

U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA UNIFICATION: A CROSS- CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

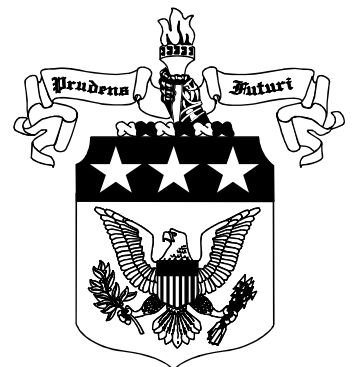
MICHAEL H. CHUNG
Department of Army Civilian

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 18-03-2009 | | | 2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project | | | 3. DATES COVERED (From - To) | | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE U.S. Policy toward the Korean Peninsula Unification: A Cross-Cultural Perspective | | | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | | |
| | | | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | | |
| | | | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) Michael H. Chung | | | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | | |
| | | | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | | |
| | | | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Breena E. Coates Department of Command, Leadership, and Management | | | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | | |
| 9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013 | | | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | | |
| | | | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited | | | | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT Cross-cultural awareness is especially important in a complex, globalized environment. Because each culture has different priorities in its basic values and beliefs, collisions can occur. This SRP identifies the cross-cultural awareness gaps between South Korea and the United States. Two feasible Korean unification policy options—"status quo" and "collapse to be absorbed"—are used as a case study in U.S.–Korean cross-cultural awareness. The SRP then analyzes the perception of the Korean people of these two policies in order to minimize the cultural misperceptions between the United States and South Korea. It concludes with strategic recommendations for supporting Korean reunification. | | | | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS Smart Power, Anti-Americanism, Globalization | | | | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON | | |
| a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED | b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED | c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED | | UNLIMITED | 24 | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) | | |

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA UNIFICATION:
A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

By

Michael H. Chung
Department of Army Civilian

Dr. Breena E. Coates
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Michael H. Chung

TITLE: U.S. Policy toward the Korean Peninsula Unification: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2009 **WORD COUNT:** 5,033 **PAGES:** 24

KEY TERMS: Smart Power, Anti-Americanism, Globalization

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Cross-cultural awareness is especially important in a complex, globalized environment. Because each culture has different priorities in its basic values and beliefs, collisions can occur. This SRP identifies the cross-cultural awareness gaps between South Korea and the United States. Two feasible Korean unification policy options—“status quo” and “collapse to be absorbed”—are used as a case study in U.S.–Korean cross-cultural awareness. The SRP then analyzes the perception of the Korean people of these two policies in order to minimize the cultural misperceptions between the United States and South Korea. It concludes with strategic recommendations for supporting Korean reunification.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE KOREAN PENINSULA UNIFICATION: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSEPCTIVE

A critical skill underlying strategic planning of decision making is cultural savvy. This awareness is especially important in a complex, globalized environment, which is fraught with cross-cultural conflicts. Each culture has different priorities in its basic values and beliefs, so cultural collisions occur with some frequency.

The U.S. Army has currently deployed Soldiers to approximately 120 different locations worldwide to protect and ensure U.S. security, to further its economic and political interests, and to fulfill its peace keeping responsibilities.¹ These Soldiers are operating in a wide variety of cultural contexts. Historically, the U.S. Army has not made concerted efforts to learn its enemies' culture. In general, Americans do not seriously attempt to understand cultural diversity; rather, they look for "commonality, which has been at the core of American domestic success in assimilating immigrants."² Americans thus seem indifferent to appreciation of other cultures and are generally uninterested in learning foreign languages.

This SRP uses the Korean unification issue as a case study to identify the cross-cultural awareness gaps, which are often ignored and over-simplified, between South Korea and the U.S. It will discuss current US security policy toward the Korean peninsula's unification by looking at two feasible policy options: "status quo" and "collapse to be absorbed."³ Then it will analyze the Korean people's perceptions of these two options as a way to minimize cultural misperceptions between the US and South Korea. In conclusion, this SRP recommends U.S. support of Korean unification.

