

1974

May - The Soviet consul general in San Francisco held talks of an undisclosed nature with Hahm Pyong-choon, South Korean ambassador to the United States.

July - The first nongovernmental contacts regarding trade occurred, and the Seoul government reported that the "prospects for. Soviet-South Korean trade were good."

October - The first South Korean-Soviet cultural contacts took place in the form of book exchanges between the Russian Lenin Library in Moscow and the National Assembly Library in Seoul. The Soviet books were addressed to the "Republic of Korea National Assembly Library."

1975

January - The Tongyang News Agency reported that Park Chung-hun, Chairman of the South Korean Traders Association, had held meetings with Soviet officials in New York to discuss trade relations.

February - South Korean Foreign Minister Park Tong-cho admitted that South Korean goods were being exported to the Soviet Union through third-party nations.

September - Despite vehement North Korean protests, a South Korean team participated in the World Amateur Wrestling Championship in the Soviet Union.

October - A South Korean delegation including Chun Taik-bo, former South Korean Minister of Commerce and Industry, participated in a United Nations Association conference in Moscow.

1977

October - South Korean Ambassador to Great Britain, Han Pyo-wook, visited Moscow to attend a United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) meeting, the first visit by a South Korean ambassador.

(October) - Moscow allowed South Korean delegates to the world weight-lifting competition, the world wrestling competition, and a UNESCO conference on atmosphere and education to attend the international events in the Soviet Union.

1978

April - The Soviet authorities treated kindly and promptly returned crewmen and passengers after a South Korean Air Lines plane had inadvertently strayed into one of the most sensitive strategic areas in Soviet territory and made a forced landing. The Seoul government expressed its gratitude for appropriate Soviet treatment of the crewmen and passengers.

August - A South Korean women's volleyball team was granted visas to participate in a volleyball tournament in Leningrad. A North Korean team had been scheduled to take part in the tournament, but failed to show up.

September - South Korean Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Shin Hyon-hwack, visited the Soviet Union as the head of a six-member South Korean delegation to the International Conference on Primary Health held in Alma Ata and sponsored jointly by the World Health Organization and the UNICEF. It was the first ministerial visit to the Soviet Union since the Republic of Korea was established in 1948. Two South Korean newsmen were granted visas to enter the Soviet Union to cover the conference, the first South Korean journalists ever to go there.

- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda (the organ of the Central Committee of the communist party, Supreme Council, and cabinet of the Kazakhstan Socialist Republic) for the first time referred to South Korea by its formal name, the Republic of Korea.

- Four South Korean scholars were permitted to visit the Soviet Union to participate in an international conference in Moscow on the preservation of nature.

1979

April - Cho Sang-ho, vice president of the South Korean Amateur Sports Association, and Choe Yong-dok, general manager of the South Korean Amateur Ice Hockey Association, participated as South Korean representatives in the Congress of the International Ice Hockey Federation held in Moscow.

- A formal international telephone line between South Korea and the Soviet Union was installed through a hookup via Great Britain.

May - Two South Korean newsmen were granted entry visas by the Soviet embassy in Tokyo to attend the 43rd Congress of the Association of International Press Services in Moscow.

- Soviet Minister of Culture, Piotr N. Demichev, visited the "Five Thousand Years of Korean Art" exhibition at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. This exhibition was sponsored by the Seoul government.

August - Sixteen South Korean scholars attended the 9th International Political Science Association meeting in Moscow.

- A group of seven South Korean natural scientists attended the 14th Pacific Science Conference in Khabarovsk.

September - Four South Korean delegates, including two government officials, participated in the International Social Security Association's Asia and Oceania regional conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

From 1973 to 1979, in short, the number of unofficial contacts between South Koreans and Soviets had steadily increased. But most of these were made on South Korean initiatives, and the Soviet side had not shown reciprocity by permitting its citizens to visit South Korea. To Pyongyang's obvious chagrin, the Soviet Union appeared to have softened its policy toward South Korea

conspicuously, showing a remarkable flexible attitude toward Seoul in nonpolitical fields at nongovernmental levels. But Moscow seemed not ready to improve Soviet-South Korean relations beyond the level of informal contacts and thus extend diplomatic recognition to Seoul, partly for fear of North Korea's adverse reaction and partly because the Chinese would take full advantage of the situation.* Interestingly enough, the Soviets would apparently like the Chinese to be the first to open official relations with South Korea, for it will be easier for them to follow the Chinese precedent on this issue. But Beijing would like to see Moscow make the first move for the same reason.