The Korean peninsula has attracted economic and political interest from the world community because of current volatile military tensions between the nuclear North Korea and the democratic South Korea. North Korea has threatened U.S. national interests by intimidating South Korea directly with its army, by raising tensions among neighboring countries with its missiles, by its involvement in the illegal drug trade, and, above all, by brutalizing its own people and resisting democracy.

While the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas, in principle, belongs to Koreans, as a matter of national sovereignty, Koreans themselves seem relatively unconcerned about the issue. There is little public discussion of reunification among South Koreans. Though Koreans say that their reunification issue belongs to Koreans, there seem to be no serious efforts to achieve it.

While there is no doubt that U.S. policy makers have strived to establish viable policies regarding the reunification of Koreas, many South Koreans wrongly perceive that current U.S. policy regarding reunification mainly favors U.S. national interests and reflects little regard for Korean welfare.

Background on Korean Reunification and Korean Perceptions of the Current U.S. Foreign Policy

The Korean peninsula has a long history of occupation and brutal treatment by foreign countries, especially by Japan and China. This historical and social experience still adversely arouses distrust against foreign countries in general. Korea, geographically situated as a peninsular that faces Russia, China and Japan, has survived hundreds of defeats. They are all too familiar with oppression and painful suffering at the hands of foreign aggressors. Under Japanese occupation, for example, Koreans were not allowed to use their own native names but were compelled to use

Japanese names and language. They were even forced to lineup and bow daily toward the Japanese Emperor across the East Sea.

After experiencing Imperial Japan's economical, social and political colonial occupation for 36 years, the United States decreed a free Korea in the negotiations following World War II in 1945. The United States saved South Korea once again in the 1950-1953 Korean War, repelling a North Korean invasion supported first by the Soviet Union and later by Communist China. At the end of the Korean War, the Korean Peninsula was split into two parts. The southern half of Korea—the Republic of Korea—with economic and political support from the U.S. has experienced a remarkable journey from poverty to prosperity, from dictatorship to democracy. It is now a new global partner with the U.S., which has provided support since 1945. However, the northern half of Korea –the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (the DPRK)—has been blundering unfortunately as a Stalinist communist state.

Since the new South Korean President Lee Myung-Pak assumed office in January 2008, South Korea's foreign policies have shifted to the right. His presidency has raised ideological debates and generated ideological doubts, especially among young Koreans, about U.S. policy regarding reunification issues.

As the only 21st century super power, the U.S. has assumed increasing responsibility to maintain the stability and peace in the region of East Asia. Curiously, U.S. foreign policy publications that disclose official U.S. positions toward the Korean reunification are not easily found. The U.S. may not want to publicize US positions on reunification to the international community. In this regard, among Koreans, probably in both South and North Korea, there are intriguing questions about U.S. policy:

- Does Korean reunification support the U.S. national interests? Does the U.S. truly support the re-unification?
- Does the U.S. military presence in South Korea alleviate the reunification process or hinder it? Will the U.S. force move out of Korea after reunification? What should happen with the large North Korean army after unification?
- Is there already a hidden consensus among Japan, China, Russia, and the U.S. governments, designed to keep the balance of power in the region, but arrived at without consultation of the two Korean governments?

Answers to these questions are not yet clear. Unless these questions are clearly resolved strategically, the misperceptions will remain. An important aspect resolving these pressing questions is cultural sensitivity to the interpretation and ramifications of any policy decision. This is important for all the countries involved—the United States, North Korea and South Korea. To date a number of unfortunate incidents have occurred that have underscored the need for cultural awareness.

There are two distinct policies toward the Korea peninsular unification: the status quo and the collapse of North Korea. The status quo policy seems the most favorable option to all at this moment. Since a cease-fire agreement was signed in 1953, both North and South Korea have not allowed free movement of people and goods across their border. Both still maintain a 2.5-mile wide and 155-mile long demilitarized zone (DMZ), which is considered Asia's Berlin Wall.⁴ This is the most tightly and militarily secured separation in the world, splitting the Korean Peninsula roughly in half at about the 38th parallel. To date, North Korea continues to isolate hundreds of thousands of separated Korean families. These families have had no opportunity even to find out

whether their parents and relatives are still alive. They have no hope of meeting their relatives or even of exchanging letters for the past 65 years.

North Korea seems to be concerned that the sooner they open the border, the more they will have to rely on South Korea's economic assistance. And surly North Korea fears that, once they allow an exchange of people, they will be forced to accept an open-door situation which will then lead to rapid economic and political reforms. North Korea has relied on a poor strategy called "tongmi bongnam", meaning "talking with the United States while blocking the South".⁵ North Korea has tried to ignore South Korea but negotiates only with the U.S., believing that they can undermine South Korea's political and economic influence and disrupt U.S. – South Korea relations by bypassing South Korea.

The status quo policy, which will implement minimal or even no changes to maintain both nations' survival, may not jeopardize US national interests or those of other global partners. It is certainly in China's national interest is to keep a stable and secure Korea. China needs a peaceful external environment in order to maintain her own domestic stability and sustain economic growth. Unless North Korea commits a huge mistake with its nuclear program, this status quo policy may be the strategy of choice for all concerned for the foreseeable future.

The status quo policy, however, poses considerable risk for all concerned. If there is a military coup in North Korea during or after Kim Jong-Il's tenure in office, China may re-establish a much more pragmatic communist regime in North Korea to dominate the region. This distressing scenario leads to consideration of the second policy option of "collapse and absorption."

South Koreans fear that self-identifying cousins, nephews, and in-laws, whom they have never met, from the North may suddenly knock on doors at South Korean homes, and ask for shelter after the DMZ walls have collapsed. Consider this Wall Street Journal (7 Nov 2008) editorial:

U.S. officials worry that a messy power shift in North Korea could send hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing over its borders and leave Pyongyang's nuclear and biological weapons unsecured. In the worst-case scenario, the Chinese and American militaries might be on opposing sides of efforts to stabilize North Korea.

More than 86 percent of South Koreans today were born after the peninsula was divided.⁶ Will these South Koreans be willing to help nephews and cousins from the North? Most of the first generation refugees from the North are already dead. Will the second and third generations in the South be willing to make necessary sacrifices to provide political, social and economic shelter for an influx of refugees from the North? The South Korean stance on the refugee influx is complex: it is a mixture of family values and fears of never-met communists. This plausible situation leads to serious concerns about doing nothing (status quo) while there is a question of how long the Kim Jong Il regime can survive.

North Korea is dismally poor. The U.S. CIA report reports that, "North Korea, one of the world's most centrally directed and least open economies, faces chronic economic problems. Industrial capital stock is nearly beyond repair as a result of years of underinvestment and shortages of spare parts."⁷ It notes that North Korea's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita at 2007 was US\$1,700, which was less than 10% of that of South Korea. Even the regime has adopted a desperate survival strategy because most of the grass roots population is suffering with starvation and malnutrition.

Many have asked how long Kim Jong-II can hold onto his regime. With the inherently inadequate resources that cannot even satisfy the people's basic needs, his family dictatorship nevertheless has managed to keep power for the last 6 decades. As much as 10 percent of the North Korean population of 22 million died during the great famine in the 1990's, according to James Brooks, in a New York Times article (6 Oct 2005) ⁸. Incredibly, there is no any indication of rebellion against Kim Jong-II's regime during this period. But it did cause a steady exodus of North Koreans through a Chinese border.

In terms of the regional balance of power, the collapse and absorption policy will not be a welcome solution for any of the parties including other regional powers. Japan considers both North and South Korea as a security buffer zone to keep them from directly confronting China and Russia. When asked to choose one of these two policies, most South Koreans seem somewhat indifferent and indecisive.