One can make a very persuasive argument that Moscow was playing its "Seoul card" mainly against Pyongyang in order to prevent North Korea from moving closer to China. One important fact supporting this hypothesis is that whenever Pyongyang showed a tendency to shift closer to China in the alignment during 1973-1979, the Soviet Union seemed more willing to respond favorably to Seoul's open-door policy toward Moscow. In so doing, Soviet leaders may have perceived that they could exercise some leverage over North Korean leaders as well as Chinese

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* *Soviet Vice Foreign Minister Firubin and Soviet Politburo alternate member Demichev said in Moscow in January 1979 that "the Soviet Union does not intend to establish political relations with South Korea immediately." The Korea Times, January 21, 1979.

leaders insofar as the Korean issue was concerned. Moscow would likely continue to play the "South Korean card" against North Korea whenever proper opportunities for doing so arise in the future.

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Moscow's attitude toward South Korea began to change. The Soviet press, for example, escalated its rhetoric supporting Pyongyang's stand on Korea, in particular calling for the withdrawal of American combat troops from South Korea, and intensified its anti-Seoul propaganda, criticizing domestic political events in the South. In this situation, Seoul decided not to send a team to the 1980 Moscow Olympics, following the example of the United States and other allies. The Soviet Union's hard-line propaganda against Seoul seemed designed to induce Pyongyang to come closer to Moscow in the Sino-Soviet rift in the wake of the Sino-American normalization and the China-Vietnam war.

Although Moscow's political rhetoric against Seoul is currently reduced, it would appear that the Soviet Union, as a result of the hardening of Soviet-American relations since 1980, and the KAL incident, has shelved thoughts of a further softening toward South Korea. There has hitherto been no official Soviet announcement about whether Moscow would participate in the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul.

In late 1974 China opened another front in its propaganda war against the Soviet Union by accusing Moscow

of betraying North Korea. An article in the November 10, 1974, issue of Beijing's People's Daily, for example, accused the Soviet Union of "flirting and colluding" with South Korea and said that this signified Soviet support for a "two-Korea" policy. Several years later, China charged again that Moscow was "sticking its sinister hand into the Korean peninsula" by allowing South Korean government ministers, representatives of economic organizations, and academic and sports delegations to visit the Soviet Union "under various pretexts."[176]

In the recent past, both Moscow and Beijing have often charged that the other side is approaching South Korea at the expense of North Korea. The Soviet Union lost no time in responding to the Chinese charge, saying that the aim of Beijing's accusation was to drive a wedge between Moscow and Pyongyang. The Soviets retorted that China was trying to distract attention from its collusion with Washington by defending the U.S. bases and troops stationed in Japan; they even charged Beijing's leaders with having assured American diplomats that China considered the presence of American troops in South Korea a stabilizing force in that part of the world. China's "double-faced position on the Korean issue," in short, "betrayed North Korean interests."[38 (1979), p. 260; 207]

Of particular interest was the Chinese reaction to increasing Soviet-South Korean contacts. Coverage of these contacts has involved, almost exclusively, attacks on the Soviet Union, while South Korea has received only very mild criticism.[209]

As regards Seoul-Beijing relations, one can notice immediately that there has been little visible contact comparable to that in Seoul-Moscow relations, and China has been more faithful in its official endorsement of North Korean foreign policy. China, for the present, probably will not indicate any support for a "two-Korea" solution because of the precedent it might imply for a "two-Korea" arrangement. Beijing has been more circumspect and taken a tougher line on contact with South Korea than did the Soviet Union, given China's preferred position with North Korea and its determination not to give Moscow an opening in Pyongyang. Despite China's obvious interest in the stability of Korea, for example, no one with a South Korean passport has been allowed to enter Chinese territory.

Despite Beijing's tougher line in dealing with South Korea, the situation in recent times has been more fluid. Chinese policy toward the Korean peninsula has recently operated at two levels. At the official pronouncements level, China has conveyed mixed signals, appearing to support North Korea's reunification stand, yet at the same time indicating that it is moderating its attitude toward South Korea. At the actual performance level, China has taken several steps which also suggest an attitude of moderation toward South Korea and a more balanced policy toward the Korean peninsula. In point of fact, there have been minor signs of a "thaw" in Seoul-Beijing relations in recent years.