The two Koreas are still technically at war. A nuclear-armed North Korea directly threatens South Korea, China and Japan. Kim Jung II's regime is brutal and morally reprehensible. At the cost of hundreds of thousands of his own people dying of starvation, he has focused on building his military power. He has used his nuclear program to create open hostility between South Korea and Japan, and probably seeks to negotiate with the U.S. to fix his collapsing economy by trading nuclear disarmament for goods, fuel and cash.

Most South Koreans, however, see the potential dangers posed by North Korea differently. Many of them, who must have been predisposed ideologically by North Korea's propaganda, trust that North Korea's long-range missiles and nuclear bombs

will not be fired at Seoul, which has a population of 15 million. Incredibly they believe that North Korea's advanced biological and chemical weapons stationed near the South Korean border are not for an attack but for export to other parts of the world. Some argue that the nonproliferation policy of the U.S. reflects a double standard, since Pakistan and other U.S. allies have been allowed to keep their nuclear weapons - but not North Korea.

The South Korean attitude toward a dangerous North Korea is seen or being too soft. They are lacking in political awareness by believing that North Korea is so poor that lacks the economic capacity and an intention to attack South Korea. Two previous South Korean presidents during years of 1998 - 2007, using the so-called Sunshine Policy, misled South Koreans to see North Korea as less hostile, even though North Korea continued its nuclear build-up to pose an imminent threat to international security. Most of them believe that the nuclear development in the North is nothing but a ruse to pull the U.S. to the negotiation table for economic gains. The Sunshine Policy of rapprochement and excessive generosity toward Kim Jong-Il's brutal dictatorship was a mistake. It is no longer effective. The Sunshine policy was finally exposed by many skeptical conservative South Koreans.

President Bush's reference to North Korea as an "axis of evil" during his 2002 State of the Union Address was a timely reminder for North Korea to cease its nuclear blackmail and stop proliferating nuclear weapons. Since then, however, President Bush has not applied sufficient military, diplomatic, and economic pressures to force North Korea to give up its nuclear weapon ambitions and cooperate fully on nuclear weapon verification efforts.

In October 2005, the former South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun requested that South Korea take over the wartime operational control of military forces from the United Nations Combined Forces Command (UN CFC) and the United States Command Korea (USFK), for the first time since the end of the Korean war of 1953.⁹ Most Korean intellectuals knew that he was trying to gain more popularity by stating publically that he wanted to rapidly reduce Korea's dependence on the U.S. for security. His political gestures, however, led to loss of confidence and trust in his administration. It even caused some consternation in the U.S. – South Korean military relationship. In order to take over the wartime operational control from the U.S., the Korean government must invest a tremendous amount of additional military spending in the next several years. This was an example of his populist posturing and muscle-flexing against U.S. influence. Most informed South Koreans understood his ploy, but they did not speak out against it.

South Korean Attitude toward America

It is important for U.S. military and diplomatic players to recognize that a culture of anti-Americanism is growing in South Korea. The U.S. has made positive influences—scarcely recognized and appreciated—to improve the quality of life in Korea. Younger generations in South Korea have no immediate memory of the Korean War and thus less fear of the communists. They do not see North Korea as their most dangerous enemy. Instead they consider the US military policy and presence as an obstacle to reunification. Greater awareness of cultural norms in South Korea by U.S. policy makers is needed in strategy deliberation to change and influence the hearts and minds of South Koreans. Ironically, most young South Koreans live in an Americanized

popular culture—consuming U.S. fashions, food, music in their daily life. They ardently study English in order to advance in their future careers. Despite the strong U.S. stance against the North Korean nuclear regime, South Koreans seem less concerned than anticipated.