On September 1, 1974, China permitted the establishment of mail service between itself and South Korea.[76] Another indication that attitudes in Beijing may be changing is the permission granted to the Koreans residing in China to communicate with relatives in South Korea, which is certainly disturbing to North Korea and implies that China will not be bound by North Korean sensitivity. Recently, China has accepted visa applications submitted by the Koreans who wish to return to South Korea, and there have been at least several cases in which elderly Koreans were permitted to return to South Korea through Hong Kong to join their families.[77; 145; 161] More recently, China released two South Korean fishing vessels within two weeks of their seizure for violating China's territorial waters,[168] and sent an envoy to Seoul with regard to the hijacking of a Chinese aircraft.

Since the announcement of the Washington-Beijing normalization, China has reduced its critical attitude and comments against South Korea, perhaps to check Seoul's approach toward Moscow. At the same time, Beijing has also refrained from excessive praise of North Korea. South Korea's consul general in Houston, Texas, in his capacity as acting dean of the consular corps in that city, officially greeted visiting Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping at a welcoming ceremony there on February 2, 1979, eliciting no objections from the Chinese, although they knew that he was a South Korean diplomat.

China in 1979 seemed desirous of expanding its nongovernmental contact with South Korea. In the summer, China was said to be negotiating for the first time a separate commercial transaction with South Korea through intermediaries in Hong Kong. One source estimated that Seoul-Beijing trade reached US $300 million in 1980.[138] Initially, trade between China and South Korea took place on a triangular basis via Hong Kong, but lately there have been reports that ships bearing Chinese coal and returning with South Korean industrial products have gone directly from Chinese ports to South Korea.[138]

Early in 1980, South Korea reached an aviation agreement with the United States that enables both Chinese and American commercial aircraft to fly over Korean territory.[143] In late 1981 the Seoul government expressed its willingness to talk with China over a possible establishment of civil air routes connecting Tokyo with Beijing via the Korean peninsula.[143] China is expected to attend the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.[158] Besides the above-mentioned unofficial contacts, South Korean athletes and scholars have tried to engage in some sort of direct exchanges with Chinese counterparts without success.

In general, then, China is perceived by South Koreans as being at present genuinely in favor of regional stability, mainly on account of the Soviet threat to China itself, but there are also serious reservations about Beijing's future course and role. As in other countries,

there is much skepticism in South Korea about China's future political stability, prospects for economic development, and military modernization program. Beijing is perceived as too eager to retain North Korean goodwill, again for reasons connected with the Sino-Soviet confrontation, to be of much help to Seoul. As a matter of fact, China has recently reduced its exports of coal to South Korea on account of North Korean protests, and in late June 1982 Chinese Defense Minister Geng Biao, speaking to Pyongyang, went somewhat farther than Chinese speakers normally do in declaring support for the North Korean position on American military withdrawal from the South and on ultimate Korean unification. China is perceived by South Korean exporters toward the less sophisticated end of the technological spectrum -- footwear, for example -- as a serious likely competitor with South Korea in the international market in the near future. It is also feared that China might reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union, and that China, when and if stronger, might try to dominate the region. It is likely that at least some of these expressed reservations about China reflect a conscious or unconscious desire to deter the United States from establishing a close relationship with it, to the possible detriment of South Korean interests.

As already indicated, in at least some South Korean circles there is a perception as well that the future security and prosperity of Taiwan are important to regional stability. There is also a lingering gratitude for the

support given prior to 1945 by the late President Chiang Kai-shek to the Korean independence struggle against Japan. There is some uncertainty, and concern, as to what the American response would be in case of a Chinese attack on Taiwan, an eventuality that, however, does not seem to be perceived as very likely in the near future.

For the present, by and large, it is clear that neither Moscow nor Beijing is prepared for any more extensive contacts with South Korea, although they will likely continue to show a considerable degree of flexibility toward Seoul in nonpolitical areas. They apparently do not want to offend North Korea, although their wish for a relaxation of tension on the Korean peninsula remains indisputable. North Korea's refusal to accept the status quo on the peninsula has been the major obstacle to improving relations between South Korea and the two major Communist powers. The critical factor in this context would be the willingness of both the Soviet Union and China to move in parallel courses, so that neither would feel that the other had any advantage in terms of its position in Pyongyang. In the final analysis, any possibility of official relations between South Korea and the two major Communist powers is quite remote, unless there are drastic improvements in Sino-Soviet and Seoul-Pyongyang relations.

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