It is commonly believed that North Korea uses the younger generation and many non-governmental left-wing civil groups to represent the U.S. as an obstacle to unification and thus to seriously damage ties between two allies. Opportunistic politicians and leftist activist groups always promote anti-Americanism. They claim that the U.S. is responsible for everything negative. These leftist groups in South Korea launched candlelight protest rallies against the U.S. for the accidental killing of two Korean schoolgirls in Dongducheon during a major exercise in 2002. The young victims had been down by a U.S. armored vehicle. The two American servicemen who manned the vehicle returned to the U.S. without being charged by the Korean legal system in accord with the Status of Forces Agreement. At that time, the U.S. military could have acted differently to calm Korean feelings and to help Koreans save face. Loss face has most seriously adverse impact than anything else in Korean culture.¹⁰ To make the situation worse some left-wing media and politicians have used anti-Americanism for their own gains. They are now trying to defy the pro-American Lee Myung Pak government.

In 2008 for several months, tens of thousands candles illuminated the night streets of downtown Seoul to protest the resumption of U.S. beef imports and to further demonstrate their anti-Americanism. Hyperactive internet rumors promoted fears of mad cow disease; they were very disturbing. Young high school students exchanged text

messages saying “Why must I die like a mad cow?”. Or they made remarks on their blogs such as, “Swallow cyanide, but don’t eat the U.S. beef.” Some young Koreans publically pronounced that George W. Bush was more dangerous than a nuclear-armed Kim Jong II. North Korean propaganda obviously exacerbated the issue. These negative perceptions come mostly from young generational perspectives, even though baby-boomers in Korea usually are not influenced by the ideological and cultural issues. During the candlelight demonstration, most foreigners simply could not understand what was happening inside the heads of Koreans. There was a serious cross-cultural awareness gap between Americans and Koreans.

These outbursts were certainly emotional. But they also arose from valid consensus. Koreans perceive the U.S. as an advocate of globalization, but many Koreans fear globalization. To them, Western culture and business practices appear to seek to shape Korean society to further Western economic and political interests. These Koreans perceive that the rules of the globalization game have been developed by Western technology and culture. So if Koreans are forced to play that game against invincible Western competition, they will lose.

Leftist NGOs misrepresented the U.S. beef issue to undermine globalization. They capitalized on Korean fears and mistrust of U.S. intentions to create increasing social stress between the “have-nots” and “haves.” The US beef was used to enhance their political gains by exploiting an anti-American theme. But many Koreans realized that these malicious efforts were designed to make Korea’s new president ineffective and to damage the U.S. – South Korean alliance.

Many Koreans fear that Korean reunification may be determined by major powers, such as China, Russia, Japan, and the U.S. So the Koreans will not be party to their own reunification. Some extreme left-wing organizations in Korea use this as a pragmatic reason that Korea should not trust the U.S. for Korean security, sovereignty, and reunification. Most of South Korea's elites remember the secret Taft-Katsura diplomatic memorandum of 29 July 1905, in which the U.S. agreed to allow Japan to take over Korea in exchange of the Philippines. Consequently, Korea was forcibly ruled by Japanese Empire during the period between 1910 and 1945. Many Korean historians believe that the Taft-Katsura Agreement violated the original Korean American Treaty of Amity and Commence, signed on 22 May 1882—23 years prior to the Taft-Katsura diplomat memorandum. In that earlier treaty, both countries agreed to “an eternal peace and alliance, and an effort to peacefully resolve any situations in which any one country was treated unfairly by another country.”¹¹

Cross-Cultural Awareness Views

Strategically culture is defined “as a distinct and lasting set of beliefs and values and preferences regarding the use of force, its role, and effectiveness in political affairs.”¹² Culture affects how people think and respond. Culture influences thoughts, ways of life, patterns of communications, customs, attitudes, ethics, and institutions. The U.S. Army Department of National Security and Strategy offers a working definition of culture: “Culture is a difficult concept to grasp with any certainty, but a fundamental one for defining and understanding the human condition. It is also an important dimension of policy and strategy, because it affects how people think and respond and thus how policy and strategy are formulated and implemented. We consider culture as

the way human and societies assign meaning to the world around them and define their place in that world. It is manifested in languages, ideas, beliefs, customs, traditions, rituals, objects, and images that are symbolic (therefore symbolic forms that represent and/or contain certain meanings) of the values, interests, perceptions, and biases of individuals and of the collective society.”¹³

Cross-cultural awareness is critically important for U.S. military operations as the world's sole remaining super power. Cross-cultural awareness will contribute to establishing the right U.S. unification policy and executing it at the right time with support of a multinational coalition. Cultural ignorance cause bad decisions. Thomas Friedman of the New York Times aptly declared, “We cannot change other societies and cultures on our own. But we also can't just do nothing in the face of this mounting threat. What we can do is partner with the forces of moderation within these societies to help them fight the war of ideas.”¹⁴

Current U.S. wars are non-traditional and unconventional. The insurgencies seek to promulgate their religious and ideological beliefs that are anti-American and anti-Western attitude. Since the U.S. has launched military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, cross-cultural awareness has become increasingly important. To win the current wars, the U.S. must interact with foreign individuals and groups as well as allied governments worldwide whose cultural contexts are profoundly different from U.S. culture. Only cross-culture awareness can prevent or mitigate mistrust and can minimize the cost of current and future conflicts. Eventually it can build a foundation of mutual trust.

In order to win the hearts and minds of Koreans, the U.S. should be able to analyze and understand its own strengths and weakness as well as its susceptibility to cultural misunderstanding. American capability to influence Korea depends on understanding both cultures. U.S. leaders cannot view Korea the way that America wishes Korean culture to be, but as Korean culture really is.

U.S. Army leaders at all levels need cross-cultural knowledge and skills to better understand the young generations, to communicate strategically with a local community, and to work collaboratively with the Korean military. Misunderstanding culture at the strategic level may lead to policies that can exacerbate tensions in international relationships. Cultural misjudgment at the operational level may lead to harmful public opinion. Cultural ignorance at the tactical level can endanger soldiers and civilians.¹⁵

Philosophical fundamentals of Korean society and military are based on Sun Tzu. His theories are more useful than Clausewitz's for understanding the nature of war historically in the Eastern part of the world. In the East, war and politics were more indivisible. They balanced one another more¹⁶ than in the West. Sun Tzu believed that all warfare is based on deception, surprise, and dissimulation. Above all, he asserted that deception is a powerful, simple, and most effective way to wage war. In *The Art of War*, he proclaimed, "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."¹⁷

Knowing the enemy, North Korea, however, seems not to have mattered to American. Generally, U.S. citizens do not feel obligated to learn about other societies

and their cultural context. Cultural awareness is a critical aspect of knowing the enemy. There is no doubt that understanding cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and hidden superstitions is invaluable when fighting guerillas.¹⁸

The U.S. has been challenged to promote human rights and freedom by building a democratic society in a VUCA operational environment. In order to win a counterinsurgency, the U.S. military leaders should learn faster and adapt more rapidly. According to the newly published “Pentathletes”, they must be intellectual athletes so they can learn and adapt interdependently in a vigorous and culturally sensitive atmosphere.

Diverse levels of cultural understanding will be required to perceive specific intentions of specific actors and political groups. Culturally savvy leaders can motivate and influence diverse organizations to achieve desirable goals and positively impact the future of America. They need to exhibit strong cross-cultural communication skills, self-awareness, and confidence. U. S. leaders should think counter-intuitively regarding their own culture to identify successful strategies to promote democracy and better persuade North Korea to work for world peace.

Asymmetric terrorism, especially when posed by North Korea’s nuclear ambition, has become the primary threat to U.S. efforts to maintain world peace and security, and to enhance international power equilibrium. Moreover, China has risen as a world superpower and as a potential new threat against our democratic efforts especially in Asia.

The U.S. military strategy should shift from hard military power to soft diplomatic power, then further to smart power. “Soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain

the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies. A smart power strategy combines hard and soft power resources.”¹⁹

The Center for Strategic and International Studies advises that “America must revitalize its ability to inspire and persuade rather than merely rely upon its military might. Despite the predominance of U.S. hard power, there are limits to its effectiveness in addressing the main foreign policy challenges facing America today.”²⁰ In order to articulate the US foreign policy toward the Korean reunification correctly and consistently with Korean people and neighboring countries, the U.S. should initiate a smart power strategy to develop and implement a more streamlined outreach plan to achieve a beneficial long-term social interaction.²¹

Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy toward Korean Unification

(1) President Barack Obama promised during his presidential campaign to pursue “a policy of open and aggressive diplomacy with the world’s so-called rogue states.”²² This may provide an opportunity for an indirect but closed-door communication channel at the highest level possible between the United States and North Korea. The U.S. should set up an interagency coordination office at the highest possible level to execute the U.S. foreign policy effectively toward East Asian regional issues including China and Japan as well as North Korea. A Los Angeles Times editorial advised, “North Korea must be treated as a regional problem to be managed by a regional concert of powers, with China in the lead. The U.S. role in all this should be sympathetic.”²³ The U.S. should continue to defer “Greater China,” which tries to influence Asia with Confucian Values which have impacted social life as well as politics

and business management philosophy over centuries in Asia. In this regard, the U.S. should understand that in the East Confucianism is as important as democracy in the West.

(2) The U.S. should pursue a soft-landing reunification policy farming a gradual progress toward peaceful unification. This may be the best alternative to achieve the most stability while reducing the financial burdens for South Korea. Even after reunification occurs and North Korea's threats decline, the US military must remain in the Korean peninsula to sustain the regional stability among China, Japan, and Russia. U.S. military presence will help prevent future conflicts as well as will protect U.S. national interests. And it will also assist in rebuilding a unified Korea.

(3) To support both or either policies, the U.S. should transform its current foreign policy to adopt a 'smart power' approach by combining hard military power with soft attractive power. Effective smart power will enable the U.S. homeland security as well as world peace.²⁴ Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, declared at his Landon Lecture at Kansas University (26 Nov 2007) "I am here to make the case for strengthening our capacity to use soft power and for better integrating it with hard power."²⁵

(4) North Korea caused the problem. North Korea is profoundly paranoid. The U.S. and South Korea should be more confrontational. There is a very little possibility to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear ambition.²⁶ The US should consider a preemptive strike at North Korea's missile sites to disable or eliminate one of the most militarized dictatorships. If North Korea continues to use the nuclear bombs as a negotiation tool with the U.S., it should be threatened with the stick of preemptive military strikes rather than with economic carrots which are no longer relevant. In June

1994, inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency were expelled from North Korea, which then threatened to process spent fuel at nuclear reactors into nuclear plutonium. At that time, there was “a general consensus, shared by American military experts, that the combined forces of South Korea and the United States could defeat North Korea with overwhelming power.”²⁷ If the US took proper military action at that time, the issue would be moot.

Conclusion

Army Field Manual 3.0 defines a center of gravity (COG) as “the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.”²⁸ The only and ultimate center of gravity for North Korea is Kim Jong-Il and his atrocious regime. The Obama administration should take a hard stance against this despotic regime by stating up front that preemptive strikes will be considered if Kim Jong-il continues his wanton nuclear program that threatens global stability.

Left-wing NGO’s in South Korea will continue making vitriolic and rude remarks against the U.S. and South Korea to shock the world and disrupt the alliance, no matter what the U.S. foreign policy will be and how the future reunification progresses. Strategic communication will play a key role in maximizing the effects of smart power. The U.S. should clearly communicate that it will support Korean unification but in a mutually agreed-upon manner with South Korea. Neither ‘status quo’ nor ‘collapsed to be absorbed’ is South Korea’s preferred unification strategy. Soft-landing unification policy, executed with due deliberation, is preferred for the national interests of the Koreas as well as China, Russia, and Japan. The U.S should state in advance that

US military will remain in Korea even after the unification in order to sustain the regional stability and to enhance prosperity during the globalization era.

Endnotes

¹ Matthew T. Margotta, "Winning the hearts and minds: A Korea," *Infantry* 95, no. 5 (September/October 2006): 5.

² Andrew Stewart, *Friction in U.S. foreign policy: cultural difficulties with the world*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, June 2006), v, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub706.pdf> (accessed January 13, 2009).

³ Sam Sarkesian, John Williams and Stephen Cimbala, *US National Security: policymakers, processes, and politics*. 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2002), 35.

⁴ Morton Abramowitz and Stephen Bosworth, "America confronts the Asian century," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April 2006):147.

⁵ Joongang Daily Editorial, "North rejects idea of liaisons," *Joong Ang Daily*, April 28, 2008, joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2889170 (accessed January 16, 2009)

⁶ Jungwon Alexander Kim and Myungshin Hong, "The Koreas, Unification, and the Great Powers," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April 2006): 186.

⁷ "Korea, South," *CIA World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ks.html> (accessed January 10, 2009).

⁸ James Brooke, "North Korea Says Bumper Crop Justifies Limits on Aid," *The New York Times*, October 6, 2005.

⁹ Lee Sang-hyun, "Seoul seeks flexibility on OPCON transfer," *Korea Herald*, April 10, 2008.

¹⁰ Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Culture*, 3rd ed (Boston: Nicholas Brealey International, 2006), 507.

¹¹ The *Embassy of Republic of Korea in the USA homepage*, http://www.dynamic-korea.com/news/view_issues.php?main=HOT&sub=&uid=200700158358&keyword= (accessed January 12, 2009).

¹² Patrick Porter, "Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War," *Parameters* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 45.

¹³ Jiyul Kim, "National Culture: Introductory Essay," in *Strategic Thinking Selected Readings* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 270

¹⁴ Thomas L. Friedman, "War of Ideas I," *New York Times*, January 8, 2004.

¹⁵ Montgomery McFate, "The military utility of understand adversary culture," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 38 (3rd Quarter 2005): 43.

¹⁶ Assad Homayoun, "Sun Tzu: The Newest View," *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* 32, no.10 (October 2004).

¹⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

¹⁸ Henri Bore, "Cultural awareness and irregular warfare: French army experience in Africa," *Military Review* 86, no. 4 (July/August 2006): 108.

¹⁹ Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (March 2008): 94.

²⁰ Center for Strategic and International Studies, "CSIS Commission on Smart Power," <http://www.csis.org/smartpower/> (accessed January 5, 2009).

²¹ Joseph Nye, "The Problem: A Smarter Superpower," *Foreign Policy*, no. 160 (May/June 2007): 46.

²² Choe Sung Hun, "Latest threats may mean North Korea wants to talk," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2008.

²³ Anatol Lieven and John Hulsman, "North Korea Isn't our problem," *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 2006.

²⁴ Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, "Implementing smart power - Setting an agenda for national Security Reform," US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, August 24, 2008, www.senate.gov/~foreign/hearings/2008/hr080424a.html (accessed March 2, 2009).

²⁵ Robert M. Gates, "Landon Lecture," Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, November 26, 2007.

²⁶ Knight Ridder, "Editorials on North Korea's missile launches," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 6, 2006.

²⁷ Jimmy Carter, "Engaging North Korea," *New York Times*, October 27, 2002.

²⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Army Field Manual 3.0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 2008), Chapter 6, <http://downloads.army.mil/fm3-0/FM3-0.pdf> (accessed February 15, 2009).